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Cross-National and Inter-temporal Analysis on Post-communist Europe.

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The Success and Failure of Ethnic Parties in New Democracies: Cross-National and Inter-temporal Analysis on Post-communist Europe¹

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Abstract

Why do ethnic minority parties succeed or fail? In order to solve this puzzle, this article explores cross-national and inter-temporal differences in post-communist new democracies using statistical analysis and small-N case studies, and argues that policy factors and the rationality of ethnic minorities determine the success and failure of ethnic parties and account for the variance in their standings.

As some studies have pointed out, ethnic minorities' voting behaviour should be rational and strategic. This article represents a basic spatial model and argues that ethnic minorities react to other parties' policy changes and to the capability of other parties to win seats. Statistical analysis verifies this hypothesis. In addition, I discuss the Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—as case studies. Although these three countries share a similar history, experience with minority issues and a common institutional design, their party systems indicate significant differences. We can observe that non-ethnic parties have assumed a major role in these countries through policy changes. My research shows that institutional factors like electoral law and system do not significantly affect minority parties' outburst and eclipse. Moreover, neither the size of a minority group nor socio-economic factors account for variance of ethnic parties' performance well. I will advocate the relevance of an actor-centric approach in ethnic political movements.

Keyword: *Ethnic Party, Central & Eastern Europe, Baltic States, Party Systems, Voting Behaviour*

Introduction and method

Why do (or do not) ethnic parties win seats? Why do ethnic parties rise or fall in the same country? Since many Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) countries democratised in the late 1980s, several national and ethnic minorities have had the chance to voice their own interests through various electoral systems. These processes led to the emergence of ethnic parties in several countries.

For example, in Bulgaria, the Turkish minority's party has won a vast number of seats in the Bulgarian parliament. The Russian minority in Latvia formed Russian parties and has won seats even now. However, many Gagauzians living in Moldova have failed to let their own ethnic parties appear in the Moldovan Parliament. The Russian minority in Estonia does not support the ethnic Russian parties nowadays in spite of their popularity among Russian voters in the 1990s. Even though about 25-30%

¹ Please consult the author if you wish to cite this paper, because this is a preliminary draft copy with some touching up for IPISA 21st international congress. I thank Takayuki ITO and Ikuo KUME for their delightful advice, and all who provide feedback on earlier works including Manabu SENGOKU, Hiromi KOMORI, Makoto ONAKA, Masaaki YOKOTA and my colleagues.

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people in Ukraine could not speak Ukrainian well³, but there are no ethnic parties. How should we interpret these variations in political party systems between countries and countries, time and time?

Such questions have typically been accounted for by classical institutional or socio-economic explanations, as Meguid (2005) pointed out. However, as many new studies have observed, these types of explanations could not solve a puzzle like the one mentioned above. To answer this question, I refer to recent theoretical works that are more actor-oriented and that assume the rationalities and strategies of political parties and ethnic voters. Then, I argue that setting policy related to national integration, such as a language law and franchising, should be considered significant variables to determine the variance of ethnic parties' situation in each countries.. In addition, the rationality of ethnic minorities is also treated as a very important variable to support this hypothesis and explain the variances in party systems.

This article consists of mainly four parts. The first section represents a theoretical review of the literature, and the second section will show the hypothesis from a theoretical deduction that includes formal modelling. In the third section, multi-regression analysis is used to verify the hypothesis and to inspect the causal effects of several variables. Case studies on the Baltic States–Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania bear in last section to show the causal mechanism from actual facts. The Baltic States all have the same problems with Russian minorities, and vary in their ethnic parties' situations; therefore, this will be the best selection of cases with which to investigate this question.

In addition, this paper uses the term 'ethnic minority' frequently as a term that includes the broader concept of ethnic minorities, national minorities and minority races. Moreover, this paper defines 'ethnic party' as 'the political party which insists on a particular ethnic minority group's interests as first among others'.

1. Review

1.1 Classical Literature of Party Systems

The situation of ethnic parties could be broadly defined as a question of political party systems.

³ Stepan 2005.

Being or not being of ethnic parties shall construct a significant aspect in each country's party systems because of its role in providing bases of a party competition and a political discussion in parliaments. When we try to examine an ethnic party's situation, the classical works of political party systems should be mentioned.

Since democracies have spread throughout the world, many political scientists have tried to account for the variations in political party systems, which include the destiny of small single-issue parties, such as ethnic parties. They have been eager to answer why some states have many political parties in their parliament while others have only a few.

Since Duverger's seminal works⁴, there have been a vast number of studies in modern political science that focus on and try to explain the differences in political party systems. Classically, the variations in party systems have been observed mainly from two perspectives. Some scholars have emphasised the impact of an institutional effect, and other scholars have focused on socio-economic factors.

'Institutionalists' often have stressed the significance of electoral rule—majoritarian or proportional—to explain the variance of party systems, and argued that the more electoral rule is proportional, then the greater the number of effective parties in each country's parliament and the better the chances that small parties will win seats. Other Institutionalists who have paid attention to the magnitude of electoral districts assume that small minority parties tend to get seats in a district wherever or whenever the electoral magnitude is high. In other words, they think that the high magnitude of a district leads to an increase in the number of effective political parties in parliaments. Whether an ethnic party can win seats or not can be easily answered by the magnitude of a district for them. However, as mentioned above and later, this paper argues that this consideration is not appropriate enough.

Other scholars have treated socio-economic variance as the most important factor. The godfathers of scholars who emphasise the socio-economic factor in party-system formations would be

⁴ Duverger 1954.

Lipset and Rokkan⁵. Their lambent works have suggested that a social cleavage defines the situation of a parliament. A country has many social cleavages, and economic or class struggles will yield a polarised parliament. Works that emphasise the special role of ethnic voting and trace an ethnic line as an unsurpassable cleavage are also categorised here. Some of them have emphasised that ethnic minorities feel the greatest pleasure in voting itself, not by taking some political and material merits through an election, because an ethnic minority would place a special emphasis on the effusion and the manifestation of their identity. The present article admits that such works have uncovered important aspects of ethnic questions.

1.2 Works after the ‘Third Wave’

However, after the Third Wave of Democratization, these two types of explanations showed their limitations. Moser (1999) argued that the electoral system in post-communist democracies does not affect these areas from a theoretical view, but rather will affect it in a reverse way. Because of a lack of information, voters tend to rely on the personalities of candidates, not on a party’s programs. Therefore, we must realise that the institution-oriented argument depended deeply on a certain assumption. Then, we can rely on these types of institutional explanations to answer questions regarding ethnic parties.

Socio-economic explanations also have not accounted for post-communist Europe. All these countries have some differences in their histories and international relations, but most of them experienced an ‘atomization’ under communism, as Geddes (1995) said, and faced similar political tasks. Most of them have faced economic privatization, democratization, the need to rebuild the nation, pension reform and debates concerning whether or not to join the EU. Whitefield (2002) asserted that CEE countries generally had dealt with similar political tasks despite their unique historical and socio-economic contexts. He inspected 12 CEE countries’ ‘political cleavages’ and presented 10 of them that had ethnic problems as cleavages. Most of post-communist Europe has faced ethno-cultural problems, more or less. However, their party systems as related to ethnic parties have displayed

⁵ Lipset and Rokkan 1967.

differences.

Political scientists have tried to account for the variation of party systems from a more actor-oriented approach. Their keywords could be expressed as 'strategy' and 'rationality'. Recent studies explain that those varied circumstances could be accounted for by differences that are the result of interest coordination between political parties and voters. Horowitz and Brown (2005) verified that institutional variables and socio-economic variables were invalid in explaining political party systems in CEE based on regression analysis. They have circumstantiated that institutional and socio-economic variables do not affect the number of significant political parties in CEE. They argued that the ideological concentration-polarization in political party systems is a very significant variable. An ideological positioning should be treated as a set of policies for each party. In short, policy factors should be paid attention to explain the variance in ethnic parties' situations. Mahr and Nagle (1995) paid attention to party systems in CEE countries and noted differences between western and eastern party systems. Ishiyama (1998; 2001) pointed out that the leftist communist successor parties had received support from economically weaker, older, less educated and ethnic minorities as same 'transitional loser', they behaved regardless of electoral institutions and socio-economic composition.

2. Theoretical Deduction

Every party seeks power resources in electoral markets, and ethnic minority voters try to register their preferences for officeholders in parliament through elections. There should be some type of equilibrium for their preferences. Some scholars hesitate to apply this theoretical frame to account for the behaviour of ethnic voters because of its specialty⁶. However, Cox's own regression analysis implied that societal ethnic factors never affected the results of voting behaviour. Kostadinova (2002) controlled ethnic variables to discover the effect of electoral systems on party systems in CEE, and her regression analysis showed that—even though it was not the main point of her argument—ethnic variables have never had unique effects that explain party systems.

⁶ Cox 1997, Horowitz 1985.

Ethnic voters have voted strategically, using their rationality as every voter does⁷. As Kitschelt (2000) pointed out, ethnic groups remained as solid societal groups after the ‘atomization’ in the communist era. It also means that any political party could retain minorities by claiming credit or by pork barrel measures.

If we mention the question of an ethnic minority party, Chandra’s works should be referred to. Even she verified that ethnic voting is probable⁸. She also theorised the mechanism that generate differences of support for ethnic parties, in each local district with India’s case studies. Her argument could be expressed as a formula that she has derived.

$$L_{it} = X_i - M_{(it-1)} \quad \text{Chandra (2009).}$$

The main point of this argument is shortness of votes to win. If the size of an ethnic minority in electoral district i at $t-1$ times election (M) is smaller than the number of votes that their ethnic parties need to win a seat in that district (X), they will abandon their votes for the ethnic parties and seek other parties that tend to contribute to their political and material interests. In short, ethnic minority voters behave very strategically and not ideologically. In other words, they will behave as non-ethnic voters do, will react to a political party’s policy changes and will try to prevent their vote from being wasted. Their behaviour resembles strategic voting⁹. We do not have to treat ethnic voting as a special case in electoral behaviour. Even though some theorists of electoral studies and strategic voting have hedged, saying that their theoretical frames would not be appropriate for ethnic voters, it would be more appropriate to treat ethnic voters in the same way as ‘normal’ voters.

Summarizing their behaviour on the classical and basic Hotelling (1929) model¹⁰, this article represents a simple frame to show the voting behaviour of ethnic minorities and the situation of ethnic parties in national parliaments.

⁷ Rationality, as I mentioned here, is not perfect rationality. It has a broader meaning, as retrospective voting theory defined it.

⁸ Chandra 2004

⁹ There are even some definitions of ‘strategic voting’. This article defines it here as ‘casting a vote for a second- or third-best party to escape wasting a vote’.

¹⁰ This model has been famous as original works following Downs model. The argument about the reasonability around this model will be omitted from the present article because there are a vast number of works from the past 80 years, and it is impossible to address and apply them briefly in this article.

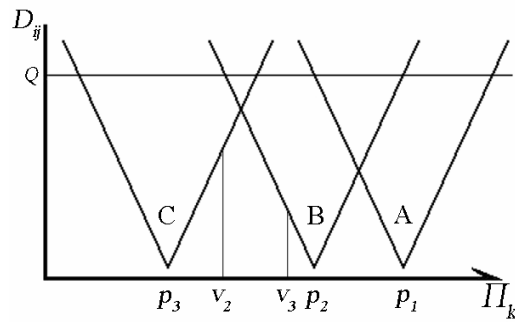


Figure 1

Figure 1 denotes a highly hypothetical situation in which there are only three political parties in parliament. Party A shall be a rightist-conservative political party and mainly supported by top-ranking people at the national level. Party B shall be a leftist-liberalised political party and also mainly supported by top-ranking people at the national level. Party C shall be a small ethnic minority party. Assume that every policy, including integration policy, would be determined by bargaining and coordination among the big parties like party A and party B, because party C is relatively small and does not mobilise well to exert its presence. Every party has the linear function representing subjective costs that the voters feel in voting for each party. If the policy positions of parties, represented as p_i , and the preferences of voters v_i are quite the same, voters will not feel any cost (other than the cost of voting itself), but the broader the distance between the party stance and the voter preference, the more cost the voters will feel. Electorates will vote for a party that they feel costs them the least. Moreover, when voters feel a very high cost of voting for any party, they will not cast a vote. Then, there should be the concept of a cost permissible limit, and it is represented as a function $f(D_{ij}) = Q$. If Q is the least cost for random voter i , s/he does not vote for any parties.

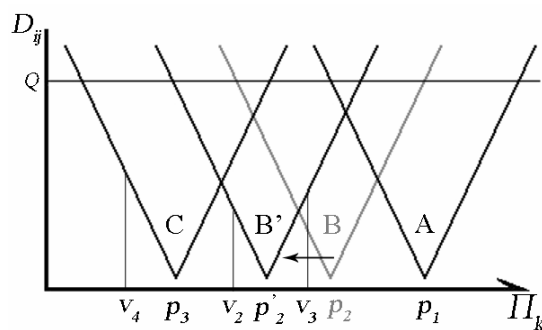


Figure 2

When political party B shifts their policy stance (resulting in a policy change in that country) from p_2 to p'_2 , it is denoted as Figure 2, and the voter v_2 is likely to change his/her voting party. This is quite a significant deduction.

Then, most ethnic small parties suffer from an inability to win an election, and we take this into account in the calculation. Small parties owe the some cost of hardness to win in each district, so, every voter feels some cost to vote such parties as his/her vote would be a wasted. Their extra cost feelings for a small party could be represented as an increase of Y-intercept on the cost function, like party C in Figure 3 below.

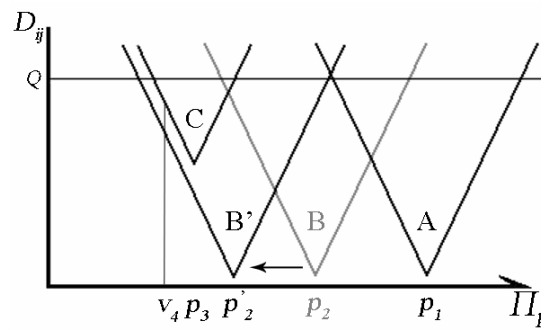


Figure 3

Here, the policy change of Party B from p_2 to p'_2 means that every potential supporter for party C could change their voting preference from Party C to Party B. If we define and express this situation in natural language, some members of the electorate (in this article, this means minority voters) cast their ballot for a large, second-best party even though they know there is a party whose policy is quite close to their preferences, in order to avoid wasting a vote.

It is reasonable to assume that a policy change and the rationality of ethnic parties' supporters should be treated as significant variables to explain the variation in ethnic parties' fates based on theoretical deduction. It leads to the hypotheses below.

Hypothesis 1:

The possibility to win seats by ethnic parties could be determined by its performance at t-1 times.

Hypothesis 2:

The possibility to win seats by ethnic parties could be determined by other parties' (or governmental)

policy change.

In addition, a rival hypothesis will be represented as below.

Hypothesis 3:

If an institutional design is advantageous (high proportionality, low threshold and large magnitude of a district) for a small party, the ethnic minority parties will win seats.

Hypothesis 4:

If the society is more fractionalised in terms of ethnicity, ethnic minority parties could win seats.

3. Empirical Inspection–Statistical Analysis-

‘Integration policy’ consists of several factors, such as politics, economics and social concerns, and these factors are integrated into a set of policy initiatives. Even if it is difficult to estimate and score the parties’ policy stance over several years and in several different countries, we can estimate the governmental policy or stance that has been generated by coordination among significant political parties.

Institutional factors also consist of several aspects, as mentioned above, like an electoral system, threshold and so on. Societal factors consist of mainly language-group situations or ethnic-group situations.

3.1 Operationalization¹¹

To verify the hypothesis, this article represents multi-regression analyses. Specified variables below are used in this regression analysis

-Dependent Variable-

ProEthPty--shall be a Dependent Variable, and it shall be estimated by each country’s election result. A determination whether ethnic parties or not have been judged in line with the Bugajski’s work (2002) and several expert literatures. Then, if some parties are coded as an ‘ethnic party’ in those works,

¹¹ Because of this paper’s space considerations, I could not insert a dataset in the paper for replication. I uploaded the replication data on my personal webpage (<http://www.geocities.co.jp/stebuklas0311/archives.html>), which the reader may check.

that party will be coded as an ethnic party in this analysis. Each ethnic group is coded separately, and each ethnic party is also coded separately.

-Independent Variables-

PoliRD—is the score of political rights and discrimination. It shall be the first independent variable for this article’s hypothesis and will be converted by the MAR project dataset. This variable would be on the ordinal scale from 1–5. Score 1 means the most discriminative situation, where ethnic minorities are excluded from the political arena, and score 5 indicates the absence of political discrimination¹².

LangRD--shall be a second independent variable for this argument. This variable indicates the status of ethnic minority’s language. This variable is also on the ordinal scale from 1–5. Score 1 indicates a minority language that has faced political official discrimination, and score 5 means that their language has full official status in each country¹³.

PreSeat– This variable is coded by t-1 times the electoral result. This regression analysis controlled all variables that have been thought to be important variables in explaining party systems, as discussed in classical and new works. Therefore, this variable indicates only the effect of the ‘capability’ of each ethnic party. If voters change their voting behaviour because of each party’s performance, this variable shall be significant. However, if the ethnic voters have behaved very ideologically, this variable would not be affected significantly.

PR-SMD--shall be controlled variables, to control the institutional effect for an explanation of the situation of ethnic parties. It is the proportion of seats (0–1) which is determined by Proportional Representation (PR) system. Therefore, if a country adopts a full Single-member district system, this variable is coded as 0, and if countries adopt Mixed-systems and 120 of 200 seats are elected by a PR system, it shall be coded as 0.6.

Magni--is the average number of magnitude is used here. When a state’s magnitude has some

¹² Detailed definitions are: 1--official political discrimination and intensive discrimination in civil society; 2--no official discrimination but historical intensive discrimination in civil society; 3--no official discrimination but weak discrimination in civil society; 4--official protective policy but weak discrimination in civil society; 5--there is no ethnic discrimination.

¹³ Detailed definitions are: 1--official language policy is regulated to use ethnic language even in civil society and outlines some type of punishment; 2--no official regulations, and no official preservation; 3--no official preservation, but there are protective policies by ECRML; 4--minority language has or could have official status in the local unit; 5--minority language has full official status. This article refers to Spolsky (2004) to devise the dataset.

extent of range between tiers, and tiers under like a mixed-method, this dataset is coded with a large number because small parties such as ethnic parties generally tend to dominate in a proportional-tier district. I used an open database related to CEE's party politics at the Kyoto University Center for Integrated Area Studies (CIAS)

Threshold—is simply coded by the percentage that is needed to get seats in each country's national election. If some countries gave ethnic groups some privileges as discharging of threshold, the simple Hare quota, which is needed for winning a seat, would be applied for coding.

ELF—is the variable for controlling socio-economic factors. The famous work by Alesina et al. (1997) is used here. This variable indicates the polarization of ethnicity and language in each state.

Composi—is the variable that represents the ratio of each ethnic group composition in the national population. This is a control variable for socio-economic factors. I coded this data from the CIA World Factbook's web resources.

Data samples consist of each CEE country's elections times each ethnic group. That is to say, for example, Lithuania has two ethnic groups--Russians and Poles--and they have experienced elections 5 times. This generates 10 cases in the dataset, and the ethnic party's seats and policy variables should be coded separately to correspond with each ethnic group.

A country-year, which is coded as 'democracy' at Polity IV and as 'free' at Freedom House, shall only be used in this data sample because this research treats electoral issues. For example, Croatia in the '90s shall be excluded from this dataset because it was coded as 'Not Free' by Freedom House at that time.

The analysis used all these variables to regress, but the key variables in this argument (PoliRD and LangRD) are the ordinal scale and not the interval scale nor the proportional scale, therefore, it is appropriate to regress and estimate the variation among each of the two contiguous scales. This arrangement avoids the estimation error by positing the premises that the range of contiguous scores are respectively equal.

3.2 Results of Regression Analysis

	Model1 PoliDR Score1↔2	Model2 PoliDR Score2↔3	Model3 PoliDR Score3↔4	Model4 PoliDR Score4↔5
Constant	.026	.009	.176	.025
PoliDR	*-.320	-.050	.294	^-140
PR-SMD	---†	---	.271	.124
Magni	.121	-.035	.187	-.070
Threshold	-.064	-.122	-.048	-.057
Ethnoseat	.078	*.204	-.034	.078
ELF	-.141	-.056	.112	*.231
Composi	**400	-.075	.339	-.025
PreSeats	**446	**826	*443	**628
AdjustedR ²	.611	.847	.776	.697
Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	45	34	21	75

** p < 0.01 * p < 0.05 ^ p < 0.10 † SPSS excludes this variable because there are no variances in this regression.

Table 1: Multi-Regression analysis with political discrimination-right variables.

We could observe several points from this result. First, electoral design factors have never affected the performance of ethnic minority parties. Second, political rights and discrimination as policy output have somewhat of a significant effect at the time of an important decision. We could interpret that it is important whether official political acts of discrimination are implemented or not, as model 1 shows. If ethnic minorities obtain political rights like suffrage, ethnic parties lose support. This is counterintuitive, but reasonable. Third, even if the other possible variables are controlled, a party's performance in the last election has great significance. We could say that ethnic voters react to ethnic parties' ability to win seats. Finally, socio-economic factors could have some effect, but not consistently.

	Model1 LangDR Score1↔2	Model2 LangDR Score2↔3	Model3 LangDR Score3↔4	Model4 LangDR Score4↔5
Constant	**029	.013	.039	.140
LangDR	**-.298	.012	-.025	**607
PR-SMD	.086	.094	.147	.468
Magni	.025	-.017	-.147	-.089
Threshold	.051	.041	-.032	.116
Ethnoseat	-.070	-.090	-.031	.091
ELF	^-145	-.126	.039	-.116
Composi	.024	-.034	*.274	**608
PreSeats	**722	**823	**677	**496
AdjustedR ²	.793	.709	.694	.790
Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	66	83	45	24

** p < 0.01 * p < 0.05 ^ p < 0.10

Table 2: Multi-Regression analysis with language discrimination-right variables.

Table 2 represents the result of regression analysis that mentioned the language policy factor. We

also can see the significance of parties' performance factors and the ineffectiveness of electoral institutions' factors. Ethnic compositions have some inconsistent significance to explain the variation of ethnic parties' situation. Language policy also has significance to some extent at the moment whether discriminative language policy applied or not.

In sum, the results of regression analysis show some astounding results. The credibility of winning seats by ethnic parties have been determined by its performance, even any other significant variables are controlled. In other words, supporters of ethnic parties (most of them belong to an ethnic minority) did not be affected by variation of electoral institutions. S/he votes for an ethnic party if its performance is good, but avoids wasting a vote if its performance is bad; and all of a voter's behaviours are defined by these strategies. Moreover, this result also shows that the fate of ethnic parties is not determined by ideological principles. If ethnic voting is special, and the expression of identity is important for members of an ethnic minority, then they would vote without consideration of a party's performance in the last election. However, they have changed their support for ethnic parties in response to the parties' capability. This shows the rationality of ethnic voters.

In addition, regression analysis revealed the significance of the policy factor and of voters' responsive attitude. It represented the ineffectiveness of electoral institution factors and also showed some effect of demographic factors. Moreover, it verifies the theoretical deduction in the above section, and has some relevance to the application of that theory to CEE post-communist democracies.

4. Case Studies.

4.1. Invalidity of classical variables

For further explanation and comprehension, this article selects the Baltic States as comparative cases. These three countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have shared some similar institutional and socio-economic factors that are related to party systems as classic studies have thought. Moreover, their minority problems are the same as the Russophone minority problem¹⁴. However, the situation of the

¹⁴ The term 'Russophone' indicates the people who speak Russian as a first language; therefore it does not necessarily mean that

ethnic parties in these three states shows us a clear difference. Russian parties in Lithuania have never even won a seat in Seimas (the Lithuanian parliament) yet. Antithetically, there are several Russian parties in the Latvian parliament, named Saeima. In Estonia, some Russian parties won some seats in Riigikogu (the Estonian parliament) in the '90s; however, they lost the support of the Russian minority voters in the 2000s. In short, these three countries share some similarity or randomness in variables that have been treated as important ones for political party systems; however, the situations of the three countries show us different results. Therefore, these cases are very good examples for verification of this article's hypothesis.

First of all, the relation between electoral systems and ethnic parties' systems shall be investigated. Estonia and Latvia have adopted PR systems since their re-independence. Lithuania uses the mixed-method: half of the seats (70 seats) have been decided by the PR system and the other half (71 seats) have been distributed in single-member districts (SMD). If the electoral rule were to matter for the success or failure of ethnic minority parties, only Lithuania would show a difference in its result; however, it has never been important. How about electoral magnitude? The number of magnitude of each country's electoral system is shown below.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Number of Electoral Magnitude	9.2 (-1999) or 8.4 (2003-)	20	70 (in PR) & 1 (in SMD)

Table 3: Electoral Magnitudes (Avg) in Baltic States.

If electoral magnitude matters, as some theorists have proposed, the Russian party in Lithuania, like *Rusų Sąjunga*--could win seats most easily in the Baltic states. The next is Latvia, and the Russian party in Estonia would have difficulty in winning seats in parliament. However, this theoretical prediction is contrasted with real examples. In short, we can conclude here that institutional factors do not affect the success or failure of Russian minority parties in the Baltic States. In addition, an electoral threshold does not have enough significance to explain variances in the fates of small ethnic parties.

Socio-economic factors also have never had significance in explaining differences in the situation

all of them are ethnically Russian. There are some famous studies that treat this problem as a theme in political science. See Laitin 1998, Kelley 2004, Galbreath 2005, Budryte 2005, Petersen 2002, Kolsto eds. 2002, Pettai 2001 and so on.

of ethnic minority parties in the Baltic States. This article checks demographic composition up, and inspects Russophones' economic situation which could not see in Large-N statistical analysis.

	Percentage of Russians in National Population ¹⁵		Percentage of Russians in Electorates ¹⁶ (estimated)		ELF Index ¹⁷	
	1989	2000	First Election	Thereabout 2000	Ethnic Fractionalization	Language Fractionalization
Estonia	30.3	25.6	5.9%	9.6%	0.51	0.49
Latvia	34.0	29.6	12.9%	18.1%	0.59	0.58
Lithuania	9.4	6.3			0.32	0.32

Table 4: Demographic factors of Russophone minorities in Baltic States

	Ratio of Wage ('97) ¹⁸ Russian/Titular	Ratio about Experience of unemployment ('97) ¹⁹ Russian/Titular
Estonia	0.811	1.444
Latvia	0.905	1.929
Lithuania	0.995	2.000

Table 5: Economic gap between Russian people and titular nations in Baltic States.

Table 4 shows societal demographic factors in the three countries. It seems that the ethnic composition in the national population has some effect for ethnic parties' fates, because Lithuania has fewer Russian people among its population and has never faced the emergence of Russian parties in Seimas; however, this factor cannot account for the difference between the situation of the Russian party in Latvia and that in Estonia. Moreover, and more important, Estonia and Latvia have restrained the franchise for Russophone minorities, and the estimated Russian composition in both countries' electoral population is somewhat similar to that of Lithuania.

Referring to a more sophisticated dataset, this table represents the ELF index. These indexes also show that ethno-demographic factors do not have enough significance to explain the variation in ethnic parties' situations in the Baltic States.

Table 5 shows the circumstance of minorities in relation to economic factors. Generally speaking, Russophone minorities have been weaker than those in titular nations. Therefore, their economic fate cannot account for the differences in ethnic parties' performances among the three states

¹⁵ Budryte 2005: 5.

¹⁶ Based on Budryte 2005 above, this table considers that most people who are not recorded as belonging to a titular nation or as 'Jewish' as immigrants in Soviet times, excluding some exceptional cases. Moreover, this table compares that percentage with Seki 2006's Inclusive Index (*written in Japanese*), and calculates the percentage of Russophone minorities in Electorates, because the Estonian and Latvian governments eliminated Russian immigrant minorities from electoral markets.

¹⁷ Alesina et al. 2003.

¹⁸ Rose 1997. Respondents for each question were: N = 1799 (Estonia), 1006 (Latvia) and 1700 (Lithuania).

¹⁹ *ibid.*

either.

The next section introduces the three countries' party political process briefly, paying attention to the ethnic parties' situation.

4.2 History of Party Politics in the Baltic States²⁰.

-ESTONIA-

First of all, Estonia has displayed a very apparent course and mechanism that explains why the situation of ethnic parties varies from time to time. After re-independence, Estonia adopted a highly exclusion-oriented policy to build national unity. Estonia faced the problem of how to treat Russian-speaking immigrants from the Soviet era and decided not to grant them suffrage, as they had been considered 'illegal immigrants' after a vast dispute among communist elites, soviet elites, republic elites and popular front elites. It was natural that Russian minority people would form and support Russian political parties, and they won several seats in '95's and '99's general elections. However, after '03's general election, such parties could not get seats, not because such parties had been banned or assimilated, but because of a change in the pattern of Russian minorities' voting.

At the time of the independence movement, hard-line members in the Estonian Communist Party and its successor, the Estonian Democratic Labour Party, expressed their affirmative position for the Soviet Union and the protection for ethnic minority parties as party strategy. However, such parties could not get support from the nation after re-independence. The first general election in 1992 saw a significant victory of right-wing nationalist parties, like '*Isamaa*' or the Estonian National Independence Party (ERSP). Many former popular front members and reformists in the Communist Party had formed the Centre Party, the Union Party and the Reformist Party, and they won the 1995 general elections. The 1995 election had several important aspects. First, the Russian minority party, 'Our Home is Estonia', got 6 seats in parliament (101 seats), and shocked the Estonian nationalists among the political elite and people who had thought that the exclusion of the Russian people from the political sphere to rebuild the Estonian

²⁰ This paper refers to each national electoral committee's webpage concerning the results of the election.

nation was effective. Second, a centre-left cabinet formed after the '95 election. The Centre party and its leader, Edgar Savisaar, had been well known not only as a redistribution-oriented party, but also as a pro-minorities party. Although the 1999 general election showed the Russian parties' success²¹, they lost seats immediately after the 2003 general elections. In fact, in this period, there were never significant changes in the electoral systems and the ethno-societal composition.

The Centre party left the government coalition after Savisaar's scandal, but kept cooperating with coalition members and suggested and passed pro-Russian minority laws²². First of all, the Centre party succeeded in passing the amendment law of local elections and granted many Russian minority people local suffrage. Budryte pointed out that its policy allowed the Centre party to gain support from Russophone minorities²³. In fact, after this moment, the Centre party showed overwhelming strength in the local elections where many Russophone minorities live, such as Narva. In addition, they amended a citizenship law to exempt a language test for long living Russian speakers in 1998. Moreover, when the Centre party rejoined the government coalition in 2002, they passed a law that alleviated and simplified the tests of a person's knowledge of history and the Constitution of Estonia that was required when seeking citizenship, for who have studied history in Estonian official education.

The change in the situation of ethnic Russian parties could be explained as the Centre party succeeded in claiming credit for Russian minority voters, and Russian voters themselves had changed their voting behaviour. Considering the theoretical deduction mentioned above, it is obvious that this change had been introduced by a policy factor, not by institutional or socio-economic factors. Table 6 below shows that Russophone minorities have tended to vote for the Centre Party since 2003. There are not significant correlations among the rate of Russian and support for the Centre party at each district level before 2003, but after that, Russophone minorities obviously tended to vote for the Centre Party.

²¹ The United People's Party (EURP: nowadays, it has changed its party name and has been called the Constitutional Party since 2006.) won 6 seats in this election as a Russian party.

²² Rawn 1997.

²³ Budryte 2005; Jeffries 2004.

	1995 General election	1999 General election	2003 General election	2005 Unified local election	2007 General election
correlation coefficient	.435	.099	*.537	*.555	** .815

** p < 0.01 * p < 0.05 district. N = 17²⁴

Table 6: Correlation between Russophone compositions and support rates for the Centre Party in each electoral

It is appropriate to say that an ethnic minority party's fate is decided by a policy factor in the Estonian case, because the voting behaviour of its supporters changed.

-LATVIA-

Next, Latvia's case shall be considered. Latvia also adopted a highly exclusion-oriented and 'Latvian first' approach as its integration policy. Its logic had been similar to Estonia's. Latvia franchised Latvian citizenship only for descendants of those who had lived in Latvia before the 1940s.

Some members of the former Latvian Communist Party formed the Russian ethnic party 'Equal Rights', or the Latvian Socialist Party, and they appealed strategically for Russophone minorities to build solid support bases and to express the Russian people's interests. 'Equal Rights' won 7 seats in Saeima (100 seats) in the first national general election even though most Latvian Russians did not have suffrage. However, it is quite natural that most of the Russophones who had suffrage voted for such a party because of the Latvian government's rigid policy. 'Equal Rights' merged with the Socialist Party, and it won 5 seats in the next national election in 1995. They merged and formed 'Harmony for Latvia', and got 16 seats in 1998. Then, renamed as 'For Human Rights in United Latvia (PCTVL)', they surprisingly took 25 seats in the 2002 election. 'Concord Centre (SC)' split from PCTVL as another pro-Russian ethnic party. In the 2006 general election, PCTVL got 6 seats, and SC got 17 seats. In short, pro-Russian parties have consistently been significant political actors in parliament since Latvia's re-independence.

In fact, there have been several policy changes in Latvia regarding the integration policy, especially in regards to the citizenship law and the treatment of language. The rigid policy, such as an examination to acquire Latvian citizenship, had been simplified in about 1998; however, it was revised at the initiative of president Viķe-Freiberga and a national referendum, following pressure from the Council

²⁴ There are three electoral districts in the capital, Tallinn, and national statistical data about the ethnic composition of Tallinn is only one set of data. Therefore, electoral data on Tallinn is integrated as a single case here.

of Europe and the OSCE²⁵.

In other words, political parties could not make appeals for Russian minorities as they were the guardians of Russophones' interests. Moreover, Latvian party politics has never franchised local suffrage to Russian minorities. In fact, several leftist parties had tried to appeal for Russian minorities²⁶, but they had never had the chance to grasp suffrage. For example, the Latvian Social Democratic Labour Party (LSDSP) or the National Harmony Party (TSP) had never taken part in the Government Coalition—even though they were fairly significant leftist parties--and had never taken credit for claiming Russophone minorities through their policy.

Meanwhile, minority voters had studied and understood that several ethnic pro-Russian parties could win seats and enough power so that their vote would not be wasted. From the Russophone minority voters' view, no political parties except the Russian ethnic parties had been affirmative to them. Related to the theoretical and statistical analysis above, the Latvian government has never opened its political arena to Russian minorities and has maintained a law that levied fines for using the Russian language in social activities. Therefore, it is natural, and it accords with the argument of this paper, that ethnic parties have kept on winning seats in Latvia.

	Rose 2005, (NBB6) (%) ²⁷	
	Latvian	Russian
PCTVL 【Russian minority party】	2	23
New Era (JL)	12	4
People's Party (TP)	11	1
For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (TB/LNNK)	8	0
Union of Farmers and Greens	7	2
LSDSP	3	5
People's Concord Party (TSP)	3	9
Latvia's Way (LC)	4	1
Socialist Party 【Russian minority party】	0	2
The Others	7	5
I don't want to vote	17	21
DN/NA	26	27

Table 7: Popularity poll for political parties in each ethnic group. (Source: New Baltic Barometer VI)

Table 7 shows that ethnic Russians expressed their attitudes that they support ethnic parties with significant differences in a relatively recent barometer survey. It verifies the structure that the Russian

²⁵ Budryte 2005; Kelley 2004: 88-89. Of course, the pressure from European organizations to change policies is applied quite equally, not only to Latvia, but also to all new EU candidates from Eastern Europe, including Lithuania potentially.

²⁶ Plakas 1997: 279-280.

²⁷ Rose 2005.

minority voter has continued to maintain support for Russian minority parties even now. This situation contrasts quite sharply with Estonia's.

-LITHUANIA²⁸-

Finally, in this section, Lithuania's case shows an example in which Russian ethnic parties could never have won seats. The population of Russophone minorities there is smaller than those of Estonia and Latvia, but its size has been large enough to gain seats. Many Russian minorities have concentrated in southeastern Lithuania, including the capital, Vilnius. Moreover, its electoral rules have a very big electoral magnitude in the PR tier. In this regard, Lithuania is the 'most likely case' for ethnic Russian parties to win seats, but this phenomenon has never occurred. This article explains reason why such a situation exists in Lithuania.

Lithuania's integration policy is quite different from that of its northern neighbours. Russophone immigrants during the Soviet era were granted full suffrage if they wanted it at the time of re-independence. Even though the Russian language has never been an official language at the national and local levels there has never been any regulation about using it in civil activity.

These types of policies were introduced about the time of re-independence in 1990 (or 1991), and followed the decision by the transitional government and the new political elites. Lithuania is well known as the first state to declare full independence from the Soviet Union, and as the communist successor party's victory in the first national general election. This means that the set of integration policies that have a slightly pro-Russian orientation were established by the former regime's elites and its successor group, the Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania (LDDP).

The set of integration policies that were introduced by the LDDP were visible for Russophone minorities, and these peoples could be assured that the LDDP would work harder for their welfare than other parties²⁹. Moreover, as Lieven (1997) pointed out, the party's leader, Algirdas Brazauskas, also enjoyed personal popularity among the Russian minorities because of the party's pragmatic attitude and

²⁸ I refer to Kricius 1997; Fitzmaurice 2003; Muller-Rommel et al. 2004 as the other literature.

²⁹ Lane 2001

its obliviousness to ethnicity.

	Rose 1995, (NBB2) Apr. (%) ³⁰	
	Lithuanian	Russian
Democratic Labour Party (LDDP)	16	37
Homeland Union-Lithuanian Conservatives (TS-LK)	22	5
Christian Democratic Party (LKDP)	16	2
Social Democratic Party (LSDP)	5	5
Liberty League (LLL)	3	2
Agrarian Party (LVP)	5	5
Pole's Electoral Action (LLRA)	0	4
Centre Party (LCS)	5	2
The Others	16	13
DN/NA	12	25

Table 8: Popularity poll for political parties in each ethnic group. (Source: New Baltic Barometer II)

Table 8 shows that most Russian minorities already supported the LDDP in the '90s. At that time, a well-organised Russian party, 'Russian Union (*Rusu Sajunga*)', was active already, but were not able to get support from the Russophone minorities (they are included as 'the others' response in the table above).

The LDDP merged with Social Democratic Party at 2001³¹, and the name of 'Democratic Labour Party' vanished, but the Russophone minorities have never supported the Russian parties in the national election. Russian parties could never win even a seat in Seimas after that time.

The minority voter's rationality seems to account for the fact that Russian parties do not get seats. Theoretical arguments have already suggested that potential supporters of small parties could behave very strategically to avoid wasting their vote, even if they are ethnic minorities. Most of all, the Russophone minorities in Lithuania have well realised that the Russian party in Lithuania (typified by the Russian Union) has never been able to win seats. Thus, Russophones in each electoral district have doubted their parties' capability to get a seat even now.

The cause of the unpopularity of the ethnic parties in Lithuania could be explained by a policy factor in the '90s and by the voters' rationality in the 2000s. These two factor accord quite accurately with the main argument of this paper.

³⁰ Rose 1995.

³¹ LDDP official homepage

Conclusion

This paper has argued about the divergent situations of ethnic political parties in newly democratised countries. From theoretical, statistical and case research, it is appropriate to conclude that the fate of ethnic parties has been explained not by institutional or socio-economic factors, but by a more actor-centric approach, especially the changes in integration policy and the rationality of minority voters.

As this study focuses on voters' rationality and the responsibility for policy change, its theoretical and formalised deduction explains well the reason why ethnic parties could or could not win seats.

Moreover, this argument is valid enough among CEE democracies. Statistical verifications give the theoretical review empirical reality and robustness. It has shown that most ethnic voters behave without considering the electoral institutional design and socio-economic factors. Ethnic composition seems to be somewhat effective in accounting for ethnic parties' fates, but it is not consistent. Furthermore, policy factors do not have a consistent effect upon the vitality of ethnic parties. However, it has a significant effect on whether ethnic minorities can enter the political arena or not, and whether they are punished for using the language or not.

Case studies for three Baltic states have shown that specific and concrete causal mechanisms, which are policy factors and voters' responses, determine the fate of ethnic Russian minorities' parties in each state. These three states have had the same type of minority problems, but the fates of their minority parties have differences. So, we can discover and investigate a very important factor that will define the situation of ethnic parties. In Estonia, the Centre Party's visible claiming of credit for Russian minorities who had changed their voting behaviour and for ethnic Russian parties have faded away in Riigikogu. Any political parties could do that in Latvia as well and ethnic Russian minority voters in Latvia have realised their ethnic parties could continue winning seats. Russophones in Lithuania cast their ballot for the Democratic Labour Party because of its tolerant policy for minorities in the '90s, and they avoided voting for their own ethnic parties in the Seimas elections because they knew their vote would be wasted.

All three methods have shown the importance of the policy factor and of voters' rationality to explain the each country's ethnic parties' fates. The question about ethnic parties will be included in

questions about the party system, but classical works about party systems could not explain sufficiently well the variance among ethnic parties in CEE countries. My argument proposed a more accountable explanation for this question, and builds a bridgehead for empirical research about ethnopolitics.

Appendix.

Countries, elections and parties, that have been used in statistical analysis.

Estonia (92, 95, 99, 03, 07) Latvia (93, 95, 98, 02, 06) Lithuania (92, 96, 00, 04, 08)
Poland [Lower Chamber] (91, 93, 97, 01, 05, 07) Czech [Lower Chamber] (96, 98, 02, 06)
Slovakia (94, 98, 02, 06) Hungary (90, 94, 98, 02, 06) Slovenia (92, 96, 00, 04, 08))
Croatia (00[Lower Chamber], 03, 07) Serbia(+SCG) (00, 03, 07, 08) BiH (none) Montenegro (06)
Albania (05) Macedonia (94, 98, 02, 06, 08) Bulgaria (90, 91, 94, 97, 01, 05) Romania (96, 00, 04, 08)
Moldova (94, 98, 01, 05) Ukraine (94, 98, 02, 06, 07)

Estonia Our Home is Estonia/ United People's Party/ Russian Party in Estonia
Latvia Equal Rights, Russian Citizen Party/ National Harmony Party/ For Human Rights and United Latvia (PCTVL)/ Concord Center (SC)
Lithuania Lithuanian Russian Union/ Pole's Electoral Union of Lithuania/ Pole's Electoral Alliance of Lithuania (LLRA)/ Minority People's Alliance
Poland German Minority/ Cultural Society of the Germans in the Opole District
Czech Union of Slovak/ Community of Slovak/ Democratic Alliance of Slovaks/ HSMS, Romany Civil Initiative/ Romany National council/ Polish Council/ Union of German culture/ Council of Jewish Communities. I exclude molavia-oriented parties because it is appropriate to treat those as regional parties.
Slovakia Hungarian Coalition/ Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement/ Coexistence
Hungary National Minority Roundtable/ Council of Gypsies in Hungary/ Roma Parliament/ Democratic Alliance Hungarian Gypsies/ Independent Gypsy Association/ Association of Germans/ Democratic Union of Slovak in Hungary/ Jewish Cultural Alliance/ Democratic Federation of Serb/ Democratic Association of Romanian.
Slovenia Italian Union/ Interest Community of Hungarian Minority
Croatia Serb People's Party/ Independent Democratic Serbian Party/ Party of Democratic Action of Croatia/ Democratic Union of Hungarian. I exclude "Istoria deomcratic council" because it seems to be regional parties.
BiH Serbian Democratic Party/ Croatian Democratic Union 1990/ Croats Together/ New Croatian Initiative. I exclude slpska partie" because it is regional party.
Montenegro Serbian Radical Party/ Serbian National Renewal/ Serbian Fatherland/ Serbia National Party (SNP)/ SNP-NP-DSS/ Together for Yugoslavia/ Serb List/ Radical Party of Montenegro/ Serbian Union/ Bosniak Coalition/ Albanian Alternative/ Albanians Together/ Democratic Union of Albanians/ Liberals and Bosniak Party-Correct in the Past, Right for the Future.
Albania Unity for Human Right Party
Bulgaria Movement for Rights and Freedoms
Romania Association of Italians of Romania/ Bulgarian Union of the Banat/ Cultural Union of Ruthenians of Romania Uniunea/ democratic Forum of Germans of Romania/ Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania/ Democratic Union of Turco-Islamic Tatars of Romania/ Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania/ Greek Union of Romania/ League of Albanians of Romania/ Lipovan Russian Community of Romania/ Party of the Roma/ Turkish Democratic Union of Romania/ Union of Armenians of Romania/ Union of Croats of Romania/ Union of Poles of Romania "Dom Polski"/ Union of Serbs of Romania/ Union of Slavic Macedonians of Romania/ Union of Ukrainians of Romania
Moldova Unity-Transnistria, Union of Patriot Movement/ Gagauz People/ Democratic Party of the Gagauz
Macedonia Democratic Union for Integration/ Party for Democratic Prosperity/ Democratic League of Bosniaks/ Democratic Party of Albanians/ Democratic Party of Serbs/ United Party of Romas in Macedonia/ Democratic Party of Turks/ Party for Roma Integration/ Party of the Democratic Forces of Roma in Macedonia/ Democratic Party of the Bosnmiaks/ Union of Roma in Macedonia/ Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia/
Serbia Hungarian Coalition/ Bosniak List for a European Sanjak/ Albanian Coalition/ Roma Party/ Roma for Roma/ Roma Union of Serbia/ Montenegrin Party/ Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians/ Together for Tolerance – Čanak, Kasza, Ljajić/ Alliance of Vojvodina Magyars/ Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina Hungarians/ Democratic Reform Party of Muslims I define Vojvodina oriented parties as regional parties except above.
Ukraine Crimia Russian Party, Democratic Movement of Donbas

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