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**International Actors and Democratization:
US Assistance to New Political Parties
in the Czech Republic and Slovakia**

JOHN K. GLENN

New York University

BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO (FI)

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John K. Glenn
New York University

Abstract:

What happens to revolutionary movements when they assume power? While the literature in political science and sociology has traditionally argued that new parties will reflect societal cleavages within nation states, recent analyses have challenged the assumption that new political parties will reproduce the patterns of earlier parliamentary democracies and observed the increasing influence of international and transnational actors. In this paper, I argue that new political parties may emerge around political rather than economic cleavages in conditions of rapid change, while assistance to political parties may create a dual relationship whereby international organizational forms and issue areas lacking historical precedent are adopted, but adapted to mobilize public support. To demonstrate this claim, I contrast assistance by U.S. political party affiliates to parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where similar revolutionary movements emerged during the fall of communism but diverged, with a rightist party in the Czech Republic and populist semi-democratic party in Slovakia winning subsequent elections (and agreeing between them to divide Czechoslovakia). The divergent paths taken by the two countries highlight the limits to applying Western models of party organization across contexts and the need for democratic actors to be strengthened beyond founding elections.

*I. Introduction*¹

What happens to revolutionary movements when they assume power? While the literature in political science and sociology has traditionally argued that new parties will reflect societal cleavages within nation states, recent analyses have challenged the assumption that new political parties will reproduce the patterns of earlier parliamentary democracies and observed the increasing influence of international and transnational actors. In this paper, I argue that new political parties may emerge around political rather than economic cleavages in conditions of rapid change, while assistance to political parties may create a dual relationship whereby international organizational forms and issue areas lacking historical precedent are adopted, but adapted to mobilize public support. It is, I emphasize, beyond the scope of this paper to test the impact of international factors upon democratization in general. As Schmitter notes, “the international sphere is almost by definition omnipresent since very few polities in the contemporary world are isolated from its effects; however its causal effects are often indirect, working through national agents” (1996:501). Rather, I compare assistance by U.S. political party affiliates to new parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where similar revolutionary movements emerged during the fall of communism but diverged, with a rightist party in the Czech Republic and a populist semi-democratic party in Slovakia winning elections in 1992.

Before turning to the scholarly literature, I discuss the emergence of new political parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (the two republics of

¹ The research for this paper was conducted as part of the project, “Evaluating NGO strategies for promoting democracy and preventing ethnic conflict in formerly communist states,” directed at Columbia University and funded by the Carnegie Corporation. I have benefited from the constructive comments of many, including Ron Aminzade, Michael Dauderstadt, Jack Goldstone, Petr Lom, Doug McAdam, Sarah Mendelson, Philippe Schmitter, William Sewell, Jr., Jack Snyder, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly, and Jan Zielonka. Any errors are of course my own. Revisions were conducted while a Jean Monnet fellow at the European University Institute.

Czechoslovakia until the division of the country in 1992) to highlight the puzzles involved.

II. The puzzle

The fall of communism in Czechoslovakia in late 1989 was especially dramatic because of the hard-line taken by the communist regime until its demise. Repression and relative economic security prevented the emergence of democratic challengers until the regime became isolated internationally and provoked mass protest by its violent repression of a student demonstration in November, 1989. More generally, Pridham and Lewis argue that in 1989 “democratic political parties in eastern Europe existed in a rather embryonic form or were totally absent” (1994:12). Rather than representing parties with defined constituencies, the revolutionary civic movements in Czechoslovakia proclaimed that they represented “society” against the state. Quickly, however, this revolutionary unity came under strain with internal disagreements about the appropriate path of developments. The form which the successors to these movements take was unclear. In the immediate post-communist environment, political parties were associated in most people’s minds with communism, and the civic movements maintained their identities as broad coalitions in the first free and fair elections in 1990 (in which they secured popular support for a two year mandate for economic and political liberalization). As the Czech prime minister argued in 1990:

the dominant feature of public political opinion is distrust and even unwillingness to participate in political parties. This is true even among people who are politically active. This is the reflection of an instinctive distaste for political parties in general, and for everything that is associated with party apparatuses, discipline, leaders’ privileges, perks and so on. These are vague, over-generalized dislikes, and spring from the experience of Communist rule. (in Whipple, 1991: 173)

While Civic Forum in the Czech Republic won a majority of the vote in the first free plurality of the vote (see table 1 for complete election results).

The subsequent emergence of new political parties in Czechoslovakia would the economic transformation or the question of the constitution which specified the Havel declared in the summer of 1991 that political parties in Czechoslovakia were not link to the people they claimed to represent:

Loyalty to the party leadership and even the party apparatus becomes more abilities of politicians. Party structures can create something of a shadow state within the real state. Electoral optimism and more important than the actual interest of society....It could hence easily by them at all. (Wheaton and

The number of parties and party-identification of deputies changed at a dizzying speed between 1990 and 1992. For example, in the 1990 elections, eight parties and

civic movements had created more than twenty parties and factions and a core of independent deputies who abandoned their initial party identification without acquiring

period. In 1994 there was only one party in the Czech National Council that had the same delegation it started with after the 1992 elections Leff observes, in the beginning “the voter had no guarantee that the party supported in one election would

have retained the same partisan affiliation between elections” (1997:103-4). Two months before the June, 1992 elections, nearly one-third of the Czech electorate

declared itself undecided about which, if any, political party to support (Wolchik, 1995:227).

In this dynamic period, transnational party organizations from established democracies sought to assist movements to establish democratic political parties and institutions. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) reports that it sought to provide immediate assistance in Czechoslovakia:

In a December 1989 survey mission to then-Czechoslovakia, an NDI delegation met with recently-elected President Vaclav Havel who said to the group, 'We need advice, here, now, immediately. Not from government but from professionals who know election laws. If you can bring somebody to Prague by Monday, that would be wonderful.' With NED funding, NDI was able to respond quickly to President Havel's request. The following week, NDI sent a four-person international team of election law experts to consult with the Czechs and Slovaks who were writing the rules for the first free election in 44 years. (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1996)

Assistance to new or emerging democratic political parties is often conceived as a fundamental part of international democracy assistance since political parties are understood to be important and necessary components of stable democracies that provide the mechanism by which diverse voices and interests are articulated and claims are made within the polity. For example, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) identifies its mandate as:

promoting U.S. non-governmental participation in democratic institution building abroad...[including] strengthening democratic electoral processes in cooperation with indigenous democratic forces, fostering cooperation with those abroad dedicated to the cultural values, institutions and organizations of democratic pluralism; and encouraging the establishment and growth of democratic development in a manner consistent both with the broad concerns of U.S. national interests and with specific requirements of democratic groups in other countries." (NED, 1997)

Two of its satellite organizations, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), define their mandate in terms of meeting the NED objectives described above. NDI's 1996 Mission Statement declares its emphasis to be on "democratic development that focuses on the roles and functions of political

parties and other institutions fundamental to democracy” (NDI, 1996). More specifically, NDI identifies three areas of political party assistance targeted towards the institutional structures of a political party that make it an effective organization that can consolidate citizen interests; (2) researching, campaigning and monitoring of elections; and (3) governance or assisting in orienting new members, educating constituencies, building coalitions and seeking IRI’s 1995 Mission Statement declares that its “grassroots political programs are designed to share techniques and experiences of democratic country” (IRI, 1995).

The break-up of the civic movements into nascent political parties took place in parties which had broken away from the dissident base of the original revolutionary movements. The Civic Democratic Party led by Finance Minister Klaus in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Democratic Party led by Vladimír Mečiar each won approximately 33 percent of the vote for the Federal Parliament (see table 2 for popular support for the separation of the country, the leaders of the two strongest parties declared their inability to work together and proceeded to divide the country in Eastern Europe in which a rightist party had emerged to govern successfully while a populist semi-democratic party governed in Slovakia.

The classic explanation for the transformation of movements into parties is Robert Michels's (1962) organizational argument that mass movements are inevitably channeled into formal organizations which favor an oligarchic elite rather than the masses. Because "democracy is inconceivable without organization," the initial democratic aspirations that give rise to movements, he argued, will inevitably be subverted by a political class possessing organizational skills that enable them to impose their will upon the party (Michels, 1962:61). Similarly, the literature on political parties and revolutions predicts that revolutionary movements will break-up as a common process of political struggle whereby an initial "honeymoon" period of artificial unity is succeeded by the forging of a "dominant coalition" to address the concerns that initiated state breakdown (Goldstone, 1991:422). The logic of these explanations includes cynical interpretations of Jacobin ruthlessness at eliminating enemies, as well as pragmatic ones which argue that different skills are needed to rule a government (such as the securing of revenues and resources, including popular support, money, technical expertise). Because parties must maintain at least periodic social support, the literature in political science and sociology argues that new parties will represent social cleavages within nation-states (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Some have sought to apply this approach to postcommunist Eastern Europe, distinguishing parties by their presumed social bases (Kitschelt, 1992) or a combination of social bases, issue dimensions and the stability of party competition (Evans and Whitefield, 1993).

The focus on societal cleavages within nation-states has come under two main forms of criticism: (1) it assumes new political parties will reproduce the same path as parties in earlier parliamentary democracies and (2) it ignores the increasing influence of international actors upon postcommunist polities. First, it is problematic to assume that all new parties will follow the same path of development as earlier parties in

parliamentary democracies -- a so-called "natural history" approach that has been (Goldstone, 1991). For example, has argued that a simple application of Western parliamentary models to the new parties in Eastern Europe "ignores the very substantial changes that have taken place in anachronistically presumes that parties in today's neodemocracies through all the stages and perform all the functions of their predecessors" (1992:426). Pridham and Lewis observed that in articulated links between new parties, on the one hand, and social groups, on the other are generally lacking and processes of representation are subject to considerable

Challenging the view that "there are interests out there -- real, particular, independent, societal interests, waiting for the chance to politically articulate their

Ost argued that the historical

political parties can be based. (1991:4) In these conditions, scholars have emphasized

Ekiert,

1991,1992,

Jadwiga Staniszkis argued that the Solidarity

interests which would benefit from its economic program. She cited the declaration by Syryjczyk, candidate for Minister of Industry, about the middle class in

1989: "I represent subjects that do not yet exist." (1991:184)

Second, the criticism of the natural history approach highlights its inability to rhetoric and elections have become largely irrelevant in explaining how a party will govern in Western democracies, that "much of a party's record in office will be

stamped upon it by forces outside its control.” (1984:142) Rather, he argues, parties are increasingly bound by global politics: “Britain’s membership in the European Community is the most obvious symbol of constraint upon a British government’s powers of decision.” (Rose, 1984:151) Mathews goes further to argue that the Westphalian system of nation-states is over, that national governments are “not simply losing autonomy in a globalizing economy. They are sharing powers -- including political, social, and security roles at the core of sovereignty -- with businesses, with international organizations, and with a multitude of citizens groups, known as nongovernmental organizations” (1997:50).

In such conditions, a new institutionalist argument might argue that the form new parties take will be the result of adoption of legitimate organizational forms in the international arena (Meyer, Boli, Thomas and Ramirez, 1997). Among the prominent actors in the international arena, international non-governmental organizations play a particular role in the support for particular groups (Boli and Thomas, 1997; Clark, Freidman and Hochstetler, 1998; Pridham, 1996). Although attention to transnational organizations is not without precedent (Huntington, 1973; Keohane and Nye, 1972), many have argued that international factors played a more influential role in the democratic transformations in Eastern Europe than in the preceding southern European and Latin American transformations (Pridham, 1995). For example, Schmitter argues, “the international context surrounding democratization has shifted from a primary reliance on public, inter-governmental channels of influence towards an increased involvement of private, non-governmental organizations -- and it is the concrete activity of these agents of consent, rather than the abstract process of contagion, that accounts for the global reach of regime change and the fact that so few regressions to autocracy have occurred” (1996:39)

Drawing on theories of institutional diffusion and mobilization, I argue that the relationship between new political parties and transnational party organizations will be adopted which lack historical precedent but adapted to mobilize public support. This entails the simultaneous creation of interfaces with international organizations and local one stage simultaneously. Robert Putnam's "two-level game" argues:

At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments. (1993:436)

logics of interaction by which international actors can influence nation states – contagion, control and consent – to which (1996) adds,

By focusing on the dual relationship, I seek to specify the conditions under which new political parties will adopt certain models of Western party organization and the emphasis on consensual knowledge in recent writings on "epistemic communities"

(Sikkink, 1993), this approach allows for conflicting models and principles, examining conflicts between international models

Risse-Kappen asks, "under what domestic and international circumstances do transnational coalitions and actors who attempt to

(1995:5) Thus, this paper does not assume that international assistance will necessarily

Carothers, 1996;

Robinson, 1996); rather it analyzes the variable impact of international actors in light

The emphasis on the dual relationship between transnational party organizations and new political parties highlights the ambiguity of the concept of “democracy” in the post-Cold war world. To international organizations, parties may speak of one vision of democracy (a formal one in which institutions are replicated in different contexts) while they simultaneously deploy a different vision for their domestic audiences (a substantive one in which the challenges of the communist legacy figure prominently). These different visions do not necessarily undercut each other. Indeed, ambiguity may be a virtue, enabling domestic actors to appear to respond both to international and local concerns while avoiding policy commitments to either.

IV. The emergence of new political parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia:

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to account for the intricacies of party development and the division of the country,² I develop the claims in this paper by analyzing the process by which new political parties emerged out of revolutionary movements in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, in light of international assistance. To provide a basis for comparison, I focus on the National Endowment for Democracy and two of its beneficiaries which specifically target political parties, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republic Institute (as representatives of the U.S. approach to international party assistance). Although not the only international actors active in this period, assistance from the NED targeted for democratic institutions and election assistance in Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia between 1989-1994 can be calculated to be approximately 40% of all similarly-targeted foundation assistance.³ Below, I analyze each country separately.

² For detailed accounts of party development and the break up of Czechoslovakia, see Blahoz 1994, Butorova 1993, Draper 1993, Innes, 1997, and Wightman 1991.

³ \$1,088,000 out of \$2,717,000 in Quigley 1997:142-5, 150-151. Appendix 1 details NED grants concerning political parties and elections in Czechoslovakia from 1990-92.

The Czech Republic

After the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia in 1989, a “government of national understanding” (composed of all political forces) was formed not by new political parties but by broad-based civic movements claiming to speak for “society.” In the Czech Republic (which made up two-thirds of the population of the federation), this movement called itself Civic Forum and was embodied in the former-dissident, Vaclav Havel, who served as president of the federation. The National Endowment for Democracy provided nine grants intended to assist Civic Forum in the 1990 elections, totaling \$842,485 (although some of the grants were broadly intended for the federation as a whole). NED’s assistance can be categorized as general election assistance (advising the drafting of a new election law and sending an international observation team), equipment provision (such as fax machines and computers), and party training (including seminars on party organization, civic education and voter participation).

In the June, 1990 elections, twenty-three parties and movements competed (all but five of whom were new organizations). Civic Forum won 53% of the vote, with the Communist Party coming in a surprising second, winning 13%. Attention to international assistance to Civic Forum in the 1990 elections reveals a broadly positive portrait, although not one in which international actors may claim to have “caused” democracy. Rather, at best, they might claim to have supported the “democrats.” The project to assist the writing of the election law led to a threshold whereby parties had to receive at least 5% of the popular vote to enter parliament. This threshold enabled Czechoslovakia to avoid the later political fragmentation in Poland which was encouraged by a 3% threshold. Since Civic Forum received seats proportional to the votes received only by parties or movements which reached the threshold, they were

able to consolidate a firm majority in both houses of parliament. Second, infrastructural assistance provided by the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe in 1990 sought to meet immediate needs for administrative assistance in governing and running election campaigns at a time when the new civic movements had virtually no preexisting resources, financial or organizational. At this time, the Czech crown remained unconvertible, limiting economic purchasing power for modern equipment from abroad. Similarly, the assistance to Freedom House which provided newsprint to *Lidove Noviny* must be placed in historical context as an underground dissident newspaper that was transformed into the sole alternative to the Communist and satellite party-controlled newspapers after the revolution, initially serving as Civic Forum's voice in the media. Both the civic movements and *Lidove Noviny* operated in this early period largely as they had in the revolutionary moments, overwhelmed by the tasks facing them in light of the resources they had at their disposal. It is not possible to quantify the impact of such infrastructural assistance at this time when stable budgets were still being created, but the ability of INGOs to act quickly and provide resources to meet short term needs can be extremely valuable. One can not be sure of the counter-factual consequences of the absence of such provisions (whether the movements would have faltered or other actors may have met these same needs), but it is clear that such a need existed and that INGOs sought to provide assistance unlikely to have been provided efficiently otherwise.

In this period NDI and IRI conducted “skills based” training workshops which typically present the model on which political parties operate in the United States, emphasizing the creation of new political organizations (including ties to local media, the office of a political organization, and voting districts), the tasks of a political party during an election campaign (such as door-to-door or mail order campaigning), and fund raising. Initially few, if any, of the members of Civic Forum were experienced in

running elections and careful organization would be necessary. In addition to the assistance to the civic movements, IRI reported that its workshops were attended by 150 individuals representing 24 political parties, including some not part of the umbrella coalitions.

Civic Forum, however, did not simply adopt a Western style campaign but adapted it to reinvolve the spirit of the revolution in 1989. Despite Havel's declaration that it was a temporary organization, Civic Forum maintained its identity as a civic movement representing "society" in the 1990 elections. Civic Forum's election slogan was explicitly anti-party, declaring: "Parties belong to Party Members: Civic Forum Belongs to All." DeCandole argued that this primarily reflected the beliefs of the dissident-turned-politicians, drawing on "the rejection of partisanship [that] formed the philosophical core of Charter 77." (1991:20) The consequences of the maintenance of this identity included the refusal by Civic Forum to create membership procedures or hierarchical organization during the 1990 elections. Its membership principles declared that:

Civic Forum is a movement of all citizens who agree with its programmatic principles from 11.26.1989 and actively support their fulfillment, and of those citizens who are not and do not want to be members of any political party....Membership of united citizens in Civic Forum is informal. They are not joined by individual membership, membership cards or by paying membership contributions.⁴

Civic Forum sought to demonstrate its ability to run as a credible opposition to the Communist Party and proponent of economic reform. Their platform was represented by the broad slogan, "return to Europe," with the democratic system, market economy, and cultural values which this implied. At the same time, Civic Forum sought to avoid a traditional appeal for votes. As Miriam Horn observed, "For too long politics had been paternalistic and pedantic, wagging its finger at the children of the state. Now the

⁴ Koordinacni Centrum OF Praha [Coordination Center of Civic Forum Prague], 1990:72.

imperative voice would be jettisoned. It would not be 'Vote for Us,' but only, 'Civic Forum, A chance for the future.'" (1990:12) The "merriness" which characterized Civic Forum in the fall of communism was evident in its electoral style, marked by irony and deliberate anti-politics. On May first, traditionally a socialist holiday, "Campaign workers donned huge paper mache heads, with scowling, puffy faces marking them as members of the old regime, and mugged and pranced on the backs of trucks winding through the streets." (Horn, 1990:11)

After the 1990 elections, the successor parties to Civic Forum adopted, as well as adapted, Western forms of party organization in different ways, taking different positions on key electoral issues. The debate over the future of Civic Forum crystallized around competition for chairmanship of Civic Forum between the former-dissidents led by Martin Palous and new political figures led by Vaclav Klaus, culminating with Klaus' election as chairman in October 1990. On the one hand, Palous argued that Civic Forum should continue to be governed during the transition period by the "consensus-oriented politics" that were the legacy of Charter 77.⁵ Similarly, Jiri Dienstbier, the foreign minister and former-spokesman for Charter 77, argued that Klaus' attempts to introduce hierarchical qualities into Civic Forum were unnecessary and "inhumane." (in DeCandole, 1991:21) On the other hand, finance minister Klaus argued that the non-hierarchical nature of Civic Forum had begun to impede its ability to implement political and economic reform. Contrary to Civic Forum's electoral program in the 1990 elections, Klaus declared the need to create formal membership structures which would enable the building of an effective party and link the regions in hierarchical party structures for effective coordination. Over differences between these two groupings on the appropriate form of the movement, Civic Forum dissolved itself in February, 1991 into the Civic Democratic Party

(*Obcanska Demokraticka Strana*, or ODS) led by Finance Minister Klaus and Civic Movement (*Obcanske Hnuti*, or OH), led by Foreign Minister Dienstbier.

In its founding program, ODS argued that the many of the most serious problems facing Czechoslovakia had "arisen due to the hesitant policies pursued by Civic Forum throughout 1990. Little action was taken against many surviving totalitarian structures. The Civic Democratic Party finds it intolerable that many important posts are still held by communists."⁶ In December, 1990 as chairman of Civic Forum, Klaus had declared his constituency to be young people, Christians, and entrepreneurs, and not artists and intellectuals among whom "trends toward leftism originate." (Quoted in DeCandole, 1991:22.) Strikingly, such a constituency did not reflect pre-existing social cleavages, nor even a clearly defined social group. At that time entrepreneurs, when privatization of formerly-state owned companies had not yet taken place, can hardly have been said to exist as a social group with concrete interests. Rather ODS' constituency was defined in political terms that sought to marginalize the former-dissidents that had created and led Civic Forum during the revolution.

Consistent with its claims that the greatest problems facing the country concerned its relationship to the past, ODS supported the screening (or "lustration") law which banned former-communist functionaries and secret police collaborators from elected or appointed public or professional positions in state organizations and joint-stock companies in which the state held a majority interest (Welsh, 1996). Although the law was condemned by the European Union as unconstitutional, the Civic Democratic Party incorporated the same principles into its founding statutes which declared, "I am not a member of any political party and I have never been a member of

⁵ Interview with the author, 4/19/94.

⁶ In *East European Reporter*, 1991:48.

the People's Militia, StB [secret police], nor a collaborator for them." The eventual law on lustration, passed in October, 1991, was led by and publicly supported by parliamentarians from ODS. Anti-left discourse was repeated by Klaus throughout the 1992 election campaign, when he described OH as a "left wing party, using the term 'liberal' in the American sense, not in the European sense, to my regret." (1992:22) In a claim which would be repeated in the 1992 elections, ODS linked its support for its market reforms with support for democracy and the federal state. Rather than unequivocal support for Czechoslovakia, the party's program declared that the party "wishes to retain the existing Czechoslovak Federation, if the federal state proves to be viable and does not hinder further social change. However, there must be unified defence [sic] and foreign policies and financial and tax policies throughout the whole country."⁷ This program was accompanied by the implementation of the institutional structures of the party across the country identified in Klaus' earlier proposals for Civic Forum. This network would provide it with an organized network with which to conduct the 1992 electoral campaign. With this network, it also raised greater income (with 43 million crowns in 1991) than the Civic Movement (with 18 million crowns) (Mlynar, 1992).

By contrast, OH declared its alliance to the principles of Civic Forum as set out in its original 1989 founding document and its intention to fulfill the 1990 election program "which has not as yet been implemented."⁸ Consistent with its origins, it sought to maintain the unity of society. In contrast to ODS's identification of its supporters as a specific set of potential voters, the OH program called for "dialogue and cooperation with the democratic right and the democratic left." It argued for a "radical but not ruthless" reform of the economy and held the lustration law to be

⁷ In *East European Reporter*, 1991:49.

⁸ In *East European Reporter*, 1991:49.

unacceptable from an ethical and legal standpoint. OH's most prominent leader, Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier, repeatedly criticized the law and, in an ironic twist of fate, voted with the communist party to oppose it in parliament. In contrast to ODS's conditional support for the federation as long as it could be "viable," OH argued there should be even greater autonomy for ethnic groups: "We believe that the Czechoslovak Federation should be retained. But the new constitution must make it possible for Moravia and Silesia to also enjoy autonomy; whether as self-contained lands within the Czech republic, or as member of a tripartite federation of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia."⁹ In the postcommunist context, OH's similar call for united economic and foreign policies appeared strained at best.

After the successful 1990 elections, international assistance to Civic Forum's successors dropped off dramatically. The NED provided several grants in this period broadly targeted to the federation as a whole. It granted NDI \$74,000 to organize party-building workshops on improving party organizations and on the mechanisms of grassroots organization and communications, and it awarded IRI \$57,000 to sponsor a series of four training seminars in Czechoslovakia and Hungary to encourage the informed participation of women and youth in the political process. It granted the Association for Independent Social Analysis \$19,300 to enable this Prague-based association to conduct a survey in advance of the June, 1992 elections on Czech and Slovak attitudes toward political parties, participation in the electoral process, democratically-elected government, and economic and social reform. Further, with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, NDI provided assistance aimed at longer-term political party development in 1991 and 1992 to six parties in each of the Czech and Slovak Republics. Regrettably, the available data does not

⁹ In *East European Reporter*, 1991:50.

indicate precisely which six parties in each republic NDI worked with, nor what the nature of their programs were.

As noted, in the 1992 elections the Civic Democratic Party garnered the largest percentage of the vote, while the Civic Movement failed to reach the electoral threshold to enter parliament. After Klaus's victory in the elections President Havel called upon him and Vladimir Meciar as the leaders of the majority parties to form a government, but both party leaders quickly decided it was impossible without agreement on the nature of the Czechoslovak state. Klaus declared that "today's maimed federation was not capable of guaranteeing a continuation of economic reform" (Zak, 1995:262). With this, both leaders prepared to divide the state, even as pre-election public opinion polls in 1992 showed that an independent state was supported by less than one-third of the population in Slovakia and even less in the Czech Republic (Butora and Butorova, 1993:721).

Slovakia

In Slovakia, the emergence of political parties took a different direction from the Czech Republic and proved to have negative consequences for democracy. After 1989 current and former-communists retained greater influence than in the Czech Republic. The Slovak communists were not compromised by the repression of the student demonstration in Prague in November 1989, nor were they as repressive in general as their Czech counterparts. The Slovak opposition that formed Public Against Violence was also not as large, nor prepared to create a new government. Indeed, Public Against Violence's highest representatives in the federal government were recent or former-communists (prime minister Calfa and speaker of Parliament Dubcek), as well as in the Slovak government (prime minister Cic). Unlike Civic Forum, which maintained its broad identity until the elections, Public Against Violence

(*Verejnosť Proti Nasili* or VPN) divided almost immediately when its main representative at the round table negotiations broke off to form the Christian Democratic Movement (*Kresťanské Demokratické Hnutia*, or KDH). In the June 1990 elections, when faced with its weakness in public opinion polls, the movement's leaders deliberately chose to include the popular former-communist politicians and saw a corresponding rise in its political fortunes (Antalova, 1998).

Again by contrast to the Czech Republic, international assistance to Slovakia was a fraction of the sum provided to the federation as a whole, although Public Against Violence can be said to have benefited from the grants by NED to draft a new election law and to monitor the elections. This suggests the need for international assistance to pay greater sensitivity to ethnic differences within federal states, although it should be emphasized that these were national elections and the capital of the country at that time was Prague. The only grant targeted to assist Public Against Violence was a \$180,000 grant from IDEE which provided equipment and operational assistance that enabled Public Against Violence to equip four regional offices, partly fund its newspaper *Verejnosť*, and support the Center for Research for Social Problems which conducted public opinion surveys and sociological studies.

Like Civic Forum in the Czech Republic, Public Against Violence did not simply adopt Western models of election campaigns in the 1990 elections but sought to recreate the "merry" spirit of the revolution. Rather than run as a political party, Public Against Violence's program, titled "A chance for Slovakia," declared that this was "a chance for all." Its declared aim was "to guarantee that the democratic changes which have begun will continue and not be turned back."¹⁰ The Public Against Violence headquarters in Bratislava prepared a show of caricature and parody of the

¹⁰ "Sanca pre Slovensko (program hnutia Verejnosť proti násilu) [A chance for Slovakia (The program of the movement Public Against Violence)]," xerox.

symbols of communist rule, including "shrouded busts of Lenin and torn Communist Party flags spread across the floor for the visitors to walk on." As Horn observed, "Having long endured politics imposed from above, full of insufferably wooden rhetoric, elaborate ceremony, and self-important men in cheap suits and slicked-back hair, they decided the only antidote was to make this campaign into a carnival."

(1990:11) Notably however, while Civic Forum won the majority of the vote in the Czech Republic, Public Against Violence won only roughly 35% of the vote in Slovakia (averaging its support in both houses), with the newly formed Christian Democratic Movement winning roughly 17% and the ex-communists winning 13%.

After the 1990 elections, Public Against Violence splintered again surrounding a leadership struggle for the movement, although the formation of new parties took a less democratic route than in the Czech Republic. After Slovak prime minister Vladimir Meciar failed to win the chairmanship of the movement in February, 1991 his close associate, the Slovak Foreign Minister appeared on television and declared that the leadership of VPN had attempted to censor Meciar's weekly television speech (a claim later disavowed). Based on the popular perception that he was a victim of communist-style politics, Meciar's popularity soared. Subsequently the Presidium of the Slovak National Council (controlled by the VPN leadership) called for Meciar's resignation leading him to form the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (*Hnuti za Demokraticke Slovensko*, or HZDS), while the remainder of Public Against Violence merged itself into the Civic Democratic Union (*Obcanske Demokraticke Union*, or ODU). In April, 1991 Meciar was officially replaced as prime minister not by a representative of the weakened ODU but by the leader of the Christian-Democratic Party, Jan Carnogursky. Opinion polls at that time indicate that although ODU and KDH continued to control the cabinet, HZDS polled support from about 27% of the electorate. With the support of the parties on the left (such as the former-Slovak

Communist party) Meciar's party could count on over 50% of the electorate, while ODU and KDH together could only count on about 30%. (Wheaton and Kavan, 1992:233f)

Just as Vaclav Klaus in the Czech Republic sought to link the issue of the federation to acceptance of his economic reforms, new political parties in Slovakia also tied the relations between the republics to claims about the proper speed or direction of economic reform. Because heavy industry dating from the communist period was located primarily in Slovakia, many argued that market reform had to take a different path than in the Czech Republic. Further, the emphasis in the Czech Republic on the "lustration" of all officials who had been communist party members was perceived as a threat in Slovakia, where many prominent ex-communists (including Meciar and the speaker of the federal parliament, Alexander Dubcek) remained active in politics.

The question of the proper relationship between the republics was unclear during the election campaign of most Slovak parties, creating uncertainty as to the consequences of electoral victory for one party or another. Meciar's HZDS took an ambiguous stand, emphasizing Slovak "sovereignty" and "autonomy" but without specifying his intentions for the future of the republic. This enabled him to "take sovereignty onto his agenda but in such a way that left Slovakia's potential legal status completely ambiguous." (Innes, 1997: 420) Draper refers to Meciar's advocacy of "confederation" as "a code word for loosening the bonds without breaking them." (1993:22) While Slovak prime minister Carnogursky from the Christian Democratic Movement declared his support for the federation, he at the same time identified his goal as "a star for Slovakia in the European flag." (Carnogursky, 1992) That is, Slovakia would remain part of the Czech and Slovak federation until entry into the European Union when each republic would enter as sovereign nations. Only the marginal Slovak National Party, which received low support in public opinion polls,

called outright for an independent state, while the successor to Public Against Violence, ODU, declared in its founding program, "We favour [sic] the maintenance of a stable, democratic Czech and Slovak Federative Republic based on equal rights for all citizens and nationalities."¹¹ Although positive toward the federation, this statement avoided answering the constitutional question about how relations would be institutionalized.

International assistance to new political parties in Slovakia after the 1990 elections was nearly non-existent. According to Quigley (1997), none of the international actors studied in this report had offices in Slovakia until after the breakup in 1993. As noted, the NED provided several grants in this period broadly targeted to the federation as a whole, including assistance aimed at longer-term political party development in 1991 and 1992 to six parties in each of the Czech and Slovak Republics (although the available data does not indicate precisely which six parties in each republic participated).

In the 1992 elections Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia received the largest percentage of the vote, followed by the ex-communists and Slovak Nationalists (with the Christian Democratic Movement fourth and the Civic Democratic Union failing to reach the electoral threshold). Meciar quickly announced he had a mandate that included the independence of Slovakia, a Slovak constitution, and international recognition of a sovereign Slovakia and agreed with Vaclav Klaus to divide the country. While the absence of international assistance can not be said to have caused Meciar's success, the contrast with the victory of the democratic market reformers in the Czech Republic is striking. The failure of the Public Against Violence's heir, the Civic Democratic Union, suggests that Western models of party organization do not take hold automatically across political and historical contexts, nor

¹¹ In *East European Reporter*, January-February 1992:66.

does initial success in founding elections guarantee the continued success of democratic parties. It highlights the danger of splintering the democratic opposition, rendering them vulnerable to populist challengers.

Further, Meciar's electoral success can not be explained in terms of the resonance of Slovak nationalist claims nor the values of the electorate. After the election public opinion polls indicated that the largest percentage of a survey of Slovak voters, 36.6%, indicated only negative feelings about the split of the country (compared to 26.7% who felt only positive and 21.8% who felt ambivalent). (Butorova, 1993:70) Research on HZDS voters reveals a range of opinions about the proper role of the federation: 14% believed that Slovakia should be part of a unitary Czechoslovak state, 29% favored federation, 22% favored confederation, and 19% an independent Slovak state. (Fric, 1992:79) As Martin Butora and Zora Butorova observed, "what proved to be crucial was not the public opinion but the lack of sufficiently strong political groupings on both sides that could have shared their basic ideas and concepts about the form of the common state and could have cooperated in a systematic and efficient way in the preservation and development of this shared vision." (Butora and Butorova, 1993:721)

IV. Analysis and conclusions

In this paper I made two criticisms of the traditional approach to political party formation: that new parties in postcommunist East Central Europe will not necessarily follow the paths of previous democracies in representing preexisting social cleavages, and that this approach ignores the impact of international actors. Let me return to both claims. First, rather than emerging on the basis of preexisting social and economic cleavages as they have in earlier democracies, I have argued that the new parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia emerged as part of a process of competition and

mobilization for electoral support. Although all political forces after the fall of communism had to confront organizational imperatives that echo Michels' warnings about oligarchy, the traditional process of parties emerging on the basis of preexisting social cleavages is difficult to apply to these conditions. For example, although Czechoslovakia was the only country in East Central Europe that could claim a democratic legacy predating communism, the new parties did not reflect prior historical cleavages and the previously dominant social democratic parties of the First Czechoslovak Republic did not re-emerge as powerful political forces¹²; rather, a new rightist Civic Democratic Party led by Finance Minister Klaus emerged in the Czech Republic to govern successfully.

As I have argued, in the dynamic conditions of postcommunist reform, political identities and economic interests are in greater flux than in stable periods, parties using similar symbols to identify themselves may have very different aims, and policy programs may be broadly similar in their support for political and economic liberalization. While Civic Forum and Public Against Violence initially represented the pro-democratic forces in Czechoslovakia after 1989, they were not political parties in the traditional sense of the word. Under such conditions, as the literature on contentious politics suggests, leaders of new political parties are likely to act like social movement entrepreneurs seeking to mobilize potential supporters in light of varying opportunities, resources and ways of framing their claims (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996). Notably, rather than reflecting public sentiments to divide the country, the dominant successor parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia sought to mobilize votes in the *absence* of public support for separation by linking their claims for economic reform with the appropriate relationship between republics.

¹² See Rothschild (1974) for electoral data on inter-war parties in Czechoslovakia.

Thus, contrary to the notion that new parties in Czechoslovakia reflected preexisting regional, religious and ethnic cleavages (Wightman, 1991), the new parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia successfully mobilized electoral support on the basis of political cleavages by blurring key issues related to the transformation process. As deputy chairman of the Czech National Council in 1992 observed:

Czech politicians avoid getting into disputes with Slovak politicians because they don't want to confront Slovak nationalism, which is on the rise. This...has allowed Slovak politicians to avoid taking a clear position on important issues such as the structure of Czechoslovakia. For example, the KDH proclaims that it supports a common state, yet it lays down conditions that would make such a state impossible. (Kalvoda, 1992:71)

This is not to minimize the very real economic differences in each republic due to different experiences of industrialization under communism. Rather it is to argue that the polarization of the new political parties was not the result of ancient ethnic differences nor economic forces but the *political* result of leaders of new parties competing for electoral support in uncertain conditions. The electoral success by ODS and HZDS suggests the linking of each party's views on economic reform, the lustration law, and the relationship between republics, as well as their organizational advantages in the election campaign.

Second, the divergent paths taken by the two countries highlight the limits to applying Western models of party organization across contexts and the need for democratic actors to be strengthened beyond founding elections. All claims of influence must be measured in light of dynamic, contingent developments, especially when the amounts of funding are relatively small and their activities or efforts rarely create binding arrangements (in contrast to international monetary institutions which can enforce economic sanctions or governmental organizations which can enforce political sanctions). On first glance, the amount spent and projects described in the cases above may seem an relatively small to have had any meaningful impact. In

absolute terms, it is difficult to say whether the NED achieved its aims of fostering democracy, regardless of whether the Czech Republic and Slovakia became more democratic during the time in question. On the one hand, virtually all of these activities could be said to contribute towards making things more democratic; on the other, it's difficult to claim that the observed impact was really caused by the actions of the international actors themselves. Rather, the cases highlight the dual relationship, whereby international models of party organization and election campaigning are adopted in some cases but adapted to mobilize popular support.

Any assessment of transnational assistance to political parties in the 1990 elections must begin with the observation that Civic Forum and Public Against Violence were pro-democratic in their origins, certainly prior to international assistance. They were not, however, political parties in the traditional sense of the word. Initially revolutionary movements are unlikely to have a strong party identification and may seek assistance from all sources, given their perceived need for help, while international pressures may lead other parties or movements to reject assistance from seemingly appropriate partners. For example, Vaclav Klaus' Civic Democratic Party, despite his Thatcherite rhetoric, chose to establish links with the German Christian Democrats rather than British conservatives, whose stance against European integration might have hindered entry to the EU (Pridham, 1996:209).

Analysis of transnational assistance in the Czech Republic and Slovakia demonstrates that such efforts play a more significant role in the early period as revolutionary movements face the initial problems of governing than in the subsequent period of competition among new parties. NED's earlier observation that it could prepare an election advising team for President Havel within a week suggests that international non-governmental organizations can provide assistance more quickly than most government bureaucracies (Quigley, 1997). Assistance at such times can have

disproportionately large consequences since the institutional arrangements created in this period can structure the medium-term allocation of resources among political contenders. Pridham observes, “external support may be an important moral or material resource for party strategies, particularly at this time when new party systems are being constructed” (1995:27-28).

The development of new political parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia reveals the limitations of democracy assistance targeted solely towards free elections. International assistance after the 1990 elections declined dramatically, and the nature of funding for political parties changed as well, with the state itself becoming a major source of funds, reimbursing parties for election expenses and providing salaries for elected members (Lewis, 1998). According to Nadia Diuk, Senior Program Office at NED at the time, NED’s assistance to political parties was limited by two primary factors: the domestic politics of financing assistance to Eastern Europe and the evolving understanding of assistance to promote democracy.¹³ First, the dramatic decline in funding between 1990 and 1992 as the result of changes in U.S. policy concerning assistance to Eastern Europe. While NED was asked to administer the first year of SEED funding in 1990 (because of AID’s inexperience with democracy assistance and with the region), it subsequently lost this funding when Congressional policy reallocated control to AID. After 1990, NED had to rely upon its own appropriation and its partners, NDI and IRI, upon their regular allocation of funds from them, which were significantly smaller. Although NDI and IRI began to apply for funding directly from AID, the process was lengthier and slower than NED funding, which may explain the time gap between the diverse projects in 1990 and comparatively little funding in 1992.

¹³ Interview with author, 3/23/1999.

Second, many policy makers in Washington had little prior experience with assistance to new political parties, having worked previously only with development aid. They therefore initially believed that democracy assistance was largely complete once founding elections had been held and the “democrats” were in power. While NED had a history of work in the region, the 1990-92 period was one in which funders and policy makers were also learning about the need for ongoing assistance to prevent reversals in democratization. Meciar’s rise to prominence in Slovakia in 1991 highlights the need for assistance to parties to continue beyond founding elections as revolutionary movements become new political parties.

By stressing how new party leaders adapt Western models to mobilize electoral support, I have sought to avoid making leaders of new parties seem either overly cynical or like “dupes”(summed up in Vaclav Klaus’s rejection of international assistance as “soft advice for hard currency”). Transnational links between parties of similar ideological tendencies have a long post-war history, beginning with the German stiftungen (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1991, 1997; Pridham, 1996). The failure of the dissident led successors to the revolutionary movements is notable, in light of their failure to adopt Western models of party organization. Consistent with Michels’ arguments about the need for organizational hierarchy in modern political parties, Vaclav Klaus declared that the success of his Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic:

was the final blow to those who advocated the ideas of ‘unpolitical politics,’ to those who saw the future as a world full of civic movements and temporary initiatives without party structures or clearly defined organizational rules, to those who wanted a world based on brave and innovative ideas implemented directly by enlightened intellectuals who tried to stay above the complicated world of politics. (Klaus, 1997:110)

If the Czech Republic and Slovakia are suggestive, the “anti-politics” of dissidents and revolutionary movements is virtually powerless against the imperatives of contemporary political competition. Yet Paul Hirst also argues that the revolutionary

homogeneous *political*

which relies on the *divisions*

contained within the party system to ensure social and political order." (1991:234, italics in original) As I have argued, this process is not straightforward, especially

nearly one quarter of the vote in each republic was for parties which failed to reach the electoral threshold and enter parliament.

efforts of NED, NDI and IRI in the context of other international efforts in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In addition to the NED, Quigley identifies eight other

“election assistance” including the Ford Foundation (the largest donor), the Charta 77

Mellon Foundation, the Bradley foundation, the Westminster

German political party foundations whose assistance he was unable to disaggregate

stiftungen, in German)

provide a comparative point of reference to evaluate the impact of NED, NDI and IRI.

parties themselves, members of political parties may participate in their projects aimed at political education, which may include trips by party members to attend seminars in

democratizing countries. Michael Dauderstadt of the Ebert Foundation

observes that fifty percent of all monies is devoted towards the maintenance of the

expenditures of the Freidrich

spent on measures directly for parties in Central and Eastern Europe and the former-Soviet Union (personal communication, 1998). Without systematic research, evidence of the influence of the German stiftungen can only be speculative, but as one official observed, “We back several horses in the race; whichever is the victor, Germany wins” (quoted in Pinto-Duschinsky, 1997:298).

The focus on parties and elections in this paper emphasizes the emergence of “constitutional democracies” not political democracies which rest upon principles of liberalism (in the language of Freedom House). After the separation of the country in 1993, however, the Czech Republic and Slovakia took markedly different paths. The Czech Republic became seen as a model of democratic development, securing early membership in NATO and the European Union, while Slovakia continued its questionable commitment to democracy and failed to be admitted to either NATO or the EU. Only with the 1998 elections in Slovakia did Meciar lose power to a newly formed Slovak Democratic Coalition which sought to remedy Slovakia’s poor international performance and image.

Further comparative research would elaborate the claims in this paper by specifying the influence of particular types of organizations and of particular legacies of communist states. Such research should examine the influence of the European Union’s PHARE program upon new democracies (Pinder, 1994) as well as compare Czechoslovakia with other postcommunist countries, such as Poland (where party fragmentation hobbled postcommunist governments) or Hungary (where parties had emerged prior to the round table negotiations). Comparison with assistance to political parties in the former-Soviet Union or new parties in South Africa might provide contrasting paths of democratization (Klandermans, Roefs, and Olivier, 1998). Analysis of assistance to the former-Yugoslavia might highlight the risks of assistance in conditions of war. Further, the particularities of assistance in the immediate period

after the fall of communism might be contrasted to subsequent developments as assistance should be different, and attention to evolution over time should provide insight into the consequences of particular forms of assistance in the early period for

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Appendix 1. NED grants concerning political parties and elections in Czechoslovakia, 1990-92

- (1) NDI in 1990 with \$11,079 to convene an international group of experts to advise the new Czech and Slovak leadership in the drafting of a new election law.
- (2) Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE) with \$290,000 “to enable Civic Forum to educate and involve the public in the political process in preparation for national elections in 1990.”
- (3) Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE) in 1990 with \$81,000 to provide “infrastructural support” to Civic Forum.
- (4) Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe in 1990 (IDEE) with \$180,000 to provide “organizational and publishing support” for Public Against Violence.
- (5) NDI in 1990 with \$53,792 to “organize a multipartisan training seminar for Czech and Slovak party leaders on the methods of democratic party organization, civic education, and campaign techniques.”
- (6) NDI in 1990 with \$172,512 to “conduct national and regional training workshops on voter education and participation, provide advice on election laws and regulations and support a public opinion survey.”
- (7) IRI in 1990 with \$42,060 to “conduct national and regional training workshops on the electoral process and provide limited infrastructural support to a range of political parties.”
- (8) IRI in 1990 with \$32,042 to coordinate an international observation delegation to monitor the national elections in Czechoslovakia.
- (9) Freedom House in 1990 with \$140,000 to provide newsprint for the newspaper *Lidove Noviny*, allowing the paper to continue printing during the period leading up to the national elections in 1990.
- (10) Freedom House with \$20,000 to help “*Lidove Noviny*, the Republic’s premier independent daily newspaper, reach its circulation goal of 500,000 in 1990.
- (11) IRI \$57,000 in 1991 to sponsor a series of four training seminars in Czechoslovakia and Hungary to encourage the informed participation of women and youth in the political process.
- (12) NDI \$74,000 in 1992 to organize party-building workshops on improving party organizations and on the mechanisms of grassroots organization and communications.
- (13) the Association for Independent Social Analysis in 1992 \$19,300 to enable this Prague-based association to conduct a survey in advance of the June, 1992 elections on Czech and Slovak attitudes toward political parties, participation in the electoral process, democratically-elected government, and economic and social reform.

Table 1. 1990 National election results in Czechoslovakia¹⁴

1. Czech Republic

<i>Party</i>	<i>House of People</i>		<i>House of Nations</i>	
	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>
Civic Forum	53.15	68	49.96	50
Communist Party CS	13.48	15	13.80	12
Christian-Democratic Union	8.69	9	8.75	6
Moravian-Silesian Association	7.89	9	9.10	7
Parties below 5% threshold	16.79	--	18.39	--

2. Slovakia

<i>Party</i>	<i>House of People</i>		<i>House of Nations</i>	
	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>
Public Against Violence	32.54	19	37.28	33
Christian Dem. Movement	18.98	11	16.66	14
Communist Party CS	13.81	8	13.43	12
Slovak National Party	10.96	6	11.44	9
Hungarian ethnic party	8.58	5	8.49	7
Parties below 5% threshold	15.13	--	12.70	--

¹⁴ Krejci, 1995:340-341.

Table 2. 1992 National election results in Czechoslovakia¹⁵*Czech Republic:*

<i>Party</i>	<i>Federal Assembly</i>		<i>Czech Parliament</i>	
	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>
Civic Democratic Party	34	85	30	76
Left Bloc (Communists)	14	19	14	35
Social Democrats	8	16	6	16
Republican Party	6	14	6	14
Christian Democrats	6	13	6	15
Liberal Social Union	6	12	7	16
Civic Democratic Alliance	--	--	6	14
Moravia/Silesia Association	--	--	6	14
Parties below the threshold	26	--	19	--

Slovakia

<i>Party</i>	<i>Federal Assembly</i>		<i>Slovak Parliament</i>	
	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>	<i>% of the vote</i>	<i>Seats won</i>
Mvmt for Dem. Slovakia	34	57	37	74
Democratic Left	14	23	15	29
Slovak Nationalists	9	15	8	15
Christian Democratic Mvmt.	9	14	9	18
Hungarian ethnic party	7	12	7	14
Slovak Soc. Dem.	6	5	--	--
Parties below the threshold	21	--	24	--

¹⁵ Olson, 1993:310.