Patterns of Political Instability: Affiliation Patterns of Politicians and Voters in Post-Communist Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania*

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In contrast to established party systems, the transformation of post-communist party systems is not only shaped by shifts in electoral preferences, but also by the changing organizational loyalties of politicians. Post-communist politicians pursue a wide range of organizational strategies such as party fusions, fissions, start-ups, and interparty switching. By focusing on the interaction between these organizational strategies and voters' electoral preferences, we argue that the seeming instability of post-communist party systems actually reveals distinct patterns of political change. The article develops an analytical framework, which incorporates politician-driven interparty mobility and voter-induced electoral change. It uses this framework to show that the apparently inchoate party systems of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania actually follow definable modes of transformation.

A mong political scientists, there is considerable agreement that party systems are central, if not paramount, for the consolidation of democracies. Elster, Offe, and Preuss speak for a long line of scholars when they note that "the structure and the interaction of political parties are the most significant variables which contribute to the consolidation or failure of the political systems of democratic politics" (1998, 110-11). However, there is far less agreement about what consolidates party systems in the first place. One school of thought, inspired by Lipset and Rokkan's work, views party system institutionalization as a bottom-up process in which the gradual coagulation of voter

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preferences produces stable socio-economic cleavages and reasonably durable voter alignments. Another school of thought points to parties' organizational weakness, volatile electorates, and politicians' continuous interparty mobility to conclude that party system formation is a top-down process shaped primarily by historical contingencies and strategic action.

These two schools of thoughts have produced research that differs considerably in its theoretical sophistication and methodological rigor. The first, structural line of inquiry borrows extensively from literatures on partisan identification, path dependence and political sociology, and engages in extensive, cross-national survey research (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Miller et al. 1998; Reisinger et al. 1995; Toka 1998). By contrast, the second, political-research approach has produced numerous empirically rich, but theoretically and methodologically underdeveloped, studies. Commonly, these studies stress the organizational flux of parties along with exorbitant levels of volatility and hyper-fragmentation, and conclude that party systems do not yet exist (Elster et al. 1998; Geddes 1995; Grofman et al. 2000: 349; Lewis 2000; Mair 1997: 175). Our goal is to build a bridge between these two schools by pointing to and partly remedying the analytical and theoretical shortcomings plaguing the second political line of inquiry.

The key for developing a more sophisticated political analysis of party system development is to place affiliation patterns of both voters and politicians on a firmer analytical and conceptual footing. Studies emphasizing political factors are surprisingly unanimous in considering voters' lack of partisan identification and politicians' shifting organizational loyalties as the key microobstacles to the macro-institutionalization of party systems. Yet, despite this tacit agreement, there has been no systematic attempt to differentiate these different forms of electoral and organizational disloyalty, analyze their interactions, compare them across countries, and ultimately provide a theoretically grounded explanation.[1] We will do so first by elaborating a typology of politicians' organizational and voters' electoral affiliations; second, by exploring how the combination of these two levels of affiliation produces distinct patterns of party system institutionalization; and third, by using this analytical framework to compare the development of party systems in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In doing so, we hope to bring the same level of analysis to the political underpinnings of party systems that has been achieved in examining their structural causes. And in creating a more equitable playing field, we also hope that it will become easier to assess the respective causal importance of these two dimensions as well as investigate the possible interactions existing between them.[2]

Analytical Framework: Electoral and Organizational Affiliation Strategies

Given that stable Western party systems constitute the primary point of departure for analyzing post-communist party systems, the lack of stable electoral partisan identification and loyal organizational affiliations among politicians in post-communist democracies has widely been read as evidence for the absence of any meaningful party systems. Mair, for example, points out that "the

very notion of a newly emerging party *system* [in Eastern Europe] may well be a contradiction in terms, in that to speak of a system of parties is to ascribe some degree of stability and predictability to the interactions between the parties concerned" (emphasis in original) (Mair 1997: 175). Such Western-centric reasoning overlooks the fact that instability can have patterns just as distinct as those of stability. That is, the formation of new party systems is subject to regularities just as much as the transformation of established party systems. However, to identify such regularities, we have to stop treating instability as an undifferentiated residual category and move towards a classificatory framework capable of capturing patterns of electoral and organizational non- or reaffiliation. The key to detecting patterns of post-communist party system transformation is a closer analysis of how politicians shift their organizational allegiances and how voters align themselves with parties.

Organizational Affiliation Strategies

One important reason why scholars fail to recognize any patterns in the instability of post-communist party systems is their neglect of politicians' organizational affiliation choices (Kreuzer and Pettai 2002). Zielinski correctly notes that the "period of organizational confusion [in transitional democracies] is frequently perceived as temporary phenomena lacking any wider theoretical significance" (2002: 184-85). Yet, Goldie Shabad and Kazimierz Slomczynski have shown that the "political tourism" practiced by organizationally disloyal post-communist politicians does follow distinct itineraries (2001: 2). Building on this work, we differentiate between five possible affiliation strategies available to a politician in developing his/her political career. We describe the strategies below; a summary overview is provided in Appendix 1.

i) Staying Put: Staying put involves a politician remaining affiliated with his/her current party. Staying put also covers a party's temporary membership in an electoral alliance *(apparentement)* even when such an alliance adopts a name different from the politician's original party.

ii) Party Switching: Party switching occurs when a politician reaffiliates with another existing party. Both the exit and entry parties have to have been in existence for at least one election prior to the switch, otherwise we classify such reaffiliations as fission or start-up (see below). Party switching is also distinguished from fusion, where the majority of a party's members reaffiliate in the form of a merger with another party. In this respect, it is important to note that our definition of party switching is more restrictive than that employed by others. Shabad and Slomczynski as well as Desposato, for example, consider any form of interparty mobility—that is, both fusions and fissions—as party switching.

iii) Fusion: Fusion is a collective reaffiliation strategy through which a majority of members from two or more parties merge to form a totally new party. Fusions can involve parties which have not participated in at least one election prior to the merger. Parties, however, are considered merged only if they integrate their organizations, adopt a new name (even if only a hyphenated version of their old names), and agree on a single party leader. Mere electoral

alliances are not considered mergers, even if they involve a special name or if the parties continue the alliance in the subsequent legislature (i.e., sit as a single party group).

iv) Fission: Fission is a collective affiliation strategy in which a minority group of politicians breaks away from an established party to form a new party. We also classify as fission cases where a politician breaks away from an established party to run as an independent[3] or decides to join a fission party before the latter has participated in its first election.

v) Starting Up: Starting up differs from the other strategies since it involves previously unaffiliated individuals creating a brand-new party and does not involve mobility between an existing exit or entry party. Start-up parties are hence distinguished from fusion and fission parties in that they lack any parliamentary representation at the moment of their creation and have not previously run in any parliamentary election. They are often what Duverger (1951) labeled "externally created" parties that emerge from social movements or interest groups and that differ from internally created, largely memberless parties established by already elected politicians. Although such parties may over time attract individual incumbent deputies or other active politicians to their ranks, such reaffiliations occur rarely, as start-up parties are usually reluctant to compromise their novel status by welcoming incumbent politicians. Such re-affiliations are therefore considered start-up only if they follow the creation of a start-up party and are inconsequential to the formation of the party. If such reaffiliations are all from a single existing party, then they are classified as fission.

Electoral Affiliation Strategies

A second, more extensively studied determinant of party system institutionalization concerns change in the electoral affiliations of voters. There are many ways to analyze these different patterns. Studies on electoral volatility, for example, measure the magnitude of electoral vote switching for an entire party system and thus provide a useful insight into the aggregate stability of voter affiliations. Election studies, in turn, further differentiate these patterns by mapping out the ideological trajectories of voters and their changing party preferences (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Tucker 2002; Whitefield 2002). Yet, while detailed knowledge about voters' partisan alignments is key for understanding party system institutionalization, it is frequently the case that the relevant polling data is unavailable. Given this problem, we can classify voters' electoral affiliations according to seven basic choices available to them: i) they can re-vote for the same party they supported in the previous election; ii) they can switch to another already existing party; iii-iv-v) they can opt for either a fusion, fission, or start-up party; vi) they can spoil their ballot; or vii) they can abstain. For our purposes, it is important to note that the last two strategies involve a form of political non-involvement, since they signal either protest or political alienation. Although such non-involvement is clearly important for assessing democratic consolidation, it does not directly shape the development of party systems. As a result, we exclude them from this analysis. In-

stead, we concentrate on the first five strategies, that is, the frequency of voters' affiliation changes and their preferences among for different party origins. We can thus observe the extent to which voters durably align themselves (by staying with their current choice), realign themselves (by switching to another existing party), or de-align themselves (by opting for a fusion, fission, or start-up party).

This interest in the continuity of voters' electoral alignments raises the question of how best to differentiate between new and old parties. Following the example of established party systems, new parties could, for example, be defined as having contested three or less elections. However, benchmarking 'new" in post-communist democracies is more complicated since arguably everything is new. For example, defining "new" based on a comparison with inter-war parties is largely useless, as such parties have played only a marginal role since the reemergence of electoral competition in the region. Rather, in the Baltic cases a much better baseline involves the reestablishment of independence in August 1991, for this served also as a clear watershed in the development of parties. That is to say, almost all of those parties which predate independence in August 1991 were actually established at least seven months prior to that date. In Estonia, fifteen out of sixteen pre-independence (or established) parties were formed in 1990 or earlier, in Latvia seven out of nine, and in Lithuania eleven out of thirteen. Moreover, very few parties were formed between independence and the first post-independence election (none in Lithuania, one in Latvia, and two in Estonia). In short, there is a clear and significant temporal distance between established, pre-independence parties and new post-independence parties that justifies the selection of independence as benchmark for classifying parties.[4] As a result, we will classify all parties created before the reestablishment of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian independence in August 1991 as established parties and all those established after independence as new parties. Moreover, as will be seen below, the new post-independence parties closely overlap with parties that emerged through fusions, fissions, and start-ups. Out of the three countries' forty-five fusion, fission, and start-up parties, only three parties were formed before independence. Thus, discussion of post-independence parties is tantamount to talking about fission, fusion, or start-up parties.

To make our typology broadly applicable, it is worthwhile also taking a quick look at the usefulness of employing national independence as a benchmark in other post-communist democracies. This criterion becomes problematic outside the Soviet and Yugoslav successor states for two reasons. First, for Central and East European countries, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not produce a clear-cut independence date, but an expansion of national sovereignty, which oftentimes is difficult to date precisely. Second, the different types of communist regimes in these countries often produced very different transition modes and durations (Kitschelt et al. 1999). As a result, it becomes difficult to find transition points that are as clear-cut as in the Baltics. We therefore suggest using founding elections as an alternative benchmark for distinguishing "established" from "new" parties. For example, Reich defines founding elections as the "first competitive, multiparty elections occurring during a tran-

sition to democracy after (a) at least ten years of authoritarian rule and (b) following reforms that allow for the formation of multiple political parties independent of the state and free from state repression" (2001: 1239-40). This criterion works well for national communist regimes (Poland, Hungary) which, just like the Baltics, prompted resistance movements from which proto-parties emerged prior to the founding election[5] (Kitschelt et al. 1999). In the case of bureaucratic communism (e.g., East Germany and Czechoslovakia) and patrimonial communism (e.g., Rumania and Bulgaria), founding elections provide a more ambiguous benchmark. Bureaucratic and patrimonial communism never fueled popular opposition movements; rather, they imploded virtually overnight. As a result, the lack of struggle against communism removed a key impetus for the formation of parties prior to founding elections (Kitschelt et al. 1999). These two types of communism thus come close to what Elster, Offe, and Preuss call "actor-less transitions," or transitions in which parties existing prior to the founding election were so rudimentary that it does not make sense to consider them established parties (Elster, Offe, and Preuss 1998).

Patterns of Party System Transformation

The structure of a party system is therefore ultimately shaped by the *interaction* of both politicians' organizational affiliations and voters' electoral choices. In Table 1 we summarize these resulting patterns. However, rather than generating a full five-by-five matrix, we collapse voter options into a single "preference change" row in order to make the table more manageable.[6]

A preliminary glance at Table 1 illustrates that of the ten possible transformation patterns several can coexist at the same time. For example, during the 1990s, Italian politicians both switched from one existing party to another and defected to new start-up parties, while voters shifted their allegiances to other existing parties and to new start-up parties. The multiple choices available to voters and especially to politicians thus means that the dynamic of party system transformation can, but does not have to, be driven by multiple dynamics. The prominence or even exclusivity of one pattern over another is thus contingent on the choices of politicians and voters. Further on, we present some empirical evidence about these choices. For now, however, we will describe these transformation patterns and then discuss the ways in which they consolidate or deconsolidate party systems. The ten permutations can be grouped into three general patterns—alignment, realignment, or de-alignment—depending on the consolidating effects of each.

Alignment patterns. Cells I a & b represent the preeminent consolidated party system. In such systems, neither voters nor political actors change their preferences; or if they do, it is very slowly or only in small numbers. Such systems have also been called "frozen" or "over-institutionalized." This lack of change has been attributed to deeply rooted social cleavages, tightly organized mass mobilization, or extensive patronage networks, all of which impede changes in voter and politician affiliation (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Schedler 1995). In transitional democracies, the standard for alignment is somewhat less strict than in established democracies. For these systems, it makes

Table 1
Patterns of Party System Transformation

		Incumbents' Organizational Affiliations				
		Staying Put	Switching	Fusion	Fission	Start-up
Voters' Electoral Choices	No Preference Change	Ia. Alignmt. (Frozen W. Europe, patronage parties)	IIb. Legis. Realignmt. (LDP faction switching)	IId. Legis. De-alignmt.	IIIa. Legisl. De-alignmt. (Weimar)	Ib. Alignmt.
	Preference Change	IIa. Elect. Realignmt. (Unfrozen W. Europe, Lithuania)	IIc. Elect. & Legis. Realignmt. (Fr. III Rep., Brazil, Italy 1990s)	IIe. Elect. & Legis. De-alignmt. (Germany 1950s, Estonia)	IIIb. Elect. & Legis. De-alignmt. (Japan 1990s; Baltics)	IIIc. Elect. & Legis. De-alignmt. (Weimar, CND & Italy 1990s, Baltics)

sense to define alignment in terms of a *growing* number of politicians staying put along with an *increasing* number of voters developing stable partisan affiliations.

Realignment patterns. Realignment patterns represent either consolidated party systems undergoing some restructuring or new, proto-party systems moving towards consolidation. In Table 1, patterns II a-e reflect dynamics in which voters change their partisan preferences and political actors switch party affiliations. For example, cell IIa encapsulates the classical realignment of Southern Democrats in the United States to the Republican Party during the postwar era. While this realignment was aided by the occasional reaffiliation of Democratic congressmen, it was overwhelmingly driven by voters changing their partisan affiliations. Realignment patterns II b & d, meanwhile, are relatively uncommon since it is rare for incumbents to either switch or merge without some voters following them at the ballot box. Still, factional switching within the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party could constitute an example for pattern IIb, while the fusion of small fringe parties demonstrates pattern IId. Patterns IIc and IIe are more common. The former can be found in transitional democracies (such as Brazil), in established democracies with undisciplined parties (such as French Third or Fourth Republics), or in established democracies experiencing a political crisis (such as Italy in the 1990s). The degree to which such party switching consolidates a party system depends on whether switchers hop from smaller to larger parties and on whether they remain affiliated or continue to switch to whichever party has the best winning prospect (Desposato 2000; Mainwaring 1999; Mershon and Heller 2001; Shabad and Slomczynski 2001). Finally, pattern IIe plays an important role in consolidating party systems. In postwar West Germany, for instance, the assimilation of various conservative parties by the Christian Democratic Union and the voters' endorsement of this move in subsequent elections together contributed centrally to the consolidation of that country's party system.

De-alignment patterns. The de-alignment patterns displayed in cells III a-c represent the de-consolidation of established party systems or the continued lack of consolidation of transitional party systems. The instability of these patterns results from the fact that voters and/or politicians change their preferences, but they do so by opting for new, rather than existing parties. Fissions constitute one source of new parties. In established democracies these are admittedly rare, occurring once every three elections (i.e., 9 to 12 years); they also rarely prove electorally successful (Mair 1990: 187). In transitional democracies they occur more frequently, but as far as we can tell from the Baltic examples, their electoral appeal is still limited. The most common source of de-alignment comes from start-up parties. Parties like Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia, Hitler's NSDAP, or the Bloc Québecois and the Reform Party in Canada are all examples of groups that have fundamentally transformed their country's political landscape. Moreover, it is important to underscore that this transformation often owes much more to the appeal or organizational skills of new political entrants than to the reaffiliation of incumbents.[7] Following our earlier definition, we will therefore count as start-up only those politicians who reaffiliate after a start-up party has been founded and who do so on an individual basis. Generally speaking, start-up reaffiliations are not very common since most start-up parties run against the political establishment and thus have more to lose by inviting incumbents into their ranks (Kreuzer 2001: 133-65).

Empirical Application

The typology outlined above provides a firm basis for analyzing the development of party systems in post-communist and other transitional democracies. By combining the organizational affiliations of politicians with the electoral choices of voters, we are less biased towards detecting patterns of stability and hence better able to capture the wide array of transformation patterns found in most transitional democracies. From Table 2, moreover, it becomes apparent why relying on conventional indicators of party system institutionalization— i.e., the effective number of electoral parties to indicate fragmentation or general electoral volatility to demonstrate the durability of voter affiliations—are of limited use in the Baltics.[8] By these two measures, the three Baltic party systems appear so atomized and in flux that they barely resemble anything like established democracies. Their effective number of electoral parties is two to three times higher than the average 3.3 parties found in advanced industrialized democracies (Lijphart 1999: 76-77). Their volatility levels, in turn, are between four and nine times higher than the average 8.4 percent reported for post-war European democracies, and two to three times higher than other East European democracies (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Mair 1997: 182). These volatility and fragmentation figures underscore a degree of voter preference change that is dramatic even by post-communist standards. Overall, then, these conventional indicators leave us with the impression of a totally inchoate party system without a clear developmental pattern. By now this should not surprise us since these indicators (with the implicit assumption of parties as stable uni-

Table 2
Baltic Party Systems

| | Fragmentation | | | | Volatility[1] | |
	First Election	Second Election	Third Election	Average	By 2nd Election	By 3rd Election
Estonia	9.5	10.6	7.0	9.0	61.1%	40.4%
Latvia	6.2	10.1	7.6	8.0	57.7%	74.2%
Lithuania	4.0	7.3	5.6	5.6	40.9%	72.9%

[1]The possibility and extensive use of *apparentements* (i.e., electoral alliances) complicates the computation of volatility in the Baltics. We therefore disaggregated the vote shares of *apparentements* using post-election seat apportionment of *apparentement* members. If an *apparentement* did not win seats, then we used pre-election seat distribution.

tary actors) only capture three (Ia, IIa, and IIId) of the ten possible transformation patterns outlined in Table 1.

The next two sections therefore inquire whether our alternative analytical framework allows us to actually detect some patterns in this apparent flux. First, we look at the frequency with which active politicians select among the different available organizational affiliation strategies. Second, we look at the frequency with which voters choose among the different types of political parties. As indicated earlier, we classify the different party types by their origin rather than ideological orientation. Thus, the remainder of this article analyzes the extent to which politicians coordinate their organizational choices and voters coordinate their electoral choices.[9]

Organizational Affiliation Patterns of Politicians

Many commentators of East European politics capture the lack of organizational continuity among post-communist politicians by referring to them simply as "political tourists" or "institutional nomads" (Shabad and Slomczynski 2001: 2). To analyze such organizational affiliation patterns in a more systematic matter, however, we base our analysis on the five organizational strategies listed in the top row of Table 1. Second, we define our set of "politicians" as anyone who ran as a candidate in any two consecutive parliamentary elections in the Baltic states during the period 1992-2002.[10] Thus, we compiled complete candidate lists for the ten elections that took place during this period.[11] Next, we compared each pair of consecutive elections and for each pair generated a list of repeat candidates.[12] Finally, we compared the party affiliations of each repeat candidate for each election pair. Any shifts were classified according to our five affiliation strategies. The results are reported in Table 3.

Unquestionably, the most distinct feature of Table 3 is the considerable organizational disloyalty evident among Baltic politicians. The latter would appear to have very different affiliation calculi than their counterparts in

Table 3
Organizational Affiliation Patterns of Baltic Politicians

	Staying Put	Switching	Fusion	Fission	Start-Up
Estonia:					
b/w 1st-2nd election:	25.2%	10.9%	39.8%	21.2%	2.9%
b/w 2nd-3rd election:	57.0%	19.1%	20.3%	2.6%	0.9%
Average:	*41.1%*	*15.0%*	*30.0%*	*11.9%*	*1.9%*
Latvia:					
b/w 1st-2nd election:	67.2%	15.7%	8.0%	4.2%	4.9%
b/w 2nd-3rd election:	47.0%	14.3%	25.0%	0.7%	13.0%
b/w 3rd-4th election:	69.6%	8.8%	5.8%	5.5%	10.2%
Average:	*61.3%*	*12.9%*	*12.9%*	*3.4%*	*9.4%*
Lithuania:					
b/w 1st-2nd election:	70.7%	19.3%	3.1%	1.9%	8.1%
b/w 2nd-3rd election:	67.3%	13.9%	2.5%	12.8%	3.5%
Average:	*68.9%*	*16.6%*	*2.7%*	*7.4%*	*5.8%*
Baltic average:	**57.1%**	**14.9%**	**15.3%**	**7.6%**	**5.7%**

established democracies. The fact that an average of only 57.1 percent of repeat candidates stayed with the same political party between any pair of elections suggests that the payoffs of continuous party affiliation are smaller in post-communist than in established democracies. Parties' lack of a brand name, their limited logistical infrastructure, and the generally high political price that the transition to a market economy has imposed on politicians are only some of the reasons why staying put with the same party is not necessarily the most advantageous affiliation choice.[13] Moreover, the average of politicians staying put has only marginally risen over time from 54.4 to 57 percent.

Despite this low overall level of organizational loyalty, however, there are still important cross-national variations, suggesting that country-specific factors interact with more general post-communist environments in shaping party affiliation. These variations differ by degree, but they will become more pronounced in the next section where we look at voters' electoral choices. For now, we see that Lithuania demonstrated the least organizational disloyalty, as fully 69 percent of its repeat candidates chose on average to stay put between elections. When Lithuanian politicians did switch their affiliation, they generally adhered to a risk-adverse realignment dynamic, as 53.5 percent of all reaffiliating politicians favored party switching to the other reaffiliation alternatives. The shake-up of existing parties through fusions or fissions played a far smaller role in Lithuania than in the other Baltic countries, accounting for only 32.8 percent of reaffiliations. Finally, defections to new start-up parties played a modest role in Lithuania, involving just 5.8 percent of repeat candidates. Overall, then, the affiliation choices of Lithuanian politicians were by no means random, but contributed to an elite-driven realignment of the party system. The greater organizational loyalty of Lithuanian politicians also meant

that established parties were relatively stable and provided the most preferred new home for defecting politicians. Lithuanian politicians thus realigned the party system by most frequently alternating their allegiances among existing parties. Organizational choices like fission and start-up, which would have contributed to party system de-alignment, were of secondary importance, although not entirely irrelevant.

Estonia's party system also experienced a significant realignment even though it was more indirect (via fusions) and hence more disruptive than Lithuania's realignment. Established parties in Estonia clearly had great difficulty securing the organizational loyalty of their electoral candidates. The low average of Estonian politicians who stayed put—just 41.1 percent— indicates either a lack of party discipline or the presence of unpopular established political parties. Yet despite this large number of defectors, the Estonian party system did not disintegrate, since 25.5 percent of these defectors switched to other established parties and 50.9 percent were part of new fusion parties. Estonia's party system was thus reshaped through switching-induced direct realignment and through fusion-driven party mergers. Interparty mobility flowed from established parties to other established parties as well as from the organizational reconfiguration of established parties. De-alignment played a relatively modest role with a paltry 1.9 percent joining start-up parties and 11.9 percent breaking away to set up their own party.[14]

Latvia's party system arguably is characterized by the most complex dynamic, which combines elements from its two neighbors. Just as in Lithuania, a high percentage of politicians (61.3 percent) stayed put, thus providing parties with considerable organizational stability. The reaffiliation choices of defectors, however, were more evenly distributed than in Estonia or Lithuania. Latvia's party system underwent a clear realignment in that 12.9 percent of deputies switched between existing parties and another 12.9 percent were involved in the reorganization of established parties. Likewise, there was a noticeable de-alignment streak, in that an average of 9.4 percent of all repeat candidates opted for start-up parties, thus displaying a greater willingness to take political risks.

Overall, this look at interparty mobility clearly demonstrates that the nomadic drive of Baltic politicians follows distinct itineraries rather than being aimless and random. Realignment clearly outweighs de-alignment even though the levels of realignment and its types vary somewhat across the three countries. Latvia and especially Estonia stand out for the importance of fusion in realigning party systems, while party switching occurs at similar levels in all three countries. With respect to de-alignment, the consistently high rate of startups in Latvia is the only striking feature. Baltic politicians thus select consolidating re-affiliation strategies (i.e., fusion and switching) far more frequently than deconsolidating ones (i.e., fission and startups). These transformation patterns resulting from intraparty mobility could be refined if we were to disaggregate affiliation choices by incumbency, ideological trajectories or electoral payoffs, but current space constraints make this impossible. We therefore turn our attention to voters' electoral choices, which constitute the second and more commonly studied determinant of party system transformation.

Electoral Affiliation Patterns of Voters

While politicians' organizational affiliations structure the choices available to voters, it is ultimately the voters and their electoral decisions which structure and hence transform party systems. Consequently, we examine now how voters responded during 1992-2002 to politicians' organizational affiliation strategies. We do so by clustering the parties and their vote totals according to their origins and then tracking their electoral performance. Our party sample is based on detailed political histories of thirty-four Estonian parties, thirty-one Latvian parties, and twenty-four Lithuanian parties. We gathered information on each party, including its founding date; the circumstances of its creation; and its participation in electoral alliances, mergers, fissions, and dissolutions. As sources, we consulted political histories, local newspapers, and individual country specialists.[15] In selecting our eighty-nine parties, we used parliamentary representation as the key criterion for inclusion in our dataset. All eight-nine parties had to control at one point or another at least one parliamentary seat. Under this criterion three types of parties qualified:

i)   parties having won at least one seat through elections;
ii)   parties emerging from breakaway legislative factions; and
iii) parties whose successor or predecessor (i.e., through a fusion or a fission) won at least one seat.

Analyzing the electoral performance of parties according to their organizational origins not only echoes but also accentuates some of the transformational patterns evident among politicians' affiliation patterns. Below we provide a brief synopsis of these patterns before using individual country profiles to elaborate them in more detail.

The realignment dynamic among Lithuanian politicians' seen in the previous section is closely mirrored in the electoral arena. During the country's first three post-independence elections, voters opted most frequently for established parties, thus rewarding the staying put and party switching reaffiliation strategies of political actors. Voters, however, also offset their preference for status quo parties by massively shifting their support among them. Their reticence to support new parties was much more pronounced for fission and start-up parties than it was for fusion parties. Lithuania's party system thus functioned most closely to that of an established democracy in that realignment took place among established, albeit still very numerous, parties. In Estonia, electoral choices mirrored those of Lithuania in that the realignment dynamic was cued by politicians' organizational reaffiliations. For example, Estonian voters similarly shifted their preferences among existing parties, but preferred fusion parties just as frequently as established parties. They were more hesitant in opting for newer fission or start-up parties, which ultimately limited the de-alignment of the party system. Lastly, in Latvia, the balance between realignment and de-alignment dynamics that we observed among its politicians clearly tipped in the electoral arena in favor of the latter. Latvian voters cast their ballots most frequently for new parties, thus providing far fewer rewards for staying put and switching than in Lithuania. Among the new parties, they clearly preferred

start-up parties over fission and fusion parties. Latvian voters thus contributed to consistent de-alignment, as start-up parties quickly replaced established political parties and even some earlier start-up parties.

The following three tables and descriptive accounts elaborate on these electoral transformation patterns more fully. They also add a classificatory nuance that is not covered by Table 1 by breaking down the established, pre-independence parties into three additional categories—"interwar," "communist successor," and "founding" parties. This allows us to further differentiate how voters affiliated themselves among incumbents who stayed put or switched among existing parties. These three additional party types also reflect what Elster, Offe, and Preuss have called Eastern Europe's "triple past"—the interwar, communist, and independence struggle eras (1998: 69; Ishiyama 2001a). For example, interwar parties usually readopted the name of their interwar precursor and in some cases had some of the original leaders or their offspring play an important leadership role. Communist successor parties emerged from the more nationalist and/or moderate factions within the old Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They were the "governing party in the communist regime which inherited the preponderance of the former ruling party's resources and personnel" (Ishiyama 2001a: 3). Finally, founding parties already had a distinct organizational existence during the pre-independence struggle, even though most of them participated in umbrella movements like the Baltic popular fronts.

Lithuania. The realignment pattern we observed in the interparty mobility of politicians clearly repeats itself in the electoral arena. (See Table 4.) Lithuanian voters fostered party system realignment by switching their loyalties among existing pre-independence parties and largely ignoring newer parties formed after independence. The country's realignment dynamic is most clearly evident in the overwhelming vote shares controlled by pre-independence parties. The latter won 88.7 percent of the votes in 1992, 78.3 percent in 1996, and 68.9 percent in 2000. Indeed, these first two elections characterize best Lithuania's realignment dynamic, since in 1992 the original democratic opposition movement Sajudis (later renamed the Homeland Union-Lithuanian Conservatives) was ousted by the ex-communist Democratic Labor Party in a stunning electoral comeback. In 1996, the reverse happened. What is more, the pivotal role played by these two parties can be seen by the fact that in 1996 they accounted for 72.9 percent of the overall electoral volatility.

By the third election in 2000, the Lithuanian party system showed some signs of de-alignment even though the share of pre-independence parties remained at 68.9 percent. An internal power struggle and resulting defections from the Homeland Union were one contributing factor. Meanwhile, the two major leftist parties (the Social Democratic Party and the Democratic Labor Party) along with two other marginal parties shored up their electoral appeal by forming in 2000 an *apparentement* called the "Social Democratic Alliance." The appeal of newer, post-independence parties remained, however, modest. Only one start-up party, the New Union, scored in the top five, and fission parties won no more than 6 percent. This astonishing continuity of Lithuania's pre-independence parties is also illustrated by the fact that over the course of these three elections they occupied thirteen out of fifteen possible top five

Table 4
Lithuanian Party System

Party Type	1992	1996	2000
Historical	[--- Chr. Dem. P. (6.2%) ---------------- (11.9%) --------------------- (4.0%) -------]		
	[--- Social Dem. Party (7.6%) ------------- (7.1%) --------------------- (8.0%)* -----]		
		[------ Farmer's Party (2.0%) ------------- (5.3%) -------]	
Founding	[------ Center Union (2.5%) ---------------- (7.8%) --------------------- (4.6%) --------]		
	[--- Homeland U. (20%) ------------------ (29.8%) --------------------- (8.1%) ------]		
	[--- U. of Pr. & Dep. (3.3%) ---------------- (1.7%) -----------]		
	[------ Liberal Union (1.5%) ---------------- (2.3%) --------------------- (16.5%) -----]		
Successor	[--- Dem. Lab. Party (39.5%) --------------- (10%) --------------------- (10.1%)* ---]		
Fission	[------ Chr. Dem. U. (3.6%) -------------------- (2.4%) ----------- ---------- (3.3%) -----]		
		[--- Moderate Cons. Union (2.5%) -]	
		[--- Modern Chr. Dem.U. (1.2%) ---]	
Fusion	*NONE*		
Start-up	[---- Women's Party (3.4%) --------------- (2.1%) -----]		
	[--- New Union (17.6%) -]		

Boxed party names indicate ranking among top five vote-getting parties. Lithuania has a dual electoral system (Pettai and Kreuzer 1999). The percentages consequently report the average of the single- and multi-member district election results.

*Only SMD results. Formed an *apparentement* for MMD; individual party vote shares not available.

vote-winning spots. Lithuanian voters thus seem to have been far more risk-averse than their Latvian and Estonian counterparts. Whatever disenchantment they had during an election they translated into defections to other pre-independence parties, rather than opting for new, untried parties. The major benefactors (and victims) of these electoral realignments were the Homeland Union and the Democratic Labor Party. Others, like the Social Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Liberal Union, and the Peasant Party, also saw their electoral fortunes fluctuate.

The overall prominence of Lithuania's pre-independence parties is reflected in the strength of each pre-independence party type. On a general level, Lithuania's founding parties mirrored those of Estonia and Latvia in that four out of seven succeeded in placing among the electoral top five during the country's three post-independence elections. Where Lithuania differed, however, was in the prominence of communist successor and historical parties. Lithuania's revived interwar parties—the Christian Democratic Party, the Nationalist Party—"Young Lithuania," and the Social Democratic Party—all had considerable success, winning 14.2 percent and 22.0 percent of the votes in the first two elections before dropping to 5 percent in the 2000 election. The Social Democratic Party was the most successful left-wing revival party in the

Baltics, while the Democratic Labor Party was by far the most successful communist successor party.

The flip side of Lithuania's realignment pattern was the marginality of its post-independence parties. Only on two occasions did such parties rank among the top five finishers. Fissions were entirely inconsequential, as no breakaway party ever won more than three seats. Only one start-up party, the New Union, managed to attract a significant vote share. Fusions were also inconsequential, and confined to small fringe parties such as the two competing Christian Democratic parties and various right-wing splinter groups.

Overall then, Lithuania's fragmentation and volatility reflected the rising and falling fortunes of parties that had established themselves early and that drew on historical legacies going as far back as the interwar period or dating from as recently as the independence struggle. These parties experienced an organizational continuity unmatched in the Baltics even as their electoral support proved highly volatile. Lithuanian parties thus differed from their Estonian and Latvian counterparts, who instead experienced both organizational discontinuity and electoral volatility.

Latvia. Latvian voters behaved in a much more straightforward manner than their politicians. Whereas the politicians had shown only a slight trend towards de-alignment, the voters' primary transformation pattern was de-alignment, as established pre-independence parties lost votes to newer, post-independence parties. Indeed, what makes this de-alignment process particularly striking is the fact that it was driven by start-up parties, whose electoral success led to the replacement of older, pre-independence parties in the electoral market place.

The rapidly declining vote share of pre-independence parties, as demonstrated in Table 5, provides the most compelling evidence for Latvia's rapid de-alignment. These parties won 49.8 percent of the vote in 1993, 36.6 percent in 1995, and just 16 percent in 1998. Thus, in only five years, the parties that had roots in either the interwar, communist, or independence periods lost nearly all their electoral support. Indeed, in 2002 they fell even further, down to just 13.4 percent. Moreover, Table 5 illustrates another aspect of de-alignment. It lists the top five vote-getting parties for each election and thus allows us to count how many pre-independence parties ended up holding such positions. In Latvia, only six pre-independence parties held one out of the twenty possible positions; this is far lower than in Estonia and Lithuania. Moreover, the electoral fortunes of post-independence parties seem as volatile and short-lived as that of the pre-independence parties. Table 5 underscores this fact by showing that ten different post-independence parties or coalitions rotated in and out of the sixteen top five spots that they occupied. Only one party, Latvia's Way, scored among the top five in at least three elections, but by 2002 it, too, fell below the electoral threshold. In addition, a number of Latvia's post-independence parties proved short-lived organizationally. At least six parties (including some that garnered as much as 15 percent of the vote) participated in only one or two elections before fading into oblivion. This rapid de-alignment process thus precipitated a lack of continuity in parties' electoral strength and organizational existence, which together accounts for much of Latvia's high fragmentation and volatility.

Table 5
Latvian Party System

Party Type	1993	1995	1998	2002
Historical	[--- Farmers U. (10.9%) --------- (2.4%) ------------------ (2.5%) ------------- 9.4% -----]			
	[--- Dem. Ctr. Party (4.8%) ---]			
	[------ SDWP (0.7%) -------------- (2.6%) ----------------- 12.9% ------------- (4.0%) ------			
Founding	[------ Chr. Dem. U. (5%) --------- (4.0%) ----]			
	[------ FFF (5.4%) ---------------- 11.9% ---]			
	[------ Greens (1.2%) -------------- (1.6%) ----------------- (≈1%) --------------- (****) -----]			
	[--- Nat. Indep. Mov. (13.4%) --- (5.4%) ----]			
	[------ Pop. Front (2.6%) ----------- (1.1%) ----]			
Successor		[---- Dem. Lab. P. (2%) ---------- (**) ------]		
	[--- Socialist Party (5.8%) -------- (5.6%) ----------------- (***) ---------------- (***) ------]			
Fission		[--- For Latvia (14.2%) --------- (1.7%) ----]		
				[-- Soc. Dem U. (1.5%) --]
Fusion		[---- DP-S (15.2%) -------------- (1.6%) ----]		
			[---- FFF/NIM (14.3%) ---------- (5.4%) ---]	
				[--- First Party (9.5%) ---]
Start-up	[------ Unity Party (0.1%)----------- 7.2% --]			
	[--- Harmony Party (12%) --------- (5.6%) --------- FHRUL (14.2%) -------- 19.0% ---]			
	[------ Union of Econ. (*) ----------- (1.5%) ---]			
	[---Latvia's Way (32.4%) -------- 14.6% ----------------- 18.2% ------------ (4.9%) ------]			
	[------ Rus. Cit. Party (1.2%)-------- (1.5%) ---]			
			[----- New Party (7.3%) ---]	
			[--- People's Party (20.9%) -- 16.6% ---]	
				[--- New Era (23.9%) ---]

Boxed party names indicate ranking among top five vote-getting parties.

*Part of *apparentement* led by Harmony Party; individual party results not available.

** Part of *apparentement* led by SDWP; individual party results not available.

***Part of *apparentement* "FHRUL" led by Harmony Party; individual party results not available.

****Part of *apparentement* led by Farmers Union; individual party results not available.

The relative insignificance of pre-independence parties is the flip side of Latvia's de-alignment. Of the ten pre-independence parties listed in Table 5, only five—the Farmers Union, For Fatherland and Freedom, the National Independence Movement, the Social Democratic Workers' Party, and the Socialist Party—ever held a top five spot. Their limited appeal was further underscored by the fact that most of these parties ranked in the top five only once. More-

over, in contrast to Estonia and Lithuania, founding parties in Latvia were especially weak. Among the country's five founding parties, only For Fatherland and Freedom and the National Independence Movement scored in the top five, and by the third election only the Greens survived as independent political organization. All the rest fused into new parties, some of which, in turn, disappeared entirely. Likewise, historical parties played a modest role in Latvia, with only the Farmers Union, the Social Democratic Worker's Party, and the Democratic Center Party winning a high of 17 percent in 1993 and a low of 3 percent in 1995. Latvia's two communist successor parties—the Democratic Labor Party and the Socialist Party—were far less successful than Lithuania's Democratic Labor Party, but more substantial than Estonia's namesake party. Still, their continued existence relied heavily on *apparentements* with other, stronger parties.

The principle reason behind Latvia's de-alignment stemmed from a high number of start-up parties and to a lesser extent fusion parties. Latvia's eight start-up parties won on average 12 percent of the votes and replaced in rapid succession most of the pre-independence parties and eventually also some post-independence ones. Latvia's Way was the most successful start-up party, winning an average of 21.7 percent of the votes for its first three elections, before slipping to just 4.9 percent in 2002. During 1998 and 2002, a number of single-leader start-up parties emerged, such as the People's Party (led by the former prime minister Andris Skele) and New Era (founded by the former central bank president Einars Repse). Both scored over 20 percent of the vote during their debut election, and the People's Party continued strong in 2002. Among other start-ups, success was more ephemeral, but it still demonstrated what one might even call an eagerness among Latvian voters to choose new-comers to the party system. The Unity Party, the New Party, and the First Party all had respectable debuts on the electoral scene in 1995, 1998, and 2002 respectively. Compared to Lithuania and Estonia, the considerable success of Latvian start-up parties suggests that Latvian voters were greater risk-takers and that the Latvian political market had fewer entry barriers. Fusion parties also had some success in Latvia, attracting an average of 10.2 percent of the votes. Three such parties—the Democratic Party-Saimnieks, For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK, and the First Party—won enough seats to score in top five positions. Only one fission party, For Latvia, played a significant, albeit short-lived, role.

In sum, Latvia's high fragmentation and volatility did not reflect the rising and falling fortunes of established parties (as it did in Lithuania), but rather it followed Estonia's example of a wholesale party system transformation. Latvia, however, differed from Estonia because the transformation was driven far more centrally by the entry of start-up parties rather than by the organizational reconfiguration of existing parties through fissions and especially fusions.

Estonia. The electoral dynamic of Estonia's party system closely followed that of its politicians' interparty mobility. Established parties lost support, but not nearly as rapidly as in Latvia. Merger parties fared better in Estonia than in any other Baltic country, thus reinforcing the organizational realignment of its politicians. Voters, however, opted for fusion parties, although not with the

same high frequency as politicians chose to form them. Instead, they were just as likely to vote for fission or start-up parties. The development of the Estonian party system was thus characterized by a hybrid dynamic combining the elements of the Latvian and Lithuanian ones. As Table 6 demonstrates, Estonia's pre-independence parties did not assume the same electoral strength or electoral swings as in Lithuania and their vote share also did not drop as rapidly as in Latvia. Estonia's pre-independence parties won 48.4 percent of the seats in 1992, 37 percent in 1995 and 30.9 percent in 1999, and they occupied seven out of the fifteen possible top five spots. Pre-independence parties in Estonia were thus able to maintain their electoral strength longer than their Latvian counterparts, and there was also far less volatility than in Lithuania. The support of the two most prominent pre-independence parties, the Center and Coalition Parties, remained steady enough in all three elections to land them in the top five vote-getting spots (although by 2002 the Coalition Party had been dissolved). Meanwhile, the average volatility for pre-independence parties was 15.6 percent in Estonia, compared to 39 percent in Lithuania. Estonia thus did not experience the same swing-like realignments among pre-independence parties observable in Lithuania. Furthermore, Estonia's established parties were dominated by founding parties, which won 40.4 percent of the vote in 1992, 28.4 percent in 1995, and 30.9 percent in 1999. As Table 6 shows, six founding parties managed to win votes in 1992, and by 1995 their electoral strength had largely concentrated on the Center and Coalition parties. The prominence of founding parties in Estonia rivals that in Lithuania, while the other types of pre-independence parties played an insignificant role. Estonia's only interwar party, the Rural Union, was an important partner in *apparentements* with the Coalition Party in 1992 and 1995, only to merge, however, in 1999 with the Country People's Party to form the People's Union. Meanwhile, the successor to the Estonian Communist Party, the Democratic Labor Party, remained marginal, failing to win any seats in the first two elections, before finally winning two spots in 1999 via inclusion in the list of the United People's Party.

The most important transformation of Estonia's party system occurred through the sort of indirect organizational realignments we observed among the country's politicians. Whereas Lithuanian voters swung their allegiances back and forth between established parties, Estonian voters followed politicians into six mergers, which subsumed a total of seventeen parties and won on average 25.6 percent of the vote. These mergers took place in two waves. The first occurred in the run-up to the 1992 election with the Moderates bringing together the Rural Center Party and the Social Democrats, while Pro Patria subsumed five proto-parties (the Christian Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Union, the Conservative People's Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, and the Republican Coalition Party). A second wave of mergers took place after the 1999 election when, on the one hand, the Moderates merged with the small Peoples' Party, and, on the other hand, the Country Peoples' Party joined with the Rural Union and Pensioners and Families Party to form the People's Union. The replacement of established parties by new start-up parties thus did not play an important role in Estonia. As Table 6 illustrates, start-up parties assumed a far less prominent place in Estonia than in Latvia. They won an average of only

Table 6
Estonian Party System

Party Type	1992	1995	1999
Historical	[------ Rural Union (6.4%)* ------------------- (6.3%)** ----------]		
Founding	[--- Center Party (12.3%) ------------------- (14.1%) ---------------------- (23.3%) -----]		
	[--- Coalition Party (7.2%)* ---------------- (14.2%)** --------------------- (7.6%) ------]		
	[------ Entrepr. Party (2.4%) ----]		
	[------ Greens (2.6%) -------------------------- (0.1%) ------------]		
	[------ Royalists (7.1%) ---]		
	[--- Nat. Indep. Party (8.8%) ---]		
Successor	[------ Dem. Labor P. (1.6 %) ----------------- (2.3%) ------------------------ (2.1%)****-]		
Fission		[--- Reform Party (16.2%) ----------------- (15.9%) ----]	
		[------ Future Party (2.6%) -----]	
		[------Right-Wingers (5%) -----]	
Fusion	[--- Moderates (9.7%) ----------------------- (6.0%) ---------------------- (15.2%) ----]		
	[--- Pro Patria (22%) ---]		
		[--- Fatherland Union (7.9%) ------------ (16.1%) ----]	
Start-up		[--- Country People's Party (7.1%)** ---- (7.3%) ------]	
		[----- United People's Party (2.8%)*** --- (4.2%)****--]	
	[------ Estonian Cit. (6.9%) -------------------- (2.9%) ------------]		
		[------Russian Party (2.9%)*** ------------- (2.0%) ------]	

Boxed party names and vote percentages indicate ranking among top five vote-getters.
*The entire RU-CP *apparentement* won 13.6%.
**The entire RU-CP-CPP *apparentement* won 32.2%.
***The entire UPP-RP *apparentement* won 5.9%.
****The entire UPP-DLP *apparentement* won 6.3%.

12 percent of the votes and only one such party, the Country People's Party, ever scored a top five spot. The four fission parties, in turn, controlled on average 8.4 percent of the votes. The Reform Party (after its creation from sections of Pro Patria and the Moderates in 1994) was the only Estonian fission party to gain any significant strength, winning 16.2 percent and 15.9 percent of the votes in the 1995 and 1999 elections.

Overall, Estonia's high fragmentation and volatility reflected a complex party system dynamic. It was neither an already set party system trying to reequilibrate itself, nor was it a party system turning itself inside out. The strength of its founding parties provided it with some continuity, and voters endorsed the various party mergers, thus contributing most of all to a realignment pattern. De-alignment still played a role, but it was not nearly as prominent as in Latvia.

Conclusion

This comparison of top-down party system transformation via politician-led interparty mobility and bottom-up party system change via voter-induced electoral shifts has demonstrated that distinct patterns of party system formation exist in post-communist countries, despite conditions of highly unstable party identification as well as organizational disloyalty among politicians. The analysis also showed a considerable degree of congruence between shifts in these two levels of party system evolution. Political instability is thus characterized by regularities just as is political stability. If we go beyond looking at post-communist party systems merely through concepts like fragmentation or volatility (which are only useful for detecting the absence of stability without telling us what shape instability takes), we can indeed detect patterns of instability. In this article, we have tried to show that the key for detecting such patterns of change and transformation is to incorporate the organizational preference changes of politicians. These constitute the central political dimensions, to which observers of post-communist party systems have frequently pointed, but which so far have not been systematically investigated. Ultimately, detecting these patterns of change is only the first and easiest step towards explaining the formation of party systems, since the interactions between political actors' organizational choices and voters' electoral choices constitute only proximate causes or underlying processes of party system transformation. They do not provide actual explanations for why one pattern occurs rather than another. Such explanations require analysis of various distal causes (such as institutions, historical legacies, transition modes) to see how these might have constrained the choices of both politicians and individual voters, which in turn have produced different aggregate transformation patterns. This represents the next step in understanding the institutionalization of post-communist party systems.

Notes

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1. The one exception we came across is mentioned in Shabad and Slomczynski (2001).
2. For a first attempt in this direction see Bielasiak (1997).
3. These cases pertain only to Estonia and Lithuania, where such independents are permitted.
4. In a similar vein, Bielasiak (1997: 33-37) reports that in East Central Europe, party politics during the closing days of the communist regimes was quite distinct from party politics in the opening of days of democracy.
5. For Poland, we would suggest the 1991 election as the first, genuine post-Soviet era election. While the 1989 election was free, the organization of parties was still quite circumscribed, making it comparable to the Baltics' 1990 Supreme Soviet elections. In both of these cases, communist incumbents competed with single broad opposition movements rather than with individual parties.
6. This also acknowledges the interdependent definition of politicians' and voters' affiliation choices. Since realigning voters switch by definition among existing parties, their electoral choices do not interact with fusion, fission, and start-up parties. Conversely, since de-aligning voters opt by definition for new parties, their choices do not interact with politicians who stay put or switch.

7. Table 1 poorly reflects this fact. Its last column defines a start-up induced de-alignment as being primarily the result of incumbents' reaffiliation and changing voter preferences. However, this last column should also be read as including de-alignment resulting from the entry of new political actors forming a start-up party.

8. For the computational details of these two measures, see Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Bartolini and Mair (1990), respectively.

9. For now we do not address the more complicated issue of a possible interaction between politicians' and voters' affiliation choices. For example, to what extent do voters and politicians coordinate their choices with each other? Do voters follow the organizational choices of politicians or do politicians respond to changing electoral circumstances?

10. In this respect, we include not just incumbent candidates (politicians, par excellence), but also non-incumbents (politicians aspiring to office).

11. In Estonia: 1992, 1995, 1999; in Latvia: 1993, 1995, 1998, 2002; in Lithuania: 1992, 1996, 2000. The total number of candidates across these elections was over 9,000.

12. Each of the resulting seven lists yielded an average sample of around 300 repeat candidates. It is interesting to note that for any pair of elections, this figure represented around 32% of all candidates who ran in the first election of the pair, meaning that after any election roughly a third of candidates tried their luck again.

13. The political calculus underlying these affiliation choices is explored further in Kreuzer and Pettai (2002).

14. Moreover, preliminary analysis of the candidate lists for Estonia's 2003 parliamentary elections shows even further stabilization of politicians' organizational affiliations. Fully 80% of the 402 repeat candidates in 2003 remained loyal to their 1999 party. Another 15% switched merely to other established parties.

15. Our principle source was the Baltic News Service, together with the following country-specific sources. *For Estonia*: (Arter 1996; Grofman et al. 2000; Ishiyama 1993; Pettai and Kreuzer 1999). *For Latvia*: (Bungs 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1993d; Ishiyama 1993; Gobins and Kerner 1997; Pettai and Kreuzer 1999; Plakans 1997). *For Lithuania*: (Girnius 1992a, 1992b, 1993; Pettai and Kreuzer 1999; Krickus 1997; Krupavicius 1998; Veser 1995; Clark 1995)

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Appendix 1
Coding for Organizational Affiliation Patterns of Baltic Politicians

Categories	Sub-Categories	Explanation
Staying put	• Loyal • Loyal following *apparentement* break-up • Loyal as part of apparentement	• Candidate remained loyal to a party that remained free-standing. • Candidate remained loyal to one of the parties, which separated after an *apparentement* from the first election broke down by the second. • Candidate remained loyal to party after it formed an *apparentement* in the second election.
Switching	• Switched to established party • Switched to post-*apparentement* party • Switched to *apparentement*	• Candidate left original party and switched to an established, free-standing party. • Candidate left original party and switched to an established party that had previously been a member of an *apparentement*. • Candidate left original party and switched to an *apparentement* made up of parties different from original one.
Fusion	• Loyal as part of merger • Switched to merger	• Candidate remained loyal as original party merged with another. • Candidate left original party and switched to a merged party.
Fission	• Fission party • Switched to fission • Switched to self	• Candidate was part of a fission party. • Candidate left original party and switched to a fission party. • Candidate left original party and became a self-nominated candidate. (Estonia and Lithuania only)
Start-up	• Start-up	• Candidate left original party and joined a start-up party.