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Political Competition and Contestability

A Study of the Barriers to Entry in 21 Democracies

By

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Abstract

The thesis offers a theoretical clarification of the concept of political competition and an empirical study of one of its defining dimensions, namely contestability. In the first part, the relevant literature is subjected to a critical review with an eye to arriving at a model of competition suited to an empirical study of its effects. The model proposed focusses attention on the incentives political actors aspiring to positions of power have to win votes. Two dimensions are singled out as crucial for such incentives. The first is the degree of contestability. That is, how open the political arena is to the entry of new competitors. The second dimension, vulnerability, addresses how closely incumbent governments are faced with the threat of losing office.

The second, and main part of the thesis, is devoted to the empirical study of contestability by examining the barriers to entry for new parties in 21 democracies. Four barriers are identified and measured in turn. The first two determine access to competition for votes. The Registration barrier captures the costs of participation,

while the Recognition barrier tries to identify costs and opportunities involved in becoming known to the public. Unlike the other barriers, several indicators are proposed to capture it. The next two determine the difficulties involved in winning seats. The Representation barrier measures this by the properties of the electoral system, while the Accessibility barrier takes the interaction of electoral behaviour and the electoral system into account. Finally, the individual and combined strength of each of the barriers to entry are investigated on the number of new parties entering. The results suggest that the relative importance of the barriers varies considerably, but also that they together explain a considerable amount of variation in the entry of new parties. The implications of the findings are finally evaluated in light of competitive theory.

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When I first started on this research project, I found it difficult to imagine how one could possibly spend three-four years to finish. I mean, how difficult can it be to produce a few hundred pages. Three years later, I was wondering whether I would ever see the end of it. Every question raised tended to lead to another hundred questions, and every decision taken on how to approach the matter only seemed to suggest many other, and probably better, ways to do it. If it were possible to have personality implants, I would have been tempted to acquire some of those wonderful character traits that simply 'gets the job done' and gladly relinquish some of those 'that keep messing about' of which I have so many. Undoubtedly, some the difficulty I have experienced in doing the research stem from events in my personal life. Most seriously, the illness and death of my father and some years later my mother's stroke. Such sad things in life simply change one's perspective. When those you love are in trouble or leave you behind, other things simply lose their appeal. Electoral thresholds and party competition certainly appeared irrelevant as well as intensely uninteresting for periods. Probably because writing a dissertation for all these reasons has not been easy for me, I am all the more grateful for the wonderful help and support, academic as well as practical and emotional, I have received during the effort. Without it, I am convinced that I would have never made it to the end. I am therefore sorry if this acknowledgement is unusually lengthy, but somehow it has to be.

Acknowledgements

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There are also a number of my colleagues I would like to thank for their contributions. In the very beginning, the many discussions with Carolyn Forestiere and Carsten Schneider definitely pushed me in the direction of doing empirical research, which was not in the cards. A special thanks to Carolyn for introducing me to the world of excel spreadsheets (but not for leaving me there on my own), and for sharing some of her data-files that later became very useful. During my stay at the EUI, I have also greatly appreciated the many exchanges with Göran von Sydow, who, unlike me, knew a lot about politics to begin with and always proved to be a source of insightful comments (except if formulas were involved). My lack of many

Introduction

Competition is a key term in politics. Commentaries on day-to-day politics and scientific works alike are replete with references to competition. It is used to describe and invoked to explain individual behaviours as well as collective outcomes. Unfortunately, it is almost as ambiguous in meaning and indeterminate in effect as it is ubiquitous in use. It triggers a wide range of associations from responsiveness, wealth and efficiency to selfishness, cynicism and conflict. One cannot help wanting to find out what this thing 'competition' actually is and what its effects are. A review of the scientific literature reveals that the term competition is used in many different and often contradictory ways and that its effects are more often assumed than actually studied.

The concept of competition thus presents us with multiple puzzles. At the most basic level, there is the simple question of what it is exactly. That is, how do we define competition in a clear way that enables us to distinguish it from other related phenomena? No less important, if we want to study it, is the question of how to recognize it in the real world of politics. What does it look like and how do we know if there is more or less of it? An impressive variety of empirical measures of competition can be found in the literature. Part of this variety can be traced back to differences in the understanding of what competition is, but the practical solutions proposed to capture same property in highly different institutional settings is

an equally important source of differences. Naturally, addressing these issues of definition and measurement is motivated by a set of theoretical expectations concerning the role of competition in democracy. Some political theories cast competition in the role of a magic elixir with the potency to transform personal ambitions and power struggles in the political arena into a system perfectly tuned to respond to popular interests. If competition were in fact such an alchemy of politics, knowledge of what - if anything - might enhance it in political systems becomes crucial. Others have expressed greater scepticism of its projected benevolent effects and have been more inclined to seek explanations for good democratic performance elsewhere. Diverging visions of human nature and behaviour typically lie at the root of differences in expectations, but opposing views on the efficacy of the constraints imposed by our environment also lead to different conclusions. Ultimately, however, the question of the effects of competition in democracy is an empirical one that we can only hope to answer through systematic comparative research.

Identifying possible effects of political competition is not a simple task, however. In the causal chain leading from competition to democratic performance several individual 'links' can be identified. Faulty theoretical as well as practical tools for capturing and placing each one of these links in its proper place can easily lead to the wrong conclusions. Recognizing that addressing the full question of whether competition matters to political outcomes would be too ambitious for this research, I propose instead to prepare the ground for such an analysis. In the following, this will be done by first addressing the theoretical and conceptual problems posed by such an empirical study and secondly by an empirical study of one of its defining dimensions.

The first part of the thesis aims to arrive at a clear definition of competition and propose a model suitable for comparative empirical research. Chapter 1 begins with a brief review of the meanings and sources of ambiguity surrounding the concept of

competition and its role in democracy. The frequent use of economic analogies and the conceptual overlap between competition and democracy are seen to undermine clarity in the discourse on the topic. Furthermore, a summary of empirical studies of competition reveals differences at the theoretical, as well as the practical levels. While there is a fundamental conceptual accord in one strand of these studies, namely those concerned with the study of competition within the U.S., the commonalities are much less salient in the studies that span different types of political systems. Moreover, in the latter type, multi-dimensional understandings of competition are suggested, while the former stick to a one-dimensional conception. In order assess what dimensions of competition are the critical ones for investigating its effects, four theoretical models of competition are consulted.

The first model, namely that of perfect economic competition, has arguably been a richer source of outcome related expectations than a provider of precise ideas to guide empirical research. Its defining features are simply not comparable to political realities, and it has therefore only little to offer. The next economic model considered has undoubtedly been a much more prolific source of useful concepts and predictions for political research. By portraying political competition as an activity occurring in a space defined by policy positions, Downs provided a framework where economic insights could be applied to political phenomena (Downs, 1957). It is argued, however, that difficulties related to derivation of precise predictions regarding outcomes, as well as in simply applying the model across different political systems, make it unsuitable for a comparative study of the effects of competition. The two next models reviewed are found to be more fertile in this sense. Both identify a number of competitive dimensions, which are possible to measure empirically in different political contexts, and furthermore give rise to predictions related to behaviours and outcomes. The first, proposed by Strøm, draws explicitly on game theoretical concepts to identify key properties of political competition (Strøm, 1992). The second, developed by Bartolini, is more detached from the 'rational actor' assumptions embedded

in the three previous conceptions, and the dimensions identified are developed in close dialogue with political realities (Bartolini, 1999 & 2000).

After this review of theory, a short definition of political competition is proposed, which identifies the efforts political actors make to win electoral support as a means to winning or retaining office and/or influence as its salient feature. Variation in the intensity of competition is seen to derive from the actual incentives they have to make such efforts in different contexts. Returning to an evaluation of the dimensions proposed in the literature, two are singled out as crucial to political competition understood as an incentive structure. The first is contestability, which seeks to capture the degree openness of the political arena to the entry of new competitors. Or conversely, the extent to which represented political actors are shielded from the threat of new contestants by barriers to entry. Such barriers remove the incentive to pre-empt potential threats by continuously making efforts to secure electoral support. Every single theory of competition assigns crucial importance to this dimension. Nonetheless, it is virtually absent from every empirical study of political competition ever made. The second dimension, vulnerability, seeks to identify the extent to which incumbent governments are threatened with take-over by an opposition. Naturally, no government in a democracy is formally immune from such a threat, but there is wide variation in how imminent or remote the prospects of turn-over are. Many studies of competition have hypothesized that the more comfortable governments are in their positions, the less pressure there is on them to engage in competition for electoral support. Unlike contestability, vulnerability is - in some form - present in the vast majority of studies of competition. Almost all operationalize it in one political context (U.S.) and the challenge for comparative research lies in the comparative measurement across different political systems. In the following, only the empirical measurement of contestability will be attempted, however.

The remainder of the thesis addresses the question of how contestable democra-

cies are. In order to measure this, it is suggested that the level of difficulty involved in registering as a participant at elections, in becoming known to voters, and finally in winning representation must be assessed. Four different types of barriers corresponding to these three challenges are identified; the first two target the openness of competition for votes. The Registration Barrier simply addresses the requirements for participation at elections, while the costs - and opportunities - new parties have for becoming known to the public are the topic of the Recognition Barrier. The two next barriers concern the openness of the competition for seats. The Representation Barrier addresses how electoral rules may exclude new and smaller competitors from representation, whereas the Accessibility Barrier tries to answer the question of how accessible the parliamentary arena is by considering the inter-action of electoral rules and voter behaviour. It is suggested to investigate the efficacy of the existing barriers - and the validity of the measures developed - on the number of new parties actually participating, winning votes and seats. The possible effects of the barriers on democratic performance are not investigated, however.

In Chapter 2 the practical parameters of the research are set. 21 democracies, mainly in the period 1950-2000, are selected for the study on the basis of the longevity of democratic institutions and similarity with respect to socio-economic conditions. Not so much because of the demands of the present question posed but with an eye to adding on the other dimension of competition and investigating performance effects later on. Furthermore, the research is limited to the barriers to entry for the lower houses of parliament. A number of methodological issues concerning prediction of the dependent variable - the number of new parties entering - are considered, and finally a number of precise hypotheses are proposed to serve as tests of the effects of each of the barriers. In the following chapters, each of the barriers is then studied in turn.

The empirical analysis commences with Chapter 3, which is devoted to describ-

ing and measuring the Registration Barrier. The requirements parties have to fulfil in each of the 21 countries in order to obtain a place on the ballot are compared, and the challenges posed by the construction of a single indicator of the costs imposed are subsequently addressed. This includes bridging differences in the type of requirements used, as well as defining what we mean by ballot access. The division of the electoral arena into separate districts necessitates considering whether ballot access in one district is sufficient or whether more have to be included. The decision taken determines how costs of ballot access should be measured, as well as which criteria should be applied in counting the number of new parties participating. The approach taken, and evidence found by previous studies on ballot access is reviewed, and an indicator of the costs of registration is proposed. Finally, its effects on new party participation are investigated.

Ignorance of new parties, and what they have to offer, is the obstacle to entry addressed by the Recognition Barrier, which is explored in Chapter 4. Compared to the registration barrier, it is infinitely more complex to capture and the chapter therefore begins with an extensive discussion of factors which may impede or facilitate the recognition of new parties by the electorate. The issue is approached from two different angles. First, the opportunities parties have for transmitting information to the public and how these vary across countries and time are considered. Second, the role played by the electorates as recipients of information on politics is discussed as a determinant of successful communication. On basis of the discussion, five specific hypotheses are singled out for further study. The first two concern the flow of information reaching citizens via the mass media. The amount of information on politics citizens are exposed to through the mass media, as well as the extent of bias in this information, is hypothesized to influence how easily new parties may manage to emerge from obscurity. The next three hypotheses try to capture the costs facing parties in attempts to communicate directly with the electorate. This is seen to be determined by the presence of state support for campaigns, as well as

the independent costs of reaching the electorate. Finally, the combined effects of the individual barriers are investigated, and on basis of the results, a single indicator of the recognition barrier is proposed.

The Representation Barrier is analysed in Chapter 5. The question at stake here is how electoral systems influence the chances for new parties to obtain representation. The starting point of the discussion is a very different one from that of the previous chapters as the issue at hand can hardly be characterised as 'virgin territory'. Rather, there is an extensive literature dealing with electoral rules and their effects on representation. The chapter therefore begins with a review of the indicators proposed in the literature to capture the extent of disadvantage imposed on the representational chances of new and smaller parties. Problems related to capturing variety among systems, as well as validity, haunt indicators based on classification schemes and observed vote-seat disproportionality respectively, while issues of practical estimation are instead seen to trouble the 'electoral thresholds'. It is argued that the threshold approach that seeks to estimate the vote shares necessary to obtain seats has advantages as measures of the representation barrier, and the problems of estimation are therefore sought resolved. In the process, a new indicator is proposed and measured, its validity tested and performance compared to other indicators. Finally, the effects of the representation barrier on the entry of new parties are investigated.

The last of the barriers, the Accessibility Barrier, is the topic of Chapter 6. Essentially, it addresses the same question as the representation barrier, namely how difficult it is for new parties to obtain representation. Where the representation barrier frames the problem in 'mechanical' terms, that is, how institutional rules may prevent parties from gaining access to the representative institutions; it is argued here that electoral behaviour should also be taken into account. The extent of electoral 'availability' - or openness to consider voting for different parties- can be seen as an independent source of constraints. A measure of electoral availability is therefore

selected (observed volatility), and problems of its validity are addressed before the variation across countries and over time is presented and discussed. To capture the accessibility of the parliamentary arena to new parties, it is argued that the number of available voters is not sufficient, however. An indicator taking the electoral barrier and the extent of availability into account is therefore suggested. Prior to testing effects of the accessibility barrier thus measured on party entry, the independent effects of the electoral system on this aspect of electoral behaviour is also investigated.

The concluding analyses are contained in Chapter 7. First, the findings of each of the chapters are summarized, and then the joint effects of the barriers are assessed. This is done in three ways; Firstly through a general multivariate analysis, where the impact of individual barriers is assessed when the effects of others are simultaneously taken into account. Secondly, by investigating whether the barriers have synergistic effects and thirdly, by exploring the presence of non-linear, level dependent effects. After this, developments in barriers and party entry over time are described. Finally, results of the statistical analyses are discussed. The limits of the model are evaluated and the lessons learned from extreme cases of high and low barriers and poorly predicted cases discussed to shed light on the statistical findings. Finally, the value of the results and the barrier indicators for further empirical work on the effects of political competition is assessed.

Chapter 1

Political Competition: Theories, Concepts and Effects

1.1 Usage, Ambiguity and Main Debates

Competition is used to refer to a wide array of phenomena in politics. It is used in reference to the behaviour of individual or collective actors in different settings, as well as to describe whole systems of interactions. In this way, the same term is used to describe interest group politics, that are classified as competitive or non-competitive, to distinguish democracies with competitive party systems from non-democratic ones which lack this feature, to characterise specific democratic party systems on the basis of the degree or nature of the competition occurring within it, or to describe the behaviour of individual parties or candidates striving to gain votes, positions, power or other prized items. It is obvious that the actual features of these situations, that is the context, the observed behaviours and outcomes encompassed by the same term, vary greatly.

However, not all applications of the term competition to politics will be consid-

ered in the following. The context in which competition will be discussed here is exclusively that provided by democratic elections to governing bodies of geographically bounded areas. This excludes for instance such aspects as the inter-action of elites in non-democratic polities, the dynamics of interest group processes or in short all political activities in which democratic elections do not play a central role in determining the competition. But placing it within this context does not do away with the ambiguity of competition. It just narrows its scope of application a bit. Many authors discussing political competition thus refer to the democratic context specified above, but differences in conceptualisation of what this process means persist. A number of scholars have addressed this problem; Strøm writes that 'Despite general interest in competitive democracy....discussions of political competition and its consequences generally have proceeded without a clear and explicit conception of their subject'(Strøm, 1989a: 278). Bartolini seconds this perception when stating, 'its [competition] exact theoretical connotations and the type of empirical phenomena that it indicates are imprecise'(Bartolini, 1999: 436) and Ware further comments that 'the idea of competition itself is one which often generates much confusion in discussions of democracy' (Ware,1989: 1).

Most of the ambiguity and debate concerning competition just referred to appear to stem from three sources; the first arises from the fact that competition is used to refer to phenomenon that can be distinguished analytically as well as empirically. This problem could be addressed mainly by a linguistic exercise. That is, specifying the different meanings intended and applying different terms to them.

The second source of ambiguity is contextual. It mainly stems from the widespread use of terms and theories derived from the economic context to describe the political arena. Commenting on this Ware writes, 'behind most theories of electoral competition lies an analogy that is drawn from perfect competition in economics' (Ware, 1979: 35). Certainly, the economic-spatial analogy developed by Anthony

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Downs has been an abundant source of analogies. In the seminal work 'An Economic Theory of Democracy', Downs explicitly used a spatial model of economic competition as the basis for the development of the political equivalent (Downs, 1957). Given that economic theories make clear assumptions about the preferences and behaviour of actors in competitive settings, it is also possible to deduce predictions pertaining to the operation of the system as a whole. The expectation that competition furthers beneficial outcomes in the political arena as it does in the economic one stems from such analogies. As Boyne put it, 'just as competition between firms in private markets is supposed to ensure the efficient provision of services required by consumers, so competition delivers the policies desired by the electorate' (Boyne, 1998: 210). The extent to which economic analogies are tenable and inform us of political realities is highly controversial, however. While a great deal of confusion has definitely arisen from careless application of economic terms, the literature seeking to compare and contrast the political and economic systems has contributed to a clarification of the meanings and consequences of competition in politics (Bartolini 1999, 2000; Strøm 1992a, 1992b; Ware 1989,1979, Miller, 1983).

A third source of confusion and debate relates to the role ascribed to competition in relation to democracy. At one level competition is conceived of as a defining characteristic of democracy, not of direct democracy, but of the representative type. One of the first to attribute such a central role to competition was Schumpeter, who by defining the democratic method as 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote' clearly emphasized the indispensable role of competition for democracy (Schumpeter, 1954: 269). And similar positions can be found in the writings of many other contemporary political thinkers. The following statements illustrate this point well: 'the competitive electoral context, with several political parties organizing the alternatives that face the voters, is the identifying property of the contemporary democratic process' (Powell, 1982: 3),'to talk today

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about democracy is to talk about a system of competing political parties' (Robertson, 1976: 1), 'democracy denotes a system of government that meets three essential conditions: [the first being] meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government..'(Diamond, Linz & Lipset 1988: xix-xxvii), 'modern political democracy is a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives'(Schmitter & Karl 1991: 76). As Ware writes 'even those who have rejected the Schumpeterian model have often argued that the availability of alternative parties competing for power is a distinguishing feature of democracy' (Ware, 1989:1). One problem that arises in this connection is of a conceptual nature where the distinction between democracy and competition becomes blurry. Bartolini comments that the 'large conceptual overlap between 'democracy', 'democratic election' and 'competition' is problematic as it generates a great deal of confusion, with the result that sometimes competition is equated with democracy and vice versa' (Bartolini, 1999: 446). What is meant by attributing competition with a defining role is mostly the presence of contestable elections (c.f. below). But placing competition at the core of democracy also has a normative dimension, where the expected consequences of such interactions are evaluated in light of democratic values. It is this type of expectations that motivate Elkins to say that 'the measurement of inter-party competition may be viewed as the critical procedural datum in assessing the degree of 'democracy' of a given system' (Elkins, 1974: 682). In other words, more competition means more democracy[1].

The most positive representation of the effects of competition is the Downsian economic model, which predicts that it will lead to maximal responsiveness to the

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[1]Schattschneider similarly conferred a key role to competition. He wrote, 'the people are powerless if the political enterprise is not competitive. It is the competition of political organizations that provides the people with the opportunity to make a choice' (Schattschneider, 1961: 137).

popular will. The Schumpeterian perspective is more cautious. Competition is here viewed more as a protective device that allows voters to hinder the development of tyranny than as a measure to ensure actual responsiveness to preferences. The greater scepticism is rooted in an unimpressed view of peoples' performance in the political realm. As Schumpeter claims 'the typical citizen drops to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field, he argues and analyses in a way which he would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interest'[2]. This perspective, which sees competition as an inadequate method for overcoming asymmetries of power and knowledge between the electorate and the political elite, finds support in the writings of many political theorists (Strøm, 1992: 381-83)[3]. As Ware writes 'Party competition may contribute towards the democratic character of a regime, but if it were the only element of popular input into the decision making of the state, it would surely constitute a very limited form of democracy. Party competition cannot be equated with Democracy' (Ware, 1989: 21). Finally there are also political theorists that perceive competition not only as inadequate, but as a directly negative feature distorting rather than improving the political process (e.g. Mansbridge, 1983).

The possible effects of political competition have not been a moot point confined to theoretical debates, however, but have inspired a considerable amount of empirical research. A number of scholars have sought to define and measure competition empirically with an eye to identifying positive - or negative - effects, as well as its

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[2]cited in Miller (1983:138)

[3]Janowitz and Marvick, for instance, emphasize voters ability to choose as well as the quality of the political elite as determining factors for the outcome of competition. They write 'Political Competition makes it possible for the people to choose between alternative leadders who appeal for the privilege of representing them. If the alternative is a choice between demagogues, the electorate suffers; If the choice is between statesmen, the electorate gains. The quality of results is not guaranteed by the presence of competition. Under modern conditions, competitive elections increasingly have the potentiality of becoming devices of mass manipulation and increasing difficulties are encountered in producing the political consensus necessary for effective government in modern society (1955-56)

causes. As will be discussed below, a review of this literature reveals on the one hand relatively congruous conceptions and measurements of competition among scholars studying differences within political units in the U.S., but also a scarcity of studies that compare competition across different national systems as well as significant differences in conceptualization and measurement among these.

1.2 Empirical Studies: Effects, Causes and Measures

An obvious difficulty in gaining an overview of the empirical studies of political competition is related to the vagueness of the concept, as discussed above. Just about any study of democratic politics can be classified as a study of political competition. The attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of empirical work exploring the causes and effects of competition is therefore to some extent doomed at the outset. However, before discussing the theoretical models of competition, it is useful to briefly examine the works that explicitly use the term political competition, define the concept and attempt to capture variation in this across political units. In the following a brief description of the types of outcomes and preconditions that have been linked to greater competitiveness will first be presented. Afterwards, the differences in conceptualization and measurement will be discussed.

A number of studies use competition as an explanatory factor to explain differences in outcomes. Most of these rely on the argument that increased competition leads to greater 'responsiveness' of politicians to the interests of the electorate. Such responsiveness can arguably manifest itself in greater economic growth (Strøm, 1989b, Mesquito et al, 2001), higher levels of public spending, redistribution or generally liberal policies (Barilleaux, 1997; Holbrook &Van Dunk, 1993; Comiskey, 1993),

lower levels of corruption (Coppedge, 1993; Meier & Holbrook, 1992; Grzymala-Buss, 2003) or result in general rather than narrow subsidies to industry (Verdier, 1995). Some argue, however, that it is doubtful whether competition can be directly linked to certain outcomes and see its effects mediated by its context. This context can be defined in terms of political cleavages. Jennings, for instance, argues along these lines when he says that 'class-based and non-class based political competition produces quite different sets of welfare policy outcomes' (Jennings, 1979:427). In one study the idea that effects are mediated by context is explicitly incorporated since the effect of competition is expected to be a reduction of the effect of party ideology on policies (Boyne, 1998)[4].

Apart from directly influencing policy outcomes, several have argued that it enhances the democratic process by leading to greater media attention and thus higher levels of awareness and knowledge (e.g. Kahn & Kenney, 1999). Likewise several studies have linked competition to higher turnout at elections (Wilfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Hofstetter, 1973; Lane, 1959; Holbrook & Van Dunk; Quaile, 1993; Hill & Leighley, 1993). In addition to its intrinsic value, some argue that higher turnout is conducive to higher responsiveness by enlarging the group whose interest the elected need to consider (Hofstetter,1973; Holbrook & Van Dunk, 1993). It is also discussed that competition can have a positive effect on popular perception of legitimacy and satisfaction with democracy, as well as reduce alienation and social tensions. Typically it is the alternation in power of different parties that is supposed to have such effects on popular attitudes (see Elkins, 1974). Not all propose that the effects of competition lie in greater responsiveness or in a more involved and satisfied citizenry. Some have instead linked it to higher campaign spending (Rosenthal, 1995) or simply to greater turnover of party leadership (Strøm, 1993). But it is evident that there is

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[4]Boyne argues that competition does not have an independent substantive effect. As he writes 'competition is simply the vehicle, not the driver, and has only a mediative, not an additive effect' (Boyne,1998:211)

a clear tendency to propose that competition engenders a number of positive effects related to electoral attitudes as well as the quality of the representation.

Finally, there are studies that investigate why there are differences in competitiveness. Some look at the socio-economic conditions conducive to the type of electoral behaviour necessary to sustain competitive parties. Both the extent of vote switching and the balance of preferences for different party alternatives are at stake. Greater diversity, urbanization, the size of the population, the degree of wealth and level of education have for example been examined as determinants for greater competitiveness (e.g. Dawson & Robinson, 1963; Dye, 1966; Dahl & Tufte, 1973; Patterson & Caldeira, 1984; Strøm1989b; Koetzle, 1998). Electoral behaviour is not the only possible determinant, however. The organisational strength of the parties themselves, the costs of campaigning or ability to raise funds is also used to explain competitiveness or the lack thereof (Abramovitz, 1991; Barilleaux, 1986; Patterson and Caldeira, 1984).

Reviewing comparative studies on differences in competition across political units within the U.S. reveals a fundamental agreement in the approach taken by scholars in the field, although there is considerable variety in the concrete measures proposed[5]. The harmony consists in the definition of competition as some form of 'closeness' or 'equality' in size of the competing parties, which is supposed to capture the degree of competitive pressure parties are under. The variation between the studies lies mainly in whether closeness of competing parties is measured in seats or votes, as well as what unit of analysis is chosen - that is, state or district level (casting candidate or party in the role of the competitor), legislature or government (see Holbrook & Van Dunk,1993; Barrilleaux, 1998 for a discussion of these differences). Another source

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[5]Studies of competition in the U.S. include Stokes and Iversen, 1962; Dawson&Robinson, 1963; Hofstetter,1973; Elkins, 1974; Ray& Havick, 1981; Westlye, 1983; Barriellaux, 1986,1997; Jacobson, 1987; Schantz, 1987; Banks, 1989; Squire, 1989; Abramovitz, 1991; Ansolabehere, Brady & Fiorina, 1992; Hill&Leighly, 1993; Berry&Canon, 1993; Aistrup, 1993; Holbrook&Van Dunk, 1993; Koetzle, 1998; Kahn&Kenney, 1999).

of variation concerns whether closeness of competitors can be captured only by the proximity in votes/seats won, the rate of observed turn-over, or whether the extent of vote swings and thereby the potential for change in distribution at upcoming elections should also be considered (see Elkins,1974; Jacobson, 1987).

When we move to cross-national studies of competition, the commonalities dwindle, however. There are relatively few studies that use a cross-national research design in studies of political competition. Firstly, some studies investigate effects of political competition, but in reality they employ measures that are identical to or closely resemble those that define democracy. For instance, two recent studies claim that political competition leads to more responsive political performance - measured by economic growth and redistribution. Both, however, employ measures which include the extent of the franchise and observance of the democratic rules of the game (Mesquita et al., 2001; Pinto & Timmons, 2005)[6]. But there are also a number of studies that examine differences in competitiveness within the group of democratic countries. First, there are some studies that use a very simple measure of competition, namely the number of elections held. The more frequent the elections, so the argument goes, the more competitive pressure there is on those who govern to respond to voters' interests (e.g. Cameron, 1978; Swank, 1988). A less simple approach inspired by the 'American' method equates competitiveness with the evenness with which the popular vote is divided between parties. Greater equality between the competitors is seen as a guarantee that none of the actors can dominate and has been used in a number of studies trying to link competitiveness with redistribution (e.g. Swank, 1983; Hicks and Swank, 1985). A different type of 'equality' is sought by Verdier in a study linking competition to more responsive policies. Instead of looking at the equality of the distribution of votes between the parties, he is concerned with the correspondence between the vote share and the share of government. The

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[6]The study by Mesquita et al. also employs a measure of alternation to measure differences in competition, however.

ideal competitive situation is defined by a perfect correspondence between the two, that is equality between vote share and share of government time (Verdier, 1995). A more complex approach to the concept is taken by Strøm, who identifies three dimensions/measures of competitiveness, namely electoral volatility, incumbency effect and alternation. He argues that 'there is no adequate single measure of electoral competitiveness in multi-party systems' and it is therefore necessary to 'use a battery of three indicators design to capture different dimensions of electoral competitiveness' (Strøm, 1989b: 6). Volatility indicates the changes in support from one party to the next, and according to Strøm, increases the competition for votes between parties (as also discussed in the 'American' literature). With respect to incumbency, he argues that elections are more 'contestable' - i.e. open to entry of outsiders - if voters tend to shift away from incumbents (governments) than if the opposite is the case. Finally, observed alternation in government also signifies a dimension of competitiveness, as governments have a risk of losing power and the opposition an opportunity to win it. However, a significant problem in the approach taken is that the intercorrelations of the three indicators are very low, and Strøm also writes that this indicates that they are 'really separate dimensions' (Strøm, 1989b: 10). In another study where Strøm examines the causes of competition rather than its effects, he adds other dimensions and indicators to the above-mentioned. The dimension of contestability is again included, but here it refers to how easily new/small parties can get access to 'the electoral market'. This is measured by the strength of the electoral system and by the fractionalization of the party system (supposed to result from the former) (Strøm, 1989a: 283). Also in addition to alternation, he includes a measure of responsiveness denoting the proportion of 'winners' among parties participating in the first government formed after an election. Winners are defined as those who have increased their share of seats or simply any absolute majority. Finally, he includes volatility, but this time not measured in terms of votes but of seats. Each of the indicators chosen has a clear logic behind it, but due to the low correlation

between them, and the lack of some form of hierarchy of importance, it is difficult to clearly distinguish systems that are highly competitive from those that are not. A more unified approach to measuring competition in multi-party systems is taken by Comiskey in his study of the impact of political competition on public spending. Like Strøm he employs different indicators of competition, but all are aimed at capturing the extent of closeness of competitors. The uniqueness in the approach taken lies in his critique that parties are commonly assumed to be the competitors, but that for many multiparty systems it is more appropriate to regard coalitions of parties as the true competitors. The measures he suggests reflect the closeness of competing parties or coalitions in terms of vote as well as their alternation in power.

The existence of different dimensions of competition and the multiplicity of possible indicators proposed to capture the degree of competitive pressure exerted on political representatives - especially in cross-national research - make it necessary to consult the theoretical basis for competition theory, in order identify an appropriate model on which the empirical study of competition can be built.

1.3 Theoretical Models of Competition

Several theoretical models have - directly or indirectly - been used or referred to in analyses of competition in the democratic context. In the following, the salient features of these will be presented and their suitability for empirical comparative studies of competition assessed. The first two are based on the economic models of competition, the third draws on game theory and the final one is developed in a discussion of competition in a political context.

1.3.1   Non-spatial economic analogies

The economic conception of competition, which as mentioned has exerted a profound influence on the study of politics, rests primarily on a number of strong assumptions concerning agency. The agent, 'economic man', has thus been endowed by theory with a number of attributes and preferences that render his behaviour predictable. In brief, he is rational, which means that he seeks to maximize his own utility, and furthermore by virtue of being perfectly informed, he consistently chooses the most effective means available to achieve this end. A number of ancillary assumptions concerning the exogenous origin of preferences, their consistency and transitive nature also form part of the theory[7]. Depending on the structural features of the market in which this agency is expressed, different models of competition can be deduced.

The paradigm case is that of 'perfect competition' and references to the laudable effects of competition typically refer to this model. To realize the projected perfection in markets, a number of structural conditions have to be met, however. The most prominent of these being a uniform, as well as rival and excludable product, a very high number of both buyers and sellers in the market, no costs of entry for new suppliers, and no externalities in the transaction[8]. When these conditions are met, minimum cost production is ensured. Moreover, if perfectly competitive markets exist for all goods and services in the economy, a Pareto optimal allocation

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[7]Preferences are conceived as exogenously given, meaning that they cannot be influenced by factors within the competitive system. The consistency of preferences implies that the same choice is alwasy repeated when identical options and circumstances present themselves and finally, transitive preferences means that preferences can be compared and prioritised.

[8]A good is rival, when its consumption by someone prevents others from likewise consuming it, and excludable means it is possible to prevent someone else from consuming it. An apple is typical example of a rival and excludable good while listening to the BBC in Londin is not. For non-rival goods, adding an extra consumer doesn't cost the producer anything and competition will force the price changed towards zero. For non-excludable goods the market fails do to free-riding. No externalities means that costs and benefits of transactions are carried exclusively by suppliers and buyers, its presence can sead to over- or under production of a good.

of resources in society would obtain without the necessity of any central planning. In addition to creating perfect responsiveness to individual consumer interests, it is this capacity of perfect competition to produce a perfect order out of thousands of uncoordinated individual actions that makes it so enticing[9]. As Bartolini comments, competition is 'legitimized from the collective point of view through its capacity to overcome tensions between subjective and objective goals' (Bartolini, 1999: 441).

An attempt to systematically apply this model of competition to the political arena is practically doomed to fail, however. Behavioural assumptions aside, and even disregarding the lack of an equivalent to price in politics and the fact preferences are inevitably expressed more crudely (one vote summarizing preferences for many different policies and behaviours), there is not a single one of the structural assumptions pertaining to the perfect market which would bear comparison. Clearly, the 'product' offered by the political equivalents of suppliers is neither uniform, nor can it be described as rival and excludable; there are clear externalities involved in the 'transaction', the number of suppliers is not very high, and finally few would contend that there are no costs of entry in politics. Held to these standards, competition in politics could ex ante be labelled a paradigm case of market failure.

While perfect competition may have given rise to analogies used for electoral competition, there is also an absence of works that explicitly draw on this framework. To the extent that the model has played a role, it has more been as a provider of justification for competition, than as a framework supplying concrete ideas for empirical work. Some of its individual features appear in theoretical and empirical work on politics, however. Primarily it is the emphasis on barriers to entry, a property which is not exclusive to perfect competition, however, but is shared by other economic models. The significance of barriers lies in the projected effects of costs of entry on the efficiency of established suppliers in the market. The higher the costs of entry, the

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[9]Conditions are described in Begg, Dornbush and Fisher (1994) and Penguin Dictionary of Economics (1992)

more opportunity existing suppliers have for colluding on sub-optimal performance standards (lower quality/higher prices) without risking that new suppliers enter to take over their market shares. A second feature also related to the possibilities for collusion is the number of suppliers. The number of suppliers is at times used as a proxy for low barriers in economic analysis (Williamson, 1975). The reason for this is that when the number of suppliers is very high, collusive strategies would be difficult to make and enforce. Therefore, even with high costs of entry we can expect that suppliers perform optimally when their number is very high. In the study by Strøm, referred to above, barriers to entry were sought captured both by the size of the electoral system as well as by the degree of fragmentation of the party systems - an approach which is reminiscent of these arguments, although no explicit reference to this is made (Strøm, 1989a). The approach is not unproblematic, however, as the numbers in most party systems would still give ample opportunity for negotiating collusive agreements. In markets with a high number of suppliers, the numbers are typically so high that it is practically impossible to reach agreements, and at the same time keep them out of the public eye. But with numbers around 5-10, it is probably not practical feasibility that prevents such deals from being struck although they may of course be difficult to keep for other reasons. One other work, namely that of Verdier, appears to refer to the model of perfect economic competition when he defines his political equivalent. He writes, 'In a perfectly competitive electoral system, a party's percentage of time in government should be proportional to its share of the popular vote. Any gross deviation from this strict equality indicates a slide towards political monopoly' (Verdier, 1995: 25). The model of perfect competition proposed is juxtaposed to its opposite, namely the monopoly. At one level the thinking is entirely logical. If a party claims the prize of government disproportionate to how much it is in demand, then one can say that people's preferences for the composition of government are not met. Perfect competition is equated with perfect responsiveness, which in turn is interpreted as parties-in-government proportionate

to parties-demanded. Realizing of course that it is not possible to have a political system that responds to all electoral preferences at the same time, Verdier suggests a measure which estimates the correspondence of a party's time in government with its share of the votes. To devise meaningful estimates longer time periods are therefore needed. The problems in this approach arise from the fact that Verdier does not consider how the measure corresponds to incentives conferred upon parties. Perfectly stable collusive systems, where government power is shared among the parties emerge as perfectly competitive. Switzerland, where the main parties distribute the government post between themselves according to a fixed-formula and arguably co-operate rather than compete, would score high on the index. Moreover, estimates can hide variation in structures within time periods. It does not distinguish between systems with stable 'monopolistic' periods, where one or a group of parties is securely in power, followed by a shift to another party or coalition, and those where shifts in governing parties or coalitions are a regular occurrence. As Milder comments in work of an earlier date, the 'Most competitive situation is not just one in which the two parties have an equal length of time in office, but one in which they also take turns in being in office' (Milder, 1974: 441).

Due to the blatant incongruence between the assumptions of perfect competition and the reality of political systems, particularly with respect to numbers and product differentiation, some authors have suggested that oligopolistic competition provides a more suitable analogy (Ware, 1974). For oligopolies, there is, however, no single theory, since the 'behaviour of oligopolistic firms is determined by the reaction and behaviour of their rivals, and the assumptions they make about those reactions' (Bannock et al., 1992: 312). It is therefore a more demanding approach and more difficult to derive precise predictions on the basis thereof. Application of a model of oligopolistic competition to politics has, to my knowledge, only been carried out within the framework of spatial theory, however. The assumptions and empirical applications of that model will be discussed below.

1.3.2 The Spatial Model

The economic model that is widely applied to the political context is not that of standard economic competition, but rather that of economic competition in space. This model was developed by Anthony Downs in his seminal work 'An Economic Theory of Democracy' (1957). In it, Downs constructs political 'space' by hypothesizing that all political issues can be ordered on a linear scale running from zero to one hundred. In other words he assumes that every issue can be placed on one dimension, which he defines to be 'how much government intervention in the economy should there be?'(Downs, 1957: 116). This dimension is meant to capture the political positions associated with what is commonly known as the right- and the left-wing. By giving it the definition of 'how much..', Downs makes it conceptually possible to think of these policies as points on an ordinal scale. This move was ingenious in removing fundamental conceptual problems involved in comparing products offered by firms in the economy with policies promised and adopted by parties and governments. The spatial conception thus paved the way for analyses of party competition employing instruments from the economic tool-kit (and sharing its assumptions on agency).

Building on this conception, it is assumed that voters can identify a preferred point on this scale. Furthermore they are expected to know where each party is located, which requires the actors' perception of the space to be the same. Moreover each voter is expected to give the party representing the position closest to their ideal point their vote, which is dubbed the proximity assumption. Regarding the configuration of voters' individual utility profiles, these are assumed to be single peaked and symmetrical, which means that they have a single highest position and that they decline on either side of this optimal point. This is particularly crucial since without single-peakedness it would be impossible to create summary measures of the electorate's views as a whole (Dunleavy & Ward, 1991: 92). And the construction of such representations – the aggregate distribution of preferences (ADP) – is crucial

for the models' ability to predict the structure of competition that develops. In the basic model that Downs constructs the ADP is presented as being similar to a normal distribution – that is with one peak and declining on each side.

Party competition under these conditions consists of a strategic positioning on a given point on the scale in order to maximise the number of votes. If two parties compete under these conditions, the model predicts that they will converge with respect to their policy platforms toward the median voter, which is defined as the voter with exactly the same number of people holding more left-wing as right-wing attitudes on each side. When preferences are unidimensional the median voter is also a Condorcet winner – that is an alternative that cannot be beat by any other. Since a party's movement away from this point will cause a loss of votes to the rival party, it is expected that competition will induce the two parties to approach this position. Downs' model in this way confers a number of beneficial properties to the process of competition. It predicts that parties will be perfectly constrained by the popular will and thus offers a model for realising a perfectly responsive democratic leadership. The median voter outcome will minimise the aggregate policy distance between the electorate and government and in this way preferences according to Downs are represented in the best possible way. Furthermore, as Strøm points out, the model also has the two additional 'virtues' of securing moderation as parties are concerned with winning the support of voters in the centre, and of 'policy continuity between successive governments, even if these are formed by different parties. This is because both parties converge in equilibrium and because this position tightly constrains their behaviour in government. Hence all governments should pursue identical policies. The only cause of policy differences between government would be changes in voter preferences over time'(Strøm, 1992: 379).

The model outlined above is simple in its basic assumptions and is therefore also clear in its results. However, when more complexity is added to the model,

deviation from the median voter as well as lack of stability is predicted. Factors related to the electoral preferences and decision making such as rational abstention or non-single-peaked ADP curves, as well as the competitive conditions such as threat of entry and more than two parties all give rise to deviations from the median voter outcomes likely (Dunleavy & Ward, 1991: 94). Furthermore, with more than two parties the predictability and stability of outcomes is diminished since 'pure political competition over seats or votes need have no Nash equilibrium [reflecting a position/strategy none of the actors have an incentive to move away from] with three or more parties' (Schofield, 1997: 279). The picture is further complicated by the admission of more than a single dimension. And the obvious point to make in this regard is that there is no reason to assume that there is only one dimension in politics (e.g. Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Laver & Hunt, 1992; Budge, Robertson & Hearl, 1987). The most important departure from the one dimensional model is that a median need not exist in two dimensions. That is, when there is more than one dimension a median outcome may not be possible regardless of voter and party behaviour (Mckelvey, 1986). Another consequence of multiple dimensions is that it opens up the question of salience. As Laver writes 'If we characterise a party system in terms of a single dimension of ideology, then the salience of this dimension is not a relevant issue....Once we move beyond a single dimension we cannot avoid consideration of the changes in party competition that may be produced by changes in the relative salience of the policy dimensions'(Laver, 1989: 319). The effects of this, he suggests, is to make electoral competition 'the interaction of conflicting attempts to manipulate the salience of particular issue dimensions that are favourable to particular parties'(ibid.). This perspective departs from the basic tenet of the spatial model, where space is fixed given by voter preferences that are exogenous to the system of party competition.

The second set of complications arises when the model is confronted with the institutional context of real political systems. That is probably the main reason why

so little empirical work has been done in this area. Ordeshook remarks that 'spatial analysis has moved only modestly beyond modelling the simplest possibilities – two-candidate plurality rule elections, exogenously imposed amendment voting agendas and the formation of majority parliamentary coalitions' and furthermore that 'there is precious little generalized theory about alternative institutional structure or experience with applying elements of spatial theory to more complex political systems' (Ordeshook, 1997: 247-8).

However, he does contend that 'simple majoritarian processes, even if they do not yield Condorcet winners, or some other simple equilibrium of strategies, generate powerful incentives for the approximate convergence of policy by the two candidates or parties that are assumed to be competing' (Ordeshook, 1997: 256). This effect depends on the electoral system, however. Schofield, commenting on the British context, is more cautious and concludes that 'a form of 'weak convergence' rather than the strong Downsian conversion' is to be expected (Schofield, 1997: 278).

Instead he asserts that in order for the median voter convergence forces to operate optimally, a PR-system (as it implies low barriers to entry) with only two parties is required (Schofield, 1997: 294). However, this particular situation is highly unlikely to arise since PR-systems tend to be associated with multiparty systems. In a multiparty system the outcome does not follow directly from electoral results, and the process of government formation must therefore also be considered (Laver, 1989). In one of the few studies that try to use the spatial framework in a comparative analysis of government formation, Laver and Hunt only find core parties in one country, namely Sweden (but also in Belgium given that parties belonging to either of the two language wings only go into government together), but here it is found that it does enter government. But in the many that do not have a core party, 'the approach has much less to say about party composition of the eventual government'(Laver & Hunt, 1990:99). Testing the predictions of the spatial model is inherently difficult. For as

Laver and Hunt point out such testing 'depends upon assuming a policy space of a certain dimensionality. Yet, as we have seen, there is no very satisfactory manner of estimating the dimensionality of any policy'(Laver & Hunt, 1990: 119).

Apart from the difficulties that arise in application, when the basic features of the spatial model are accepted, a number of problems also arise from the assumptions of the theory itself. While I cannot go into details with these here, I think it is worth mentioning a few of them. First, to construct the ADP curve that is essential for the spatial model it must be assumed that voters have symmetrical utility profiles. This can, however, be seriously questioned. In fact Dunleavy and Ward contend 'there is absolutely no reason to suppose that a majority of voters have symmetrical utility profiles' (Dunleavy & Ward, 1991: 92). With multi-peaked preferences, the proximity assumption of spatial theory is hence called into question. Each person might have differently shaped indifference curve contours and the party which parties are considered close would vary from one person to another. The second set of considerations arises from the differences that are likely to exist between actors in the perception of space. In fact 'the extent to which relevant decision-makers can be said to operate within the same spatial conceptual framework' can be questioned (Ordeshook, 1997: 250). Furthermore, in the case of multidimensionality, Laver and Hunt point out that 'the first sweeping assumption that tends to be made by many theorists is that every individual in the system trades off the various policy dimensions in the same way... If we do not make such an assumption, then there are as many different maps of the system as there are sets of relative weights of the dimensions and manners of trading these off – ultimately as many different maps as there are individuals' (Laver & Hunt 1990: 18). And in fact they claim that there is 'strong evidence that different actors do in fact attach different weight to different ideological dimensions. This suggests the use of a single spatial map of any policy system is a considerable oversimplification'(ibid.). Thirdly, and most importantly, there is the question of what the points on the scales refer to. The

meaning of points in between is described by indifference relations between the other points in the system. But as Ordeshook points out the whole issue of convergence to centrist policies hinges on what such policies actually consist in. Hence he says that the 'validity of centrist policy outcome depends on the assumption that such policies exist' (Ordeshook, 1997: 259). To my knowledge, no one has properly tried to address this question. Finally, on a related note, there is a highly uneasy relationship between the spatial scales and redistributory motives. As Ordeshook comments, 'if voters conceptualize policy in redistributional terms – so one person's gain can only come at the expense of someone else, the usual spatial representation may be inappropriate. When the things a government supplies are perfectly divisible, transferable and in constant supply, we can require one dimension for every person or household to represent preferences and ideal points are widely scattered and located on the vertices of the constraint that defines feasible policy. In this event there is no reason to suppose that candidates or parties converge to anything. . . .the only prediction we can offer about final outcomes is that each candidate tries to form some majority coalition and proposes to expropriate all things from those excluded from the coalition' (Ordeshook, 1997: 260). While the above comment depicts an extreme situation, it touches on a crucial point. A party may thus both represent some sort of median point of the scale of liberal versus interventionist economic policies, and at the same time favour large subsidies for the farmers that traditionally vote for them. If in government the subsidies are likely to be implemented, but they are hardly a median outcome in the spatial sense.

Naturally, this brief discussion does not do justice to the theory and range of literature on spatial competition, but it should be sufficient to lend support to the few basic conclusions relevant for the development of this research project. The first is that it is extremely difficult to use the spatial framework for cross country comparisons of competitive performance. The number of specific conditions necessary to arrive at the essential median voter prediction is unlikely to be met in very many

countries or in any one for that matter. Furthermore the notion of median voter is elusive both in theoretical terms as well as when trying to 'capture' it empirically. The assumptions on both party and voter behaviour predicts responsiveness, but the problems of operationalizing the spatial framework create problems for rendering it plausible that the virtue the competitive interaction is supposed to engender, namely responsiveness, is indeed achieved. It often appears to operate as an implicit assumption rather than a fact to be proved. That is, in the studies referred to above, the party which the median voter casts her vote for is by definition seen as responsive to this voter. Two studies, by Huber and Powell (1994) and Powell and Vanberg (2000) respectively, investigate the 'responsiveness' thesis empirically. Here the self-placement of voters on a left-right scale is correlated with expert placements of the governing parties on the same scale. The somewhat surprising finding is that the multiparty and PR electoral systems tend to produce more congruence than two party majoritarian ones. The dimension of identifiability of future government at election time separated from other dimensions appears to prevent rather than foster congruence (Huber & Powell, 1994). However, since the problems involved with regard to dimensionality of the political systems are not overcome, I think this is not a fruitful avenue for research on the effects of competition.

Finally, competition in the spatial conceptualisation is fundamentally a description of party behaviour in seeking votes and office. For instance, if one party consistently wins the majority or is placed at the median and is consequently always represented in government then the logic of the spatial framework forces us to view its position as the result of competition. The result of having two parties alternating should yield the same outcome, namely the median. The spatial model therefore offers no real way of seeing political systems as either more or less competitive. That is, unless the two party model with two close competitors is seen as the perfect competition and deviations from this, whatever their cause, as less competitive. But then the theory does not offer any guidance for how to measure it in terms of degrees

of competitiveness.

1.3.3 A Game Theoretical Model

The next model of competition draws explicitly on game theory. It therefore lies close to the economic models in terms of basic notions of agency, but in the adaptation offered by Strøm, he focuses on its structural features and discusses how these may apply to the political context. As in the other models, a central feature is the issue of barriers and the costs of entry, which is presumed to influence the incentives of those already 'playing the game'. Strøm writes, 'Political contestability constrains.. each player to take into account the options of any potential competitors. For those who deal in votes, that means pleasing voters enough to keep out new parties and candidates' (Strøm, 1992). However, he goes on to specify, easy entry is no guarantee for competitive politics. Instead, he argues that it signifies 'potential, rather than actual competition' (Strøm, 1989: 279). Strøm then uses the term 'situational competitiveness' to refer to competition proper separate from the dimension of contestability, i.e. the question of barriers to entry. The framework is provided by game theory and the application he proposes differs from the models described above by being explicitly concerned with structures conferring incentives on 'suppliers' rather than with a complete modelling of the competitive interactions and their results. It is therefore a model, which approaches competition not simply as a set behavioural trait that under certain circumstances leads to specific outcomes, but rather as a property that varies in intensity according to the structures in place.

Strøm describes three factors, which influence the incentives faced by the players in a game and thus the degree of competition between them. As he writes: 'Competitiveness..pertains to the strategies, states of nature and payoffs of particular games'. This is further clarified as follows: 'situational competitiveness has three dimensions:

payoff variability, strategy determinacy, and player indeterminacy. Payoff variability refers to the variation of payoffs to the various players across their sets of strategies. The more variation of payoffs, the greater the competitiveness. Strategy determinacy refers to the extent to which strategy choice, rather than states of nature, affects the payoffs for each player. The more strategy choice matters relative to states of nature, the more competitive the game. Player determinacy refers to the extent to which the payoff distribution systematically favours certain players over others'(Strøm, 1992: 385-386).

The conceptualisation has two distinct advantages. Firstly, if we wish to study the effects of competition in democratic politics, it is an advantage that competition is not dichotomized, but rather conceived as present in different degrees of strength. Secondly, while the model is abstract and non-contextualised, it is directly applicable to political realities that are widely perceived to impact political processes.

Payoff variability (PV), or simply how much can be gained or lost, is for instance not the same in all democratic regimes. In some countries the difference between winning and losing is between control of government and being completely outside influence. In other systems access to the rewards office and influence is not an either or, but contains many shades of grey. Parties outside government may still wield considerable policy influence and sometimes government offices are widely shared among the parties yielding few real losers. Such differences can arise from party behaviour, in which case they may be challenged by new parties aided by the electorate, but they may also simply result from a constitutional design that divides power across institutions[10].

The second dimension is that of strategy determinacy (SD). In simpler terms, it poses the question of how much it matters what parties do for what they achieve.

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[10]This difference is for instance discussed by Lijphart and captured in the distinction between consensus and majoritarian democracies (Lijphart, 1997)

This touches on a number of crucial questions primarily concerning voter behaviour that are neglected in the economic models. By assuming rationality - or some variant thereof - it is simply taken for granted that parties can win through adopting strategies that are to voters' liking. However, if voters, for instance, identify strongly with certain parties, the attempt to win more votes may accomplish little more than alienate the original electoral base. The question is not only quantitative, however, but also touches on the question of what strategies lead to the desired outcomes. Once the possibility that voters may not respond rationally to what parties offer is opened up, the questions of whether viable strategies are 'cosmetic' ones (such as changing the image of the party, increasing campaign spending, selecting a charismatic leader figure etc.) or substantial (changing positions on policy issues, combating corruption etc.) emerge. If voter rationality is not assumed, the outcomes of competitive incentives cannot be specified in advance. It is therefore an open question whether increased competitiveness leads to better or poorer political performance.

The final dimension of situational competitiveness identified by Strøm is the degree of equality of opportunity to 'win' and the closeness of the electoral race, which he calls player determinacy (PD). The dimension addresses the question of whether any other party than the actual incumbents have a real chance of winning (Strøm, 1992: 386-390). This dimension is identical to that employed in the American literature, as discussed above. The theory is that the closer non-incumbents are to potentially winning, and the more present the threat of losing is to incumbents, the more likely are they to exert effort, that is to act in ways that can secure them the outcome.

The main drawback of the model is that it is neither discussed how the three dimensions interact with each other nor how they relate to the underlying dimension of contestability. That is whether it is possible to have maximal competitiveness on all dimensions simultaneously or in fact how to interpret different patterns –

say high PV, low SD, high PD with low PV, low SD, high PD. In combination with contestability it theoretically yields 8 possible patterns. With different possible patterns, how do we prioritize them in terms of importance? On this question, Strøm is silent. It can be argued, however, that if strategy determinacy (the possibility to influence outcome) is low/absent - for whatever reason - then high pay-off variability and low player determinacy (i.e. close race) will make absolutely no difference to outcomes. That is, unless we assume that the actors make more effort to respond to electoral interests even if such efforts will have no effect. This would seem highly irrational, however. Moreover, regarding pay-off variability, it is easy to see that no payoff variability undermines the incentives to make an effort. However, are actors expected to 'try harder' when there is greater payoff variability? In order to support such an argument it seems assumptions have to be made which relate 'effort costs' to expected utility. For instance if the 'effort costs' have a maximum which is always below the lowest expected utility can it then still be expected that increases in utility will have the effect of increasing effort or will maximal effort not always be made?

These points are important, since the indicators of the different dimensions of are unlikely to co-vary. This was also a problem in Strøm's empirical studies referred to above. Although none of these was a direct application of this model, they contained elements of it. Before exploring these points further, however, the final contextual model developed by Bartolini will be discussed.

1.3.4   A Four-dimensional Contextual Model

The next conceptualisation of political competition is the highly contextualized model proposed by Bartolini. Unlike the other models, it is developed in a 'dialogue' with political realities, and aims to identify those features of democratic systems that would be conducive to responsive outcomes. Bartolini identifies four

conditions or dimensions that can play this role. As he writes 'if politico-electoral competition is meant to grant the unintended value of political responsiveness, then, in both logical and empirical terms, the following conditions need to be met: (1) electoral contestability; (2) electoral availability of the voters; (3) decidability of the electoral or policy offer; and (4) electoral vulnerability of the incumbents'(Bartolini, 1999: 454-55). The dimensions overlap somewhat with Strøm's model, but there are significant differences.

The dimension of contestability is conceptualized in a way that is congruent with the approach taken by Strøm, and is also associated with potential rather than actual competition. The difference in the treatment of contestability here is twofold. On the one hand, contestability is directly discussed in relation to its impact on the other dimensions of competition (c.f. below). On the other, potentially beneficial as well harmful effects accruing from variation in contestability are considered. While it is recognized that high barriers to entry facilitates collusion between parties, it is considered that such collusion may stabilize the functioning of the political unit and even preserve it - at least in the context of certain electoral preferences.

The second dimension is electoral availability. Some degree of willingness to substitute parties for each other, expressed as electoral availability, constitutes a prerequisite for having competition at all. This means that availability, much like contestability, can be interpreted as a precondition to rather than competition proper. It is also presented as an indicator of openness of the market on the demand side, while contestability signifies openness of the market on the supply side. Concerning the question of the effect on the strength of competition, Bartolini argues that we 'can simply assume that, ceteris paribus, the higher the level of potential availability, the higher the potential level of competition'(Bartolini, 1999: 465). But as with contestability, positive as well as negative effects are considered. While some availability is necessary, it is also argued that 'a certain amount of vote identification and

vote stability is necessary to allow parties to plan the offer' (Bartolini, 2000: 58). This is reminiscent of Hirshman's argument that if consumers 'exit' options are too sensitive to performance, it will undermine the possibilities for firms in the market to improve their products and thus in the long run the foundation of competition itself (Hirshman, 1970). The extent of voter availability is not the only, nor necessarily the most important consideration, however. Certain characteristics related to where - in policy terms- footloose voters are located as well as how decisions are made must be taken into consideration, if outcomes are to be predicted. Availability of the median voter can be expected to have different consequences for competition than availability at the margins. But the 'logic of choice', concerning prospective and retrospective evaluation, as well as the role of expressive versus instrumental motives also determines outcomes (Bartolini, 1999: 461-466).

The third dimension is decidability, which refers to the extent to which clear differentiated choices are offered to voters. The factors that affect decidability include both differentiation and clarity of party platforms, as well as the character of the party system itself, as it impacts on the choice of government. The argument for including this dimension is that voters give information on their preferences through their choice of parties, and if this choice is not meaningful, it undermines the voter input. Without provision of choice, information cannot be fed into the system. If parties therefore consistently present voters with vague platforms, the latter's choice of party is not only made difficult, but it is also not a meaningful input to define what responsive outputs might be, as Bartolini argues, we cannot simply assume that parties offer what people want. Competition cannot be about the price or quality of the product offered for the simple reason that there is no price in politics, and with respect to quality, the fact that there can only be one supplier of public goods at a time, comparisons of alternatives on this basis are not practically feasible. Competition in politics must therefore be about differences in 'products' to have any meaning. As with other dimensions, it is discussed that while differentiation of what

packages a party proposes to voters is necessary, there is no apparent advantages of increasing differentiation, however. While decidability is necessary, it is not easy to determine an optimal level. On the one hand, obfuscation of platforms or strong collusion by politicians to restrict the agenda can make the choice meaningless but on the other hand, extreme differences may polarise the system and make it difficult to formulate policies and if governments change to attain some degree of consistency in the longer run.

The final dimension, which Bartolini calls vulnerability, refers to the degree to which incumbents are under a real threat of loosing. It is therefore essentially the same as the 'closeness' conception, which is employed as a measure of competition in the American context, as discussed above. It is emphasized (as others have also done) that any projected behavioural effect does not depend on the 'objective distance' (in seats or votes) between incumbents and challengers, nor the actual turn-over in office but rather to the risk of losing: 'The general idea of the 'uncertainty of the electoral outcome' refers to the psychological effect linked to the absence of safety, rather than the actual result. Closeness and uncertainty may not result in turnover but still provide their supposed effect on competition' (Bartolini, 2000: 52). The question is thus, as earlier discussed, how to bridge the gap from objective characteristics of a situation to the individual assessments of it which is not immediately accessible to the observer. Bartolini discusses that measures must take into account the two conditions of identifiability of government and opposition on the one hand, and a level of electoral availability large enough to turn government into opposition on the other. The dimension of vulnerability is, however, the only one where a higher score more unambiguously seems to strengthen competition.

An advantage of Bartolini's conceptualisation compared to Strøm's is that the relationship between the dimensions is explicitly considered. He thus argues that it is not realistically possible to maximise/minimise each of them to create an ideal type

of perfect political competition, since 'each dimension impinges on the other, not in a linear and additive way, but rather in a contradictory one' (Bartolini, 2000: 57). Therefore different models are bound to emerge. For instance the Downsian model of two party competition 'maximize vulnerability, postulating high availability, but they also imply low contestability and, at the same time, the irrelevance of decidability, which tends to zero', while the consociational model 'is characterized by much higher contestability and modest decidability but, at the same time, it necessarily implies reduced electoral availability and blurred vulnerability.' (ibid: 60-61). In light of this it is argued that 'an empirical model of competition should...take the form of a set of hypothesis concerning the trade-off between the dimensions and the consequence of such tradeoffs '(ibid: 61).

1.4 Components of an Empirical Model

1.4.1 Defining Political Competition

Which of the dimensions and measures discussed above should be included in a model fit for a comparative study of political competition depends on how we understand and define the concept. As discussed above, different approaches can be taken. It can be argued that these primarily differ with respect to whether they primarily view competition as a means for producing certain outcomes, or whether it first and foremost is seen as a type of behaviour induced by the desire to reach certain ends under a given set of constraints. In the former representation, political competition is a systemic property, which is defined by the generation of outcomes that are in conformity with electoral preferences/interests. Inspiration is in this respect drawn directly from the economic context. This approach is perhaps most clearly expressed in Verdier's definition of perfect competition as equal to perfect responsiveness. As

discussed, he defines responsiveness as perfect correspondence between parties' vote shares and their share of government (over time). The incentives parties have are not considered but are simply assumed. The spatial model of competition follows a similar logic. The perfectly responsive system is, as discussed, reached under certain structural conditions, one with two parties competing for the median voter. When the competitive system deviates from this, perfect responsiveness is not attainable. Parties are simply assumed to compete, and cannot do this more or less. In a sense, one can say that the reasoning is backwards, that is responsiveness is posited as the end result, and then one goes back to see what conditions must be met in the political arena for this goal to be reached. In this manner, Bartolini also explicitly deduces his competitive dimensions by examining what the necessary preconditions to responsiveness are, but the discussion doesn't lead to a clear idea that this is a likely - or even possible - scenario in politics.

The other approach is characterised by a focus on the behaviours of actors trying to reach a particular end. This approach is, for instance, taken by Strøm, who in his game theoretical model analyses competition exclusively in terms of incentive structures, which can be expected to influence behaviour. If we want to study differences in the intensity of competition, we have to identify the nature and strength of the incentives faced by the 'players'. And, as discussed, there are several possible sources of variation in incentives for those who seek political office. This approach to competition is also dominant in the American studies discussed above. What the measures proposed try to capture in different ways is in fact the strength of such incentives. As Holbrook and Van Dunk argue, an 'indicator should represent the degree to which elected officials feel pressure from the electorate' and they go on to explain that elected representatives can only be expected to be 'responsive due to risk of defeat' (Holbrook & Van Dunk, 1993: 959). The same position is expressed by Milder, who writes that the 'assumption is that the possibility of gaining control of the decision-making machinery influences the behaviour of the out-party and the

constant threat of being put out of office influences the behaviour of the in-party' (Milder, 1974: 433). Uncertainty, or risk, is key if we want to predict behaviour. As Strøm writes 'Competition is fundamentally a matter of risk. The more competition, the greater the risk'. Risk is further specified as the 'threat of failure' and it is stated that 'the more intense the competition, the more acute the threat of failure' (Strøm 1992: 390-91). The emphasis on risk and uncertainty stands in stark contrast to the Downsian model. In his model a party occupying a median position in a party system is not under risk of loosing as long as it 'stays put' (given there is no major shifts in public preferences). The emphasis on risk deviates from assumptions of perfect (or near perfect) information that spatial models rely on.

For an empirical study of competition, I would argue that the important feature to focus on is the incentive structure. Firstly, it can be argued that the conditions that need to be fulfilled to obtain responsive outcomes are both so numerous and in many cases difficult to capture empirically that trying to include these in an empirical study makes little sense. Secondly, if we want to know what effects competition has for political processes and outputs, it is necessary to separate the concept we measure from its expected consequences. Standard definitions of competition often include both. For instance, a typical dictionary definition of competition reads: 'the effort of two or more parties acting independently to secure the business of a third party by offering the most favourable terms' (Meriam-Webster Dictionary). It thus refers to equally process and outcome. The actors try to reach their goal by 'offering the most favourable terms' and responsiveness to third party interests is thus assumed. In the first and parsimonious definition offered by Bartolini, references of this nature are not present. Competition is defined as a 'parallel and independent effort to achieve the same prize'. The term parallel simply implies that there must be more than one actor, while independent implies the absence of cooperation between competitor as well as the exclusion of coercive means to obtain the prize. However, the 'third' party is entirely missing from the definition. In the subsequent detailed description

of the defining characteristics of competition, the third party enters but in a limited capacity: 'based on the individualistic principle and, as such, not requiring formal subordination of such a principle to overarching goals (removing the problem of how autonomous actors can define and agree upon such goals); based on interaction among actors who aim at the same goal and can define their interests to be independent of one another; avoiding the resorting to direct use of force and menace; putting the prize continuously and repeatedly at stake; and finally, characterized by beneficial unintended effects for third parties'. The role of the 'third party' lies solely in being recipient of 'beneficial unintended effects'. I would argue, however, that it is necessary to actively include consideration of the choice of the third party as determining who gets the prize, and see this third party as a defining part of the competitive interaction. Only in some sports do we have a situation where the competitors alone determine the outcome. The prize is allocated almost 'mechanically' in the sense that criteria are pre-defined and known: whoever scores more goals, reaches the end of the lane first etc., wins. The role of third parties is solely to determine whether there has been a breach of rules. Consequently, the only source of uncertainty stems from predicting the performance of the competitors. However, with respect to competition in the realm of economics or politics, there is a third party present, who controls the allocation of the prize. The demand is not an impersonal machine, but people who make decisions according to what they are seeking. In standard economic theory competition has been construed as revolving around the question of price by assuming that demand in a particular market is only sensitive to price. In this way, it is possible to 'standardize' the prize-allocation mechanism, as if it were a law of nature rather than a choice made by human beings. In politics, such a conception makes little sense.

A brief definition of political (democratic) competition that would satisfy the need to focus on incentives and leave possible effects out might be formulated as the effort to win electoral support made to obtain legislative power and/ executive office.

It is naturally implied that the effort made is constrained by the democratic rules. If we want to identify what makes parties or candidates make more or less effort, we have to focus on the incentives they have to do so. Furthermore, by simply stating that the effort is directed at winning votes, the definition is silent on what strategies might win such votes. Policies that respond to voters' preferences and interests are one possibility, but it is not the only one. More cosmetic changes in party image, communication strategy and greater spending on campaigns may accomplish exactly the same. In the definition proposed, the coveted prize is legislative power and/or government office. In some systems, such as the U.K., the two invariably go together, while in others parties can choose to remain outside government office, but still wield considerable influence. In light of the fact that many suggest that both policy influence and office are important goals for parties, it is reasonable to define both as 'rewards'. With this definition in mind, I shall return to the discussion of what aspects to consider.

1.4.2   The Sources of Incentives

The question that now needs to be addressed is what structures strengthen or weaken incentives for political actors to win votes. Several possible theoretical and practical approaches have been described. In the following, I shall first discuss which theoretical dimensions confer incentives on the competitors, and therefore should be included in an empirical study of competition. Secondly, I shall briefly address the usefulness of the 'operational' measures of competition proposed in empirical studies that are not directly covered in the discussion of theoretical dimensions.

Contestability and Barriers to Entry

Firstly, contestability and the issue of barriers to entry is mentioned as a pivotal dimension in all the theoretical models of competition, although it is only included

in two of the empirical studies discussed above (Strøm, 1989a+b). There is general agreement in the theoretical debate that barriers influence the incentives competitors have with respect to responding to their electoral base. In light of this, it is odd that it is completely it is completely neglected in the American empirical studies on the effects of competition.

As discussed, the primary effect of the threat of entry is to prevent collusive behaviour. If established parties were to suspend competition and thus collectively enjoy the benefits of power without facing the constant risk of losing it and without the ceaseless pressure to respond to elecoral wishes, we could expect new parties to emerge and challenge their positions. That is, unless the barriers to entry are so high that this is an unrealistic scenario. It is not only the responsiveness of the party system as a whole that may be influenced by the barriers, however. Since parties are rarely simply substitutable, each party may enjoy a sort of monopoly situation as the representative or agent of a given section of the electorate. The awareness that a new party cannot easily arise to challenge it can work as an invitation to slack. Particularly if other parties in the system may be in a difficult position to compete for its voters for fear of distancing themselves from their own electoral base Incentives to keep voters pleased are simply weak under such conditions. When new parties are prevented from entering, both individual and collective party behaviour may therefore be influenced.

Apart from the effects barriers supposedly have on incentives and party behaviour, the degree of contestability also plays a significant role in shaping other dimensions of competition through its direct impact on the magnitude of the party system. When it is easy for new parties to form and gain access to representative institutions, the likely result is a higher number of parties represented. This, Bartolini discusses, is in turn likely to have a negative effect on the dimensions of vulnerability and decidability - to which we could also ad payoff variability - by blurring

the choice of government, alternation and clarity of governmental alternatives (Bartolini, 1999&2000). While it is not impossible for multiparty systems to organise in distinct coalitions that compete for government, a less clear pattern of co-operation and competition is often seen. Conversely, low contestability is likely to increase vulnerability as well as payoff variability but perhaps also has a negative effect on decidability by a different mechanism, namely that of convergence of platforms in two party systems. For studies of competition, it is thus a crucial dimension, and the extent to which it interacts with other dimensions is in itself an important question for empirical research.

Vulnerability

The other dimension, which directly confers incentives to win votes, is the dimension of 'vulnerability', 'closeness' or in Strøm's model 'player indeterminacy'. The different terms used refer to the same basic concept, namely the degree of pressure incumbents are under from take-over by the opposition. Higher uncertainty of prospects of remaining in power for incumbents and indeed higher chances of winning for the opposition can be expected to increase their efforts of both parties to win electoral support. As mentioned, several objective features are important to determine this uncertainty of outcomes.

The presence of a clearly identifiable alternative to the current 'winners' is a precondition, and the higher the likelihood that it can win, the stronger the incentives to make efforts to secure electoral support. This likelihood can be seen as determined by how many votes have to change to alter the outcome, as well as the possibilities for this to be realised. As Elkins discusses, the distance in votes (or seats) between incumbents and opposition, is not sufficient to predict probabilities, since even small differences can be very stable. Knowledge of the number of potential vote switchers is therefore equally important. He writes 'the extent to which potential loose voters exceed or fall short of observed party differences in vote or seat shares' indicates

the likelihood of turnover'(Elkins, 1974:689). But as several of those employing measures trying to capture the uncertainty factor have pointed out, it is subjective perceptions that create incentives. While risk can be described as an objective feature of situations in terms of probabilities, the important thing in behavioural terms is how the situation is perceived by individuals (Milder 1974). For constructing a measure, the only possibility is to rely on objective features, however, and the validity may therefore suffer[11]. Finally, a crucial question is how to identify 'the competitor', which for some systems poses more of a challenge than it does in others. This question will be further discussed below.

Properties of the Electorate (Availability)

Both Strøm and Bartolini identify the characteristics of electoral choice as a independent dimension in itself. Strøm conceptualizes it as 'strategy determinacy', which concerns whether it matters what parties do for what results they achieve. If voters identify so firmly with particular parties that their votes cannot be obtained by others, strategy determinacy would, for instance, be very low. Electoral availability in Bartolini's model refers basically to the same reality of whether voters are flexible in their choices or not. As discussed qualitative dimensions concerning what influences voters' choice is also analyzed in both models, however[12]. The question is,

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[11]In this context, a study by Koole and Van Praag of Dutch parties in the 1950s is interesting (1990). The authors claim that 'the dutch case of the 1950s shows that party elites are uncertain about the outcomes of elections, although the Dutch party system had been characterised (afterwards) as a very stable one'. They also argue, however, that such 'mismatch' of elite perceptions and public attitudes is unlikely to occur after polling has become normal.

[12]As presented above, Strøm, for instance, discusses that the important aspect is that voters respond to party strategies in contradiction to being influenced by 'random factors'. Simply being available is not sufficient to provide parties with incentives to change their behaviour. If choices are random - in relationship to party actions - there is no incentive for them to act. Bartolini, on the other hand, discusses the significance not only of how many voters are available, but also where - in spatial terms - they are located, since this may be crucial for how they may influence party strategies and outcomes. Also the extent to which voters rely on retro-spective voting influences what parties can hope to gain from

however, whether it should be included as a separate dimension. Firstly, regarding the qualitative aspects pertaining to how voters reach decisions (e.g. whether what parties do or say influences their decisions, whether they vote pro- or retrospectively) this is virtually impossible to incorporate in a comparative analysis of competitiveness. While they inform us of the strength of the incentives parties have to make an effort, they are difficult to capture empirically. Moreover, even if voters are moved by 'random factors' unrelated to the political substance, or emphasize parties past behaviour over their present promises, we cannot be sure that party behaviour will be influenced by this fact. It is not implausible that a lack of knowledge of what moves voters makes political elites assume that their performance in many areas actually makes a difference and adjust their behaviour accordingly whether this objectively helps their situation or not. Secondly, regarding the quantitative dimension, I would argue that the number of available voters is primarily a 'supporting' factor for defining the strength of competition rather than an independent source of incentives. As discussed above, the extent of vote swings are important to vulnerability in relation to whether they are sufficient to switch the places for incumbents and opposition. Availability is, in other words, necessary to capture vulnerability. In relation to contestability, availability is also important to evaluate how credible the potential threat of new parties is, but as will be further discussed later, whether parties are threatened by new parties depends on whether vote swings are large enough to make it possible for them to obtain seats in the representative institutions. It is necessary to consider electoral availability to assess competitiveness in both respects, but it is difficult to see that the extent of availability plays a role separate from this.

Pay-off Variability

Strøm's dimension of payoff variability is an obvious candidate for inclusion in a model of competition since it can be hypothesized to have a direct effect on the

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changing their positions on policy.

efforts exerted by parties. As discussed, the concept addresses the differences between what is gained by the winners and losers of the contest. However, while analytically distinct from the concept of vulnerability (or player determinacy), two problems arise if we include it in an empirical analysis.

Firstly, there is significant empirical overlap between the two concepts since the same conditions tend to give rise to both. It is, for instance, difficult to imagine a situation characterized both by high vulnerability and low pay-off variability. For vulnerability to be high, it requires a clearly identifiable government and opposition as well as high uncertainty of whether the incumbent government can stay in office after the next election. Having prospects of clear turn-over in government would also imply high pay-off variability however, unless we imagine that government and opposition simply share power - a scenario that is difficult to imagine if the two competing parties/coalitions are identifiable and therefore separate. On the other hand, the type of power-sharing arrangements between parties, where the outcomes of elections do not strongly influence who gets what afterwards must be described by low vulnerability as well as low pay-off variability. Secondly, there is the question of how to prioritize the separate effects of the two dimensions on the incentives of parties to engage in competition for votes. For instance, how do we perceive a situation of high pay-off variability and low vulnerability? A simple scenario is one where there are two clearly identifiable parties/coalitions, but where one has a strong and stable lead over the other, and the prospect of turn-over is therefore low. Do government and opposition still have strong incentives to make efforts simply because there is a strong difference in pay-offs between winners and losers, even if the prospect of a change of fortunes is very remote? If we believe that is the case, then it is hard to imagine a situation which does not confer strong competitive incentives. I would therfore argue that proximity to success/failure is the more important dimension, and further that since a threshold of difference in the situations facing parties after an election is necessary for the term vulnerability to make sense, it does not make

sense to include pay-off variability as an independent dimension.

Finally, it is also interesting to observe that higher structural pay-off variability has in fact been linked to stronger incentives for inter-party collaboration rather than than competition. In their work on the Cartel party model, Katz and Mair thus suggest that the presence of party patronage may induce parties to collaborate on an arrangement for sharing the spoils (Katz & Mair, 1995). They essentially view the political elite as risk averse and therefore prone to pursue strategies that afford them a stable access to the rewards. The more abundant the spoils, the smaller the chance that parties will want to leave it up to voters to determine who takes all and who takes nothing. Whether the attempts to influence the pay-off structure is mainly directed at sharing patronage privileges, securing state subventions and the like or also extends to collaboration on policy-making and government is naturally crucial to its consequences for democracy. If it is limited to collusion on some privileges for the political class, it may not pose much of a threat to the quality of democracy, but if the collaboration is more far reaching, it could curb the opportunities for voters to choose between genuine alternatives. In any case, if power-sharing does indeed tend to occur with high structural pay-off variability, then this would also diminish vulnerability as just discussed.

Competition Indicators in Empirical Studies

Finally, in the review of the empirical studies, a number of specific indicators of competition were mentioned, which were not directly covered by the discussion above. Firstly, the frequency of elections has been used as a measure of competition. However, the frequency of elections is unlikely to play an independent role. Like electoral availability, its effect on incentives depends on other factors. In conjunction with high vulnerability the frequency of elections could expect to keep parties more continuously engaged in the effort of securing electoral support. However, when vulnerability is low, no real impact on incentives is to be expected. Secondly, measures

that equate greater equality of strength (measured in seats or votes) of parties, or greater correspondence between vote shares and time in government with greater competitiveness simply fail to capture the incentives facing parties. At least the risk that they do not correlate outside the context of two-party competition is very high. Thirdly, a measure of incumbency effects was proposed by Strøm, which captures whether there is a higher tendency for voters to drift away from governments than vice versa. However, in line with the discussions above, it can be argued that whether voters generally tend in one or the other direction would be less important than whether there is a real threat of turn-over in government. If voters consistently punished incumbent governments regardless of what they did, there would in fact be little incentive for those in office to exert themselves. Finally, he also proposes a measure of 'responsiveness', which counts the proportion of 'winners' (those who have gained votes or any absolute majority) in the first government formed after an election. This should show how sensitive government formation is to changes in electoral support. However, any system with a stable 'untouchable' majority government would score high, and it therefore cannot be used as measure of the strength of the competitive pressures.

1.4.3 Identifying the Competitor

For an empirical study of competition, a fundamental question is naturally how the 'competitor' is defined. In empirical work on competition the most common approach is to use parties as the competitive unit, but as mentioned coalitions and the individual candidate have also been used in connection with studies of vulnerability. Which conception is more correct depends on the functioning of the political system under investigation. The manner in which rewards are obtained or lost is the key property, since this is what may confer incentives on the individuals who ultimately act. If individual candidates were largely independent of their party affiliation in their

efforts to obtain office and policy influence and parties had no significant influence on their behaviour, there is obviously no reason to suppose that we can infer much from the electoral proximity of parties. These would in such case have little more substance than mere labels. However, to the extent that parties successfully control access to the rewards sought by candidates, we can assume that competitive forces affecting the fortunes of parties result in active responses to such pressures. The argument by Comiskey that in some multi-party systems, the relevant competitor is the coalition rather than the individual party would be supported by this approach. The successful access to rewards of office and influence may in fact depend on the collective success of a group of parties, rather than on a single one. To capture the competitive pressures, it would therefore be logical to investigate the threats facing the coalition as a whole.

The question of who the competitor is can of course also be approached from another angle, namely that of the voter's choice. The question here is whether the competitive unit corresponds to the unit providing what is demanded. This correspondence is crucial since it ensures that the preference expressed can relate to the output (legislative/governmental performance) as well as complete. If voters are not given a choice of a policy package for the country, but a choice of representatives with certain ideas about what policies should be pursued, it has consequences for what we can expect competitive pressures to accomplish. If voters are not given a choice over 'final' outcomes, it is difficult to imagine a greater competition will induce greater responsiveness to median voter preferences for such outcomes. It becomes very complicated for voters both to place responsibility for past accomplishments as well to project consequences of the votes cast for future acts of government. It might therefore be expected that competition is less efficient under circumstances where the unit presenting choice to voters is different than the unit organising government.

1.5 The Barriers to Entry: Outline of Empirical Research

The result of the discussion above can be summarized in three simple propositions. Firstly, political competition should primarily be understood and analyzed as an incentive structure. It was proposed that competition in politics is defined as the effort to win electoral support made to obtain legislative power and/or executive office. Consequently, when we want to capture differences in competitiveness, it is necessary to identify those conditions that provide incentives for political competitors to make more or less efforts to secure electoral support. Secondly, it was suggested that such incentives arise primarily from the degree of contestability and vulnerability observed. Both dimensions can be expected to influence the behaviour of those in power and different hypotheses concerning the character of these effects can be made. Thirdly, it was discussed that the competitive unit should be defined as the unit by which success or failure in accessing office and legislative influence is determined in a given system. The following study will focus on the question of how to measure the degree of contestability in democratic systems. The empirical question of how constestable democracies are requires, however, that the questions of 'who enters', 'what is entry' and 'what prevents entry' must be addressed first.

Regarding the 'who', it is possible to cast both individual candidates as well as parties in the role of the competitor, as discussed above. What unit is chosen naturally depends on what is meant by entry and it directly influences what barriers are identified. However, since political parties play a clearly more dominant role in the electoral contests in the group of democracies that will be considered here, parties are regarded as the relevant unit (c.f. below). Parties are also clearly the more important players in government formation and thus for the dimension of vulnerability. If we want to compare how open democracies are to new competitors, it

is therefore suggested to identify and measure the barriers that may prevent parties from succeeding in this effort.

A clear understanding of what defines entry constitutes the next step on the way to identifying the barriers that may prevent it. In accordance with the discussion above, the important property of the threat to entry is how it influences the incentives established parties have to secure electoral support. In my view, this necessitates considering entry in two stages, namely in terms of access to winning votes (partial entry), as well as in access to seats (full entry). As long as new parties do not obtain seats, it is obvious that they will be excluded from directly partaking in legislative acts and in government formation. In addition, knowledge that entry in the representative institutions is highly unlikely may encourage the represented parties to collude. However, the fact that parties outside parliaments cannot themselves snatch these coveted prizes from the hands of the established parties, does not necessarily make them harmless. Electorally successful new parties may alter the representational strength and thereby potentially also who gets what after the election. Even in the absence of full entry, established parties may therefore be pressured by such threats to secure their electoral base. Arguably, the strongest form of barrier is therefore the barrier that prevents new parties from winning votes, as it blocks both types of threats from arising. On the other hand, the strongest form of entry is undoubtedly full entry as this most effectively prevents collusion and keeps parties occupied with securing electoral support. Naturally, not all entry, be it into the electoral market or the representative institutions, is necesarily a threat to existing parties. It is not inconsquential how great a vote or seat share new parties take. Nor is it irrelevant 'where' in geographical or ideological terms the point of entry is for how it affects the established parties. A new party with a four percent seat share may be inconsequential in one system, but completely change the government formation process in another. If a new party enters in the middle of the righ-left ideological divide, it may be a pivotal player in negotiations, if it enters on the extreme right, it may never be

considered relevant. It is, in my view, difficult to define abstract criteria for when entry becomes significant and threatening as it depends on the characteristics of the party systems. In the following study, I have therfore chosen to limit myself to the identification and measurement of the obstacles to entry and leave the question of what consequences such entry may have in different systems.

The final question concerns the barriers to entry in politics. Bartolini identifies three types of barriers, namely an 'ex ante' barrier, which concerns requirements to become a recognized participant at elections, a 'representational barrier', which defines how votes are translated into seats, and finally a barrier constituted by the incumbents' advantages in terms of campaign laws and access to resources. While the first two suggested barriers are clear, I would argue that the term chosen for the third barrier is a bit ambiguous since incumbents' advantage can also be found in the design of the ballot access laws and the electoral rules. However, others have also mentioned barrier effects in the conditions for access to resources and campaign regulation in studies of party systems, new party formation and entry (e.g. Katz&Mair, 1995; Hug, 2001; Bowler, Carter & Farrell, 2003; Abedi, 2004).

I suggest organising the empirical investigation around answering the following three questions that define different aspects of entry: How difficult is it for a party to 1) register as a participant at elections? 2) to become recognized by the electorate? 3) to win representation? Four different types of barriers can be identified which are relevant to answering these questions. The first two barriers influence entry into the competition for votes, while the two latter ones concern the competition for seats.

The *Registration Barrier* concerns the level of difficulty involved in getting access to the ballot, which is the logical first step to entry. This barrier has been included in studies of new party formation and entry, but the approaches taken to measuring it vary a great deal (Harmel & Robertson, 1985; Hug, 2001; Abedi, 2004). The second barrier is the *Recognition Barrier*, which refers to the costs of being recognized by

voters as alternatives to existing parties. A high recognition barrier will therefore undermine the ability of new parties to gain electoral support. It considers factors that may facilitate or hinder new parties in their efforts to campaign and obtain publicity. Only few comparative studies consider this dimension, and those who do look exclusively at the existence of state assistance for parties' campaigning efforts (Hug, 2001; Bowler, Carter & Farrel, 2003; Abedi, 2004). The *Representation Barrier* expresses the extent of disadvantage suffered by small and new parties under different electoral systems and thus captures how difficult it is to obtain seats. This is undoubtedly the barrier most well studied. Numerous studies include it, but the indicators chosen to capture it vary a great deal. Finally, it is possible to define another barrier that essentially seeks to answer the same question as the representation barrier. Instead of looking only at the properties of the electoral system, however, it also takes the extent of electoral availability into consideration. As discussed earlier, electoral availability can be viewed as a precondition to both entry and vulnerability. The *Accessibility barrier* will consider thus assess how the combination of the electoral system and the electoral availability combine to make representative institutions more or less accessible to new parties. To my knowledge, this aspect has not been included as a barrier measure in previous studies. In this way, the research proposed considers both institutional and non-institutional factors to capture the openness of the political system.

As will be discussed further below, the cases chosen for the empirical analysis reflect my intention to ad the dimension of vulnerability to it at a later point and thus be able to study the joint effects of the two dimensions of competition on political performance and electoral attitudes. While such effects of contestability will not be tested in this study, I propose to test the efficacy of the barriers - and validity of the measures proposed - on the number of new parties actually entering. As will be discussed further below, the number of new parties entering depends on many other factors apart from the strength of the barriers to entry. However, to the extent that

Chapter 1. Political Competition: Theories, Concepts and Effects

the barriers identified matter, it is reasonable to hypothesize that this has an effect on observed party entry. The hypothesis is that each of the barriers to entry will deter new parties from entering by hindering their participation, campaigning efforts to win electoral support and reducing their chances of obtaining representation.

Chapter 2

Studying the Barriers of Entry and Their Impact

The research proposed consists in an analysis of the barriers to entry in political systems and their effects. As discussed above, the barriers can be expected to influence the behaviour of elected representatives and governments and can thus be hypothesized to have consequences for political processes and outcomes. The investigation of such effects will not be dealt with here, however, but rather be left for a later study where the dimension of vulnerability is also included. The cases chosen for the present analysis reflect, however, the intention to expand the analysis in this manner at a later stage. In the present analysis, an intermediary dependent variable - namely the number of new parties entering - has instead been chosen to test the effect of the barrier measures suggested. The main function of barriers is naturally to keep new parties from entering the democratic contest and institutions. As discussed, we can therefore expect high barriers prevent new parties from entering. In the following, the choices made with respect to case selection and research design will first be described, secondly the hypotheses will be defined operationally and finally some methodological issues concerning the prediction of the dependent variable and

the use of statistical methods will be addressed.

2.1 Case Selection and Research Design

In order to test causal hypotheses concerning the effects of competitiveness on political performance and popular attitudes, a significant concern is the ability to control for other sources of influence on the dependent variable than that stemming from variation in the independent variable. This can be done in two ways. The first is by including as high a number of cases as possible. A higher number of cases enables a more rigorous testing of causal claims by means of statistical techniques, and ceteris paribus increases the ability to control for 'other' sources of influence on the dependent variable(s). The ability to control for other influences depends, however, on the existing variation on the relevant dimensions in the cases themselves. Another 'natural' source of such control is therefore to select cases that are as similar as possible with respect to conditions that might influence the dependent variable(s). In other words, we need a most similar case research design since this maximizes our ability to ascribe variation in the dependent variable to the influence of the independent variable outcomes[1]. Unfortunately, the real world imposes quite significant limitations to selection of cases of democratic polities. However, the cases included in this study are drawn from countries with a long uninterrupted history of democracy, and relatively similar levels of socio-economic development. On the one hand, countries with a longer history of democracy provide for the possibility of drawing more cases from the same national context and thus increase control of contextual factors in a longitudinal comparison. This can often be more difficult in a cross-national comparison of cases. On the other hand, to investigate the possible influence of competitiveness on attitudes to democracy, the longevity of the regime

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[1]See, for instance, Pennings, Keman and Klinnijenhuis, 1999 for a description of this approach.

may prove to be an important source of control for other 'transitional' factors. Finally, similarity with respect to the level of socio-economic development is important when investigating the possible impact of competitiveness on welfare policies or other aspects of economic performance as well as attitudes to democracy.

In light of these considerations, it was decided to include the following 21 countries in the analysis; Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. 18 of these are long standing democracies and the time period covered was thus 1950-2000. Greece, Portugal and Spain are more recent democracies and were only included for the period 1980-2000. A time lag before observations begin is thus introduced from the end of the second world war in the case of the first group of countries and from the introduction of democracy in the latter in order to increase the probability that the effects observed are related to the competitive dimensions measured and not caused by 'transitional' factors. In relation to this study, the re-establishment of party systems in many countries after WWII would naturally lead to the formation of a high number of new parties and in this way be less comparable to numbers observed in subsequent decades (c.f. below). But also for other effects, it is reasonable to expect a minimum period of 'learning' for both voters and political elites before the competitive incentives may be expected to take effect. Since the strength and duration of such transitions have differed from country to country, the reason for beginning observations in 1950 (and 1980) for all of them is also pragmatic and has to do with the fact that decades are used as the units of observation for most of the analyses (c.f. below). The countries all belong to the group of so-called rich or industrialized democracies and are thus comparable with respect to the levels of economic development.

The next question concerns what democratic institutions in the countries for

which barriers to entry are considered. In some countries, the solution is simple inasmuch as there is only one national representative institution for which elections are held. However, in other there are two (bicameral systems) or three (bicameral and presidential). If we want to consider the impact of contestability on political outcomes, it is necessary to arrive at a measure of contestability, which takes into account the costs of entry to all institutions that give access to significant policy influence and government office. However, since the purpose of this research is partly exploratory and aims to develop hypotheses concerning what barriers influence the costs of entry as well as construct indicators to measure them and test their effects, it was decided to only consider lower houses of parliament in the present study.

Regarding the units of observation (=cases), it can be argued that the natural pick would be the individual election to these institutions. As discussed in the theory chapter, competitiveness is measured in terms of the potential impact of next election on the incentives facing the present incumbents. It is also the choice that would yield the highest number of cases for the analysis and allow the greatest possible variation to be captured. But consideration for the explanandum - the number of new parties - makes it necessary to use time periods as cases for the analysis of the effects of the barriers. This implies loss of variation in the independent variables, but as I shall argue below, this is necessary for the investigation of effects. The research will therefore only use the individual election as a case for certain tests of the validity of indicators and their co-variation and otherwise rely on decades as the unit of observation.

2.2 Predicting Prevented Entry: Methodological Considerations

Testing for the effects of barriers on the entry of new parties is somewhat tricky. Apart from the difficulties that arise in connection with making valid barrier indicators, which will be discussed in the following chapters, the problem is that the putative effects of the barriers are virtually impossible to measure directly. Information about 'potential parties' that are deterred from even trying to register or attempt to do so but fail to meet requirements is hard to come by. Likewise, we cannot directly observe whether the parties running for elections manage to become known to the electorate at large and in this way fulfil the necessary requirements for electoral gains. The effect that is most directly observable is the effects of the representation barrier, which can block vote-winning parties from gaining seats. But that is only a part of the possible effects of this barrier. As will be discussed further later, poor prospects of obtaining representation can deter parties from forming in the first place, and voters may withhold support for the new parties for the same reasons. We are therefore chasing counterfactuals: the parties that do not register, fail to win votes or seats. Resorting to variation in the number of new parties entering as a proxy of those deterred or prevented from doing so appears to be the only viable alternative, and it is also in different forms the one adopted in the studies of factors influencing electoral registration of new parties discussed below (e.g. Harmel & Robertson, 1985; Willey, 1998; Hug, 2001). This solution entails, however, equating fewer or no entries with deterred entries, which is not without difficulties. If no new parties form to contest elections, this may simply be expressive of lack of demand for new alternatives rather than being due to deterrence of potential contenders. Likewise, even if a high number succeeds in obtaining place on the ballot, we cannot be sure that others were not simultaneously deterred. And the same logic extends to the electoral success of new parties. If new parties do not obtain votes, it may

be because they do not have sufficient resources to campaign and become known to voters. However, it is equally possible that voters are fully aware of what the new parties have to offer but simply prefer the established alternatives. Only when it comes to winning seats do we have the possibility of observing a direct effect, inasmuch as the representation barrier manifests itself by not allocating seats to parties that win votes. However, as mentioned, we cannot be sure that the prospects of failing to win seats deter parties from participating or voters from giving their support at the polls. And the full effects may therefore remain hidden. Using variation in the number of new parties entering at elections is therefore not a perfect dependent variable for barriers.

As mentioned above, using variation in the number of parties entering as the dependent variable makes it necessary to carefully consider the unit of observation chosen. In the studies of new party entry referred to above, two use countries in a specific time period as cases (Harmel & Robertson, 1985 and Willey, 1998), and the other uses the individual election (Hug, 2001). While the individual election in many ways would be ideal, I would argue that using time periods is necessary. The problem related to the individual election as the unit of observation arises because of the rather large differences in the frequency of elections in the countries from which the cases are drawn. For the five decades included, Norway and Italy have, for instance, only held 12 elections compared to 20 in Australia and Denmark and 25 in the U.S. If we use the individual election as a case, we therefore have a situation, where a completely different picture of new party entry emerges depending on the unit of observation chosen. For instance, a total of 5 new parties participating at elections in both Norway and Denmark during the period 1950-2000 would mean that there is no variation to be explained by the barrier measures used. At this level of observation, the cases yield identical values for the dependent variable. But if we use the individual election as the unit of observation, Denmark might yield 15 cases with no new party observed and 5 cases with a new party. Norway could, on the other

hand, present 7 cases with no entry and 5 with entry. The model would therefore suddenly have significant variation to explain - 5 cases of entry for both, but 15 cases of non-entry in Denmark versus just 7 in Norway. The choice of unit of observation is therefore a crucial one, and I would argue that observing variation at the level of the individual election is misleading. Firstly, while elections provide occasions for the entry of new parties, they cannot be construed as causes of entry. In other words, there is no reason to believe that more elections will lead to more party formation. At least not of the credible kind. Theories of party formation typically consider the presence of incentives for the political elites that organise them, as well as of demand for representation (c.f. below) and these factors are rarely very short-term. It is possible that some parties form spontaneously in response to a particular situation and would organize entry only for an election 'here-and-now' but loose momentum if they had to wait two years for an occasion to enter. I would argue, however, that this is probably not the typical scenario and that the large differences in the frequency of elections therefore create an artificial variation in the dependent variable if elections are used as units of observation. I therefore suggest that the unit of observation is a decade in each country. Taking each country for a 30-40 year period, as done by Willey and Harmel & Robertson would hide too much variation in both independent and dependent variables.

Finally, it is possible to argue that the full effects of barriers on the observed rate of entry can only be captured in a 'global' model considering the full range of factors that influence party formation. In their comprehensive studies of new parties, Harmel and Robertson (1985) and later Hug (2001) discuss and test the influence of a number of different social, economic and institutional factors on the frequency with which new parties arise. They, for instance, hypothesize - and find evidence to support - that countries that are larger, more culturally and socially diverse, with stronger economical inequalities or have a stronger dimension of post-materialism will tend to give rise to more parties than other countries due to differences in

representational 'needs'. Furthermore, they propose that political factors such as the number of dimensions (cleavages) and parties already represented by the party system and the type of institutions such as parliamentary versus presidential or federal versus unitary can also play a role by influencing both how much demand there is for additional representation and the institutional incentives provided[2]. The authors also test the impact of the ballot access (registration barrier) and electoral systems (representation barrier) within such global models of new party formation and success. Since the purpose here is not to explain differences in the number of new parties participating but rather to construct indicators of barriers to entry and test their validity by testing their effects on the number of new parties entering, the potential impact of factors that stimulate new party entry will not be actively considered, however. In evaluating the results, it is therefore necessary to be aware that the model is incomplete in relation to explaining variation in the dependent variable. Finally, the results of the studies above will be discussed in relation to the findings reported below.

2.3 The Hypotheses: Defining the Dependent Variables

Four different barriers to entry were identified in the theoretical discussion above. It has been argued that each individual barrier defined can be expected to present difficulties at a specific step in the process of entry. How the specific effects expected can be measured needs to be specified. In many ways, the simplest to specify and

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[2]Cox also discusses the openness of parties themselves as a determining factor for the incentives to form new parties. If parties are not strong in the sense that they have clear policies and control candidate selection, Cox argues that individual actors have no incentive to begin a new party, but will instead choose to run under an already existing party 'label' (Cox, 1997).

predict is that related to participation in elections. When we address the barriers to winning votes and seats, there are more ways of constructing the dependent variable and more factors potentially interfere in the causal relationship suggested. Below, each of the hypothesized effects of the barriers is stated clearly and the specific configuration of dependent variable defined.

Hypothesis 1. A higher Registration Barrier can be expected to reduce the ability of potential new parties to participate in elections.

Empirical test: *The higher the Registration Barrier, the lower the number of new parties 1) registered at elections 2) the maximum number participating at any one election.*

Hypothesis 2. A higher Recognition barrier can be expected to make it more difficult for new parties to become known to voters and thus to gain votes.

Empirical test: *The higher the Recognition Barrier, the lower the number of new parties 1) obtaining at least 1 percent of the votes 2) obtaining at least 4 percent of the votes and 3) the maximum number obtaining at least 1 percent of the votes at any one election.*

Hypothesis 3. A higher Representation barrier can be expected to lower the chances that new parties participate, gain electoral support and seats.

Empirical test: *The higher the Representation Barrier, the lower the number of new parties 1) registered to participate 2) maximum number registered to partici-pate 3) obtaining 1 percent of the votes 4) maximum number obtaining 1 percent of the votes 5) obtaining 4 percent of the votes 6) obtaining 1 percent of the seats 7) obtaining 4 percent of the seats*

Hypothesis 4. A higher Accessibility barrier can be expected to lower the chances that new parties win seats.

Empirical test: *The higher the Accessibility barrier, the lower the number of new parties that obtain 1) 1 percentage of the seats 2) 4 pct of the seats.*

With respect to the first hypothesis, the question of how to define participation emerges. Previous studies including this dimension have included all parties that field candidates in any of the electoral districts on which data were obtainable. However, as will be argued in further detail in the chapter dealing with the registration barrier, there are theoretical as well as pragmatic reasons related to the quality of the available data that make it necessary to introduce stricter criteria for defining a party as 'participating'(c.f. chapter 4).

With respect to hypotheses 2-4, there are different possibilities when it comes to defining the dependent variable for the electoral and representational success of new parties. Willey, for instance, uses the percentage vote for new parties as such, whereas Harmel and Robertson use an approach similar to the one suggested here only that they include more categories[3]. Counting the number of parties according to whether they pass vote or seat shares of 1 and 4 pct. is naturally somewhat arbitrary. As a dependent variable for the Recognition barrier, it can be argued that the vote share should reflect a level, where it is reasonable to say that voters at large probably know of the party in question - that is, it must have 'passed' the recognition barrier. It can be argued that higher vote returns is highly likely be more powerfully influenced by the demand for them rather than just knowledge of them. However, demand and not just recognition plays a role in all cases, and there is thus no single correct measure. The same considerations apply to the choice of dependent variables for the share of seats obtained.

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[3]They categorize vote-winning parties in 6 categories: 0-1 pct votes, 1-5 pct votes, 5-10 pct votes, >10 pct votes but no seats, up to 10 pct seats, >10 pct seats, cabinet participation (Harmel and Robertson, 1985:510).

Defining a 'new party'

The question now is how to identify a new party. Firstly, any organisation presenting candidates under a common label at an election is regarded as a party. Secondly, all such organisations fielding candidates for the first time at an election in 1950 or after are classified as new. As stated above, the new parties that serve as dependent variables to the recognition and representation barriers are counted if they obtain 1 or 4 pct or more of the vote and seat shares respectively. Moreover, a new party is registered in year it obtains the specified vote or seat share rather than the first year it presented candidates. This implies that the same party may figure as a new party in the category of 'minimum 1 pct of the votes' and then be counted as a new party in the category of 'minimum 4 pct of the seats' a decade later. In terms of organizational history, the party is obviously not new when it wins the seats, but in terms of entry into the parliamentary arena, it is. This method of counting is designed to be sensitive to possible effects on entry of changes in the size of barriers. If a party has participated with weak results in several elections, but suddenly benefits from more favourable conditions and as a result succeeds in winning the specified votes or seats, its 'entry' should not fail to be recorded only because it is not a first or second time contender per se. In other words, the focus is on new party as the vehicle of entry rather than new party as an organization. It is of course possible that barriers influence the time it takes new parties to gain momentum. That is, in high barrier systems new parties may need more time to gain votes and seats than in low barrier systems. Such effects are not studied here, however, and by not classifying only those running in the first one or two elections as 'new', such effects are in fact discarded. Since it is the protective effects of barriers we are after, I believe the all-important consideration should be whether entry is indeed prevented rather than on whether it is subject to possible delays.

This only answers part of question of how to count new parties. Studies of

new parties typically operate with different categories not all of which are relevant. These include mergers of pre-existing parties, parties that change their names and/or reform, those that split off from an existing party (members of an existing party decide to form a new one) and finally genuine new parties (emerge without help from members of existing parties) (see Hug, 2001:11-15 for overview). In this study, I have chosen to include mainly the genuinely new and the parties that split from existing ones - subject to some exceptions.

Mergers of pre-existing parties, as well as those that change name or reform, are generally excluded on the following grounds; For a study of contestability, the interesting question is whether represented parties are shielded from new competitors from the 'outside', not whether parties already 'in' re-organise or reform to present a different type of competitive challenge to them. Moreover, the barriers we are interested in can only really be expected to be efficacious gatekeepers vis-à-vis parties that actually have to go through the steps of registering, winning recognition and representation. Genuinely new parties as well as splits generally have to do this, while mergers or parties that change names will typically be able to rely on organisational resources, public renown as well as representation in parliaments. Another argument for excluding mergers is that high barriers may encourage parties to merge in order to compete better. Norris for instance argues along these lines when claiming that a higher representation barrier induces party mergers (Norris, 2004). The causal expectation that higher barriers prevent entry of new parties - and we therefore observe fewer - would be reversed in the case of mergers. Counting the outcome of such mergers as new parties would therefore inevitably blur the results - at least if it is not kept as a separate category. Exceptions to the rule of omitting mergers are necessary, however. If a party is the result of a merger of two pre-existing parties where neither of the 'formateurs' have crossed the relevant threshold of success (and thus already been counted as a new party), it is counted as a new party. That is, if two parties which have fielded candidates at previous elections but each earned less

than 1 pct of the votes merge to form a party that succeeds in winning more than 1 pct of the votes, it is counted as a new party in that category. Likewise, if two parties that have not managed to pass the 4 pct threshold merge and form a party that does, it is counted as a new party at that level. Here we are clearly dealing with situations where the merger cannot be interpreted as a simple re-organization of insiders and by not counting such cases, we would leave out obvious cases of new party entry on grounds of their organizational histories.

The question remaining now is how to evaluate splits from existing parties. While genuine new parties are obvious examples of new contenders that have to face a whole battery of barriers, splits are not always obvious cases of new entry. On the one hand, discounting a party because its founders were previously members of one of the existing parties seems highly restrictive. Previous membership in an existing party or even membership in parliament is not an automatic ticket 'in' and splits can face exactly the same challenge as the genuine new with respect to registration, obtaining recognition and representation. Although it should be observed that in some - but far from all - countries membership in parliament entails exemption from registration costs (c.f. later). On the other hand, when splits represent a solid fraction within an existing party, it is clear that they may already command organizational resources and be known to the public. It can be argued that such parties are instances of re-organisation of 'insiders' rather than examples of new entry. However, it is often difficult to distinguish on basis of existing sources between cases where a new party is classified as a split because some of its founders were previous members of an existing party or because it represents a genuine fraction of a pre-existing party and carries with it the organisational resources and renown of the former. In my view, not counting any of them would entail leaving out many cases that should be included. Moreover, it is clear that the higher the barriers - at least the representation barrier - the stronger the disincentives for existing parties to split. In this way, we might expect higher barrier to result in fewer splits (opposite of mergers). Therefore, it as

a general rule all splits from existing parties except when the 'mother' party ceases to present candidates when major fractions split off from it. The new parties that split from it can it such cases be expected to incorporate its resources rather than have to start from scratch[4].

2.4   Using Statistical Methods

The investigation of whether the different barriers have the expected effect on entry of new parties necessitates the use of statistical techniques. The type of data, the nature of the hypothesized relationships and the character of the pool of data used raises certain general questions that need to be considered, however. First, and most fundamentally, it is important to observe that we are not dealing with a standard statistical sample. Inferential statistical techniques rely on the assumption that the data fed into the models stem from a random sample. The tests of significance inform us of the probability that the relationships observed in the sample also exist in the population as a whole. Although the political systems selected here do not constitute the population of democracies in the world, they practically constitute the population of longstanding democracies. In any case, the data pool cannot easily be construed as a random sample. This being the case, the question is what purpose is served by using statistical methods for other than descriptive purposes. That is, does it serve any purpose to report significances of the findings? What, if anything, does it tell us if the models and coefficients pass tests of significance? Statistical methods are used and tests of significance are reported by all but a few scholars in the field, who analyse 'apparent population' data comparable to those

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[4]The new parties that arose from the division of the Belgian Party system along the linguistic divide during the 1960-70s have thus not been counted, nor have the temporary split of the Japanese Socialist party into a left and a right wing in the 1950s been included.

used here[5]. There are also arguments sustaining this approach, although those using them rarely discuss them explicitly. The most common argument is that such data can be regarded as a random sample from the population of 'all possible universes', i.e. a sample from a type of 'super population'. This approach entails accepting that the data could have been different, that the population data is a simple random sample from an underlying distribution and that the social processes generating the data are stable enough to make it realistic to imagine a large number of identical and independent trials (Berk et. al, 1995:428). Not all concur that such a thought experiment is warranted or provides a sound basis for scientific conclusions as Berk et al discuss. Instead of choosing sides in the debate, I have opted for a somewhat eclectic approach to the matter. In recognition of the shaky status of the arguments that passing the tests of significance is necessary to accept the validity of a hypothesis even with 'apparent population' data, I will not regard a hypothesis rejected solely based on failed significance tests. If coefficients or differences in mean values are in the expected direction and have a reasonable degree of strength, there are no strong reasons for rejecting them in my view. However, I will consistently report the tests of significance, as is commonly done, for two reasons. One the one hand, so that the results can easily be compared to the results obtained by others, and on the other because the significance tests gives us valuable information about how consistently the variation observed in the dependent variable can be related to variation in the independent variables.

The next question concerns the type of statistical techniques employed considering the type of data. Here again I have chosen an mixed approach. In the analyses that follow, I have chosen to use non-parametric methods (measures of association and tests of differences of means) wherever possible. One advantage of these methods

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[5]Berk et al. use the term 'apparent population' to describe data sets containing for instance 'all nations on a continent' or 'all cities in country X'. (Berk, Western and Weiss, 1995)

in the context of this study is that they do not require interval data (some of the variables are ordinal), nor do they suggest a particular distribution (the normal distribution in the case of OLS-regression). On the question of distribution, statistical theory informs us that the assumption of normal distribution of data in the population can be dispensed with when the sample is sufficiently high. Healey states as a 'rule of the thumb' that we need at least 100 cases to be sure that the sample size offsets the influence of a non-normal population distribution, although others may set it lower (Healey, 1996:148)[6]. In this study, the number of cases typically lies between 80 and 94 and thus below the recommended amount. Moreover, the variables used here deviate strongly from the normal distribution. Naturally, we are in a grey-zone for the simple reason that they are not genuine sample data, as just discussed. It is therefore difficult to evaluate the importance of this question to the problem of testing the hypothesized relationships. However, non-parametric methods provide more conservative estimates in general, and using them wherever possible can therefore be regarded as a more cautious approach to testing relationships. The drawback of the non-parametric methods is that variation is lost since they test the relationship between variables by first transforming these into ranks. That is, the individual values are ranked in relationship to each other, but in the process the magnitude of the differences disappear. A numerical sequence of 1, 5, 6, and 30 is transformed into 1, 2, 3 and 4 and consequently we lose information on the gaps separating the individual scores. For the dependent variable, this is not a major problem, since the number of new parties per decade has limited range and only little information may be lost using this method. Nevertheless, as shown in the subsequent chapters, this is not the case for the non-ordinal independent variables. And for some of the analyses,

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[6]The Central Limit Theorem states that 'if repeated random samples of size N are drawn from any population, with mean u and standard deviation x, then, as N becomes large, *the sampling distribution* of sample means will approach normality, with mean u and standard deviation $= \frac{x}{\sqrt{N}}$'(Healey,xx:142). For significance tests it is the sampling distribution rather than the sample or population distribution that is important.

the loss of information is considerable. There is no ideal solution to this problem, and I have therefore chosen to use parametric statistics (OLS-regression, ANOVA) alongside the non-parametric ones in the bivariate analyses. This also has the advantage that it becomes possible to compare the results of the bivariate analyses to the final multivariate ones, which for want of non-parametric methods has to make use of parametric ones.

The multivariate analyses thus rely on parametric statistics - in this case OLS regression - to estimate individual and combined effects of several barriers within one model. This entails, however, a violation of the assumption of interval level data, as some of the indicators are ordinal. This is obviously not ideal, but difficult to get around given the type of data used and the methods available. Another problem of the OLS-regression model is the assumption of linear causal relationships. There are different ways of investigating whether such effects are present, however, and these are used in the final chapter to assess the extent of the problem.

Chapter 3

The Registration Barrier

Who gets access to the voting booth, where the composition of the ruling elite is ultimately determined, is pivotal to political outcomes. Not surprisingly, a key struggle in the fledgling western democracies of the 19th century centered exactly on the issue of who is granted access and who is kept outside. The institutional structures we associate with modern democratic government were thus often in place long before the mass of people obtained the right to use them, making access the main contentious issue (see Dahl, 1989). Following the lift of the major restrictions to universal participation, however, the question of admission to the electoral process in the established democracies has passed from the limelight to oblivion. This would seem perfectly natural considering that the rights to participate have remained essentially unchallenged in the post-war period. Only in cases where parties have advocated views seen as subversive to the preservation of democracy itself, have parties been directly barred from nominating candidates[1]. The protection of the right to participate does not mean, however, that it is free to use this right. The recent exceptionally narrow

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[1]Article 21 of the Basic Law of West Germany recognizes only parties that accept the principles of democratic government. The law was originally intended to block parties of the extreme right from returning to power, but it has also been used to ban the Communist Party (1956-1969) (Willey, 1998:665).

margin between the top candidates in the US Presidential elections in November 2000 and 2004, with its concomitant allegations of state-level irregularities with dire consequences for national politics, rekindled widespread interest and debate on the costs and barriers that exist to participation, be it as candidate, party or voter. In the field of comparative politics, access to the ballot has only recently been included in studies as a factor to be reckoned with, and evidence that the requirements that matter is ambiguous.

The provision of meaningful choice at elections, and unfettered exercise of the same, naturally requires an electoral process which is not simply open to voters and politicians pro forma, but is so de facto. All the countries we consider democratic grant the right of participation, as candidates or voters, to virtually all their citizens, but this does not imply that it is equally easy to make use of this right everywhere. As Nassmacher writes: 'The inalienable right to participate is inextricably linked to obvious practical difficulties' (Nassmacher, 2003: 5). Engaging in almost any type of activity involves incurring a cost. Should the costs of political involvement, however, reach a level where participation becomes seriously impeded, the very function of democratic elections may be undermined. To be persuaded that popular preferences are adequately reflected in the composition of the representative institutions, we need to be confident that neither demand nor supply is subjected to bias. If, on the one hand, the desire to vote is stifled by cumbersome procedures in place, and sections of the population consequently refrain from voting, voices that could tip the balance of power between political parties competing may be left unheard. On the other hand, if potential parties or candidates are deterred from presenting their programs to voters, we cannot be sure that the range of alternatives offered to voters provides an adequate match for their preferences. Participation costs play different roles, however, depending on whether we are looking at the demand or the supply side of the electoral market.

Chapter 3. The Registration Barrier

Most would probably agree that enhancing the democratic process entails keeping the costs of voting as low as practically feasible. Regulating access of parties and candidates to the ballot calls for different measures, however. In the former case, the incentive - in rational terms - to participate is virtually absent, as expressed by the famous 'paradox of voting' first formulated by Downs. According to this paradox two facts conspire to dampen the participatory zeal of rational electors; On the one hand, the miniscule chance that any individual vote will exert a decisive influence on the outcome, and on the other, the guarantee that the potential costs and benefits of future government actions are conferred on all, irrespective of whether they have voted or not (Downs, 1957). Imposing costs on voting is therefore likely to diminish participation rates, while no appreciable positive effects for democracy would be reaped thereby. Rather the contrary, several have argued that raising costs leads not only to a drop in turnout, but also to a reduction of the representativeness of the turnout, as less resourceful sections of the population may be more disinclined to vote (Lijphart, 1997; Mahler, 2002). In the case of parties and candidates, the situation with respect to the incentives to participate is reversed. For them, the incentives to participate are evident. The prospects of power, prestige or more humbly just a paid position clearly have a certain pull. But in addition to such legitimate aims (legitimate since the goal is to get elected) non-political motives, such as obtaining publicity for commercial, organizational or private purposes or quite simply to play a prank, could induce people to make a bid for a place on the ballot (Katz, 1997: 255). So if simply voicing one's wish to run were sufficient to be put on the ballot, two problems could arise. On the one hand, the ballot might become long and unwieldy, and thereby serve to blur, rather than clearly represent, the choice voters are called on to make. On the other hand, unrestricted access could make it difficult to sustain the rights to financial aid, free publicity and the like, which in some systems are conferred on all those that stand for election to ensure that all are given a fair chance to be elected. Identifying and enforcing a level of cost, which will

deter non-serious candidates from running, while at the same time not depress the participation rate of 'sincere' politicians, can be viewed as ideal[2]. Whether the costs actually imposed on would-be contenders, which are normally justified with reference to such considerations, actually live up to this ideal is a different matter.

In the following, the requirements made for accessing the ballots will first be described and compared, and then their possible effect on deterring participation of new parties will be assessed.

3.1 Ballot Access Requirements

All 21 countries included in this study oblige parties or candidates to fulfil certain conditions to obtain a place on the ballot, but the requirements vary significantly in kind as well as in degree. Three different types of legislation can be identified, which are used alone or in combination and are applied at the level of the electoral district or at the national level[3].

The first type requires contenders to evidence a certain level of popular support by submitting a petition. In some countries, the petitions, in terms of number of signatures required, are so low that hardly any cost is incurred by fulfilling it. In others, collecting the necessary signatures makes higher demands on the resources of contenders. The second type of requirement involves payment of a filing fee or a monetary deposit. In the case of a filing fee, the money is simply the cost of partici-

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[2]Nassmacher writes 'To some extent precautions against frivolous candidates are legitimate as long as such discrimination does not exclude new political movements from effective participation in the political competition' (Nassmacher, 2003:14)

[3]The information used on ballot access requirements is from Katz (1997), Hug (2002), Katz and Mair (1992). In the case of Portugal, information was obtained directly from the Ministry of Interior. For Japan the information stems from Shuugiin Chousa-kyoku Daini Tokubetsu Chousa-shitsu, "Senkyo-Seido Kankei Shiryou-shuu" (November, 2002) and was made available by Kenneth McElwain.

pating, in the latter the sum is reimbursed on the condition that the party/candidate succeeds in garnering a specified amount of votes. It is therefore only a 'real' expense for those unable to obtain enough votes to qualify for reimbursement. There is a clear tendency to use petition requirements in the party-oriented systems, while deposits seem to be the preferred choice in candidate-oriented systems. There are several exceptions to this pattern, however. Finally, a few countries allow contenders to enter the race if they receive the nomination of a recognized party. Nomination is, however, always used as an alternative path to the ballot rather than the only one.

Another difference between systems concerns the universality of the requirements. That is whether all parties have to register for the elections or whether only new participants face these costs. Eleven countries in this study effectively grant exemption from fulfilling requirements to the parties that are already represented in parliament (or in the case of Sweden have registered once and continue to present candidates at elections), while in the remaining ten countries all parties regardless of status have to fulfil the requirements. In the latter group eight of ten use financial deposits, and with possible exception of Canada and UK before 1985, the conditions for reimbursement are set so low that most parliamentary parties are protected from loosing much (see Appendix A for overview of ballot access laws).

When comparing the requirements that have to be met, it is important to observe the difference between requirements applied at the district and the national levels. Most systems set criteria for participating at the district level, and thereby give parties the possibility for registering participation in just a few districts. They can thereby pay a lower 'price' than if they were to field candidates in all. In a few countries, however, the requirement is set at the national level and gives access to placing candidates in all the districts (e.g. Denmark, Sweden). In order to get an idea of the comparative size of costs entailed for parties aiming to compete nationally, the ballot access legislation will be compared on the basis of the national total. That

is, for countries where requirements exist at the district level, these are added up to the total for running in all districts. The descriptive comparison is divided into two parts; First, for the countries using petitions and secondly for those requiring a deposit or fee.

3.1.1 Countries using petition requirements

For the first group, a chart showing the number of signatures that had to be collected by a party at the end of the 20th century were it to field candidates in all districts is presented in figure 3.1[4]. The US was omitted from the chart, since it deviates too much from the rest of the group to allow us to observe variation among the other countries.

As can be seen from figure 3.1, the countries using petition requirements can be placed in two different categories: those asking parties to present less than 7500 signatures and those requiring 20,000 or more[5]. There are none in between. In the category of high requirements we find all the larger European nations Germany, Italy and Spain and only one small country, Denmark, whereas the low requirement category only contains smaller countries. Moreover, Denmark is the only country in this group where the requirements are truly national. In the others, new parties could choose to lower the costs of participation by fielding candidates in fewer dis-

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[4]Austria is included in the petition group, as well as the fee/deposit group, presented below since it both types of requirements. For the other countries using both types (Canada, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, UK) the district petition requirements are so low (<25) that they do not need to be considered. For Germany the petition requirement shown is that for the land lists rather than the single member constituencies since this would be the better option for new parties with dispersed electorates. If the single member districts are also included approximately 50,000 extra signatures would have to be collected.

[5]In Finland, the requirement is not a petition, but rather the formation of electoral associations in each district with 100 members in each. Due to the fact, that more than mere signatures must be collected the total 'membership' of 1500 is multiplied by 5.

Figure 3.1: Ballot Access Laws: Petition Requirements
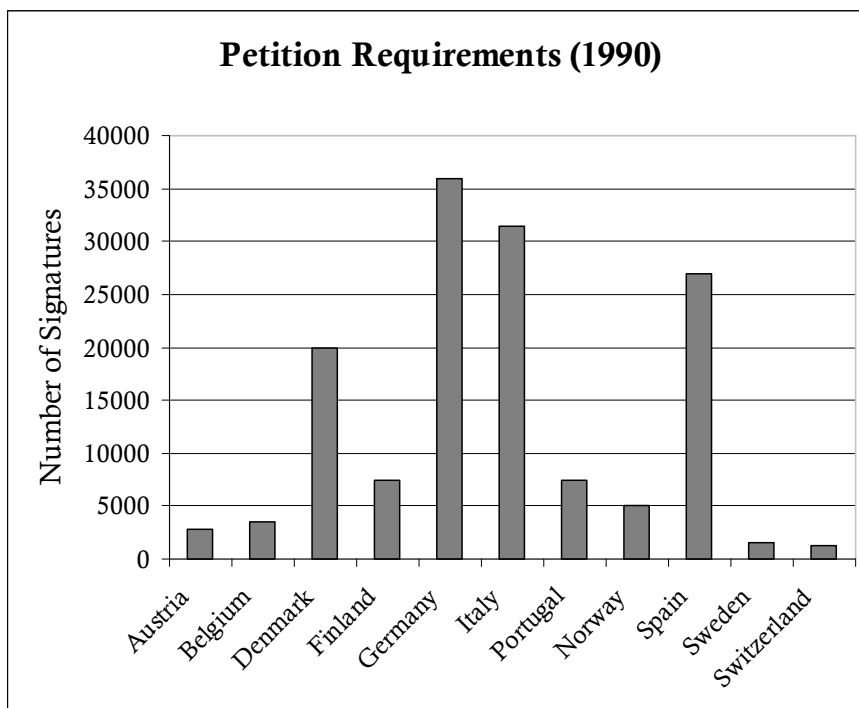
tricts. For the three large countries, the amount of signatures needed to run in one 'district' ranges from 500-2000, a clearly lower barrier. Unless a party's appeal is to a geographically concentrated electorate, however, pursuing such a strategy would of course entail lowering the national vote share it is possible to obtain.

As mentioned, the US stands out in this group of countries. For a new party to qualify a full slate of candidates for the House of Representatives, it had to collect approximately 1,600,000 signatures in 1994 - which is about 45 times more than Germany, which has the 2nd highest petition in the group (Winger, 1994)[6]. In addition to the petition requirement, three states use fees. If parties were to run in all districts in the three states, it would presently have to pay 230.000 US$ - an

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[6]The petition requirements in 2002 amount to a national total of approximately 1.100.000.

amount which is non-refundable[7]. Democrats and Republicans do not have to collect signatures to secure themselves a place on the ballot[8].

In terms of historical developments, there have been few and relatively modest changes in the other group of countries, while for the U.S. some major changes have been observed. For instance, California is reported to have had a petition requirement of 660.000 signatures (or 66.000 members) in the 60s, while it is presently around 80.000. Commenting on long-term developments Winger writes, 'From 1888 to 1931, ballot-access laws were rather mild. In 1924, only 50,000 signatures on a petition were required to place a new party on the ballot in 48 states (a figure that represents 0.15% of the number of people who had voted in the previous election). During the 1930s, ballot-access laws became significantly restrictive, as they required new parties to gather more signatures and file for application earlier and earlier in the campaign year. Still, it was not until the 1960s that compliance with ballot-access laws became extremely difficult' (Winger, 1994).

A further clear difference between the US and the other countries is that ballot access laws are not determined centrally in the US. The institution for which the elections are held has, in other words, no say in the matter. Instead the states legislate independently on ballot access to the federal institutions, and, as a consequence, wide variation in the existing laws can be observed. Some states ask new parties to collect only a few hundred signatures, while the petition size in others lies in the vicinity of 200,000. Moreover three states, as mentioned, use fees rather than petitions as a means to get on the ballot, and six states do not allow the party affiliation of candidates to be stated on the ballot. The lack of some form of harmonization of the laws does appear somewhat odd, especially in light of the fact that in all the

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[7]The states are Florida (6% of annual salary of House member – approx. 9000 US$), Louisiana (600 US$) and Oklahoma (500 US$). Costs are per district.

[8]While Democrats and Republicans are secured a place on the ballot, candidates for Democratic primaries would have to collect a total 138,996 to access the ballots for this contest (Winger, 1994).

other federal systems, the laws are issued by national government and the stipulated criteria for access are either identical in absolute terms, as in Australia, Canada and Switzerland, or are so in relative terms as differences are congruent with variations in population size of the constituent states, as in Austria, Belgium and Germany.

Until now petitions have been compared in absolute terms, but they can also be compared on the basis of their size relative to the total electorate. In a recent study of new party entry, it is argued that the petition requirements, as a barrier to entry, should be seen in relation to the size of the total electorate rather than in absolute terms (Hug, 2001). Whether this is a valid argument will be addressed later, but it is interesting to investigate whether the differences observed are mainly explained by the sizes of the countries in question.

Figure 3.2: Ballot Access Laws: Relative Petition Requirements
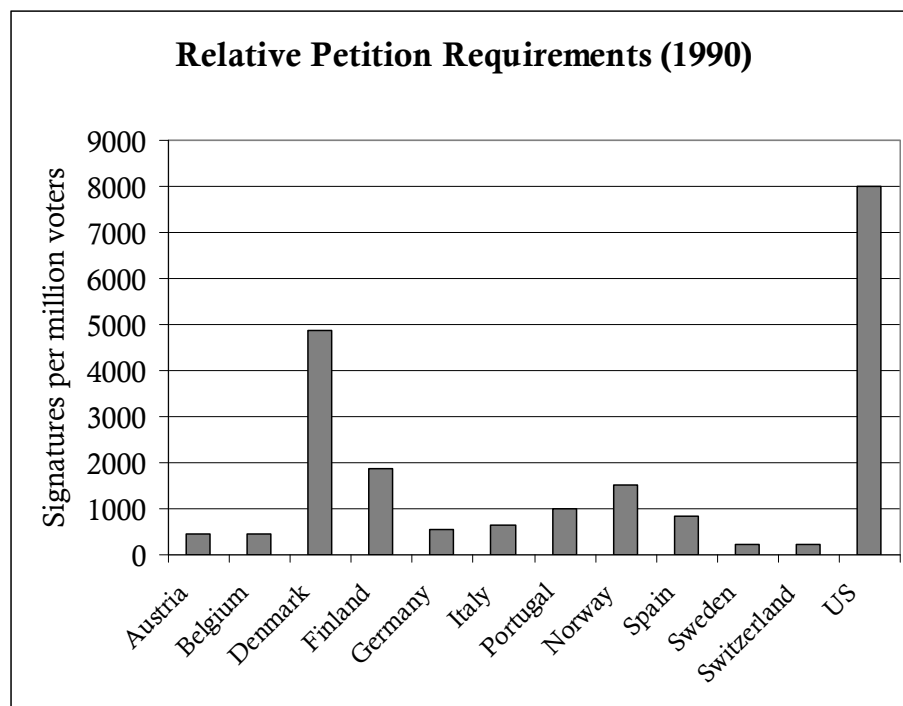
Comparing the petition sizes in this way, yields a distinctly different pattern as seen from figure 3.2. The gap between the larger and smaller countries is clearly, and unsurprisingly, reduced. The US retains its position as the country with the highest petition, but it now appears only somewhat (60 pct) higher than Denmark with 2nd highest petition in the group. From these two countries there is a considerable gap down to the 3rd country, Norway, whose petition requirements are only about 25 percent of the Danish ones. The three larger European countries on the other hand now appear more similar to the smaller ones; Germany is only slightly higher than Austria and Belgium, and on the same level as Finland. Italy and Spain are only slightly higher, while Sweden and Switzerland remain at the bottom of the distribution.

It is clear, therefore, that whether we compare the ballot access signatures in absolute terms or in relation to the total electorate in a country makes a considerable difference, both in terms of the ranking of countries where only the US retains its position, as well as in terms of the distance observed between the levels observed. The number of signatures required, of course, does not tell the full story. Ancillary laws, stipulating requirements related to the procedure to be followed in the collection, validation, timing and submission of the petition, is likely to affect how difficult it is to fulfil the requirement[9]. Moreover, there may be national differences with respect

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[9]Richard Winger for instance writes of West Virginia (US) that 'Third party and independent candidates for office (other than president) must circulate their petition before the primary. It is a crime for any petition circulator to approach anyone without saying "If you sign my petition, you cannot vote in the primary." The law can be enforced because it is illegal for anyone to circulate a petition without first obtaining "credentials" from election officials for this purpose. Furthermore, it is impossible for third party or independent candidates (not running for president) to ever know in advance if they have enough valid signatures because if anyone who signs a candidate's petition then votes in a primary, the signature of that person is invalid. For candidates, it is impossible to know who will actually vote in the primary, and it is too late to get signatures after the primary.' (Richard Winger, 1999). Katz writes 'Often these (signatures collected in the U.S.) must be collected within a narrowly defined time period, an inconsequential requirement when a few hundred names are involved, but potentially insurmountable when talking about many

to how easily people are persuaded to sign petitions. Lack of more than anecdotal information on these factors, however, makes it impossible to evaluate how such laws may affect the validity of indicators based on mere numbers.

3.1.2   Countries using fees or deposits

The second group of countries using financial deposits/fees are presented in figure 3.3 showing the costs a party would incur if it were to field candidates in all districts. Japan was omitted from the chart, since it deviates strongly from the rest of the group.

Figure 3.3: Ballot Access Laws: Fee/Deposit Costs
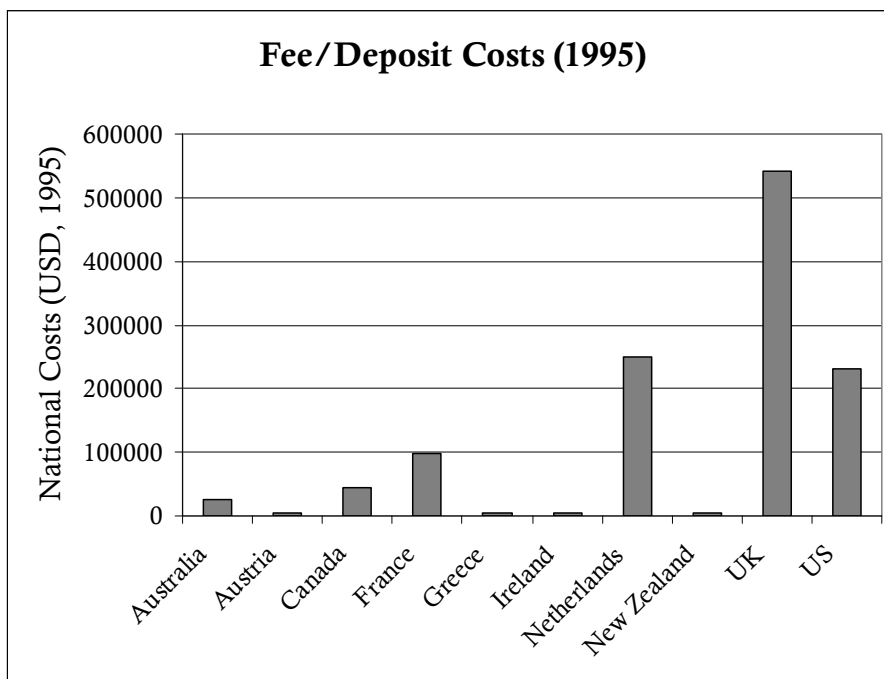
Here again the main difference observed is between the group of small and large

thousands'. (Katz, 1997: 260)

countries. As seen from figure 3.3, four of the smallest countries, Austria, Greece, Ireland and New Zealand are relatively similar with costs varying between 4000-6000 US$, but in the former two countries, the sum paid is a fee rather than a deposit, and thus cannot be reclaimed whatever level of electoral support is obtained. The UK clearly has the highest requirements of the countries on the chart, followed by a smaller country, the Netherlands, which has a cost level of approximately 60 pct that of the UK. Then there is a considerable distance to France with less than half the sum of the Netherlands, followed by Canada[10] and Australia. In absolute terms, Japan imposes costs of an entirely different order than the other countries, and is therefore discussed separately below.

As for petition requirements, the size of the countries in question appears to play a role. It would therefore be useful to compare the level of cost in relation to the total wealth of the countries, and here again the chart portraying the costs in relative, rather than absolute terms yields a different picture as seen in figure 3.4[11].

As seen in figure 3.4, Austria and Greece remain in the bottom of the group, while Australia, Canada, and Ireland now appear very similar, followed closely by France and New Zealand. Canada distinguishes itself from this sub-group, however, by having much stricter conditions for return (15 pct. of the vote compared to 4 in Australia and 5 in France). The Netherlands here clearly emerges as the 2nd most expensive country for parties run. However, the Dutch rules guiding reclamation are much more lenient. Obtaining as little as $\frac{3}{4}$ of the electoral quotient (=0,5 pct of the national vote) entitles parties to be reimbursed in the Netherlands, while it is 5 pct in the UK and 10 pct in Japan. Japan, not included in the chart, retains its

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[10]The ballot access legislation in Canda was changed in 2001. Presently, candidates must pay a deposit of C$ 1000 (approx 650 US$), which is refunded in full conditional only on fulfilment of certain reporting requirements.

[11]The national fee/deposit costs are seen in relation to the GDP in Purchasing Power Parity (that is the GDP controlled for differences in price levels) for the respective countries (Source: OECD)

Figure 3.4: Ballot Access Laws: Relative Fee/Deposit Costs

Relative Fee/Deposit Costs (1995)

National Costs/GDP(billions)

Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, UK, US
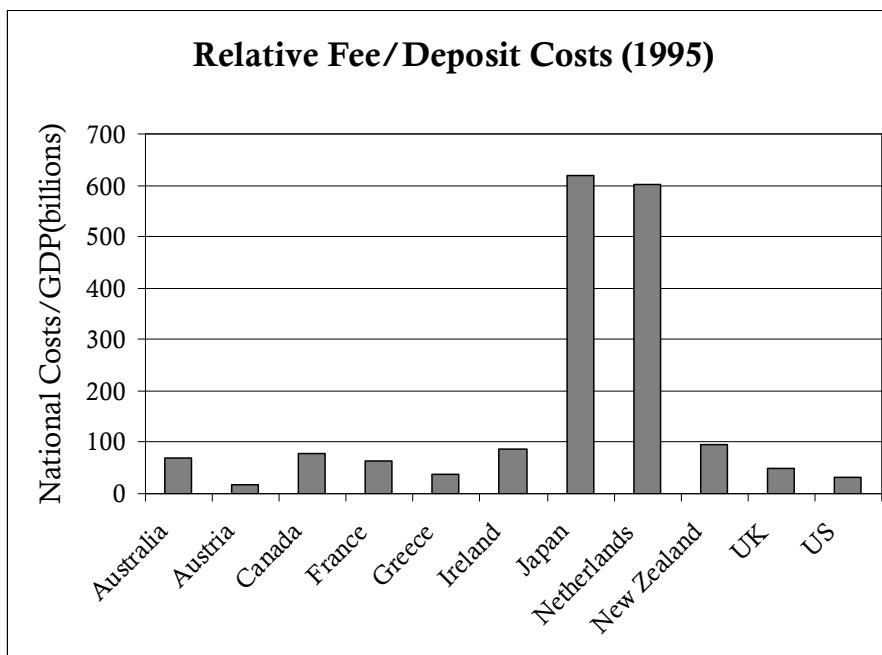
position as the most expensive country, but correcting for GDP total, Japan (1992) was slightly more expensive than the Netherlands, but its conditions for return much higher.

Japan is therefore the most expensive in absolute as well as relative terms. It distinguishes itself not only by the exorbitant deposits presently asked of candidates, but also by its history of changes. From 1994 each candidate was required to deposit around 25,000 US$ in a single member district, and 50,000 US$ to be put on the ballot in one of the eleven multimember districts (or the same amount be a candidate in both, 1995 exchange rates). This would mean that a new party presenting just one candidate in all PR districts, where in general the expectation of higher chances of winning representation, would have to pay 550,000 US$. To be represented in all single member districts, and present just three candidates in all the multi-member

districts, would cost around 8,600,000 US$, which is 16 times more than the costs of fielding candidates in all districts in the UK. To participate in all single-member districts and present enough candidates to win 50 pct of the PR seats would cost 14,4 million US$. That we are dealing with a barrier of entry of quite a different order than in the other countries becomes particularly obvious when we consider the district level candidate costs in other countries. In the UK a candidate had to deposit around 850 US$, which is the highest fee required in any of the candidate oriented systems (and 14 times higher than New Zealand, the lowest in that group). Paying this deposit, however, amounted to an investment roughly equivalent to 4 pct of the GDP per capita for that country. A sum, which quite clearly is well within the range of possibility for the vast majority of the population. In other words, if a candidate were committed to supporting a new party that does not have the means to sponsor his or her candidacy, deciding to participate anyhow would only entail a relatively minor sacrifice of personal resources. In Japan, on the other hand, running in a PR district would cost around 120 percent of the GDP per capita, and as such constitute a considerable investment of resources likely to be beyond the financial ability of the average citizen. A candidate deciding to run will therefore have to be independently wealthy, be backed by resourceful sponsors or by a party with ties to such donors.

Moreover, the chances of being able to garner enough votes to qualify for reclamation are small for new parties. For the single member districts more than 10 pct of the vote is needed (only Canada with 15 pct has had a higher reclamation threshold), while for the multimember districts, parties can reclaim deposits only for the candidates on their list that were elected. If there are just two candidates competing for each of the 200 seats to be filled by these elections some 10 million US$ are inevitably transferred to the state treasury at each election. For the PR level, the ballot access legislation presents powerful disincentives for parties to present more candidates than they believe they can get elected. The Japanese legislation is in

this sense unique; In no other party-oriented system do we find similar provisions militating against inter-party competition for seats. Even in the candidate-oriented systems there is no comparable incentive, inasmuch as the conditions for return are normally set at such a level that all but the smallest parties can expect to get the deposits back.

Another way in which Japan differs from the other countries in this study is by the number and direction of changes the ballot access laws have been subjected to. Since 1950 the deposit has been raised 6 times and while part of the changes simply adjusts the sum to take account of price developments, there has been an increase in the real value of the deposits required from approximately 19 times the GDP per capita in 1950s to 54 times the GDP per capita in the 1990s. For most of the other countries the tendency has been exactly the opposite, not because of changes in deposit, but due to changes in the real value of the sums demanded. To get an overview of ballot access costs for the entire period, it is naturally important to investigate such changes over time. This is done by presenting the costs in relation to the GDP per capita for the countries and periods where data are available (see note on calculations in Appendix A.2.). Figures for the U.K. for the 1950s and 1960s are excluded from the chart (see figure 3.5), since they differ so much from the rest that the graphic presentation suffers.

The figure 3.5 reveals two things; Firstly, there is a clear downward trend in the real costs of accessing the ballot for most countries. The only country consistently countering this trend is Japan, and partly the Netherlands. In the latter country, there was an increase in 1989, which made the costs in the 1990s 6,5 times larger than in the 1960s. But as mentioned the reclamation vote share is set at just half a percentage of the votes and serious contenders therefore have a fair chance of getting their deposit back. In Japan the increase in real value is only 2.5 times the level of the 1950s, but the starting point was, as described above, much higher. Secondly,

Figure 3.5: Fee/Deposit Costs over Time

Ballot Access Costs Over Time
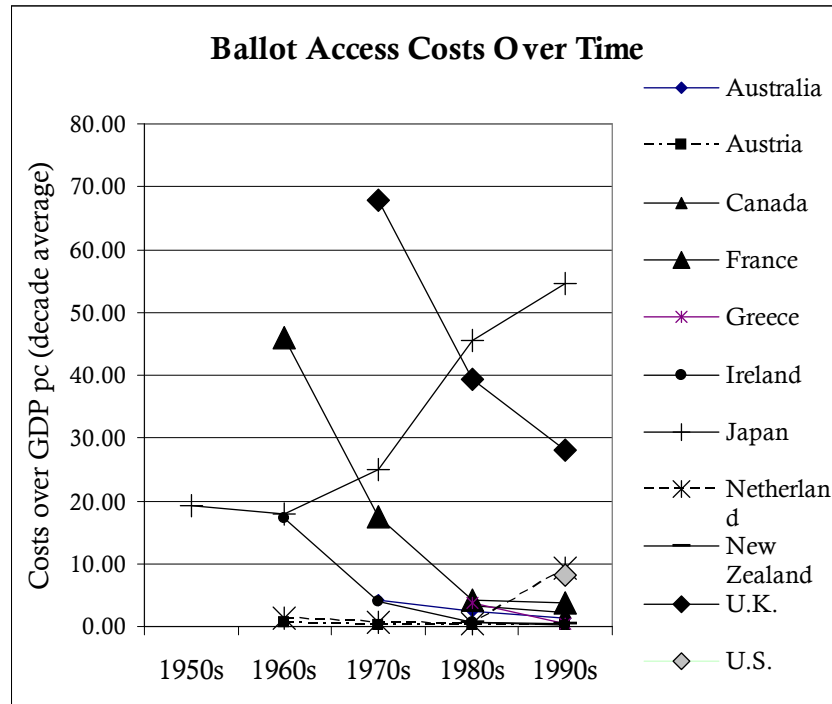
temporal analysis of the costs reveals that deposit costs that in today's currencies appear very reasonable were more significant burdens in the past. UK's average total costs in the 1950s and 1960s were at 365 and 243 times the GDP per capita respectively. This far exceeds the present costs in Japan. Furthermore, the 150 GB£ district deposit was equal to approximately 60 and 40 pct of the GDP per capita for the two decades. At the district level, the U.K. in the 1950s had, in fact, exactly the same price for running as Japan has for its single member districts today (and for its multi-member districts in the beginning of the 90s). The strong decrease witnessed for the U.K. is caused not by changes in law, but by changes in the value of money and the GDP per capita. In fact, the U.K. increased its deposits from 150 to 500 GB£ in the mid 1980s (accompanied by a lowering threshold of reclamation from 15 to 10 pct.), but since decade averages is used and due to monetary changes, the

increase is not visible on the chart above. Likewise, the real value of the deposit required in France was of much higher value in the 1960s than it is today, but here the decline over time is also evident.

It is difficult to interpret the changes in ballot access laws in Japan as other than a conscious strategy to prevent new parties from participating on the part of the party, which has wielded government power alone in most of the post-war period. Moreover, since parliamentary parties are not exempt from paying the deposits, it would seem not only a strategy to make it difficult for outsiders to enter, but also to reduce district level competition. In any case it is clear that pressure is put on all parties or candidates contesting elections to develop strong ties with firms and organizations with sufficient resources to sponsor their electoral participation. The other countries in this group have abstained from such tactics.

3.1.3   Other costs of organizing ballot access?

There are reasons, however, for considering that the costs of ballot access are not fully captured by the sum of the district level requirements, as presented above. The division of the electoral arena into distinct arenas affects how many ballots there are to access. In some countries, there are relatively few different ballots that parties have to be represented on to solicit the support of the whole electorate. In others, parties have to organise to be present on several hundred ballots in order to be available to all voters. The division of the ballot implies two things. Firstly, access to many rather than few ballots probably imposes different transaction costs for parties. Secondly, and probably more importantly, parties have to organise internally to present candidates on the ballots. Where a few dozen candidates may suffice to present voters everywhere with an alternative in the Netherlands, it would take several hundreds to achieve the same in the U.K. The costs of organising would

undoubtedly be higher in the latter case. Parties, like all other forms of organizations, do not arise spontaneously in response to demand. They have to be created and sustained. And in assessing the costs of such an endeavour, size in terms of members running for office, may be an important factor. It is inherently more difficult to mobilize many than few, especially when no immediate rewards can be offered in return for time and effort spent, as discussed by Olson (Olson, 1971). This would typically be the case for new parties trying to enter, unless the initiators are already an established political elite, for example split from a party of prior affiliation, who already have a certain clout and strong prospects of being victorious at the polls. It would then also be reasonable to expect that organizations unable to offer material benefits, or strong prospects of such, would be likely to attract people motivated primarily by personal convictions, with the result that it may be more difficult to forge the compromises necessary to present a coherent alternative to voters. How the electoral arena is divided in this manner is, however, determined by the electoral systems. The crucial variable is the number of districts it defines. But since the barrier effects of the electoral system (which strongly depends on the number of districts) is considered in chapter 6, it would not be fruitful to consider its impact under ballot access as well. It should, however, be kept in mind that electoral systems may not only impact the prospects of representation for parties and thus their incentives to participate, but are likely to have an effect on the formation and participation costs of parties as well.

3.2 Measuring the registration barrier and testing its effects

There are three comparative studies, in which an attempt is made to gauge the influence of ballot access laws on the electoral participation of new parties, which

use such variation in order to estimate the impact of this and other factors on the participation rate of new parties.

The first study is Harmel and Robertson (1985), who opt for an ordinal classification of ballot access laws in 19 democracies. They devise three categories of easy, moderate and difficult, containing 14, 3 and 2 countries respectively. It is not stated how each country is classified nor on what basis. We are instead referred to the authors' interpretation (Harmel and Robertson 1985:504). The explanatory power of these categories is then tested on three different dependent variables; all new parties registering participation at election in a country in a period of 30 years, a subset consisting only of those forming 'naturally', that is excluding splits, mergers and electoral alliances, and finally the number of successful (those who have obtained representation) of the latter group. No support is found for the hypothesized effect, however. It is worth remarking on the fact that countries are given a single score on ballot access, and variation over time is therefore not included.

The second study, which attempts to explain party formation and include ballot access as an explanatory variable is by Hug (Hug 2001). He takes a somewhat more sophisticated approach to constructing an index of the costs imposed by the legislation in place. Instead of using ordinal categories, he constructs two separate continuous indices. The first indicator is the number of signatures required divided by the total number of voters. The second is the electoral deposit or fee required (at the national level) as a fraction of GDP per capita. The difference between fee and deposits and the conditions for return of the latter are ignored. Rather than using the countries as cases, as above, national elections play this role, which has the effect of allowing for variation in both independent and dependent variables occurring within each country over time. The dependent variable he employs is the number of new parties registering for the first time at each election (counting only genuine new parties and splits from existing parties). The relationship found between

deposit/fee costs and number of new parties is negative as expected, but as Hug writes 'surprisingly weak'[12]. The petition on the other hand shows a stronger relationship leading him to conclude that at least one element of the ballot access costs has a 'considerable impact on the likelihood of party formation' (Hug, 2001: 101). Hug attributes the positive results obtained, compared to the non-finding of Harmel and Robertson, to the indicators chosen and argues that the ordinal categories used by the latter hide important variation. In the multivariate analysis, however, it is reported that positive correlations are found between both petition and deposit requirements and the dependent variable instead of negative, as we would expect. The reversal of the direction of the effect is not acknowledged explicitly, but Hug concludes on the basis of the weakness of the correlation that formation costs (including also public party financing) 'fail to have a strong direct impact on the emergence of new political parties' (Hug, 2001: 119).

The third and most recent study is by Abedi, who considers the ballot access requirements for petition, deposit and conditions of return, as well as demands for recognition of candidacy (Abedi, 2004). He devises a ranking on the basis of how highly each country scores separately on each of the dimensions. It is not clear whether district or national costs are used, but it would appear that the district requirements are used, since these are the ones cited in the text. The method used results in a rank ordering where countries that use both types of requirements inevitably end up at the top of the scale and those only using one type end up at the low end. Denmark, which, as reported above, is one of the countries with the highest petition requirements in absolute as well as relative terms, somehow ends up with the third lowest score. Japan is assigned a middle ranking with the U.K.

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[12]The finding with respect to deposits is supported by within country evidence from U.K., before and after the increase from 150 to 500 £, reported by Katz. He comments that 'even after substantial recent increases in some countries, the deposits required still are insufficient to discourage a large number of candidates whose support is trivial' (Katz, 1997:255).

a few notches above and with Belgium immediately below, and Austria comes out as having the toughest requirements. The rankings, which are constant over time, are then used to analyse relationships with other variables than the participation of parties at elections, and so are not relevant to this study[13].

The lack of positive findings linking the ballot access requirements to party electoral participation could be interpreted as an indication that registration is not an important barrier in the sense that it does not offer represented parties much protection from new competition. Before accepting such a conclusion, a more careful consideration of some points related to the study of ballot access and its effects, however.

Firstly, the cases included in the two studies just described differ from the ones included here. This is particularly important, since the two cases with the highest requirements are either not included or appear in a different form. Japan is not included in the first two studies and in the case of the US, the ballot access laws as well as the number of new parties participating refers to competition for the office of president rather than congress. This would seem to make it less comparable to the parliamentary institutions that are the objects of analysis in the other countries, and furthermore the ballot access requirements for the office of the president are significantly lower than those for congress (Winger, 1994). It may well be that the level of requirement in the other countries constitutes an insignificant obstacle to entry, and that registration only truly serves as a barrier in present-day Japan and the US or historically in the U.K. and France. It would therefore be necessary to include these two in the analysis and to have a closer look at whether they deviate from the pattern of new party participation observed elsewhere.

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[13]Abedi reports a significant correlation between the ballot access indicator and the indicator made for state support to parties and candidates. Both dimensions attempt to measure how far parties protect themselves from new competitors. Furthermore positive correlations between ballot access requirements and the combined vote shares of 'Anti-Political Establishment Parties', but these are insignificant (Abedi, 2004:100-101).

Secondly, there is a problem with how ballot access is conceived, which affects the appropriate definition of both independent and dependent variables. In the studies described above, no distinction is made between parties that access the ballot everywhere and those merely appearing on the ballot in a single or a few constituencies. The category of new parties in both studies therefore includes parties with complete as well as partial coverage of the electoral districts. The costs of running in all districts (universal coverage), which Hug explicitly uses as the independent variable, could logically be expected to exert an influence on the number of new parties participating in all districts, or at least a significant share of these, but not necessarily on the number of new parties simply participating irrespective of their coverage. Only to the extent that parties refrain from running even in a few constituencies, because they anticipate not being able to bear the costs of running in all at future elections, is it reasonable to expect an effect on participation in individual constituencies. If explaining the number of parties participating regardless of how much ground they cover, using the district level cost rather than the national costs might be a more important explanatory factor.

The third issue concerns the base line of comparison, that is, whether petitions or financial costs should be compared in absolute or relative terms. As was shown above, the perspective taken alters both the ranking of countries as well as the distance between them considerably. Hug is somewhat inconsistent in his approach to this question. Petitions are compared on relative terms, that is, the size of the petition relative to the total electorate. Deposits/fees, however, are compared in absolute figures corrected only by differences in individual financial capacity (GDP per capita) rather than the total wealth of the country. The other authors do not discuss the issue.

3.2.1   Comparative Indicator of the Registration Barrier

There are, as discussed, two important issues that affect how the indicator is constructed. The first is the question of national versus district level costs and participation. The second is the question of relative versus absolute costs.

The criteria used to devise an indicator for ballot access costs naturally hinges on the effect sought. The important question for this study is to identify the role ballot access plays for party competition, that is, to what extent parliamentary parties are shielded by ballot access barriers from competitive threats. The problem is then how to define a competitor in this context. If we consider all new parties that register for elections 'somewhere' as new competitors, the problem is that parties only competing in a few districts are put on equal footing with parties with universal presence. When only a negligible fraction of the electorate is given the opportunity to vote for a party, per definition it can not threaten to cut into much of the electoral base of other parties, nor would it, in most systems, stand much of a chance of exerting influence on national politics. But regardless of the potential for very small parties to play pivotal roles in government formation and legislative processes under certain circumstances, when conceiving of competition in strictly electoral terms, it would be erroneous to conceive of it as a proper competitor. The issue that needs to be settled is only what degree of electoral coverage is necessary before a party would qualify as a competitor.

Electoral markets are, as mentioned, often divided into several arenas of competition and the structure of demand is never exactly identical across these arenas. The variation across arenas in combination with the electoral plays a strong role in determining what a competitive strategy with respect to coverage would be. If a party's actual or potential electorate is concentrated in a limited number of electoral districts, there is naturally no reason for it to run in all. Partial coverage would be

sufficient for exhausting its share of the electoral market. Each party will naturally differ with respect to the concentration of its vote (Caramani, 1997). But even parties with highly dispersed electorates will at times be confronted with districts where they have no real chance of wining seats and therefore have weak incentives to run. The districts that are known as 'safe' because they always return the same partisan candidate to office, present strong disincentives to the participation of others. Cox argues, however, that strategic withdrawal is not a costless strategy in the long run. Absence from districts where the chances of winning are low is dangerous in the long run, since it is likely to have the unintended consequence of erasing a party from voters' political map and therefore make re-entry under more favourable conditions difficult (Cox, 1997). The case Cox uses to 'prove' his point, however, may not have strong relevance for politics in an era of mass media and nationalised politics. He attributes fatal importance to the decision of the Liberal party in the U.K. in the opening decades of the 20th century, to withdraw from a number of districts. By this act, it relegated itself from a position as a main contender to one of near irrelevance, according to Cox. He argues that a party to stay competitive has to retain presence in districts, even where its chances of winning seats in the present are minimal. If it doesn't, it will not be able to benefit from future changes in the popular mood. That such considerations play a role in party decisions finds support in the observation that most large parties do in fact retain a presence even in districts where the prospects of winning a seat are very remote indeed (see below). However, if voters are oriented towards politics at the centre - as reflected in national news media - the importance of activism at the national level may far outweigh any potential benefits of presence on the ground. Being erased from the electoral map, such as Cox claims happened to the Liberal Party, may well be a phenomenon of the past. Voters in the era of mass media may be more likely to 'erase' those who do not appear in newspapers or TV, rather than those absent on the ballot they put their cross on every few years.

Recognizing, on the one hand, that what constitutes competitive coverage by parties varies according to the location of its potential voters combined with the possible influence of strategic long-term considerations and on the other, that the term new competitor does imply at least posing a potential threat to the electoral base of established parties, makes the choice of a cut-off point difficult. Surely parties do not need to run in all districts to be counted, but running in just a few in a system where there are hundreds does seem to stretch the concept beyond reasonable limits. I therefore propose the following;

Ballot access is defined as the costs of participation in all districts. The national costs are chosen because the electoral structure in the countries investigated here imply that the typical number of districts allowing parties to fulfil their 'quota' of potential votes lies much closer to the national total than the national minimum. As will be demonstrated in chapter 6, for the vast majority of the countries included in this study, the average geographical concentration of partisan votes implies that parties must be present in more than 2/3 of the districts in order to collect their votes[14]. This means that running in fewer districts would entail losses in electoral support for most parties. Moreover, in most countries the represented parties, with the exception of regional parties, actually field candidates in over 90 pct of the districts. This holds for countries with PR electoral systems, as well for plurality systems. Choosing the national costs, of course, means not taking into account the advantage that partial coverage may have for new parties. By being able to participate in a limited amount of districts, such parties can test their electoral appeal and gradually increase coverage over a couple of elections if there are signs of success. Accessing the ballot 'gradually' may in fact be a more manageable task than having to take all in one stride. Congruent with the choice of national level cost, the testing on new party participation will be sensitive to the question of coverage (cf.

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[14]Only in two countries, Belgium & Switzerland are the competing parties votes concentrated in a number of districts less than 2/3s of the total.

below).

The next question concerns whether to conceive of costs in relative or absolute terms. In favour of relativising, an argument could be made that new parties in larger countries (population/wealth) ceteris paribus can draw on a stronger base of resources and thus fulfil requirements more easily. Contradicting this would be the argument that new parties facing an uncertain electoral future are hardly in a position to fully reap the advantages of scale. Considering the difference between petition requirements in the US and Denmark is instructive for understanding what is at stake. If costs are relativised the two cases look fairly similar, as already discussed. However, it is intuitively clear that collecting 1.6 million signatures requires organizational resources of quite a different order than 20.000. A key difference lies in the transaction costs involved for the group of political entrepreneurs in persuading a high number of corporate or individual sponsors to lend support to their cause. In Denmark relatively few actors can organise collecting the necessary signatures, while in the US a much higher number need to be involved for the endeavour to succeed. The presence of a larger pool of signatures or higher levels of financial wealth in larger countries cannot, in my view, be expected to off-set the costs of building the organisations it would require to mobilize them. Put differently, national abundance of money or signatures does not flow automatically to those in need of them. Endeavour is needed to reap the benefits of abundance, and it is highly probable that the constraining factor is not the presence of resources per se, but the mobilization of them. Especially when the demand on the resources is, in any case, infinitely much less than what is available, so agents tapping into them do not come close to exhausting them. Moreover the higher the risk that the enterprise fails, that is that the objective of not only participation but of representation and influence is achieved, the more difficult it would be to attract the assistance needed. Ballot access in the US would therefore seem a far more overwhelming task than it is in Denmark. When evaluating the comparative size of the barriers, I would, in light of these considerations, argue that a comparison

in absolute terms comes closer to being an accurate representation of the barrier to entry. This does not mean that a 20.000 signature barrier, which in Denmark might perform an adequate (or more than adequate) gate-keeper function, would be sufficiently high to keep the ballot manageable in a large country such as the US. One might expect ceteris paribus that more individuals/groups would want to form new parties - and be capable of doing so - in larger than in smaller countries. To keep the number of entrants at the same level larger countries may have to use higher requirements than in smaller ones, but this of course also entails that the barrier *is* higher.

The final issue concerns how to handle the differences between petition and fee/deposit requirements. Having two separate indicators aggravates the problem of the small N, and furthermore, there is, as mentioned, a tendency for countries with majoritarian electoral institutions to employ financial requirements, while countries with PR-systems tend to use petitions. To be able to separate the effects of the electoral system from these, it would be an advantage to be able to identify a method for putting all on a common scale. The method I suggest involves translating petition costs to financial costs by setting a price for signatures. 5000 signatures are thus equated with 1 GDP per capita. The background for this choice is the estimate, that if one person were to collect around 20 signatures a day for a working year (240 days), he/she would be able to collect 5000. On top of this effort of course comes administrative costs, which would be covered by the difference between an average annual wage and the GDP per capita. Whether more signatures could be collected on average or whether the administrative costs are much higher for an effort of this nature is uncertain and there is nothing in the literature to assist with making this decision.

3.2.2   Defining Participation: The Dependent Variable

Before the testing, a short comment on the data used is necessary. As mentioned above, the testing of the registration barrier (and other barriers) made by Hug relied on data on all parties recorded to have participated in national elections. The information on the new parties was collected from a variety of sources, and did not rely on any cut-off point, neither with respect to the share votes won or number of districts covered. The same approach is taken by Willey, as well as Harmel and Robertson in their studies of new parties. Deploring the lack of information on smaller parties aggregated in the 'other parties' category, in the International Almanac of Electoral History by Mackie and Rose, he consults other sources, such as newspaper accounts, to break the 'other' category into its constituent parts (Willey, 1998:637-8). Likewise Harmel and Robertson state 'no new party that could be identified in available sources is excluded from this study, regardless of size or electoral strength' (Harmel &Robertson, 1985:508). The problem in this approach is two-fold. On the one hand, there appears to be an element of chance involved with respect to the number of parties that make it to official records. This means that differences in frequency may not reflect real differences in participation rates, but differences in how meticulously events are recorded. On the other hand, the lack of a cut-off point with respect to district coverage creates a situation, where, if all new parties participating somewhere are counted, the numbers can be quite astronomical.

In order illustrate how these two problems affect the data, it is useful to cite a few cases; In New Zealand 1950-1972, a period for which very detailed district level data are available, 20 new parties presented candidates at national elections[15]. Only 4 of these, however, participate in more than a single district and only 1 party fields candidates in more than 20 pct of the districts of them. Moreover, the list

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[15]The data set on district level electoral results for New Zealand was made available by Prof. Jack Vowels Waikato University, New Zealand.

that Hug provides for this period includes only 5 parties for this period, and two of these only participate in 1 district. Obviously the sources he has consulted have used some criteria for inclusion, but they are not consistent. Similarly, Willey lists 16 new parties in New Zealand for the entire post-war period, which is less than the number for the shorter period mentioned by the detailed records referred to above. For the United Kingdom 1950-1997, where detailed district level results are also available, some 69 new parties have participated at elections. But of these only 4 of fielded candidates in more than 20 pct of the districts, and the majority of these only participated (or received votes) in a single district. Hugs lists counts 30 until 1989 (56 for the same period in the district level data set), while Willey counts 12 for the entire post war period. For Spain, some 44 new parties (using a lower cut-off point of 0.01 pct votes) were on record for the two elections 1993 and 1996, and the most successful of these, receiving 0.55 pct of the national votes, only participated in a small number of districts[16]. The problem is of course that the chances of detecting any effects that the ballot access laws may have are likely to fail if a clear criterion with respect to inclusion of cases is not applied. The differences between the sources are simply too large as these examples demonstrate.

The ideal dependent variable for this study would of course be the total number of parties that have registered to participate and the number of districts that each have fielded candidates in. This would allow us to test the real variation in partici-pation and the extent of coverage. Furthermore, it would allow us to systematically compare, whether even parties that obtain low returns still succeed in accessing or-ganising general participation in the districts, or whether this is reserved for parties obtaining more support at the polls, and thus supposedly more resourceful. How-ever, the district level data available for many countries does not allow such detailed comparison. For the data on Western Europe, for instance, a lower cut-off point of 5

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[16]The data are available on the web site of the Spanish Ministry of Interior (www.elecciones.mir.es)

pct. vote share at the district level is employed for all the countries, except the U.K. (Caramani, 2000)[17], which means that for a number of smaller parties, we cannot see how many districts they field candidates in. And for the remaining countries, the district level records available also differ somewhat with respect to the degree of detail (and for Japan district level data is available only 1947- 1990).

In light of this, I decided to test the effect of the barrier using different dependent variables. Firstly, testing the number of parties fielding candidates in $>.25$, $>.50$ and $>.75$ pct of the districts respectively, making use of the information where it is available. Secondly, in recognition of the lack of data on coverage in all cases, the number of new parties obtaining more than 1 pct. of the votes will be used as a complementary dependent variable. Furthermore, decade averages of the number of new parties, rather than the number per election, will be used to control for differences in the frequency of elections. Since there are significant differences in the number of elections in the different countries, counting new parties per elections would mean that countries with more elections would have to 'produce' more new parties than countries with few elections, if the conclusion that they are affected by higher barriers is to be avoided. Finally, in recognition of the fact that there may be periods of high demand for new parties, as well as periods of low demand, the maximum amount of new parties participating at any election in a given decade is included as a supplementary test of barrier effects.

3.2.3 Statistical Tests and Discussion of Results

In the following the relationship between the variables will be examined by use of different methods. Both OLS regression and non-parametric correlation will be used to analyse the relationship as discussed earlier (see 2.4). The first test of

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[17]Only the data set for the U.K. shows electoral results for parties obtaining lower vote shares.

OLS Regression

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties Participating*						
		District Participation			Vote	Decade Maximum	
	All	>0.25	>0.50	>0.75	>1pct.	>0.5 dis.	>1pct.vote
Registration Barrier	0.07	-0.31**	-0.32**	-0.27**	-0.29**	-0.36**	0.31**
	(0.001)	(-0.001)	(-0.001)	(-0.001)	(-0.001)	(-0.005)	(-0.004)
Constant	0.52**	0.20**	0.18**	0.14**	0.19**	1.16**	1.30**
R^2(adj)	**0.01**	**0.09****	**0.09****	**0.06****	**0.07****	**0.12****	**0.9****
N=84							
** p<0.01 level *; p<0.05 (two-tailed) - standardized coefficients reported, normal coefficients ( )							

Table 3.1: The Impact of the Registration Barrier on the Number of New Parties Participating

the hypothesis that a higher registration barrier leads to lower number of parties participating uses the following model: *Number of New Parties Participating =* $\beta_0 + \beta registration barrier + \varepsilon$

As can be seen from the results of the regression analysis summarized in table 3.1, there is a marked improvement in explanatory power in the regression analysis when district coverage (or vote share) is taken into account versus when simply all parties are counted[18]. The category containing all new parties is poorly predicted with an $R^2$of just 1 pct (non-significant) and furthermore the coefficient is in the 'wrong direction'. That is, instead of registration costs deterring participation, it appears to be encouraging it. When district coverage of new parties is taken into account the explanatory power is markedly improved. What level of coverage is chosen does not change the explanatory power much, however. The standardized coefficents across the dependent variables reflecting district coverage are all moderately strong,

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[18]The number of cases is 84. In 12 cases information on ballot access requirements was missing (typically for 1950s and 1960s). See Appendix I.

Non-Parametric Correlation

The Registration Barrier	*Number of New Parties Participating*						
		District Participation			Vote	Decade Maximum	
	All	>0.25	>0.50	>0.75	>1pct.	>0.5 dis.	>1pct.vote
Kendall's tau	0.19*	-0.19**	-0.15**	-0.15**	-0.13	-0.21**	-0.08
Spearman's rho	0.25*	-0.26**	-0.29**	-0.20*	-0.17	-0.28**	-0.09
N=84							
**p<0.01; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)							

Table 3.2: Correlation of the Registration Barrier and the Number of New Parties Participating

negative and significant. Very similar results are obtained when participation is measured by a minimum of 1 pct vote share. It can also be observed that the explanatory power is greatest for the category containing the maximum numbers of new parties per decades. The non-standardized coefficients are very low, however, indicating that large changes in the registration barrier are needed to exert much of an influence on the number of new parties participating.

The next analysis of the relationship between the registration barrier and the number of new parties participating makes use of non-parametric statistical methods. As can be seen from the correlations coefficients 3.2, similar results to the above OLS regression are obtained. Again the category of all new parties stands out due to its positive coefficients compared to the negative coeffients for those taking district coverage or vote share into account. The Kendall's tau indicates that knowledge of the ranking of registration costs will reduce errors in predicting the ranking for most of the dependent variables some 15-20 pct. The category of the number of parties obtaining 1 pct of the vote is again least well predicted (low and insignificant) and the category containing the maximum per decade number of new parties with 50 pct district coverage is again predicted best. The Spearman's rho likewise reveals

a rather weak association between the registration barrier and number(s) of new parties. For both non-parametric measures, the results are significant - almost all the 1 pct. level - in all cases except for the category of new parties obtaining a minimum of 1 pct of the votes.

On basis of the statistical analysis, it is fair to conclude that the registration barrier has a weak but nonetheless significant reductive effect on the number of new parties participating[19]. The effect is only apparent when the district coverage of new parties participating is taken into account, however. If all parties irrespective of how many districts they participate in are included in the dataset, then the registration barrier instead appears to have positive effect on participation rates. The analysis does not give us much of a clue, however, as to whether all variation in registration costs matter. From the presentation of the cases, it was evident that there is (and has been) large variation in the values and it is probable that ballot access effects on new party participation only become apparent over a certain threshold. To get an idea of this, it is necessary to take a closer look at the relationship. From the graphic presentation of the relationship between the registration barrier and the decade maximum number of new parties with an above 50 pct. district participation and winning 1 pct or more of the votes, it can be seen that the relationship between the variables is not linear (see figures 3.6 and 3.7).

From the figures, it can be seen that most cases have GDP per capita costs of below 5 and furthermore it looks as if variation below this range makes little difference to the rate of new party entry. But at which level the registration costs may begin to matter is difficult to say. The number of cases that would allow for a proper test of the relationship between ballot access requirements above this threshold level is

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[19]Two other conversion factors for translating petition into financial costs - equating the GDP per capita with half (2500) and double (10000) the number of signatures per person - was also tried. This did not change the results very much, however, and generally only resulted in a slight (around 1 pct) lowering of the adjusted R^2.

Figure 3.6: The Maximum Number of New Parties Participating (>50 pct Districts)
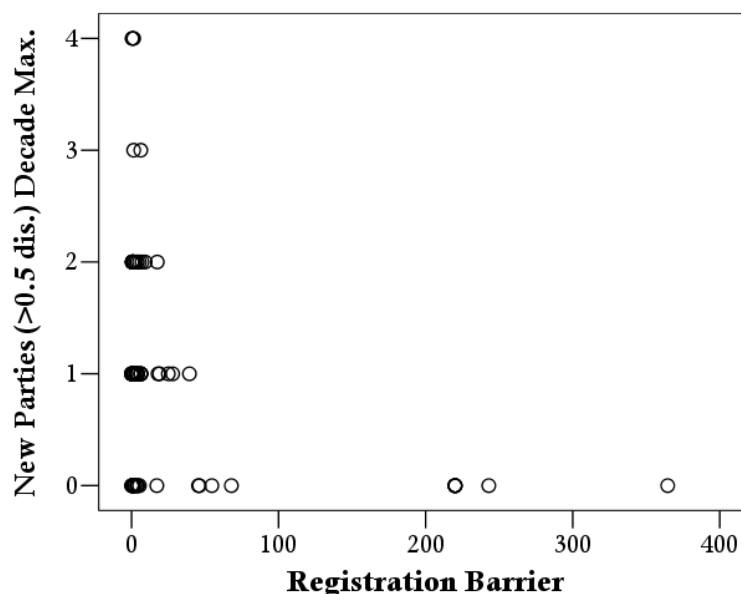
small. A closer look at the cases with high requirements may be helpful.

The cases where the registration barrier is very high give some indication that participation has been deterred. Looking at the U.K. over time, for instance, there is not a single new party in the three decades 1950-1980 that organises participation in over 25 pct of the districts. There are several parties that field candidates in the elections in the 1960s-1970s, but who only in the 1980s manage to present themselves in more than a just a few. For instance, the British National Party is seen participating at elections from 1964, but only in 1983 do they run in as many as 64 districts - and the same pattern can be observed for the National Front and the Workers Revolutionary Party that also begin with few districts and only expand to a higher number in the 1980s. The Green party, which in 1992 presented candidates in 255 constituencies, started out with just 7 and 52 in the 1970s, and then expanded to 110 and 134 in the elections of the 1980s. We might, of course, be observing a normal growth

Figure 3.7: The Maximum Number of New Parties Participating (>1 pct votes)
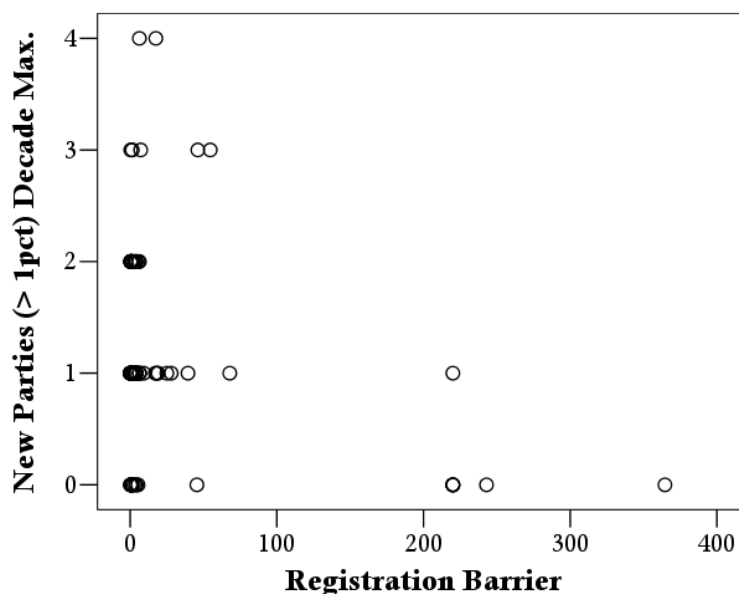
pattern of new parties that begin in a few constituencies and then gradually build up their organisation in response to support, to cover more ground. If we compare with parties in countries that similarly employ single member districts but have low registration barriers (Canada, Australia, New Zealand), a similar tendency for new parties to begin in fewer constituencies and then expand can be observed. But there is a clear difference. In the latter countries, the new parties start out covering many more districts, and then they expand much faster. Typically they reach a significant coverage at their second election. Moreover, there are clearly more of them. With respect to the registration barrier of the U.K. in the 1990s, which is much lower than in the preceding decades but still comparatively high, it is notable that two parties, the Natural Law Party and Referendum Party, present themselves in 298 and 547 constituencies respectively (of 651 districts) and obtaining just 0.18 and 2.7 pct of the votes. Participation in many districts may still represent a challenge, but it is at

least not impossible for parties which receive only little support at the polls[20].

Observing the pattern of new party participation in the United States in the post war period, the effects of the registration barrier are evident. There are only two parties in the period that manage to organise ballot access in over 25 pct of the districts, and both do so in the 1980s and 1990s. The Libertarian party, which had participated since the mid 1970s and at its peak nominated candidates in 120 constituencies in 26 states (1992), and Natural Law party, which was present in 16 states and 154 districts in 1992. While it may be true, as for instance Cox (1997) and Willey (1998) argue, that the incentives to form parties is lower in the U.S., due to the nature of the parties and the open primaries, than in the other countries in the group, it does seem telling that out of the 18 new parties that did form and participated in House elections between 1950-1999, none of them managed to access more ballots.

In the case of Japan, it is not so easy to assess the extent of the deterrent effect from numbers alone. But it may be instructive to look a bit closer at the new parties that participated. In the 1950s-70s, there are 5 new parties. All except one are splits from existing parties, however, and only 2 of these nominate candidates in the majority of the districts. And if electoral success at the first election can be used as a measure of resourcefulness, then both of these are resourceful as they take about 9 pct of the vote share each. The other two parties, which are also splits, are only present in 8 and 34 districts (of 130 possible) and do not make any noteworthy expansion in the following elections. The only genuinely new party runs in about half of the districts, but does not expand in the following elections either. In the 1980s where the participating fees are significantly increased, there are no new ones. In the

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[20]Commenting on the impact of the increase in the deposit in 1985, Katz concludes that 'the size of the deposit primarily affects the number of independent and fringe party candidates, while the threshold [which was lowered from 12.5 to 5 pct.] affects the costs of competition for small (and not so small) parties that will present candidates regardless (Katz, 1997: 260).

1990s, major changes in the party system take place, and there are a number of new parties splitting off from the established ones. Unfortunately data on participation in districts is lacking, so it is not possible to know how widely they participated. It would naturally require proper case studies to assess how the participation fees may affect the decisions of parties to field candidates in districts in Japan.

Finally, there are some countries which fall into the group of intermediate-high requirements for some periods. That is France (1960s-70s), Ireland (1960s) and the Netherlands (1990s). For the Netherlands, there are 4 new parties participating in the 1990s, but data on many districts they participate in is not available, since their electoral returns were very low. For Ireland in the 1960s there is just one new party (Democratic Party), and it nominates candidates in just 10 pct of the constituencies. New parties participating in subsequent decades tend to present themselves in at least 25 pct of the districts, but this may be caused by other factors, of course. In the case of France, district level data are absent, as electoral results have been aggregated at the level of the 90 regions rather than the 460-470 primary districts. So all that can be said is that in the 1960s and 1970s there are 3 new parties that participate, two of these fielded candidates in over 75 pct of the regions and one in just over half. While there is evidence to support that ballot access in the countries that have very high requirements actually prevents participation, it is difficult with these data to establish, at what exact level it is reasonable to say that the ballot access actually constitutes a barrier to be reckoned with.

A separate test was made of the countries using petition requirements since they (with the exception of the U.S.) fall into the group with low requirements as operationalized here. The lack of any apparent effects of ballot access requirements for these cases could be related to an erroneous translation of petition to financial costs. It was not possible to establish any meaningful results by statistical methods, how-

ever[21]. Evidence from the individual cases tends to support the conclusion that the registration barrier doesn't keep new parties out. The countries with the high petition requirements, Italy, Spain, Germany and Denmark, have all regularly witnessed new parties participating with a high coverage of the districts. And in all of these countries, there are recorded cases of parties with low popular support (1-2 pct vote share) that have participated in over 75 pct of the districts[22]. In this connection, it is worth citing within country evidence from Denmark, where petition requirements were doubled in 1965 (from 10.000 to 20.000 signatures). Pedersen refers to a study on the process of registering for elections in Denmark, where it is found that of 43 parties attempting to be accepted in the period 1915-75, only 3 had failed (Pedersen, 1991). This does indicate that party competition was not been seriously hindered by the ballot access laws in this case.

In conclusion, it can be said that ballot access is not a major obstacle for new parties in the large majority of the countries in the period studied here. Only two countries, Japan and the US, have consistently applied very high requirements, which are likely to have deterred participation. Historically, The United Kingdom also had very high barriers until the 1980s when requirements fell to more manageable levels. They are still high,however, and likely to challenge potential contenders. France (1960s-1970s) and Ireland (1960s) also imposed high costs of registration, but in subsequent decades these can not be regarded as high.

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[21]In fact, there was a sligth postive (not significant) correlation between petition requirements and the number of new parties participating.

[22]Examples of parties with low electoral returns and district participation over 75 pct: Germany: German Peace Union 1961 (1.9 pct), Spain: Democratic Reform Party 1986 (1.pct), Italy: Radical Party 1976 (1.1. pct), Denmark: Unity List 1987 (1.3 pct).

Chapter 4

The Recognition Barrier

Ignorance may well be the most important barrier shielding established parties from competitive threats emerging from outside the political institutions. Discrepancies between the performance of existing parties and electoral preferences are not sufficient in themselves to propel new parties into public office. However worthy a cause espoused and however strong the disenchantment of the public with its current political leaders, if a new contender does not succeed in establishing itself in the mind of the public as a viable alternative, it stands little chance of gaining electoral support - even if it has obtained a place on the ballot. Since the information that needs to be transmitted is typically multifaceted and furthermore aims to induce voters to act, the task is not an easy one. The resources needed for bridging the gap between anonymity and renown, the special opportunities and obstacles presented to succeed in this effort, make up the recognition barrier to entry in politics.

The most direct barrier to recognition new parties can encounter is obviously if they are directly prevented from disseminating information about themselves by the authorities. This type of barrier does not appear to have distorted the electoral process in the countries included in this study, however. The democratic rules of the

game, including the right to campaign for the registered participants at elections, have largely been observed[1]. Nevertheless, equal rights to campaign do not entail equal opportunities for all to do so. The challenge facing parties in their efforts to emerge from obscurity may instead vary significantly across countries and time.

The question is, however, what specific factors influence the level of difficulty involved in obtaining recognition for new parties. Until now, only little research has been devoted to this issue, and the few studies that address it focus exclusively on differences in the level of state support for electoral campaigns (Abedi, 2004; Bowler, Carter & Farrell, 2003; Hug, 2001). Considering that the level of assistance typically provided is unlikely to be sufficient in itself to provide parties with the level of exposure necessary, it not unreasonable to suggest that there may be more to the story than that. In order to identify other possible barriers or facilitators to recognition, it is necessary to give careful consideration to how parties can transmit information as well as how it is received. The success of any effort to communicate a message depends on both sender and receiver. As Gunther and Mughan write 'the political effects of this information [from the mass media] are shaped by the interaction between its use by elites and the receptivity of individual citizens who are the targets of political messages' (Gunther & Mughan, 2000: 444). It can therefore be argued that the recognition barrier is determined by the costs and opportunities for relaying messages to the public, as well as the propensity for the public to acquire information made available to them. And there is no reason to assume from the outset that such communicative conditions do not vary across countries or time.

The first part of the chapter is consequently devoted to exploring possible sources of barriers (and facilitators) to recognition at the two ends of the communicative

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[1]There have been instances, such as the exclusion of the Communist Party in New Zealand from access to air time in the 1960s (Bowler, Carter & Farrell, 2003). But such cases appear to have been rare and none of the studies concerned with formation and entry of new parties take this actively into consideration (Harmel & Robertson, 1985; Hug, 2001; Willey, 1998)

effort. A wide range of possible barriers will be considered and the feasibility of subjecting them to empirical analysis briefly assessed. Five factors are identified, which are then subjected to further empirical analysis and testing in the second part of the chapter.

4.1 Sources of Barriers

4.1.1 Barriers in Reception of Political Information

Barriers to recognition are not likely to stem from deficient provision of information alone. Inadequate reception of the information parties 'put out' about themselves may present an equally serious hurdle to new parties trying to make a name for themselves. The implications of this dimension for the comparative costs of communication will be explored by first considering the consequences of the generally low level of interest in and knowledge of politics observed, and secondly, by considering the implications of differences in how attentive electorates are to political news.

Ignorance, short-cuts and barriers

A perfectly informed electorate would undoubtedly provide ideal conditions for entry of new parties, since it would remove the advantage incumbents have by already being well known to the public. New parties would simply have to present their platform, and if this, and its candidates, were more to voters' liking than the already existing ones, they would be elected. Both theory and reality militate against the credibility of this scenario, however. Theoretically, there are strong arguments that the average citizen will invest only little time in informing him or herself about politics. As Downs argued there is simply a shortage of rational incentives to devote resources to

this (Downs, 1957: 246). Gauging from observed levels of interest in and knowledge of politics, it appears that the Downsian prediction is not far off the mark. Decades of research has only served to confirm over and over that most citizens have only scant knowledge of politics and take little interest therein. As two scholars recently commented, 'The widespread ignorance of the general public about all but the most highly salient political events and actors is one of the best documented facts in all of the social sciences' (Lau & Redlawsk, 2001)[2].

The consistently low levels of knowledge displayed by the vast majority of the world's democratic citizens are undoubtedly one of the most unsettling factors in the equation sustaining democracy. The hazard of voter ignorance is that it belies the very idea of democratic rule, namely government constrained by citizens' interests and preferences. Not all have been willing to succumb to the view that democracy is naught but a fiction, however. A number of political scientists have instead been at pains to salvage both the dignity and democratic value of voters' choices. While these scholars do not fail to acknowledge the factual ignorance of politics displayed by most citizens, or the fact that they pay little attention to politics, they fail to accredit this basic reality quite the devastating effects on the integrity of vote-decisions that others tend to do.

The 'know-nothings' can, it is argued, make 'good-enough' and even quite rational choices (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). Drawing on the insights of cognitive psychology, the focus is shifted from the limited information actually retained by each individual to the mechanisms whereby we humans in many arenas deal with a complex environment and manage to navigate in situations of 'informational overload'. Rather than basing decisions of careful weighing of facts, so the argument goes, 'human be-

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[2]The conclusion refers primarily to surveys of voter knowledge in the US (e.g. Bennet, 2003). Shifting attention to other established democracies gives little cause for significant revisions of the picture of a generally uninformed electorate, however (e.g. Vettehen et al, 2004; Popkin and Dimock, 1999).

ings have adaptively developed a large series of cognitive heuristics or shortcuts that allow them to make 'pretty good' judgements most of the time' (Lau & Redlawsk, 1997: 586). The key is the so-called cues or short-cuts, which serve as substitutes for detailed information. As Lupia and McCubbins claim 'when substitutes for detailed information are available, then people who have limited information can make reasoned choices' (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998: 36).

What is not discussed by these scholars, however, is how heuristic short-cuts might influence the chances that new parties are recognized as alternatives. And it can in fact be argued that it is not inconsequential which cues people use. Briefly considering the impact of some frequently mentioned cues can serve to illustrate the point. Using 'party' as a cue for voting decisions would for instance tend to close the system to outsiders (as discussed by Fiorina, 1981). If the landmarks on the political map of the average voter are established party names, which in turn are associated with certain key positions, values and behaviours, their movements are inevitably confined to these. Using ideology as a short-cut can be expected to have a more open effect. New contenders' entry might be facilitated if the public were to base their decisions on ideological cues. Rather than having to communicate an entire set of policy proposals, a few ideological references can be sufficient to get across to people. The obstacle parties may encounter in this respect might instead lie in the ideological space itself, that is, whether it is already crowded and monopolised by established actors. Using endorsements by known actors - including unions, business associations, churches, media organizations etc. - might be expected to have a more conservative effect. At least in times of stability, endorsements are likely to bias the status quo. Betting on newcomers is generally - although of course not always - a less secure way of ensuring that members' interests are protected. Endorsements may therefore prove a difficult resource to procure. Finally, personality traits of political candidates have- in line with the prominent role of television - been attributed an ever stronger role as cues for voters (e.g. Wattenberg, 1991). This tendency might

put establishment parties on an equal footing with newcomers, since there is no reason to believe that either would be in a particularly privileged position to attract 'likeable' candidates.

While it is interesting to speculate on how low levels of political knowledge coupled with the use of different heuristic devices may affect the openness of the political arena, it is difficult to move beyond that. It is not unreasonable to presume that not all types of cues are equally important everywhere, as the extent ideological polarization, partisan identification, the role of organisations of civil society etc. are known to vary (e.g. Dalton &Wattenberg, 2000; Franklin et al. 1992, Bartolini & Mair, 1990; Inglehart, 1990). However, systematic comparative research into the relative importance of cues in electoral decision-making does not exist, as most research has focussed on the US, and it is therefore not possible to pursue the question further here (Dalton, 2000)[3].

Public Attention to Political Information

A politically well informed and interested electorate would certainly provide the most level playing field for the competition between old and new parties. But, as discussed, such conditions are unlikely to obtain anywhere and incumbents will therefore always enjoy a strong advantage simply by being known to electors. However, it can be argued that differences in the level of attention the public pays to political news will influence the chances that new parties might succeed in being noticed. For a new party to be recognized as an alternative to existing ones does not require that the

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[3]'Much of the primary research on political cognition and political sophistication is based on the American public. One may argue that many of the cognitive processes being studied transcend national boundaries: Americans presumable think about politics in ways that are similar to other publics. However, we also know that political structures can affect political perceptions and cognition. The non-ideological and complex structure of American politics, for example, creates much different dynamics for electoral choice than a polarized parliamentary system' (Dalton, 2000: 921)

public is thoroughly acquainted with its policy proposals and candidates, no more than voting for the already represented parties does. It does require, however, that the party is seen or heard enough times to be remembered. Greater attention paid to news about politics would therefore - ceteris paribus - increase the chances that new parties are recognized. The question is of course whether electorates differ in this respect.

There are a number of studies that bring evidence that national electorates in fact do differ with respect to how attentive they are to news about politics and consequently how well informed they are (see Milner, 2002: 53-66). Unfortunately, comparative data on how much time people in different countries spend following political news is not available and neither is information about relative differences in knowledge levels. However, a number of studies have revealed that there are clear differences with respect to how much political information different types of media provide, and popular media consumption patterns consequently indicate how exposed they are to political news. As will be argued below, media use can therefore be used as a proxy indicator for consumption of political information. It is therefore possible to suggest the following hypothesis for empirical testing:

- *Higher public exposure to political information lowers the recognition barrier.*

Before proceeding with the empirical testing of this proposition, the issue of barriers arising at the transmitting end of the communication will be considered.

4.1.2 Barriers in Transmitting Political Information

Political information: Availability and Suppliers

The possibilities for communicating with the public have vastly expanded in the post war period and caused a radical transformation in the nature as well as sheer magnitude of societal information flows. The much discussed revolution in information technologies and their spread during the second half of the 20th century has profoundly impacted society and with it of course also its politics. Driven by changes in technologies and communication infrastructure, the channels of communication available have multiplied drastically and made information an ubiquitous and easily accessible commodity for citizens from all walks of life[4]. The expansion of media systems has had far reaching implications for various aspects of the cultural, social and political life of nations. In the area of political communication, the impact has certainly been profound. On the one hand, there has been a massive increase in the amount of information transmitted, the speed with which it travels and its reach. On the other, the emergence of mass media organizations has crowded out other actors providing information on politics, including political parties themselves[5].

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[4]The most radical changes with respect to the transmission of information in the post war period have occurred in the broadcast media, particularly television. From the inception of regular broadcasts typically occurring in the course of the 1950s, television rapidly expanded its reach. Already by 1970 an average of 270 per thousand inhabitants in the established democracies owned a television set and the vast majorities of the populations could be counted among the regular viewers. The development of radio preceded that of TV by some decades, but also expanded in this period (UNESCO, 2002). The so-called new media appeared later and in the 1990s still only played a marginal role for election campaigns.

[5]As Hallin and Mancini comment that the mass media has become 'a central social institution to a significant extent displacing churches, parties, trade unions, an other traditional organizations of civil society as the central means by which individuals are connected to the wider social and political world' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 33). Dalton and Wattenberg further observe that not only have parties lost ground with respect to the general flow of information on political affairs, but also in relation to their own electioneering efforts. They write: 'The mass media are assuming many of the information functions that

As a result of these developments, it is possible to hypothesize that recognition has generally become easier for new parties to obtain. Firstly, because technologies of communication have made transmission of information easier with the result that there has been a steep increase in the amount available and in the facility with which the public can acquire it. Secondly, because the costs of communication no longer necessarily fall on parties themselves. The growth of a specialized media industry has arguably had implications for organizational and resource demands being made on political parties - be they new or established. In a certain sense, a burden has been lifted from the shoulders of political parties, as they no longer have to bear the full costs of communicating with the public. As both generators and carriers of political messages to the public, parties depended on commanding considerable organisational resources, such as a membership that could be mobilized to campaign, close ties to organisations of civil society that could be relied on to relay messages on their behalf or access to economic resources enabling them to communicate to the public through their own newspapers. This would of course seem to make the task facing new parties trying to obtain public recognition quite formidable, since such resources would have to be mobilized before electoral support could be attained.

Testing whether the expansion of media systems has had the effect of reducing the recognition barrier would either require a comparison of periods before the development of mass media and after, or alternatively examine differences in the post-war period according to the different rates of expansion of the reach and dominance of the mass media (i.e. primarily the broadcast media). In the former case, testing would move outside the period limits for the study, in the latter it would be necessary to acquire precise information about the dominance of mass media as sources of information over time. And to my knowledge accurate comparative data of this

political parties once controlled. Instead of learning about an election at a campaign rally or from party canvassers, the mass media have become the primary source of campaign information' (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000:11-12)

nature are not available[6]. Moreover, due to strong similarities among the countries in this study with respect to the timing of the introduction and development of broadcast media, there is a risk that relying on approximations will result in an indicator, which is very close to the simple passing of time - and thus overlap with a number of other phenomena as well.

While the effects of these changes in communication technologies and identity of suppliers cannot be analysed further here, it is necessary to consider the bias of suppliers with respect to the content of the information conveyed.

Media Systems and 'Insider-Bias'

The mass media can facilitate the entry of parties without independent resources for communicating. There are no indications, however, that obtaining coverage in the mass media is always costless, nor is it likely that all actors have the same chances of getting attention in the media. Established parties and political figures are naturally advantaged with respect to media attention. As the lead characters of political dramas and natural suppliers of political news, they are guaranteed a place in the limelight. For new parties, the task is different, since they have to establish their relevance. If the media were neutral in their selection and presentation of information about politics, the barrier might be the same for new parties everywhere. But as the pundits never grow wary of pointing out, in the selection of news and stories, in how they are told, as well as in the space they are accorded, the media, intentionally or inadvertently, colour their material. The question is, however, whether it is meaningful to suggest that national media systems - comprising the totality of media outlets in a given country - might exhibit different degrees of bias with respect

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[6]UNESCO provides data on the number of radio and television receivers in each country from the 1970s onwards. However, apart from information about when regular broadcasting began in the different countries, data on reach of mass media before the 1970s are not available.

to coverage of politics in general and in their openness to new parties specifically.

A number of scholars do in fact argue that national media systems tend to differ quite significantly with respect to their coverage of politics (e.g. Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Humphrey, 1996; Blumler, 1992; Kuhn, 1985; Seymour-Ure, 1974). On the basis of the evidence amassed on the different systems, there is in fact little reason to suppose that parties in different systems have similar opportunities for communicating to the public through the mass media. As Semetko for instance comments 'the conditions under which politicians attain visibility through the media differ widely across countries, depending on the media systems' (Semetko, 1996). The question is 'just' what specific features of the media systems are likely to play a role for the efforts of new parties to obtain publicity. On this topic there is little direct help to find in the literature, as this question has not, to my knowledge, been subjected to systematic comparative research. However, media scholars discuss a number of different characteristics, which directly or indirectly may influence the openness of the media to actors outside the political establishment. In the following, I will briefly review these features with a view to identifying those possible to subject to further empirical analysis and testing.

Firstly, the extent of diversity or concentration in national media systems might be expected to influence their accessibility to new actors. The higher the number of independent editorial units, and the greater variety of information communicated, the greater we might expect the chances that new parties get publicity to be. The tendency towards increasing concentration of ownership as well as the reduction in number of independent outlets (in the press system) over the past fifty years could therefore be interpreted as a move in the direction of more closed media systems. However, as several have pointed out, 'real' diversity is difficult to measure empirically (e.g. Voltmer, 2000; Picard, 1998; Humphrey, 1996). The problem is that concentration - whether on the dimension of ownership or the number of outlets -

does not correspond directly with the number of independent editorial units or with message diversity. On the one hand, common ownership does not necessarily entail uniformity in message and political viewpoints[7]. On the other, multiplicity of outlets is no guarantee for message diversity either due to the widespread practice of outsourcing news production to specialized agencies[8]. Apart from the difficulties in obtaining data on the relevant dimensions, there is therefore also a problem in construction of valid indicators of this phenomenon, making it difficult to pursue this further here.

Secondly, the criteria employed by media organisations for selecting a 'good story' are likely to play an important role. Countless media scholars have commented on the spread of a 'media logic', which implies that abiding social and economic problems lose out to short-term events with higher 'entertainment' value in the competition for media attention[9]. Mughan and Gunther comment that scholars agree that the 'notion of a 'media logic' - according to which television is seen as privileging candidates over party, program, or policy-relevant issues' is a ubiquitous phenomenon, but also qualify this by saying that 'this logic is not felt equally strong in all countries' (Mughan & Gunther, 2000:403)[10]. Many argue that this tendency is enhanced in national media systems when commercial competition for audiences is strong, but

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[7]'Demers has shown that top editors at the chain-owned newspapers enjoyed no less professional autonomy than those at independently owned ones, and that corporatization and globalization of the media have not been associated with a shrinkage in the diversity of ideas available to mass publics (Demers, 1999: chapter 7)' (Gunther & Mughan, 2000:423)

[8]As Picard writes 'most studies of media content have shown that different units of a medium and different media tend to provide relatively similar content, programming and views because of commercial concerns' (Picard, 1998: 213).

[9]As Mazzolini et al. for instance write 'the media, by virtue of their espousal of new values - such as timeliness, proximity and prominence - tend to focus upon dramatic and transitory issues rather than on prolonged analyses of social and political phenomena' (Mazzolini, 2003: 226)

[10]It has been argued that the spread of the media logic constitutes the basis for a convergence of media systems. However, as Hallin and Mancini point out there is an 'important ambiguity' about whether 'this is essentially a professional or a commercial logic' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 253)

journalistic cultures, popular demand and individual media types may be equally determining. As Hallin and Mancini point out there is an 'important ambiguity' about whether the media logic 'is essentially a professional or a commercial logic' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 253). A strong predilection for interesting personalities, novelties, scandals or crises no doubt provides ample possibilities for entry into the lime light for actors with an aptitude for providing the media with stories matching these criteria[11]. While undoubtedly providing an easy way into the public eye for some new parties, it should of course be kept in mind that the 'media logic' can work to the detriment of parties that have little to offer on those terms. Assessing the relative strength of 'media logic' in different media systems is not possible, however, and it is therefore not feasible to investigate its effects comparatively.

Thirdly, it has been argued that journalist cultures simply vary strongly with respect to how they interpret and practice their political roles. In some cultures journalists see it as their task to advocate particular views and participate in setting the agenda, while in others this is perceived to be the task of established political actors (Patterson, 1998; Donsbach & Patterson, 2004). It is for instance described how the partisan 'impartiality', which is aspired to in some cultures, such as the American press, is interpreted by journalists as fairly reporting the viewpoints of representatives of the main parties[12]. Furthermore, it has been argued that journal-

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[11]There are many accounts of populist or extremist parties that have enjoyed extensive coverage simply because they deliver provocative statements challenging established conventions or actors, and therefore provide a novelty and 'crises-feel' to the stories that can be transmitted to the public. As Mazzoleni writes 'Neo-populist leaders...appear at all times to be astute exploiters of 'free advertising' and in fact 'rely mostly on this kind of 'free media' to gain coverage and exposure, rather than on paid advertising (Mazzoleni, 2003:15).

[12]As one American newspaper editor is quoted saying 'After thinking it over, it became obvious to me that the fairness I was so fond of extended only to those who won or came in second. I had never even entertained the possibility of covering minor-party candidates, either during the campaign or in the election results' (Byrd, 1998). Likewise, the impartiality practised by the BBC in its coverage of political affairs has, some argue, also manifested itself in balanced coverage of the major parties and therefore not necessarily

ists in some cultures, more than others, are trained to interpret politics as a 'strategic game' (Patterson, 1993). In addition to other consequences of this approach, the focus on 'winners' in a game perspective can make life doubly difficult for parties in systems, where new parties for other reasons have a hard time getting in. There is thus little doubt that differences in professional cultures may play an important role for the efforts of new parties to obtain publicity[13]. The absence of more than anecdotal evidence of such differences, and the difficulty in obtaining it per se, makes it impossible to consider this dimension further, however.

Finally, the degree of 'political parallelism' - understood as the links between the media and political parties[14] - in media systems is likely to influence the situation for political outsiders. As Mughan and Gunther, for instance, argue 'the emergence of political television has helped to transform party systems by giving unprecedented publicity to parties (such as the Liberals in Britain) that had been largely ignored by a partisan press aligned with the governing Conservatives and Labour, or to new parties, like Berlusconi's Forza Italia..'(Gunther & Mughan, 2000: 417). A media system, whose constituent parts are closely affiliated or identified with established political actors, can simply be expected to paint a different picture of reality than more independent media systems. As Mazzoleni put is, 'The Political reality ordered and structured by the media is closely correlated with the degree of the integration of the media into the political system and with the unique patterns of relations between the media institutions and the political establishments existing in different national contexts' (Mazzoleni, 2003: 13). Further, Entman writes 'In a national

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benefited other actors (Burns, 1977 cited in Mughan & Gunther, 2000: 11).

[13]Commenting on Australian media, Mazzoleni for instance writes: 'national media... had for decades cynically portrayed political reality as a simple choice between the two major parties to the detriment of the minor parties (Mazzoleni et al, 2003: 220).

[14]Hallin and Mancini adapt Seymour-Ure's term 'Party-Press Parallelism' to a broader concept of Political Parallelism, which they define as 'the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties or, more broadly, the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 21).

context where governmental political control over media organisation is stronger, and partisan news media coverage is more common, the political interests of both the media and political elites are much closer (Entman, 1989)[15]. Since established political parties would generally not afford new parties much space in the limelight, if they can help it, the nature of the links between the political establishment and the media systems is likely to determine the chances that new parties obtain coverage as well as what kind of coverage they get. Moreover, while the data available on this dimension is far from complete, there is enough information available to allow for its inclusion. The hypothesis, which will be subjected to empirical analysis, can be formulated as follows:

- *The stronger the links between the established party system and the media system, the higher the recognition barrier.*

Before moving to the operationalization and empirical testing, other relevant hypotheses will first be considered.

Direct Communication

The pivotal role of the mass media notwithstanding, the paths of direct communication are neither hermetically sealed nor irrelevant to the electoral contest. It is clear that the methods and the relative importance of direct communication have changed over the post war period in line with the expansion of the mass media. The question is, however, whether it is possible to assess differences in the costs of direct communication across countries and time. The role of the state through laws regulating the activities of political parties, as well as the properties of the 'target group' of the communication need to be considered;

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[15]Cited in Mazzoleni 2003: 13

Firstly, there are notable differences between countries with respect to the laws that regulate parties' campaigning efforts as well as their financial status. Differences in rules on disclosure of and ceilings on contributions, tax breaks for contributors and parties, bans on specific sources of income or limits on expenditure etc., are likely to constrain or enable parties with respect to mobilizing resources and campaigning (Alexander,1989; Alexander & Shiratori, 1994; IDEA, 2003). Bans on advertising in television, along with expenditure ceilings, may for instance have the effect of putting new and established parties on a more equal footing, while tax breaks for contributors may make it easier for all parties to attract resources. It is very difficult, however, to assess the implications of the different types of legislation in their national context, and consequently to assess their comparative barrier effects. The focus here is consequently on the two most direct forms of assistance, namely state guaranteed free access to media in the course of electoral campaigns and direct financial assistance. State funding or free access to exposure in the media can play a particularly important role for groups trying to organize politically. As Nassmacher writes 'the harsh reality is that it is often the lack of financial resources which prevents the leaders and supporters of such groups [politically relevant groups in society] from achieving political participation through representation which would foster the democratic protection of their interests' (Nassmacher, 2003:1). Even if such assistance is not sufficient in itself, it may prove important for less resourceful actors. As mentioned earlier, state support for parties has been included as a variable in other studies too (Abedi, 2004; Bowler, Carter & Farrel, 2003; Hug, 2001). The expectation is simply that more generous terms of free access to media and financial assistance will lower the recognition barrier.

Secondly, to determine the costs of direct campaign both the means of communication, as well as properties of the 'target group' may be important. As already mentioned, the expansion of media systems in the post war period implied a shift in voters' attention towards mass media at the expense of other sources of informa-

tion. For parties this has implied a shift in the means of communication, from more labour-intensive forms - such as door-to-door canvassing or town-hall meetings - to more capital intensive forms, namely advertising. Whether this shift has implied an increase in the costs of communicating with voters, is not an easy question to settle, however. It is clear that a shift of this nature favours parties who mobilize funds more easily than manpower, but with respect to absolute levels, it is difficult to compare. The other consideration concerns the costs of reaching the 'target group' in a direct information effort. It is intuitively clear that the number of people new parties need to reach with their messages will make a significant difference for the costs incurred. Whether a new party tries to obtain recognition with 5 million or 40 million voters will influence the resources required to succeed. It is also likely, however, that other factors than the sheer number of people enter the equation for determining costs. Population density might be particularly important if face-to-face methods are used, whereas an advertising strategy is likely to be more strongly affected by factors such as the number and relative reach of media outlets. How to measure this feature will be addressed further below.

Three hypotheses related to the costs of direct communication can thus be formulated on the basis of the discussion above:

- *The more generous the terms of free access to media for new parties, the lower the recognition barrier*

- *The more generous the terms of financial assistances for new parties, the lower the recognition barrier*

- *The higher the costs of reaching the electorate in a direct campaign, the higher the recognition barrier*

4.1.3   Overview of Hypothesized Barriers

In the preceding section, no less that fifteen different factors were discussed, which can be expected to influence the height of the recognition barrier. Of these, five were singled out for further empirical analysis and testing. The lack of data and/or the difficulty involved in measuring the phenomena in question render it impossible to consider others. For the sake of overview, each of the hypothesized relationships is illustrated in figure 4.1 on page 121. The five hypotheses to be considered in the following section are highlighted.

Compared to the registration barrier, it is obvious that the barrier to recognition is much more difficult to capture. Quite another level of complexity is involved in modelling information flows in a society than ballot access, and identifying conditions that may facilitate or block such flows is consequently more demanding. Given the number of different factors that may influence the ease with which new parties can obtain recognition, it is also likely that predicting differences in the number of parties actually succeeding in winning recognition will be difficult. However, in the following each of the hypotheses will be operationalized and tested in turn.

Figure 4.1: Overview of Hypothesized Recognition Barriers

Reception of Political Information

Use of Cues
'Party' (+)

'Ideology' (-)

'Endorsements' (+)

'Personality traits' (-)

Attention to Political Information
Public Exposure (-)

Transmission of Political Information

Political Information: Reach and Suppliers
Communication Technologies (-)

Mass Media Dominance (-)

Media System and 'Insider'-Bias
Diversity (-)

'Media Logic' (+/-)

Journalistic Insider Bias (+)

Political Links (+)

Direct Communication
Legal framework (?)

Free Media Access (-)

State Funding (-)

Costs of Reaching Voters (+)

Recognition Barrier

4.2 Public Exposure to Political Information

The first proposition made is that greater public exposure to political information increases the likelihood that new parties are recognized. As mentioned, comparative data on how much time people in various countries spend on following political news is missing. Instead, it was suggested that media consumption patterns provide an indication of how much news on politics people are exposed to. In the following, the argument that use of different types of media may indeed give us an indication of differences in exposure to political information will first be developed. Since television and newspapers on average are the top two sources of information on politics in the countries studied here, and more information on these is available, only these two media are considered[16]. After that, a brief description of the differences in national markets for the different media types will be explored, and finally the indicators will be defined and their effects on the number of new parties winning votes tested.

4.2.1 Can we infer from media consumption to exposure to political information?

Consumption patterns: Use of television and newspapers as sources of news

With respect to the sources of information on politics that people use today, there are strong similarities with respect to the role of television, while the use of newspapers is subject to greater variation. Since the inception of regular broadcasts, which in

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[16]Gunther and Mughan comment 'The lack of comparative research (which is probably a product of the high level of fragmentation of radio, which consists of hundreds or thousands of local broadcasting stations in most countries) is unfortunate, since many radio stations provide the most voluminous and intensive flow of political communications of all the mass media' (Gunther & Mughan, 2000:419)

most countries occurred in the course of the 1950s, television has developed from a marginal position into being the most important source of information for citizens in all countries, and also as the media most trusted to provide reliable information (Dalton, 1996; Eurobarometer, 1999)[17]. There is considerable variation in how much this medium is used, however. The number of hours people in various countries spend watching television on a daily basis thus varies considerably with citizens in some countries spending almost twice as much as in others[18]. On the other hand, the frequency with which people follow the news on television varies quite modestly across countries, and appears to be unrelated to the number of hours spent in front of the screen. A recent survey of EU countries for instance reveals that in audiences for daily news there is only a 20 pct. difference between the keenest and least interested viewers, and the gap is reduced to a mere 10 pct. if we compare those who watch news daily or several times a week[19] (Eurobarometer, 1999). It is of course not impossible that the differences may be somewhat larger if the non-European countries or developments over time are included. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that variation in how much citizens in various countries follow news on television only contributes marginally to how exposed national electorates are to political news.

Turning to the role of the press as a source of information, a very different picture emerges. There are very large cross-national differences in the role newspapers play

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[17]In the U.S., where regular broadcasts began in 1950, only 20 pct cited television as their only source of information on politics in 1960, but already by the mid 1980s this figure had risen to 60 pct. (Clark and Rempel, 1997 cited in Milner, 2002)

[18]According to the Audiovisual statistics report 1995 people in Austria and Sweden spend a little more than half as much time in front of the television as they for instance do in Spain, U.K. and the U.S.

[19]The keenest audience for news is found in Finland where 83 pct. state that they follow the news on a daily basis, and the least interested are found in France where 60 pct say they do the same. However, the difference from top to bottom is a mere 10 pct. (94/84) if we compare those who watch news daily or several times a week in the two countries (Eurobarometer, 1999).

as a source of information on politics. In some countries, such as Japan and Sweden, following news in the daily press is practically as common as watching news on television, although in others, such as Greece or Portugal, reading the newspaper is an activity confined to a much smaller group, and the vast majority relies instead on television to inform them of current events. According to the same survey referred to above, some 70 pct of the population read the paper on a daily basis in the EU country with the most avid newspaper readers, while only 16 pct do the same in the country with the smallest readership[20]. While it, as mentioned, is not possible to infer from the amount of hours a population spends on average watching television to how frequently they watch the news, there is a clear correlation between national newspaper circulation figures and how frequently people report using them as a source of information on politics. There are some differences in ranking of countries according to circulation figures and survey data, but by and large they are congruent. All the countries, where over half of the population report reading news in the press on a daily basis, thus fall into the group of countries with a circulation above 300 per thousand inhabitants, and vice versa (Eurobarometer, 1999).

Gauging from the evidence reviewed here, we would expect the main cross-national differences in degree of exposure to political news to stem from differences in the readership of newspapers[21]. As many have pointed out, however, the supply

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[20]According to the survey, some 70 pct. in Finland report reading the news on a daily basis, while only 16 pct. do the same in Greece. Comparing the groups of who follow news in the press on a daily basis or several times a week, doesn't narrow the gap much: 83 pct. in Finland against 30 pct. in Greece (Eurobarometer, 1999)

[21]Radio also provides an important source of information in a number of countries, but it is difficult to find systematic data on use of this medium for all the countries. While we therefore loose information about exposure to information on the radio by omitting this, there is some indication that this may not be grave. According to the Eurobarometer survey (1999) there is a tendency for higher use of radio as a source of information to be correlated with the use of newspapers. The five countries that have the fewest newspaper readers are the same countries where fewest listen to news on the radio. Nevertheless, use of the two media is not perfectly correlated for all countries and information is therefore invariably lost.

of political information by different kinds of broadcasters and press should also be considered.

Media Types, Political Coverage and Effects on Citizens' knowledge

Both the format and strength of commercialism influence the extent to which different media cover political news. Firstly, the format arguably sets tangible constraints on both the form and quantity of information that can be conveyed. Television is typically viewed as subject to greater constraints than newspapers in this respect. Its reliance on pictures to convey messages, as well the more acute limitations on the attention span of audiences, induce reductions in the quantity as well as complexity of the information conveyed[22]. Secondly, the strength of commercial forces tends to reduce the focus on politics. Given that politics, as discussed earlier, is not the ruling passion of the average citizen's life, filling the media with different types of entertainment or sports is likely to attract higher numbers of viewers, readers or listeners. Commercially run media outlets, especially when under pressure to maximize audiences, are therefore likely to allocate less time and space to politics, as well as portray it in more entertaining ways. Due to differences in format, however, television is more vulnerable to commercial influences than the press. As Postman and Powers write, 'every time a newspaper includes a feature which will attract a specialized group, it can assume it is adding at least a little bit to circulation. To the degree a television news program includes an item of this sort...it must assume that its audience will diminish' (Postman and Powers, 1992)[23].

Public service broadcasting, wholly or partially shielded from market forces, has widely been perceived as a bulwark against the effects of commercialism on tele-

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[22]Mughan and Gunther argue that 'television by nature has inherent propensity to emphasize candidates and personalities over parties and their programs to compress presentation of information' (Mughan and Gunther, 2000: 15).

[23]Cited in Milner (2002: 97)

vision. Typically public service has been charged with the tasks of educating and informing the public on a wide range of cultural, social and political affairs, in addition to providing entertainment. Moreover, its greater independence of audience ratings, public service television has also generally provided more coverage of political affairs, as well as more serious in depth analyses and debate programmes than commercial television has (e.g. Peter, Lauf & Semetko, 2004; Blumler, 1992; Kuhn, 1985)[24]. It can therefore be argued that public service television has therefore been instrumental in exposing the public to more politics. There is no comparable distinction for the press, however. The public service arguments used for interference in broadcasting have never been used as an argument for similarly interfering in the market for newspapers. However, a distinction is often made between 'quality' and tabloid newspapers, with the latter representing the more 'commercialized' elements generally providing less information about political affairs[25]. Both types compete on market terms, however.

Finally, a number of studies reveal that differences in the prominence accorded to politics in different media are not without consequences for their users. Firstly, whether people have a predilection for television or newspapers is important to how informed they are of politics. On the whole, newspapers have the better track record with respect to informing citizens. As Milner summarizes research on the topic: 'individuals who read newspapers on a daily basis invariably average significantly higher rates of knowledge than those who do not' (Milner, 2002: 90). The effects of television on citizens' knowledge of political affairs are more ambiguous. Some

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[24]As Semetko concludes in a recent study of election campaign coverage in four countries, 'public service channels...aired more substantive issue stories than the private channels' (Semetko, 1996: 11).

[25]In terms of conveying policy-relevant information, Gunther and Mughan write that 'in general the print medium continues to perform well in this regard, even if there is considerable variation in individual newspaper's performance within and between nations. At the low end on the continuum are Britain's..daily tabloids' (Gunther & Mughan, 2000: 429)

surveys have shown that television watching has a non-existent or even negative impact on what people know, and in light of this the growing importance of this medium might be regarded as fatal for efforts at cultivating an informed citizenry[26]. However, there is considerable evidence that whether people watch public or commercial channels matters for how informed they are. Studies of the effects of news watching in countries dominated by public service television thus consistently report positive effects, while those conducted in countries with commercial dominance are more equivocal (see Milner, 2002: 95-97 for review of evidence).

In light of the relationships described, I would argue that using national market shares of public television and the readership of newspapers as proxies for the extent of exposure to political information is a valid approach, although not all variation can be captured in this way.

4.2.2   National Television and Newspaper Markets

Before proceding to test the hypothesis proposed, the differences in national television and press markets will be briefly described and some problems related to the operationalization, validity and variation of the indicators will be addressed.

Audiences for Public Broadcast Television: Markets and Trends

There is significant variation between national systems in the balance of public and private broadcasting, although these have diminished considerably over time. In most of the countries included in this study, and almost all of the European ones, the

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[26]As Norris summarizes research on the effects of television watching in the U.S.: 'the hours people spent watching television was negatively correlated...people who watch a great deal of television know less about politics' (Norris, 1996: 478)

broadcast media were at their inception fashioned as nationwide state monopolies[27]. This structure was motivated by a mix of political, technological and economic realities. Politically, broadcast media were seen as a matter of public interest. A mixture of awareness of the potency of the new media and of the limitations to the diversity of possible supply, dictated by technological and economic factors, generally made state monopolies the preferred solution. However, some countries such as the U.K. and Finland opted instead for so-called dual systems where public service TV co-existed with commercial broadcast companies. Outside Europe, Japan, and to lesser extent Canada, likewise established competitive systems with a strong presence of public service. Only two countries, namely the U.S. and Australia, have consistently had commercially dominated markets where public service television never obtained noteworthy market shares. And in the case of the U.S. these have been negligible. The diversity of broadcasting models was significantly reduced, however, as a result of the wave of deregulation that swept over Europe in the 1980s. Virtually all public service monopolies were broken during this decade and the following, and the typical scenario in European broadcast in the 1990s was instead one of competition between commercial and public channels. Public service television has remained dominant in many countries, where it has retained up to 50 pct of the marked shares. Only in few of the prior monopolies, e.g. Belgium and Greece, have audiences for public TV dropped below 30 pct following the entry of commercial channels (see Eurostat, 1995; Smith, 1998; Blumler, 1992; Kuhn, 1985; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Due to these developmental trends in television markets, it should be observed that, for the main bulk of the cases, the market shares of public service television drops drastically in the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, while high levels are observed before that.

Defining public television exclusively in terms of ownership may be misleading, however. As mentioned above, a central issue for the extent of informational and

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[27]Radio broadcasting typically began in the 1920s and 1930s, while for most countries regular television broadcast began in the course of the 1950s.

news programming is how shielded the broadcast organisation is from commercial forces. And in this respect the financial basis as much as the ownership of the organisations can be expected to play a role. The 'pure' public models can be defined as those whose financial basis is entirely non-commercial. That is, the broadcasting organisations are financed by the public purse through some form of grant, taxation or licence fees[28]. According to Sepstrup, however, such differences in revenue basis had little - if any - impact on the services provided during the period of public service monopoly since there was no competition for profit with other providers. It was therefore easy to distinguish the commercial public service organisations from their purely commercial counter parts during the era of public monopoly. After the opening up of television markets to commercial competitors, differences in the financing of public service broadcast are more likely to play an important role, however. Reliance on advertising income in the competitive environment can pull public service television in the direction of their commercial counterparts and serve to diminish the differences between the two types. It has also been argued that the public service television in several countries has lost some of its distinctive character following the liberalization[29]. The lack of systematic information on the extent to which the 'publicness' of various public service providers has suffered from the loss of monopoly status, makes it difficult to actively consider this dimension, however. The consequence is that market shares for public service television may not be as accurate an indicator of exposure to political news for the 1980s and 1990s.

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[28]This type of pure public service (or non-commercial public service) was for instance originally used in Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. A higher number of systems have instead consistently relied on a mixed revenue model, where a part of the income stem from advertising ('commercial public service') including Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland.

[29]The reform of PS broadcast in New Zealand to compete on market terms has raised concerns for loss of public service values (Comrie & Fontaine, 2005) and similar concerns have also been raised for the quality of public service in, for example, the Netherlands (Van Praag & Van der Eijk, 1998). Gunther and Mughan comment that 'With deregulation...the general trend has been a decline in the substantive informational content of political communications' (Gunther & Mughan, 2000:439).

Finally, it should be mentioned that differences between commercial broadcasters as well as between public service broadcasters, with respect to their coverage of politics is a potentially blurring factor. Partly as a result of differences in national regulation requiring them to provide a certain amount of 'public service' programs, such as news, and partly as a result of differences in demand, television providers vary cross-nationally with respect to their coverage of politics (Mughan & Gunther, 2000:430-31; Blumler, 1992).

Newspaper Readership

Newspaper markets have exhibited much more stability in the post war period than broadcasting. The printed press was, in many countries, already an established source of information by the end of the 19th century, while it followed later in others typically reflecting national differences in literacy rates. In the post war period the evolution of newspapers has not followed the same clear-cut growth trajectory as the broadcast media, but instead experienced a more mixed fate; The average readership of newspapers has been subject to a modest decline. The circulation of daily newspapers has thus declined from 300 per thousand inhabitants in 1970 to 270 in 1995 in the 21 countries (Source: UNESCO)[30]. However, it should also be noted that the output in terms of pages and areas covered by the individual newspapers has generally clearly expanded in the same period.

As can be seen from table 4.1 (page 132), the differences in market shares of newspapers are large as well as relatively stable in this period. At the top, we find Norway, Japan, Finland and Sweden, where the daily circulation of newspapers average 500-600 per 1,000 inhabitants and at the bottom, the Southern European countries Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece, where newspaper circulation remains below 150 per 1,000 inhabitants. The very low market shares of newspapers in

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[30]Figures from previous decades are not available.

these countries can partly be explained by the fact that widespread literacy was acquired later and overlapped with the establishment of broadcast media. As can be seen, the levels are relatively stable. Only in the case of Norway do we see a marked increase in readership and for the U.K. and New Zealand significant downward trends. Otherwise, the figures for each country are relatively stable over the period. As mentioned, there may be differences between quality and tabloid newspapers as to how much they cover politics. But it is not possible to compare newspaper markets on this dimension due to the lack of data. It should be observed, however, that countries with very low readership hardly have any market for tabloids (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). One reason for this is that the segments of the population that are potential consumers of tabloids in these countries, simply do not read newspapers at all. On the other hand some countries, such as the U.K., tabloids have a significant share of the market. The extent to which exposure to news on politics is captured by the figures on circulation may therefore be somewhat overstated for some cases with intermediate to high circulation.

The circulation of newspapers therefore gives us an indicator of exposure to political news, which reflects stable differences between the countries and does not vary greatly over time.

4.2.3   Test of the hypothesis

The hypothesis that greater public exposure to information about politics leads to a lowering of the recognition barrier will first be tested by a separate testing of the two indicators proposed, namely the audience shares of public service television and the circulation of newspapers. Then the combined effects of exposure through these two media will be investigated. The three dependent variables are the number of parties obtaining at least 1 pct of the votes, at least 4 pct. of the votes, and finally

Newspaper Circulation 1970-2000

	1970s	1980s	1990s
Australia	352	299	290
Austria	315	331	325
Belgium	234	226	173
Canada	204	218	187
Denmark	352	365	324
Finland	440	525	500
France	224	193	193
Germany	n.a.	n.a.	318
Greece		121	140
Ireland	225	211	164
Italy	131	99	103
Japan	528	566	578
Netherlands	313	318	309
New Zealand	333	330	238
Norway	405	487	601
Portugal		46	55
Spain		87	100
Sweden	539	527	488
Switzerland	391	442	403
U.K.	447	407	360
U.S.A.	285	265	228

Table 4.1: Newspaper Circulation 1970-2000

the decade maximum number of parties obtaining no less than 1 pct of the votes (see chapter 3).

Effects of Market Shares of Public Service Television

Precise data on the size of the audiences for television - public or private - is not available for the whole time period, but only for the late 1980s and 1990s. The indicator proposed is therefore based on information on the market structure (monopoly versus competitive) and descriptions of the strengths of public service television for

all the cases 1950s-1970s. The proportion of the population actually watching television, which is likely to have varied substantially across countries particularly in the 1960s as it was just beginning to expand its reach, is not taken into account due to the lack of accurate data. As in the previous chapter, decades are used as cases, but the 1950s are only included for the three countries (US, France and U.K.) where broadcasting began prior to or in 1950. In the other countries, regular broadcasting began in the course of the 1950s, and only the cases from 1960s onwards are therefore included. An ordinal indicator with three categories was created to reflect differences in the market shares of public service television. The score of low was given, where market shares are below 33 pct, medium, where it falls between 33-66 pct, and finally high for market shares above 66 pct. The latter category typically contains the cases of public service monopoly.

1) High: Austria (1960-00), Belgium (1960-1980), Denmark (1960-1990), France (1960-1980), Germany (1960-1980), Greece (1980s), Ireland, Italy (1960-1980), Netherlands (1960-1980), New Zealand (1960-1990), Norway (1960-1990), Portugal (1980s) Spain (1980s), Sweden (1960-1990), Switzerland (1960-1990).

2) Medium: Belgium (1980s), Canada (1960-90), Denmark (1990s), Finland, Germany (1980-), Italy (1980-), Japan, Netherlands (1980-), New Zealand (1990-), Norway (1990-), Sweden (1990-), Switzerland (1990-)

3) Low: Australia and U.S.(whole period), 1990s: Belgium, Canada, Greece, Portugal, Spain.

The cases of Japan and Italy in the 1990s were excluded from the tests, since major changes in the party systems took place - partly as a result of corruption scandals - leading to an 'abnormally' high number of new parties winning vote shares. The possible influence of the market shares of public service television is investigated by testing its effects on the mean number of new parties obtaining votes. The results

Market Share of Public Service TV		New Parties		
		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
Low (<1/3)	Mean	**1.13**	**0.93**	**0.47**
	N	15	15	15
	Std. Dev.	1.06	0.80	0.64
Medium (1/3-2/3)	Mean	**1.41**	**0.97**	**0.83**
	N	29	29	29
	Std. Dev.	1.45	0.87	0.85
High (>2/3)	Mean	**2.03**	**1.40**	**0.83**
	N	35	35	35
	Std. Dev.	1.34	0.88	0.82
All	Mean	**1.63**	**1.15**	**0.76**
	N	79	79	79
	Std. Dev.	1.37	0.88	0.80
Kruskal Wallis ANOVA		*		
*p<0.01; **p<0.05 (two-tailed)				

Table 4.2: Public Service Television Market Shares and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

are summarized in table 4.2. Both parametric (ANOVA) and non-parametric tests (Kruskal Wallis) of significance are reported.

The results of the analysis lend support to the hypothesis that higher consumption of public televison provides better conditions for new parties. As can be seen in table 4.2, there is a clear increase in averages from the system with low public service shares to those with high for the number of parties obtaining over 1 pct. of the votes. In fact, there is almost a doubling of the average from the lowest to the highest category. The difference in means is furthermore significant at the 5 pct. level in the Kruskal Wallis test. This same pattern can be observed for the maximum numbers observed at any election[31]. However, a similar trend cannot be observed for the group of electorally

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[31]The differences in means using ANOVA was significant only at the 5.8 pct. level for the category of parties winning at least 1 pct of the seats, while it was only significant at

successful parties (> 4 pct. vote shares). Although the group with medium and high shares public service television contains a higher number of parties than that with low shares, whether there is medium or high audience for public service appears to have no impact.

Effects of Newspaper Readership

The second factor, which may influence how much information voters receive about politics, is the extent of newspaper readership. As an indicator of the differences in newspaper readership, the circulation of dailies per 1000 inhabitants is used and on basis of this, an ordinal indicator was created. Three categories were created: the score of low was given to cases where the circulation is under 250, medium for circulation between 250 and 400, and finally the score of high was given to cases where circulation is over 400 copies. Figures on circulation were only available for the period 1970-2000, but since differences in newspaper readership are known to be relatively stable (Gustafsson & Weibull, 1996; Hallin & Mancini, 2004), ordinal scores are also given to 1950s and 1960s based on previous levels.

The results, as summarized in table 4.3 , disconfirm the hypothesis very clearly. Higher newspaper readership appears to have quite the opposite effect of what was expected. For the number of parties obtaining 1 percent or more of the votes, there is a marked decline from the category containing few newspaper readers to that containing a high number. A similar but less strong effect can be observed for the maximum number of new parties. For the group of electorally successful parties with vote shares at 4 pct or more, we can also observe a small decline, although the differences in numbers here are much smaller. However, none of the differences in means pass the tests of significance.

the 8 pct level for the category of maximum number of parties per election. The latter passed test of significance at the 8 pct. level in Kruskal Wallis.

Newspaper Readership		New Parties		
(Circulation per 1000)		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
Low	Mean	**1.88**	**1.15**	**0.73**
(<250)	N	33	33	33
	Std. Dev.	1.75	0.97	0.84
Medium	Mean	**1.49**	**1.14**	**0.68**
(250-400)	N	37	37	37
	Std. Dev.	1.10	0.86	0.78
High	Mean	**1.13**	**0.92**	**0.63**
(>400)	N	24	24	24
	Std. Dev.	0.90	0.78	0.71
All	Mean	**1.53**	**1.09**	**0.68**
	N	94	94	94
	Std. Dev.	1.34	0.88	0.78
None of the results pass tests of significance				

Table 4.3: Newspaper Readership and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

Exposure to Political Information		Share of Public Television		
		High	Medium	Low
Newspaper Circulation	High	Very High	High	Medium
	Medium	High	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Low	Very Low

Table 4.4: Indicator on Exposure to Political Information

Combined Indicator of Exposure to Political Information

Before drawing any conclusions about the effects of higher consumption of information on politics, it is necessary to make a test of the joint effects of the public television viewership and newspaper readership. A new ordinal variable was therefore created in which scores are given to cases on the basis of their combined scores on public service television shares and newspaper readership. The scores were assigned as indicated in the matrix table 4.4 .

Exposure to Political Information		New Parties		
		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
Very Low	Mean	**1.43**	**1.14**	**0.71**
	N	7	7	7
	Std. Dev.	0.98	0.69	0.76
Low	Mean	**1.33**	**0.80**	**0.47**
	N	15	15	15
	Std. Dev.	1.88	0.94	0.83
Medium	Mean	**2.33**	**1.56**	**0.94**
	N	18	18	18
	Std. Dev.	1.53	0.98	0.87
High	Mean	**1.44**	**1.03**	**0.84**
	N	32	32	32
	Std. Dev.	1.05	0.78	0.81
Very High	Mean	**1.33**	**1.33**	**0.50**
	N	6	6	6
	Std. Dev.	0.82	0.82	0.55
Total	Mean	**1.62**	**1.14**	**0.76**
	N	78	78	78
	Std. Dev.	1.37	0.88	0.81
None of the results pass tests of significance				

Table 4.5: Exposure to Political Information and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

The hypothesis that greater exposure to information about politics, taking the combined effects of television and newspaper consumption into account, was then tested for effects on the number of new vote winning parties.

The results summarized in table 4.5 do not lend support to the hypothesis, however. The cases containing the highest exposure to information about politics have averages of new parties obtaining 1 pct of the votes that are slightly lower than those containing the lowest exposure, and the categories containing high and low exposure return very similar averages. For the category containing the number of parties with over 4 pct of the votes, the highest exposure category clearly returns lower averages

than the lowest exposure category does, while the opposite is the case for the averages contained in the high exposure versus the low exposure groups. There is, in other words, no clear direction, which can support the hypothesis that exposure to political information gives better chances for new parties to obtain recognition. Instead, common for all three dependent variables is that the category of inter-mediate exposure contains the highest averages. The only conclusion congruent with the results is therefore that high exposure or low exposure to information is equally unfavourable to new parties.

Different Effects of Newspapers and Television?

It is likely that we are not tapping into a simple dimension of exposure to information about politics with the indicators on newspaper readership and public television shares. Given that the bivariate relationships between the market shares of public service television and newspaper readership with the dependent variables pointed in opposite directions, it is necessary to check whether the direction and strength of the relationships remain when the effects of the other media are taken into account. Since there is no multivariate statistical method for ordinal variables, a regression model was applied. The hypothesized relationships are tested with the following model: *Number of Vote-Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta pstv + \beta np\text{-}readers + \varepsilon$

The results of the regression analyses summarized in table 4.6 are clear and significant only for the categories containing average numbers and decade maximum of parties obtaining over 1 pct of the votes. For the former, the variance explained is 15.7 pct., and the coefficient for PSTV share and Newspapers are strong and point in opposite directions and are highly significant. The two variables do not predict the maximum numbers per decade as well, but the direction is the same. The cause of this difference may lie in differences between the two types of media, with television providing better conditions for exposure of new parties to the electorate

OLS Regression

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*		
	>1 pct	>1 pct, max	>4 pct
Public Service TV	0.27** (0.48)	0.23* (0.27)	0.14 (0.15)
Newspaper Readers	-0.30** (-0.52)	-0.17 (-0.19)	-0.08 (-0.06)
Constant	1.5**	0.9*	0.53
R^2 N=79	0.16**	0.08*	0.02

** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)
standardized coefficients reported, normal coefficients in ( )

Table 4.6: The Impact of Public Service TV and Newspaper Readership on the Number of New Parties

than newspapers do or simply affecting electoral behaviour differently. However, the regression model explains none of the observed variance of the number of new parties obtaining over 4 pct of the vote shares. Therefore, even if these differences in media supply and consumption do appear to matter for the number of parties that obtain a minimum of recognition and electoral support, they do not make much of a difference for how many obtain a higher level of support.

Nevertheless, as discussed above, it is possible that the extent to which established political parties wield influence over media systems intervene in the relationships proposed. It is therefore necessary to review evidence of such effects before drawing any conclusions.

4.3   Political Links to the Media Systems

The next question to be investigated concerns the strength of the links between established political parties and the media system. The hypothesis proposed above is that stronger links between the established party system and the media system will make the recognition barrier higher. Stronger links imply a stronger influence of parties and government over the media or a stronger congruence of interests between the media and established parties, which is likely to reduce the chances that new parties will be able to obtain coverage - at least of a favourable kind. The nature of the links with the press and broadcast television are different and only for the latter is it possible to construct a meaningful indicator of differences in the extent of influence. However, a brief review of both will be made.

4.3.1   Political Links to Press and Broadcast Television

Political Parties and the Press

There is a conspicuous lack of examples of executive dominance or interference with the press system among this group of countries. Where governments have interfered in the press market by offering subsidies or tax breaks, it is generally acknowledged that the aim has been to maintain readership levels and/or guarantee diversity rather than to influence the contents (Humphreys, 1996: 102-107)[32]. Political parties have, on the other hand, played a very direct role. Newspapers were once perceived as an intrinsic part of parties' mobilization strategies, and as crucial to their success and survival. In many countries newspapers owned or managed by political parties were once dominant voices in the media landscape, but the party

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[32]An exception to this is found in Greece, where governments have attempted to influence newspapers by offering subsidies, secret funds and a widespread practice of keeping journalists on the state payroll (Østergaard, 1997)

press that accompanied the formation of the party systems in the 19th century had already diminished considerably in strength by the middle of the 20th century in most countries (Seymour-Ure, 1974). In the few places where it held out longer, it declined steadily in the decades following the second world war and by now, it is virtually extinct. As Farell and Schmidt-Beck comment 'the party press, where it still exists, has mostly turned into an instrument of internal communication' (Farrell & Schmitt-Beck, 2002: 7). The absence of parties in the management of newspapers does not vouch for an impartial press, however. As Seymour-Ure discusses, advocacy and support of particular parties or ideologies may be driven by the personal interests and preferences of independent owners or staff, as well as reflect a strategy to target readers of a particular political persuasion. Many observers claim, however, that the strength of this type of parallelism between the press and party systems has also generally waned over time. Mounting competitive pressures, following in the wake of the expansion of broadcast media, has along with changes in popular demand, induced newspapers to broaden their political appeal in search of readers and advertisers alike (e.g. Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Gunther & Mughan, 2000; Voltmer, 2004). Notwithstanding this general trend, it is important to observe that national press systems to this day differ quite significantly in this respect. In their comparative work on national media systems, Hallin and Mancini describe that the press in a number of Southern European countries has retained a strong tradition for using the press as a means for ideological expression and political mobilization. Although they point to a weakening of this tendency from the 1970s onwards, market forces have arguably not accomplished the same watering down of ideological content here as elsewhere, mainly due to significant structural differences[33]. Furthermore, they point to differences in the extent of partisan alignment of press in central and northern European countries, as compared to the press in North America, although these

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[33]There is thus a smaller market for newspapers in these countries, as described above, and the readership largely consists of educated minorities with distinct political and cultural identities within society (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 90-97)

have converged in the post war period (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Voltmer, 2004). Unfortunately, the lack of reliable data on the strength of the differences between the countries - and on developments over time - makes it difficult to construct a reliable indicator of the links between the press and the established party system.

Political Control of Broadcast Television

The broadcast media have an entirely different history of ties to the political system. Rather than close affiliation with particular parties, the broadcast media have in most countries been closely associated with the state, as mentioned above. The public nature of the broadcasting organisations can be regarded as a strength, as discussed in the previous section. But while the public nature of the institutions has allowed them to escape the side-effects of commercialism, it has at the same time made them prey to the interests of those who wield political power. Rather than being above politics, broadcast organisations have typically been highly politicised organisations (Kuhn, 1995; Blumler, 1992; Humphrey, 1996). As Humphrey comments 'A marked congruence can be demonstrated between structures of broadcasting and the particular character of the respective political systems. In the past at least, politics has played a key role in defining the shape of the national broadcasting systems and, not infrequently, in intruding upon the broadcasters' freedom' (Humphrey, 1996: 111).

The means by which elected politicians have exercised influence over the broadcasting organisations have ranged from very direct types of intervention to more subtle and indirect ways. Humphrey classifies the models according to the patterns of politicisation practices into three different types: the 'arms length influence', 'multiparty/group dominated' and finally the 'executive or single party dominated' type[34]. A classical example of the first type is the British BBC, which has earned a

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[34]Hallin and Mancini describe the broadcast governance systems by using four types, namely the 'government model', the 'professional model', the 'parliamentary/proportional

reputation for independence from the political leadership. A high degree of institutional autonomy coupled with an agreement between the political parties to refrain from interfering in its running, has made it possible for the BBC to stay aloof from day-to-day politics, and made it a credible source of political news to people with different political persuasions. This does not mean that the BBC, and other similarly styled broadcasters, has not been accused of bias, however. While its impartiality in a partisan sense may not be an issue, accusations of elitism and lack of social representativity have frequently been levelled against it. The use of the term 'arms length influence' by Humphrey, rather than describing it as 'autonomous' or 'professional' as Hallin and Mancini do, is indicative of the author's acknowledgement of this problem.

Another institutional solution, which has prevailed in much of continental Europe, integrated social and political accountability mechanisms in the broadcast organisations rather than leaving its running to professionals. Instead of autonomy as a path to impartiality, these have instead actively included delegates from social and political groups, whose task it is to guarantee a balanced partisan and social representation in the programs. With respect to governance of Austrian broadcast, it is, for instance, described that 'Organisational and control structure is designed to ensure that all significant views of society are fully and fairly represented in its operations' (Euromedia Research Group, 1997:7). There are differences, however, in how much parties involved have penetrated the organisations. For Austria and Germany it is described that parties have played a strong role, not only through representation on boards, but by appointments of staff at all levels of the broadcasting organisations, while the governance of the Scandinavian broadcasters, for instance, have been more hands off (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 167-168). In the case of Belgium, it is reported that ties to the party system were so close that 'the composition of the board of public service

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representation model' and the 'civic/corporatist model'. The professional model corresponds to the 'arms length influence', but the others overlap (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 30-31).

broadcasting changed every time a new election was held' and further that 'members of the board of directors define themselves explicitly as being 'mandatories' of the political parties'[35]. Likewise for Spain, it has been reported that the members of the board are 'unambiguously appointed as party representatives' (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:107).

Finally, there are a few countries, including Greece, France and Italy, where broadcasting for long periods has fallen more directly under executive or single party dominance. In the case of France, the broadcast organisation (RTF) was originally held directly accountable to the Ministry of Information and interventions in editorial decisions were not infrequent. Similarly, government controlled broadcast organisations were also seen in Greece in the 1980s, as well as in New Zealand and Ireland in the 1950s. Italy's model, on the contrary, has been dubbed the partyocratic model. Until the mid 1970s broadcasting was dominated by a single party, where after more parties were allowed a share of control. And as Mazzoleni comments the parties did not remain aloof from the running of the broadcast organisation. On the contrary, 'the parties had placed their yes-men from the governing body down to the television channels and news services. The parties' influence was (and to a certain extent still is) extensive' (Euromedia Research Group, 1997: 127).

While the governance of broadcast organisations is well described in the literature, there have been no systematic attempts at assessing the bias of the news services produced by these organisations. However, reviewing evidence of the independence of journalists in some of the highly politicized broadcast organisations, Hallin and Mancini write that 'they leave both agenda setting and the interpretation of political reality to other political actors, particularly representatives of political parties and other organized groups, whose comments usually dominate the news' (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 119). In this context, a recent study by Rösler of the content of news

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[35]Burgelman, 1989:179-80 cited by Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 169.

services in 8 countries, which identifies important differences between these is also interesting. Although the study focussed on foreign and not domestic political coverage, he observes significant differences with respect to the actors covered. Rösler, for instance, reports that the Head of Government appears twice as much in the German, Austrian and Italian news services, compared with the Norwegian, Danish and American (Rösler, 2004: 286). This might indicate a difference between systems dominated by commercial and independent public service systems and those where political governance of the broadcast typically plays a stronger role. How strongly influenced the news and other political programs are by the political interests of those in power is not easy to say, however, and it is possible that the effects in many cases are moderate as some claim they are[36].

Informal Sources of Political Influence

Finally, it is also necessary to briefly mention other conditions that perhaps make independent media organisations vulnerable to political influence. Firstly, there is some evidence that commercial broadcasting has been susceptible to political influence due to its dependency on government for having licenses awarded (Weare, Levy & Raphael, 2001)[37]. Secondly, it has been argued that commercial markets can develop dependencies on the political systems for economic reasons. Competitive pressures can induce cut-backs on news related research and thereby increase the dependency on political actors - be they political parties, interest organisations or government itself - as sources of information. Both in terms of credibility as source and command of resources, it has been argued that government enjoys a particularly

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[36]Gunther and Mughan describe the bias of even the more politized broadcasters, such as Italy and Spain, as 'modest' (Gunther&Mughan, 2000: 436-437)

[37]Weare, Levy and Raphael argue that the licensing process creates possibility and means for politicians to meddle with broadcasters' editorial decisions. They provide evidence that newspapers with broadcast holdings write editorials that are more positive towards political incumbents (2001)

privileged position as news supplier (Edwards, 1986; Underwood, 1998)[38]. Finally, it should be noted that extensive use of government or party sources need not only be induced by market conditions, but can also arise from journalistic practices. Journalists may develop close ties to the political actors they cover as a means of getting information, and several point out that such ties may influence their choice of stories and their content (e.g. McCargo, 1996)[39]. It is not possible to assess, however, how strongly affiliated national media systems are to political actors through such 'informal' channels.

4.3.2   Test of the hypothesis

The hypothesis that stronger links between the established party system and the media system heighten the recognition barrier will be examined in the following. As discussed, limitations with respect to the data available make it impossible to estimate the extent of political control over the press. The focus is therefore solely on broadcast television, and given that it is the most important source of information on politics in all of the countries, it is likely that if political influence over the media plays a role for recognition, it should above all be observable in television markets. It is therefore reasonable to re-state the hypotheses to be tested as: the greater the political control over broadcast television, the higher the recognition barrier.

In order to assign scores to national television markets reflecting the extent of

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[38]As Edwards writes, 'The more authoritative and credible the source the easier it is to accept statements without checking and the less expensive is news-making'(Edwards, 1986:174). Underwood argues that the consistent cut-backs on news staff and simultaneous growth in government public relations staff is congruent with the high proportion of news that originate with public relation sources in American media (Underwood, 1998: 179).

[39]In the case of Japan, it is for instance reported that 'Journalists, especially newspaper reporters, have long enjoyed privileged access to politicians through a system of kisha (journalists) clubs, a system which allows for a cosy rapport between reporters and their sources, but often works against the public interest' (McCargo, 1996: 251)

political influence exerted over them, both the governance of public broadcast organisations and their market shares must be considered. First, public broadcast organisations were given scores of high, medium and low according to their dependence on political parties and government. The score 'low' was given to broadcast organisations that function largely autonomously of the political leadership (the professional or 'armslength-influence' models), a score of 'medium' was assigned to organisations where established political parties have strong voice within the organisations, but these nonetheless function with a great deal of autonomy, and finally the score of 'high' was given to broadcast organisations where the political leadership (be it government, a single party or a plurality of parties) observe a more interfering style. The following scores were assigned:

1) Low: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland (1970-), Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K., U.S.

2) Medium: Austria (1970-), France (1990-), Germany, Ireland, Netherlands (1970-), New Zealand, Spain (1990-)

3) High: Austria (1960s), Belgium, France (1950-1990), Greece, Italy, Netherlands (1960s), Portugal, Spain (1980s).

Secondly, these are combined with the market shares of public service television (as measured above). The scores are assigned as indicated in table 4.7. Political control over broadcasting is only hypothesized to have an effect in systems where they have a high or medium share of the market.

This indicator of the extent of political influence over broadcast television was then tested for effects on the number of new parties winning a minimum of 1 and 4 pct of the votes respectively, as well as the maximum number observed winning at least 1 pct of the votes at an election. The results are summarized in table 4.8.

As can be seen from table 4.8, the results do not lend support to the hypothesis

Political Influence on on Broadcast TV		Share of Public Television		
		High	Medium	Low
Political	High	Very High	High	Low
Control	Medium	High	Medium	Low
of PBO	Low	Low	Low	Low

Table 4.7: Indicator on Political Influence on Broadcast Television

that political influence over broadcast markets depress the number of new vote-winning parties. Across the categories, low over medium to high, there is hardly any difference in the average number of parties obtaining over 1 pct of the votes. Moreover, for the cases of very high political influence on broadcasting, where we

Political Influence on Broadcast Television		New Parties		
		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
Low	Mean	**1.47**	**1.02**	**0.67**
	N	43	43	43
	Std. Dev.	1.24	0.74	0.78
Medium	Mean	**1.50**	**1.25**	**1.00**
	N	8	8	8
	Std. Dev.	1.20	1.04	0.76
High	Mean	**1.46**	**1.08**	**0.77**
	N	13	13	13
	Std. Dev.	1.05	0.76	0.93
Very High	Mean	**2.69**	**1.77**	**1.00**
	N	13	13	13
	Std. Dev.	1.75	1.09	0.82
Total	Mean	**1.68**	**1.18**	**0.78**
	N	77	77	77
	Std. Dev.	1.36	0.87	0.80
Kruskal Wallis ANOVA		*		
**p<0.01; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)				

Table 4.8: Political Influence on Broadcast Television and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

might expect the strongest deflating effects on the number of new parties, the average number is instead much higher. One possible interpretation of this is that strong attempts at steering information flows by the political leadership provokes a reaction in the form of more new challengers and also of more electoral support for these. For the category of successful parties - that win at least 4 pct. of the vote, however, this effect is not apparent. There are no more successful parties in the category of very high influence than there is in the category corresponding to medium influence over broadcast television markets. Only the difference observed for the number of parties obtaining at least a percentage of the votes comes close to passing tests of significance, however.

In light of this finding, it is necessary to check whether the positive effect of stronger public service television on the average number of new parties obtaining at least 1 pct of the votes observed above can be attributed to cases where such public service in closely affiliated to the political establishment, or whether in fact also higher shares of public service has this effect on its own. The cases were therefore divided into the following four groups: 1. Commercial systems: all systems with low market share for public service television. 2. Mixed Systems: all systems with medium market share of public service and no higher than medium political control. 3. Public Service Independent: all systems with high market share of public service and low political control. 4. Public Service Political: all cases with high market shares of public service television and high or medium political influence, or medium market shares and high control.

As can be seen from the table 4.9 (page 150), the results are somewhat ambiguous and do not lend support to the hypotheses. The two categories where public service dominates return different averages. But the highest averages are found where political influence is strong rather than where it is not. Furthermore, strong independent public service cannot be associated with higher numbers than either mixed

Public Service Shares & Political Influence		New Parties		
		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
Commercial Domination	Mean	**1.21**	**1.00**	**0.50**
	N	14	14	14
	Std. Dev.	1.05	0.78	0.65
Mixed	Mean	**1.61**	**1.13**	**1.00**
	N	23	23	23
	Std. Dev.	1.50	0.87	0.85
Public Service Independent	Mean	**1.50**	**1.00**	**0.50**
	N	14	14	14
	Std. Dev.	0.85	0.68	0.65
Public Service Political	Mean	**2.08**	**1.42**	**0.88**
	N	26	26	26
	Std. Dev.	1.55	0.99	0.86
Total	Mean	**1.68**	**1.18**	**0.78**
	N	77	77	77
	Std. Dev.	1.36	0.87	0.80
None of the results pass tests of significance				

Table 4.9: Television Markets and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

or commercial systems. Instead, we observe the highest average numbers of new parties over 1 pct and 4 pct respectively in the categories of mixed and politicized public service. Furthermore, none of the results are significant. In short, there is not evidence in favour of either the expected positive effect of public service television on the success of new parties, nor of the expected negative effect of political control over television markets. Before discussing the reasons for this non-finding, the hypotheses concerning direct communication will first be tested.

4.4 Direct Communication: Costs and Opportunities

In the discussion above, three factors were identified that can be expected to influence the costs of a direct campaign to reach voters. The first two concern the nature of the assistance provided by the state for parties' campaigns in connection with elections. The third concerns the costs of reaching the electorate. Each of the hypotheses will be operationalized and tested in turn.

4.4.1 Free Access to Media (Television)

The first hypothesis states that more generous terms of free access to media for new parties will lower the recognition barrier. Access to free exposure in television is granted by many countries to parties in connection with elections and provides parties with the opportunity for presenting themselves to voters. Only two studies have included differences in access to media as an explanatory variable. Bowler, Carter and Farrel investigate whether changes in media access has an effect on the effective number of parties and also in the proportion of independents - and finds a correlation only with the latter (Bowler, Carter & Farrel, 2003: 94-95). Abedi, in a study of anti-establishment parties, constructs a joint indicator, which takes account of both financial support and conditions for media access, and distinguishes between systems where support is granted to all versus those where support is based on previous electoral performance (Abedi, 2004: 95). A similar approach in the sense of considering the basis of access will also be used here, while separate indicators of access to finance and media will instead be made.

An ordinal indicator containing four categories was created, reflecting the strength of support for new parties. First, those that grant equal television exposure for all

parties participating in elections ('All Equal'); Second, those that grant access to all, but employ a clear criterion in the allocation of air time based on size of parties (that is, time is granted in some form of proportionality to electoral support; 'All Proportional'); Third, those that do not have any rules on the matter ('None'); And finally those that grant only represented parties access ('All Rep.'). The differentiation between the latter two categories is to investigate, whether advantage granted to incumbents may exacerbate the competitive situation facing new parties (See overview of country scores in Appendix B.2.).

Not surprisingly perhaps, the category in which free access is not granted to any of the parties includes two countries where the state has never played a strong role in broadcasting, namely Australia and the U.S. In the former case, legislation to grant free airtime to parties was introduced in the beginning of the 1990s, but the supreme court struck it down soon after. The only other country currently not grant granting free access is Switzerland, but here all parties presenting candidates in a minimum number of cantons are entitled to buy equal shares of time. The category where free access is granted only to the represented parties contains the largest number of cases. Looking at developments in legislation over time, however, there is a clear trend towards making terms of access that better conditions for new and smaller parties[40]. The cases contained in the categories of 'All Equal' and 'All Proportional' are therefore typically later in time. The possible influence of the rules were tested on the number of new parties (see table 4.10).

The results in this case clearly support the hypothesis, although none pass tests of significance. The two categories (All Equal and All Proportional) with the best conditions for media access clearly return the highest averages on all three dependent variables. The category which was expected to put new parties in the most difficult situation, namely that with access to represented parties only, returns slightly higher

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[40]Changes in legislation on media access in Ireland (1987), Italy (1975), Japan (1974) and New Zealand (1990) all lowered the threshold of eligibility for free media time.

Free Access to Television		New Parties		
		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
1 **Mean**		**2.20**	**1.60**	**1.10**
All Equal	N	10	10	10
	Std. Dev	1.14	0.70	1.10
2 **Mean**		**1.81**	**1.29**	**1.05**
All Prop.	N	21	21	21
	Std. Dev	1.40	1.06	0.80
3 **Mean**		**1.14**	**0.86**	**0.43**
None	N	14	14	14
	Std. Dev	1.03	0.77	0.51
4 **Mean**		**1.53**	**1.07**	**0.63**
All Rep.	N	30	30	30
	Std. Dev	1.55	0.83	0.76
Total	**Mean**	**1.63**	**1.16**	**0.77**
	N	75	75	75
	Std. Dev	1.38	0.89	0.81
None of the results pass tests of significance				

Table 4.10: Free Media Access and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

averages than the category where no advantages to the incumbent parties are given, however. There is therefore no evidence here in support of an incumbency effect. However, the only differences in means that come close to passing tests of significance are those for the group of successful parties.

4.4.2   Financial Assistance to Political Parties

The second type of state intervention concerns financial support to parties. Hug examined the effects of party finance on new party participation and found a positive effect, but uses a dichotomous variable and thereby fails to distinguish between systems that support parties with low electoral returns and those that reserve this for larger and/or represented parties (Hug, 2001:102). Since it is not reasonable to

Access to Financial Assistance		New Parties		
		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
<1pct	**1 Mean**	**1,67**	**1,50**	**0,83**
	N	6	6	6
	Std. Dev.	1,21	1,05	0,75
<4pct	**2 Mean**	**1,91**	**1,45**	**0,91**
	N	22	22	22
	Std. Dev.	1,57	1,10	0,81
None	**3 Mean**	**1,20**	**0,80**	**0,56**
	N	41	41	41
	Std. Dev.	1,45	0,81	0,81
>4pct.	**4 Mean**	**1,67**	**1,11**	**0,67**
	N	18	18	18
	Std. Dev.	0,69	0,47	0,77
Total	**Mean**	**1,51**	**1,08**	**0,69**
	N	87	87	87
	Std. Dev.	1,36	0,89	0,80
Kruskal Wallis			*	
ANOVA			*	
**p<0.01; *p<0.05 (two-tailed)				

Table 4.11: Access to Financial Assistance and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

expect financial support given only to larger or represented parties to have a positive effect on the number of new parties, an indicator taking into account the minimum vote shares necessary to qualify for support was made. Moreover, as Katz and Mair argue, state subventions to established parties may pose a barrier to the emergence of new parties (Katz & Mair, 1995). The cases were therefore divided into countries that offer support to parties of small sizes (<1pct and < 4pct), not at all, or only to those represented or obtaining vote shares above 4 pct. However, it was not possible to also include consideration for the sums actually offered.

As can be seen from table 4.11, the direction in differences of averages is consistent with the hypothesis for both the number of successful parties and the maximum

number of parties obtaining over 1 pct per decade. In the latter the results furthermore passed the test of significance. With respect to the number of electorally successful parties, the average numbers are also higher for the categories where support is offered to parties with lower vote shares than 4 pct, although as for the others a lower threshold for receiving support does not make a difference. Nevertheless, it should also be observed that the number of cases where financial support is offered to parties with 1 pct or less vote returns is very small. There is thus evidence that financial support to parties matters, although the differences between the categories were not as large as those observed for access to media.

4.4.3 Costs of Reaching the Electorate

The final test concerns the costs of reaching the 'target group', that is, the electorate. As discussed, a number of factors may influence these costs; How many people messages have to be delivered to is obviously important, but also the population density - especially for face-to-face communication strategies - or the number of media outlets and their relative reach - particularly for advertising campaigns in the media - matters for the costs involved. Marketing agencies routinely make assessments of the costs of marketing specific products to consumers in various countries taking such factors into account[41]. But to my knowledge such cost assessments do not exist for political 'products', so a less precise measure must be relied on.

As a measure of the relative costs of reaching the electorate in a direct communication campaign in different countries, I propose that differences in total spending on advertising in each country may provide a good indicator. A country's total spending on advertising (adspend) reflects not only differences in the costs of reaching consumers, however, but also the level of economic activity and wealth. To control

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[41]The World Advertising Research Centre for example produces cost-estimates for marketing products to consumers in different countries, which companies can buy.

Correlation Analysis

Costs of Reaching Voters		*New Parties*		
(Adspend Total, 2001 wealth corr.)		>1pct	>1pct, max	>4 pct
	Pearsons R	-0.25*	-0.24*	-0.22*
	Kendall's tau	-0.12	-0.06	-0.07
	Spearman's rho	-0.16	-0.08	-0.09
N=94				
** p< 0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed)				

Table 4.12: Costs of Reaching Voters and the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

for this, the total adspend was corrected for such differences (as expressed in GDP per capita). Since figures on total advertising spending (adspend) in the group of countries were not available for the whole period, but only from 1991- present day, the totals for 2001 and 1991 in USD were used. Since we could expect the differences between countries to be relatively stable over time, this should not be a problem. It was also found that the figures for 1991 and 2001 were almost perfectly correlated and only the results using the figures for 2001 are reported. A simple statistical test of whether a correlation can be identified between total 'wealth-corrected' adspend (2001) and the three dependent variables is presented in table 4.12. Similarly to the previous analyses, both parametric and non-parametric measures are presented.

As can be seen from the results (table 4.12), the correlations are all in the expected direction, but also somewhat weak. The correlations measured by Pearson's R are clearly higher than the non-parametric measures of association, and only the former pass tests of significance. This difference is not surprising, since the non-parametric measures are based on rankings and thus 'diminish' the magnitude of the differences. Further, since there are large differences in total adspend values, and we expect these to matter, the non-parametric measures of association do not give us good indications of the strength of the association. Suspecting that the United States, because it is significantly larger than the other countries, and hardly has any new

parties with electoral success in the period, might contribute unduly to the strength and significance of the correlations observed, the tests were repeated without this case. In addition, while the direction of the correlations was maintained, both the strength and the significance vanish. Pearson's correlation coefficient is only 0.11 for the category of parties obtaining at least 1 pct. of the votes, while it is a mere 0.02 and 0.06 for the categories containing the decade maximum over 1 pct and the successful parties respectively[42].

On the basis of this bivariate analysis, there is no evidence to support that the costs of reaching voters by direct communication strategies contributes to lowering the number of new parties. However, this is not conclusive evidence of its irrelevance. In their study of the determinants of new party formation and success, Harmel and Robertson argue that larger states are likely to give rise to more new parties than smaller states, as a consequence of the generally larger diversity of interest communities that exist within them. Following the argument that parties fulfil a representational need in society, they argue: 'It follows that the greatest representational needs should be found in those countries marked by cultural and social diversity and hence that the greatest number of new parties should be found there. Countries with large, plural, heterogeneous populations and countries that are highly sectionalized have, by definition, diverse populations'(Harmel & Robertson, 1985: 502-503). The conspicuous lack of difference between larger and smaller states found here (as well as in their study), may simply be because the challenges of organising on a larger scale deters many potential parties from engaging in this venture or diminishes their ability to get voters' attention.

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[42]A separate test of correlation between number of voters and the dependent variables was also made. And, as for Adspend total, the correlations as measured by Pearson's R were all in the expected direction, and only slightly weaker than for adspend. (>1 pct: -0.22; >1pct max: -0.18 and >4pct: -0.17). Only for the number of parties obtaining at least 1 pct vote did it pass tests of significance, however.

4.4.4 Combined Tests of Direct Costs

The results of the bivariate analyses were clearly congruent with the hypothesis that state support to parties in the form of free access to media or direct financial support facilitates recognition of new parties. Only for some representations of new party electoral success did the differences observed pass tests of significance, however. The comparative costs of reaching the electorate, as measured by the number of voters and total adspend, showed correlation - in the expected direction - with the number of parties winning votes above the two threshold values chosen. This correlation became very weak and insignificant, however, once the United States was removed.

The final item in the analyses concerns the possible combined effects of the three indicators for direct communication costs. The three indicators of access to media, finance and finally the total adspend (2001, wealth corrected) were therefore entered in a multivariate regression model. As mentioned above, there are no multivariate techniques for ordinal variables and regression analysis is therefore used instead. The model used to test the hypothesized effects is the following: *Number of New Vote-Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 media + \beta_2 finance + \beta_3 reachvoters + \varepsilon$

The variation explained by the model, as indicated by the R^2, is just 6-7 pct. for all three dependent variables (see table 4.13). In addition to being weak, the models do not pass tests of significance. The U.S. was excluded from the model, but the values in brackets refer to the variance explained when it is included. As can be seen this case contributes considerably to the results, and since it is probably that registration barrier is an important contributing factor to the low number of new parties observed, it is reasonable to run the analyses without it. However, even without the U.S. included, the coefficients for all three indicators have the expected direction. The coefficients for access to media, in this model, are similar for all categories of new parties, but only for the category of successful parties do they

OLS Regression

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*		
	>1 pct	>1 pct, max	>4 pct
Access to Media	-0.17 (-0.17)	-0.16 (-0.16)	-0.24 (-0.24)
Access to Finance	-0.03 (-0.02)	-0.15 (-0.13)	-0.02 (-0.02)
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.20 (-0.00)	-0.09 (-0.00)	-0.10 (-0.00)
Constant	2.6**	2.03**	1.43**
R^2	0.06	0.06	0.07
(U.S. included)	(0.12*)	(0.15*)	(0.13*)
N=79			
** $p<0.01$ level; * $p<0.05$ (two-tailed) standardized coefficients reported, normal coefficients in ( )			

Table 4.13: The Impact of the Costs of Direct Communication on the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

come close to passing test of significance. This finding was the same in the bivariate analysis. The indicator for access to finance shows the weakest coefficients, except for the maximum number of parties observed at an election where it shows effects similar to media access. For the costs of reaching the electorate, the standardized coefficient is the highest for the category of parties obtaining at least a pct of the votes. Only for the category containing the decade maximum of parties obtaining at least 1 pct of the votes are the coefficients similar to those seen for access to media; for the other categories it is very low. Finally, and somewhat surprisingly, the indicator for costs of reaching the electorate now shows a moderate negative effect, as can be seen from the standardized coefficients. The negative impact is strongest for the number of new parties obtaining 1 pct. or more of the votes (similar to the impact of access to

media), but it is stronger than the access to finance for the other new party variables. None of the coefficients pass the test of significance, however.

Interaction Effects

The analysis has so far relied on the assumption that the barriers - or facilitators - have independent effects, but it is likely that the barriers interact and produce joint effects over and above the individual ones. That is, a single high barrier may not be sufficient to block entry on its own, but if there are multiple barriers facing a new party the negative effect on electoral success may be tangible. Since all of the barriers of direct communication identified here show only weak to moderate effects on their own, it would be interesting to investigate whether interaction effects can be identified. In the following, two different interaction effects will be examined. Firstly, it will be examined whether access to media and finance interact and secondly, it will be examined whether all three direct communication barriers interact. The method for testing the relationships proposed involves firstly transforming each of the 3 variables into z-scores, secondly creating the two interaction terms: 1) Interact Media&Finance = Z-AccessMedia · Z-AccessFinance) 2) Interact All Direct Costs = Z-MediaAccess · Z-FinanceAccess · Z-CostsReach. Finally the effect of the interaction terms will be tested in a multivariate model[43]. The model used to test the first hypothesis is: *Number of New Vote-Winning Parties =*
$\beta_0 + \beta_1(media \cdot finance) + \beta_2 media + \beta_3 finance + \beta_4 reachvoters + \varepsilon$

The results of the first analysis investigating the existence of interaction effects of the rules on financial support and media access are summarized in table 4.14. As can be seen, there is some evidence in support of the hypothesis although it is not consistent across new party categories. For the two categories of new parties obtaining at least 1 pct of the votes, the coefficients for the interaction term are

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[43]The method is described in 'Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analysis' by Brambor, Clark and Golder. Political Analysis (2006) 14:63-82. An example of the procedure can also be found in Tavits (2004).

OLS Regression

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*		
	>1 pct	>1 pct, max	>4 pct
Interaction Term (AccessMedia•AccessFinance)	**0.01**	**0.06**	**-0.13**
Access to Media	-0.17	-0.15	-0.26*
Access to Finance	-0.01	-0.13	-0.61
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.20	-0.11	-0.07
Constant	-0.10	-0.00	0.06
R^2	0.06	0.07	0.08
(U.S. included)	(0.12)	(0.15*)	(0.14*)
N=79			
** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed) standardized coefficients reported			

Table 4.14: Interaction Effects in the Direct Communication Barrier (1)

negligible. However, for the category of successful parties including the interaction term results in slightly more variance explained by the model and furthermore the coefficient for the interaction term is negative as expected. It is not large, however and it should of course be observed that the model does not pass tests of significance.

The next question is whether we can explain more by taking the possible interaction of all three barriers of direct communication into account. The model used to test this hypothesis can be written as follows: *Number of New Vote-Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1(media \cdot finance \cdot reachvoters) + \beta_2 media + \beta_3 finance + \beta_4 reachvoters + \varepsilon$

As can bee seen from the results of the multivariate regression analysis summarized in table 4.15, the results do not give any evidence in support of an interaction effect - quite the contrary. The coefficients for the interaction term are positive across all three categories. For the maximum number of parties obtaining at least 1

OLS Regression

Regressor	Dependent Variable: New Parties		
	>1 pct	>1 pct, max	>4 pct
Interaction Term (Media•Finance•ReachVoters)	0.11	0.02	0.12
Access to Media	-0.20	-0.16	-0.27*
Access to Finance	-0.03	-0.15	-0.05
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.22	-0.10	-0.13
Constant	-0.12	1.15	-0.02
R^2	**0.07**	**0.06**	**0.08**
(U.S. included)	(0.13)	(0.15*)	(0.14*)
N=79			
** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed) standardized coefficients reported			

Table 4.15: Interaction Effects in the Direct Communication Barrier (2)

pct of the votes, it is negligible, however. On basis of the analysis presented here, there is thus no consistent evidence to support that the individual barriers of direct communication produce in concert over and above their individual effects. Only a weak interactive effect between the conditions for access to media and finance could be observed in the model predicting the number of successful parties.

4.5 Multivariate Analysis and Discussion of Results

Concerning the first dimension examined, namely the extent of public exposure to political information, which results from the particular mix of demand and supply structures in each country, the tests did not confirm the original hypotheses. The market shares of public service television displayed a consistent, but insignificant, positive effect on the number of new parties obtaining minimal vote shares, but only the difference between low and medium public service shares had a positive effect on the number of electorally successful parties. The effect of newspaper readership pointed in the opposite direction, however, and the indicator combining newspaper readership and shares of public service television seemed to indicate that too high or too low levels of information were equally unfavourable to new parties. A multivariate analysis of the separate impact of newspaper readership and public service television consumption revealed, however, that the two sources of information pull in opposite directions. With newspaper readership having a clear depressing effect on the number of new parties obtaining minimal vote shares and public service television having the opposite effect. None of these effects were observable for the group of electorally successful parties, however.

The tests including the dimension of political control over broadcast organisations did not confirm the hypothesis that greater political influence over television succeeds in depressing the rate of new party success. Instead, the contrary appears to be the case for the number of parties obtaining at least 1 pct of the votes. This may be because demand for new parties is higher in these cases, or simply because politicization of broadcast organisations is not effective in steering the information reaching to public - either because they receive it through other sources, or because journalists in the broadcast organisations generally have enough leeway to employ

professional rather than political criteria in the selection of material. However, again, there was no clear variation in the average number of parties obtaining over 4 pct of the votes across the categories.

Finally, the observation that the cases with high political control over broadcast television was associated with higher means of new parties, led to an additional test to uncover whether the positive effect of higher market shares of public service television observed earlier, should in fact be attributed to the cases with high political control of broadcast. And in fact, this was found.

The results related to direct communication were more encouraging. In the bivariate analyses more generous terms of financial support and free access to media were associated with higher averages of new parties (all types), while the deflating effects of the costs of reaching the electorate were only apparent when the US was included, once this case was removed, the effects virtually disappeared. The multivariate analysis (excluding the US) confirmed the results as the coefficients observed all had the expected direction - although none were significant. Free access to media displayed the strongest effects across all three types, while access to finance showed an effect on the maximum number of new parties observed at an election. Somewhat surprisingly, the costs of reaching the electorate now proved to have an effect comparable to that of access to the media on the number of parties obtaining just 1 pct of the votes, while the effects on the other categories were more moderate. It was then investigated whether the barriers have interaction effects. There was no evidence to support that this is the case, however.

Before dismissing the hypotheses concerning the influence of the media system indicators, it is necessary to investigate how much variance can be explained by combining the different indicators of the recognition barrier in one model and relationships hold up when the effects of other variables are controlled for.

OLS Regression

Regressor	Dependent Variable: New Parties		
	>1 pct	>1 pct, max	>4 pct
PublicService TV Market Share	0.13	0.07	-0.01
Newspaper Readership	-0.30*	-0.15	-0.02
Political Influence PublicTV	0.00	0.04	0.07
Access to Media	-0.14	-0.14	-0.23
Access to Finance	-0.01	-0.12	-0.00
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.12	-0.09	-0.07
Constant	2.8**	1.9*	1.48*
R^2	**0.16**	**0.10**	**0.07**
N=79			

** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)
standardized coefficients reported

Table 4.16: The Impact of the Recognition Barrier Indicators on the Number of New Vote-Winning Parties

The model used to test the hypothesized effects is: *Number of New Vote Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 pstv + \beta_2 np\text{-}reader + \beta_3 media + \beta_4 finance + \beta_5 reachvoter + \varepsilon$

The results of the multivariate regression analysis are summarized in table 4.16. As can be seen from the results, the model best explained is the number of new parties obtaining at least 1 pct of the vote share. For this group some 16.3 pct of the variation (R^2) is explained. However, the coefficients are not always in the expected direction. Public Service TV market shares have a positive effect, but only on the number of parties obtaining 1 pct of the votes. For the group of successful parties the coefficient is tiny. Surprisingly, the political influence over broadcasting organisations appears to have a slight positive effect on the number of parties obtaining at least 4 pct of the votes, but no effect on the number of parties obtaining over 1 pct of vote shares

and a very weak effect on the maximum number of parties with over1 pct of vote shares observed at an election. Newspaper readership has a strong deflating effect on the number of new parties with over 1 pct of vote shares - which is furthermore significant - but it has hardly any effect on the number of new successful parties. Of the three indicators of direct communication costs, only the access to media shows a moderate effect on all three dependent variables. It is also the only factor which appears to determine variation in the number of successful parties. However, it should also be observed that the costs of reaching voters has a negative effect on all dependent variables. The standardized coefficients are weak, but still stronger than in the bivariate analysis.

4.6 Conclusion: Capturing the Recognition Barrier

The question is what conclusions can be drawn concerning the recognition barrier. None of the hypotheses aimed at capturing the role played by the mass media, whether on the demand or supply side, were supported by empirical evidence. The hypothesis that greater exposure to political information, measured by higher consumption of media known to provide more extensive coverage of political news, would facilitate recognition was not consistent with the evidence. In fact, one of the indicators of such exposure, namely newspaper readership, appeared to have the exact opposite effect. Furthermore, the expectation that greater political control over national television broadcasting would make it more difficult for new parties to break through also disconfirmed, and again actually the opposite appeared to be the case. There are many possible reasons for these findings. Firstly, it is possible that the indicators chosen of the phenomena in question may be too crude. While this is certainly true, I would argue that the problem is less related to this and more to

the dependent variables chosen. The number of new parties winning certain vote shares is a crude indicator for the recognition of new alternatives, particularly as the numbers do not yield any information about the resources possessed by the parties that make it. Secondly, it is highly probable that media consumption taps into other dimensions than the mere exposure to political information. Newspaper reading may, for instance, have a stabilizing effect on electoral behaviour by strengthening existing partisan preferences. Newspapers typically have a political profile, and the choice of what newspaper to read may both reflect and reinforce partisan preferences and therefore reduce vote switching. Television is generally more 'catch-all' in its profile and may therefore have the opposite effect. Or the reasons may lie in the medium itself, that is, people may be more easily swayed by appeals from new alternatives when they see them 'in person' on television than when they read about them. The depressing effects of higher newspaper reading could therefore be unrelated to the effects of this medium per se, and instead express the greater dependence on television in countries where readership is low. Thirdly, with respect to the lack of an effect from political control over national broadcast television, the problem may lie with the dependent variable, but it could also relate to the issue itself. Blocked access to certain media outlets, such as television, may strengthen efforts to go through other channels and may also provoke a counter reaction of greater openness on the part of other media. Media systems may for such dynamic reasons be very difficult to describe as more open or closed per se - even if individual parts can be so characterised. Finally, while the mass media undoubtedly play a crucial role for recognition, it is possible that single events determine exposure much more than structural features and that theory will therefore fall short in trying to predict differences.

As a comparative measure of the recognition barrier, the only solution is to rely on the three indicators of the direct communication costs. In the final chapter analysing the combined impact of the barriers to entry, these three indicators will therefore represent the recognition barrier.

Chapter 5

The Representation Barrier

5.1   Introduction

Having secured a place on the ballot, and at least some degree of recognition in the electorate, a new party faces the final barrier, namely that of obtaining representation. Access to seats is facilitated or impeded by two factors, namely the share of votes obtained and the electoral system. Electoral systems invariably influence political processes and outcomes. The structure they impose on the choice offered to voters and the mechanism they employ to translate electoral support for candidates and parties into parliamentary representation are widely recognized as important determinants of static as well as dynamic features of the party systems that evolve within their framework. As Sartori writes, electoral systems are the '*most manipulative instrument of politics*' (Sartori, 1997). Arguably, the most important property of electoral systems is that they pose a barrier to the entry of smaller parties. By excluding or limiting new or small parties from representation, the fragmentation of the party system is reduced and parliamentary parties shielded from new competition.

Identifying an indicator, which captures the barrier or 'strength'[1] of the electoral system, is not easy, however, and several solutions have been proposed and used in comparative research. In the following, the strengths and weaknesses of these indicators will first be discussed, and it will be suggested that the Effective Threshold suggested by Lijphart has clear advantages compared to other types (Lijphart, 1994). Problems related to its estimation as well as its definition, make it necessary to examine the method for calculating it, and I propose also to identify a new indicator. Such an indicator of the national electoral barrier, the Threshold of Proportionality, is therefore developed, and tests of its validity are made. Finally, the effect of the representation barrier, thus measured, is tested on the number of new parties participating, winning votes and seats.

5.2 Indicators of the Electoral System Barrier

To capture the size of this barrier posed by electoral systems, three main types of indicators have been employed in comparative research. The simplest, and probably also the most widely used, is the dichotomous classification of proportional (PR) versus plurality-majoritarian systems, initially proposed by Duverger (Duverger, 1972). A more recent but also problematic addition to this classification scheme is the insertion of the class of mixed-systems as an intermediate category. P. Norris as well as Woldendorp, Keman and Budge use 'combined'/'mixed' systems as an intermediary category between PR and majoritarian systems. Norris uses this ordinal classification as an explanatory variable to account for various phenomena including the level of party fragmentation, while Woldendorp et al. uses it to explain government duration (Norris, 2004: chapter 3; Woldendorp et al., 2000). Implicit in this scheme is the assumption that mixed systems by combining features found in proportional

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[1]The term 'strength' of the electoral system coined by Sartori is also frequently used to refer to the barrier property of electoral systems (Sartori, 1997)

and plurality systems also fall between the two in terms of their effects. The reality is, however, that they differ greatly with respect to their barrier effects, with some resembling PR-systems and others majoritarian ones (Massicotte and Blais, 1999; Shugart and Wattenberg, 2001). Moreover, as many have pointed out, significant variation between the systems remains hidden when they are lumped together in just two or three categories. More finely tuned indicators have therefore frequently substituted these in comparative studies.

One such set of indicators is based on the observed deviance from proportionality between votes and seats obtained by parties[2]. Disproportionality indicators offer a continuous measure of the distortions introduced by the electoral systems and have on occasion served as proxies of the electoral barrier in comparative research (e.g. Strøm, 1989; Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Lijphart, 1999). However, the underlying assumption that the size of the barrier of electoral systems consistently covaries with observed disproportionality is not a valid one. Disproportionality is caused by a conjunction of factors of which electoral rules constitute but one set. A source of constraint, whether it stems from the district magnitude, legal threshold or allocation formula, is necessary but not sufficient on its own to produce disproportional outcomes. The party system, that is the number of parties running and their relative electoral success, co-determines the level of disproportionality observed. Strong increases in the number of parties and the degree of fragmentation will only have a marginally deflating effect on the proportionality of outcomes if the constraining properties of the electoral system are very weak, as evidenced by the consistently proportional results observed, for instance, in the Netherlands despite significant changes in the party system. The lower the district magnitude or the higher legal thresholds, however, the greater the scope for the party system to influence disproportionality. In single-member district systems, for example, the number of parties and

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[2]See Lijphart (1994) and Pennisi (1998) for a review of the different indicators of disproportionality.

their relative vote shares explain the great variation in disproportionality observed across countries and time. Likewise for systems using legal thresholds, significant variation can be traced back to the degree of fragmentation - even if the thresholds are relatively low, if many run but fail to pass them, the recorded disproportionality will be high[3]. Since we know that increased fragmentation of the party system leads to a lowering of the vote share necessary to win seats (see further below), and that more parties may be encouraged to participate when the barrier is perceived to be lower, the covariation of disproportionality indices with the fragmentation of the party system in stronger systems brings on problems of validity, when we use them as a proxy of the barrier[4].

A third, and more promising approach to capturing the electoral barrier, used by an increasing number of scholars in the field, consists in constructing a measure on the basis of characteristics of the electoral rules themselves. Indicators of this type rely mainly on the constraining effect of the district magnitude, which at times is also simply used directly, but some also include consideration for the potential impact of the electoral formula, the number of parties running and lately also the number of districts[5]. Following this method, scores are produced which are independent of the concrete electoral outcomes and thus less subject to random fluctuations. Among these, the Effective Threshold used by Lijphart in his large comparative study of electoral systems has emerged as a particularly popular indicator of the electoral

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[3]See Penadés,1997; Lijphart, 1994; Rose, 1987 for a discussion of the causes of disproportionality.

[4]Sartori remarks on this fact that '*this least-proportional proportionality may not show up in our measures, and this for the simple reason that poor propotionality penalizes the smaller parties and eventually wipes them out*'. (Sartori, 1997). Bartolini and Mair refer to variations in the '*disproportionality potential*' between electoral systems thereby highlighting the difference between the observed outcomes and the nature of the rules (Bartolini and Mair, 1990:39)

[5]For instance, Ordeshook and Shvetsova (1994), Monroe and Rose (2002), Willey (1998) employ the district magnitude to investigate the effects of electoral systems.

barrier (Lijphart,1994)[6].

The Effective Threshold, which Lijphart defines as '*the vote share with which parties have a 50-50 chance of winning their first seat*', builds on and incorporates earlier work on electoral thresholds. Operationally it is identified as the mid point between the thresholds of inclusion, originally defined by Rokkan (1968)[7], and its logical complementary, the threshold of exclusion, proposed by Rae, Hanby and Loosemoore (1971). Apart from the fact that the Effective Threshold is straightforward to interpret, it shares the advantage with disproportionality-based measures in being continuous[8]. At the same time it avoids the main pitfalls associated with the latter. It yields stable scores for systems with unchanged rules and produces similar scores for countries with identical institutions. Moreover, contrary to disproportionality scores, the values of the threshold co-vary with the number of parties in the system in a way that is congruent with the logic of the barrier. The more parties competing, the lower, rather than higher, the indicator values. The psychological effect of electoral rules implies that parties and voters may be deterred from participating if the chances of success are deemed too slim or conversely encouraged if conditions are seen to be favourable. The presence of more parties should therefore give us lower rather than higher estimates of the barrier as the threshold does[9].

Recent criticism pertaining to its operational definition and measurement in practice has, however, challenged its position as the standard measure of the electoral barrier. This problems raised, as well as the solution proposed to solve these, will be discussed in the next section.

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[6]A number of recent comparative studies use the Effective Threshold as an indicator (e.g. Hug, 2001; Powell and Vanberg, 2000; Anckar,1997).

[7]The threshold of inclusion was called the threshold of representation by Rokkan (1968).

[8]Pendades does, however, criticize out that Lijphart's method of assigning values to plurality systems results in a semi dichotomous variable (Penades, 1997)

[9]The 'short-cut' formula proposed by Lijphart does not take the number of parties into account, however (Lijphart, 1994).

5.3   Threshold Definition and Estimation

Given the widespread use of the Effective Threshold as an indicator of the electoral barrier in comparative research, it is naturally important that it is estimated correctly. The comprehensive critique recently delivered by Taagepera of the method used by Lijphart to estimate the Effective Threshold therefore calls for careful consideration (Taagepera, 2002). Essentially, Taagepera introduces two revisions that both have significant impact on the calculation of this threshold.

Firstly, he rightly points out that the way in which the Effective Threshold was estimated by Lijphart implied a failure to distinguish between the district and the national levels. In spite of the fact that the formulas used to calculate the thresholds of inclusion and exclusion were initially developed for the district level, they are used in the Effective Threshold to estimate the size of the threshold at the national level. The criticism applies not only to the Effective Threshold but also to similar measures such as the Effective Magnitude that use the same approach (Shugart and Taagepera, 1989). The failure of the Effective Threshold to take the difference between district and nationwide levels into account has, according to Taagepera, led to consistently misleading estimates. He therefore proposes a method for including national level factors to enhance the precision of the scores.

The second and, as will be argued, less convincing argument presented by Taagepera contains a critique of the method for estimating the mid point between the thresholds of inclusion and exclusion used to calculate the Effective Threshold. Referring to earlier work (Taagepera, 1998 & 1999), Taagepera argues that instead of taking the arithmetic mean (average) of the two thresholds we should take the geometric mean which has the effect of producing significantly lower scores.

Finally, Taagepera proposes a revised formula which is launched under the name of the Nationwide Threshold of Representation. It shares definition with the Effective

Threshold, but is 'simply' calculated differently: including national level factors in the formula(s) and using the geometric mean to estimate the mid point between the inclusion and exclusion thresholds. However, the new method of calculation overturns established conventions about the constraining properties of electoral systems. The scores assigned to the majoritarian systems fall in the same range and often below those of the PR-systems. To support the claim that these scores are more accurate, Taagepera evaluates them in light of empirical evidence and concludes that they provide superior estimates to those of their predecessor.

Taagepera's work therefore leaves us with a clear dilemma. Either we abandon firmly established conventions concerning the constraining effects of electoral systems in the light of the fresh evidence presented, or we reject the Nationwide Threshold Representation as a measure of this property. In the following, it will be argued that, at least partly, the latter rather than the former route should be taken. A number of objections can namely be raised to Taagepera's arguments and method. Below, a detailed critique of the steps taken, and final results reached, will therefore be offered. The structure is as follows:

Firstly, it is demonstrated that the argument presented for establishing the mid-point between the thresholds of inclusion and exclusion contains significant errors. At the root of this is a fallacy consisting in a confusion between estimating the centre of a distribution informing us of the probabilities of parties of varying sizes obtaining seats on the one hand, and a frequency distribution of party sizes on the other. This confusion is closely related to the choice of a misleading benchmark, the Empirical Threshold, for testing the accuracy of both district level and national level threshold estimates.

Secondly, it is argued that moving the locus of threshold estimation from the district to national level not only requires inclusion of new factors in the formula to calculate the threshold values, but forces us to reconsider what the national threshold

can be used as an indicator of. It is shown that a threshold defined in terms of 'winning a seat' captures but one aspect of the electoral barrier and not necessarily the most important one for the most common research agendas. To capture the constraining effect on representation across different types of systems, it is argued that we need a threshold defined in terms of attaining proportionality. Such an indicator, Threshold of Proportionality, is therefore proposed and the next section is concerned with developing estimates and testing their validity.

5.3.1 The Elusive Mid Point between the Thresholds of Inclusion and Exclusion

The method used to estimate the Effective Threshold (T_{eff}) as well as the Nationwide Threshold of Representation (T_{nat}), proceeds by establishing the boundary conditions for the range of possible outcomes. As Taagepera points out that if we don't know a particular value, but know that it cannot exceed a given level nor fall below another, then we can estimate it to be somewhere in the centre of this range (Taagepera, 1999). The T_{eff}, as well as the T_{nat}, is determined in this way by establishing the boundary conditions of attaining parliamentary representation, namely the threshold of inclusion (T_i) and threshold of exclusion (T_x). The T_i is defined as the minimum share of votes that could win a party at least one seat under the most favorable circumstances, while its counterpart, the T_x, is defined as the maximum share of votes a party could gain but still fail to win a seat with under the most unfavorable of circumstances. In other words, if a party obtains less that the T_i share of votes, it will certainly fail to obtain seats, while if its vote share exceeds the T_x, it cannot fail to obtain a seat[10].

To determine the '*vote share with which parties have a 50-50 chance of winning*

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[10]The formulas for calculating the two thresholds for different formulaic structures have been developed by different scholars and are presented in appendix I.

their first seat' (defining the T_{eff} and T_{nat}) Lijphart takes the average of the T_i and the T_x, so that:

$$T_{eff} = \frac{T_i + T_x}{2}$$

Taagepera argues, however, that the geometric mean of the two extremes T_i and T_x, rather than the arithmetic mean (average) should be used. The formulaic expression is:

$$T_{nat} = (T_i \cdot T_x)^{0.5}$$

While this distinction may sound very technical and inherently uninteresting, it is nonetheless important since it strongly influences the value of the Nationwide Threshold, especially when the difference between the T_i and T_x is high[11]. This will particularly be the case in systems with high number of districts and low district magnitudes (as particularly is the case in plurality-majoritarian systems). Taagepera advances theoretical arguments in favour of this choice and subsequently furnishes empirical evidence to back it up.

The theoretical argument made by Taagepera favouring the geometric mean over the arithmetic mean is related to assumptions concerning the distribution of the data, as he explains in some detail in a research note of an earlier date (Taagepera, 1999). It is here stated that while the arithmetic mean or average gives the centre (median) of a normal distribution, the geometric mean yields the centre of a lognormal distribution.

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[11]For example, the average of 2 and 50 is 26, while the geometric mean of the two is 10.

The question would therefore seem to be which type of distribution is the more suitable one for the data we wish to analyze.

Taagepera expresses strong disapproval of the tendency among social scientists to use the normal distribution uncritically, and argues that it should under certain circumstances be replaced by the lognormal. Regarding the properties of the two types of distribution, it is explained that, whereas the normal distribution extends to both positive and negative infinity, the lognormal distribution has its lower boundary at zero and only extends into positive infinity. Using data with a conceptual lower limit of zero (e.g. one cannot have negative vote shares) makes the lognormal distribution more conceptually appropriate. As he points out, however, when the mean of a distribution is many times larger than its standard deviation, the normal distribution can be used (and is very similar to the lognormal) since the probabilities of getting the conceptually impossible positive or negative extremes of the distribution are extremely low. When this is not the case, however, the lognormal should be used instead. Finally, when seeking to estimate the centre (median) of a distribution, Taagepera claims that the geometric mean is 'always advisable when the ratio of the largest to the smallest entry is large (say, over 10) – even when the best fit deviates from the lognormal. In such a situation the arithmetic mean would basically depend on the largest entries, regardless of the precise size of the smallest' (Taagepera, 1999:424). In the research note two very different examples are given of how the geometric mean yields more accurate predictions of the median. In the first, the minimum and maximum weights of mammals are presented and the geometric mean used to indicate the median. In the second example, it is the median size of states in the US which is predicted given our knowledge of the sizes of the largest and smallest respectively. In both cases the geometric mean gives estimates much closer to reality than the arithmetic mean.

In the article on the Nationwide Threshold, Taagepera backs up his theoretically

founded choice of mean for estimating the centre between the T_i and T_x by empirical evidence. In order to test the calculated estimates of the T_{nat}, he compares them to an observed value, the Empirical Threshold (T_{em}). The T_{em} is defined as '*the vote share below and above which an equal number of parties have won and failed to win seats*' (Taagepera,1989). It can be identified both at the national and district levels, but was initially proposed by Taagepera to compensate for the failure of theoretical threshold calculations for the national level as well as a test for the theoretical estimates. In his original discussion of the empirical threshold, Taagepera explained that 'When one proceeds beyond a single district which uses a standard allocation formula (such as d'Hondt), theoretical calculations bog down. Thresholds in terms of nation-wide vote shares depend on local concentrations of these votes and cannot be calculated, unless one introduces knowledge about such geographical distribution of votes. Therefore, theoretical threshold formulas up to now have been restricted to a single district.' (Taagepera, 1989:106). This problem Taagepera now claims to have solved with the Nationwide Threshold. He demonstrates that the Nationwide Threshold calculated using the geometric mean between the T_i and T_x yield values closer to the Empirical Threshold than values estimated by using the arithmetic mean as with the Effective Threshold (Taagepera, 2002)[12]. Admittedly, using the geometric mean is not the only cause of estimates close to the T_{em}, the method for including concern for the vote concentration also plays an important role. However, as will be shown in section 4, the estimates made on the basis of Taagepera's method for including consideration of the vote concentration, but using the arithmetic mean to estimate the mid point, fall around 25 pct. Using the geometric mean instead results in scores of just a few percentage points, which is in the immediate vicinity of the observed T_{em} values.

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[12]Using the geometric mean is not the only cause of estimates close to the T_{em}, the method for including concern for the vote concentration also plays an important role. However, as will be shown in section 4, the estimates made on basis Taagepera's method for including consideration of the vote concentration, but using the arithmetic mean to estimate the mid point, fall around 25 pct. Using the geometric mean instead results in scores of just a few percentage points which is in the vicinity of the observed T_{em}.

There are, however, problems in the method suggested. First, Taagepera's argument that the lognormal distribution should be used when the chance of obtaining conceptually invalid scores assuming a normal distribution is too high appears to overlook that such problems can be overcome simply by truncating the normal distribution so that the chances of predicting non-existing values is reduced to a minimum. Secondly, it is difficult to see any inherent reason why it would be advisable to use the lognormal distribution simply because the ratio from highest to lowest observation is high. Whether the main bulk of cases fall towards the lower end of the distribution, as in the lognormal, or around the mean, as in the normal, can only be determined in one of the two following ways; Firstly, knowledge about the nature of the data can create an expectation that the underlying distribution is congruous with a particular shape or secondly, empirical sampling can demonstrate that the cases fall in a pattern that resembles a particular distribution. The range in the data set alone offers no help in this respect.

It remains to be explained, however, why the estimates using the geometrical mean of the T_i and T_x to find the T_{nat}, predicts the T_{em} much more accurately than those using the average.

Distributions, means and the nature of the data

The first method for determining which distribution is the more appropriate consists in considering the nature of the data we wish to analyze. For some types of data, the value of one case does not affect that of another. A typical example of this would be the height of people. For others, like party vote shares, they are intimately related. In defining the empirical threshold as he does, Taagepera implies that the data is the sizes of parties in terms of vote shares and the frequency of their occurrence. If we want to estimate the vote share of the party where below it and above it an equal number of parties have won and failed to win a seat ($=T_{em}$), then we are looking for

a distribution of the frequency of parties with particular vote shares. And it is clear that the vote shares of parties within a country are intimately connected simply because they are drawn from the same pool of votes: The higher the percentage obtained by one, the lower the share available to others. Within a given party system we have the logical possibility of finding a relatively high number of parties with low vote shares (say less than 5 pct.), while we logically can find very few with high vote shares (say more than 25 pct.). In order to illustrate this point, I produced a graph of the relationship between number of parties and party size (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Party Sizes and Expected Frequency
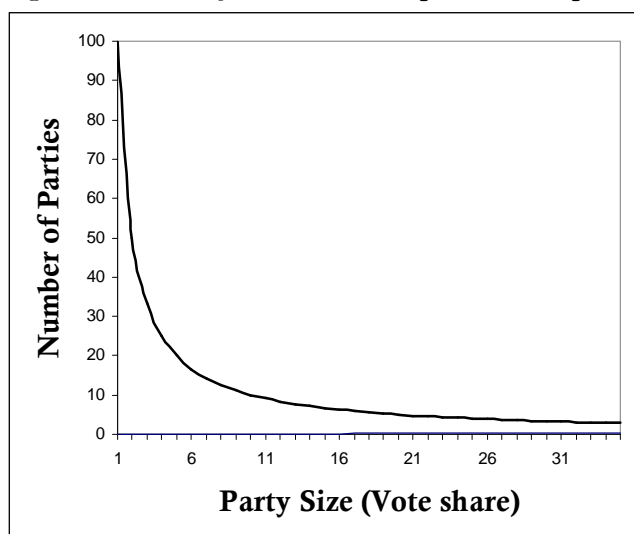
The graph I propose as an illustration of this point shows the relationship between the sizes of parties and the maximum frequency for each particular size. The line is drawn on basis of the formula: Frequency $= \frac{1}{party-voteshare}$. That is, if we know the only occurring party size is 50 %, then only $\frac{1}{50\%}=2$ parties can be contained in a system, and if the only party size is 25%, then the number is $\frac{1}{25\%}=4$. Of course no party system contains parties with only one size, but I would argue that it is reasonable to expect that the graph drawn according to this logic shares the

properties of a graph showing frequency of sizes appearing if we were to draw all possible samples from a party system. It therefore provides us with an indication of the frequency with which parties of various sizes can be expected to appear - given of course that no other factors influence their sizes. What we can see from the graph above is then that the probability mass is strongly skewed to the left. This is also the case for the lognormal distribution as opposed to the normal distribution which is symmetric around its mean, as can bee seen from figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Normal and Lognormal Probability Density Functions
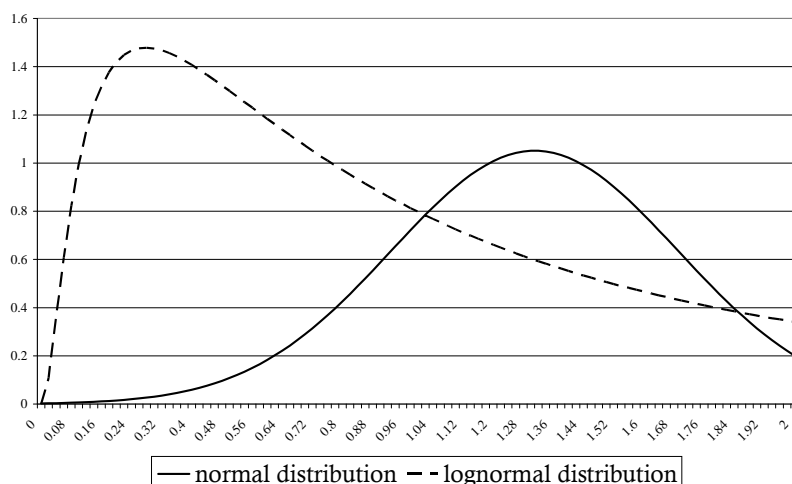
Empirical support for this theoretical argument concerning the distribution of party sizes can be found in observing the actual frequencies of parties of different sizes. The frequency with which various party sizes appear in the party systems of 20 countries covering the time period 1945-2000, encompassing 2659 cases, is presented in figure 5.3[13].

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[13]The countries the parties are taken from include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece (1974-2000), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal (1975-2000), Spain (1977-2000), Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom (Source: Mackie and Rose, 1990 and 1997; European Journal of Political Research various issues 1995-2000)

Figure 5.3: Observed Frequency of Party Sizes
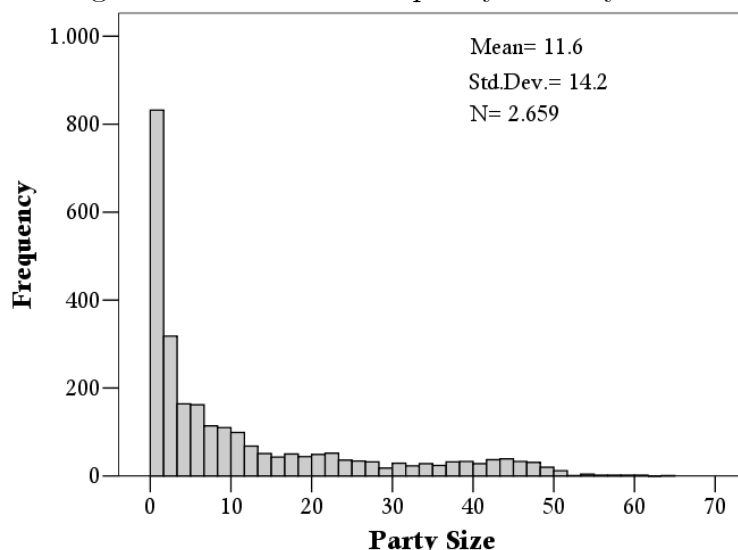
The first observation that can be made is that the shape of the histogram (figure 5.3) bears a striking similarity to the graph of expected party size frequencies in figure 5.1. It is clear that the proposition that frequency is inversely proportional to size has a firm hold in reality. The vast majority of cases lie on the left side of the distribution and indeed the mode of the distribution is very low at 0,2 pct. However, there are also a higher number of cases above 15-20 pct than we might expect and the line is not smoothly decreasing. This is, however, only to be expected inasmuch as the sizes of parties is not a random phenomenon. Several factors such as the advantages of size in campaigning, obtaining seats and access to government provide clear advantages for larger parties.

This fact is, I would argue, an important part of the explanation for why superior estimates (i.e. closer to the observed T_{em}) are made using the geometric mean of the T_i and T_x. The geometric mean gives much lower estimates of the median than the average does and thus reflects that that the main bulk of the cases lie to the left of

the distribution. That the median of party vote shares would be accurately predicted by the geometric mean is then explained by the fact that as is the case for parties we are dealing with distribution of unit-sizes which are intimately related inasmuch as their sum is equal to 100 pct. That the median size of mammals is predicted by taking the geometric mean of the highest and the lowest known sizes, as Taagepera uses as an example, would seem purely fortuitous, however.

Finally, it should also be observed that if we were to accept to take the geometric mean between the T_i and T_x, because we assume an underlying lognormal distribution (which as noted resembles the real distribution), a methodological inconsistency could be involved. Since the extremes T_i and T_x are given by characteristics of the electoral system, we would be assuming a lognormal distribution not for the whole data set, but only for the points between the T_i and the T_x. This has the consequence that if our T_i and T_x is 1 and 5 pct respectively, we expect the median party size to be 2.2 pct., whereas if the T_i and T_x are 2 and 15 pct., we can expect 5.5 pct. to be the median size. In other words the assumed median party size changes with the features of the electoral system instead of being external to it.

An argument that the median party size is larger in countries with low district magnitudes could be made, based on the fact larger parties generally have an advantage due to the high barriers to representation of small parties under such systems. To investigate this, I analysed the frequency of party sizes in single member district systems (SMD) and multimember district systems (MMD) separately. As can be seen from the histograms - figures 5.4 and 5.5 - the difference between the median party size in countries with single member districts (SMD) and those with higher magnitudes (MMD) is not very big. The median in the former types being 5.35 pct and in the latter 5.0 pct. (basing the analysis on the same countries and periods as above). Noticeable, however, is the pattern in the frequency of party sizes that can be observed in each group, as evidenced by the stronger difference between the

Figure 5.4: Observed Frequency of Party Sizes in SMD-Systems
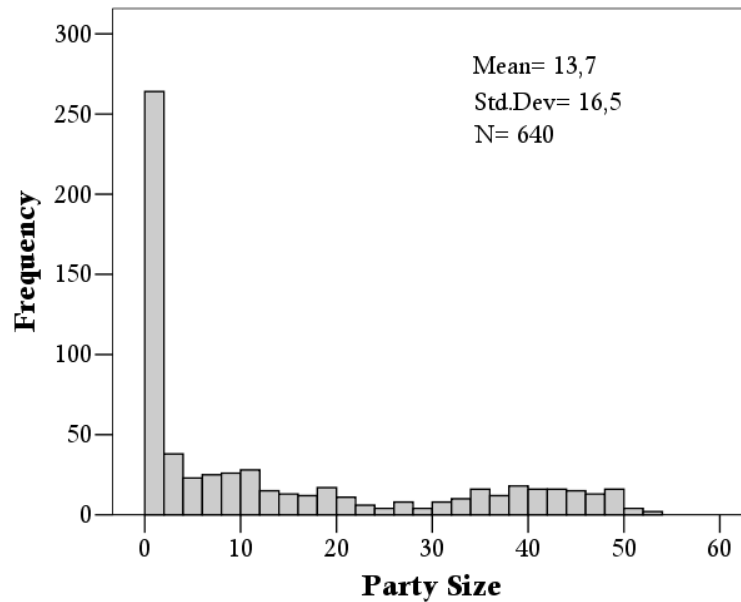
means - 13.7 (SMD) versus 10.9 (MMD).

However, these differences albeit as expected are simply not sufficiently pronounced to warrant a methodology such as the one suggested, which assumes that party sizes (especially the median size) vary strongly according the features of the electoral system.

The Nationwide and the Empirical Thresholds: Equivalent concepts?

While it is clear that the geometric mean - in spite of the problems discussed - provides a superior method to the arithmetic mean for predicting the median of a distribution of party sizes, the question is whether this is in fact what we are looking for. This essentially depends on whether the Empirical and the Nationwide Thresholds are equivalent concepts as Taagepera claims they are.

Figure 5.5: Observed Frequency of Party Sizes in MMD-Systems
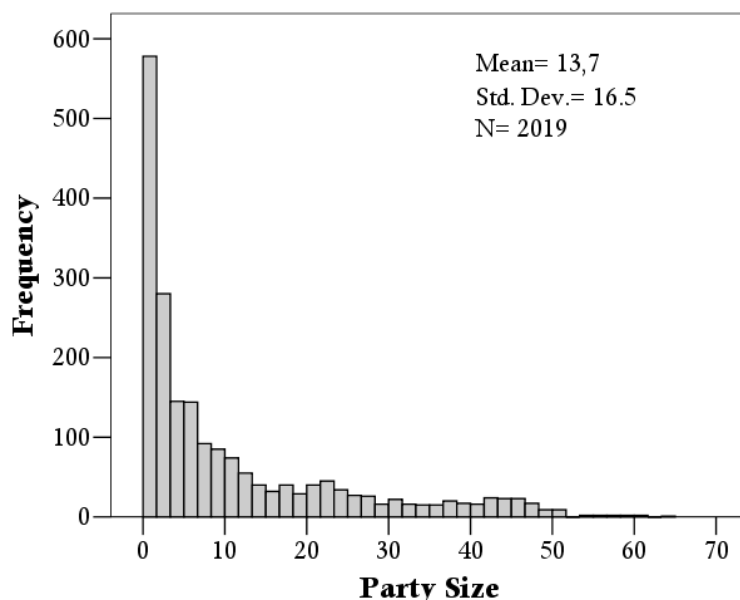
To answer this question it necessary to revisit the definitions of the thresholds provided by Taagepera. Both the Effective and the Nationwide Thresholds are defined as: '*the vote share, with which parties have a 50-50 chance of winning their first seat*' (Lijphart, 1994:25; Taagepera, 2002:384). The observable Empirical Threshold, on the other hand, is operationally defined as '*the vote share below and above which an equal number of parties have won and failed to win votes respectively*'(Taagepera, 2002). Taagepera claims that the procedure used to identify this vote share implies that a party has a fifty-fifty chance of winning a seat at the Empirical Threshold (Taagepera, 1989:107)[14]. However in the process of providing an operational defin-

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[14]The procedure for identifying the empirical threshold is described as follows: 'find the vote shares for all those cases where a party obtained one seat but no more. Rank these votes by increasing size. Also find the vote shares for cases where parties with non-negligible vote shares failed to win a seat, and rank these shares by decreasing size. The empirical representation threshold (T) is defined as the vote share (v) such that the number of cases where a party fails to get a seat with v>T equals the number of cases where a party with v<T does win a seat.' (Taagepera, 1989:106)

ition of the threshold, the focus is subtly changed from a probability statement of the vote shares with which parties have equal chances of winning or losing a seat, to a statement of the frequency of parties with certain vote shares we can expect to observe. And this is not the same. Only if we had an equal number of parties of all sizes running at elections could we trust that the vote share above and below which an equal number of parties have succeeded and failed to enter were representative of the point of equal probabilities. But as shown above, we can ceteris paribus expect to find a higher number of smaller parties than larger ones. This is, I would argue, one part of the reason that the Empirical Threshold is not a precise test for the Nationwide Threshold scores. We simply cannot expect an equal frequency of attempts to enter for all party sizes between the T_i and the T_x but rather a sharply declining one as shown above, and therefore the observations of entry or failed entry are not representative of the chances of entering alone.

Taagepera's own analysis of district level thresholds in Finland, where it is found that 'the empirical threshold is not halfway between the exclusion and inclusion threshold but tends to be at or even below the inclusion threshold' lends support to this hypothesis (Taagepera, 1989:113). Taagepera suggests that the phenomenon is caused by electoral alliances, but it is highly likely that we are also observing an effect caused by the higher frequency of smaller parties and would indeed find a similar pattern in systems that do not accommodate such alliances.

The question is whether rejecting the T_{em} as a litmus test for estimates of the vote share giving even odds of winning a seat implies simply reverting to taking the arithmetic mean between the T_i and the T_x. A distinction arises on this point between the district and national levels. The assumption of perfect proportionality between increase in vote share and increase in probability of winning a seat between the T_i and T_x *at the district level* remains uncontested and it is therefore still valid to use the arithmetic mean to estimate the mid point. This is then not because we

are assuming that probabilities follow a normal distribution but simply because the arithmetic mean gives the centre of any distribution symmetric around its mean - in this case a linear increase in probabilities per unit increase in size between the T_i and the T_x, as shown in figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Party Sizes and the Probability for Obtaining a Seat
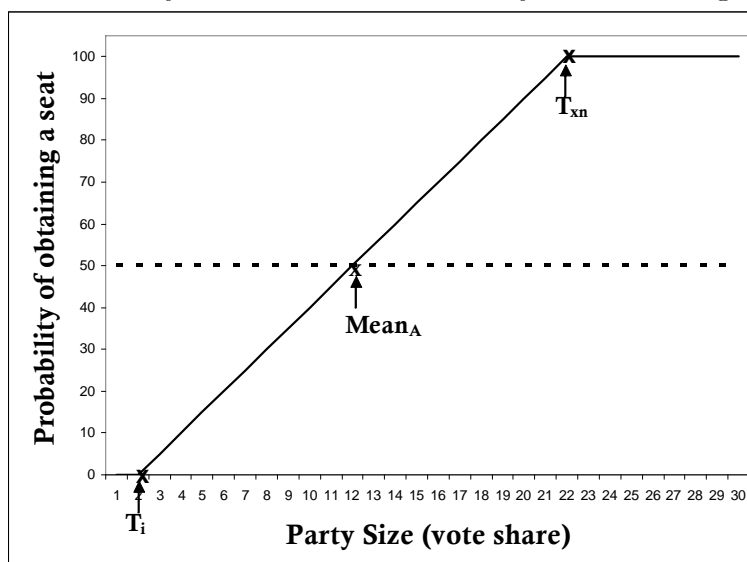
However, for *national level thresholds* the effect of the frequency distribution on the position of the T_{em} is only a small part of the story. The additional factors of geographical vote concentration and party strategy that emerge at this level intervene and provide strong explanations for why the national T_{em} is closer to T_i than the T_x. As will be argued below, this added complication forces us to reconsider the concept we want to measure prior to deciding on which estimation-technique to use.

5.3.2 Defining the Electoral Barrier:'a seat' or a 'proportional share'?

At the national level we have strong reasons to expect a non-linear relationship between vote shares and the probability of winning a seat between the T_i and the T_x. In fact, we would expect a sharp increase in the probability of winning a seat after the T_i and then a strongly diminishing rate of increase the closer we get to the T_x. The cause lies in the combination of geographically heterogenous electorate and party strategy.

Considering the impact of the vote concentration, Taagepera explains that the threshold for winning a seat at the national level is given by the district level T_i divided by the share of votes held in one district. For instance, in a plurality single member districts system, a party might win a seat with 35 pct of the votes in a given district. But if this party's total vote were concentrated in that district and it held just 1 percent of the total electorate, then the seat could logically be obtained with only 0.35 percent of the national vote. Based on this simple observation Taagepera delivered a sharp critique of Effective Threshold as estimated by Lijphart, as well as similar estimates published prior to his article[15]. While he claims that the thresholds estimated were never intended to predict the nationwide vote share necessary to gain a single seat (as was, however, implied by their definitions), he does point out that the way in which national legal thresholds were equated with those calculated on the basis of district level factors, indicated a confusion of the two levels (Taagepera, 2002:386).

The scenario of total vote concentration in one district of course depicts an extreme situation, but the norm is that parties' vote shares vary across the national territory along with differences in socio-economic, ethnic, religious etc. composition

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[15]The critique also applies to the Effective Magnitude proposed by Shugart and Taagepera (1989).

of the population. A party that has strong appeal to voters in one constituency may, as a consequence, hardly have foothold in another. Given variation in electoral structure across districts, it is obvious that smaller parties running have powerful incentives to concentrate their campaigning efforts in districts where the chances of winning representation are better. And the other side of the coin is that parties can economize on their resources by refraining from presenting candidates and/or campaign less vigorously in districts where they are unlikely to win seats anyhow. The combination of uneven electoral geography on the one hand, and strategic participation and campaigning efforts on the other, therefore creates a situation where parties with very small vote shares are only slightly less likely to win a seat than much larger parties are. All that is needed to pass a one-seat-threshold is to have a relatively strong appeal to the electorate in a single district. It is therefore not strange that we find quite a number of parties in single-member district systems who in spite of tiny national vote shares nonetheless succeed in winning seats. The question is, however, how interesting the fact that parties may win a seat somewhere is for the attempt to capture the electoral barrier or in Sartori's terminology the 'strength' of an electoral system?

A glance at the electoral results and seat allocations of the Liberal party in the UK illustrate the problem of using 'one seat' as the yardstick of representation; At its absolutely worst election in the post war period, the Liberal party received a mere 2.6 pct of the national vote, but managed even so to win 1 pct of the seats. It thus appeared on that occasion to be only marginally disadvantaged by the electoral system. 20 years later, in the election of 1974, the same party won an impressive 19.6 pct of the popular vote, but this time the barrier of the electoral system was tangible: the impressive electoral support translated into a mere 2.2 pct. of the seats. And this is not an outstanding case. In order to illustrate the problem, proportionality profiles were made for for New Zealand (figure 5.7) and the United Kingdom (figure 5.8). Proportionality profiles were proposed by Shugart and Taagepera to show the effects

of electoral systems. They show the advantage ratio of parties (%seats/%votes) as a function of their size (%votes) (Shugart and Taagepera, 1989).

Figure 5.7: Proportionality Profile: New Zealand
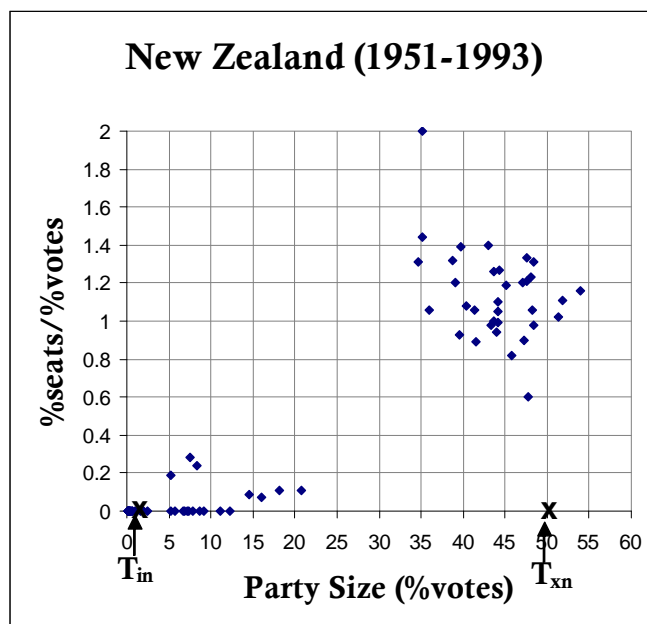
The first observation that can be made from looking at the profiles of the two countries is that all observations with a zero-score on the Seats/Votes-ratio (where no seats are obtained) are crowded close to the national T_i (as Taagepera explains: $T_i = \frac{T_{i-district}}{districts-total}$) - there is not a single observation close to the T_x or even at the midpoint between the two. In the British case there are 41 cases of failed entry of 129 observations in the period and none obtained more than 2,5 percent of the vote – and in fact 40 of the cases obtained 0.6 pct of the votes. The U.K. would thus appear equivalent to a country like Denmark with a legal threshold of just 2 pct in terms of its electoral barrier. In New Zealand, 33 failed entries of 74 cases can be observed and 22 of the failures obtained below 5 pct, while the rest received between 5-12 pct. of the vote. Similar observations can be made about the other

Figure 5.8: Proportionality Profile: United Kingdom
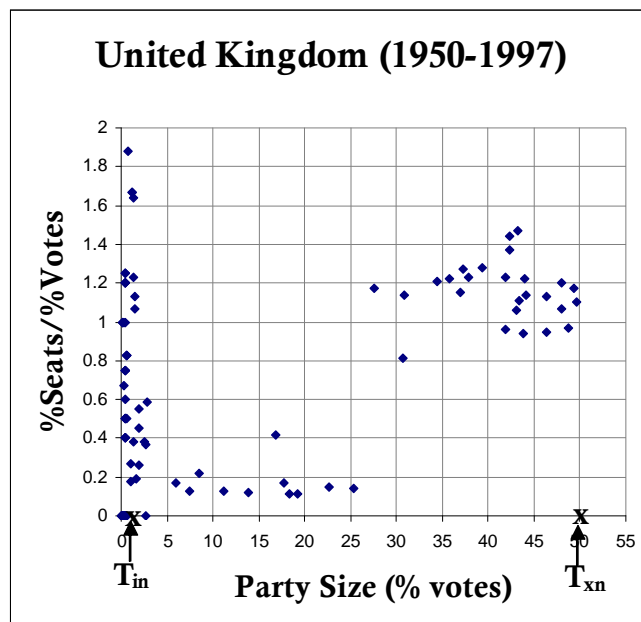
countries with plurality or majoritarian electoral systems. In the Canadian case, out of 116 observations there are 48 cases of failed entry in parliament and 90 pct of these obtained shares of less than 1.5 pct. The largest share of votes obtained by any party in the system that failed to obtain seats was a mere 4.5 pct. If obtaining a seat is the measure of the threshold, Canada would clearly present a lower threshold than Germany's 5 pct. In Australia and France the main bulk of those not succeeding to win a seat are indeed very small parties, although here like for New Zealand we do find a few cases where parties as large as 10-13 percent fail to gain access to parliament. In the case of France for example, there is but a single case of a larger party being excluded, namely the National Front in 1993 that obtained 12.7 pct of the vote, but no seats. Apart from this, however, only parties with less than 4 pct ever experienced such total exclusion. The implication of this would seem to be that the conventional proposition that proportional systems are more open to

small parties than versus majoritarian systems should be fundamentally revised, as Taagepera's Nationwide Threshold in fact suggests. However, if we instead look at parties that are strongly disfavoured it is clear from the profiles of both New Zealand and the U.K. that strong negative disproportionality is experienced by parties with up to 30 percent of the vote.

We clearly miss a big part of what we want to capture with respect to the electoral barrier by using a one seat criteria as the yardstick of representation. In fact, we end up with a measure that conceives of representation in formal or dichotomous terms (yes/no) rather than in substantial (how strongly) terms. While gaining access to parliament may lend some political credibility to new parties and possibly strengthen their chances for survival in the long term, it is usually not very important for national politics that small parties obtain a seat here and there. What is, instead, of overriding importance for the dynamics of party competition and the fragmentation of the party system is whether minor parties are likely to be strongly disadvantaged in the process of seat allocation or simply receive roughly proportional shares. Whether expansion beyond a few token seats is likely to be hampered or not. In countries where dominant cleavages are not geographically based, the only parties that can threaten the political establishment are those that solicit the support of a 'naturally' dispersed electorate. Parties with localized appeals might win a seat here and there, but they cannot pose a credible threat to cut into the electoral base of the major parliamentary parties. Only if a new party were successful in changing the policy space by inserting a new territorially based cleavage would it be able to obtain a larger share of votes and benefit from systems that give better access to geographically concentrated electorates. But such transformations of the political space occur only rarely. As has been demonstrated, the territorial base of cleavages is mostly quite stable at least in the longer standing democracies (Caramani, 2001).

Constructing a comparative measure of the electoral barrier requires sensitivity to

how constraints are imposed across systems. In systems with national legal thresholds the electoral barrier operates like a threshold that can be passed only by those above a certain size, and then introduces no impediments to expansion beyond that size. In other systems, as those with small district magnitudes, the picture is more complex. Some parties enter with a small but concentrated share of the national vote while some with much larger but dispersed votes fail to win seats. The barrier is neither a fixed vote share, nor does passing it in one district entail escaping its effects in others. If we choose winning one seat as the criteria of representation, we inevitably put systems that on average penalize smaller parties on a par with systems that over a certain size treat them the same as larger parties. A PR-system such as Sweden with a legal threshold of 4 pct., where winning a seat is intrinsically bound up with being proportionally represented would, according to Taagepera's estimates, be equated with plurality New Zealand.

The only method which would allow us to measure the average barrier imposed by a system is to pitch the measure around the vote share likely to result in proportional seat shares. It means setting a higher standard for representation, but in this way the average disadvantage imposed on smaller parties could be captured. We would then aim to capture the electoral barrier understood as the *vote share with which parties escape being penalized by the electoral system*. This implies, however, producing scores that are not sensitive to the fact that smaller vote shares may give parties access to representation. The bottom-line is then that whichever criteria is chosen, problems of comparability will arise. The determining factor for choosing a definition if we want a national level comparative measure of the barrier is the research question. We have to *decide what type of representational constraint we are interested in capturing.*

Estimating the National 'One Seat' Barrier

If we are looking for a comparative measure of *how difficult it is for localized political interests to gain representation*, we could use an indicator defined in terms of attaining 'one seat' such as the Nationwide Threshold. The question of estimation is then a purely technical one. I would, however, have some hesitations in picking up the formula proposed by Taagepera for the following reasons. Firstly, as will be further explained below, the method suggested for considering the potential impact of vote concentration implies assuming that parties's vote shares are concentrated in half (or even less) of a countries districts. This is clearly unrealistic for most countries (c.f. below) and serves only to 'artificially' deflate scores so that they fall closer to the T_{em}. Secondly, there is no reason to assume that the vote share corresponding to even odds to win or fail to win a seat can be estimated by the geometric mean. In fact, I would argue that no model can really be developed to predict this vote share, since it is *neither* random *nor* determined by factors we can claim knowledge about ex ante. We know that the lower limit is given by the T_i and that there is a clear incentive structure inducing smaller parties to focus their efforts in real or potential strongholds, but that is all. We have no theoretical tools enabling us to predict how widely parties might cast their net, how many votes they could muster or how these might be dispersed across the national territory.

One option in this theory void would simply be to use Taagepera's Empirical Threshold, which he initially proposed to compensate for the lack of theoretically based national measures (Taagepera, 1989). With this we do not get a barrier measure that tells us the vote share that gives even odds of winning or failing to win a seat, but one that gives us the *typical vote share of parties winning their first seat in a given system.* Identifying the T_{em} requires, however, following a rather cumbersome procedure. Furthermore it varies considerably across systems with identical electoral rules: from 0.3 in U.K. (1918-1979) to 8 pct in New Zealand (1880-1981). This is

a natural consequence of the fact that the T_{em} reflects a mix of objective constraint and the actual fortunes of parties that participate. Finally, we can expect the T_{em} for countries that only have a short electoral history to yield unstable scores as the vote share is determined on the basis of only few 'trials'.

A better option might then be to simply use the T_i. We know that the T_x has only negligible traction in terms of influencing the sizes at which parties typically win seats. The T_i is institutionally the determining factor in this respect and while we would get a vote share below the typical size of parties entering, we would have a stable measure which makes sense theoretically and furthermore is very easy to compute[16]. However, the effect of the actual electoral structure would be completely left out.

Defining and Estimating a Barrier of Proportionality

If the research question were instead to require an indicator which captures *the average national representational barrier to representation*, then we would be forced to consider the issue of proportionality. And this is the case in this study. I therefore propose a new national threshold measure defined as 'the *vote share with which parties have a 50-50 chance of winning a share of seats proportional to their share of votes*'. This indicator can be called '*National Threshold of Proportionality*' (T_{pro}). The definition of the T_{pro} somewhat resembles the interpretation Lijphart gives of the Effective Threshold as a national measure. As Lijphart writes: 'all effective thresholds except national legal thresholds are not only rough estimates but also midpoints in a range between no representation and full representation. Hence, falling short of such an effective threshold does not necessarily entail getting no representation at all

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[16]It should be noted that if we, in spite of the lack of theoretical validity, were to use the formula proposed by Taagepera, we would instead get too high estimates of the typical vote share with which parties win seats as Taagepera himself points out (Taagepera, 2002).

– as it does when the threshold is a national legal barrier – but being substantially underrepresented' (Lijphart, 1994: 29)[17]. The issue of proportional representation is clearly brought into play although it is not entirely clear what Lijphart means by 'full representation'.

The question is then how a threshold of proportionality can be estimated. To do this, I would suggest simply following the logic indicated by Lijphart in the citation above. That is, using estimated district level thresholds and relying on a process of a national level cancelling out of over- and underrepresentation in individual districts. If we use the district level measure of 50-50 probability to win or fail to win a seat, it seems reasonable to expect that the wins will evenly compensate for losses resulting in an overall proportional representation. The issue of how to deal with the impact of vote concentration on party representation persists, however. To produce a truly national level indicator, as opposed to the district level based Effective Threshold, we need a method for dealing with this.

In the following section, it will be demonstrated that Taagepera's method for considering the impact of the vote concentration on the national threshold value entails assuming an electoral geography which is unrealistic for most countries. A method is therefore suggested for how knowledge of the real vote concentration can be included when estimating the threshold. The estimates of the Threshold of Proportionality that are made will then be evaluated in light of empirical evidence.

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[17]Lijphart also brings the issue proportionality to bear on the operational decisions necessary to make for calculation of the Effective Threshold (1994). To decide which district magnitude should be included in the threshold formula in systems using more than one tier, Lijphart argues that it is the tier (and district magnitude of that tier) that is decisive for the proportionality of the results that matters.

5.4 The National Threshold of Proportionality

That the geographical vote concentration impacts the representation of small parties hardly constitutes news. As Sartori discusses, the constraining properties of electoral systems on the party system depends on the electoral structure. Discussing the circumstances under which plurality electoral systems will lead to a two party system he writes: 'a two party system is impossible if minorities are concentrated in above-plurality proportions in particular constituencies or geographical pockets' (Sartori, 1997:46). The question is just how to deal theoretically with the impact of the geographical electoral structure on our measures of the electoral barrier. Logically it can be dealt with in three different ways.

The first is the approach 'semi-consciously' taken by Lijphart (1994)[18], which Taagepera criticizes. The underlying assumption of Lijphart's approach is that parties' vote shares are evenly distributed among the districts. This allows him to make estimates of the Effective Threshold on the basis of the same factors that are necessary to estimate it at the district level. The lack of realism in this assumption, however, leads Taagepera to suggest another way of dealing with the issue. The method he proposes admits ignorance of its real value and tries to compensate for this by inserting an estimate instead. The formulaic expression used estimates the national T_i under assumption of complete concentration and the national T_x under the assumption of complete dispersion of the vote. The most and least favourable circumstances for representation. The problem in his method is, as mentioned, that when we then take the average of the two, we get values of the threshold that reflect

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[18]In presenting the Effective Threshold, Lijphart does not draw attention to the fact that an even distribution of the vote must be assumed in order to make the step from district level thresholds to national ones. However, in discussing how to transform complex legal thresholds in two-tier systems into effective thresholds, Lijphart recognises that an extrapolation from district to national threshold requires the assumption of complete homogeneity of the vote (Lijphart, 1994: 37).

the situation where the votes of parties are typically concentrated in half its districts[19]. Assuming a concentration in half of the districts would be close to the truth in a country like Belgium, which in electoral terms is split down the middle, but very far off the mark for most other countries that have far more homogenous electorates. The result of using an approximation far from the political realities in most countries we investigate is of course that the estimates we get are strongly misleading. In fact, as will be shown later, they are mostly more misleading than the scores based on the assumption of even distribution.

The third approach, which will be developed here, entails measuring the observed vote concentration and including its value in the calculation of the threshold.

5.4.1 The Factors: individual versus systemic features

Calculation of the threshold requires knowledge of factors internal and external to the electoral system. The internal factors are the district magnitude and the electoral formula, while the external factors are the number of parties and the vote concentration. Except for the electoral formula, the factors often vary across the territory. The district magnitude typically varies within the same system and frequently we find a different number of parties running in each of these. However, while these variations affect the value of the electoral threshold equally for all parties running, the vote concentration is party specific and influences the threshold individually. For instance the electorates of the Labour and the Conservative Parties in the UK are highly dispersed, while those of the Scottish National Party and the Welsh Plaid Cymru are highly concentrated. The result of this is that the latter two parties face much lower National Proportional Thresholds than Labour and the Conservatives do. So if we are interested in getting an average estimate of the electoral barrier in a

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[19]Taking the geometric mean between the two would reflect a much stronger heterogeneity with parties typically collecting in just a a small part of the national territory.

particular country, the individual party scores must be transformed into a systemic value taking the relative importance of the respective party thresholds into account. That is party competition on the left-right cleavage typically cuts across electoral districts, so that parties competing on such platforms face highly dispersed electorates. Other cleavages like linguistic or religious and certainly regional cleavages tend to have geographically concentrated electorates. If we want a systemic threshold value, we therefore need to take into account the relative electoral strength of the parties, and thus the geographical base of the cleavages and weight the scores accordingly.

5.4.2 The Threshold with the Vote Concentration

The question is how real values of the vote concentration can be included in the formula for calculating the T_{pro}. To explain how this can be done, it is necessary to briefly review how the vote concentration exerts an influence on its value. On the one hand, if the vote of a party is completely homogenous, it means that both T_i and T_x can simply be calculated without consideration of the number of districts. If, on the other hand, the vote of a party is completely concentrated in one district, both will be lowered in proportion to the number of districts in the system as Taagepera has explained (Taagepera, 2002). Let the national level and district level thresholds be written T_{in} and T_{xn} and T_{id} and T_{xd} respectively and let D_{es} signify the number of districts in a system. Then the relationship can be expressed as follows:

$$T_{in} = \frac{T_{id}}{D_{es}}$$
$$T_{xn} = \frac{T_{xd}}{D_{es}}$$

What we need therefore is a measure of the vote concentration, which can replace the number of districts (D_{es}) in the denominator in such a way that when the vote moves toward total dispersion it comes close to 1 and when it moves towards total concentration it equals the number of districts used in the particular electoral system we want to estimate the threshold for. Among the existing measures of national vote concentrations, however, none can be found which fulfils these criteria (see review of these in Caramani, 2002). So a different approach to measuring vote concentration has to be taken. I suggest the following steps are taken;

First, the Herfindalh-Hirshman concentration index (HH) is applied to the distribution of parties' vote shares across districts. This means taking the number of votes a party has obtained in a given district and dividing it by its total vote. Each district vote fraction thus obtained is then squared for all districts. Let v be the fraction of a party's total vote and i be each district, the formula can be stated as follows:

$$HH = \sum (v_i)^2$$

The second step is then to estimate the number of districts that the party's vote is mainly concentrated in. This can be found by taking the inverse of the HH. The measure thus found can be called the effective number of districts (D_{eff}) since it is similar to the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979).

$$D_{eff} = \frac{1}{\sum (v_i)^2}$$

D_{eff} gives us a measure of how many districts a given party's vote is dispersed over. If a party obtains 100% of its votes in one district only, we get the value 1. On

the other hand, if electoral strength is invariable across districts, we get the number of districts used in the system. This score then gives us the opposite of what we need. But if we take the number of districts in the system and divide it by the D_{eff} we will get a measure that can be used in the manner suggested above. This measure can be called the effective vote concentration, V_{eff}, and the formula for calculating it, is written as follows:

$$V_{eff} = \frac{D_{es}}{D_{eff}}$$

It should be observed that V_{eff} as a measure of concentration is equivalent to the variance. Although the scores obtained fall within widely different ranges, V_{eff} and S^2 scores for parties' vote concentrations were found to correlate perfectly (pearson's r =1). The perfect correlation is explained by the fact that V_{eff} is in fact equal to the variance (S^2) plus a constant:

$$S^2 = V_{eff} - \bar{x}^2$$

To get a score for each country that reflects its electoral structure, as discussed above, a weighted V_{eff} value is calculated. This can be done by taking the sum of the D_{eff} for each party multiplied by the party's share of the total vote. The number of districts is then divided by this system-D_{eff} to get the system-V_{eff}. This has the advantage over a similar weighting directly of the V_{eff} scores of each party, that it prevents very small parties with very high V_{eff} scores (in systems with high number of districts) from exerting undue influence on the systemic value.

$$SystemV_{eff} = \frac{D_{es}}{\sum D_{eff_i} \cdot v_i}$$

The formula for the National Proportional Threshold using the systemic Effective vote concentration and the district threshold of inclusion and exclusion can then be expressed as follows:

$$T_{pro} = \frac{T_{id} + T_{xd}}{SystemV_{eff} \cdot 2}$$

The appropriate formulas for calculating the thresholds of inclusion and exclusion can then be inserted. Whether a standard formula is used to calculate the district T_i and T_x for all systems as is done by Lijphart and Taagepera, or whether one lets the formula vary according to the allocation rules used and the number of parties running is then up to the user (the formulas for different formulaic structures and the short cut formulas are listed in Appendix C.1.).

The effect of vote concentration on the threshold – some further considerations

In order to avoid a misinterpretation of the T_{pro}, it is necessary to consider a bit more carefully how V_{eff} interacts with party size in influencing its value. While the argument presented by Taagepera regarding the lowering of the threshold according to increases in vote concentration holds for the example given, there is not a straightforward relationship between the two.

Firstly, it should be noted that V_{eff} scores have a natural upper limit for parties depending on their size. Given that all constituencies have the same size, a party obtaining 30 pct cannot exceed a V_{eff} score of 3.3, while one of 10 percent cannot exceed 10, since this would signify that the total vote is concentrated in 30 and 10 pct of all the districts respectively. Very high V_{eff} scores are consequently reserved for very small parties, whose vote can actually be contained in just one or a few

districts.

Secondly, one should be aware that a higher V_{eff} for a party does not always translate into more advantageous seat allocation[20]. The optimal vote concentration for a given party, that is the vote concentration that will maximize its seat share, depends on the share of votes obtained. To illustrate how this works a graph is presented which shows the V_{eff} scores that would lead to the maximum share of seats possible for a party running in a system with 100 single member districts and with only two parties running.

Figure 5.9: Vote Concentration, Party Size and Maximizing Representation
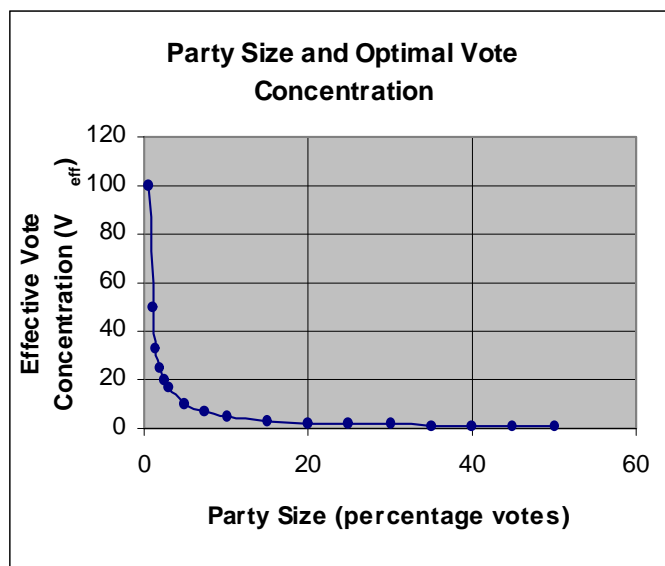
A party winning just over 25 pct of the vote could potentially win 50 pct of the seats if its votes were dispersed evenly over 50 districts and thus had a $V_{eff} = 2$, while a party of just over 1 pct of the vote would need a V_{eff} of 50 to obtain a maximum of 2 seats.

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[20]The tendency for larger parties to be less optimally represented due to strong concentration of votes has already been pointed out (Taylor and Johnston, 1979; Grofman et al., 1997)

Moreover, the effect of the vote concentration not only varies according to size, but each unit increase in V_{eff} for a party of the same size not only has a non-linear effect on its seat share, but can have directly opposite effects. A party receiving 25 percent of the vote running the same system as described above would get a proportional seat share if its entire vote were contained in just 25 of its districts ($V_{eff}=4$). If its votes are dispersed completely evenly in half the districts ($V_{eff}=2$) it will increase its seat share to 50 pct, but a further decrease in vote concentration leading it to receive the same share of votes in each district ($V_{eff}=1$), would have the opposite effect, since it will receive no seats at all. There are many combinations possible of vote shares the different districts and the same vote concentration score for a party may cover a very fortunate situation where it just gains enough votes to win a seat in many districts and loses just a few or a situation where it comes close in many districts but only wins a few. The V_{eff} measure cannot capture such situations accurately. As is the case for the effective number of parties, the same V_{eff} score can be produced by several vote concentration scenarios and some of these may be more opportune for the party in question than for others[21].

A good illustration of the dilemma is found in the New Zealand election of 1990. The Labour party gained 47,8 pct of the total vote but just 28,9 pct of the seats, while the National Party with just 35,1 pct of the vote took 70,1 pct of the seats. The V_{eff} scores of the two parties do not help us to explain this blatant misallocation of seats, since the values were very similar: Labour's V_{eff} being 1,09 while the National Party's was 1,08. At the following election in 1993, the results were far more proportional; The National Party obtained the same share of votes but this time only 50,5 pct of the seats, while Labour with only 34,7 obtained 45,5 pct of the seats. Again, however, the V_{eff} scores for that election were closely similar: 1,12

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[21]Dunleavy and Boucek demonstrate that different combinations of party numbers and party vote shares may lead to similar effective number of parties scores. As a result they recommend that the index is interpreted carefully (Dunleavy and Boucek, 2003).

for Labour and 1,14 for the National Party. The example clearly illustrates that the V_{eff} cannot be used to predict the advantage ratio (%seats/%votes) for larger parties, while it offers much more secure predictions when we are dealing with minor and very small parties. This is clear when comparing the Country Party of Australia or Bloc Quebecois of Canada with the Liberal Party in the U.K. The two former have V_{eff} scores in the range 4,5-6,5 and vote shares ranging from 5-15 pct. typically been overrepresented, while the Liberal Party with similar vote shares but V_{eff} scores typically between 1,5-2,5 has been strongly disadvantaged under the same electoral rules.

The examples serve to illustrate that the vote concentration measure must be used with some care in connection with threshold calculations. However, since the threshold values primarily serve the purpose of predicting the openness of the political system to minor and new parties, we are concerned with predicting what the chances are for these to attain fair representation. For such parties running in systems with small district magnitudes facing a heterogenous electoral structure will facilitate easier access to representation than will a homogenous one. In other words these systems will offer space for a more fragmented political representation.

5.4.3   The Estimates of the National Proportional Threshold - Internal and External Validity

To show how T_{pro} compares to the T_{eff} of Lijphart and T_{nat} of Taagepera, all three types of estimates for 22 systems used in one of the 21 countries in the period 1950-2000 are presented in tables 5.1 and 5.2(Taagepera, 2002; Lijphart, 1994). Countries using legal thresholds are not represented in the tables and the results for single member district systems (plurality-majoritarian) and multi-member district systems (proportional or mixed) are presented in separate tables. Unlike the T_{pro}, where the

Single-Member-District Systems

Country	Threshold Indicators			Vote Conc. V^{eff}
	T_{pro}	T_{nat}	T_{eff}	
Australia (1951-98)	37.1	3.6	35	1.41
Canada (1953-97)	27.9	2.4	35	1.41
France (1958-97)	20	1.7	35	1.57
New Zealand (1951-93)	32	4.2	35	1.16
U.K. (1950-97)	31.2	1.5	35	1.24
United States (1950-98)	33.7	1.8	35	1.65

Table 5.1: The Threshold Estimates for Single-Member-District Systems

original formulas are used to calculate the values, the T_{nat} and T_{eff} are estimated on the basis of 'short-cut' formulas in which both formulaic structure and the number of parties are disregarded. One should thus be aware that the only feature that causes the variance across systems for these two types of scores is the district magnitude. Furthermore the T_{eff} for countries using plurality-majoritarian systems is not based on calculation, but simply represents 'guesstimates' assigned by Lijphart, since the formula used was believed by him to yield unrealistically high scores (Lijphart, 1994). Including the vote concentration and the number of parties in calculating the T_{pro} solves this problem. In a nutshell, Lijphart's problem in using the number of parties in plurality systems was essentially that including all running would for some countries deflate the scores artificially. Counting parties in proportion to the share of districts they run in and using a national cut-off point of 2 pct. solves this problem, however. If a party presents candidates in almost all districts, it counts as one, but if it only runs in half, it only counts as half. Parties running just in a mere fraction of the districts are simply omitted. This is a logical consequence of the fact that parties only affect the threshold values in the districts where they are present and collect some minimum of votes.

As can be seen from tables 5.1 presenting the single-member-district systems, the

Multi-member District and Mixed Systems

Country	Threshold Indicators			Vote Conc.
	T_{pro}	T_{nat}	T_{eff}	V^{eff}
Austria (1953-66)	3.8	3	8.5	1.17
Austria (1970-90)	1	3.3	2.6	1.05
Belgium (1950-91)	2.5	0.8	4.8	1.6
Belgium (1995-99)	3.1	1.5	5.2	1.96
Denmark (1950)	5	0.8	5.5	1.1
Finland (1951-99)	4.7	1.3	5.4	1.3
France (1986)	5.6	1.1	11.7	1.15
Ireland (1951-97)	11.3	2.6	17.2	1.19
Italy (1953-92)	2.4	0.4	2	1.13
Italy (1994-96)	25.7	1.4	28.2	1.32
Japan (1952-93)	9.8	1.4	16.4	1.34
Norway (1953-81)	9.6	1.9	8.9	1.14
Portugal (1980-99)	6.6	1.3	5.7	1.18
Spain (1982-96)	9.14	1.4	10.2	1.23
Sweden (1952-68)	6.1	1.5	8.4	1.06
Switzerland (1951-99)	5.2	1.7	8.5	1.86

Table 5.2: The Threshold Estimates for Multi-Member-District and Mixed Systems

different threshold scores do differ significantly[22]. Taagepera's T_{nat}-scores stand out as consistently lower and fall within a much narrower range than both the T_{pro} and T_{eff} scores. Furthermore the ranking of the countries is also significantly different. Both T_{pro} and T_{eff} places the plurality-majoritarian systems as the ones with the highest thresholds, but T_{nat} scores rank these very differently. None of the countries are assigned a threshold higher than Germany with its 5 pct. legal threshold and the U.K. and majoritarian-system France have identical values to Switzerland and Sweden before 1968. The range of calculated (excl. legal thresholds) values is from 0.4 to 4.2, while for the two other scores they vary from around 1 to 35-40. The T_{nat}

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[22]* Signifies that the value is a legal threshold. See appendix for explanation of calculation of scores for the individual countries.

Information on the electoral systems and number of parties was obtained from Caramani (2000), Lijphart (1994) and Mackie and Rose (1990;1997). District level electoral results for the countries of Western Europe is from Caramani (2000), Jack Vowels kindly provided files on New Zealand, Australia was obtained from Adam Carr's Election Archive (www.adam-carr.net) and Canada from the Library of the Canadian Parliament (www.parl.gc.ca).

scores thus make the systems appear much more similar. The correlations found between the T_{nat} and the two other thresholds reported above were also weak as expected. For T_{pro} and the T_{nat} the Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.45 and for T_{eff} and T_{nat} it is 0.41.

Between the T_{eff} and the T_{pro} the differences are smaller. A strong bivariate correlation is found between T_{pro} and T_{eff}, where Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.95 for the scores reported above. Moreover one can see that the T_{pro} scores lend credibility to the 35 pct. arbitrarily assigned by Lijphart to the single-member district systems, since it in many cases falls close to this value. The T_{pro}, however, differentiates between the countries in this group. The value for single-member-district France is only slightly higher than half of Australia's. This pronounced difference, in spite of similar electoral rules, is explained by the higher number of parties as well as by the relatively high V_{eff} values for France. The data for calculating the latter value are, however, imperfect and the difference may be smaller in reality (see Appendix C.2. for notes on the calculation).

It is clear that it matters which method is used to estimate the barrier, but it remains to be evaluated against empirical evidence which are the more accurate measures of the barrier. This question will be addressed in the following section.

Are the estimates accurate? - an 'eyeball' test

The question is how to test the accuracy of the estimates. A simple, albeit somewhat impressionistic method, is by visual representation. Producing proportionality profiles that show the relationship between the share of votes obtained and the advantage ratio (%seats/%votes), gives us a method for evaluating whether the T-scores give fair estimates of the size with which parties obtain proportional representation. Proportionality Profiles were in fact developed by Shugart and Taagepera to estimate

the Break-Even point, which can be interpreted as the empirical counterpart of the T_{pro}. The break-even point they suggested should be identified as the point where a line drawn through the points of the proportionality profile crosses the *perfect proportionality line*, that is where the advantage ratio $= 1$ (Shugart and Taagepera, 1989).

The proportionality profiles of 5 plurality and 4 low magnitude PR-systems are therefore presented below. These countries were selected (from the group presented above) because the three types of T-scores generally differ more for them than for other systems and/or since these have a longer history with stable electoral rules and relatively stable vote concentrations allowing us to interpret the cases as a result of the interaction of the two conditions. The T_{nat} scores are positioned on the x-axis reflecting its definition as measuring the point of entry, while the T_{pro} is put on the perfect proportionality line as it seeks to identify where parties have even odds of obtaining a share of seats proportional to their votes. Finally T_{eff} scores are also put on this line although its definition places it on the x-axis, its interpretation by Lijphart resembles the T_{pro} as do the scores. For the PR-systems the observations fall somewhat more densely and in the pattern of a line than they do for the plurality-majoritarian systems, which makes it is easier for the former to evaluate how well the calculated values capture the mechanics of the electoral systems.

Proportionality Profiles for Proportional Electoral Systems   As can be seen from the proportionality profiles, representing Norway (figure 5.10 page 210)and Finland (figure 5.11 page 211), the T_{nat} score is much lower than the two others, and also clearly closer to the point where parties are likely to win a seat. The T_{pro} and T_{eff} scores, on the other hand, appear to capture the point where parties typically obtain proportional representation. There is no way of assessing which value is better than the other since they fall very close and the points are scattered, obscuring the

Figure 5.10: Proportionality Profile: Norway
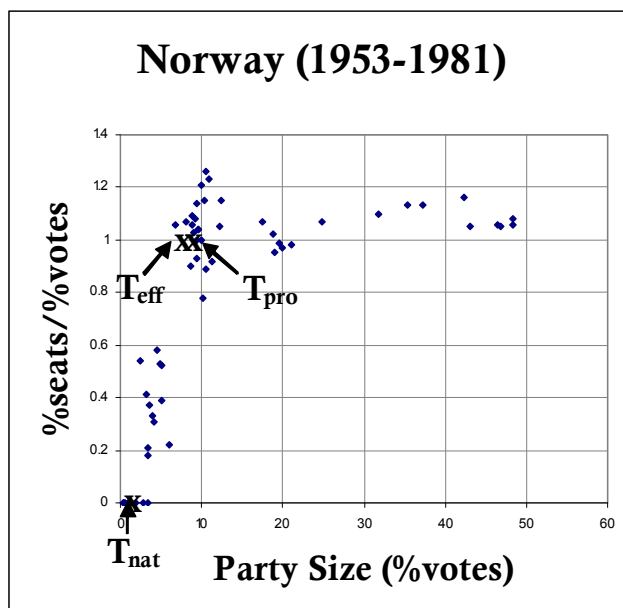
point where a line would cross the perfect proportionality line. This suggests that it is not necessary to take the vote concentration into account when we are calculating thresholds for countries characterized by homogenous electorates. The difference in the calculated values is so small that it can safely be ignored. Using Taagepera's method for considering the vote concentration would in these cases take us further from the truth rather than closer to it.

In order to assess whether the T_{pro} represents an improvement over the T_{eff} scores for countries with more heterogenous electorates, three countries, Ireland, Switzerland and Japan where the scores obtained are very different, are presented in figures 5.12, 5.13 and 5.14[23].

First, in the case of Switzerland (figure 5.13, p. 213) the inclusion of the vote

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[23]For both Switzerland and Ireland a few tiny parties obtaining very high advantage ratios were removed to ensure a good graphical representation.

Figure 5.11: Proportionality Profile: Finland
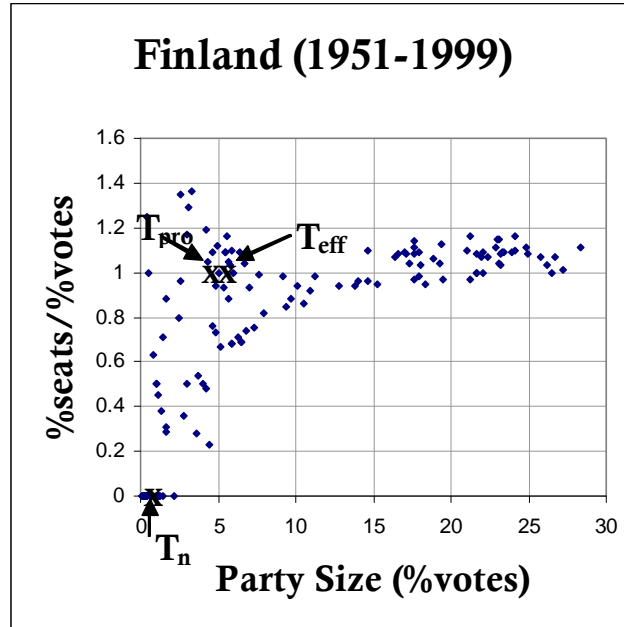
concentration leads to a lowering of the T_{eff} compared to the T_{eff}, due to its heterogenous electorate[24]. And in comparing the two scores, the T_{pro} appears to give a more accurate estimate than the T_{eff} of where proportional results are typically achieved. There are only few cases that do not receive seats proportional to their votes with vote shares larger than the T_{pro} and those that do are only marginally under-represented. In the case of Ireland (figure 5.12, p. 212), the T_{pro} also appears to be more precise than the T_{eff} [25]. Finally for Japan (figure 5.14, p. 214), the same can be said. As can be seen below the T_{pro} accurately shows what appears to be the

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[24]This is also the case for Belgium, but since its V_{eff} scores have almost doubled from 1.15 to 2.03 in the post-war period, and it had an electoral reform in the early 90s, it is difficult to produce a proportionality profile with sufficient cases where the parties run under similar conditions.

[25]In the case of Ireland, the T_{pro} is lower than the T_{eff} mainly, but not only, as a result of considering the electoral structure (V_{eff}). Also important is that different district level formulas were used. The T_{pro} is based on the T_x of STV-systems, but the T_i of Hare. The T_i of STV equal 0, which reflects a highly improbable situation.

Figure 5.12: Proportionality Profile: Ireland

Ireland (1951-1997)
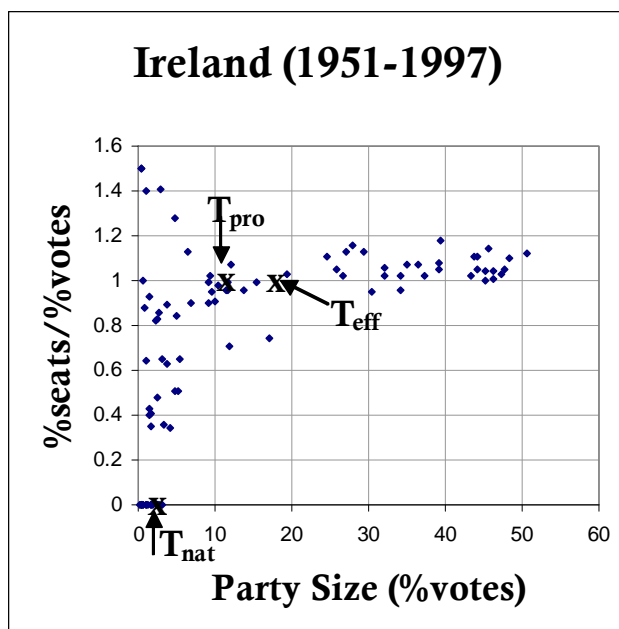
real size of the barrier. All parties with low seat/vote-ratios are below the 10 percent line and the few cases that have obtained a vote share above it, but failed to pass the perfect proportionality line, have very high seat/vote-ratios of above 0.85.

But as can be seen from the table 5.1, for many systems with quite homogenous electoral structures the difference between the two types of scores is not very large. Only when the electorates are more heterogenous, does it make a clear difference and the impact is potentially largest in single-member districts systems.

Proportionality Profiles for Plurality Electoral Systems   The proportionality profiles of the plurality electoral systems unfortunately do not yield as clear a picture as those for proportional systems.

Again it can be observed that T_{nat} scores generally capture the typical entry

Figure 5.13: Proportionality Profile: Switzerland
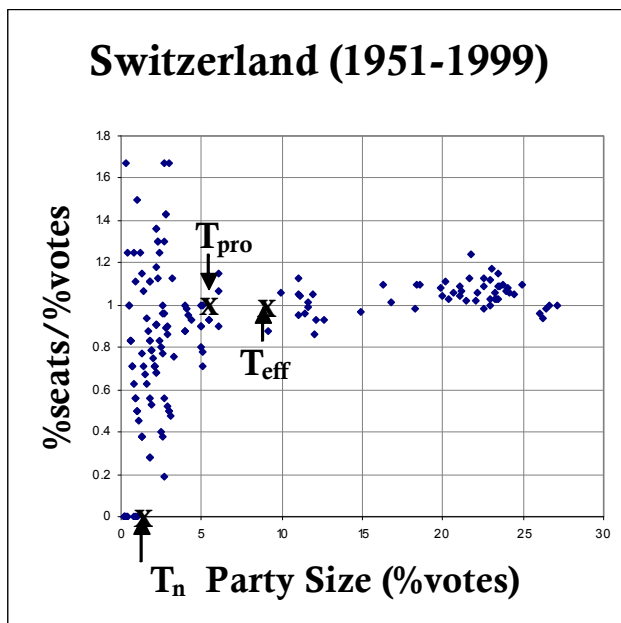
point, although in the case of France (figure 5.17 p. 216) , New Zealand (figure 5.15 p.214) and Australia (figures 5.19 p.217, and 5.20 p.218) cases of failed entry with much higher vote shares can be observed as discussed earlier. It is also clear that if we want to estimate the barrier small to medium sized parties face, the T_{nat} is misleading. Comparing for example the profiles of the U.K. (figure 5.16 p.215) and Finland (figure 5.11 p. 211) that have practically the same T_{nat} score (1.3 and 1.4), it is obvious that the identical scores do not give much information about the widely diverging mechanics of inclusion and exclusion so evident in the diagrams.

The T_{pro} values for both countries above fall quite close to the T_{eff}-guesstimates and thus lend credibility to the values assigned by Lijphart. Looking at the profiles above, however, it is impossible to see whether precision is gained from the theoretical calculation.

Figure 5.14: Proportionality Profile: Japan
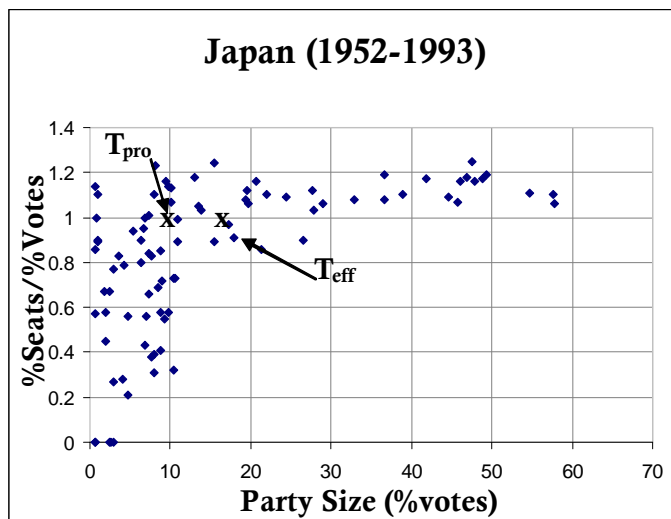
Figure 5.15: Proportionality Profile: New Zealand
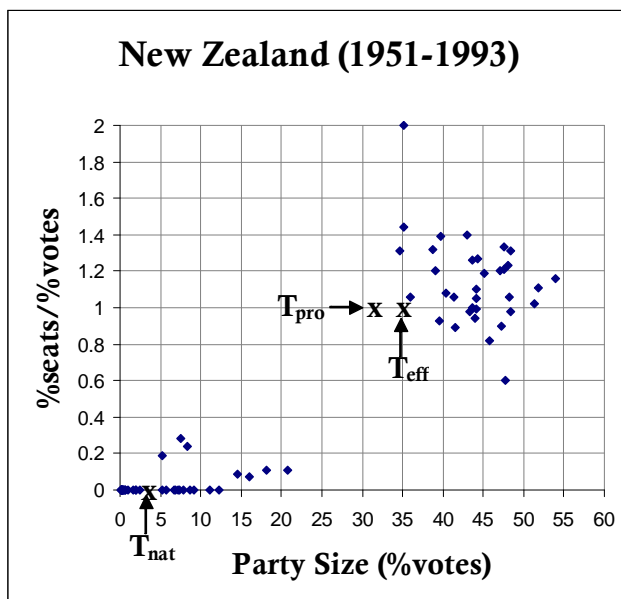
Figure 5.16: Proportionality Profile: United Kingdom
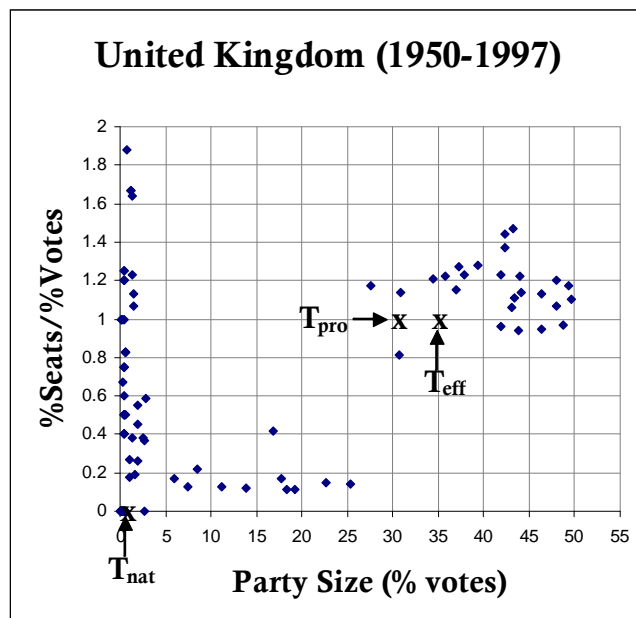
Among the single-member-district systems analyzed here, France and Canada have the most geographically heterogenous electorates. In the case of Canada (figure 5.18 p. 216)there has been an increase in vote concentration in the period examined (with the success of the Quebec party in early 90s), while it has decreased gradually in the French case (figure 5.17 p.216). It should be noted, however, that the electoral data available to calculate the V_{eff} for France was far from perfect (see Appendix C.2.). The conditions underlying the scores have therefore not been completely stable. It is, however, interesting to have a closer look at how the T_{pro} scores represent the cases here since they differ more from the T_{eff}. For France, taking the vote concentration into account clearly helps give a better estimate of the electoral barrier. Compared to the T_{eff}, it lies much more in the centre of where the cases fall around the perfect proportionality line. For Canada, it is more difficult to evaluate which of the two Threshold estimates is the more accurate. It is also abundantly clear that

Figure 5.17: Proportionality Profile: France

France (1958-1997)
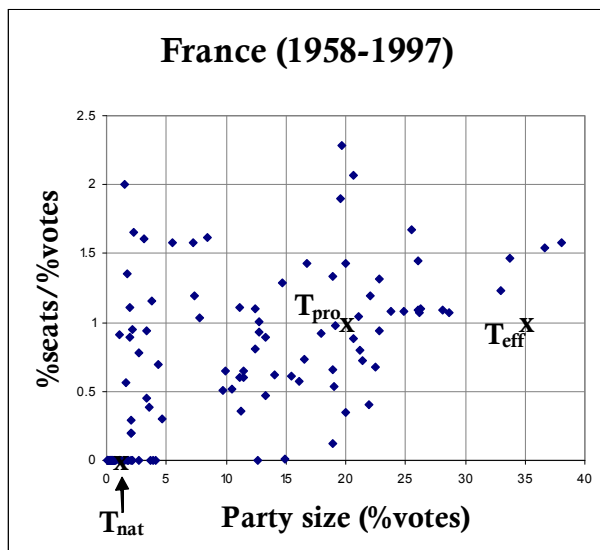
Figure 5.18: Proportionality Profile: Canada

Canada (1953-1997)
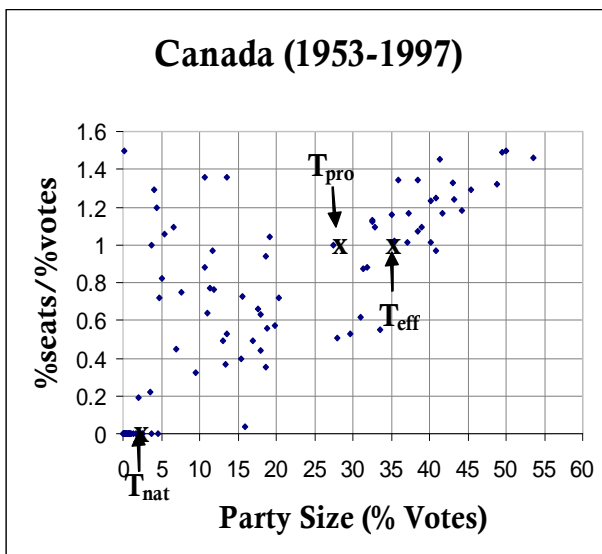
the T_{pro} in the plots does not predict where the cases fall with any great accuracy. In France, particularly parties obtaining vote shares close to the T_{pro} have received both very low and very high advantage ratios. As mentioned earlier, the Threshold in these types of systems can only seek to capture an average value.

Figure 5.19: Proportionality Profile: Australia
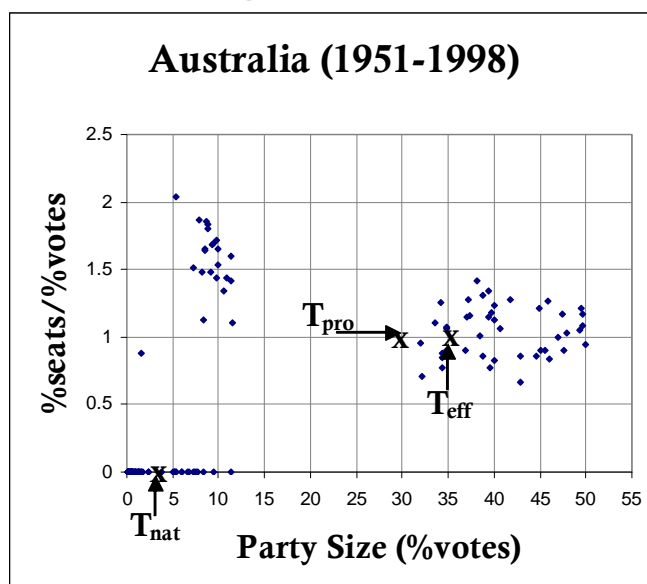
Finally, for Australia two plots were produced; One where the Country and Liberal Parties are regarded as separate (figure 5.19 p.216) and one where they are regarded as one (figure 5.20 p.218). Since the parties hardly compete electorally (rarely present candidates in the same districts) nor in the parliamentary-governmental arena (they follow each other in government and opposition), there are good reasons for seeing it as one party when analyzing the impact of electoral rules on party competition. The score of 37.1 is therefore the one most suited to capture the barrier for Australia. The plots illustrates that the T_{pro} is lower when the two parties are regarded as separate, but the lack of parties obtaining 10-30 percent of the votes,

Figure 5.20: Proportionality Profile: Australia 'Corrected'
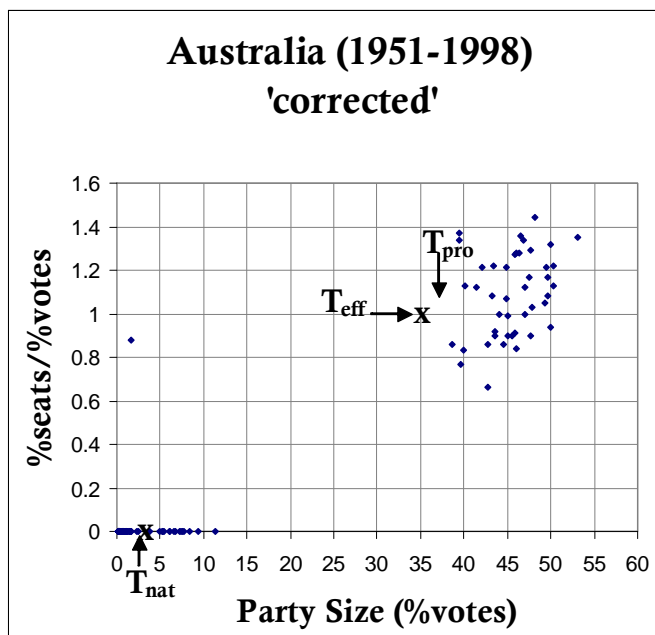
makes it difficult to see whether the scores represent good estimates. A further analysis of the single-member-districts is therefore presented below.

The accuracy of scores for Plurality systems: A Statistical Test A method for circumventing the 'visual-method' and retain an empirically based evaluation of the accuracy of the T-values, would be to apply a logistic regression model. Creating a dichotomous dependent variable, so that all parties being proportionally or over-represented in the process of seat allocation (advantage ratio ≤ 1) fall into the one category (category P+) and all the under-represented (advantage ratio <1) into another (category P-). The point where there is a 50/50 chance of falling into one or the other categories would give us the empirical equivalent of the T_{pro}. Logistic regression models exactly seek to predict the probabilities of certain outcomes on the basis of variation in the independent variable(s).

Country	Australia	Canada	France	N.Z.	U.K.
Log.Reg.Estimate	29 (41.9*)	26.3	17.9	36.6	8.2(32.8#)
T_{pro}	32.1(37.1*)	27.3	20	32	31.2
$T_{pro\text{-}ign.}$	25.2	25.1	25	25	25

Table 5.3: Logistic Regression Estimates of the Proportional Threshold

In addition to the average T_{pro} for the period 1950-2000, a row with $T_{pro-ign}$-scores made under the assumption of ignorance of the real value of the vote concentration is also included. The method proposed by Taagepera is followed only that the mean between the T_i and T_x is used ($T_{pro-ign} = \left(\frac{T_i}{D_{es}} + T_x \right) /2$). Since it is somewhat cumbersome to calculate the vote concentration, it would be useful to know whether much is gained by this in terms of precision. The Logistic Regression scores reflect the size, calculated on the basis of the coefficients reported in the model, at which there is a 50-50 chance of being in the P+ or P- category[26].

* The scores in brackets cover the situation where the Liberal and the Country party are regarded as one party. Since the two parties neither compete in the electoral arena (they do not field candidates in the same districts) nor in the parliamentary-governmental arena (they are always in government or opposition together), there are good grounds for seeing them as one when analyzing the impact of electoral rules on party competition.

\# The U.K. contains a very high number of very small regional parties that

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[26]For all countries the constant and the b-coefficient used to predict the threshold are significant at the 1 pct. level, except for Australia were it is at the 5 pct. Level. In terms of how much the models explain, the Nagelkerke R squares vary from a high 71,9 pct for Australia-2, to a low 33,5 in UK and 33,5 in France. It is quite clear that larger number of unexplained cases is related to the impact of the high vote concentration of smaller parties that give then a higher advantage ratio than the model would predict. Examining the residuals, however, also reveals that larger parties whose advantage ratio fall just below 1 has the same effect on the model fit – there are, however, much fewer such cases in the countries examined here.

succeed in obtaining a seat share higher than their vote share. Since the logistics estimate of party size was only 8,2 compared to the theoretical estimate of 31.2 pct, the model was applied again excluding all parties obtaining less than 2 pct of the national vote and the score is written in brackets.

As can be seen from the table 5.3, the T_{pro} scores closely follow the values predicted by the regression model and are mostly closer than $T_{pro-ign}$. The only exception to a good fit was the United Kingdom, where the regression model estimate was much lower than the expected. Suspecting that the high incidence of very small parties with high vote concentrations and advantage ratios above 1 could be the reason for this, a second regression was run where all parties obtaining less than 2 pct of the vote were excluded. As a result of excluding the very small parties the value predicted by the model came much closer to the theoretical estimate. While France and Canada both have many parties with higher vote concentrations than the systemic value that achieve high advantage ratios, several of these are medium sized and they thus lower the calculated T_{pro} values as well as the regression estimates resulting in more congruent figures. In the U.K. a large number of parties with high advantage ratios are tiny and therefore have no effect on the calculated T_{pro}, while they strongly influence the logistics regression estimates.

The accuracy of the scores by considering the move to the national level and including the vote concentration has therefore been distinctly improved. Where the other indicators are constant across the different systems, the T_{pro} values vary with the national context and they are therefore better indicators of how a particular system imposes constraints within a particular context. The congruence between the logistic regression estimates and the T_{pro} values confirms that the electoral vote concentration matters to the representational conditions for parties.

The very encouraging results with respect to obtaining estimates close to the calculated values should, however, be interpreted with some care. Firstly, in con-

structing the dependent variable, variation is lost. The model does not distinguish between advantage ratios of 0 and of 0.99, and this difference is very important for evaluating the impact of electoral systems. To investigate the importance of keeping this variation, a linear regression model was applied now using the Advantage-ratio (=%seats/%votes) as the dependent variable. The point of intersect with the perfect proportionality line (A=1) was calculated yielding scores within a very close range from those obtained by logistic regression[27]. These scores of course do not represent probabilities as do the values predicted on the basis of the logistics regression model. Only in the case of the U.K. is the difference between the two types of scores palpable; the regression line changes only little, the parties below 2 pct. are excluded and the linear regression model is thus less sensitive to the presence of the many small parties with high advantage ratios, but the adj. R^2 is almost doubled from 29,9 to 57,8 pct when the small parties are removed. The explained variance as expressed by the adj. R^2 follows the same pattern as Nagelkerk R^2 of the logistics model. It varies from a high 92,2 for Australia to a low 35 pct. in France. Secondly, it is clear just from simply seeing the scatterplots that there are problems of heteroscedasticity and the statistical readings based on this data set must be taken with a grain of salt. The latter is clearly due to the different vote concentration of the parties causing much larger variation in advantage ratio scores towards the lower end of the size range. Entering V_{eff} scores for the parties into the model would hardly do much good, however, since the effect of vote concentration is far from linear as discussed above. Size, on the other hand, can be expected to have an effect on the advantage ratio that is linear. In other words, it is a set of data which is difficult to analyze with statistical techniques.

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[27]The following values for x (party size) were predicted for the intersect with the perfect proportionality line: Australia (41,44), Canada (31,7), France (19,75), New Zealand (36,6), UK (37,18) and UK-2 (38,8).

External Validity: The Reductive Effects of the Electoral Threshold

The final test of what indicator to prefer relates to the question of external validity of the indicator proposed. If the analysis presented above is correct, then the Threshold of Proportionality should fare better than other indicators of the electoral barrier in explaining the number of parties. The reductive strength of the electoral barrier on the party system is undoubtedly one of its most commonly accepted effects. In the tests four different measures of party numbers are included. First, a simple number of parties competing at elections with a lower cut-off point of 2 pct. to avoid that a larger number of tiny parties may unduly influence the results. Secondly, the same number, but weighted according the district coverage ('dw' as explained earlier). Finally, the effective numbers of elective (based on vote shares) and parliamentary parties (based on seat shares) are also included. Both parametric and non-parametric methods are used to analyze the relationships. The first analysis (OLS regression) seeks to test the hypothesized relationship with the following model where the Representation Barrier is represented by one of the three indicators (T_{pro}, T_{eff} or T_{nat}):

The Number of Parties $= \beta_0 + \beta representation + \varepsilon$

From the regression analysis presented in table 5.16, it can be observed that the T_{pro} consistently performs better than the T_{eff} and the T_{nat} in explaining variation in the number of parties. The adjusted R^2 reported for the Threshold of Proportionality are consistently higher than those of the Effective Threshold across all four types of party numbers. The difference between the two is, however, much smaller than that between the Effective Threshold and the Nationwide Threshold. The latter measure explains very little of the variation observed, and thus cannot be taken as a reliable measure of the reductive power of the electoral system.

What might, at first sight, appear somewhat surprising is that the indicators

OLS Regression

Regressor: Indicators of the Representation Barrier		*Dependent Varibable: Number of Parties*			
		>2pct	>2pct(dw)	Effective Elective	Effective Parliament.
Proportional Threshold	β-coeff.stand.	-0.63**	-0.67**	-0.52**	-0.52**
	β-coefficient	(-0.10)	(-0.10)	(-0.58)	(-0.54)
	Constant	6.9**	6.1**	4.6**	4.0**
	R²(adj)	**0.40****	**0.44****	**0.27****	**0.26****
Effective Threshold	β-coeff.stand.	-0.57**	-0.65**	-0.45**	-0.49**
	β-coefficient	(-0.94)	(-0.93)	(-0.49)	(-0.51)
	Constant	6.9**	6.2**	4.6**	4.1**
	R²(adj)	**0.32****	**0.42****	**0.20****	**0.25****
Nationwide Threshold	β-coeff.stand.	-0.11	-0.23**	-0.35**	-0.28**
	R²(adj)	**0.8**	**5.1****	**11.9****	**7.7****
N=301					
		**p<0.01; *p<0.05			

Table 5.4: The Impact of the Threshold(s) on the Number of Parties

better explain variation in the pure number of parties than the effective number of parties. The latter takes into account the differences in party vote shares (elective) or party seat shares (parliamentary) and we might have expected the higher thresholds to not only reduce the number of parties, but also have the effect of consistently rewarding larger parties with more seats and votes and thus lead to smaller numbers of effective parties. Also the lack of stronger coefficients and variance explained in the case of effective parliamentary parties compared to effective elective parties is surprising. In Lijphart's study of Electoral Systems and Party Systems, a clear difference, in both explained variance and strength of the coefficients, was found between the two. The effective number of parliamentary parties being much better accounted for than the number of elective parties (with a coefficient of almost double (0.34/0.55) and the adjusted R^2 being more than triple (8 versus 28 pct.) (Lijphart,

Non-Parametric Correlation

Indicators of the Representation Barrier		Number of Parties			
				Effective Elective	Effective Parliament.
		>2pct	>2pct.(dw)		
Proportional	Kendalls tau	-0.54	-0.60	-0.46	-0.49
Threshold	Spearmans rho	-0.69	-0.77	-0.63	-0.68
Effective	Kendalls tau	-0.48	-0.57	-0.38	-0.45
Threshold	Spearmans rho	-0.61	-0.72	-0.53	-0.62
Nationwide	Kendalls tau	-0.18	-0.11	-0.24	-0.17
Threshold	Spearmans rho	-0.25	-0.15	-0.36	-0.26
N=301					
All p<0.01					

Table 5.5: Correlation of the Threshold Indicators and the Number of Parties

1994: 107-111). The intercepts give away at least part of the solution to these two 'mysteries'. The regression models thus set the intercepts much lower for both the effective numbers of parties than for the regular number of parties, and again the intercept for the number of effective parliamentary parties is set a lower than for the elective parties. There is, as mentioned, very large variation in the numbers of parties at the lower end of the thresholds, which furthermore decreases strongly with increased values of the threshold (violating the assumption of heteroscedasticity), and where the model sets the intercepts is therefore somewhat fortuitous. It does not make sense to trust the result that, at a zero-threshold value, the difference between effective number of parliamentary parties and elective parties would be 0.6. Logically, there should of course be no difference between the two. However, the other part of the solution is naturally, that the concentration of votes on parties depends on many factors other than the electoral system.

The non-parametric measures of association presented in table 5.5 confirm that

the T_{pro} is consistently more strongly associated with the number of parties than the other two. The Kendall's tau indicates a strong 60 pct reduction in error in predicting the rank of the number of parties with over 2 pct votes shares and district weighted, while the other dependent variables are slightly less well predicted (around 50 pct reduction in error). The Spearman's rho also shows strong association between the T_{pro} and the number of parties and again consistently stronger than the T_{eff}. The associations observed for the T_{nat} are all weak, but significant.

5.5 The Representation Barrier and the Number of New Parties

The question is whether the representation barrier has any effects on the entry of new parties. The possible effects of the registration barrier were tested on the number of parties participating, while the recognition barrier was tested for effects on the vote shares of the new parties. We would of course expect the representation barrier to have the clearest effect on the actual representation of new parties in parliaments, but it is possible that it also deters new parties from participating, due to slim chances of succeeding, as well as voters from voting for them for similar reasons. As Duverger argued electoral systems have mechanical as well as psychological effects (Duverger, 1972). Previous studies have, however, produced equivocal results in support of these hypotheses. Harmel and Robertson found a significant effect of the electoral system on the number of new parties participating, but in the wrong direction. That is, more parties are seen to form under plurality than PR systems. This is also found by Hug and Willey, who, as barrier measures, use the Thresholds of inclusion and exclusion, and both the Effective Magnitude (Hug, 2001; Willey, 1998)[28]. However, all find

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[28]In the multivariate analysis were all determinants of new party formation are entered, Hug reports that 'the threshold of representation considerably decreases the number of

that if electoral success of new parties is taken into account, the prediction that
electoral systems will inhibit new parties are supported (Harmel&Robertson, 1985;
Willey, 1998). On basis of his results, which identify positive effects of higher district
magnitudes on both the share of votes obtained by new parties and the share of seats
they obtain, and Willey therefore concludes that his 'findings provide strong evidence
that the stability of a party system is a function of district magnitude' (Willey, 1998:
667). It should be noted, however, that in Willey's analysis the coefficients found
are significant, but they are also extremely low (0.0004 for vote shares, 0.004 for seat
shares), so that changes in the effective magnitude appears to have little more than
a marginal impact[29].

In the following, the effects of the electoral system will be tested on the number of
new parties represented, as well as the numbers having electoral success and simply
participating, starting with the representation of new parties since it is here that
we can expect to see the strongest effects. The relationship between the variables is
examined using the decades as cases as was done for the registration and recognition
barrier analyses. The cases - 5 in all - where there have been major changes in
the Threshold of Proportionality in the middle of a decade are omitted from the
analysis since the averages would thus be strongly misleading [30]. Again, for reasons
earlier stated both parametric and non-parametric methods are used to analyze the
relationship (see Chapter 2.4). The first model used to test the hypothesis can be
stated as follows: *The Number of New Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta representation + \varepsilon$

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parties, while the threshold of exclusion achieves the opposite' (Hug, 2001:120). However,
since majoritarian electoral systems have both very low T_i and very high T_x, this finding
points to a positive effect of higher barriers on new party formation - contrary to expecta-
tions. The contradictory finding, however, clearly illustrates that the T_i and T_x cannot be
used as measures of the same phenomenon.

[29]Robertson and Harmel do not report on the strength of the relationships, only on
significance and direction.

[30]These include: Italy, Japan and New Zealand in 1990s and France in 1950s and 1980s.

OLS Regression

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: Number of New Parties*						
Representation Barrier	Seat Winning		Vote Winning		Particip.	Decade Maximum	
	>1pct.	>4.pct	>1pct	>4pct	>0.5 dis.	>1pct	>0.5 dis.
Threshold of Proportionality	-0.46**	-0.32**	-0.29**	-0.19	-0.33**	-0.24*	-0.38**
	(-0.04)	(-0.02)	(-0.03)	(-0.01)	(-0.00)	(-0.02)	(-0.03)
Constant	1.41**	0.76**	1.81**	0.79**	0.20**	1.26**	1.29**
R^2(adj)	**0.20****	**0.09****	**0.07****	**0.03**	**0.10****	**0.05***	**0.14****
N=91							
** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$ (two-tailed) - Standardized coefficients reported, Unstandardized in ( )							

Table 5.6: The Impact of the Representation Barrier (Tpro) on the Number of New Parties

The results of the regression analysis are summarized in table 5.6. As can be seen the Representation Barrier has a clear and significant reductive effect on the number of new parties. As might be expected (due to the direct mechanical effects of the electoral system) the number of new seat winners are best explained. As much as 20 pct of the variance is explained in the case of the category of parties winning at least 1 pct of the seats, while only about half of that is accounted for in the case of the more successful seat winning parties. For the number of vote winning parties, the Threshold does not seem to have much of an impact. Only 3-7 pct of the variance is explained implying that voters are not much deterred by the prospects of 'wasting' votes on parties that do not gain access to parliament. For both categories, the barrier is most successful in preventing the entry of the less successful parties. It appears to be a pattern (also seen in the recognition barrier analyses) that the number of parties that pass the 4 pct. threshold are less well explained by the barriers. The prediction of the number of participating is relatively high. Especially the decade maximum of parties running in at least half of the electoral districts is

Non-Parametric Correlation

Representation Barrier	Number of New Parties						
Threshold of Proportionality	Seat Winning		Vote Winning		Particip.	Decade Maximum	
	>1pct.	>4.pct	>1pct	>4pct	>0.5 dis.	>1pct	>0.5 dis.
Kendalls tau	-0.40**	-0.29**	-0.26**	-0.15	-0.33**	-0.24**	-0.36**
Spearmans rho	-0.51**	-0.36**	-0.33**	-0.18	-0.44**	-0.31**	-0.45**
N=91							
** p<0.01;* p<0.05 (two-tailed)							

Table 5.7: The Correlation of the Representation Barrier (Tpro) and the Number of New Parties

well explained with a high coefficient of -0.38 and 14 pct of the variance accounted for. This might imply that those who start parties are more readily influenced by the prospects of sucess than voters are.

As can be seen in table 5.7, the non-parametric measures of association reveal the same pattern. The representation barrier consistently reduced the number of parties winning seats, votes and simply participating. The same differences in explanatory strength as those observed in the regression analysis apply here. Futher all except the category of 4 pct vote winners pass the tests of significance in this model implying that the findings are robust.

In order to get an clearer overview of the effects of the threshold on the number of new parties of the different types, four ordinal categories of the Proportional Threshold were created[31] and the summary means of new parties corresponding to each of these are presented in table 5.8 (p.230).

There is a clear tendency for lower mean values in the categories corresponding to higher values of the threshold. The only exception to the pattern is found between

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[31]The ordinal categories are not of equal 'size', since the number of cases would be very small for the higher threshold values.

the 2nd and 3rd categories for the number of parties obtaining over 1 pct of the votes. Otherwise the trend is consistent across all categories. This is, of course, partly a result of how the ordinal categories where constructed. Smaller categories at higher ends of the threshold would have produced higher means in some of these, due to the influence of the cases discussed above. However, the differences are clear between the category containing the lowest threshold values and that containing the highest. The reduction in mean values from the lowest to the highest categories is strong, ranging from around 40 to 70 pct., across all but one of the new party measures. The mean values of the number of parties obtaining over 4 pct of the vote shares vary very little across the threshold categories and furthermore the differences in this category are the least robust of all, as was also the case for the regression analysis[32]. In the higher threshold systems, there are fewer (about half) of these that actually obtain representation above the 4 pct level, so the electoral barrier protects the parliamentary arena from the intrusion of newcomers. The lower threshold systems almost replicate the numbers of successful parties in the electoral arena to the successful on the parliamentary arena. Since it is the group of parties obtaining over 4 pct of the votes that we expect to actually constitute a threat to the party system, the lack of deterrence is a noteworthy finding. Moreover, it is not caused by a few deviant cases[33]. It is evident that while lower threshold systems have a much higher number of new parties taking smaller vote shares, there is little difference with respect to the number of parties cutting deeper into the vote share.

It would then appear that high threshold systems are successful in deterring both participation and preventing representation of small parties but plays a marginal role when it comes to deterring electoral support of parties that either command more

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[32]The Anova test of difference of means reports a significance of 0.48, and the Kruskal-Wallis at 0.81.

[33]Removing the cases, where major changes in the electoral systems and party system occurred, such as Italy, Japan and New Zealand in the 90s, only raises the adj. R2 to 3.2 pct.

IndependentVariable: Threshold of Proportionality		Dependent Variable: New Parties						
		Seat Winning		Vote Winning		Participate	Maximum Number	
		>1pct.	>4.pct	>1pct	>4pct	>0.5 dis.	>1pct	>0.5 dis.
0-3.9	**Mean**	**1.68**	**0.82**	**2.00**	**0.82**	**0.22**	**1.36**	**1.59**
	N	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
	Std. Dev.	1.21	0.91	1.35	0.91	0.13	0.79	0.96
4-7.9	**Mean**	**0.89**	**0.52**	**1.44**	**0.63**	**0.14**	**1.07**	**0.89**
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
	Std. Dev.	0.93	0.70	0.97	0.69	0.15	0.83	0.80
8-19.9	**Mean**	**1.00**	**0.59**	**1.53**	**0.71**	**0.19**	**1.00**	**0.88**
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
	Std. Dev.	0.94	0.80	1.55	0.77	0.26	1.00	0.70
>20	**Mean**	**0.24**	**0.20**	**0.92**	**0.48**	**0.06**	**0.80**	**0.52**
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
	Std. Dev.	0.60	0.58	0.91	0.65	0.07	0.82	0.59
Total	**Mean**	**0.92**	**0.52**	**1.45**	**0.65**	**0.15**	**1.05**	**0.96**
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91	91
	Std. Dev.	1.06	0.77	1.22	0.75	0.16	0.86	0.86
ANOVA		**	*	*		**		**
Kruskal-Wallis		**	*	*		**		**
		**p< 0.01; *p< 0.05 (two-tailed)						

Table 5.8: The Representation Barrier Ordinal and the Number of New Parties

resources and/or respond to a more substantial electoral demand.

Chapter 6

The Accessibility Barrier

However important the role played by electoral systems may be, they only tell us part of the story. As impersonal gatekeepers of the representative institutions, electoral rules determine how much electoral support is needed to win representation. Nevertheless, like the barriers to registration and recognition, the representation barrier is silent on how easily support can be won. In their quest for seats, parties must break through multiple barriers, the least visible of these being in the minds of people. As discussed earlier, the incentive to compete for votes depends on the extent to which more votes can actually be won. The final question pertaining to barriers to entry is therefore whether voters are willing to consider new alternatives, or are so entrenched in fixed patterns of partisan loyalties that new parties have little chance of appealing to them. How open voters are to change their partisan preferences defines how much is at stake at elections, and alludes to the facility with which party fortunes may change. The nature of the competitive incentives furnished by elections therefore depends on the extent and character of electoral availability. However, electoral availability should be seen in conjunction with the electoral system rather than independently, as already discussed. The extent of available voters may have widely differing consequences for the openness of the parliamentary arenas, and thus

the nature of the pressure represented parties are under, depending on the electoral rules in place.

This 'human' barrier is, however, of a different order than the institutional barriers discussed in the preceding chapters. The institutional barriers can protect the political incumbents from competitive threats even in the presence of electoral dissatisfaction and demand for alternatives. The registration barrier directly influences the offer, the recognition barrier affects the awareness of the offer and the representation barrier can block demands expressed from being represented in the political institutions. Electoral availability is, however, intrinsically linked to demands. Whether it is 'legitimate' to conceive of voter behaviour as a form of barrier consequently depends on the theoretical perspective taken. Adopting a rational choice approach implies assuming that voters everywhere unfailingly go for the party offering the 'package' of policies and behaviours, which come closest to their preferences, as discussed above. Inserting the notion that voters may be more or less resistant to change is alien to the theory - at least in its simple form (Downs, 1957). However, there are other theoretical perspectives that introduce the idea that electorates differ with respect to their willingness to change, depending on bonds of a less rational nature (Campbell et al., 1960). A large body of empirical evidence has been amassed in support of the idea that voters - and national electorates - differ in the extent to which they identify with particular parties, and therefore also with respect to how easily they can be persuaded to change their vote (e.g. Goren, 2005; Blais et. al., 2001; Clark & Steward 1998; Sinnot, 1998; Schickler & Green, 1997). Voters in this conception do not simply support the party which in terms of promises and behaviours matches their policy preferences most closely. Instead they may have emotional ties to certain parties, with which they personally identify, and the act of voting expresses this, rather than a dispassionate weighing of pros and cons in the policy packages offered. Probably no one would claim that the bonds of loyalty or identification cannot be broken by any kind of 'deviant' party behaviour, but highly loyal voters are likely to

give parties more leeway to stray from their preferences, than would those who are less attached. The consequences of such loyalty need not solely be to invite slack, however. As Hirshman discusses in his 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty', the shelter provided to suppliers by a market where a significant share of the consumers stay with a particular product in spite of some degree of deterioration or emergence of better alternatives allows the producers to learn and improve their performance. Swift and decisive consumer reactions to the offer would instead force poorly performing suppliers out and by removing the chance to improve, negative long-term consequences for the offer might be the consequence (Hirshman, 1970). While it can be argued that electoral availability should be considered as a dimension of contestability and that considering it is necessary for an investigation of whether established parties operate under a real threat from outside the parliament, it should be recognized that using it may not fit all research agendas[1].

In the following, the two sets of questions will be addressed. Concerning electoral availability, it will first be discussed how it can be measured, then observable differences between countries and over time will be described and finally the extent to which it predicts new party success at the polls will be examined. After this, it will be considered how availability interacts with the representation barrier, and how the two factors combined can provide an indicator of the openness of the political arena which will be dubbed the Accessibility barrier. Finally, it will be tested how well it predicts the number of new parties obtaining representation.

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[1]Strøm, for instance, includes volatility as dimension of competition to explain government responsiveness and finds a positive relationship (Strøm, 1989b). Higher volatility leads to a more efficiently managed economy, appears to be the conclusion of Strøm's study. It begs the question, however, of what exactly causes the volatility observed. At the level of individual decision-making, if higher average volatility understood as the presence of voters that are less identified and more sensitive to the performance of political parties, it makes sense to expect it to induce higher responsiveness from parties. But if volatility is caused by dissatisfaction of voters with their political leadership, and low volatility expresses satisfaction, it would seem contradictory to link it to superior performance.

6.1   Measuring Electoral Availability

Electoral availability is easier to define theoretically than to measure empirically. To assess the extent of such availability one of the following two routes can be taken; the first consists in an attempt to unravel the mechanisms behind the individual voters' decisions by enquiring into the nature of the considerations that underlie their choices. By means of surveys, voters can be invited to disclose their thoughts and feelings about the political parties and the act of voting, as well as report on actions in the past and intentions for the future. The purpose is to find out whether - and to what extent - the actual doings and sayings of parties and other actors play a role in determining how the votes are cast or whether this basic choice is determined more by a stable affinity for a particular party linked to social identity. The stronger voters' identification with existing parties is, the less available they would be to be won over to new ones. Ideally this would give us a solid measure of the share of the electorate that would be likely to 'swing' in response to changes in the perceived performance of parties, however in practice, the exercise is fraught with difficulties (see e.g. Bruden & Klofstad, 2005; Blais et al, 2001; Bartle, 2003; Sinnot, 1998). The second approach is simply to infer from their actual behaviour at elections to how attached they appear to be to particular parties. The simple proposition being that the more voters change from one election to the next, the more available they are. For the purposes of this research, there is no other option than to rely on this method. Survey data on voter attitudes are simply not available for all the countries included here and covering the whole period under investigation. Data on electoral behaviour is, on the other hand, readily available and can be used instead[2]. As will be discussed further below, using actual vote shifts as a proxy for available voters is

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[2]As Bartels writes, 'Lacking direct measures of party identification from contemporary surveys in most other liberal democracies or earlier periods of our own, it seems reasonable to look for evidence of party loyalties in the continuity of partisan voting patterns over time' (Bartels, 1998:280).

not without its problems.

The first important issue is whether information on the net changes can be used as an indicator of individual voting shifts. This is important since only the latter figure would express the real extent of availability in the electorate. The problem is twofold as discussed by Bartolini and Mair (1990). On the one hand, there may be more individuals changing votes than the aggregate net results reveal. In theory, zero aggregate volatility is compatible with very high levels of individual vote changes as long as these cancel each other out perfectly. On the other hand, not all recorded volatility results from voters changing from one party to the other. New voters enter and old ones exit. Nevertheless, on the basis of a comparison of survey data on individual shifts and observed volatility for the countries and periods where such is available, as well as a theoretical modelling involving comparison of number of possible combinations of individual and aggregate volatility, Bartolini and Mair conclude that aggregate volatility is a decent indicator of individual level vote changes (Bartolini & Mair, 1990: 34). However, even if the two are not highly correlated, it could also be argued that for the parties competing, the most important factor is the net changes, not the individual ones. When voters move in opposite directions this may be because they are responding to different cues or alternatively, responding differently to the same cues. Whatever the situation, however, the interesting bit for parties competing is the net share that moves in the same direction, since it is this net change (the percentage of the total valid votes) that influences the distribution of seats.

As a measure of the systemic volatility, the most common is the 'Total Volatility' (V_{tot}), also referred to as the Pedersen index[3]. It is simply the sum of the changes in

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[3]While this is the most commonly used measure of volatility, it is not the only one possible. As Grofman and Taagepera demonstrate, a number of formulaic expressions can be applied to the deviations occurring in vote shares obtained by parties from one election to another, just as they are applied to deviations occurring between parties' vote shares and seats shares for disproportionality indices (Taagepera & Grofman, 2004). None of the

individual parties vote shares from one election to the next, divided by two to give it a logical upper boundary of 100 and avoid counting each shift twice. Its formulaic expression is:

$$V_{tot} = \frac{\sum |P_i v|}{2}$$

The formula can be applied to electoral data in different ways, however. It was decided here to 'control for' volatility caused by party mergers, but only for 'splits' when the party of origin ceases to run. The total volatility is intended as an indicator of the general propensity for electors to change their vote from one party to another, and it can be argued that when the original alternatives cease to exist, it forces voters to change their votes rather than reflects their own choice[4]. Taking such changes into account would therefore undermine its validity[5]. Name changes of parties were ignored for the same reasons. Finally, the 'other parties' category was included as a party in the calculations, but as the vote percentages in this category are typically small, it contributes only little to the average scores.

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other indices have any obvious advantages over the Pedersen index for the purposes here, however.

[4]In their calculations, Bartolini and Mair control for all party splits to the extent possible (in some cases it is difficult to ascertain as they discuss) (Bartolini & Mair, 1989: 311). However, whether the formateurs of a new party have a basis in a pre-existing one or not should not be a defining criteria in my view. If voters stand identified with existing parties, we would expect them to regard elite 'defection' from such parties with a certain measure of scepticism. There is therefore no compelling reason for controlling for this in my view. Naturally, there are cases, where the split is so major that one can argue that the identity of the original party is altered.This is difficult to estimate precisely, however. Therefore, if the orginal party keeps running under the same name as before, it is here assumed that voters attached to the party have the option to remain loyal. If it ceases to exist, however, this is taken into account (i.e. the vote shares of the split parties are related to the total vote share of the now abolished 'mother' party)

[5]Information on party splits and mergers were based on Caramani (2001), Hug (2001), Mackie and Rose (1991,1997) and EJPR Political Data Year Books.

Chapter 6. The Accessibility Barrier

The validity of total volatility as an indicator of electoral availability is, however, more likely to be threatened by other issues than the technical points discussed above. The fundamental question for this validity is whether actual behaviour is a good proxy for potential behaviour. First, we can ask whether it is reasonable to interpret observed vote changes as evidence that voters are not attached to parties by organisational or psycho-social bonds, but freely consider voting for any party offering the best 'deal'. A voter who does change may be hard pushed by circumstances to do so, just as a voter who sticks with the same party may not be particularly loyal. However, while it is difficult to speak with certainty about what prompts the individual act, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the repetition of a certain act gives us a clue about its causes. It can be argued that consistently high levels of volatility in a country does give us a clear indication that a substantial share of voters do not feel tied to particular parties. The notion that voters could repeatedly defect, but still maintain very high loyalty thresholds, is not very realistic, however. Even if we could admit the possibility that the parties in question would continue to perform poorly, then for the simple reason that being 'hard pushed' on a regular basis would probably undermine even the most ardent believer's loyalty. Likewise, it might be argued that it is not very realistic that voters constantly remain with the same parties without having some sort of affinity for them. However, this situation is not comparable to the former, since switching to a different party depends not only on willingness to do so, but also on having the possibility. And this leads to the second question, namely how observed volatility is related to the context of choice, distinct from the basis which informs the choice. As Bartolini and Mair discuss, a number of institutional as well as ideological factors play a role for the choice voters are presented with (Bartolini & Mair, 1990). The number of parties, and the ideological distance between them, clearly influences the options voters have. In simple terms, a voter with left-wing political preferences might find changing from a social democratic to socialist party an option, but if the only alternative to the social

	Voter Attributes	
Context	*Free*	*Bound*
High Choice	HV	LV
Low Choice	LV	LV

Table 6.1: Voters' Inclination, Choice and Total Volatility

democrats is a market-liberal party, there is not real possibility for defection. It can therefore be argued that when we interpret observed volatility as an expression of availability, we face the problem that the willingness to consider voting for another party is not directly reflected in volatility. The problem is schematically illustrated in table 6.1.

As argued above, consistently high levels of volatility can safely be interpreted as an expression of an available electorate. However, low volatility may be explained equally well by a lack of choice, as by a bound - or unavailable - electorate. The introduction of a new party may therefore provide a hitherto low volatility electorate with the occasion to change behaviour. There is, as far as I can see, no way of solving this dilemma and using total volatility as a measure of availability is therefore necessarily imperfect. Finally, the total volatility registered at elections, as will be seen below, is often not either stably high or low across elections, but can fluctuate greatly. Single elections with high volatility - perhaps caused by single events and crises - may therefore make even stable identified electorates appear more volatile than they are when averages are taken. These facts naturally circumscribe the explanatory power of volatility as an indicator of electoral availability.

6.2   Aggregate Volatilty: Levels and trends

As can be seen from the calculated volatility values in table 6.2, the levels of volatility vary considerably across countries as well as time periods. The volatility for the US (House of Representatives elections) stands out not only by being particularly low - only 3.1 pct for the whole period on average - but also by being one of the few cases where the electorate is actually more stable in the 1990s than the average of the whole period. The relative stability of the American electorate does not appear to be limited to the House elections considered here. Bartels examines data on electoral behaviour for presidential elections over more than a century and concludes that 'the unusual political turmoil of the 1960s and '70s has given way to a period of partisan stability and predictability unmatched since the end of the 19th century' (Bartels, 1998: 297)[6]. However, the 'unusual turmoil' he refers to is not evident in the data on House elections presented here, where the 1960s and 1970s are still unusually stable compared to other countries. One explanation for this may simply lie in the lack of choice provided to voters in the U.S. However, several would argue that the few percentage points aggregate swing observed is probably overstating the number of stable voters. Basinger and Levine, for instance, claim that voters who hold 'ambivalent partisan attitudes' in the U.S. typically constitute approximately 30 pct of the electorate and that the amount has been increasing over the past decades (Basinger & Levine, 2005; See also Dalton, 2000)[7]. Neither the alleged trend or level of potential vote-switchers manifest themselves in the aggregate measures of volatility, however.

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[6]Not all agree in this interpretation and do claim that partisan attachment in the US has been on the decline (e.g. Dalton, 2000; Clark & Steward, 1998; Wattenberg, 1990).

[7]A similar estimate is provided by Dalton and Weldon who write, 'American partisanship was extremely stable from the 1950s to the early 1960s with party identifiers constituting 70-75 percent of the electorate. But loyalties began to weaken after the 1964 election. By the 1980s, more than a third of the electorate were non-partisans, and in the 1990s, Ross Perot's third-party candidacy in the two presidential elections pushed the percentage of partisans down still further' (Dalton & Weldon, 2005).

Country	Total Volatility in 21 Democracies 1950-2000							
	Period Averages						*Special values*	
	1950-2000	**1950s**	**1960s**	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**	**Max.**	**St.Dev.**
Australia	**6.4**	4.6	5.8	7.3	3.8	10.4	13.1	3.0
Austria	**5.6**	4.1	4.0	2.6	7.3	9.6	15.6	4.1
Belgium	**9.1**	8.0	10.4	6.5	9.5	11.9	16.1	3.8
Canada	**11.1**	8.7	9.1	6.6	11.4	24.9	42.0	9.7
Denmark	**11.0**	5.5	8.8	17.1	9.7	12.9	29.1	6.0
Finland	**8.3**	4.4	7.2	8.4	10.8	11.3	14.6	3.6
France	**15.6**	21.5	14.1	12.3	13.9	14.6	22.8	4.8
Germany	**8.5**	15.3	8.5	5.0	6.3	8.4	21.3	4.4
Greece	**10.2**				11.3	8.7	26.7	8.0
Ireland	**9.0**	11.1	7.0	5.0	8.2	14.7	16.2	4.5
Italy	**17.7**	10.7	8.1	8.3	9.1	25.8	38.9	9.2
Japan	**9.4**	12.2	7.1	5.1	3.8	18.4	24.7	6.4
Netherlands	**10.7**	6.4	7.9	13.0	9.5	19.0	21.8	4.5
N.Z.	**9.8**	5.9	4.6	8.9	13.6	15.6	20.8	6.0
Norway	**10.4**	4.5	5.3	15.6	10.6	16.4	20.3	6.2
Portugal	**15.3**				17.9	11.8	23.2	8.8
Spain	**17.6**				21.6	8.4	42.5	14.9
Sweden	**7.6**	4.8	4.7	6.7	7.9	14.0	15.4	3.8
Switzerland	**5.6**	2.5	3.8	6.3	7.1	8.1	9.0	2.7
U.K.	**7.0**	5.0	5.2	8.3	7.8	9.5	15.0	4.0
U.S.A.	**3.1**	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.1	2.6	6.6	1.9
All	**9.0**	**7.3**	**7.0**	**8.0**	**9.6**	**12.4**	**42.5**	**6.2**

Table 6.2: Total Volatility - Absolute Levels and Secular Trends

The countries that follow immediately after the US in having low volatility scores - including Austria, Australia, Switzerland and Sweden - have period averages almost double or more than that of the US and three of them experience significant increases in the 1990s. For Australia, and to a lesser extent Austria, the low number of parties and consequent lack of choice may contribute to explaining the low volatility levels, while Swiss and Swedish voters have not - at least on the face of it - been starved for options. In Australia, Austria and Sweden, the much higher volatility scores of the 90s are in fact related to the success of new parties, whereas this does not contribute to the only slightly increased volatility levels in Switzerland during that decade. In a

comparative study of American and Swedish voters, Granberg and Holmberg argue that partisan identification has played a strong role in Sweden and that the steady increase in volatility of Swedish voters over the past decades can in fact be attributed to the decline of party identification. They also observe that there is no similar trend for the American voter (Granberg & Holmberg, 2002). For Switzerland, linguistic and religious segmentation of the electorate, may explain the relatively low volatility observed.

At the other end of the scale, there are the high volatility countries including the older democracies such as Italy and Japan, whose very high average is mainly explained by the politically tumultuous 1990s. For both countries, corruption scandals contributed to the erosion of support for the established parties and both also introduced major changes in the electoral systems. Neither country experiences unusually high levels of volatility in the preceding decades. In fact, Japan is unusually stable in the 1970s and 1980s. France is another case where the average level of volatility is unusually high, but unlike Italy and Japan, this is a consistent trait. The very high volatility of the 1950s could be explained in part by the changes in electoral rules, as well as the constitution, in that country. However, it is possible that the disruption of the political systems before and during WWII has also contributed, since higher than average volatility can also be observed in Germany, Italy and Japan, where new party systems are being established. But as can be seen, the volatility levels of France remain well above the average in the following decade. Apart from institutional factors contributing to this, Bartolini and Mair mention the very weak partisan identification in the French electorate as an important explanatory factor (Bartolini & Mair, 1990: 247). In Spain and Portugal very high levels are likewise recorded, which is likely to be associated with the establishment of the party systems of those countries in the wake of democratisation. They are also the only countries where there is a significant drop in average volatility from the 1980s to the 1990s. Greece, also re-established as a democracy in the 1970s, on the other hand lies at

average levels.

The fact that the 1990s proved to be a particularly volatile decade is not only seen in an average for all countries almost double that of the 1950s and some 60 pct higher than the decade that preceded it, but also evidenced by the fact that 9 of the 21 peak values observed in the whole period are recorded in the 1990s. Within countries there is also considerable variation with respect to how stable the level of volatility is. France stands out by having consistently high levels throughout the whole period with a standard deviation of just 4.8 compared to its mean of 15.6 pct., while countries like Canada, Italy and Spain exhibit large standard deviations.

One possible explanation of the higher volatility levels observed on average for the 1970s onwards in comparison with previous decades is that it reflects a loss of partisan identification. Some argue that there is evidence of a general decline in partisan attachments across most long-standing democracies, although the trends differ in strength (Dalton, 2000). This would then also imply a secular trend in which the electorate has become increasingly more open to consider new alternatives. Others claim, however, that the evidence is more ambiguous due to large variation between countries, although trends do point in that direction (Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995[8]). In any case, as discussed, other factors than availability in a strict sense can contribute to an understanding of the variation observed between countries.

Before examining the relationship between the volatility levels observed and the number of new parties entering, however, the impact of the electoral system on volatility will be addressed. Since the electoral system is conceived as a barrier in itself, it is necessary to examine the extent and nature of its influence on volatility.

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[8]Schmitt and Holmberg report more ambiguous findings than Dalton, however. They write, 'If there is an overall tendency, it is of loosening party bonds. But specific developments, by country and party, are so varied that any general overview disguises more than it discloses' (1994:121).

6.3 The Impact on Volatility of Electoral Rules, Strategic Incentives and the Party System

The question which will be addressed in the following section is whether the electoral system itself exerts an influence on electoral volatility. Bowler, Lanoue and Savoie argue and adduce evidence to support that the electoral rules influence the extent of partisan identification. This effect they argue is mediated by the strategic considerations imposed by the electoral system (Bowler et. al, 1994). Bartolini and Mair similarly argue that the electoral rules, and changes thereof, can induce vote switching. They write 'If we assume a degree of rationality, then the individual voter will not merely have to decide on a party preference, but will also have to weigh that preference against the potential for vote wastage and vote effectiveness' (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:151). Since electoral systems influence this opportunity structure faced by voters, it is likely that they also influence the degree of volatility observed.

Bartolini and Mair examine the proposition that major changes in electoral system result in greater than normal changes in partisan distribution of electoral support. This hypothesis was found amply supported by the data. With respect to the stable effects of electoral systems, the pattern discerned through analyses of the data was more blurry, however. Majoritarian systems were initially thought to lead to higher levels of volatility than PR-systems, due to the imposition of strategic constraints on the one hand, and due to the impact of bipolarity in government on the other. The existence of strategic constraints implies, according to Bartolini and Mair, that changes in the viability of a party from one election to the next in such systems would induce strategic voter shifts accordingly. The assumption is that such changes in viability are frequent enough to result in higher levels of volatility in such systems. Another hypothesis is that the bipolarity often associated with majoritarian systems promotes retrospective voting - rewarding or punishing the incumbent gov-

ernment - and thereby similarly encourages vote-switching. Only tenuous evidence supporting the hypothesized link between majoritarian systems and higher volatility is found, however, leading them to consider two possible explanations for this. First, the crude dichotomization of electoral systems in majoritarian versus proportional systems could be at fault, since differences in the degree of constraint existing in the category of proportional systems remain hidden. Secondly, the low barriers to entry of new parties and the higher number of parties associated with PR-systems could in itself also provide favourable conditions for voter shifts by affording more choice. And in fact further analysis reveals that party system format does explain much of the observed variation in volatility. Controlling for the number of parties, contradictory results with respect to the influence of the electoral systems emerge, however. With less than 11 parties, there is generally lower volatility in PR systems than in majoritarian ones, but when the number of parties exceeds this, the pattern is reversed. The tests are finally repeated replacing the dichotomous indicator with a continuous one, namely the Rae index of disproportionality. And both party system format and disproportionality are found independently associated with higher levels of volatility, leading to the conclusion that the electoral system constraints do indeed influence volatility in the expected direction.

In light of the somewhat ambiguous results with respect to the effects of electoral systems when the number of parties exceeds 10, as well as the development of a more accurate indicator of electoral system constraints than the ones used, re-visiting the question would seem necessary. The first step in a re-examination of the relationship is then to test the explanatory power of the T_{pro} on total volatility by means of a regression analysis. The results of this simple test are not favourable to the hypothesized influence of the electoral system on volatility. Regressing the total volatility on the T_{pro}, yields evidence only of a weak association. The adjusted R^2 is a mere 3.3 percent even if it significant at the 1 pct level. Further, if the U.S., which as observed has very low volatility levels and also a high number of elections in the period, is

removed as a case, any evidence of even a weak effect evaporates.

There could be several reasons for this non-result, however. First, it would be necessary to control for the influence of major changes in the electoral system, which was shown to produce higher than normal levels of volatility. The first election after each major change was therefore removed from the data set. Furthermore, the influence of the number of parties should also be controlled for since they were found to have a stronger impact on volatility than the constraints of the electoral system itself. The method for counting parties will differ in this analysis, however. Since voters can only logically be said to have the opportunity to switch between parties that are present in their electoral districts, the number of parties are weighted according to the number of districts that they field candidates in (as above, see 5.4.3). For some countries, like Denmark or the Netherlands, such weighting by districts makes little or no difference since parties normally participate in all districts, but for countries like Belgium, where most run in just half of the electoral districts, or in the U.K., where many run in just a fraction of the districts, it clearly makes a difference. In addition, a lower cut-off point of 2 pct is used to avoid that very weakly supported parties exercise an undue influence on the results when they are unlikely to influence aggregate volatility much[9].

The multivariate regression model with the number of parties and the proportional threshold as predictors explains 14 pct of the variance (adjusted R^2 0.14)- a result which is significant at the 1 pct. level. It is the number of parties, however, that is the strongest predictor accounting for 13.6 pct of the variability in outcome alone. The coefficients inform us that an increase in the number of parties of 1.3 predicts an increase in volatility of 1 percent, while it takes a 4.7 pct. rise in the Threshold of Proportionality to produce the same effect (the standardised beta co-

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[9]Only in the event that many parties of 1-2 percent size were to participate in elections could they signficantly contribute to aggregate volatility. This is not the case in any of countries included in this dataset, however.

efficients are 0.45 and 0.11 for the number of parties and the threshold respectively). Only the coefficient for the number of parties pass the test of significance, however. On the basis of these results, it seems that the constraint of the electoral system has but a marginal effect, albeit positive as initially hypothesized, on volatility.

However, problems of a methodological nature may plant doubts concerning the reliability of these findings. First, there are problems of multicolliniarity as demonstrated by high VIF values (1.968) and the variance proportions, which show that both predictors have most of their variance loaded on the same dimension. The very high Pearson's correlation coefficient of -0.701 that describes the relationship of the number of parties and the T_{pro} further testifies to the presence of a problem. Secondly, it is necessary to have a closer look at the hypotheses creating a link between the electoral system and volatility.

It was hypothesized that stronger electoral systems cause vote switching by one of two mechanisms. On the one hand, strategic incentives can induce voter shifts from one party to another in accordance with changes in viability. On the other hand, by association with bipolarity in government, a higher degree of retrospective voting can be expected to produce higher volatility. However, regarding the strategic voting argument, Cox has convincingly argued that a number of conditions external to the electoral system have to be met to bring strategic incentives into play. The mere presence of electoral system constraints is not sufficient in itself. Cox states that strategic incentives are unlikely to emerge in systems with district magnitudes larger than 5 even if objective constraints are imposed. At higher magnitudes, he argues, voters (as well as other actors) loose their ability to predict with any certainty who is viable and who is not. This knowledge is crucial to induce strategic behaviour[10]. Why district magnitudes larger than 5 would undermine the ability to

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[10]However, it should be observed that considering the knowledge condition also brings volatility into the equation as an independent variable. As Cox points out, the higher volatility in general, the lower the ability to form clear expectations with respect to viability,

predict viability is not explained in any detail by Cox and needs to be considered if the criteria is to applied. Considering how district magnitudes influence seat allocation and viability may give us an indication of why it is suggested that magnitudes over 5 blur predictability; With a district magnitude of 6 and using the Hare largest remainder allocation formula, a seat can be theoretically be won with as little as 2-5 pct of the votes (if 3-8 parties participate), while a party/candidate can only be certain to win one with more than 14 pct of the votes. The vote share that would give a 50/50 chance of winning a seat is therefore around 8-10 pct (See formula in Appendix C.1.). If voters under such circumstances were to abandon a new party in the belief that it is unlikely to win seat, the probability that the assumption is proven false can therefore be considered relatively high. Given that one has to expect a certain margin of error in predicting outcomes even from modern opinion polls, voting strategically is inherently risky when the vote shares necessary to win seats are low and/or when the distance between front-runners and trailing candidates/parties is small. Statistically, one can routinely count on a sampling error of 3-5 pct for most polls[11], but other methodological problems in polling can at times result in predictions that are much further off the mark[12]. Given that many voters may also not be too well informed about the status of 'the race', it is not unreasonable to assert that strategic voting is unlikely to occur at high district magnitudes. However, as discussed earlier, magnitude is not all that matters. While the largest remainder method gives a 50/50 seat-chance at 8-10 pct of the votes, it takes a district mag-

which in turn diminishes the incentive to strategic voting (Cox, 1997:122). This hypothesis has in fact been validated in a previous study (Forsythe et al, 1993).

[11]For a sample size of 1000, the sampling error is 3 pct.

[12]The general election in the U.K. in 1992 provides a case in point. Virtually all polls (including exit polls) showed a lead for the Labour party. Instead, the election gave a clear victory for the incumbent Conservative party. Explanations for the rather large errors include such factors as late swings (people who decided at the last minute to vote for the Conservatives), non-response bias (supporters of the Conservatives were more likely to refrain from answering), spiral of silence (some supporters of the Conservatives felt under pressure to give the more 'popular' answer).

nitude of 8 to give similar odds using the D'Hondt method. Furthermore, the latter method yields higher thresholds of inclusion, which means that the chance of a fortunate distribution leading to winning seats at a very low vote shares is non-existing. For a district magnitude of 6 for example, the T_i is 8-12.5 (3-8 parties). In order to apply the theory, we therefore need to have at least a rough idea of what vote shares we consider within the realm of predictability or outside it. In the following empirical analysis, I propose to set this at 10 pct. That is, electoral systems that give a 50/50 pct chance of winning a seat with a vote share of 10 pct (T_{pro}= 10 pct) or below do not provide favourable conditions for estimating viability[13]. It is of course somewhat arbitrary, but a cut-off point has to be chosen and considering normal margins of error in estimates, this is not unreasonable. In addition to considering the impact of district magnitude on strategic voting, Cox also argues that multi-member districts accommodate another type of strategic voting than single member districts do. He writes, 'In multi-member districts operating under SNTV or PR, strategic voting can refer to the strategic desertion of both candidates/list that are 'too weak' [as in SMDs] and candidates/lists that are 'too strong' (Cox, 1997: 121). The notion that voters would abandon a party of first preference because it is 'too strong' is perhaps a bit strange. Instead of the commonly assumed hierarchical preference structure with one party in the lead, voters abandoning a party on such grounds would have preference for a representation characterized by a certain balance of partisan forces. A preference for such mixed-representation becomes possible in multi-member districts, but unlike abandoning the unviable, it does not depend on small magnitudes to be practised. Quite the contrary. Moreover, it is not strategic in the sense that

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[13]The same unpredictability would render elite level co-ordination difficult too. A party, which has an excess of votes - in the sense that the same amount of seats could be obtained with less votes - could try to organize some of its voters to vote for another party (e.g. coalition partner) who might thereby win. However, if the votes given equal chances to win a seat is lower than 10 pct, there is a high risk that unpredictable outcomes might lead to actually losses for the benefactor. Furthermore, such voter mobilization is probably difficult to organize within individual districts.

it involves defaulting on support for the preferred candidate/party. In the following, only the type of strategic voting where considerations of viability induce voters to abandon preferred parties in favour of others and the electoral system therefore plays a pivotal role will be considered, however.

The second condition for strategic voting discussed by Cox concerns the number of participants. In the case of Single-Member-District systems (SMDs) Cox points out that the number of parties/candidates competing must exceed the district magnitude by at least two (M+2). If only two parties were competing, voters would have no incentive to abandon a trailing candidate in order to support a sure winner. But if there are three candidates, two of which are viable, voters with a preference for the predicted looser have a clear incentive to abandon him/her and instead lend their support the preferred one of the top two candidates. Cox does not discuss whether this 'M+2' rule applies to multimember districts as well - and it fact it doesn't. In fact, the 'M+' rule could simply be reformulated as a simple '3' rule applicable to all systems irrespective of magnitude. Of course, vote switching caused by strategic voting also presupposes that changes in the viability of one of the parties occur. Apart from the number of parties competing, it therefore also depends on their relative electoral strength.

In addition to the number of participants and the type of electoral system, Cox summarises the necessary conditions for strategic voting in the following points: only if voters care which of the front-runners win and only if there is no sure winner are strategic considerations relevant; the tighter the competition between front-runners, the stronger the pressure for strategic behaviour; it must be common knowledge who is a front-runner and who is trailing; and finally voters must be short-term instrumentally rational (Cox, 1997:76).

It is clear therefore that an investigation of the potential effect of strategic voting on the propensity for vote-switching requires an approach which takes more factors

than the strength of the electoral system into account. The testing proposed here entails a division of systems into those where the conditions for strategic behaviour are met and those where they are not. Whether the preference, knowledge or competitive closeness conditions are met will not be taken into consideration, however, leaving only the two 'structural' conditions described above. These are that the cost of a seat is no less than 10 pct of the votes (at the district level) and the number of parties competing is no less than 3.

As the incentive to act strategically is induced in the individual district, using aggregate data to establish whether the proposed connection between volatility and strategic constraints is rooted in reality implies making assumptions concerning electoral behaviour. We must assume that changes in the viability of parties/candidates (which would induce vote switching) are not contradictory across the electoral districts with the result that district level changes in partisan support cancel each other out. The fact that all the countries included in this analysis have nationalised political systems in the sense that a majority of the electorates are primarily oriented towards national rather than local politics when they elect parliamentary representatives, it would seem perfectly safe to assume that voters' response to national cues would not be completely contradictory from one constituency to the next even if the response is of course likely to be differentiated. If an electoral system, therefore, in combination with party system format, induces any notable changes in the partisan distribution of votes in the individual district, we can expect this to be observable at the aggregate level.

The following method for testing whether strategic constraints result in higher levels of volatility is proposed; the first election after each major change is left out for the reasons stated above. The cases are subsequently divided into two categories, one where the conditions for strategic voting are met, 'Present', (average district T_{pro} >10 pct and at least 3 parties running) - and where they are absent ('Absent')

(average district T_{pro} is maximum 10 pct or less than 3 parties). As mentioned parties are counted and weighted according to the number of districts in which they run. But since the '3-parties' criteria refers to whole numbers and weighting can result in fractions, it was decided to let >0.5 parties count as a whole party. In this way if a single member district system has 2.4 parties, it is not regarded as fulfilling the conditions for strategic voting, while if it has 2.5, it is. Using these criteria to separate the cases has the following consequences. Firstly, none of the elections in the US and a number of elections in Australia (1951-55, 1974-75), New Zealand (1951), the U.K. (1951-59, 1983-1987) do not qualify for the strategic voting group due to the low number of parties running. The remaining SMD systems - Canada and France - fulfil the conditions for the entire period[14]. Outside the SMD systems only few are eligible. These include Ireland for the entire period, Spain (1982-1996) as well as Italy and Japan under the Mixed-Member systems instituted in the 1990s (when the first election post system change is removed, the case of MM system Japan falls out, however). In both the latter cases the PR-tier is not designed to fully compensate for the effects of the plurality districts - as it is in the German mixed system - and the majority of seats in both cases are allocated in SMDs. SNTV Japan is a borderline case with an average district T_{pro} falling just short of the requirement. Since it is just on the limit, the results of the statistical analysis when it is included it the category of 'present' are reported in the footnotes and in appendix D.1.

A simple comparison of the mean volatility between elections in systems where strategic incentives are potentially present and those where they are absent as seen in table 6.3, reveals a difference in mean total volatility of 2.3 pct. The results are reported significant at the 0.01 level using the independent t-test and at the 0.05 level using the non-parametric Man-Whitney test. The findings thus give evidence

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[14]It should be noted, however, that the coverage of French parties is somewhat uncertain since information is aggregated on 90 districts instead of the real number used (See Appendix C.2.).

	Strategic Incentives		Total
Volatility	Absent	Present	
Mean V$_{tot}$	8	10,3	8,7
N	198	89	287

Table 6.3: Strategic Incentives and Total Volatility

in support of the hypothesis[15].

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude on this basis that strategic constraints induce a higher than normal level of volatility. We know that the number of parties has been shown to be a strong explanatory variable and the influence of parties therefore needs to be controlled for. Since multivariate techniques have not been developed for non-parametric statistical methods, checking for the influence of the number of parties demands requires a number of subsequent tests.

Firstly, 9 categories were created for the number of parties and the mean volatility corresponding to each computed. As can be seen in table 6.4, there is a consistent rise in average total volatility following the rise in the number of parties. Moreover the one-way ANOVA and the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis reveals that the relationship is significant ($p < 0.01$). Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the increase is consistent apart from a very minor drop in volatility observed from around '7'-'9' parties. But these small drops are then followed by a drastic increase in the category of '10' or more parties. Volatility is thus seen to vary positively with the number of parties more consistently than reported by Bartolini and Mair. In the data presented, several sharp drops in volatility could be observed when the number of parties in-

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[15]Transferring SNTV Japan to the category containing cases with strategic incentives present yields the following results; Strategic Incentives Present: 10.0 V_{tot}, Absent: 7.9 V_{tot}. Difference pass both tests (independent t-test, man whitney) of significance at 0.05 level.

Number of Parties	Volatility V_{tot}	Cases N
2 (1-2.4)	3,8	36
3 (2.5-3.4)	7,3	62
4 (3.5-4.4)	8,7	58
5 (4.5-5.4)	10	47
6 (5.5-6.4)	10,3	32
7 (6.5-7.4)	10,9	28
8 (7.5-8.4)	10,7	9
9 (8.5-9.4)	10,2	7
>10 (>9.5)	16,4	8
Total	8,7	287

Table 6.4: The Number of Parties and Total Volatility

creased[16]. Although the datasets differ in the two analyses, I would suggest that the main explanation for this difference lies in the way in which the number of parties is counted. Weighting the number of parties according to the districts they run in gives a more precise testing of the hypothesis that the more choice voters have the more likely they are to change their preference from one election to the next.

The next step is then to test whether the relationship between the number of parties and volatility holds up across systems where incentives for strategic voting are present and those where they are absent. And as seen from results in table 6.5, it does. The same pattern is repeated and in addition, it is evident that an increase in the number of parties has a stronger impact on mean volatility in systems that fulfil conditions for strategic voting than in the other group. The difference in mean volatility between the Absent and Present categories more than doubles

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[16]The relationship between volatility and party system format is shown for the two categories proportional and majoritarian systems. Both within each category and when the two categories are seen together, such inconsistencies in the relationship between the variables are evinced (Bartolini & Mair, 1990; 158-159)

Number of Parties	Strategic Incentives				
	Absent		Present		Difference
	V_{tot}	N	V_{tot}	N	V_{tot}
2 (1-2.4)	3,8	36	-	-	-
3 (2.5-3.4)	3,8	9	7,9	53	4,1
4 (3.5-4.4)	7	35	11,2	23	4,2
5 (4.5-5.4)	8,3	40	19,6	7	11,3
6 (5.5-6.4)	9,3	27	15,9	5	6,6
>7 (>6.5)	11,4	51	20,1	1	8,7
Total	8	198	10,3	89	2,3

Table 6.5: The Number of Parties, Strategic Incentives and Total Volatility

from the category with the lowest number of parties to the one with the highest (holding only few cases), although the rise over categories is not a smooth one. The low number of cases in the category of 'Present' at high party numbers makes the averages observed highly sensitive to single cases[17]. The persistent difference in volatility levels depending on whether the conditions for strategic voting are met or not, as well as the increase in this difference according the the number of parties running, lends strong support to the argument presented by Bartolini and Mair that strategic considerations promotes vote switching. That is, vote switching is not merely stimulated by the number of alternatives voters are presented with but by changes in viability since such changes would also be more likely when the number of parties is higher[18].

Within each of the two strategic incentives categories (Absent, Present), the differences in mean volatility reported across the groups represented by different

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[17]Corresponding to the category of '5' parties, removing just one case (Spain 1982) lowers the V_{tot} score from 19.6 to 15.9 and the difference between the 'Present' and 'Absent' categories is 7.6 instead of the very high 11.3.

[18]See results when Japan is included in the group with strategic incentives present in the Appendix D.1.

party numbers tests positively for significance using both the one-way ANOVA and the Kruskal-Wallis test (p<0.01). The results therefore appear to be robust. Testing the significance of the difference in mean volatility between the Present and Absent categories across party numbers confirms this. The differences in mean volatility values across all party categories pass the Mann-Whitney test of significance at the 1 pct level. The results of the independent t-test are similar, only that '3'-'4' pass at the 5 pct level and the '5'-'6' pass at the 1 pct level. 1 pct level in both independent t-test as well as the Mann-Whitney test for non-parametric data. Only the '>7' where there is but a single case in the category with strategic incentives present fails both tests of significance.

The above analysis does not address the hypothesized effect of the bipolarity in government often associated with strong electoral systems, as Bartolini and Mair suggested. Such bipolarity, they theorised, can induce vote-switching motivated by a desire to reward or punish the incumbent government on its performance. The fact that an increase in the number of parties, which we would suspect is negatively associated with bipolarity, has such a strong effect on volatility seems to indicate that whatever effect increased retrospective voting may have is overruled by the richer choice afforded by having more parties.

The question is how these conclusions influence the interpretation of volatility as an indicator of voter openness to consider new alternatives. It is clear that the presence of more choice presented by a higher number of parties is consistently associated with more actual vote switching, as is electoral system mediated by its effects on the number of parties and presence of strategic incentives. However, as discussed above, fewer parties running -and thus less choice- need not signify that the electoral market is necessarily more 'in-elastic', since lower volatility levels is likely to reflect the choice offered. Where few parties are the result of constraints imposed by the electoral system, we may therefore wrongly attribute such cases with an extra bar-

rier in the form of an unavailable electorate. Furthermore, the presence of strategic incentives will - in general - make it more difficult for new parties to win support, since establishing viability for such parties is more difficult. This means that the higher volatility associated with such strategic incentives is not indicative of higher potential for support of new parties. When using volatility as an indicator of voter availability, it is necessary to be aware of these effects of the number of parties as well as strategic incentives.

6.4   Measuring the Accessibility Barrier

Even high levels of volatility do not translate into credible threats of entry, however. Electoral swings are obviously necessary to put a new party into parliament, but they must reach a critical level determined by the electoral system in order to make this happen. The presence of a threshold vote share for obtaining seats defined by the electoral system blocks vote changes below this share from having much of an effect. Put differently, it is the interaction of the institutionally defined rules and the electoral behaviour that sets the actual height of the barrier. This means that it makes little sense to expect identical levels of volatility to have the same effects on the probability of new parties entering across systems employing different electoral rules. For instance, if we see 5 pct of the voters changing party from one election to the next, we know that this would suffice for a new party to gain proportional access to the parliament in both the Netherlands and Denmark. The same level of volatility occurring in Australia or the U.K. would clearly not. The same volatility levels therefore have different effects under different electoral systems. And the same argument can be made the other way around. Low levels of volatility may make even relatively low electoral barriers such as Germany's 5 pct insurmountable. Which of the two, volatility or threshold, is the limiting factor depends on their relative size.

In order to capture the barrier as produced by electoral rules and electoral availability in concert, I propose to simply divide the volatility vote share (V_{tot}) with the Threshold of Proportionality. The resulting indicator, the Accessibility Barrier (A_{bar}), can thus be written as follows:

$$A_{bar} = \frac{V_{tot}}{T_{pro}}$$

The Accessibility Barrier returns scores above 1 when the total volatility exceeds the vote share necessary to obtain proportional representation. An A_{bar} of 1 can thus be said to define a turning point by representing the point at which entry becomes feasible. Of course, it is not an absolute due to the fact that party entry can occur incrementally. The higher the values, the higher also the chances that a new party obtains representation.

In tables 6.7 and 6.6 the average scores for the Threshold of Proportionality and the Accessibility barrier are listed with the ranking of the cases (among all the cases included) based on their scores on each of them. As can be seen, using the A_{bar} instead of the T_{pro} as a barrier measure makes little difference for the rank-ordering of the some countries, such as Australia, whereas for others the change in rank is considerable, such as Switzerland. In the following section, the effects of volatility and the Accessbility barrier on the number of new parties will be examined.

Multi-member District and Mixed Systems

Country	Scores		Ranking of Cases	
	Tpro	Abar	Tpro-Rank	Abar-Rank
Austria (1953-66)	6.6	0.6	20	29
Austria (1970-90)	2.2	2.2	3	13
Austria (1994-1999)	4*	2.4	9	11
Belgium (1950-91)	2.4	3.9	4.5	5
Belgium (1995-99)	2.8	4.1	6	4
Denmark (1950)	5	2.1	14.5	15
Denmark (1953-1998)	2*	5.5	2	2
Finland (1951-99)	4.6	1.8	11	17
France (1986)	5*	3	14.5	9
Germany (1953-1998)	5*	1.8	14.5	16
Greece (1981)	17*	1.6	26.5	20
Greece (1985-1990)	13.1	1.7	25	18.5
Greece (1993-1996)	3*	1.7	7	18.5
Ireland (1951-97)	10.7	0.9	24	25.5
Italy (1953-92)	2.4	3.5	4.5	6
Italy (1994-96)	23.3	1.5	29	21
Japan (1952-93)	9.8	0.8	23	27
Japan (1996)	17	2.9	26.5	10
Norway (1953-81)	9.6	0.9	22	25.5
Norway (1985-97)	4*	3.3	9	7
Portugal (1980-99)	6.6	2.1	18	14
Spain (1982-96)	9.1	1.3	21	22
Sweden (1952-68)	6	1	19	24
Sweden (1970-1998)	4*	2.33	9	12
Switzerland (1951-99)	5.2	1.7	8.5	1.86
* Legal Threshold				

Table 6.6: Abar and Tpro Scores and Ranking in MMD- and Mixed Systems)

6.5 Test of Effects

The question is now, how far the Accessibility barrier contributes to explaining the number of new parties winning seats. However, before addressing that question, it would be interesting to see how far total volatility is correlated with the number of new parties and their electoral success. We expect the two to correlate both because new party vote shares is an integral part of the total volatility observed, as well as because it expresses the electoral availability conducive to new parties'

Single-Member District Systems

Country	Scores		Ranking of Cases	
	Tpro	Abar	Tpro-Rank	Abar-Rank
Australia (1951-98)	33.1	0.2	34	33
Canada (1953-97)	25.6	0.45	30	30
France (1958-97)	19.8	0.77	28	28
New Zealand (1951-93)	31.8	0.32	33	31
U.K. (1950-97)	31.2	0.23	32	32
United States (1950-98)	28.1	0.12	31	34

Table 6.7: Abar and Tpro Scores and Ranking in SMD-Systems

electoral success. However, it would also be interesting to see whether total volatility correlates with the number of new parties simply participating. The causality can run two ways. High volatility can express dissatisfaction with the established party system and a higher number of participating new parties can reflect the popular mood at the election time. But of course, the number of new alternatives can also contribute to vote switching in itself. Secondly, there is the issue of how well the accessibility barrier explains the observed variation in the number of new parties winning representation. The first analysis tests the relationship with the following model: *The Number of New Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta volatility + \varepsilon$

The results of the regression analysis are summarized in table 6.8. A very high correlation between the number of vote winning parties and the total volatility can be observed. The highest correlation is found for the group of successful parties, where the Pearson's R is 0.55 corresponding to 29 of the variance explained. Given the 'circularity' involved this is hardly surprising. The total volatility thus gives us a good indication of how many new parties succeed electorally. However, as can be seen total volatility does account for more than 22-29 pct of the observed variance in numbers of new parties, and it is therefore obvious that volatility in large part reflects switches between existing parties[19]. The high correlation between the total volatility

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[19]However, the fact that we are counting the numbers of new parties obtaining 1 pct and

OLS Regression

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*		
	Vote Winning		Participate
	>1 pct	>4 pct	>0.5 dis.
Total Volatility	0.47** (0.15)	0.55** (0.11)	0.45** (0.02)
Constant	0.27	-0.24	0.00
R^2(adj.)	0.22**	0.29**	0.19**
Pearsons R N=91	0.47**	0.55**	0.45**

** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)
Standardized coefficients reported, unstandardized in ( )

Table 6.8: Total Volatility as Predictor of the Number of New Parties

as the number of participating parties - Pearson's R of 0.45 - gives an indication that more parties tend to register at times when more want to switch party, although we of course cannot rule out that the causality runs in the opposite direction[20].

As can be seen from the non-parametric correlation in table 6.9, the Kendall's tau and Spearman's rho both demonstrate a strong association between the variables. As can be seen from the Kendall's tau, knowledge of the volatility levels entails a 34-37 pct reduction in error in predicting the number of new vote winning and participating parties. Spearman's rho likewise gives evidence of a high association of the variables. All are furthermore significant at the 1 pct level.

The question is now how well the Accessibility barrier predicts the number of parties winning seats. This hypothesis that it reduces the number of seat-winning

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4 pct of the seats respectively, rather than directly measuring their vote shares also implies that the correlations or explained variance could never be perfect, even if vote switching only benefited new parties.

[20]It should be remembered that the data on party participation is not pure, as discussed in chapter 4. The selection criteria for inclusion in some countries contains a minimum size of 5 pct vote share in at least one electoral district.

Non-Parametric Correlation

Total Volatility	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*		
	Vote Winning		Participate
	>1 pct	>4 pct	>0.5 dis.
Kendall's tau	0.34**	0.37**	0.37**
Spearman's rho	0.44**	0.46**	0.47**
N=91			
** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)			

Table 6.9: The Correlation of Total Volatility and the Number of New Parties

parties will be tested with the following model: *The Number of New Parties* $=$ $\beta_0 + \beta\, accessibility + \varepsilon$

The results of this analysis are summarized in table 6.10[21]. As can be seen, the A_{bar} measure is a very strong predictor of the number of seat winning parties. It explains as much as 21 pct of the variance for the group of parties obtaining over 1 pct of the votes but only 11 pct. of the variance observed for successful parties. The same pattern is observed for the non-parametric measures of association summarized in table 6.11. Both show a strong correlation, which is, however, weaker for the number of successful parties that for those winning just over 1 pct. In the correlations between total volatility and the number of new parties, we saw instead very similar correlation coefficients for the two types of new parties. This can be taken as an indication that A_{bar} is a valid barrier measure, whereas using volatility as such a measure on its own would problematic (as done by Strøm, 1989a). And not just for theoretical reasons. The other barriers examined - both the direct communication costs as well as the electoral threshold - explained the number of parties winning just over 1 pct much better than the number of electorally successful parties. The A_{bar} in this way 'behaves' as the other barriers. From a democratic point of view, we

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[21]Five cases were removed from the data-set (France 50s+80s, Italy, New Zealand and Japan 90s) due to changes in the electoral system mid-decade, which significantly alters the T_{pro} values that the A_{bar} is based on (the same procedure was followed in 5.5.).

OLS Regression

Regressor: Accessibility Barrier	*Dependent variable: New Parties*	
	Seat Winning	
	>1 pct	>4 pct
β-coefficent stand.	0.47**	0.35**
β-coefficient	(0.12)	(0.07)
Constant	0.63**	0.36**
R^2	0.21**	0.11**
N=91		
** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)		

Table 6.10: The Impact of the Acessibility Barrier on the Number of New Seat-Winning Parties

might find consolation in the fact that the barriers in place may successfully weed out smaller competitors but do not have the same efficacy to block parties for which there is higher demand. In terms of explaining variance in the number of seat-winning parties, the A_{bar} represent but a minor improvement compared to the T_{pro}. For the latter the adjusted R^2 was 20 and 9 pct respectively. The non-parametric measures of association were, however, clearly lower for the T_{pro} (Kendall's tau: 0.40/0.29, Spearman's rho: 0.51/0.36). Which barrier measure to obtaining seats should be used depends on the type of research question, however. As discussed above, it depends on what role electoral demand plays in the theoretical model applied. It can be said that the A_{bar} gives us a measure, which more accurately shows us the amount of real threat represented parties are under from entry of new parties, while the T_{pro} is a better measure of potential threat.

Finally, a comparison of the mean number of new parties corresponding to ordinal categories of the A_{bar} and the V_{tot} is presented below, in order to get a better im-

Non-Parametric Correlation

Accessibility Barrier	*New Seat Winning Parties*	
	>1 pct	>4 pct
Kendalls tau	0.48**	0.38**
Spearmans rho	0.61**	0.48**
N=91		
** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)		

Table 6.11: The Correlation of the Acessibility Barrier and the Number of New Seat-Winning Parties

pression of the nature of the relationships, than correlations coefficients may do (see table 6.12). The tendency in the mean values is clearly observed. There is a marked reduction in the mean number of parties winning seats in line with the increase in

Accessibility Barrier		New Parties Seat Winning		Total Volatility		New Parties Vote Winning		Participate
		>1pct.	>4.pct			>1pct	>4pct	>0.5 dis.
1. (>4)	Mean	2.08	1.00	1.(>15)	Mean	3.08	1.83	0.30
	N	13	13		N	12	12	12
	Std. Dev.	1.32	1.00		Std. Dev.	2.54	1.70	0.26
2. (2-3.9)	Mean	1.12	0.71	2.(10-14.9)	Mean	1.90	0.81	0.24
	N	17	17		N	21	21	21
	Std. Dev.	0.68	0.67		Std. Dev.	1.30	0.75	0.24
3.(1-1.9)	Mean	1.00	0.67	3. (5-9.9)	Mean	1.58	0.73	0.13
	N	18	18		N	45	45	45
	Std. Dev.	0.97	0.77		Std. Dev.	1.20	0.72	0.11
4.(0-0.9)	Mean	0.47	0.23	4. (0-4.9)	Mean	0.56	0.06	0.04
	N	43	43		N	18	18	18
	Std. Dev.	0.83	0.61		Std. Dev.	0.86	0.24	0.08
Total	Mean	0.92	0.52	Total	Mean	1.65	0.76	0.16
	N	92	92		N	96	96	96
	Std. Dev.	1.05	0.76		Std. Dev.	1.55	0.97	0.18
All significant at the 0.01 level (Kruskal Wallis and ANOVA)								

Table 6.12: The Accessibility Barrier, Total Volatility and the Number of New Parties

the Accessibility barrier (corresponding to lower values). The differences between the 2nd and the 3rd categories are not very pronounced, however. What stands out in the table is the consistently high difference in means between the 4th category, where volatility levels fall short of the threshold value, and the 3rd category, where it just exceeds it. The mean values in the latter category are four times as high for the number of parties winning 1 pct or more of the seats, while it is ten times larger for the group winning 4 pct or more of the seats. Finally, the mean values of new parties in the very low barrier cases are very high. With the A_{bar}, we therefore have a powerful predictor of the chances that new parties will succeed in winning representation. Moreover, if we need a simple dichotomous measure, it would make sense to distinguish between systems where the A_{bar} values fall short of 1 and those above, since this is where the stronger differences in reductive strength appears to be.

The differences in the number of vote winning parties, of both types, as well as those participating also varies strongly across the ordinal categories reflecting the total volatility levels. The difference between the second and third categories again are small for the group of parties winning just 1 pct of the votes, while it is absent for the group of electorally successful parties. It is, however, interesting to observe that there is a marked increase in the number of participating parties between these two, lending credibility to the hypothesis that more parties tend to register their participation when at times, when demand for change is higher.

Chapter 7

Do the Barriers to Entry Matter?

In the four preceding chapters, four different barriers to entry were identified, measured and their effects on new party entry tested. Two of the barriers identified, namely the registration barrier and the representation barrier, are largely 'mechanical' and therefore relatively straightforward to measure. The other two were more elusive. For the recognition barrier, the problem was the great number of factors which might possibly influence it, but escape precise measurement. For the accessibility barrier, the problem stems from measuring the key property - namely the extent of availability - and the solution found entails a certain degree of uncertainty concerning its validity. In the following, the results of the analyses made in each chapter will first briefly be reviewed and re-stated. After this review, it will be examined how important the barriers are for the possibilities of new party entry when they are combined in one model rather than seen individually. This question will be explored by means of different types of multivariate analyses. Afterwards, the question of temporal developments in the barriers will be addressed. The question being whether it is possible to identify trends within this group of established democracies that point towards more open or more closed competitive systems. Finally, the question of what the results signify for the role of barriers to entry for political

competition is addressed. By evaluating the results of the statistical analysis and discussing what can be learned from extreme cases as well as those poorly explained by the model, the foundation is laid for drawing conclusions concerning the value of the work.

7.1   Review of the Barrier Analyses and Results

The first barrier studied - *the registration barrier* - addresses the question of how difficult it is for new parties to obtain a place on the ballot. A comparison of the requirements used in the 21 countries was made, and considerable variation with respect to the conditions new parties have to fulfil to participate in elections was identified. An indicator of the costs of registration was made, where the total costs of accessing the ballot in all electoral constituencies was summarized and the differences between petition and financial requirements were bridged. The effects of the registration barrier on new party participation were tested, and a moderately depressing effect was identified. As expected the effect was only apparent when participation was defined by a specific share of the electoral districts. A closer look at the relationship between the variables revealed, however, that the effect was not consistent (linear), but largely produced by a smaller number of outlying cases. When these were removed, evidence of effects of the registration barrier disappeared. It was therefore concluded that ballot access is not a barrier be reckoned with in most of the countries included in the analysis. Only in some cases including Japan, the US and U.K. in the whole period studied, as well as France and Ireland in past decades, it would be a mistake to discard it.

The second barrier - *the recognition barrier* - is inherently more complex and therefore also more difficult to capture. A number of conditions that may facilitate or impede the efforts of new parties to become recognized by voters were identified

and five of these were singled out for further operationalization and testing. The first two hypotheses concerned the role of the mass media, which as the primary source of information on politics in all countries, could be expected to play a pivotal role. One hypothesis was that greater exposure to political information, measured by consumption of media known to provide more extensive information on political affairs, would increase the chances that information on new parties reach voters. The other was that greater political domination of the mass media, measured by the extent of political control over national broadcast organisations combined with their markets shares, would decrease the chances that voters would be exposed to information on new parties. None of the hypotheses were supported by the results of the empirical analysis, however. It is highly likely that media system structures matter to political competition and recognition of new alternatives, but identifying and measuring the critical properties is not an easy task. Moreover, as discussed, it is entirely possible that an unfriendly reception in certain quarters of the media system is compensated for by others in a reaction to this, so that media environments are dynamic and inherently difficult to describe as open or closed. Finally, with modern mass media, the most important determinants of exposure may lie in single events rather than depend on structural features and therefore impossible to theorize about in a study of this nature. The remainder of the analysis was devoted to measuring the costs of direct communication with the electorate (as opposed to that mediated by the media system). Three hypotheses were formulated. Two concerned the role of the state, as a provider of free access to media exposure and funding. Indicators capturing how favourable the rules are for new/smaller parties were created and their effects were tested. Evidence in support of an effect of both indicators was found, with media access showing the strongest effect. Finally, the costs of reaching the electorate were hypothesized to vary according to such factors as size, density, media structure. An indicator of such costs was identified (total advertising spending corrected for differences in economic wealth) and weak effects on the number of new

parties winning votes were identified. Finally, multivariate analyses were made. No interactive effects of the three barriers could be identified and in combination they only explained a small amount of the observed variance in new voting winning parties.

The third barrier - *the representation barrier* - stems from the failure of electoral systems to translate vote shares into equivalent seat shares. A property, which is probably one of the most well described in the field of political science. The extent of the distortions introduced by electoral systems differs considerably across systems and a number of different indicators have been proposed to capture the disadvantage these impose on the opportunities for smaller parties to obtain representation. In order to address difficulties related to the definition and practical estimation of some of these indicators, a new indicator of the electoral barrier, the Threshold of Proportionality, was developed. The validity of this indicator was tested against empirical evidence and found to perform better both on direct (observed discrepancies in vote/seat-shares) and indirect (effect on the party system) evidence of validity. Finally, the effects of the representation barrier, thus measured, were tested on the number of new parties participating, winning votes and seats. The strongest effects were observed for the number of new seat-winning parties where a clear reduction could be observed. For the number of vote-winning parties, the barrier only appeared to have an effect on the smallest of these and no real effect on the category of electorally successful parties. Reductive effects on the number of parties participating in elections could also be observed.

The final barrier - *the accessibility barrier* - essentially addresses the same question as the representation barrier. That is, how difficult it is for new parties to obtain representation. The question was in this case answered by considering both electoral behaviour and formal rules, however. As argued, electorates can be more or less firmly committed to certain parties, and the higher the degree of partisan loyalty voters evince, the lower the chances that new parties may be able to attract

electoral support. The actual level of vote switching was used as an indicator of this phenomenon and the total volatility observed for the countries was examined. It was found to vary significantly across countries, but also to exhibit a common tendency to increase in the last decade of the period. The accessibility barrier was then constructed by dividing the scores for total volatility by the threshold of proportionality, and the resulting measure then tells us whether - and how far - the number of available voters exceeds the amount necessary to make new party entry into parliament a realistic scenario. Finally, the effects of the accessibility barrier were tested on the number of new seat-winning parties. Significant and moderately negative effects on the number of new parties winning seats were observed. Taking the degree of vote switching into account only resulted in a marginal improvement in the variance explained as compared to using the representation barrier alone, however.

7.2 Combined Effects of the Barriers

A proper assessment of the strength of the barriers requires taking the analysis a step further than the analysis of bivariate relationships permit. The relative strength and nature of the individual barriers as well as their joint effects effects on the entry of new parties can only be properly evaluated if they are analysed in a single model. In the following, three different types of questions regarding the the barriers will therefore be investigated by means of multivariate models. The purpose of the first such model is to evaluate the relative strength of the individual barriers as well as their their combined effects on the entry of new parties. The second set of multivariate tests will explore the question of whether barriers have interaction effects. As will be discussed in more detail below, it is likely that there is an added barrier effect when several barriers are high as compared to the situation when several are low. Finally, the question of non-linear effects of the barriers will be examined by investigating

the impact of the barriers at different levels as well as by means of statistical tests of non-linearity.

Since two different measures were made of the barrier to obtain seats, namely the representation and the accessibility barriers, these will be analysed in separate models with the two other barriers of registration and recognition. The latter barrier will be represented by the three indicators created for direct communication costs (i.e. access to media, access to finance and costs of reaching voters). As discussed in chapter 4, only the indicators of direct communication costs showed signs of the expected impact in the bivariate analysis and only these are therefore included here. The five cases that were excluded on methodological grounds from certain of the preceding bivariate tests are also exluded in the following statistical analysis[1]. Finally, while the bivariate analyses were conducted with missing values for the independent variables of access to media and finance, these are here replaced by mean values to avoid that many cases are excluded from the analyses[2]. In the case of the registration barrier, some missing values were due to lack of information for an earlier decade. When this was the case, the score assigned to subsequent decade was used in the expectation that the legislation would not have been subject to drastical changes. Otherwise mean values were assigned[3].

Two separate analyses are made. The first set of tests assesses the impact of

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[1]In five cases electoral systems were subjected to major reforms leading to significant increases/decreases in the Threshold of Proportionality mid-decade. These include France in the 1950s and 1980s, as well as Italy, Japan and New Zealand in the 1990s. The average values for these decades therefore do not reflect the actual representation barrier. The cases of Italy and Japan in the 1990s were also excluded from the analyses of the recognition barrier due to the major changes in the party system (and abnormally high rate of new party entry) - see 4.2.3.

[2]For example, the average score on media access replaces the missing value.

[3]For an assessments of the effects of this approach, the first multivariate analysis was conducted with the missing values. The regression results did not deviate much from the one where missing values were replaced and the approach would therefore seem sound (see tables in appendix E.1.).

the three barriers of registration, recognition and representation, and the second tests the effects of the registration, recognition and accessibility barriers. Since the representation and accessibility barriers were suggested as indicators of the same, namely the barrier to obtaining seats, and furthermore overlap in measurement, it makes little sense to include them in the same model. Finally, it should be noted that the assumptions of the statistical techniques used concerning the nature of the data are not met. The lack of multivariate techniques for ordinal variables makes it necessary to move outside the methodological 'comme il faut'. The results obtained must naturally be evaluated in light of this fact.

7.2.1 The Barriers to Entry I: The Registration, Recognition and Representation Barriers

The following multivariate model testing is intended to shed light on two questions. The first is how much of the variation in new party entry is explained by all the barriers identified. The second is how much weight each individual barrier has when the influence of the other barriers is taken into account. The hypothesis that the barriers reduce the number of new parties winning votes and seats will be tested with the following model where the recognition barrier is represented by indicators of conditions for access to media, finance and the costs of reaching voters: *Number of NewParties*

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 registration + \beta_2 media + \beta_3 finance + \beta_4 reachvoters + \beta_5 representation + \varepsilon$$

As can be seen from the results of the multivariate regression analysis of the barriers summarized in table 7.1, the model explains as much as 12 to 21 pct of the variation in number of new vote winning parties Moreover, the models pass the test of significance. The barriers to do not contribute equally to explaining each of the dependent variables, however, nor do they always appear to pull in the expected direction. The strongest predictor is the recognition barrier where the

The Barriers to Entry I
OLS regression with standardized coefficients.

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*			
	Vote Winning		Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct	>1 pct	>4 pct
Registration Barrier	-0.15	-0.12	0.09	0.03
Recognition Barriers: Access to Media	-0.32**	-0.24*	-0.37**	-0.24*
Access to Finance	0.00	-0.06	0.11	-0.07
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.11	-0.12	-0.11	-0.06
Representation Barrier	-0.06	0.01	-0.39**	-0.23
Constant	1.49**	0.66**	0.95**	0.52**
R^2	**0.21****	**0.12***	**0.34****	**0.16****
N=91				
** $p<0.01$ * $p<0.05$ (two-tailed)				

Table 7.1: The Barriers to Entry I: The Impact on New Party Entry

conditions for access to media display fairly strong negative effects on the number of new vote winners. Only the coefficents for the small vote winners pass tests of significance, however. The costs of reaching voters also appears to play a reductive role, albeit a weak one. Evidence that access to finance matters to new party entry is virtually absent, however. In addition to the recognition barrier, the registration barrier appears to play a weakly reductive role. However, as discussed in the bivariate analysis, it is plausible that the observed effect of the registration barrier is mainly the result of the high barriers in a few countries. Finally, there is scant evidence that representation plays a role for reducing the number of new contenders. This finding confirms the conclusions of the bivariate analysis, but it is surprising that the

representation barrier does not appear to play even a weak role. As discussed, we could expect deterrent effects of the representation barrier on both party formation and voter support for new parties. Instead, the registration and recognition barrier - represented by access to media and less so by the costs of reaching voters - emerge as the important factors for entry to competition for votes. It should be observed, however, that the explained variance in the model is notably reduced if the U.S. is removed from the data-set, and the coefficients are weakened although the direction remains the same[4].

More powerful results are obtained for the category of seat-winning parties where a very high 34 pct of the variance in the number of parties winning 1 pct of the seats is explained by the barriers compared to 16 pct for the number obtaining at least 4 pct of the seats. The fact that it is possible to explain more variation is only to be expected since all three barriers potentially exert a direct influence on the number of seat-winners. Moreover, the representation barrier has very tangible mechanical effects on party representation, which can be expected to reduce the number of new parties successfully entering. It is therefore not surprising that the representation barrier emerges as the most powerful determinant of the number of seat-winning parties, although it is almost equal to the conditions for access to media when it comes to explaining the number of parties winning over 4 pct. The access to media exposure is also a strong - and significant - determinant of the number of parties winning 1 pct of the seats. The fact that the standardized coefficients for this predictor are stronger for the number of seat-winning parties than for the number of vote-winning ones is not immediately intelligible, however. The costs of reaching voters appears to have a weak but consistently negative effect on the number parties winning representation. The registration barrier and access to finance display tiny

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[4]As the U.S., was seen to influence the bivariate results of the recognition barrier strongly. Removing this case from the data set yields the following R^2 across the categories; Vote-winning: >1pct: 0.16, >4 pct.: 0.08.

and in some cases even positive coefficients and there is therefore no evidence to support that they play a role. Removing the U.S. from the data set makes little difference to the results. The explained variance remains largely the same, but it should be noted that the coefficients of the costs of reaching voters turn positive[5].

The overall conclusion that can be drawn on basis of these results is that access to media is the main determining factor for the number of vote-winning parties, while the number of seat-winning parties is predicted by both access to media and the representation barrier. In fact, for the number of vote-winners, the conditions for media access explain 13 pct. (>1pct) and 7 pct (>4 pct) of the variance on its own with both models and coefficients passing tests of significance[6]. It clearly appears as the strongest, but not the only factor that matters. For the number of seat-winners, however, the representation barrier and media access together explain 32 pct and 16 pct of the variance and also in this case the findings also pass tests of significance[7]. In this case, there is thus little evidence to support that other barriers matter to prevent entry.

Interaction Effects

The next question is whether the barriers have interaction effects. While one barrier on its own may accomplish little in terms of preventing entry, there is a distinct possibility that barriers have synergistic effects. Simultaneously high registration, recognition and representation barriers may effectively prevent entry, while a mix of high and low barriers may offer established parties much less protection from new

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[5]The multivariate analysis without the U.S. returns the following R^2 values: Seat-winning: >1pct: 0.31**, > 4 pct.: 0.14*.

[6]The coefficients for media access to predict the number of vote-winning parties are -0.36* (>1pct) and -0.26* (>4 pct).

[7]Predicting the number of seat-winners of >1pct and >4pct respectively, the standardized coefficients for media access are -0.34**/0.24* and for the representation barrier they are s -0.38**/-0.26*.

competitive threats. In other words, the may be an added effect over and above the sum of the individidual barrier effects.

A simple test - blind to the evidence of the relative importance of the barriers that emerged in the multivariate analysis above - is first taken. That is, all the barriers are considered potentially important for the interaction effect. In order to test the hypothesis, the same procedure described earlier (see 4.4.4.) was followed[8]; Each of the variables were transformed into z-scores and an interaction term defined as the product of the z-scores of the barrier indicators was created[9]. The hypothesis that there are interaction effects of all the barriers is tested with the following model: *Number of New Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 (registration \cdot media \cdot finance \cdot reachvoters \cdot representation) + \beta_2 registration + \beta_3 media + \beta_4 finance + \beta_5 reachvoters + \beta_6 representation + \varepsilon$

The result of the multivariate regression with the interaction term and the indicators representing the three barriers are presented in table 7.2. As can be seen, there is no evidence of a general interaction effect. The coefficents for the interaction term are positive across all the categories of new parties indicating an effect contrary to the expected. None are significant, however.

It is possible that a mistake is made by including all the barrier variables in the interaction term. As demonstrated by the multivariate analysis above, not all barrier measures have the same effect on party entry. It may therefore simply distort the results to consider all barrier variables relevant to the question. Before entirely dismissing the idea that there may be interactive effects, it is therefore necessary to design a more discriminating test which only considers interaction effects between the strongest barrier indicators, namely the representation barrier and access to

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[8]The method is described in 'Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analysis' by Brambor, Clark and Golder. Political Analysis (2006) 14:63-82. An example of the procedure can also be found in Tavits (2004).

[9]A z-score is also known as a standardized value. To obtain z-scores for a variable, for each case the variable's mean value is subtracted and then divided by the standard deviation.

The Barriers to Entry I
OLS regression with standardized coefficients.

Regressor	Dependent Variable: New Parties			
	Vote Winning		Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct	>1 pct	>4 pct
Interaction Term (Registration•Media•Finance•Reach•Representation)	**0.35**	**0.11**	**0.09**	**0.23**
Registration Barrier	-0.36	-0.19	0.05	-0.11
Access to Media	-0.39**	-0.26*	-0.39**	-0.28*
Access to Finance	-0.03	-0.07	0.10	-0.08
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.23	-0.16	-0.14	-0.14
Representation Barrier	-0.06	0.02	-0.39**	-0.23
Constant	1.37**	1.42**	0.92**	0.47**
R^2	0.23*	0.13	0.34**	0.17*
N=91				
** p<0.01 * p<0.05 (two-tailed)				

Table 7.2: The Barriers to Entry I: Interaction Effects

media. Interaction effects of the two are most likely to occur at the level of entry into parliaments since both directly influence the number of new parties that obtain representation. An interaction term defined as the product of the representation barrier and access to media was therefore made. Following the same procedure as above, the interaction term is analysed in a multivariate regression model with the two original barrier variables. The model that is to test the hypothesis is the following: *Number of New Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1(media \cdot representation) + \beta_2 media + \beta_3 representation + \varepsilon$

Evidence supporting the hypothesis that the representation barrier and conditions for state guaranteed media access have interactive effects fail to materialize, however. As seen in table 7.3, the coefficients for the interaction term are positive contrary to

The Barriers to Entry I

OLS regression with standardized coefficients.

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*	
	Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct
Interaction Term (Media•Representation)	0.03	0.23
Access to Media	-0.32**	-0.31*
Representation Barrier	-0.39**	-0.22*
Constant	0.93**	0.54**
R^2	**0.32****	**0.17***
N=91		
** p<0.01; * p<0.05 (two-tailed)		

Table 7.3: The Barriers to Entry I: Interaction Effects of Strong Barriers

what was expected. The results therefore do not then lend support to the hypothesis that the barriers have joint effects over and above the sum of their individual ones.

Barrier Effects at Different Barrier Levels and Non-Linear Effects

The final question that will be considered is whether the strength of one barrier depends on the level of another. In the analysis so far we have examined the effects of the barriers with all cases as a single group under the implicit assumption that the indicators have independent and linear effects on the dependent variables. However, it is possible that the level of one barrier matters for the strength of the impact of another. Likewise, it is not granted that all variation in barriers matters equally for prediction of the number of new parties. In concrete terms, it is possible to hypothesize that the recognition barrier plays a different role in systems where it is generally difficult for small parties to gain representation compared to systems offer-

ing easier access to parliament. Firstly, when the prospects of winning representation are good, it may be easier for new parties to attract resources for campaigns from private sponsors. It is reasonable to expect that sponsors are generally less inclined to lend support to parties whose prospects of winning representation and influence are bleak. Secondly, as discussed in chapter 4, it is probable that media covering elections give more coverage to new parties exactly when they may win access to the representative institutions. In such systems they are more likely to be perceived as relevant political players and therefore newsworthy. There is therefore no reason to believe that the influence of the recognition barrier is the same independent of the characteristics of the electoral system. Moreover, the same increase in the electoral threshold may have a different effect when the level is high than when it is low. It is not difficult to imagine that an increase from 5-15 pct threshold to obtain representation has a stronger negative effects on new party competition than one from 15-25 pct. On the one hand, increases in the lower range are likely to influence voters more strongly because those electors who are strategically motivated can be expected to respond to the increasing chances that their vote will be wasted on a party with thin prospects of winning representation. On the other hand, electors casting their vote for new parties when the threshold is already high are unlikely to be moved by further increases simply because such strategic considerations are unlikely weigh heavily in their decision-making process. If such consideration had played a strong role, they would be unlikely to support new parties in the first place.

In order to investigate this, the cases were divided into two groups; One group where the Representation Barrier is high ($T_{pro} >$ 8 pct) and one where it is low ($T_{pro} <$ 8 pct). The threshold value of 8 pct was chosen to have approximately the same number of cases in each group, which is necessary to limit the problem that very few cases in the different ordinal categories of access to media and finance determine the relationship (see frequency tables in appendix E.2.). Since there are good reasons to believe that the registration barrier plays a role for only a limited number of

OLS Regression: Cases with LOW Representation Barrier

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*			
	Vote Winning		Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct	>1 pct	>4 pct
Access to Media	-0.25	-0.17	-0.27*	-0.07
Access to Finance	0.23	0.07	0.25	-0.00
Costs of Reaching Voters	0.16	0.05	-0.01	-0.00
Representation	-0.24	-0.18	-0.40**	-0.29
Constant	0.49	0.04	-1.36	0.66
R^2	**0.16**	**0.08**	**0.30****	**0.10**
N=49 (<Tpro 8 pct)				
** p<0.01; * p<0.05 (two-tailed); Standardized coefficients reported				

Table 7.4: The Barriers to Entry I: Impact when the Representation Barrier is Low

cases, it is left out of the following analysis. The first analysis looks at the effect of the recognition barrier indicators and the representation barrier itself among cases where the representation barrier is low. The model used to test the hypothesized relationship can be written as follows: *Number of New Parties = β_0 + β_1 media + β_2 finance + β_3 reachvoters + β representation + ε*

As can be seen from the regression results summarized in table 7.4, media access is the only of the recognition barrier indicators that appears to have an effect somewhat comparable to that observed in the multivariate analysis (see table 7.1). It is a much weaker predictor here, however, and for the number of seat winners obtaining at least 4 pct of the seats the coefficient observed is very small. The only exception is for the number of seat-winners obtaining at least 4 pct of the seats where the coefficient is very small. The coefficients for access to finance and costs of reaching voters are all in the wrong direction and thus evidently do not play a role. However,

OLS Regression: Cases with HIGH Representation Barrier

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*			
	Vote Winning		Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct	>1 pct	>4 pct
Access to Media	-0.36*	-0.27	-0.38**	-0.40**
Access to Finance	-0.19	-0.20	-0.04	-0.14
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.34*	-0.31*	-0.08	-0.09
Representation	-0.09	-0.09	-0.42**	-0.27
Constant	1.69**	0.77**	1.02**	0.67**
R^2	**0.30****	**0.24***	**0.40****	**0.31****
N=42 (>Tpro 8 pct)				
** p<0.01 * p<0.05 (two-tailed); Standardized coefficients reported				

Table 7.5: The Barriers to Entry I: Impact when the Representation Barrier is High

the representation barrier appears to reduce the number of new parties winning votes in this group as expected. The coefficients are negative and moderately strong, which was not the case when its general effects on all cases were considered. The coefficients for predicting the number of seat winners are almost the same as those seen in the multivariate analysis including all cases above. In terms of variance explained for the number of vote winning parties, this is nearly halved compared to the analysis including all cases. For the number of seat winning parties the diminished explanatory power is only notable for the category of parties winning at least 4 pct. The question is what picture emerges when we repeat the same analysis in the group where the represenation barrier is high. The results of this analysis are summarized in table 7.5.

As seen from the regression results (table 7.5), the recognition barrier appears to play a much more prominent role when the level of the representation barriers is

high. All three indicators have notable negative effects on the number of new parties winning votes. The conditions for media access plays a much stronger role here as evidenced by the larger coefficients. The access to finance now also appears to play a part in determining the number of vote winners, as does the costs of reaching voters. Only the coefficients for the latter pass tests of significance, however. Even if the U.S. is excluded from the group (as this might be suspected to unduly influence the size of the coefficients), all three indicators return negative coefficients although in the case of costs of reaching voters, they no longer pass tests of significance[10]. The results are thus relatively robust[11]. The representation barrier also clearly plays a weaker role in reducing the number of vote winning parties than in the group above (coefficients 2-3 times smaller). Finally, the variance explained for the number of vote winners is very high. As much as 30 pct is explained in the case of the smallest vote winners and for the more successful ones obtaining at least 4 pct of the votes, the model still accounts for 23 pct of the variance. Exluding the U.S. brings the number down 6-7 pct in each case, which is still high. The number of seat winning parties is even better explained by the model with 40 pct of the variance for the small vote winners explained compared to 31 pct of the successful seat winners. Here the representation barrier itself and the access to media clearly play leading roles, as was also seen in the other analyses. The coefficients observed for the access to finance and particularly for the costs of reaching voters are smaller as well as insignificant. Moreover, the U.S. plays a strong role for the coefficients here. If the U.S. cases

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[10]Analysis without the US. >1 pct. vote winners: The R2 drops to 23 pct and costs of Reach fall to -0.19 (not significant). The other coefficients remain at the same level. >4 pct vote winners: R2 falls to 16 pct and the coefficients are close to the above.

[11]Since the cases where the registration barrier is likely to play a role are concentrated in this group, the analysis was repeated including this indicator. For the number of vote-winners the registration barrier displays a weak to moderate negative effect, and the (-0.19; -0.16). The coefficients for costs of reaching voters are reduced to - 0.19 and -0.20, while the access to finance remains at the same level. Exclusion of the U.S. leads to drop in coefficients to -0.13 for costs of voters, but the others remain at the same level. The findings would thus appear solid.

are removed, the R_2 remains almost the same (2-3 pct. lower), but the direction of the costs of reaching voters coefficients become positive. The the latter factors hardly play a role for explaining the number of seat-winners considering the high representation barrier should not surprise us.

The results thus provide evidence in support of the hypothesis that the recognition barrier plays a stronger role when the conditions for access to the representative institutions are less favourable to smaller parties. The hypothesized non-linear effect of the representation barrier on the number of vote-winning parties was also validated by the results. The reductive effect of increases in the representation barrier appear to be stronger in the lower range indicating that strategic desertion from new parties occur here. When the barrier to representation is already high, changes do not matter much. The same pattern was not observable for the number of seat winning-parties where we also expect a more straightforward linear mechanical effect. It should of course be borne in mind that the coeffients observed were all small. In order to check whether this is indeed the case or might be artificially caused by the way in which the groups were defined, it is possible to make an additional statistical test on non-linearity. The presence of non-linear causal effects can be identified by squaring the representation barrier variable and entering it as a predictor in a regression model alongside the representation barrier itself (Gujarati, 2003: 226). If the coefficients for the squared term are strong (and significant), this is an indication that non-linear effects are indeed present[12]. The model used to test the hypothesized non-linear effects in the representation barrier can be written as follows: *Number of New Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 representation + \beta_2 representation^2 + \varepsilon$

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[12]The following interpretation of results are given: If β_1 is positive and β_2 negative, it indicates a parabolic effect in shape of ∩. That is x has a positive effect on y until a certain threshold level and then the relationship is reversed. If β_1 is negative and β_2 positive, the opposite is the case (i.e. ∪ shaped). If both coefficients are positive or negative, it implies that the curve does not change direction, but accellerates or decelerates (see http://faculty.ucr.edu/~hanneman/soc203a/nonlin.html)

OLS Regression - Non-Linear Effects

Regressor	Dependent Variable: New Parties			
	Vote Winning		Seat Winning	
			>1 pct	>4 pct
Representation Barrier^2	**-0.12**	**-0.15**	**0.09**	**0.05**
Representation Barrier	-0.18	-0.06	-0.53**	-0.28
Constant	1.6**	0.75**	0.83**	0.54**
R^2	0.09*	0.04	0.21**	0.10**
N=91				
** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed); Standardized Coefficients				

Table 7.6: Non-Linear Effects of the Representation Barrier

As seen from the results of the regression analysis summarized in table 7.6, the expectations concerning the nature of the causal effects are confirmed. For the number of vote winning parties the squared representation barrier is a strong predictor - relatively speaking. For the number of small vote winners it is only a bit weaker than the normal term, while it is three times stronger in determining the group of successful new parties. Negative coeffcents for both the squared and normal predictors indicate a decelerating non-linear effect. That is, strong effects of increases in the beginning that wear off as values get higher. None of the coefficients are very high nor are they significant, which should not surprise us as the representation barrier does not explain much of the variance observed. It would probably require a different set of dependent variables - taking vote shares as such rather than numbers over certain threshold values - to fully capture the effect.

Turning to the number of seat-winning parties, the difference is clear. Here the squared representation barrier displays only weak - and positive - coefficients that are around 6 times smaller than those associated with the normal representation

barrier. This means in effect that all variation in the barrier matters equally for the number of seat winners, and it is highly likely that the observed effects stem from its mechanical properties rather than from psychological deterrent effects. As observed on the effect on the number of vote winning parties, such effects are higly limited. The rationale behind expecting a non-linear effect of the electoral threshold lies mainly in its possible deterrent effect on electoral support.

7.2.2 The Barriers to Entry II: The Registration, Recognition and Accessibility Barriers

The next multivariate model considers the impact of the accessibility barrier with the two other barriers of registration and recognition. Apart from the value of assessing the relative importance of the accessibility barrier vis-á-vis the other barriers, the following analysis also serves the purpose of evaluating whether the findings regarding the contribution of the registration and recognition barrier indicators hold up when the final barrier indicating the barrier of entry to parliament is differently measured. Since the indicators of the representation and accessibility barrier are not very highly correlated (Pearsons R: 0.44), this is not a trivial question. Only the impact on the number of seat winning parties is investigated since the construction of the the accessibility barrier means that it is only a meaningful predictor for entry into parliament (see chapter 6). In the subsequent analyses, the indicator of the accessibility barrier is reversed to make higher values correspond to a higher barrier like the other measures. The model used to test the hypothesis that the three barriers reduce the number of new parties winning seats is the following: *Number of New Seat Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 registration + \beta_2 media + \beta_3 finance + \beta_4 reachvoters + \beta_5 accessibility + \varepsilon$

The results of the multivariate regression analysis are summarized in table 7.7.

The Barriers to Entry II
OLS regression with standardized coefficients.

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*	
	Seat Winning	
	>1 pct	>4 pct
Registration Barrier	-0.05	-0.06
Access to Media	-0.30**	-0.18
Access to Finance	0.11	-0.06
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.14	-0.07
Accessibility Barrier	-0.34**	-0.24*
Constant	0.94**	0.51**
R^2	**0.33**	**0.17**
N=91		

** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed); Standardized coeff.reported

Table 7.7: The Barriers to Entry II: The Impact on New Party Entry

The results - in terms of variance explained, direction and strength of coefficients - are comparable to those obtained in the regression model where the representation barrier fills the place of the accessibility barrier[13]. The coefficients for the accessibility barrier are moderately strong, significant and virtually identical to those observed for the representation barrier. Also here media access is a strong predictor while the effects of access to finance are best described as erratic; weakly negative in the model predicting the number of successful seat winners and positive as predictor for the number winning at least 1 pct of the seats. The costs of reaching voters gives

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[13]One case, the U.S., has earlier been seen to influence the results strongly. Removing this case from the data set yields the following R^2 across the categories; Vote-winning: >1pct: 0.12, >4 pct.: 0.10. Seat-winning: >1pct: 0.30, >4 pct 0.14. Moreover all except the number of parties winning at least 4 pct of the votes pass tests of significance at the 1 or 5 pct level.

evidence only of a feeble effect, but here it is at least in the expected direction. It is clear that the variance explained depends mainly on the accessibility barrier and the access to media[14].

Interaction Effects

As discussed above, it is possible that barriers interact and create synergistic effects. That is they have joint effect that are stronger than the sum of the individual ones. In the analysis above, no interaction effect was identified. So is there is any reason to expect it will be any different here? The anwer to this is yes. It is in fact highly plausible that the recognition barrier plays a much greater role when willingness among voters to switch to another party is higher and possibilities for obtaining representation for new parties at the same time are better. It is therefore necessary to test the hypothesis.

In light of previous findings, the registration barrier is left out of the analysis and the interaction term defined as the product of the three recognition barrier variables and the accessibility barrier (i.e. of their z-scores[15]) and entered in a multivariate regression model to explain the number of seat-winning parties[16]. The model used to test the hypothesis is the following: *Number of New Seat Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1(media \cdot finance \cdot reachvoters \cdot accessibility) + \beta_2 media + \beta_3 finance + \beta_4 reachvoters + \beta_5 accessibility + \varepsilon$

As can be seen from the results of the analysis in table 7.8, the evidence of an

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[14]A model with only access to media and the accessibility barrier explain 29 pct of the variance in the number of small seat winners, while they explain 15 pct of the variance for the larger ones.

[15]The accessbility barrier scores are reversed so that higher scores are associated with a stronger barrier as is the case for the other two.

[16]A similar analyses with an interaction term defined as the product of the registration, recognition and accessibility barriers was also made. No evidence of an interaction effect was found in this case, however.

The Barriers to Entry II

OLS regression with standardized coefficients.

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*	
	Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct
Interaction Term	**-0.38***	**-0.36***
(=media•finance•reach•accessibility)		
Access to Media	-0.33**	-0.36*
Access to Finance	0.09	-0.08
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.13	-0.07
Accessibility Barrier	-0.65**	-0.53*
Constant	1.03**	0.58**
R^2	0.37**	0.21**
N=91		
** p<0.01; * p<0.05		

Table 7.8: The Barriers to Entry II: Interaction Effects

interaction effect is strong in this case. The coefficents for the interaction term are negative, strong and significant for both dependent variables. Moreover, it is the second strongest predictor of the batch. The other predictors largely behave as we would expect them to. The strongest predictor is clearly the accessibility barrier while the third strongest predictor is the conditions for access to media. The two other dimensions of the recognition barrier again do not pull much weight in the model. Compared to a model excluding the interaction term, but keeping the other variables implies a loss of 4 pct in variance explained for both dependent variables (R^2= 0.33 and 0.17 for the smallest and largest respectively). The model thus provides relatively strong validation of the presence of an interaction effect.

As discussed above, the observed interaction effect could indicate that the impact

The Barriers to Entry II

OLS regression with standardized coefficients.

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*	
	Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct
Interaction Term	**-0.22***	**- 0.13**
(=media•finance•reach•volatility)		
Access to Media	-0.38**	-0.23*
Access to Finance	-0.08	-0.08
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.17	-0.09
Total Volatility (Reversed)	-0.16	-0.31**
Constant	1.50**	0.66**
R^2	0.27**	0.23**
N=91		
** p<0.01; * p<0.05		

Table 7.9: Interaction Effects of Recognition Barriers and Total Volatility

of the conditions for campaigning is reinforced when voters are willing to change their position. If this hypothesis is indeed correct, we should also be able to identify an interaction effect of the recognition barriers and total volatility in predicting the number of new vote-winning parties. In order to check this, an interaction term defined as the product of the three recognition barrier variables and total volatility (reversed) was made and the same procedure as that above followed[17]: *Number of New Seat Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 (media \cdot finance \cdot reachvoters \cdot volatility) + \beta_2 media + \beta_3 finance + \beta_4 reachvoters + \beta_5 volatility + \varepsilon$

As can been seen from table 7.9, the results of the multivariate regression analysis lend support to the hypothesis. The interaction factor is negative for both dependent

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[17]The z- scores of the V_{tot} are reversed in order to make it as the other barriers, where higher scores are associated with higher barriers.

variables, although it is not very strong for the number of electorally successful parties. For the smaller parties it has a notable - and significant - reductive effect, however. Moreover, all the other predictors in the model perform as we would expect. The access to media again proves to be the strongest of the recognition barrier variables, while financial support and costs of reaching voters once again appear to be less important. The total volatility is, not surprisingly, also determining for the number of new parties winning votes. Compared to a model with the same variables but without the interaction term, more of the variance is explained. For the number of new parties gaining at least 1 pct of the votes excluding the interaction term implies a loss of 4 pct variance explained (R^2 =0.23), while for the number of electorally successful parties it is only 2 pct less ($R^2 = 21$ pct). The findings thus lend support the hypothesis that higher electoral availability enhances the importance of the recognition barrier.

Barrier Effects at Different Barrier Levels

Following the same line of reasoning as above, the final tests examine whether the impact of the recognition barrier variables depends on the level of the accessibility barrier and furthermore whether the effect of the accessibility barrier itself varies according to its own level. As evidenced by the results of the analysis of the barriers to entry I, the assumption of linearity does not necessarily hold up to closer scrutiny. In order to investigate the presence of this type of inter-dependent and non-linear effect here, a similar procedure to the one taken above was followed; the cases were divided into two groups. The first group of cases ('low' accessibility barrier) have volatility levels that exceed the threshold of proportionality (A_{bar}>1) and in the other ('high accessibility barrier') the total volatility falls short of the threshold value (A_{bar}<1). As the accessibility barrier was defined as total volatility over the threshold of proportionality ($A_{bar}=V_{tot}/T_{pro}$), it follows that higher values imply

OLS Regression: Cases with 'LOW' Accessibility Barrier

Regressor	*Dependent Variable: New Parties*	
	Seat Winning	
	>1pct	>4 pct
Access to Media	-0.28	-0.02
Access to Finance	0.20	0.04
Costs of Reaching Voters	-0.06	0.06
Accessibility Barrier	-0.32*	-0.25
Constant	1.15**	0.80**
R^2	**0.27****	**0.07**
N=44 (Abar>1)		
** p<0.01; * p<0.05; Standardized coefficients are reported		

Table 7.10: The Barriers to Entry II: Impact when Accessibility Barrier is 'Low'

easier access rather than the other way around. The scores were reversed here as also done above, so that it behaves as other barriers and the results are easier to understand and compare with the previous ones. A 'low' accessibility barrier thus signifies higher A_{bar} scores and vice versa. The following model is then used to test the hypothesized effects: *Number of New Seat Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 media$ $+\beta_2 finance +\beta_3 reachvoters +\beta_4 accessibility +\varepsilon$

As seen from table 7.10, the only consistent and fairly strong predictor in the model is the accessibility barrier itself. The access to media only appears to play a role for the number of small seat winners. The latter category is also very well accounted for by the model, while the number of successful seat winners is very poorly predicted.

The model clearly does a better job of predicting both dependent variables when

OLS Regression: Cases with 'HIGH' Accessibility Barrier

| *Regressor* | *Dependent Variable: New Parties* Seat Winning | |
	>1pct	>4 pct
Access to Media	-0.28*	-0.43**
Access to Finance	0.14	0.04
Costs of Reaching Voters	0.02	0.06
Accessibility Barrier	-0.48**	-0.18
Constant	3.4**	0.67**
R^2	**0.34****	**0.31****
N=47 (Abar<1)		
** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$; Standardized coefficients are reported		

Table 7.11: The Barriers to Entry II: Impact when Acessibility Barrier is 'High'

the accessibility barrier is at a higher level as the regression results summarized in table 7.11 testify to. The result thus conform to the pattern observed in the analyses where the representation barrier is included instead of the accessibility barrier. It would appear that more difficult access to the representative institutions - however measured - strengthen the role played by access to media. It should be noted that also here there is no evidence here of any role played by access ot finance nor of costs to reaching voters when predicting the number of seat-winners. This confirms earlier findings. However, it should be observed that the results for the access to finance are particularly unreliable in this analysis as there are extremely few cases in the two categories of favourable support (1 and 5) compared to the number of cases in the other categories (26 and10) (see appendix E.2.).

When comparing the coefficients for the accessibility barrier in the two groups, a contradiction emerges, however. It is a much stronger predictor of the number of

OLS Regression - Non-Linear Effects

Regressor	Dependent Variable: New Parties	
	Seat Winning	
	>1 pct	>4 pct
Accessibility Barrier^2	- 0.65**	-0.52**
Accessibility Barrier	-1.04**	-0.69**
Constant	1.06**	0.59**
R^2	0.32**	0.19**
N=91		
** p<0.01 level; * p<0.05 (two-tailed); Standardized Coefficents		

Table 7.12: Non-Linear Effects of the Accessibility Barrier

small seat winners in this group than it was in the other (-0.32/-0.48). But for the group of successful seat winners, the exact opposite can be observed(-0.25/-0.18). It is difficult to find a reasonable explanation for this. Moreover, the very high constant in the first model (2-3 times higher than the normally observed) gives reason to speculate about the appropriateness of the model applied. One explanation for the somewhat strange results may lie in the nature of the accessibility barrier itself. It is possible that its properties do not fit well in an analysis where linearity is assumed. In order to identify the presence of non-linear effects, the squared accessibility barrier is entered in a multivariate regression model together with the usual accessibility barrier measure (as also done above). The model used to test the hypothesis is the following: *The Number of New Seat Winning Parties* $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 accessibility + \beta_2 accessibility^2 + \varepsilon$

The results of the regression analysis designed to identify non-linear effects show beyond a shadow of a doubt that the accessibility barrier does not fit in causal models where linearity is assumed (see table 7.12) . The coefficients of the squared barrier term are extremely strong and highly significant as are those of the normal

barrier. The fact that both are strong and negative indicate that we are dealing with a strongly non-linear negative effect. Furthermore, the explained variance in the model is very high. In fact, it alone explains the same as the accessibility barrier and the access to media did together in the analysis above. These findings strongly suggest that statistical methods suited to deal with this type of causal effects are applied if the accessibility barrier is employed as an explanatory variable.

Conclusion

The analyses above allow us the draw the following conclusions; Firstly, the relatively limited role of the registration barrier was confirmed. The results showed a mildly depressing effect on the number of vote-winning parties, but only inconsistently so on the number of seat-winning parties (in some cases coefficients were positive). In no cases did the coefficients pass tests of significance. There is therefore no reason to overturn the conclusions drawn on basis of the bivariate analysis that the registration barrier is likely to matter only in a limited number of cases.

The recognition barrier, on the other hand, proved to be a factor to be reckoned with. Its effects were more evident when the influence of other barriers were taken into account than they seemed in the bivariate analysis. Moreover, its effects were influenced by other barriers. On the one hand, it played a much stronger role in cases with a high representation barrier than a low one. As discussed, the added role of the conditions for campaigning may be caused by the greater difficulties involved in getting media attention under such circumstances. On the other hand, there was also evidence to suggest that the efficacy of the recognition barrier was enhanced by higher electoral availability. The all-dominant dimension in the recognition barrier - the only one with consistently negative as well as fairly strong coeffiecients in virtually all models - was state guaranteed *access to media*. It proved to be a potent predictor for both the number of new vote- and seat-winning parties. It may be regarded as

somewhat surprising that state guaranteed television time for new parties should prove to have such a potent effect. In addition to the obvious value derived from getting such public exposure for free, it is possible to speculate that spill-over effects may be at work. That is, when new parties are given the opportunity to present themselves on television, this may provide an occasion for media attention. Moreover, the idea that providing all parties with an opportunity to present themselves to voters is the task of the state could also be reflected in the prevailing media ethos in such countries. Media players may therefore also see it as their task to inform voters of new alternatives. Such dynamics may explain why providing air time for participating parties apparently has such far reaching effects. The role played by the *costs of reaching voters* was clearly much less important and its effect was not consistent across all dependent variables. It only really appeared to play a moderate role for the groups of countries with high representation barrier where the effect of all recognition barrier variables was considerably enhanced. And then only for the number of new vote-winners. As discussed earlier, it is possible that the barrier effect of increased costs of campaigning in larger countries is off-set by a stronger tendency for parties to form compared to smaller countries. The two tendencies may in fact cancel each other out. The effects of *access to finance*, on the other hand, could best be described as erratic as it often returned positive coefficients. It only evinced a moderate effect in the expected direction in the group of countries with a high representation barrier and here played a tiny role in predicting the number of seat-winners. There is thus no evidence here to suggest that financial support provided to parties influences the emergence and success of new competitors such as suggested in the theory of the Cartel Party (Katz & Mair, 1995).

Thirdly, and confirming the findings of the bivariate analysis, the *representation barrier* proved to have but a small effect on the number of new parties winning votes. Apparently, voters are not much deterred by the prospects of not winning representation. Interestingly non-linear effects were identified suggesting that increases in the

representation barrier within a lower range has a mildly deterrent effect, but that similar changes at higher levels fail to register an effect. The mechanical effects on preventing new parties from getting access to parliaments do not fail to show up in the results. It was generally the strongest determinant of the number of new seat winners, although the conditions for access to media was close behind. This effect was evidently completely linear.

Finally, the accessibility barrier also proved to be a potent predictor of the number of new seat-winning parties. However, some odd effects were discovered when its performance at different levels were examined. As a consequence a test of non-linearity showed that the indicator has very powerful non-linear effects and that using it as an independent variable requires methods suited to capture such effects.

7.2.3   The Barriers to Entry: Secular Trends

Having discussed the effects of the barriers, it is interesting to see whether one can say anything about whether access to elections have become easier or more difficult over time in the group of countries studies here. Bowler, Carter and Farrel in their study of electoral access conclude that 'the general evolution of these rules (electoral rules, ballot access, access to media) appears to have been towards a more liberal environment for all political parties, which on the face of it suggests an easier ride for small and/or new parties wishing to break into the system.' (Bowler, Carter and Farrel, 2003: 95). In order to compare these developments over time, the mean values for each of the barriers per decade, as measured here, is presented in table 7.13.

As can be seen, the findings of the analyses here, seconds the observation made by Bowler, Carter and Farrel. The general trend is one towards lower barriers and thus easier access. The strongest decline in any of the barriers over time is seen for

The Barriers to Entry: Trends over Time

Decade		Registration	Recognition *Media*	Recognition *Finance*	Representation	Accessibility
1950s	Mean	**68.4**		**3.0**	**13.8**	**1.7**
	N	9.0		17.0	18.0	18.0
	Std. Dev.	132.1		0.0	13.4	2.3
1960s	Mean	**35.1**	**3.0**	**2.9**	**14.4**	**1.8**
	N	16.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Std. Dev.	77.7	1.1	0.7	13.7	2.8
1970s	Mean	**21.0**	**2.8**	**2.8**	**13.9**	**2.5**
	N	17.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Std. Dev.	53.9	1.2	0.9	13.7	4.7
1980s	Mean	**16.5**	**2.7**	**2.7**	**12.7**	**2.4**
	N	21.0	20.0	18.0	21.0	21.0
	Std. Dev.	48.2	1.1	1.0	12.9	3.1
1990s	Mean	**16.7**	**2.8**	**2.6**	**12.6**	**3.5**
	N	19.0	20.0	18.0	21.0	21.0
	Std. Dev.	50.0	1.2	1.0	12.1	5.9
Total	Mean	**26.5**	**2.8**	**2.8**	**13.4**	**2.4**
	N	82.0	77.0	89.0	96.0	96.0
	Std. Dev.	69.4	1.1	0.8	12.9	4.0

Table 7.13: The Barriers to Entry: Secular Trends

the registration barrier. As discussed earlier, the reason for this decline is not to be found in conscious acts on the part of decision-makers to lower the requirements. Rather, it can be directly attributed the decreasing real value of the sums originally set for ballot access through payment of fees/deposits. Only in two countries (Japan and Netherlands) was a contrary trend observed, and the strong general decline is in reality caused by a few countries (U.K., France, Ireland). For petitions, the trend has been towards an increase, these have generally been very modest, however (with the exception of Denmark)[18].

Regarding the recognition barrier, it is here represented by the indicators of free access to media and conditions for subvention of political parties since a 'static' measure of the costs of reaching voters was adopted. For the access to media, no

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[18]As described, Denmark increases ballot access requirements from approximately 10.000 to 20.000 signatures in 1960.

scores are reported for the 1950s since access to media was not a relevant score for most countries in that decade. The average scores for media access was 3 in the 1960s and by the 1990s is was down to 2.8 implying a trend towards more favourable conditions for access to television coverage for new parties. However, a small increase in mean values from the 1980s to 1990s is observable and the direction is thus not unequivally towards a more easy access. On the question of access to finance, there is a clear and consistent trend towards a lowering of the barrier. The initial changes reflect the introduction of rules in the area, but as can be seen there is a general tendency for party finance to be offered to new and smaller parties also.

With respect to the Representation Barrier, there is a very small general tendency towards a lowering of the threshold of proportionality. That is, for all the countries, the average has been lowered 1.2 percentage points in the 1990s compared to the 1950s. However, this hardly expresses a general trend. Some countries, such as Italy and Japan, introduced electoral reforms in the 1990s that resulted in significant increases in the threshold, while two countries, New Zealand and Greece, introduced changes in the exact opposite direction. For the other countries, the changes in electoral rules have been relatively minor and only resulted in a few percentage points alteration of the thresholds (with the exception of France[19])

Finally, the accessibility barrier clearly declines over time (corresponding to increasing values), and since only minor changes are observed in the average threshold values, this development can be attributed to the general increase in volatility levels described earlier. Some of the increased volatility is certainly 'circumstantial' in the sense that very high levels of vote switching was observed in connection with major upheavals in the party systems of certain countries in the 1990s (Japan and Italy). Nevertheless, the increase does represent a general trend (9 of 21 peak values are observed in this decade) and it is probable that this phenomenon is a manifestation

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[19]In France the electoral system changed from proportional to majoritarian in the 1950s. And it has remained thus with a temporary reversal to proportional rules in the 1980s.

Observed Entry of New Parties over Time

Decade		Participate	Vote-Winning		Seat-Winning		Maximum	
		>0.5 distr.	>1 pct	>4 pct	>1pct	>4pct	>1pct	>0.5 distr.
1950s	Mean	**1,50**	**1,00**	**0,28**	**0,28**	**0,17**	**0,72**	**0,78**
	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
	Std. Dev.	0,24	1,14	0,46	0,46	0,38	0,83	0,73
1960s	Mean	**1,22**	**1,56**	**0,72**	**1,00**	**0,50**	**1,22**	**1,00**
	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
	Std. Dev.	0,14	1,15	0,75	1,14	0,79	0,88	1,19
1970s	Mean	**1,44**	**1,83**	**0,89**	**1,17**	**0,67**	**1,22**	**1,00**
	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
	Std. Dev.	0,13	1,62	0,96	1,34	1,03	0,94	0,77
1980s	Mean	**1,62**	**1,33**	**0,67**	**1,00**	**0,52**	**0,95**	**0,95**
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
	Std. Dev.	0,14	1,06	0,66	1,00	0,60	0,80	0,67
1990s	Mean	**1,79**	**1,95**	**0,84**	**1,37**	**0,89**	**1,32**	**1,16**
	(All)	**(2.0)**	**(2.43)**	**(1.19)**	**(1.86)**	**(1.24)**	**(1.52)**	**(1.19)**
	N	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
	Std. Dev.	0,20	1,58	0,90	1,26	1,10	0,89	1,12
Total	Mean	**0,15**	**1,53**	**0,68**	**0,97**	**0,55**	**1,09**	**0,98**
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
	Std. Dev.	0,17	1,34	0,78	1,12	0,84	0,88	0,90

Table 7.14: Entry of New Parties per Decade

of a changed relationship between parties and the electorate, which signals greater competition for votes between established parties as well as increased competition from new ones.

In light of the overall trend for a lowering the barriers, it would be interesting to observe, whether there is a corresponding increase in the number of new parties participating, winning votes and seats over time. The average number of new parties per decade is therefore presented in table 7.14. The number in brackets for the 1990s represents the averages including also the two deviant cases of Japan and Italy.

The strongest decline of any of the barriers was observed for the registration barrier. However, for the number of parties fielding candidates in at least half of

the electoral districts, there is no clear strong trend towards an increase, although the number is highest in the 1990s. It is possible that the absence of a clear trend towards increasing number is partly caused by a problem in the data. Looking at the category of parties obtaining at least 1 pct of the votes (which was also used as a complementary measure of participation) a clearer tendency towards a higher number over the decades is observable. The 1980s represents an exception, however, with lower averages than those observed for the previous two decades. A similar trend is, in fact, observable across all measures of new parties. Higher averages of vote-winning as well as seat-winning parties are observable for each subsequent decade from the 1950s onwards - with a small reversal of this trend in the 1980s. However, the 1990s returns the highest averages for all categories without exceptions. These developments are unlikely to be accounted for by changes in the institutional barriers described above, as would not seem large enough to produce such changes. Instead it is likely that these developments are more strongly related to changes in electoral behaviour. As noted, the accessibility barrier has strongly decreased as a result of the higher levels of volatility observed.

7.3 Evaluating the Results: Questions Answered and Questions Raised

Having revisited the findings of each of the individual chapters, investigated combined impact of the barriers on new party entry, and finally reviewed trends over time; it is time to consider what the results signify. What questions have been answered in the research, and what questions does it raise? The starting point of the research was the role of barriers for party competition. The arguments reviewed considered the potential impact on the behaviour of represented parties if these are shielded from threats of new party entry. The question is whether the barriers found in the

study offer the type of protection we would expect to influence party behaviour. In the following, this question will be discussed by addressing the question of how to interpret the results. Firstly, there is the question of what we can learn from the variance explained - and unexplained - about the role of the barriers. Secondly, what is there to be learned from the outliers? Is there anything to be learned from looking at the extreme cases of high barriers and low barriers? Or going backwards in the causal chain - can anything be learned from looking at the cases where many new parties have entered or those where few have? Having discussed these questions, we are able to better assess the potential relevance of barriers to shaping competition.

7.3.1 Enough 'Variance Explained'?

As seen above, the barrier indicators developed successfully explained variation in the number of new parties entering. Between 13 and 32 pct of the variance was explained in the multivariate models. As expected, how well the barriers explain the number of vote and seat winning parties differs, but a clear relationship (independent of extreme cases) was observed in each case (c.f. below). In this sense, the barrier indicators developed are validated by the findings, and we can conclude that higher barriers to entry reduce the rate of entry of new parties.

However, even if the findings are significant there is a lot of variance, which is not explained by the model. In order to evaluate the importance of this for the role of the barriers in the democracies studied, it is useful to consider why there is so much unexplained, and what the reasons behind this are. The first possible explanation lies within the parameters of the model itself. That is, as discussed in chapter 2, measuring variation in the number of new parties necessitated using period averages rather than single elections. This means that variation in the barriers is lost, and this might reduce the predictive power of the model. For the registration

barrier, the loss of variation is not grave, however. The requirements were found to be stable, as well as unimportant to variation in participation, for most countries. In the countries where ballot costs were seen to matter, and where major changes in costs were observed, it is unlikely that explanatory force is lost by the use of decade average costs. For two of the countries, France and Ireland, where costs decreased as a result of a drop in the real value of money over time, the new parties participating actually register at the beginning of the decades in question rather than towards the end (where costs are therefore higher), and for the country where this decline was strongest (U.K.), no parties enter at all during the period of the strongest changes. For the representation barrier, significant variation important for predicting party entry is definitely lost, but only for relatively few cases. France (1950s&1980s) and New Zealand, Greece, Italy and Japan in the 1990s. However, all but Greece were omitted in the final analyses due to the major changes of the electoral system mid-decade (and in two cases major changes in the party system). The increase in variance explained by a more finely tuned approach would therefore be limited. For the recognition barrier, it is possible that more variation is lost. Rules for access to finance and media were changed mid-decade for many countries, and whether party entry occurred at elections before or after the changes is not captured by the model. It would take a closer analysis of the data to investigate whether we miss important information by using decade scores. However, it is probably fair to say that we would not make strides in terms of improved prediction by adopting an approach, which captures more variation.

It is more likely that examining the limits of the model contributes to understanding the 'unexplained'. Firstly, a model explaining all the observed variance would necessarily be one in which all variation in the independent variable matters. But, in the world we study this is highly unrealistic. As was particularly evident in the study of the registration barrier, it is highly likely that variation below a certain level makes no difference whatsoever. Whether 3000 or 5000 signatures need to be sub-

mitted is unlikely to change the rate of party participation at elections. Those that are able to collect the smaller amount will also manage the higher ones. Likewise - as mentioned - there has been a decrease in ballot access requirements in the U.S. in the post war period, but they are still tremendously high and may well explain the lack of new parties participating. Furthermore, while the mechanical effects of the representation barrier are tangible and gradual, when it comes to allocating seats, its deterrent effects on parties participating and winning votes are not, as was shown in the analysis. With non linear effects, not all variance can be captured with the models used. Secondly, on the side of the dependent variable, all variance explained would mean that the propensity to form parties were exactly the same everywhere. This is highly unlikely, however, and more potent causes for unexplained variance can be found in the fact that positive incentives for party formation are not considered at all. The model seeks to explain party entry only by looking at the costs, but we would expect party formation and entry to be driven by a combination of 'elite' incentives and popular demand. As discussed in chapter 3, institutional and socio-economic conditions may explain why more parties form in some countries than in others. By including them in the model, we might get a better idea of how the barriers work. But the somewhat modest explanatory power of such stimulating factors found in previous studies suggests that significant causes elude measurement[20]. A political scandal, a drop in the popularity of the incumbent government or a new issue on the political agenda may stimulate new party formation and be conducive to its success. Moreover, the resources commanded by those who incidentally form the parties we observe are crucial to their ability to break through the barriers. Even high barriers of all types are unlikely to affect the chances that political entrepreneurs

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[20]Another reason for the lack of strong prediction may also lie in the fact that many of the measures included - e.g. ethnic-religious diversity, economic inequality etc. - are static. Neither Hug (2001) or Harmel & Robertson (1985) consider changes over time in these as a determinant of entry, and while some of the measures proposed may influence how many parties there are to represent the interests of citizens, they may not necessarily lead to new party formation.

with personal resources like those of Berlusconi in Italy succeed in winning access. Obviously the fluctuations in demand, the skill and resources at the disposal of those who start new parties cannot be captured by a theoretical model and will thus defy explanation.

It is clear, therefore, that we should not expect a model of barriers to explain more than a modest share of the variation actually observed. In this perspective, the explanatory force of the barriers is as strong as can reasonably be expected.

7.3.2   A Dialogue with the Data: Lessons from Extreme and Mixed Cases

The next question is what we can learn from the extreme cases of high barriers, as well as the cases with very high party entry. In the statistical analysis above, the U.S. was for instance singled out as an outlier, and therefore also omitted in some of the analyses to see if the hypothesized relationships would remain significant even without this case. But the question here is what we might learn from this and similar cases. Countries in the period 1950-2000, rather than decades, will be used as basis for the comparison for the sake of simplicity. In the following, the top two and bottom two countries with respect to barriers will first be compared, and then some of the intermediary barrier countries that are 'unusual' in terms of the observed party entry will be discussed.

Countries with very high barriers.   There are only few countries which have high barriers of all types. United States is the country where the established parties are clearly most protected against new competitive threats by barriers. It has the highest registration barrier observed for any country, the highest recognition barrier - determined both by the absence of state support for campaigns and costs of reaching

the electorate - and finally a very high representation barrier (T_{pro} 33 pct, A_{bar} 0.12). And the effects of these multiple barriers on new party entry are obvious. In the entire post war period only one party has obtained over 1 pct of the votes. Not a single one has successfully garnered more than 4 pct of the votes and consequently the parliamentary arena has remained outside the reach of new parties. The U.S. is a clear case where the conditions of contestability - which we normally regard as a defining feature of democracy - are so unfavourable that it is hardly contestable at all. The existing parties are effectively granted a monopoly on representation. However, the lack of entry - or even of pressure to change the rules concerning access - may also be explained by the fact that parties are very open organisations. That is, entry of new parties is difficult, but on the other hand, candidate entry into the party is not controlled centrally. Furthermore, the parties are spacious in the sense that candidates are free to endorse policies of their own choice, rather than pressured to support a particular party platform. As discussed by Cox, these features of parties undermine the incentives political elites/entrepreneurs have to form parties (Cox, 1997). Apart from the formidable barriers to entry, this may help to explain why a country with the diversity and magnitude of the U.S., which in this period witnessed fundamental changes in socio-economic structures, and where there has been no shortage of new issues gaining prominence on the political agenda, nor for that matter of political scandals undermining the positions of incumbents that might be expected to stimulate formation of new parties and ensure them a smooth passage into office. Of course, this open - and fluid - character of the parties does have consequences for the clarity of the choice offered to voters for their legislative institutions and cannot therefore compensate for the low contestability of elections seen from the point of view of competitive theory.

Another case of multiple high barriers is that of the U.K. In the first decades of the post war period, the registration barrier was very high, and only in the 1980-90s did it fall to passable - albeit still challenging - levels. The recognition barrier has

also been high throughout the period due to the lack of access to media and finance for other than the represented parties, as well as high costs of reaching the electorate. Finally, access to the parliamentary arena has been protected by high representation and accessibility barriers (T_{pro} 35 pct, A_{bar} 0.23) . The pattern of new party entry also confirms the role of the barriers in this case. In the period studied, there were but 3 new parties managing to get 1 pct of the votes, and only a single one succeeded in getting more than 4 pct of the votes. Only one new party managed to get 1 pct of the seats, while none were more successful. In this case, the low contestability again effectively protects existing parties from new parties. And unlike the U.S., the parties are actually organized actors and so the institutional incentives for party formation are not absent in this case. This case therefore clearly shows that barriers can effectively shield established parties from threats of entry.

Countries with very low barriers. At the other end of the scale, there are two cases where the barriers to entry are extremely low. The Netherlands is undoubtedly the most contestable country in the group. The registration barrier was negligible until the 1990s, when higher fees were imposed on participants. However, these are matched by very lenient terms of return, and will therefore only be a cost for parties that are very unsuccessful at the polls. The recognition barrier is also very low. The costs of reaching voters is at the lower end, equal access to media exposure has been guaranteed to all parties participating at elections since the 1960s, and funding available to parties with minimal representation in parliament since the 1970s. Coupled with the lowest representation barrier observed in this group of countries (0.67 pct of the votes to obtain seats) and above average volatility levels in four out of the five decades, it is difficult to imagine a more opportune environment for new party entry. And the conditions do not fail to materialize in high entry rates. 11 new parties win over 1 pct of the votes during the period, while 5 win more than 4 pct of the votes. And the numbers are replicated when we look at the

parliamentary arena. The system is highly contestable, and elections have also been keenly contested by new parties.

The country with the second highest level of contestability is Denmark. Here the registration barrier, as discussed, was somewhat high compared to other countries using petition requirements. But as shown, the level applied clearly appeared to be insufficient to prevent participation. Likewise, the recognition barrier is also favourable due to low costs of reaching the electorate and guaranteed access to media for all parties participating. Funding for unrepresented parties for campaigning purposes was not introduced before the late 1980s, but then the terms adopted were very favourable. The representation (legal threshold of 2 pct) is only slightly higher than those in the Netherlands, and furthermore among the lowest in the group. Moreover, the volatility level has been above average and the accessibility barrier consequently very low (A_{bar} 5.5). For Denmark also, the observed rate of entry matches the favourable situation. 10 parties win 1 pct of the votes in this period and 5 parties manage to get over 4 pct. And again this is mirrored by the numbers winning seats.

Intermediary Barrier Cases and High/Low Party Entry. Comparing the extreme cases of low and high barriers confirms the expectation that the barriers in democracies have the power to shape party competition. In the Netherlands and Denmark, established parties have to calculate with the possibility that new parties may arise to challenge their positions. In the U.S. and U.K. - especially in the past - this threat is so remote as to be negligible.

Naturally, if all cases were as clear as the ones described above, there would be a lot less unexplained variance than there is. It is the 'unexpected' performance of a number of systems that fall in between in terms of barrier-scores that cause trouble. Going backwards in causality, that is from observed party entry to the countries and their barriers may be instructive. For simplicity, we again compare countries for the

entire period (omitting the 3 countries that were only 'in' for 2 decades)[21]. For the number of vote-winning parties passing the 1 pct threshold, the observed range is 1 to 16 (or 14 without Italy in 1990s) and the average for the 18 countries is 8.2 (median 8.5). For the number of electorally successful parties (>4 pct), the range is more limited, and goes from 0 to 7 (6 without Italy), while the average is 3.5 (median 3). Some of the countries found at the lower end of this observed party entry include countries that have barriers to entry in the lower end of the range.

Austria has a low registration barrier, a representation barrier in the lower end of the scale (T_{pro}: 2-7 pct in the period)[22], although the low volatility levels observed placed it high on the accessibility barrier until 1970s, where it dropped (A_{bar} 0.6-2.4). The recognition barrier is a bit more mixed. The costs of reaching the electorate are in the lower end of the range, but access to media and funding and finance has been reserved to the represented (but T_{pro} just over 2 pct 1970-1990, so even small parties can obtain it). In the period, however, there has been a below average number of new parties winning at least 1 pct of the votes - namely 6 - and also very few electorally successful parties, namely 2 that also won representation (only U.K. and U.S. have lower numbers). And 5 of 6 parties with over 1 pct vote shares, as well as the 2 successful entered in the 1980s-90s. This means that there are several decades with reasonably low barriers, but not much entry. In the case of Austria, this might well be explained by the high levels of party identification and encapsulation of the electorate evidenced by very high membership of parties and the wide range of activities and benefits offered to members (as well as the low volatility). Similar observations can be made for the case of Sweden, which had low registration and representation barriers (4 pct legal threshold since 1970, and T_{pro} of circa 6 pct before that) and a mixed recognition barrier with low costs of reaching voters, but only access to funding and

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[21]The 3 countries are Greece, Portugal and Spain, which were included for the period 1980-2000 only.

[22]The values should be compared to a average T_{pro} for all the countries in the period of 13.8, and a median of 7

media for represented parties (with the exception of the 1980s, when all participants were given free air time). Here the number of parties with minimal success is very low, namely just 4, while the number of electorally and 'representationally' successful parties is 3. It is possible in both cases that unfavourable conditions for access to media and funding make a difference, but at the same time, the number of parties obtaining even small vote shares is below average. So the below average entry is likely to be caused by other factors related to the demand and can also in the case of Sweden be related to party identification (also evidenced by low volatility until the 1990s).

There are also countries where a higher number of parties enter even if conditions for entry appear to be difficult. France is an example of such a case. The registration barrier was relatively high until the 1980s, the representation barrier has been high most of the period (T_{pro} circa 20 pct), with the exception of the first part of the 1950s and one election in the 1980s (legal threshold of 5 pct). Even if its volatility scores are among the highest in the group, the accessibility barrier was still among the highest in the group. For recognition the costs of reaching voters are high, while the conditions for access to finance and media are more mixed. Until the mid 1980s media exposure was available to all fielding a minimum of 75 candidates, after that it was only for represented parties. But some reimbursement to candidates obtaining 5 pct of the district vote shares has been available throughout, and the threshold of access to compensation was lowered in 1988. However, there is a very high number of new parties winning votes and seats. There are some 14 parties that obtain a minimum of 1 pct of the votes and at least 5 that obtain more than 4 pct of the votes, and the same number that obtain over 4 pct of the seats[23]. It is possible that low party identification (as also seen in very high volatility levels discussed earlier) contributes

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[23]The many changes and names that appear in the electoral data, particularly for some of the smaller parties, sometimes makes it difficult to evaluate whether a new entry in the data represents a new party or an alliance (i.e.) merger of older parties, and the numbers may therefore not be completely accurate.

in part to explaining this. But it is also entirely possible, as suggested by Meny, that the existence of local level institutions where parties can obtain representation on a proportional basis encourages formation and survival of more parties at the national level (Meny, 2002).

Other intermediate cases may also assist us in understanding the sources of unexplained variance. Comparing Australia with Canada with respect to observed entry is, for instance, instructive. Both have high representation barriers, but the effects with respect to the numbers entering are completely different. In the former, 3 electorally successful parties can be observed in the period, which have obtained maximal vote shares of 8-12 pct. None of them have obtained a single seat, however. In the latter, the exact same number can be observed with maximal vote shares of 4-20 pct, but in this case, all have obtained seats. For two of them, an important cause of the easy entry to representation lies in the fact that they were regionally concentrated. For the last, the amount of votes was sufficiently high to gain strong access. However, in analysing the numbers, Australia performs as we would expect from a system with high barrier to representation, while Canada looks no different from Austria or Sweden in terms of openness.

This very brief description of some of the outliers illustrates that the dynamics of new party formation and entry cannot be captured by a barrier model. While the extreme cases fit very well with expectations, there are also a number of cases in the 'middle', where prediction of new threats to existing parties by the formation and success of new ones is not very precise. There are, as already discussed, many factors related to the institutional and electoral context, which contribute to an understanding of the party entry, actually observed in the individual cases. But naturally, there are also factors that cannot be gleaned from numbers only. It is entirely possible that parties that make it in France and those that make it in Denmark or Austria are qualitatively different. They may vary with respect to who their founders are -

already established political elites or new actors - or with respect to the resources they command. Another very important difference may lie with the platforms presented to voters. Do the new parties attempt to respond to a neglected issue, or propose a set of policies that are not on offer elsewhere, or are they not really distinguishable from the existing ones and might serve more as vehicles for the personal ambitions of political elites? Investigating whether differences of this nature can be observed in the characteristics of new parties entering in low barrier and high barrier contexts might yield important information about the role of barriers for political representation.

7.4   Do Barriers Shape Competition?

The question that remains is how to evaluate the results in light of the theoretical expectations that motivated the study. At the outset certain theoretical propositions concerning the role of contestability for party competition were discussed. These propositions prompted the empirical research into the empirical foundations of contestability, and its variation across countries and time. It is perhaps useful to briefly revisit these before finally discussing the implications of the findings. The degree of contestability could be expected to have both direct and indirect effects on party competition. The direct effects are those expected to influence the behaviour of represented parties and incumbent governments by alerting them to the potential threat of new parties. Protected by high barriers these parties might collude with each other to act in ways that would not be viable for their survival if new parties could arise and challenge their positions. But collusion is not the only possibility. Since parties are not entirely substitutable - as they represent different interests and advocate different policies - each party may also on its own be less attentive to its electoral base, if it knows that new parties stand little chance of emerging to challenge its position.

Chapter 7. Do the Barriers to Entry Matter?

Indirect effects can also be expected, since easy conditions for entry of new parties may alter the party system by adding new parties to existing ones, and thus lead to greater fragmentation. Such fragmentation may in turn influence vulnerability and can be expected to undermine it. The two primary dimensions of competition - as defined here - are thus likely to contradict each other. The extent to which they actually do, however, is an empirical question and one that can only evaluated precisely after vulnerability has been measured.

In order to assess the value of this study as a foundation for the investigation of the direct effects of contestability, I think two questions need to be addressed. Firstly, there is the question of whether the barrier indicators proposed can serve as reliable proxies for protection from entry. Or in other words, is it reasonable to expect that increases in the barrier indicators corresponds to an increase in a sense of safety on the part of represented party? Secondly, and intimately related to this, there is the question of how to interpret differences between entry in terms of winning votes, and entry in terms of winning seats. As discussed in the beginning both types of entry can be expected to influence the incentives established parties have to care for their electoral base, but how do we interpret combinations of high and low barriers affecting the access to seats and competition for votes respectively?

As discussed above, the question is easily answered in extreme cases. With multiple high barriers, it is entirely reasonable to expect parties to feel safe from threat of entry; with multiple low barriers, it would be odd indeed, if political leaders were to discount such threats. The question is how to interpret the cases in the middle, where barriers are mixed. First, there is the difference between barriers influencing entry into the competition for votes and those affecting seats. Logically, the ones influencing competition for votes potentially have the strongest effect since they bar access to both arenas. Further, even if access to seats is difficult, new parties winning votes may strongly affect the situation facing represented parties after the elections.

Chapter 7.   Do the Barriers to Entry Matter?

But as discussed the registration barrier has probably affected some 5 of the countries in the past, and it was argued that it presently only constitutes a formidable barrier in two countries (U.S. and Japan) and a definite challenge in one other country (U.K.). And arguably in these it is sufficiently high to curtail competition on its own. However, this means that for most of the other countries in the study, we do not need to consider it. This leaves the recognition barrier, where the access to media was successful in predicting the number of vote-winning parties, so in a sense we could rely on this to inform us of how safe established parties can feel. Before accepting this, however, it is necessary to reflect a bit on the evidence. As mentioned above, the prediction of the number of vote-winning parties was very sensitive to the presence of one case (U.S.), when this was removed only 8 to 16 pct of the variance in the number new of vote-winners was explained. Even if the findings were significant, are they important? For people in positions of power, is it likely that the protection offered by not granting free access of new parties makes them rest assured that they will not be challenged electorally? Differently put, with such a margin of risk that new parties may succeed in winning votes anyhow, would it be rational to discount the threat? Furthermore, as shown above, the effects of the costs of recognition became strong in the cases where the barriers to obtaining represenation were high. In countries where such barriers are low, it is very difficult to assess how easily new parties may sucessfully enter the fray of electoral competition. The last two barriers indicating ease of access to the representative institutions were much more robust in this sense. They do not depend on any single case to display a strong effect. Furthermore, there are many cases, where an effective protection of the parliamentary arena from new party entry can be observed. Parties winning vote shares that in other systems would have made them one of the major players are here left on the outside. In some cases, like Australia, it seems entirely reasonable to expect that established parties feel safe from threats to their seats - even if new threats to their electoral shares arise. But is it reasonable to expect that established parties

in France have always enjoyed the same sense of security? If established parties are repeatedly exposed to threats from new contenders - in spite of high barriers - is it not reasonable to expect that this fact may guide their behaviour? Also if, the vote shares they take influences their own chances of winning governing majorities. In order to capture the degree to which established parties have cause to fear new competition, it can be argued that looking at barriers alone is likely to miss important information. A complementary approach including concern for facilitating factors or history of entry may be necessary to established whether the lack of 'safety' in fact does have measurable effects on party and government behaviour. How this can be done is an independent research question in itself, however.

In conclusion, it can therefore be said that this research has accomplished two things. On the one hand, measures of the barriers to entry in the 21 democracies have been constructed and their effects on new party entry successfully demonstrated. On the other, it has illustrated that for a large group of countries that display neither very high nor very low contestability levels, simply inferring from the barriers to entry to the degree of pressure established parties are under from threat of entry is not a viable strategy. An investigation of the effects of competition, as contestability, on political performance may therefore require an approach, which is sensitive to other factors than the barriers to entry.

Appendix A

Registration Barrier:

A.1 Overview of Ballot Access Laws

The information on current requirements for access to the ballot of parliamentary elections is provided by Katz 'Democracies and Elections' (1997:256-8), while information about changes is taken from Katz and Mair 'Party Organizations – A Data Handbook' (1992) and Hug 'Altering Party Systems' (2001:178-181). For Japan the source of information is the House of Representatives Department of Research, Special Research Office Number 2, "Electoral System-Related Data Compendium" (November, 2002)., and for U.S. the information on current requirements was provided by the Ballot Access organization run by Richard Winger. The requirements asked of would-be parties and candidates include petitions, payment of fee or deposits and nomination from a recognized political party. To make comparison easier the fee/deposit requirements are presented in national currencies as well as in US$ (rounded figures using exchange rates of August 2002).

The information about the country requirements are organized in the four categories:

Appendix A. Registration Barrier:

1) Petitition/nomination/electoral support 2) Fee/deposit 3) Conditions for return 4) Changes in the period 1950-2000

Australia: 1) Petition of eligible voters 2)1983-: House of Representatives: A$250 (140 US$) Senate: A$: 500 (280US$) 3) 4 pct of total 1st preference vote in district 4). Until 1983: House: 100 A$ returned if 1/5 the 1st preference vote of successful candidate was obtained (approx. 6-8 pct.); Senate: 200A$ returned if 1/10 of 1st preference vote of successful candidate was obtained.

Austria: 1) Nomination by 3 members of parliament or 1971-: Petition of 200 voters (Burgenland, Kärnten, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg), 400 voters (Oberösterreich, Steiermark), 500 voters (Niederösterreich, Wien) 2) 1959- ÖS 6,000 (430US$) per region. 3) Not returned 4) District petition: 1945-59:100 voters; 1959-71: 200 voters; 1971-: 2-500 voters

Belgium: 1) Nomination by 3 outgoing members of parliament or 500 (Brussels), 400 (Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi, Liege), 200 (other 25 districts).

Canada: 1) 25 electors in each district 2) C$200 (130 US$) 3)15 pct. of the vote

Denmark 1) 1965-: Representation in outgoing Folketing or petition of 1/175 total valid vote in last election (approx: 20,000 signatures). 4) Until 1960: 10,000 voters; 1965: 1/175 total valid vote

Finland 1) 100 electors form electoral association in each district. 4) Until 1969-: 30 voters form electoral assembly for each candidate. 1969-: only parties propose candidates: 5000 adherents sign to register a party. 1975-: district association of 100 members.

France 1) None (declaration of candidacy) 2) FF: 1,000 (150 US$) 3) 5 pct. of the vote cast

Germany 1) Independents: 200 voters (only SM-district). Candidates of parties

Appendix A. Registration Barrier:

represented by at least 5 members in BT or relevant LT, or representing a national minority: In S-M seats: signatures of Land executive committee; Land lists, signature of Land executive committe. Candidates of other parties: In S-M seats: signatures of the Land executive committee plus 200 registered voters; for Land lists, signatures of Land executive committee plus one per 1,000 persons entitled to vote at the last election to a maximum of 2,000.

Greece 1) Petition of 12 voters in district 2) Dr.20,000 (60US$)

Ireland 1) Self-nomination and signature by one other elector of constituency. 2) IR 100 (130US$) 3) 1/3 of constituency quota 4) 1962-: only party candidates on ballot

Italy 1) Chamber of deputies: Petition of between 500-1,000 electors in each constituency for list of candidates. Senate: Petition between 350-700 electors

Japan 1) Declaration of candidacy 2) Fee per candidate in thousands of Yen: 1996-: House of Representatives: SMP: 3000 (24,000 US$) PR & Double Candidacy: 6000 (48,000 US$). House of Councillors: Nationwide PR: 6000 (48,000 US$) Regional districts:3000 (24,000US$). 3) House of Rep: Receipt of 20 pct valid vote/ number of members to be elected. SMD: 10 pct of valid vote 4) Fee per candidate in thousands of Yen: House of Representatives: 1950: 30 1952-:100, 1962-:150, 1969-:300, 1975-:1000, 1982-: 2000, 1992-: 3000. House of Councillors: Regional Disctrics the same deposit as for the House of Rep., while Nationwide PR has been exactly the double since 1956.

Netherlands 1) 1989-: Representation in outgoing parliament or 10 electors in each kieskring. 2) 1989-:Dfl. 25,000 (11,000US$) 3) Reciept of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the electoral quotient 4) Until 1989: 25electors and 1,000 Dfl.

New Zealand 1) 2 registered voters of constituency 2) NZ$: 100 (50 US$) 3) Receipt of $\frac{1}{4}$ the votes of the successful candidate

Appendix A. Registration Barrier:

Norway 1) Lists may be submitted by 500 registered voters in a district (19 districts) or by registered party (5000 signatures to register, keeps status unless no candidates are nominated in two consecutive elections) 4) Party registration until 1990: 3000 signatures

Portugal 1) A party must submit a petition of 7500 signatures.

Spain 1) Nomination by registered party or petition of 0.1 pct electors of constituency (min. 500)

Sweden 1) Registered parties may submit lists of candidates. To register a party for RD elections requires signatures of 1,500 voters. Parties with members are re-registered automatically.

Switzerland 1) Petition of 50 electors 4) Until 1985: 15 signatures

UK 1) Signatures of 2 proposers and 8 assentors 2) £500 (490US$) 3) Receipt of 5 pct of the vote 4) Until 1985: 150£ and conditions of return eqal to 12.5 pct of the vote.

US 1) Varying State level requirements: All (except 2) give access to parties on basis of obtaining a specified share of voter registration or votes at previous election. In 27 states it is above 5 pct of the vote cast and in 11 of these it is above 10 pct. For other parties: Petitions: high e.g. florida: petition by 3 pct registered voters and verification fee for each one of 3 pct registered voters

Appendix A. Registration Barrier:

A.2   Calculation of Ballot Access Costs over Time

In order to compare the costs of ballot access across countries and time, the price of ballot access for each decade was transformed into 1995 prices in USD. The procedure followed was to convert the price of ballot access in local currency (BA_{lc}) to USD by using the historical exchange rates. The resulting sum was then transformed into 1995 values by multiplying it with 100 over the consumer price index value corresponding to the mid-point of the decade (CPI_{md}). That is $(BA_{lc} \cdot ER_{his})$ = Cost of BA in 1995 USD; Cost of BA in 1995 USD $\cdot (\frac{100}{CPI_{md}})$ = Value of BA cost in 1995 USD. For relativising the costs, this sum was divided by the average GDP per capita for the decade in question.

Appendix B

Recognition Barrier

B.1 Public Service Television and Political Control of Broadcast Organisation

A brief synopsis of the main features of the television markets and the extent of political control over public broadcast organizations used to construct the indicators is provided. The Sources consulted for most of the cases were: Hallin and Mancini (2004), Smith (1998), The Euromedia Research Group (1997), Humphreys (1996), Eurostat (1995), Blumler (1992), Kuhn (1985).

Information on audience for public television is taken from the European Audio-Visual Statistics (Eurostat, 1995) and Media in Western Europe (Euromedia Research Group, 1997) for the European countries. For Australia, Canada, Japan and U.S. the information provided on audiences is taken from 'Television- an international history' (Smith, 1998). For Japan the chapter on Japan by Ellis S. Krauss in 'Democracy and the Media' (Gunther&Mughan,2000). Information on New Zealand is primarily from Comrie&Fontaine(2005).

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

Australia: Regular broadcasts were initiated in 1956 and a dual system with public and commercial broadcasters was established from the beginning. The public broadcasters (mainly ABC) have never enjoyed a dominant market position. According to 'Television - An International History' the market share of the two public broadcasters was around 20 per cent in the 1980s (Jack & Johnson, 1998:219) and thus comparable to Canada, but data on historical developments are not provided. The broadcast organisation is described as styled according to the British BBC and is considered autonomous in relationship to the political system.

Austria: Regular broadcasts began in 1956 and public monopoly on television maintained until 1996. A High level of political control of broadcasting was exercised prior to the reform of 1968, where more independence to the broadcasting organisation was granted. A system of proportional representation in appointments to broadcasting institutions has remained in place, however, and it is cited as example of the 'politics in broadcasting' model, where established parties exercise influence at all levels of the organisation.

Belgium: Regular broadcasts began in 1953 and monopoly on television lasted until the deregulation act was passed in 1987. However, considerable penetration of foreign channels is reported to have influenced viewing of public service television before that. According to the European Audio-Visual Data, audience shares of public television were between 20-30 pct in 1995-2000. Boards managing public broadcast are described as highly politicised and change according to the colour of government. Members are said to view themselves as mandatories of political parties.

Canada: Regular broadcasting was initiated in 1952 and was initially a public monopoly. In 1958 this was reversed and commercial television was introduced (1960) and since then both commercial and public broadcasters have been on the market (and competed for advertising income). The Canadian market has always had very high penetration of foreign broadcasters (US). It is stated that audience shares were

around 20 pct (English) and 30 pct. (French), but it is indicated that shares were higher in previous decades (Raboy, 1998:164).

Denmark: Regular broadcasts began in 1954, and public monopoly on broadcast television lasted until the early 90s (1994). According to the European Audio-Visual Data, audience for public service television was around 40 pct between 1995-2000. The broadcast organisations are not free of ties to the political parties (appointments) and the political orientations of the two main public channels are said to diverge. However, public television is generally considered highly autonomous of parties in their operations.

Finland: Regular broadcasts were initiated under public monopoly in 1956, but in 1959 it was replaced by a dual system with both commercial and public service television. The public broadcast has successfully maintained high viewer-ratings, however, until this dropped somewhat with an increase in commercial competition following deregulation in 1986. According to the European Audio-Visual Data, audience shares between 1995 and 2000 were 42-47 pct. None of the sources mention any political interference in the public broadcast organisation, and from classification used in Hallin and Mancini, it appears to operate autonomously.

France: Regular broadcasting begun as early as 1935, and television operated as a public monopoly until the deregulation of 1985 (followed by privatisation of one of the public channels). In the 1990s the market becomes more commercial, and according to the European Audio-Visual Data, audience shares for public service television between 1995 and 2000 were approximately 42-44 pct. The broadcast organisation was highly politicized until 1980s and is referred to as a type of paradigm case of executive domination of broadcast. In the 1980s the socialist government embarks on reform, but doesn't carry through completely. In 1989, however, organisational changes rendering it very independent of political leadership were made.

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

Germany: Regular broadcasts were initiated in 1952 as public service. Monopoly on television broadcasts were maintained until mid 1984. According to the European Audio-Visual Data, audience shares for public service television were around 40-43 pct between 1995 and 2000. With respect to the governance of broadcasting, it is described as a case of 'politics in broadcasting' system, emphasizing the importance of political parties in the governance of the broadcast institutions through appointments at all levels as well as influence, although not control of, the 'social significant groups' represented on governing boards. Principles of proportionality in influence, which is, however, exerted indirectly.

Greece: Began regular broadcasts in 1966 and public monopoly was broken in law in 1989. The year before that, however, local/regional television channels had already started up at the initiative of mayors in larger cities. Quickly after commerical television was introduced, public service television audience shares fell drastically. Public service only had audience shares of 8-11 pct at the end of the 1990s according to Media in Western Europe. Government control of broadcasting was very high and the extreme pro-government bias of radio and TV is said to have been motivated strong social pressures for deregulation during the 1980s.

Ireland: Regular broadcast began late in Ireland, 1961, and public monopoly on broadcasting was preserved until 1989. However, not until 1998 did a commercial station begin broadcast. There has always, however, been strong foreign competition for viewers. During the 1990s the audience shares of public service television were 50-60 pct. The broadcast organisation was granted autonomy from the state in 1960 and is known for being outside direct political influence much like the BBC (before that it was described as a government 'mouthpiece').

Italy: Regular broadcasts began in 1954 and the public broadcasting system held monopoly until the mid-1970s. In 1975 private cable television was allowed and in the years after there was an rapid expansion of local broadcasting. Establishment of

national commercial networks followed in beginning of 1980s. However, public service television channels have maintained around half of the market shares. According to the European Audio-Visual Data, audience shares were 45-50 pct. in 1995-2000. Governance of public broadcasting in Italy has been described as the 'partyocratic' model being dominated until 1974 by one party and thereafter by allowing more parties to take part. External diversity existed by the division of channels between parties.

Japan: Regular broadcasts began in 1953 and was a dual system almost from the beginning. The public broadcaster has always enjoyed a strong position on the market in spite of strong competition with the commercial stations (and had an exceptionally strong focus on news services). Precise figures on audience shares are lacking, however. The broadcast organisation is considered autonomous in relation to the political system, and is known for being even-handed in its coverage of partisan politics.

Netherlands: Regular broadcasts began in 1954. Its broadcasting system was originally strongly pillarized with time divided between broadcasting organisations linked to existing 'pillars' who set standards of broadcasting autonomously. In the late 1960s a Dutch broadcast organisation was established to produce daily news and it heralded the beginning of secularization and standardization of public broadcast. In the mid-1970s, new legislation allowed more neutral organiziations to enter, but commercial television wasn't introduced before 1989 (legalized in 1990). Public television audience shares were around 35-40 pct in 1995-2000 according to the European Audio-visual.

New Zealand: Public monopoly on broadcasting lasted until deregulation in the beginning of 1990s. The public broadcaster was re-organised to operate on a commercial basis. The public broadcasting organisation was practically run by government departments until 1962 when it was reformed. However, although abated

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

by reforms, political interference in its operations is reported to have continued after that.

Norway: Regular broadcasting started in 1960 and operated as a public monopoly until 1988 when national commercial stations started competing. Local television started from the beginning of the 1980s, however. Audience shares fell to 40-45 pct by the mid 1990s. The broadcasting corporation is highly autonomous, but it is characterized as closer to the parliamentary model than for example Sweden (comparable to DK).

Portugal: National public service broadcast began in 1957 and enjoyed monopoly until beginning of the 1992, when two private channels started up. The competition not only reduced audience for the public stations, but also affected the programming by introducing competition for advertising. Public service market shares were reported at 44 pct in 1995, but only 30 pct in 2000.

Spain: Regular broadcasting began in 1956 and public monopoly was upheld until 1988 (in practice until 1989). After deregulation the market shares of public broadcasting fell to about 50 pct in 1995, which was still upheld in 2000. There private broadcasters compete strongly with the public channels for advertising with the result that differences in programming are not so clear. The governance of broadcasting has been described as party interventionist with a clear slant towards the political interests of the governing parties (although some observers believe the influence is moderate).

Sweden: Regular broadcasting began in 1956 and it was organised as a public monopoly until 1987. In 1987 first satellite TV stations and in 1992 first terrestial stations were licenced, quickly taking a large share of the market. By the mid 1990s audience shares of public television were down to 50 pct and in 2000, it was 44 pct. Swedish broadcast governance is compared to that of the BBC and enjoys a very

high level of independence.

Switzerland: Regular broadcasting was initiated in 1958 and the public broad-casting enjoyed monopoly until 1992. The Swiss market is highly segmented, and the public broadcast system has always faced intense competition from foreign channels. In mid 90s a Swiss private tv station attempted to enter the market, but closed down again just after two years. The market shares of public service television in 1995-2000 were 34-36 pct. The broadcast institution SSR was set up as a private non- profit company with a public mission, and functions independently of political influence.

United Kingdom: Regular broadcasts began as early as 1935 and functioned as a public monopoly until 1955. From then on the U.K. has had a dual broadcast system with strong public service alongside commercial television. The commercial channel has always been required to provide basic public services such the provision of news. An increasing commercialization is described for the 1990s. However BBC retained market shares of 50-55 pct 1995-2000. The public broadcasting organisation is considered autonomous in relation to the political system.

United States: Regular broadcasting began in 1950 and was offered by com-mercial channels. Public broadcasting was established in the 1950s and was allocated frequencies that most tv-sets could not receive at that time. Audience shares have never developed above a few percent. There are no indications of political instru-mentalization of public broadcasting.

B.2 Information on Free Media Access

Detailed descriptions of the current rules (1990-2000) concerning media access can be found in IDEA (2003) and Katz (1997) Historical information is taken from Bowler, Carter&Farrell, 2003 and Katz&Mair (1992). In the following a brief synopsis of the

aspects of rules relevant to the construction of the indicator is provided.

Australia: Free broadcasting time is not provided for any parties. A law was passed in 1991 giving parties access on the basis of public support and seats contested. However the law was repealed by the Supreme Court the year after, and never was in force for an election. Score: 3 (1960-00) (According to Bowler et. al and Katz, Austrialia in year 2000 had introduced free broadcasting time, but according to IDEA this is not the case. This may be a mistake due to the passing of a law in 1991 granting such access, but which was never enforced as mentioned above).

Austria: No regulation until 1966. From then on, represented parties have been granted free media time. Time is allotted on the basis of seats in parliament. Score: 3 for 1960s, 4 for 1970-00.

Belgium: Different laws for Flanders and Waloon; In Walloon: There were no rules until 1964. The rules adopted granted free media access. Time is allocated proportional to seats held in the Conseil Culturel. In Flanders: No rules until 1979. The rules adopted then granted possibility to groups represented in the Culturaad to make programmes. Time allocated on basis of size. Since 1982 all fractions in the Vlaamse Raad are entitled to create a broadcasting organisation. Score: A joint score of 4 is assigned for the whole period.

Canada: From 1960-1974: free airtime to established parties (discretionary for new parties complying to certain criteria, but never awarded in practice). 1974-: free air time to all registered parties that present a minimum of 50 candidates at the elections. Time allocated in proportion to criteria related to size. Score: 4(1960), 2 (1970-00).

Denmark: All registered parties have been granted equal shares of free airtime during the whole period. Score: 1 (1960-00)

Finland: No formal rules, but informal agreements regulate access to the media.

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

According to Bowler, Carter and Farrel, the parties are all granted time to appear in connection with elections. Information for the 1960s is that all parties are granted equal time and for 2000, it states that this is in proportion to size. Due to the lack of precise information on changes and absence of fixed rules, a score of 2 is given for the whole period. Score: 2 (1960-00)

France: 1960s-1984 all parties have been granted free airtime. Parties not represented in parliament, but presenting a minimum of 75 candidates, were allocated smaller time slots. Since 1984 only represented parties are granted free air time in proportion to size. Score: 2 (1960-1980) 4 (1980-00)

Germany: During the whole period parties have been granted free air time in proportion to votes received, while a minimum time is allotted all registered parties. Score: 2 (1960-00)

Ireland: No rules until 1965. From then on parties with a minimum share of seats (7) in parliament were entitled to election broadcasts, while others only were entitled to short spots on the news. From 1987 election broadcasts were made available to all parties fielding at least 7 candidates. Time allocated on the basis of size. Score: 4 (1960-1990), 2 (1990)

Italy: In the 1960s only parliamentary parties were granted free access to media. From 1982 media access was also granted to unrepresented parties (conditional on fielding candidates in all districts), but time is allocated on the basis of size. Score: 4 (1960) 2 (1980-00)

Japan: Since the 1960s provisions for free media time have been granted to all parties, but only since 1994 were equal shares of time granted to candidates of all parties fielding at least 12 candidates at the elections. Score: 2 (1960-1990), 1 (1990s)

Netherlands: In the whole period all parties presenting a list in at least one district have been allocated equal shares of air time. Score: 1 (1960-00)

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

New Zealand: Until 1989 there were no formal rules, but broadcasting organisation provided parties with free air time for election broadcasts. Not all were granted time, however. From 1989 all registered parties have the right to free time, which is allocated in proportion to size. Score: 4(1960-1990), 2: 1990s

Norway: No formal rules, but the broadcast organsiation has granted free air time to all represented parties (that nominate candidates in over half of the districts and have a national organisation). Score: 4 (1960-00)

Portugal: Equal air time is granted to all represented parties. Score: 4 (1980-00)

Spain: Air time is granted to all represented parties in proportion to their size. Score: 4 (1980-00)

Sweden: No formal rules, but the broadcasting companies have generally granted parliamentary parties free broadcast time at elections with time allocated on an equal basis. Exceptionally, smaller parties have been granted smaller spots. But for the two elections in the 1980s all parties participating were granted equal free time. Score: 4 (1960-80, 1990s) 2(1980s)

United Kingdom: No formal rules, but the BBC has granted major parties air time in connection at election time. From 1960 time was allocated according to size, but since 1987 all the major parties get equal shares of time. Score: 4 (1960-00)

United States: No rules. Score: 3 (1950-00)

B.3 State Subventions (Financial)

Sources: Katz&Mair (1992); Katz (1998); Bowler, Carter&Farrel (2003), IDEA (2003). A synopsis covering only the aspects of the rules relevant to the construction of the indicator is provided;

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

Australia: 1950-83: no state subvention. 1984-: Election funding available to registered parties in districts, where they win at least 4 pct. of the first preference votes. Since uneven electoral support makes it highly likely that parties with less than 4 pct. vote shares at the national level receive financial support, a score of 2 is given for the period since the rules were introduced. Score: 3 (1950-1980), 2 (1980-00)

Austria: No subvention until 1962. From 1962 subsidies were offered to parliamentary groups with a minimum of 5 MPs but mainly for assistance with parliamentary work. From 1971, financial support is accessible to parties obtaining under 4 pct of the votes (ca. 2.7) due to change in electoral rules lowering the threshold of representation, and budget for public relations were included. Since 1975 subventions for party organisations were introduced along with press subsidies. Score: 3: 1950-1970, 2: 1970-00

Belgium: No subventions until 1971. The subsidies introduced were offered to parliamentary fractions (3 MPs) and only to support parliamentary work. Since 1989 funding for central party organisation is made available for parties represented in parliament (which is possible with less than 4 pct of the votes). Scores: 3: (1950-1990) 2: (1990s)

Canada: No subvention until 1974. The rules introduced then reimburse campaign costs of candidates conditional on receiving at least 15 pct of the constituency votes. Parties are also reimbursed, although the sources do not state what requirements have to be met. Scores: 3 (1950-1970), 4 (1970-00)

Denmark: No state subventions until 1965 and then limited to support for parliamentary work of groups in parliament. Since 1987 subventions in connection with elections is available to parties receiving a minimum of 1000 votes. Scores: 3 (1950-1990), 1 (1990s)

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

Finland: State subventions introduced in 1967 to parties for parliamentary work, however, only from 1974 is budget for relations with the press included. Scores: 3 (1950-1970) 4 (1970-00)

France: Information on rules in the 1950s is not available. 1960s: Candidates winning more than 5 pct of the vote are reimbursed for certain campaign expenses. Since 1988 candidates who win less than 5 pct. of the vote are also entitled to reimbursement. Parties presenting candidates in at least 75 districts are also entitled to funds. Since the mid 1990s candidates winning more than 5 pct. receive an additional sum to cover campaign expenses. Scores: n.a. (1950s), 2 (1960-00)

Germany: State subvention introduced in 1959 to parliamentary parties, but outlawed in 1966. Since the 1967 election reimbursement per eligible voter introduced for parties obtaining at least 2.5 pct. of 'second votes' (or 10 pct of 1st). In 1969 the threshold was lowered to 0.5 pct. of the second votes. Scores: 3 (1950), 4 (1960s), 1 (1970-00)

Greece: n.a.

Ireland: Introduced state subventions in 1965 to leaders of opposition parties provided they have at least 7 MPs. State funding to party organizations and campaign subsidies were introduced in the late 1990s to parties winning at least 2 pct. of the vote. Score: 3: (1950-1960), 4 (1970-00)

Italy: No state subvention before 1974. After that annual funds available to all parties that win 2 pct. of the votes. In 1993 a law on funding for parties is abolished. A new law is introduced offering candidates reimbursement for campaign spending in proportion to vote and to parties winning more than 4 pct of the vote or 3 pct of the vote and 1 candidate elected. In 1999 reimbursement to all parties polling at least 1 pct of the votes. Scores: 3 (1950s), 2 (1960-00)

Japan: No state subvention to parties before 1994. After that subventions avail-

able to parties with at least 5 MPs. Scores: 3 (1950-1990), 4 (1990s)

Netherlands: No state subvention until 1964. The subvention introduced is for parliamentary parties (minimum 1 MP). During the 1970s expenses in more areas were covered (e.g. research institutes, 1971; personal assistants to MPs, 1972; educational institutes, 1975 etc.). Scores: 3 (1950-1960), 2 (1970-00)

New Zealand: No state subvention.

Norway: No subvention until 1966, when assistance to work of parliamentary parties was introduced. From 1969 a press subsidy was introduced and in 1970 support was also given to central party organisations. In 1977 a threshold of eligibility for subsidies was set at 2.5 pct of the votes. Scores: 3 (1950-1960), 4 (1970s), 2 (1980-00)

Portugal: n.a.

Spain: n.a.

Sweden: No subsidy until 1966. Subsidies then introduced to party organisations of parties winning at least 2 pct of the votes and parliamentary representation. In 1969 press subsidies were introduced. Since 1972 subsidies available to parties with at least 4 pct of the vote, but no seats. Scores: 3 (1950-60), 4 (1970-00)

Switzerland: No subventions before 1972, when these were introduced for parliamentary groups.

Scores: 3 (1950-70), 4 (1970-00)

United Kingdom: No subventions before 1975. The subventions introduced were available to parties with at least 2 MPs or 1 MP and 150.000 votes. Scores: 3 (1950-1980) 4 (1980-00)

United States: No subsidies for parties.

Appendix B. Recognition Barrier

B.4   Advertising Spending - The Figures

	GDP pc in 1995 USD	Wealth Difference	Adspend 2001 (Millions) Nat. Currency	USD	Adspend Corrected (Adspend/WealthDiff.)
Australia	24109	0.83	7218	5414	6520.103269
Austria	33761	1.16	2012	2236	1922.96738
Canada	23080	0.79	8436	5399	6791.932643
Belgium	31022	1.07	2059	1853	1734.289014
Denmark	38968	1.34	9485	1138	847.9104599
Finland	31834	1.10	1145	1030	939.4244518
France	30573	1.05	9455	10505	9976.399863
Germany	32833	1.13	18579	16721	14786.57286
Greece	13675	0.47	1237	1113	2363.108578
Ireland	28981	1.00	1071	964	965.782906
Italy	21311	0.73	7834	7051	9606.445713
Japan	44924	1.55	3963	31704	20490.44961
Netherland	31415	1.08	3718	3346	3092.464479
New Zeala	18429	0.63	1505	617	972.0738076
Norway	39885	1.37	10743	1182	860.4462129
Portugal	13003	0.45	1483	1334	2978.709252
Spain	17774	0.61	5312	4780	7808.337347
Sweden	33151	1.14	16542	1489	1304.109059
Switzerlan	46895	1.62	4152	2491	1542.279318
United Kin	22637	0.78	11700	16614	21309.39808
United Sta	31466	1.08	124389	124389	114777.3743
Average:	**29035**	**1.0**			

Appendix C

Representation Barrier

C.1 Formulas for calculation of district level thres-

holds

Below the formulas for calculating the T_i and T_x at the district level developed by Lijphart and Gibberd (1977) as well as the for plurality rule (Rae, Hanby, and Loosemore 1971) and STV (Gallagher,1992:486) for are given (source of overview: Hug, 2001:177). The following abbreviations are used: m= district magnitude, n= number of parties, D_{es} = number of districts

	Plurality	d'Hondt	Pure Saint-Laguë	Modified Saint-Laguë	Largest Remainder	STV
Tx						
If n-1≥m	1/2	1/m+1	1/m+1	1/m+1	1/m+1	1/m+1
If m/2≤n-1≤m	1/2	1/m+1	1/2m-n+2	1.4/ 1.6m-2n+1.6	n-1/mn	1/m+1
If n-1≤m/2	1/2	1/m+1	1/2m-n+2	1.4/ 2m+n+2.4	n-1/mn	1/m+1
Ti	1/n	1/m+n-1	1/2m+n-2	1.4/ 2m+1.4-2.4	1/mn	0

The 'short-cut' formulas suggested by Lijphart, which omit the number of parties, are: $T_{id} = \frac{1}{2m}$ and $T_{xd} = \frac{1}{(m+1)}$

C.2   Notes on the Calculation of the T_{pro} and the V_{eff}

General. For PR-systems the vote concentration is calculated on the basis of the percentage votes obtained by the parties within each district. This is done to correct for the large differences in the sizes of the districts (both in terms of magnitude and number of voters) that are normal in these systems. If the share of each party's total vote obtained within each district was used instead, the vote concentration would appear higher than it is and reduce the threshold artificially. This correction is not made for plurality systems, where instead the share of a party's total vote obtained in each district is used. Because here there is always the same number, namely one, candidate up for election in these systems, the variation in the electoral sizes of districts must be actively included as it affects the vote share needed to obtain seats.

1. Australia's V_{eff} score was calculated for only the 2 election years of 1955 and 1977, since district level data was not available in machine readable format and therefore had to be entered manually. However, the V_{eff} scores for the Senate (which use the states as electoral districts) were calculated and found to be very stable in the period, and it is therefore reasonable to assume the same for the House. The values calculated with the nominal party system were 1.54 and 1.31 and an average of 1.42 was used. When the Country and Liberal parties are regarded as one, the scores were 1,17 and 1.27 and the average of 1.22 was used in the calculations.

2. The operational decisions underlying the T_{pro} of Austria (before the legal threshold was introduced) differ from those taken by Lijphart. Since one seat has to

Appendix C. Representation Barrier

be obtained in the 1st tier to get access to the 2nd tier allocations, the threshold was calculated using the largest district magnitude in the primary tier since this is where we would expect smaller parties to being. Lijphart argued that the 2nd is decisive for the proportionality of the outcomes uses the 2nd, which is of course true, but he overlooks that winning a seat in the primary is needed to gain access to allocations here.

3. For Belgium until 1994, the 2nd tier district magnitude is used (following Lijphart, 1994)

4. Canada's V_{eff} was only calculated for the two elections of 1974 (1.34) and 1997 (1.55) since machine readable data were not available. The period until the electoral success of the Quebec party in 1994 was therefore set at 1,4 and the two elections of 1994 and 1997 at 1,55.

5. The V_{eff} scores for France are calculated on the basis of electoral results aggregated over 94-99 districts, since they are not available by the electoral districts that have been used. The scores displayed the largest change among the countries examined here. Before the 1967 election it is above 3 and after it drops to below 2 and falls gradually until 1997, where the value is 1,6. Comparing to scores obtained when using scores correcting for differences in size between electoral units, it became clear that the aggregated units simply contained very different shares of the electorate. The score of 1.6. for the 1997 election, which was more congruent with the corrected scores, was therefore extended to the whole period. When the difference in size (number of voters) between the units is corrected for, as was done for 1986 elections with PR-system, the vote concentration is much lower (1.15).

6. For Germany the V_{eff} reported is if the CSU and CDU are regarded as one party, if they are not the V_{eff} score is an average of 1,3.

7. For Ireland the formula of T_i for Hare was used instead of that for STV – the

latter is 0 and getting close to this seems highly unrealistic.

8.The scores for Italy after the introduction of the mixed system are calculated in the following way; A T_{pro}-value is calculated for the PR-system and one for the Plurality-system: each with its specific formula, district magnitude and number of parties. The scores are then weighted by the percentage of seats allocated in each (25 and 75 pct. respectively) and then summed up to give a unified score for the whole system.

9. Lijphart writes that the droop quota can be used as the T_x of the SNTV. The T_i is given by the legal threshold (1/4-Hare quota).

C.3   The Proportional Threshold and the Number of Parties

Some country markers were given to several cases making it difficult to distinguish between countries in all cases and due to technical difficulties this could not be changed. However, all the 'deviant' cases are properly marked and should be recognizable.
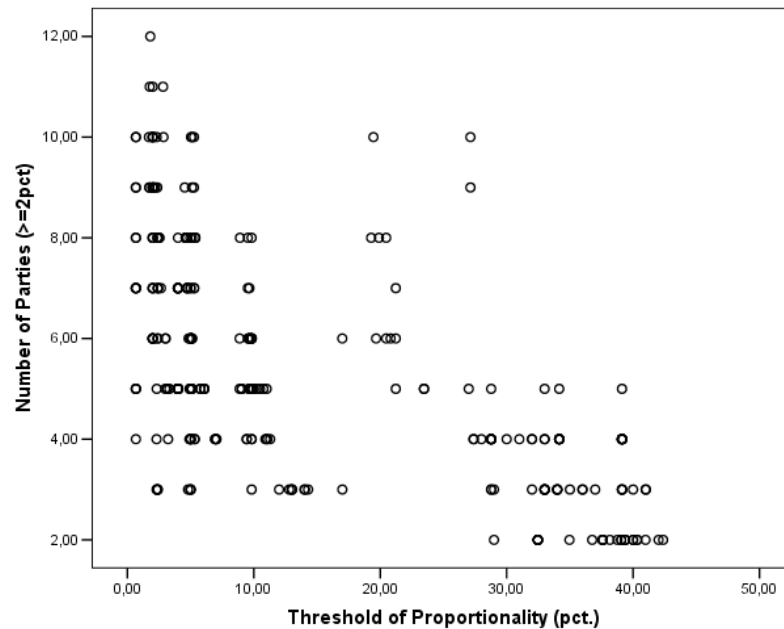
Appendix C. Representation Barrier
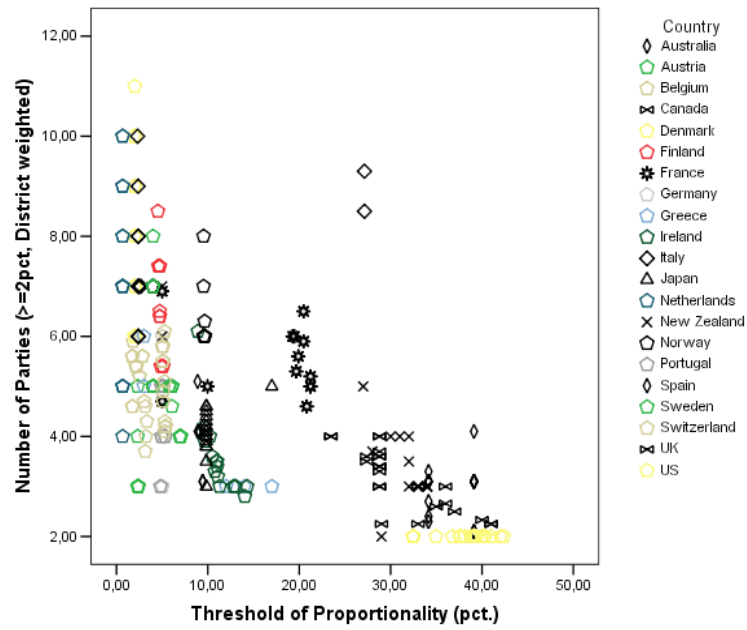
The Proportional Threshold and the Number of Parties

(Country Markers)

Appendix D

Accessibility Barrier

D.1 Conditions for Strategic Voting and Volatility

The results if Japan is included in the category where conditions for strategic voting are fulfilled:

Number of Parties	Strategic Incentives				Difference
	Absent		Present		
	V_{tot}	N	V_{tot}	N	V_{tot}
'2' (1-2.4)	3.8	36	-	-	-
'3' (2.5-3.4)	3.4	8	7.9	54	4.5
'4' (3.5-4.4)	7	23	9.8	35	2.8
'5' (4.5-5.4)	7.8	37	18	10	10.2
'6' (5.5-6.4)	9.3	27	15.9	5	6.6
'>7' (>6.5)	11.4	51	20.1	1	8.7
Total	8.2	182	10.8	105	2.6

Appendix E

Do the Barriers to Entry Matter?

E.1 The Barriers to Entry I: With Missing Values

The Barriers to Entry I
OLS regression with standardized coefficients.

Regressor	Vote Winning >1pct	Vote Winning >4 pct	Seat Winning >1 pct	Seat Winning >4 pct
	Dependent Variable: New Parties			
Registration Barrier	-0.19	-0.17	0.17	0.07
Recognition Barriers: Access to Media	-0.20	-0.26*	-0.36**	-0.23
Access to Finance	0.00	-0.01	0.18	-0.03
Costs of Reaching Voter	-0.12	-0.33	-0.20	-0.15
Representation Barrier	-0.08	-0.04	-0.46**	-0.25
Constant	1.78**	1.42**	2.11**	1.42**
R^2	**0.19***	**0.17***	**0.38***	**0.17***

** $p<0.01$ * $p<0.05$

E.2 Barriers to Entry I: Frequency tables

The frequency tables for the two recognition barrier variables - access to media and access to finance- for the group of counries with high representation barrier (Tpro>8pct) and low representation barrier (Tpro<8pct) respectively. As mentioned the statistical analyses assigned mean values in the cases where scores were missing.

Access to Media (1=all equal, 2=all prop, 3=no,4=rep)		Frequency	Percent	Access to Finance (1=<1pct, 2=<4pct, 3=no, 4=rep)		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	10	20	Valid	1	6	12
	2	9	18		2	15	31
	3	4	8		3	18	37
	4	16	33		4	7	14
Total		39	80	Total		46	94
Missing	9	10	20	Missing	9	3	6
Total		49	100	Total		49	100

Freqency table with low representatiion barrier

Access to Media (1=all equal, 2=all prop, 3=no,4=rep)		Frequency	Percent	Access to Finance (1=<1pct, 2=<4pct, 3=no, 4=rep)		Frequency	Percent
Valid	2	11	26	Valid	2	6	14
	3	10	24		3	22	52
	4	13	31		4	11	26
Total		34	81	Total		39	93
Missing	9	8	19	Missing	9	3	7
Total		42	100	Total		42	100

Frequency table with high representation barrier

Appendix E. Do the Barriers to Entry Matter?

Access to Media (1=all equal, 2=all prop, 3=no,4=rep)		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	10	21
	2	10	21
	3	3	6
	4	16	34
Total		39	83
Missing	9	8	17
Total		47	100

Access to Finance (1=<1pct, 2=<4pct, 3=no, 4=rep)		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	5	11
	2	16	34
	3	14	30
	4	8	17
Total		43	91
Missing	9	4	9
Total		47	100

Frequency table with 'low' accessibility barrier

Access to Media (1=all equal, 2=all prop, 3=no,4=rep)		Frequency	Percent
Valid	2	10	23
	3	11	25
	4	13	30
Total		34	77
Missing	9	10	23
Total		44	100

Access to Finance (1=<1pct, 2=<4pct, 3=no, 4=rep)		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	1	2
	2	5	11
	3	26	59
	4	10	23
Total		42	95
Missing	9	2	5
Total		44	100

Frequency table with 'high' accessibility barrier

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