What Is Different About Post-Communist Party Systems? 1
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in Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations
Published in print: 1998 Published Online: November 2003
Item type: chapter

This is the second of three chapters on political party systems and structures of competition, and looks at post-communist party systems in Europe. The author’s intention is to explore some preliminary thoughts on the specific characteristics of newly emerging party systems, and of newly emerging post-communist party systems in particular, and to identify the major reasons why these newly emerging systems may look and perform differently from established party systems. It is suggested that differences in the democratization process, in the character of the electorate, and in the context of competition, together create formidable obstacles in the path of eventual consolidation, and that these also imply a pattern of party competition likely to prove both more conflictual and adversarial than is the case within the established democracies. The approach has been to identify the sort of factors that have encouraged the stabilization and institutionalization of established party systems, and then to turn these on their head in order to hypothesize and speculate about the sort of factors likely to be absent from newly emerging party systems, and from post-communist party systems in particular. The discussion is presented in five sections: (1) Newly Emerging Party Systems; (2) Post-Communist Democratization is Different; (3) The Electorate and the Parties are Different; (4) The Context of Competition is Different; and (5) The Pattern of Competition is Different.

Electoral Markets and Stable States
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in Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations
Published in print: 1998 Published Online: November 2003
DOI: 10.1093/0198295499.003.0007
This is the first of three chapters on political party systems and structures of competition, and looks at electoral markets in Europe. It begins by clarifying the term ‘electoral markets’ in the context of the chapter, noting first that the competition to be investigated is inter-party competition, which will arise when parties have a market in which to compete (i.e. when there are voters in competition), and is at least in part a function of the size of the electoral market. Second, it notes that when parties confront an electoral market, they have a choice of two not necessarily exclusive strategies -- defensive or expansive; and third, that the size of the markets in general, and the degree of electoral availability, is largely a function of the strength and pervasiveness of the relevant political identities. The first section of the chapter, Developments and Contrasts in Western Europe, looks at the history of the development of political parties in western Europe as a history of attempts to narrow the electoral market through the promotion and inculcation of mass political identities; it concludes that, other things being equal, polities characterized by the presence of strong identities are likely to be less competitive than those where they are not, and will, more precisely, tend to be more consensual. The next section of the chapter, ‘Electoral Markets and Consociational Democracy’, leads on naturally to a discussion of consociational democracies (which are plural societies) in western Europe, and this is followed, in ‘Small States and Large States’, by an examination of the differences in policy style in small states (which are largely consensual) and large states (which are adversarial, with high electoral volatility). The last section ‘Some Implications for the New East European Democracies’, applies the previous discussion to eastern Europe.