

Across postcommunist states, studies of electoral competition reveal variation in the capacity of political parties to compete on the basis of clearly articulated issue-based programs. Notably, the development of programmatic party competition in the Russian Federation is lagging behind other postcommunist states. Over time it is likely that democratic institutions shape the learning process that enable politicians to adjust strategies of party competition, but learning is not likely to occur at the same pace across all countries. The authors explain the observed cross-national variation in party system development as a function of the aspiring political elites' capabilities to solve social choice problems through party formation against the backdrop of past experiences with collective mobilization under and before communist rule. The authors test this model using survey data of middle-level party elites in five countries and find that legacies decisively affect elite strategies in the initial rounds of democratic party competition.

## PROGRAMMATIC PARTY COHESION IN EMERGING POSTCOMMUNIST DEMOCRACIES Russia in Comparative Context

HERBERT KITSCHELT  
Duke University

REGINA SMYTH  
Pennsylvania State University

**A**cross postcommunist polities, emerging political parties demonstrate diverse capacities to compete for votes on the basis of clearly articulated policy programs. Notably, Russia's political parties exhibit considerably less ability to organize coherent issue-based appeals than East Central European cases. In this article, we rely on elite-level survey data to develop a measure of party cohesiveness that enables us to compare party development across five postcommunist polities. The measure provides a common basis to explore the conditions that are likely to influence the emergence of programmatic-based parties in new democracies.

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The framework and data presented in this article provide a unique look at the variation in party formation in postcommunist countries in the early stage of democratization. We collected comparative data in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Russia after each of these countries experienced 4 to 5 years of democratic “system time” following the founding elections. These historical points constitute a critical juncture in the evolution of state-society linkages and ultimately the trajectory of democratic regime consolidation. The data reveal that the East Central European cases exhibit some capacity to compete and build voter-elite linkages on the basis of clearly articulated programs. Notably, Czech parties have the greatest capacity to forge issue-based ties with voters. In contrast, party systems in Bulgaria and Russia show extremely limited capacity to establish programmatic linkages. More recent data from Russia confirm that this capacity has not increased with time.

In the first section, we characterize different types of citizen-politician linkages and the importance of programmatic cohesiveness for democratic consolidation. In the second section, we outline theoretical propositions rooted in communist legacies and new democratic regime structures that help to explain cross-national diversity in average levels of parties’ programmatic cohesiveness. After describing our research strategy, we present general results about the variation in programmatic cohesion of five postcommunist democracies at the party-system level. In the final sections, we test the robustness of our findings against predictions generated by the literature on party system competition.

#### **PARTY COHESION AND MASS-ELITE LINKAGES**

As a key component of the system of linkages between voters and their representatives, the ties established within a nascent party system are determinants of the quality of a new democracy. Simple models of democratic accountability demand that party organizations provide voters with a clearly defined party program that can serve as a yardstick by which voters judge the party’s performance in office. As a first step in exploring the consequences of different modes of political competition for the emergence of representative democracy, we employ a measure that captures a party’s capacity to forge ties to citizens based on clearly articulated issue positions. We argue that high cohesiveness—general agreement within a party organization on specific issue positions—is a necessary condition for programmatic party competition. Conversely, low levels of cohesiveness are indicators of alternative linkage structures: either clientelist linkage formation or the highly volatile personal charisma of individual politicians.

Relying on this measure, our article tests the fundamental assumption that party organizations behave as unitary actors united around a common programmatic focus. This assumption underpins the formal literature based on spatial or directional competition (Downs, 1957; Merrill & Grofman, 1999), the literature on issue competition (Budge & Farlie, 1983), and the historical-comparative literature on cleavage formation (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). For many advanced democracies, the unitary actor assumption is realistic, but for developing democracies, it may not hold. To understand the role of party competition in nascent democratic development, it is necessary to measure party cohesiveness and theorize about its effects on the quality of democratic processes that evolve from the transition period.

As a number of cases in the second wave of democratization demonstrate, party system competition rooted in well-articulated party platforms is not the only possible basis for party system development. Aldrich (1995) argues that politicians in new democracies need time and resources to build party organizations (or solve collective action problems) and to coordinate agreement around a common program (or solve social choice problems). We argue that politicians' propensities to address these problems vary according to the incentives presented by the institutional frameworks adopted at the onset of transition and the resources derived from the legacy of the communist regimes. As a result, programmatic parties that embody the solution to both collective action and social choice problems are not inevitable.

Faced with the high costs of building issue-based parties that deliver collective goods, politicians may choose to invest in building clientelist political machines. This choice enables politicians to sidestep the cumbersome and divisive process of bargaining over a joint political program and to compensate supporters through direct exchange based on selective rewards (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1984). For example, party funders might demand public procurement contracts, subsidies, and favorable regulatory decisions in return for contributions. Voters might expect public sector jobs, housing, favorable consideration for social transfer payments, or outright gifts. In contrast to the collective benefits that programmatic parties secure for broad sectors of the population, such exchanges favor rent-seeking special interests that are undermining democratic accountability mechanisms.

#### ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENCES IN PARTY COHESION

Our premise is that three critical variables affect programmatic cohesiveness across nascent parties and party systems: the resources, skills, and expectations that citizens and politicians possess at the origin of political parties (*legacies*), the democratic institutions that provide incentives for politi-

cians in the electoral arena, and the time afforded politicians to adapt their electoral vehicles to the conditions provided by legacies and democratic institutions. Our empirical test holds time constant, allowing us to focus on the impact of legacies and institutions.

Comparativists have employed historical legacies and new democratic institutions as variables to account for diverse patterns of postcommunist democratic governance. These two sets of variables are usually equated with the behavioral-cultural and rational choice explanations (Easter, 1997; Grzymala-Busse, 2002; Jones Luong, 2000; Jowitt, 1992; Lijphart & Crawford, 1997; Linz & Stepan, 1996). To bring these variables under one framework, we define legacies in terms of the patterns of resources and skills established by the institutional practices under precommunist and communist regimes. Under the new regime, the distribution of resources and skills and the expectations that they generate about political behavior of other actors shape the strategic choices of postcommunist politicians.

Defined as such, legacies establish connections between actors' orientations in the communist past and the democratic present that is evident in the institutional choice at the onset of democracy (Easter, 1997; Jones Luong, 2000; Przeworski, 1991; Taras, 1977). Yet there are important limits to this link between legacy and institutional selection (Jones Luong, 2000). The timing of bargaining over new institutions, external shocks, unexpected opportunities, and politicians' miscalculations of costs and benefits of alternative institutions can yield institutional outcomes not predicted by legacies of communist rule.

Miscalculations in the Bulgarian case illustrate the potential disconnect between old and new institutional arrangements (Taras, 1997; Whitefield, 1993). Initially, the communists, endowed with strong bargaining power and electoral clout, preferred a strong presidency, whereas the emerging democratic opposition argued for a weak presidency to minimize communist influence. Both sides miscalculated (Elster, 1997). Scandal provoked the sudden resignation of the communist provisional president, Petar Mladenov, and discredited his party. Recognizing they would lose the office to an opposition candidate, the communists quickly shifted gears and abandoned their quest for a strong presidential system, yet the weak democratic opposition could not capitalize on its good fortune and impose enhanced presidential powers. As a result, the Bulgarian outcome—a weak presidential structure—deviated from the postcommunist pattern linking successor parties to strong presidencies.

In the face of evidence that institutions are not always endogenous to political legacies, we develop hypotheses about the independent effects of legacies and institutions on party system cohesiveness. We posit that legacies and

institutions provide elites with competing or reinforcing impulses in the early stages of transition. Over time, we expect that political actors will revise their resources, skills, and expectations in response to new rules until the incentives encoded in new institutions come to dominate politicians' efforts to build political parties.

### **Predictions About Legacy Effects**

Our conception of legacies combines a long-standing historical focus with a stress on the factors that influence political behavior in the immediate postcommunist period. We identify two empirically intertwined variables—precommunist experience with collective interest mobilization and civil service organization—as central to our study. These two factors strongly influence the nature of the regime during the communist period and the resources and skills available to postcommunist elites as they compete for votes in the new democratic regime. Accounting for these factors allows us to distinguish among different communist legacies.

The set of cases included in our study controls for the legacy-based “macrovariables” that Linz and Stepan (1996) identify in their cross-regional study of democratic consolidation yet still retains the important within-region factors that influence party system development. We attempt to specify some of the forces underlying Linz and Stepan’s typology of regime legacies by focusing on the components of the precommunist and communist experience that shape the expectations, skills, and resources available to postcommunist elites as they attempt to build durable ties to party-based constituencies. In Linz and Stepan’s rubric, these factors include nascent forms of civil society (precommunist mobilization), political society (the structure of the former party system), and the usable state (the nature of the civil service). Following Jowitt (1992) and Hanson (1995), we stress the influence of these factors in shaping the expectations and patterns of behavior of transitional elites. Our focus on these aspects of the communist legacy maps closely to Grzymala-Busse’s (in press) notions of “portable skills” and “usable pasts” that link communist-era experiences of ruling party elites with the actions of postcommunist elites tasked with reinventing ruling parties to meet the challenges of the new regime.

Based on these conceptions of legacy, we argue that patterns of precommunist mobilization fall into three general categories: unrestricted democratic competition with communist, socialist, and non-working class programmatic party mobilization; restricted democratic competition with non-working class parties; and no widespread democratic competition or party mobilization. We expect the first two patterns to aid programmatic

party building by providing postcommunist entrepreneurs with potential constituencies and political skills, whereas the third configuration will discourage programmatic linkage formation.<sup>1</sup> Along the same lines, we hypothesize that a professional civil service organization before communism presents fewer opportunities for clientelism to emerge from postcommunist democratic competition. This logic extends Shefter's (1994) argument that patronage systems endure when political insiders of the pre-democratic regime maintain strong support in the process of democratization and can exploit a nonprofessional state apparatus to reinforce that support.

Thus, variation in precommunist organization and bureaucratic development produce differential experiences with communism and ultimately variation in the capacity of party organizations to forge issue-based ties with new constituents. Countries with strong precommunist political mobilization, a more lasting interwar democratic experience, and a firmly established civil service, such as Czechoslovakia or the German Democratic Republic, should be more likely to develop programmatic party competition (Berend, 1986; Held, 1992; Walters, 1988). Such polities produced intransigent communist ruling parties that repressed a potentially formidable opposition but imploded in the face of a sudden and powerful surge of democratic opponents in 1989. These opposition forces could rely on a store of skills to build parties and push aside an unpopular, exhausted ruling party. At the same time, the residual professionalism of the state apparatus limited patronage resources and undermined the potential for clientelism.

In contrast, countries with considerable precommunist mobilization, a weak socialist movement, and a relatively weaker civil service—such as Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia—evidenced a different experience under communism (Chirot, 1986; Held, 1992; Janos, 1989). After a brief episode of Stalinist rule, Communist Party leaders shored up their feeble moorings in society through implicit compromises with potential opponents. In the late 1980s, a generation of reform communists engineered democratic transitions through lengthy negotiations involving emerging noncommunist challengers with roots in civic associations and proto-parties. Although this pathway supports the emergence of programmatic competition, a weaker professionalization of the state apparatus offers somewhat greater opportunities for clientelist party formation.

1. The lack of variation in empirical cases is an important constraint on our ability to measure fully the effect of the duration of communist rule on postcommunist party formation. We have no case of a country with conducive legacies and 70 years of communist rule that could provide a contrast to Russia. However, the variation in outcomes in Bulgaria and the other East Central European countries—all of which experienced approximately 40 years of communist rule—demonstrates that legacies and not durability of communism matter for creation of cohesive party organizations in those cases.

Finally, a third set of countries, including Russia and Bulgaria, had little precommunist partisan mobilization, minimal experience with electoral competition, and a weak pre-bureaucratic state apparatus. Throughout the communist period, these regimes relied on personal networks that permeated the political hierarchy, *de facto* decentralized control of the state and party apparatus, and heavy-handed repression of potential dissenters (Roeder, 1993; Willerton, 1992). In the face of economic decline in the late communist period, debate over reform divided the ruling elite. Some party factions launched preemptive strikes designed to introduce new political and economic structures, whereas others resisted reform and attempted to perpetuate the old system under a new label. In these cases, the low store of resources available to the non-communist opposition, along with the availability of patronage-based resources, created strong incentives for political entrepreneurs to build clientelist parties.

### **The Effects of Institutions**

Although legacies can provide powerful incentives to party entrepreneurs, they are not the only influence on political behavior. Institutions also shape political outcomes in postcommunist states (Geddes, 1995). The laws governing competition for legislative and executive offices, together with the nature of executive-legislative relations, federal structure, internal legislative organization, and the competitive dynamic within the party system, are all forces that contribute to party formation and party system development.

We hypothesize that institutional variations across electoral systems create incentives for party- or candidate-centered elections. Programmatic party competition assumes that individual candidates run as a member of a team, whereas candidate-centered competition opens the door to clientelist party formation. There is indirect evidence for our proposition in the literature on the political implications of election laws. Most specifically, Carey and Shugart (1995) demonstrate that the interactive effects of district size and ballot structure in electoral systems can undercut the incentives for individual candidates to join in a team effort and instead run as individual candidates. Along the same lines, we hypothesize that closed list, multimember district competition provides strong incentives for politicians to cooperate in party building and that single-member district (SMD) competition, particularly if candidates are nominated through a primary system, encourages candidate-centered competition. Party cohesiveness is least likely in multimember districts that use preferential votes to choose individual candidates on party lists.

Russia's 450-member Duma is selected according to a peculiar mixed electoral system adopted in 1993. Under the law, 225 seats are awarded

through a closed-list proportional representation (PR) system and 225 seats are determined by single-member plurality races, with the overall distribution of seats determined by the outcome of each race. As evidenced by the increasing success of independent candidates in SMDs, the two-tier electoral system sets mixed incentives for party organizations because the SMDs favor programmatically diffuse, personality-centered parties or even independent candidates entrenched in local patronage networks (Hale, 2002; Moser, 2001). In contrast, the national closed lists, together with a 5% minimum threshold to gain seats, promote programmatic party cohesion. Importantly, the interaction between the two tiers complicates the party-building process by mixing candidates rooted in very disparate constituencies, thereby undermining the positive incentives toward programmatic cohesion in the PR section of the race. The upper house is now appointed, strengthening a tendency toward patronage-based rather than issue-based linkages with constituents.<sup>2</sup>

On balance, Russia's confusing mixed electoral system is less likely to foster party cohesion compared to the laws governing elections in the four other postcommunist democracies we examine. In the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, elections to the single or dominant house of parliament are held under multimember, closed party lists that encourage programmatic party formation. Poland's upper house is elected in dual-member districts, and the lower house is elected in multimember districts, with seats distributed according to personal preference votes pooled by party lists. Hungary's unitary parliament is elected under a complex, three-tiered electoral system constructed around closed regional and national party lists and majority runoff, single-member district races. Although the Polish and Hungarian arrangements are somewhat more favorable to candidate-centered competition than the Bulgarian and Czech systems, none should impede cohesiveness as much as the Russian system (Lijphart, 1992).

Strong presidential systems also embody mechanisms that undercut party cohesiveness (Linz & Valenzuela, 1994; Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997). Because competition for the main electoral prize is candidate-centered, candidates have few incentives to pool resources. As a result, there is a proliferation of personal electoral machines around potential candidates. In Russia, this outcome is even more likely as majoritarian runoff presidential elections are not held concurrently with parliamentary elections (Moser, 2001).

In the postelection period, the strong executive's broad control of resources and decision-making powers enable him or her to promote a per-

2. The upper house was originally elected in dual-member districts. The law was changed in 1995 so that the body would include the popularly elected regional governor and head of the regional legislature from each region. A further revision to the law in 2000 mandated that the governor and regional legislatures would each appoint one representative from their region.

Table 1  
*Institutional Incentives for Programmatic Party Development*

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Bulgaria	Russian Federation
Electoral system (single vs. multimember districts [MMD])	+	Mixed	+	+	Mixed
Partisan control of nomination (MMD portion of the race)	+	+	+	+	+
Vote pooling (MMD portion of the race)	+	+	+	+	+
Partisan control of nomination plurality portion	NA	+	NA	NA	—
Legislative power over cabinet formation	+	+	+	+	—
Legislative power over law making	+	+	Mixed	+	—

*Note:* A plus indicates institutional structures conducive to programmatic party development; a minus indicates structures detrimental to programmatic party development. Mixed systems provide partial incentives for programmatic development but given the specifics of the Hungarian and Russian laws, these incentives are probably overstated in the Russian case. NA = not applicable.

sonal political agenda by building legislative coalitions on an issue-by-issue basis, thereby eroding programmatic party cohesion. Furthermore, if the stability of the executive does not rest on party support, legislators tend to be more concerned with constituency service and less attentive to overall party positions (Ordeshook, 1995). Russia's 1993 constitution maximized the powers of the president vis-à-vis the parliament and endowed Yeltsin with formidable veto power over legislative decisions as well as the power to govern by decree, schedule referendums, appoint acting prime ministers, and devise budgets. In contrast, in Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, we expect parliamentary systems with weak presidents to foster the development of programmatic parties. Poland's semipresidential arrangement is relatively less conducive to programmatic party building but significantly more conducive to issue-based competition than Russia's super-presidential system.

The expected effects of these institutional structures are summarized in Table 1. The table underscores that the problematic incentives for programmatic party building in Russia's constitutional structures stand in sharp contrast to our other cases. As the table summarizes, on the basis of institutional structures, we certainly expect Russian parties to remain less cohesive than parties in comparable cases as politicians adapt to their new environment.

### THE JOINT EFFECT OF LEGACIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Considered together, legacies and institutions constitute a developmental model of linkage formation. Our framework posits that communist-era legacies will constitute the dominant influence over patterns of party system development in the immediate postcommunist era but that over time, institutional incentives for programmatic or clientelist party strategies begin to assert themselves. Thus, if these legacies play a role in postcommunist party development, they should show up, net of institutional incentives, in the first decade of democratic competition.

On the legacies dimension, we expect the Czech Republic to display somewhat more programmatic coherence than Hungary and Poland and considerably more programmatic coherence than Bulgaria and Russia. On the institutional dimension, closed, multimember electoral lists, parliamentary government, and unitary states create the strongest incentives for programmatic competition. If these institutions govern programmatic party formation, we expect Bulgaria and the Czech Republic to be most cohesive, followed at some distance by Hungary and Poland and trailed by Russia.

Bulgaria plays a critical role in our effort to isolate the independent effect of legacies and institutions at the early stages of party system development. According to our argument, Bulgaria's institutional incentives are favorable to programmatic party formation, although the patrimonial communist legacy works against it. If Bulgaria looks more like Russia than the Czech Republic in the initial years of democracy, we have reason to believe that legacies play a critical role in shaping parties' strategies of competition. If the reverse is true, we can conclude that institutions overwhelm legacies from the very beginning.

System time and learning present a final consideration for our model. We cannot test these propositions directly with our cross-sectional research design, but the juxtaposition of the influence of legacies and institutions presents an opportunity to make predictions about future developments. If politicians respond to institutional cues through learning, institutions should replace legacies as the primary influence shaping patterns of party formation over time. Thus the process of learning and adaptation emerge as central questions for study of the dynamics of democratic system consolidation. Our framework suggests that critical questions for future research are the actual process of system learning, the impact of learning on the mass and elite levels, and the length of time needed for these forces to take effect.

Figure 1 relates legacies and institutions to the passage of time and outlines four ideal-typical trajectories. Where both legacies and institutions are conducive to programmatic party formation (curve A), we would expect ini-

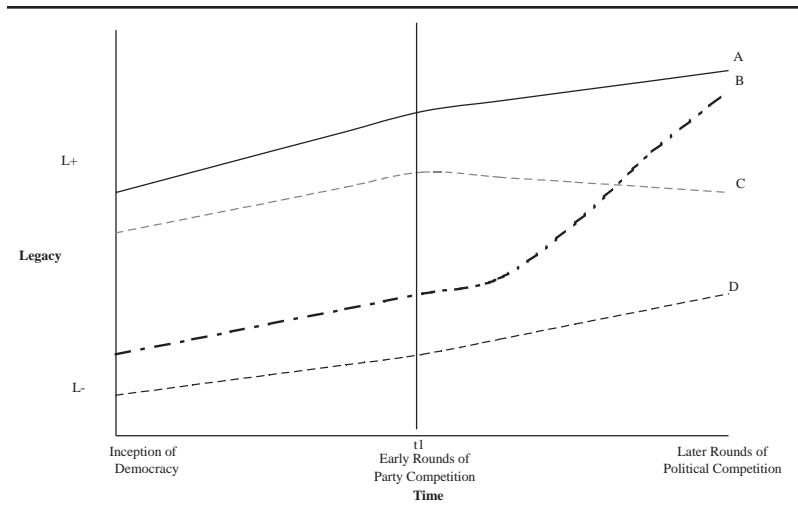


Figure 1: Hypothesized trajectories of programmatic development over time.

tially higher levels and then the emergence of programmatic parties. Where both legacies and institutions are inimical (curve D), programmatic party development takes place along a very flat learning curve leading to a relatively low level of programmatic cohesion. Next, note the contrast among the asymmetrical cases, B and C. Conducive initial legacies, but detrimental institutions, yield a trajectory B where programmatic party formation peaks early and then shows signs of decline with additional institutional learning, whereas the inverse generates curve C with initially low but then rapidly rising party cohesion.

The vertical line at  $t^1$  generates positions for our five cases 4 years after their founding election. Given the theoretical predictions, the Czech Republic should approximate curve A. Hungary and Poland should fall between curves A and C because these countries' legacies are not quite as conducive to programmatic party formation as suggested by curve A, but their institutions are not quite as detrimental as suggested by curve C. The other two countries, Bulgaria and Russia, are located on curve B or between curve B and D. As long as legacies prevail, Bulgaria should display weak programmatic party formation but then experience a relatively rapid programmatic structuring of party competition. By contrast, Russian programmatic party development should continue to lag behind all of the other cases.

Our small-N, cross-sectional comparison permits an initial evaluation as to how well actual outcomes map to the predictions generated in Figure 1. If, for example, Russian and Bulgarian programmatic cohesion are the same as

in the Czech Republic, neither legacies nor institutions are plausible explanations for varying levels of party cohesion. If Bulgaria and Russia evidence low levels of party cohesion yet the three Central European democracies evidence high levels of cohesion, legacies have a stronger influence than institutions in early stages of development. Conversely, if Bulgaria evidences more rapid party system development than Russia, we can conclude that institutions quickly dominate party system development, drowning out the effects of communist-era legacies.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The findings we present below are based on data collected through survey research in each of the five countries. We asked midlevel party elites to place their own party and their competitors' parties on a series of policy issues.<sup>3</sup> Our initial Russian study was conducted in fall 1997 and spring 1998. Subsequent surveys were implemented in early spring 1999 and December 1999, coinciding with parliamentary elections. We also report results from equivalent surveys completed in 1994 in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. We collected our data when all five party systems had experienced 4 to 5 years of democratic system time following the founding election and at least two democratic parliamentary elections.<sup>4</sup>

If time translates into political learning to solve problems of collective action and social choice, Russian politicians included in the study are somewhat advantaged with slightly more system time. This feature biases our cross-sectional analysis against our legacies hypothesis. Simply because they had slightly more time, Russian politicians should display somewhat greater capacity for programmatic party formation.

The parties represented in our Russian study received 68.2% of the vote in the 1995 Duma election. In each of the four East Central European polities, we included parties receiving together between 82% and 91% of the vote in the parliamentary election closest to our elite surveys. By ignoring the Russian splinter parties as well as the unaffiliated candidates in single-member district races, once again we bias our analysis against our hypothesis that the Russian party system will show less programmatic structuring than systems in other postcommunist countries.

3. This work modifies Laver and Hunt (1992) to provide a more direct measure of coherence.

4. Because of space constraints, appendices describing both the surveys and samples for all waves of the study are available at <http://polisci.la.psu.edu/faculty/smyth/welcome.html>. The authors would be glad to address any questions regarding data collection.

The analysis presented in this article is based on 16 questions drawn from a longer survey instrument. Our Russian surveys included most of the policy items employed in the 1994 Central European surveys, adapted to reflect Russian conditions. Moreover, we added some policy questions with unique relevance for Russia as the heir of a former hegemonic power. On each policy item in the questionnaire, we formulated polar options and asked respondents to place their own party and their competitors' parties on a 10-point, Likert-type scale. We also asked them to score the importance of each issue for their own party on a 10-point scale.<sup>5</sup>

The first basket of policy questions concerned socioeconomic issues of protection versus market liberalization. As in the other countries included in the study, we asked respondents to rank parties' inclinations: to allow privatization and bankruptcy (question 1); to prioritize speed over social and political justice when creating property rights (question 2); to fight inflation over unemployment (question 3); to privatize health care and health insurance (question 7); and to preserve the collective farm system (question 10).

Four issues broadly addressed national autonomy concerns. As in the Central European surveys, politicians considered: parties' dispositions toward foreign capital inflows (question 4) and how much parties emphasize a uniquely Russian consciousness as opposed to a European regional or global consciousness (question 18). In Russia, we also asked questions about parties' positions on the treatment of Russians in the near-abroad (question 14) and Russia's cooperation with the West within the structure of NATO (question 15).

In a similar vein, 2 items explored issues of multicultural tolerance. First, politicians evaluated the level of adaptation required from non-Russian citizens to ensure equal treatment (question 5). Second, politicians reported parties' levels of tolerance for the use of indigenous languages by non-Russians in regional schools and government offices (question 6).

The remaining questions concerned social values and quality-of-life issues. Two of these questions had strong economic implications. One measured the extent to which parties prioritize environmental protection, even if it entailed the loss of jobs (question 12). The second focused on gender roles in labor markets (question 8). Reflecting the reality of Russian debates over gender roles, the question was modified to ask politicians to indicate party support for state-sponsored child care as a mechanism to safeguard women's workforce participation versus support for state subsidies to allow women to stay home and raise their families. The revised question defines the endpoints

5. For the East Central European cases, the surveys employed 20-point scales. Results reported are translated into 10-point scale equivalents.

of the scale in terms of governmental support for women in the workforce versus governmental support for women to remain at home. This change in question wording did not significantly change most respondents' rating of either the importance of the question or their judgments of parties' positions. The question does distinguish the Women of Russia party from all other parties, therefore we retained it in the analysis.

The other values and lifestyle questions had a sociopolitical but not a distributive content. These questions explored the extent to which parties see a role for church influence in government (question 9), endorse the death penalty (question 11), wish to impose moral restraints on the mass media (question 13), and seek to preserve Russian values in the face of social change (question 16).

### PROGRAMMATIC COHESION IN POSTCOMMUNIST PARTY SYSTEMS

To highlight cross-national differences in the programmatic structuration of entire party systems, we present a highly aggregated measure that captures system-level variation. For each party, we calculate the standard deviation of the values that all survey respondents report for that party's position on a particular issue. Low standard deviations signal high programmatic cohesion. We then report the averages of all the parties' standard deviations on each issue in each country to capture the prevailing central tendency in each polity.

To give a reference point for the empirically observed levels of programmatic structuration in our five cases, on a 10-point scale, the maximum value of a party or party system's standard deviation is 4.5 and the minimum value is 0.<sup>6</sup> Randomly generated scores produce a standard deviation of 2.87. Programmatic structuration represents the reduction of the standard deviation from that level. Standard deviations greater than 2.87 indicate deep divides in the perception of parties' policy positions.

Table 2 reports the average programmatic cohesion for baskets of issues measured by the mean standard deviation of all parties' positions in a country.

6. Imagine respondent X scores parties A through C as 1, 4, and 7, yet respondent Y scores them 3, 6, and 9. Both respondents assign the same rank order and see the same distances between the parties but differ in their interpretations of the endpoints of the scale. In aggregating respondents' scores for each party, variation in the respondents' anchor points will distort the measure. To eliminate these differences, we set each respondent's evaluations on an issue equal to the difference from the mean value the respondent gives all parties. Thus, in our example, both respondents score the parties as -3, 0, and +3.

Table 2  
*Party Cohesiveness in Postcommunist Party Systems; Mean Standard Deviations Across Issue Bundles*

	Russia 1	Russia 2	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland
Economic issues	2.05	1.93	1.85	1.46	1.63	1.55
National issues	2.03	1.97	1.79	1.53	1.62	1.51
Cultural issues	2.05	1.97	1.84	1.64	1.46	1.53

These findings are based on the judgments of all respondents, regardless of his or her affiliation.

Table 2 highlights the contrast between the average programmatic structuration observed in the Russian party system compared to East Central European (i.e., Czech, Hungarian, Polish) party systems. The latter show substantially more programmatic structuration than either the Russian or Bulgarian parties. Among the East Central European countries, Czech party cohesiveness is slightly greater on the economic issues that are most salient in all three countries.

Russian parties indicate a slight tendency toward increased programmatic cohesiveness from 1996 to 1997, but this change does not affect the rank order among countries. Moreover, these changes are so small that they may reflect measurement error rather than substantive shifts. Although the number of countries and surveys in our comparison is too small to calculate the statistical significance of cross-national variation, the consistency of the cross-national rank orderings for each and every item suggests that the pattern is not random.

Comparing the Russian and Central European results issue by issue in Table 3, we see that an “information intensive” question comparing modes of privatization generates more programmatic diffuseness than cognitively less demanding policy issues, such as state-led versus market economies. Nevertheless, the cross-national differentials of programmatic structuration remain almost equal. Russian parties are invariably less cohesive than their counterparts in other postcommunist countries.

Given the contrast between Russian and Central European party cohesiveness, we infer that variations in legacies, institutions, or both explain the empirical pattern. Both legacies and new democratic institutions are more conducive to programmatic party competition in East Central Europe than in Russia. Importantly, the Bulgarian data afford the first clue about the independent effects of legacies-based and institution-based explanations of programmatic structuring. Across a wide range of issues, Bulgarian program-

Table 3  
*Programmatic Cohesion of National Party Systems (Average Diffuseness of All Parties in Each Country)*

	Russia 1	Russia 2	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland
Economic issues						
Health/social security	2.06	2.18	1.75	1.50	1.37	1.46
Industrial privatization	1.98	1.82	1.95	1.44	1.75	1.58
Privatization priorities	2.27	2.06	2.22	1.56	1.94	1.67
Inflation/unemployment	2.02	1.94	1.82	1.35	1.72	1.59
Land privatization	2.00	1.85	1.60	1.48	1.54	1.46
Market/planned economy	1.95	1.72	1.73	1.42	1.44	1.54
National issues						
Foreign investment	2.06	1.96	1.88	1.42	1.77	1.62
Nationalism/cosmopolitanism <sup>a</sup>	1.94	1.92	1.77	1.64	1.43	1.40
Alliance system participation	2.06	2.04	1.73	NA	NA	NA
Protection of citizens in the near-abroad <sup>b</sup>	2.05	1.97	NA	NA	1.65	NA
Cultural issues						
Treatment of minorities <sup>c</sup>	2.05	2.01	NA	1.56	1.53	1.62
Language use in schools	1.90	1.84	1.71	NA	NA	NA
Women's roles	2.24	2.21	1.97	1.59	1.56	1.78
Environment/economic growth						
Role of church in schools <sup>d</sup>	1.97	2.00	1.62	1.34	1.27	1.29
Death penalty	2.12	1.98	NA	NA	NA	NA
Media censorship	2.19	2.04	1.92	1.76	1.62	1.57
Individualism/traditionalism	1.96	1.92	2.01	1.78	1.43	1.49
Traditional values/social reform <sup>e</sup>	2.03	1.93	1.82	1.88	1.33	1.56

Note: NA = not applicable.

a. Bulgaria: Turkey as an ally?

b. Hungary: Treatment of Hungarians abroad?

c. Central Europe: Treatment of asylum seekers?

d. Bulgaria: Protection of orthodoxy?

e. East Europe: Authority and individual autonomy as values at school?

matic party cohesiveness approximates Russian parties' scores. In fact, on at least three important economic items, the Bulgarian levels fail to match the cohesiveness of the Russian parties in the second survey. The evidence suggests that the shared legacies of patrimonial communism have a stronger impact on party system formation than Bulgaria's new democratic institutions that provide some incentives for programmatic party building.

Importantly, since our 1994 survey, changes in the Bulgarian party system suggest that Bulgarian politicians adapted to the incentives of the new demo-

Table 4  
*Developments in the Russian Party System: Coherence Scores for All Issues, All Respondents Reported by Party Organization*

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
KPRF	1.93 (.34)	1.92 (.3)	2.01 (.41)	2.06 (.41)
LDPR	2.27 (.21)	2.31 (.23)	2.31 (.26)	2.36 (.29)
Yabloko	1.94 (.15)	1.99 (.15)	2.00 (.19)	2.08 (.19)
Democratic Choice of Russia <sup>a</sup>	1.99 (.27)	2.03 (.32)	2.01 (.31)	2.03 (.33)
Our Home Is Russia	2.06 (.19)	2.11 (.17)	2.01 (.14)	2.00 (.14)
Women of Russia	2.03 (.17)	2.08 (.20)	2.03 (.40)	1.94 (.23)
Agrarian Party	2.13 (.20)	2.15 (.19)	2.15 (.18)	2.11 (.17)
Lebed Parties	2.04 (.18)	2.05 (.17)	2.06 (.17)	2.06 (.18)
Fatherland	—	—	2.04 (.18)	2.10 (.16)
Unity	—	—	—	2.10 (.18)

Note: KPRF = Communist Party of the Russian Federation; LDPR = Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.

a. This category includes all of the subsequent party organizations, such as Russia's Choice and Union of Right Forces.

cratic rules more quickly than their Russian counterparts. Although we do not have direct evidence of party system cohesiveness, through the 1990s the Bulgarian system evidenced relatively durable electoral coalitions, the breakup of successor parties into ideologically distinct organizations, party penetration of regional and local elections, and strong party influence in presidential elections (Dainov, 2000; Karasimeonov, 1999). In contrast, Russia's presidential race was not partisan, party organizations continue to play a minor role in regional elections, the successor party has endured intact, and coalition activity on the right and left is limited. Subsequent iterations of this survey in Russia provide direct evidence that the party system has not developed greater capacity for programmatic competition. These data, shown in Table 4, show the lack of Russian party development through 1999.

These data demonstrate that the Russian party system increased its capacity for issue-based competition in the decade since the introduction of elections. In addition, the party-level data reveal that no single party or set of parties is driving the system-level results. Not only are coherence scores relatively consistent across the period of the survey, but they also have actually increased over time, indicating diminishing party capacity to project cohesive issue positions. These trends are most notable in precisely the organizations in which program-based competition is most likely, Yabloko and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

Importantly, the most recent election in Bulgaria and Russia witnessed very similar developments—the emergence of new dominant political par-

ties. In Bulgaria, the National Movement of Simeon the Second, a charismatic organization formed around former king Simeon Saksakoburgotski, secured almost 43% of the popular vote and the prime minister's post for the former king. In Russia, renewed state intervention in the party system gave rise to a new party of power, Unity, with strong ties to both Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and the clientelist networks in the regions headed by powerful governors.

The meteoric rise of these organizations provides evidence of the long-standing influence of political legacies. These events also underscore the importance of further study of learning and adaptation in the period of democratic consolidation. Although the new Russian party of power conforms closely to our theory, the evolution of elite strategies to transform Bulgaria's National Movement from a charismatic organization to a durable party organization will shed important light on the relative import of legacies and new institutional structures.

#### **PROBING THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE**

Given the high level of aggregation in our dependent variable, the reader might worry that our findings mask organizational-level processes that account for the seeming cross-national variation. The existing literature on party system competition yields a number of hypotheses that might plausibly explain our pattern of findings and undermine our explanation based on political legacies. In the next section, we examine alternative explanations based in issue salience and party system characteristics and find that the data provide little support for these alternatives.

#### **A Salience Theory of Party Competition**

One possible objection to our interpretation of cross-national differences in parties' programmatic cohesiveness focuses on the impact of issue salience on patterns of programmatic party competition. Salience-based theories of party competition posit that parties compete by boosting the salience of issues in an area they "own" and displaying a clear programmatic profile on these issues (Budge & Farlie, 1983). For example, Agrarian parties may focus on issues surrounding land ownership at the expense of cohesive positions on all other issues.

We use our data to explore two implications derived from a salience-based theory of party competition. If the theory is correct, then the number of issues owned by particular parties would influence the variance we observe across party systems. Aggregation to the party system level could conceal the vari-

ance across party organizations and mask the potential for outliers to drive cross-national differences. Space constrains us from reporting programmatic cohesiveness of individual parties. However, party-level analysis revealed no evidence that outlier parties drive the greater programmatic cohesiveness of East Central Europe compared to Russia and Bulgaria. In fact, the data suggested the reverse might be true. One outlier in both Hungary and Poland actually minimizes the contrast in aggregate level programmatic cohesiveness between these countries and their Bulgarian and Russian counterparts.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, proponents of the salience theory might argue that a party that stakes its voter appeal on a single extremely salient issue could appear incohesive across a larger bundle of issues. In contrast, a party that embraces a larger number of salient issues should coincide with more programmatically cohesive parties. For example, if parties in Russia and Bulgaria base their appeals on fewer issues than East Central European parties, then they may appear less cohesive. Table 5 reports average salience scores for Russia. Neither survey reveals the expected relationship between salience and programmatic cohesiveness. Surprisingly, the data suggest the reverse relationship: High salience can be correlated with lower cohesiveness scores.

The salience theory of party competition also predicts that levels of salience for individual issues should vary across parties. As Table 5 indicates, our data provide little support for this prediction. All parties list some economic issues among their four most salient concerns. In particular, seven of eight Russian parties stress social protection and the inflation/unemployment tradeoff. Similarly, both surveys indicate that six of eight parties attribute high salience to agricultural land ownership, an issue we expected the Agrarians to own. Finally, almost all parties place environmental protection and moral censorship of media in the top half of their issue ranking. The same holds for the Eastern and Central European cases.

There are two clear outliers to this pattern of converging cross-party salience in the Russian case. The first is the issue of child care and women's employment, which was ranked as comparatively low salience by all parties except Women of Russia. The other is protection of Russians in the near-abroad, which is ranked second in importance by the nationalist parties, Zhirinovsky's LDPR (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia), Lebed's Honor, and Motherland and in the middle range by the remaining parties. But these outliers cannot overwhelm a robust overall picture that is confirmed findings from the East Central European surveys.

7. These outliers were charismatic parties: Polish President Lech Walesa's Non-Party Bloc to Support Reforms and Jozsef Torgyan's Independent Smallholders Party in Hungary.

Table 5  
*Salience of Political Issues (Averages for All Parties)*

	Russia Survey 1			Russia Survey 2		
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
<b>Economic issues</b>						
Health/social security	8.86	0.69	1	9.25	0.33	1
Industrial privatization	7.49	0.91	10.5	8.34	0.78	8
Priority in privatization	7.49	0.73	10.5	8.41	0.56	6
Inflation/unemployment	8.35	0.53	3	8.66	0.80	4
Land privatization	8.61	0.78	2	0.09	0.72	2
Market/planned economy	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mean: Economic issues		8.23			8.85	
<b>National autonomy issues</b>						
Foreign investment	7.57	0.46	9	8.19	0.37	9
Alliance system participation	7.63	0.69	8	8.16	0.60	11
Protection of citizens in the near-abroad	8.03	0.96	6	8.37	0.64	7
Mean: National issues		7.74			8.24	
<b>Cultural issues</b>						
Treatment of minorities	6.99	0.64	14	7.45	0.56	14
Language use in school	6.41	0.59	15	6.88	0.84	15
Women's role in economy	7.39	1.02	12.5	7.72	1.07	12.5
Environment/economic growth	8.22	0.44	5	8.60	0.51	5
Role of church in schools	5.95	0.80	16	6.42	0.79	16
Support for death penalty	7.39	0.87	12.5	8.11	0.27	12.5
Moral censorship in mass media	8.33	0.65	4	8.85	0.51	3
Compatibility of traditional values and social reform	7.68	0.95	7	8.18	0.77	10
Mean: Cultural issues		7.34			7.89	

*Note:* There are no salience measure for ideology questions. NA = not applicable.

### Insider Versus Outsider Judgments

A second possibility is that system-level measurements of cohesion mask strategic disputes between the respondents' assessment of their parties' positions versus evaluations by competitors. Partisan insiders may try to construct a reputation that has wide voter appeal, whereas politicians from other parties may try to replace that image with one they believe is less appealing for voters. In these cases, party issue scores depend on the party affiliation of the judge. We refer to this as a systematic asymmetry of judgments. If systematic asymmetries exist, our measure may conceal a deeper struggle among parties over reputations.

This condition is most likely when applied to issues in which politicians know that most voters prefer a particular policy, such as national health insurance. If most voters want national health insurance as a component of a dense social safety network, then market liberal politicians are likely to exaggerate their own party's support for national health insurance. In contrast, communists' scores will place liberal parties as far from the public's ideal point as possible but score their own party close to it.

We measure systematic asymmetries by regressing respondents' scores for each parties' position on (a) the party label of the evaluated party, (b) the party membership of the respondent, and (c) the interaction term between the evaluated party's label and the judge's own party affiliation. Because our independent variables are nominally scaled, we employ an ANOVA routine. Using this technique, systematic asymmetry is revealed by comparing the percentage of variance explained by the interaction term compared to an equation without the interaction term.

Table 6 reports the percentage of variance in Russian parties' issue positions accounted for by the interaction term as well as the total explained variance of the entire equation for our second survey. Results for the first survey are very similar.

The interaction term is statistically significant if the explained variance exceeds 5%. As the data show, in the few instances in which systematic asymmetries are significant, their explanatory power is modest. To provide a standard of comparison for systematic asymmetries, our surveys include the ultimate valence question, affect for one's own party and other parties. Every politician prefers his or her party to all others. As a consequence, estimations of sympathy toward a party reveal a strong interaction between the identity of the evaluated party and the party membership of the respondent, accounting for upwards of 50% of the variance in all cases. In contrast, systematic asymmetries on policy issues rarely top 10%.

The comparative data demonstrate that the systematic asymmetry component in the assessment of Russian programmatic party cohesion is modest and consistent with levels found in other Central European countries. In fact, some of the countries with more cohesive programmatic party systems show greater systematic asymmetries. Hungarian respondents affiliated with the former Communist Party toned down the party's socialist leanings on economic and social policy questions, whereas their opponents exaggerated the socialists' economic policy positions. The data simply does not support the claim that systematic asymmetries in parties' issue placement manufacture the low level of programmatic cohesiveness of Russian parties.

Table 6  
*Systematic Asymmetries in the Evaluation of Party Positions*

	Russia 1 Asymmetry	Russia 2 Asymmetry	Russia 2 Total Variance
Economic issues			
Health/social security	7	4	50
Industrial privatization	4	2	61
Privatization priorities	3	2	45
Inflation/unemployment	3	2	54
Land privatization	3	3	65
Market/planned economy	3	2	65
Mean: Economic issues	3.5	2.5	56.7
National issues			
Foreign/investment	3	2	55
Nationalism/cosmopolitanism	2	2	56
Alliance system participation	3	2	49
Protection of citizens in the near-abroad	4	9	29
Mean: National issues	3	3.8	47.3
Cultural issues			
Treatment of minorities	8	10	21
Language use in schools	3	3	23
Women's roles	5	2	16
Environment/economic growth	9	6	15
Role of church in schools	6	4	24
Death penalty	3	2	55
Media censorship	8	5	45
Individualism/traditionalism	5	4	52
Traditional values/social reform	3	2	45
Mean: Cultural issues	5	3.4	45

*Note:* Measured in terms of the percentage of explained variance.

### Party System Polarization and Fragmentation

Finally, it is possible that we observe cross-country variance due to features of the party systems—specifically, degrees of polarization and fragmentation—and not the legacy and institutional variables we suggest. Scaling effects inherent in our measures might cause ideologically polarized party systems to score higher on our index of programmatic party cohesiveness despite low levels of programmatic competition. Specifically, a wide range of responses would tend to draw the parties' means toward the center of the issue scale and away from the radical endpoints. Put another way, given

our scale, it is very difficult for a party to have a radical mean issue position and still appear incohesive.<sup>8</sup>

In terms of our argument, if the Russian party system is less polarized or less fragmented than the other cases in our sample, our finding of high levels of incohesiveness might be driven by the nature of party system competition. To examine the level of polarization in the Russian party system, we calculate a measure of polarization for each policy issue using the standard deviation of all parties' mean positions on an issue scale. If politicians can distribute eight parties over a 10-point issue scale, then a score in the neighborhood of 2.0 to 2.5 indicates rather hefty polarization, whereas a score around 1.0 to 1.5 suggests muted polarization. Table 7 presents polarization data for Russia and the four East Central European countries.

By cross-national comparative standards, the Russian party system is both more polarized and programmatically diffuse on more salient issues.<sup>9</sup> Despite fragmentation and polarization, Russian parties' mean issue positions are widely scattered across the issue scales. However, these parties nevertheless display a greater lack of cohesiveness than those of the other polities. Politicians identify the KPRF (Communist Party of the Russian Federation) and the Agrarians generally as anti-market and Yabloko as generally pro-market, but they also score each of these parties very differently, suggesting that respondents perceive these parties to speak with many different and ambiguous voices. This pattern asserts itself despite the arithmetic tendency for programmatically diffuse party systems to exhibit a regression of parties' average policy positions to the center of the scale.<sup>10</sup> It is safe to conclude, therefore, that the low average programmatic cohesiveness of Russian political parties stems from low levels of issue-based competition.

A related objection argues that the degree of party system fragmentation may distort our aggregated measure of programmatic cohesion. This objection derives from modification of Downs's (1957) theory of spatial party competition. In multiparty systems with a dominant dimension of competition, office-seeking politicians have an incentive to advertise diverging policy programs (Cox, 1990; Shepsle, 1991). In equilibrium, the more "crowded" the system, the narrower the market segment available to office-seeking politicians, creating strong incentives for politicians to articulate sharply contoured, cohesive policy programs. According to this logic, politi-

8. It is important to note that party-level analysis reveals that insiders consistently identify themselves as more extreme than their opponents do.

9. In Russia, the correlations between issue salience (see Table 2) and polarization (see Table 6) are  $r = +.43$  ( $N = 16$ ) for the first survey and  $r = +.58$  for the second survey ( $N = 16$ ).

10. In all surveys, programmatic cohesiveness exhibits a negative correlation with system polarization ( $r = -.21$  in survey 1/ $N = 19$ ;  $r = -.39$  in survey 2/ $N = 19$  in Russia).

Table 7  
*Polarization Among Russian and East European Parties*

	Russia 1	Russia 2	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland
Economic issues						
Health/social security	2.06	2.16	1.09	2.04	0.90	1.66
Industrial privatization	2.26	2.33	1.89	2.27	1.23	1.85
Privatization priorities	1.55	1.94	1.18	2.13	1.56	1.80
Inflation/unemployment	1.83	2.07	1.42	2.27	1.04	1.94
Land privatization	2.47	2.59	1.70	2.18	1.42	1.44
Market/planned economy	2.17	2.41	1.70	2.15	1.47	1.99
Mean: Economic issues	2.06	2.25	1.50	2.17	1.27	1.78
National issues						
Foreign investment	2.11	2.26	1.66	2.42	1.89	2.08
Nationalism/cosmopolitanism	2.05	2.17	0.90	1.61	2.18	2.18
Alliance system participation	1.56	2.04	2.08	NA	NA	NA
Protection of citizens in near-abroad	0.93	1.07	NA	NA	2.56	NA
Mean: National issues	1.64	1.89	1.55	2.02	2.21	2.13
Cultural issues						
Treatment of minorities	0.77	0.77	NA	0.99	1.52	1.37
Language use in schools	1.08	0.99	1.62	NA	NA	NA
Women's roles	0.53	0.94	0.52	1.71	1.71	1.42
Environment/economic growth	0.70	0.70	0.95	0.66	0.43	0.52
Role of church in schools	0.99	1.09	1.09	2.46	2.98	2.61
Death penalty	1.98	2.25	NA	NA	NA	NA
Media censorship	1.68	1.78	1.23	1.14	2.27	1.89
Individualism/traditionalism	1.89	2.00	1.23	1.33	2.65	2.08
Traditional values/social reform	2.03	1.79	1.18	0.95	2.51	1.89
Mean: Cultural Issues	1.74	1.78	1.21	1.32	2.01	1.68

Note: NA = not applicable.

cians' incentives to project ambiguous and diffuse programmatic messages should increase as the number of parties in a system falls or the dimensions of competition increase.

To test these claims, we construct a measure of party system fragmentation by counting the parties that meet a minimal criterion of electoral relevance (4% of the national legislative vote) and calculating the effective number of parties using the Herfindahl-Hirschman concentration index (Taagepera & Shugart, 1989). We use factor analysis to measure the dimensions of competition. Consistent with other studies, we find that the Bulgarian, Czech, and Russian systems tend toward one-dimensional competition, whereas Hungary and Poland have two dimensions (Evans & Whitefield, 1998; Klingemann, 1998).

Table 8 relates these patterns to the programmatic cohesiveness of the postcommunist party systems, characterized by average scores for all issues, economic issues, issues relating to national autonomy, and sociocultural issues that were also salient in Russia. Overall, these results do not support a modified Downsian account. Columns 1 and 2 show that the most programmatically diffuse party systems, Bulgaria and Russia, encompass the smallest and the largest systems in the sample. Furthermore, the findings reported in column 3 directly contradict the modified Downsian hypothesis. With the exception of the Czech Republic, the data also reveal a positive correlation between issue dimensions and the party cohesiveness, a pattern that is especially pronounced when looking at sociocultural issues. In the face of a number of alternative hypotheses, our explanation of the emergence of party system cohesiveness based in legacies and institutions appears robust.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our article employs data on the emerging postcommunist democracies to test theories of programmatic party cohesiveness, with a particular interest in accounting for the Russian case. Early evidence supports our proposition that both legacies and institutions explain diverging patterns of programmatic party cohesiveness in postcommunist regimes. The evidence also suggests that in the early rounds of democratic competition, legacies of communist rule matter more than the new democratic institutions and that these legacies are likely to have a long-term impact on party system development.

Over time, however, we argue that politicians adapt to the incentives provided by new institutions adopted early in the transition. The Bulgaria-Russia contrast—two cases that share a similar legacy but different democratic regime structures—is critical to understanding the timing and process of political learning during the consolidation period and should be an important focus of future work. The overall picture suggests a growing dissimilarity between patterns of party competition in East and Central European postcommunist countries and Russia. Our data reveal that these differences are initially promoted by different legacies of precommunist and communist rule but are enhanced by the power of democratic institutions to shape politicians' strategies. To explore our claims that institutions gradually dominate the incentives that shape whatever “equilibrium” evolves from party competition, we would need a broad cross-sectional comparison of postcommunist polities and longitudinal analysis of party dynamics.

These findings are a first step toward understanding the relationship between different types of mass-elite linkages and the quality of democracy

Table 8  
*Party System Format and Programmatic Cohesiveness*

	Measures of Party System Format			Programmatic Cohesiveness of the Party System			
	No. of Parties With > 4% of Vote	Effective No. Of Parties (N)	No. Of Competitive Issue Dimensions	All Policy Issues	Economic Issues	National- Ethnic Issues	Social Issues
Russia	9	11.1 (12/95)	1	2.00	1.99	2.00	2
Survey 1				2.05	2.05	2.03	2
Survey 2				1.96	1.93	1.97	1
Bulgaria	5	3.9 (12/94)	1	1.81	1.85	1.79	1
Czech Republic	9	7.7 (6/92)	1	1.53	1.47	1.53	1
Hungary	6	5.5 (5/94)	2	1.52	1.66	1.62	1
Poland	9	9.8 (9/93)	2	1.52	1.58	1.75	1

that emerges from postcommunist transitions. Our theoretical account and empirical findings of variation in party cohesiveness among the postcommunist party systems of Russia and Eastern Europe are suggestive but certainly not conclusive. This article cannot fully account for the linkages that will emerge over time in cases in which cohesiveness is low. We would require both a more expansive theory of linkage formation and alternative data that measure clientelism directly to establish such claims. Moreover, to understand the role of political learning for politicians' strategies over time, we must monitor party development over numerous rounds of electoral competition. Such studies could establish whether political learning actually does increase politicians' propensities to revise their strategies in agreement with the diverging institutional incentives that each democratic polity offers for the creation of programmatic parties.

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*Herbert Kitschelt is professor of political science at Duke University. His research interests include studying social movements and political party organizations in comparative perspective. He has conducted empirical research in Western Europe, East Central Europe, the former Soviet states, and Latin America. He is the author of numerous articles and award-winning books. His most recent work (as coauthor) is Postcommunist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Interparty Cooperation (Cambridge University Press, 1999).*

*Regina Smyth is an assistant professor of political science at Pennsylvania State University. Her research interests include the emergence of mechanisms that enable state responsiveness and accountability in transitional Russia. She is currently completing a book-length manuscript on candidate influences on state-society linkages in the Russian Federation and another manuscript exploring the evolution of the Russian party system.*