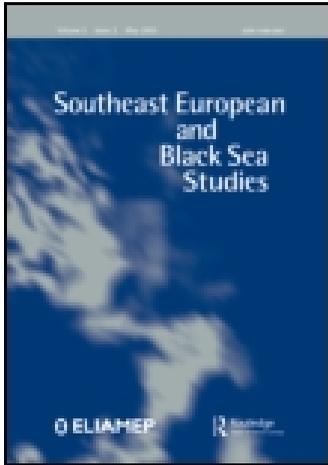


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The international dimensions of democratization in Slovakia and Croatia

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International influences were instrumental in the shaping of democratic outcomes in post-communist countries. The cases of Slovakia and Croatia demonstrate that international actors can play a transformative role during crucial moments in a country's trajectory (or 'critical junctures') by de-legitimizing support for the authoritarian alternatives, shaping choices and resources available to elites, and building consensus on the democratic course at the elite and societal levels. Slovak and Croatian politics show the impact of external factors on the September 1998 and January 2000 parliamentary elections, respectively, that ended the legacy of a previous critical juncture and began a new path-dependent process.

Keywords: democratic consolidation; critical junctures; path dependence; conditionality; the European Union; civil society; nationalism; Slovakia; Croatia

Introduction

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe (EE) in the 1990s and the subsequent transition process have challenged many assumptions in the democratization literature. The role of international factors in post-communist transitions to democracy has proved to be far more important in EE than in previous waves of democratization in post-war Western Europe, Southern Europe and Latin America. International actors and factors shaped all phases of transition in EE: the breakdown of the old communist regime, the transfer of political power and the process of democratic consolidation. Various external actors, including transnational networks, international organizations (IOs), foreign governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have been involved in democracy building in EE. The mission of the major IOs after the end of the cold war has been to spread the institutional benefits of cooperation, democratization, stability and economic prosperity to the post-communist region. Ideas and norms of democracy, carried through global media and social movements, have also played a role.

Drawing on the Slovak and Croatian experiences, this article shows why and under what particular conditions international factors can influence the extent of democratization in EE; how they interact with domestic factors, developments and historical legacies; and what are the limitations of their influence. I argue that

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international actors can play a transformative role during the crucial moments in a country's democratic development, the so-called 'critical junctures', by eliminating and de-legitimizing support for the authoritarian alternatives. They can shape choices and resources available to post-communist elites and help to build consensus on the democratic course of a country on both the elite and societal levels. They reward those countries already on a successful path as well as shape the choices in 'turnaround cases', such as Slovakia under Mečiar or Croatia under Tudjman, where domestic leaders often have conflicting objectives and the impact of international actors is particularly visible. Slovak and Croatian politics demonstrate the impact of external factors on the September 1998 and January 2000 parliamentary elections, respectively, which represented the crucial turning points in the democracy-building efforts in these countries. Experiences of these two countries inspired the 'colored revolutions' in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan between 2000 and 2005.

I further argue that international actors can make substantial and sustained contribution *only* if their political pressures are accompanied by support of domestic civil societies and political parties. Thus, external actors can prompt policy changes to promote better democracies if they are deeply involved in domestic politics of democratizing societies.

The first section of this article provides a brief survey of the existing theoretical approaches to explaining international-domestic relationships. The second section examines various forms of international influence on democratization processes in EE at a general level. Transitions have already occurred in all post-communist countries, albeit with diverging outcomes. For the purposes of this article, I am interested in the effects of international factors on democratic consolidation – a lengthier phase of democratization than transition, but with wider and deeper effects. Consolidation involves the removal of the remnants of the previous regime, making democracy 'the only game in town' (Przeworski 1990); as such, it opens the way for new rules, institutions and political culture (Pridham 2002, 955). External influences tend to be greater on the consolidation of democracy than on transition itself (Schmitter 1995, 517). The remainder of the article evaluates my arguments through a structured comparison of my two case studies.

Theoretical conceptualization of international-domestic nexus

The comparative literature on democratic transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America has focused on the influence of the domestic realm on transitions from authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). External actors have been considered to play only an indirect and marginal role, with the exception of countries occupied by foreign powers. Two *domestic* perspectives prevail in the literature on democratization. First, there are the 'macro-level' approaches that, in the spirit of modernization theory, underline the socio-economic and cultural prerequisites of democracy. This school emphasizes the longer-term developments, prior to the transition to democracy that can influence political culture and new democratic arrangements. Scholars working in this tradition focus on various legacies such as the history of imperial rule, levels of economic development or backwardness, traditional political culture, religion, history of statehood and prior experience with democracy. Second, the 'micro' approaches emphasize the role of agents in bringing about regime change, focusing on crucial events during the period of the collapse of the authoritarian regime and initial phases of democrati-

zation.¹ This scholarship examines the quality of political leadership, institutional design, the mode of transition and the first post-communist elections. Both approaches are, however, restricted to within the sovereign borders of a democratizing country. More recent democratization literature on the 'fourth wave' of democratization in EE (McFaul 2002) challenges this domestic conceptual framework by probing the importance of international factors – state, non-state and supranational – in democratization (Carothers 1999; Plattner and Smollar 2000; Thomas 2001; Whitehead 2001; Zielonka and Pravda 2001; Pevehouse 2002; Kurz and Barnes 2002; Jacoby 2006).

Furthermore, there is a rich IR literature examining interdependence and showing that international influences on domestic politics depend on factor endowments and on the degree of state openness and international institutionalization of the specific issue-area (Gourevitch 1978; Putnam 1988; Risse-Kappen 1995; Frieden and Rogowski 1996; Risse and Sikkink 1999; Mendelson and Glenn 2002). 'Democratic peace' theory provides the theoretical underpinning for the 'democratic mission' of the West (Mansfield and Snyder 1995; Oneal and Russett 1999). Finally, the European integration literature examines the impact of the EU on democracy building in EE (Iankova 2001; Pridham 2005; Jacoby 2004; Kelley 2004; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Vachudova 2005; Grabbe 2006).

This paper extends the existing literature by applying a path-dependence approach to studying external influences on democratic outcomes (Thelen 1999; Collier and Collier 1991; Mahoney 2000; Pierson 2004). The focus here is on 'critical junctures' in proximate post-communist politics, emphasizing the power of agency to build democracy despite unfavourable initial conditions.² Collier and Collier (1991, 29) define a critical juncture as 'a period of significance change – which is hypothesized to product distinct legacies'. For Mahoney (2001, 112), the critical juncture involves 'the selection of a particular option (for example, a specific policy, institution, coalition or government) from among two or more alternatives'. The actors' choices during these critical moments are consequential because they lead to the creation of new institutional, structural and behavioural patterns that put countries on certain paths of development, with certain outcomes that endure over time (Thelen 1999, 387). Change occurs because actors become convinced of the validity of one course of action being greater than that of the competing alternative (Weingast 2005). During these periods of discontinuity, the legacy of a previous critical juncture – such as the first post-communist elections in 1990 in Slovakia and 1992 in Croatia – will end, indicating the beginning of a new path-dependent process.

Forms and mechanisms of international influence

The literature identifies three principal mechanisms of international influence on democracy building: first, the demonstration effects and diffusion of the democratization experience; second, deliberate policy actions through political pressures and conditionality linked to the promise of membership in IOs and democratic assistance; and finally, transnational non-governmental support in the generation of new democratic norms from below.

The West as a political model

The revolutions of 1989–92 in EE were largely inspired by the model of Western Europe. For EE countries, the EU represents a model for economic prosperity and democratic values. Their call for a ‘return to Europe’ has resulted from a strong identification with the values of the European community from which they were cut off under communism. EU membership, the primary foreign policy goal of countries in East Central Europe, promised the prospects of belonging to the Western liberal community and liberation from the communist ‘Eastern’ identity. The experience of integrating Spain, Greece and Portugal influenced the belief of the current generation of European leaders that the EU membership can be a central support for consolidating democracy.³ In addition, Germany has always played an important role in EE, albeit not always positive. In the past, it had been perceived as a modernizing force but also as a potential danger to national security and identity; its role in the region today is mainly economic, through the *Bundesbank* rather than the *Bundeswehr* (Rupnik 2000, 60). The American model was emulated to a lesser extent, but its emphasis on an independent judiciary and media was an inspiration to many EE leaders (Rupnik 2000, 64).

The borrowing of Western models of liberal democracy and market capitalism by post-communist countries was a relatively simple way to design new institutions without the costs of trial and error (Jacoby 2001). Imitation of Western templates also gave domestic elites legitimacy with their electorate and helped to build political coalitions, while providing assurances to Western political and economic elites and investors. Furthermore, the emulation of Western templates was often a prerequisite as most EE countries rushed to join Western institutions and needed financial assistance.

Top-down pressures and membership incentives

External pressures can weaken authoritarian regimes in two principal ways (Pevehouse 2002, 522). The interruption of trade and aid and the imposition of economic sanctions can aggravate the economic problems of the regime. Furthermore, public shaming, diplomatic pressures, international isolation and expulsion from IOs can de-legitimize the authoritarian regime in the eyes of domestic elites and population.

The top-down approach of international actors to influencing post-communist democratization has been applied principally through the use of political conditionality, which means

the linking, by a state or international organization, of perceived benefits to another state (such as aid, trade concessions, cooperation agreements, or international organization membership) to the fulfillment of conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles. (Smith 2001, 37)

Such conditions provide both a guide for democratizing governments and a justification for pursuing unpopular reforms at home.

The EU has the most elaborate policy of democratic conditionality, particularly through its enlargement policy. Strong leverage is provided through the conditionality components of its PHARE, TACIS, as well as the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization programmes, which provide the largest amount of financial aid to EE countries, while the Association and the

Stabilization and Association Agreements offer the prospect of full membership (Pridham 2002, 956).⁴ The degree of EU influence on political changes in EE has varied over time (Vachudova 2005). In the first phase that began in 1988, it concluded the trade and cooperation agreements without the promise of membership. But by 1993, the EU had established extensive and well-enforced conditions – the Copenhagen criteria – for membership.⁵ The EU emerged as the principal regional actor in democracy building in EE, but the USA has played a dominant role in the security area, leading military interventions to stabilize areas of conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. In US foreign policy, stability, order and free market have equal weight with promotion of democracy. While the USA is an advocate of ‘formal’ democracy, focusing on its institutional, constitutional and legal dimensions, the EU stresses ‘substantive’ democracy, which includes respect for human rights, minorities and fundamental freedoms (Pridham 2001, 63).

Conditionality in security matters is linked to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO memberships. Since the signing of the Helsinki Act, the OSCE and its partner (and competitor) institution, the Council of Europe, have helped to reinforce democratization in EE by stressing the protection of human and minority rights, free and fair elections, free press and the rule of law. NATO has also developed criteria for new members that include democratic governance, respect for human rights and civilian control of the military. Its main contribution to democratization has been to resolve ethnic disputes and encourage peaceful relations among neighbouring states with a history of ethnic tensions. NATO’s Partnership for Peace program (PfP), established in 1994, is a major initiative to promote political and military cooperation in Europe. However, while formally committed to promoting democracy, NATO has a record of tolerance of authoritarian regimes when it served the security interests of the institution or those of the USA.

The principal flaw of democratic conditionality is that it relies on persuasion and influence rather than on coercion (Pridham 1999). The pressures from IOs are more efficient and persuasive when backed by the promise of membership, and the sanctions of blocked membership negotiations are an effective coercive measure. For a membership incentive to be used efficiently, it must be accompanied by credible punishment for authoritarian misbehaviour. Although the Amsterdam Treaty allows the European Council to suspend certain rights of an EU member state in response to ‘a serious and persistent breach’ of democratic principles, there is no legal basis for the expulsion of the state from NATO.⁶

Bottom-up democratic support

Conditionality can be promoted not only by pressures but also through socialization, training and education. Bottom-up approaches involve help in building democratic institutions and civil society (e.g. political parties, trade unions, civil rights organizations) (Smith 2001). Such promotion of democracy has been a central focus of US foreign policy since the cold war, frequently implemented by NGOs funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). American NGOs used various strategies to build civil society and democratic institutions in EE, including assistance in infrastructure or human capital building (Mendelson and Glenn 2002, 7–8). Similarly, the EU approach to the candidate countries includes not only the ‘hard’ pillar of conditionality but also ‘soft’ pillars (Iankova 2001) that include the

informal spread of the EU's rules and norms through trans-governmental institutional structures of accession, policy advice and institutional twinning, transnational party and trade unions, business and interest group networks and NGOs.⁷ Nonetheless, international NGOs have been criticized for their focus on short-term goals and the interests of donors rather than on the long-term developmental goals of recipient countries (Mendelson and Glenn 2002).

Comparative analysis: Croatia and Slovakia

As I outline below, the most effective way for international actors to influence the democratic course of Slovakia and Croatia has proven to be a combination of 'top-down' international pressures, applied mainly via political conditionality, and 'bottom-up' democratic support of civil society and democratic institutions. These two countries have been chosen because of their manifold similarities, allowing us to control for some crucial variables and exclude them from our explanation of democratic outcomes.

First, the two countries share *communist legacies*. Despite some differences in the respective communist regimes, their institutional structures were the same: hegemonic political role of the Communist Party, and command economies.⁸ Both countries also experienced regime change roughly at the same time, from 1989 to 1992. Nonetheless, while the Czechoslovak communist leaders (particularly after the 1968 Prague Spring during the period of normalization under Husák's leadership) were repressive and loyal to the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav communist regime was among the most open and liberal. Yugoslavia retained a communist form of government but openly proclaimed its independence from the Soviet imperial centre after Tito's split from Moscow in 1948. The country did not participate in either the Warsaw Pact or Comecom, which coordinated defence and trade in the communist bloc and began to experiment with market socialism as early as the 1980s.

These countries also share the *socio-cultural legacies* of Habsburg imperial domination, which endowed them with positive cultural and political capital for democratization. They benefited from geographical closeness, cultural and economic links with the West, and from penetration by Western Christianity, with the Roman

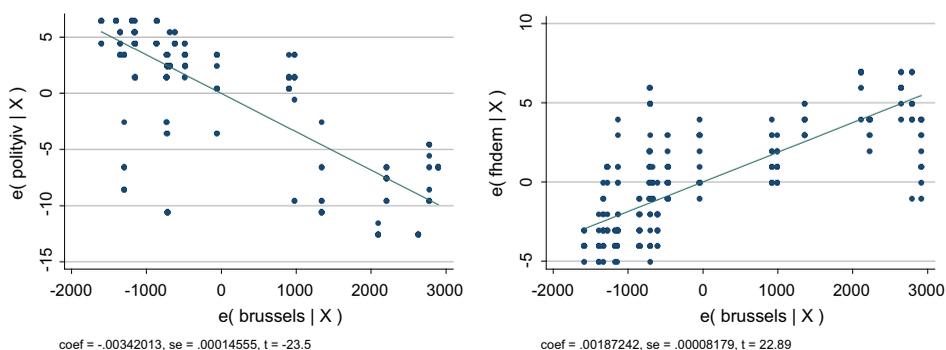


Figure 1. (a) Democracy (Polity 2 democracy index, POLITY IV) against the distance from Brussels; (b) Democracy (Freedom House index) against the distance from Brussels. Notes: Please note that the Freedom House ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of democratic progress.

between the Czech lands and Slovakia, and increased urbanization and educational levels in Slovakia (Table 1). Similarly, Croatia became one of the economically wealthiest republics in ex-Yugoslavia (Table 2). Favourable initial economic conditions allowed Slovakia and Croatia to achieve relatively high levels of economic wealth in the post-communist period (with respective GDPs per capita amounting to \$3668 and \$4548 in 2001).⁹ From the perspective of the modernization literature, which links levels of economic development to the survival and collapse of democracy, both countries enjoy favourable democratic prospects (Lipset 1959; Przeworski and Limongi 1997).

These two countries gained international recognition as independent sovereign states for the first time in their respective national histories only after the collapse of communism, albeit through different methods ('velvet divorce' in Slovakia in 1993, and war in Croatia in 1991). Although both were independent entities for a short period during the second World War (as puppet Nazi states), the independent statehoods in the 1990s were their first serious state-building experiences. The difficulties in anchoring democracy after the collapse of communism stemmed mainly from the necessity of nation- and state-building, alongside economic and political reforms (Offe 1991). Both countries are ethnically heterogeneous with large ethnic minorities, most strongly represented by Hungarians in Slovakia (9.7%) and Serbs in Croatia (12%). These minorities are simultaneously majorities in neighbouring countries, potentially a destabilizing factor. Ethnic heterogeneity tends to exacerbate the risk of inter-ethnic conflict, with negative effects on democratization prospects (Horowitz 1993). Accordingly, ethnicity became one of the most important cleavages in both cases, as ruling authoritarian elites mobilized national sentiment for the purpose of strengthening their regimes. Nationalism was a particularly useful tool because it cut across economic and religious cleavages and ensured a divided opposition.

Alongside these similarities, two crucial differences between these two cases contributed to their different outcomes (or stages) in democracy building. First, in contrast with ex-Yugoslavia, Slovakia, the successor country of the former Czechoslovakia, has a positive legacy of pre-communist experience with democracy during 1918–38 and to a lesser extent in 1945–48. Despite the fact that the first Czechoslovak Republic was fundamentally a Czech state run by a shifting five-party government coalition (Pražská petka) and Slovaks were almost perpetually excluded from power, the interwar democracy provided a model for the post-communist institutional framework and influenced political culture in the successor countries of the

Table 2. Social and demographic trends in Croatia since 1948.

| Percentage of labor force in: | 1948 | 1971 | 1989 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Agriculture | 62.4 | 32.3 | na |
| Non agricultural population | 37.6 | 67.7 | na |
| Levels of education (%) | 1953 | 1971 | 1991 |
| 0–3 years | 30.5 | 18.0 | 10.1 |
| 4–8 years | 60.8 | 59.8 | 44.6 |
| Secondary | 7.3 | 18.5 | 36.0 |
| Technical/Higher | 0.7 | 3.2 | 9.3 |

Source: Cohen (1997).

former federation. Second, in contrast to the peaceful ‘velvet revolution’ in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia experienced a violent transition from communism, followed by ethnic wars among its successor republics, which shaped and retarded political transformation in Croatia.

Slovakia

Domestic context

The establishment of an independent Slovak Republic in January 1993 and the process of state building complicated democratic consolidation. This was further contested under the leadership of Vladimír Mečiar, who was the Prime Minister during 1990–1991, 1992–1994 and 1994–1998.¹⁰ The government coalition after the 1994 elections, consisting of the nationalist-cum-populist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), nationalist Slovak National Party (SNS) and extreme left Alliance of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS), had a particularly negative impact on democracy building.

The political style of Mečiar’s cabinet resembled O’Donnell’s (1994) ‘delegative democracy’ – that is, once elected and endowed by a parliamentary majority, its members assumed that the government was empowered to run the country as it deemed fit.¹¹ Legislative changes introduced by Mečiar’s third government weakened not only the ‘horizontal accountability’ of state institutions (O’Donnell 1998) but also ‘vertical accountability’ to voters (Deegan-Krause 2003). In its relation to civil society, the governing coalition tried to establish a ‘party-state corporatism’,¹² that made civil society institutions accountable to the government, while maintaining the image of a formal democracy (Malová 1997).

The economic transition during the Mečiar years was characterized by two conflicting processes (Mikloš 1997). While the Slovak economy developed the basic institutional features of a market economy, interest groups and political parties were increasingly linked through the distribution of state property. Mečiar’s government cancelled the second wave of the voucher method of privatization and replaced it primarily with direct sales to buyers who were selected based on party membership or client–patron relations. The outcome of insider privatization of state property to cronies was flourishing clientelism and corruption, and thus a deviation from the Western economic model.

Mečiar’s ‘goulash nationalism’ (Bútorá and Bútorová 1999) rested on the idea that in order to achieve economic prosperity, Slovak people had to govern their own independent state. Although he portrayed himself as the ‘father of the nation’, neither Mečiar nor his party ever elaborated a concept for building a new state. However, his policy did emphasize the concept of an ‘ethnic Slovak nation-state’ that excluded national minorities from participation in state formation and led to various restrictions on the use of minority languages (Kusý 1997).

Using Fisher’s (2006) typology, the political elites during the Mečiar years can be divided into two competing groups: ‘Europeanists’ and ‘nationalists’. The opposition parties were oriented toward the model of liberal democracy, with clear ideological profiles and unambiguous pro-integration orientations. In Kitschelt’s (1995, 449) terminology, these were standard, ‘programmatic’ parties that sought to attract voters through their programme priorities, which were influenced by their membership in international party organizations. The ‘nationalist’ group consisted of political parties of the 1994–98 ruling coalition favouring authoritarianism,

populism, nationalism and isolationism. Using Kitschelt's (1995) typology, these were 'clientelistic' and 'charismatic' parties. These 'mass elites' were not associated with any ideology and jumped from 'idea to idea (nationalist or democratic) or from party to party'. They easily manipulated the society, which was like them a product of the communist socialization process and was not equipped or motivated to assess the validity of elites' claims (Cohen 1999, 121). Their ideological profile was unclear and their foreign policy orientation ambiguous. Mečiar's HZDS was a catch-all party representing a mix of nationalists, dissidents and former apparatchiks (Carpenter 1997). Slovakia's relatively traditional rural culture provided a favourable terrain for the emergence of these charismatic and populist politicians. While the nationalist parties found their greatest support in socially conservative rural areas, support for the Europeanist parties came mostly from urban or metropolitan settings (Szomolányi 1997, 9).

On the positive side, the political institutions that developed in Slovakia in the initial years of transition (e.g. formal separation of institutional powers, functioning multiparty structure, relatively strong civil society) provided not only political opportunities but also constraints to Mečiar's governments.¹³ The president, through a mixture of constitutional powers and his own political actions, was able to limit Mečiar's ambitions.¹⁴ The opposition parties were able to use the Parliament to express their dissatisfaction with the policies of government – although with only 66 out of 150 deputies, it was practically impossible to pass an opposition proposal without the support of government parties (Haugton 2003, 284). Equally important was the support for democratic principles among the Slovak population, which greatly increased during the third Mečiar term, while popular discontent with the state of civil rights increased from 29% in 1994 to 58% in 1996.¹⁵

The role of international actors

Since independence in 1993, all Slovak governments have unequivocally declared the desire to bring the country into Western political, security and economic structures. The 1994 Program Declaration of Mečiar's government proclaimed European integration as its primary goal, but its true commitment was questionable and consistently conflicted with its unwillingness to fulfil the accession criteria for the Euro-Atlantic structures.¹⁶ Mečiar's major international patron was the Russian government, which supported the 'Slovak model' of democratization.¹⁷ In return, Mečiar backed the Russian model of post-cold war pan-continental security in Europe based on the OSCE, instead of NATO.

After the infamous first session of Parliament in November 1994 – the so-called 'November night' during which the ruling coalition revoked 38 incumbents in key governmental positions (e.g. the chief prosecutor, Board of Directors of national television and radio) – EU officials started to voice concerns about the political problems in Slovakia. EU Commissioner Hans van den Broek, High Commissioner for National Minorities of the OSCE Max van der Stoep, the Council of Europe and several Western governments criticized the government's concentration of power and minority policies in a series of demarches issued in 1994 and 1995. A resolution of the European Parliament in 1996 threatened that the EU might have to reconsider its programmes of assistance and cooperation under the Europe Agreement (Henderson 1999, 232). This culminated in July 1997, when the European Commission concluded that Slovakia did not satisfy the political criteria of

accession due to instability of its institutions and shortcomings in the functioning of its democracy with regard to minority rights, the arbitrary use of police and secret services, and the lack of an independent judiciary.¹⁸ The Commission's opinion was officially endorsed by the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997, where the EU leaders excluded Slovakia from the first wave of applicant countries to be considered for EU accession.¹⁹

The US government was also critical of the authoritarian practices of Mečiar's government.²⁰ Slovakia, first assured by the US Congress to be a prime candidate for NATO membership, was excluded from the first enlargement wave at the Madrid summit in July 1997. This decision was made despite the fact that the Slovak military met most of the criteria for NATO membership (Samson 2001, 376).

Mečiar tried to downplay the significance of Western criticism, managing to persuade his electorate that the failure to be invited to join the EU and NATO was the fault of the government opposition. The government accused the opposition parties of damaging Slovakia's international reputation by spreading false and negative information and the West of using double standards in evaluating democratic outcomes, claiming that Slovakia was a victim of the geopolitical priorities of powerful states. IOs and foreign leaders also closely monitored the developments around the 1998 elections and sharply criticized the election law amendments passed by Parliament in May 1998 for its timing close to Election Day and the lack of transparency, among other things.²¹

Thus, Western pressures and conditionalities alone did not bring about a positive change in the policies of Mečiar's government. Several reasons lie behind this failure. First, Mečiar's foreign policy objectives were subordinated to his domestic policy goals. Full integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures would have constrained his objective to consolidate political power domestically. Second, Mečiar misread the West's determination to bring about political change in Slovakia (Samson 2001). Reasoning in the spirit of *Realpolitik*, the government wrongly believed that Slovakia's unique geostrategic importance and good economic outcomes would guarantee its EU and NATO memberships regardless of its democratic performance. Third, the Slovak government had an alternative foreign policy orientation: Russia. Slovakia's heavy industry represents a large proportion of the GDP, and employment is dependent on imports of raw material from Russia. Aware of Russia's disapproval of NATO enlargement, Mečiar believed that his ambiguous integrationist policy would bring some economic concessions from the Russian government (Duleba 1997). Finally, the Western threat was not credible. The fact that NATO has not suspended its relations with countries such as Turkey, known for its human rights violations, and that the EU has never used its suspension clause, reassured the Slovak government.

Nonetheless, the possibility of suspending PHARE assistance or the EU Association Agreement was a good mobilizing argument for pro-integration Slovak politicians. The argument that Slovakia would face complete international isolation became the main weapon used by the government opposition in the 1998 election campaign. Supporters of the Europeanist parties blamed the Mečiar government for its foreign policy failures and saw democratization as a prerequisite for Slovakia's integration into the Western structures.²² Views on the desirability of Slovak membership in the EU correlated not only with party preferences but also with socio-demographic characteristics of the population. The 'winners' of post-communist transition – the young, better educated, men and urban residents – were in general

more attracted by the EU. By 1997, 82% of Slovaks supported EU membership and 65% NATO integration (Bútorová 1997, 10).

Since top-down pressures were not sufficient to bring about a regime change, the West combined them with support of civil society and political parties. This approach had a positive political impact on the society and mobilized the anti-Mečiar opposition. Political polarization intensified the search for transnational linkages between Slovak opposition parties and their Western counterparts (Pridham 1999). Among the center-right parties, the Christian Democrats had the most extensively developed transnational links. Hungarian parties used transnational links as a means of external solidarity for a Hungarian minority in Slovakia.²³ Transnational party cooperation influenced programmes of political parties, reinforced party identities and provided material and moral support. The Europeanists tried to use their transnational party contacts to promote the prospect of Slovakia's EU accession. These transnational party linkages were viewed as an alternative and perhaps even more influential channel for lobbying in favour of EU accession, compared with the official relations between the Slovak government and the EU institutions.²⁴ The need for a united front to oust the Mečiar government led the opposition parties to a mutual cooperation that overcame their ideological (right vs. left) and ethnic divisions (Slovaks vs. Hungarians).

A particularly important element of the bottom-up approach was the involvement of Western NGOs in the development of the non-governmental sector in Slovakia. International NGOs were indispensable not only in establishing new NGOs in Slovakia but also in connecting them with their counterparts around the world. In 1997, there were already 12,000 NGOs in Slovakia.²⁵ Prior to the 1998 parliamentary elections, NGOs created a Civic Campaign (OK '98) designed to organize free and fair elections, aiming specifically at increasing public awareness about the elections, increasing turnout and citizens' influence in preparing elections laws and electoral monitoring (Fisher 2006, 140). The international community and foreign donors had an important role in the formation of OK '98, which was heavily dependent on foreign funding, both before and during the 1998 election campaign (Fisher 2006, 141).²⁶ The Mečiar government repeatedly criticized and opposed the efforts of international governmental and non-governmental institutions helping to build up civil society and strengthen democracy in Slovakia. In summer 1998, the group Civic Eye (OKO) was established to train and deploy domestic election monitors. International Republican Institute (IRI) and other international observers trained domestic observers in techniques of election observation as well as sponsored exit polls and monitored the 1998 elections.²⁷ Domestic monitors were active in encouraging the high electoral turnout in the 1998 parliamentary elections, which benefited the opposition. The strength of Slovak civil society turned to be a key factor in the fall of the Mečiar government.

The 1998 elections, crucial for successful democratic consolidation, brought the victory of the pro-integration parties. The voter turnout was an impressive 84% of eligible voters.²⁸ The alliance of four opposition parties – the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK), the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL), the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) and the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) – captured over 58% of the vote and formed the government under the premiership of Mikulas Dzurinda (Table 3). Despite the diversity of their political programmes and ideological profiles, coalition members were united in their commitment to democratic principles and unequivocal support for Slovakia's EU and NATO integration. A short

Table 3. Results of parliamentary elections in Slovakia on September 25, 1998.

| Political group | Votes (%) | Distribution of votes (%) | Distribution of seats (%) |
|--|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Movement of a democratic Slovakia (HZDS) | 907,103 | 27.00 | 43 |
| Slovak democratic Coalition (SDK) | 884,497 | 26.33 | 42 |
| Party of the democratic left (SDL) | 492,507 | 14.66 | 23 |
| Hungarian coalition party (SMK) | 306,623 | 9.12 | 15 |
| Slovak national party (SNS) | 304,839 | 9.7 | 14 |
| Party of civic understanding (SOP) | 269,343 | 8.01 | 13 |
| Association of workers of Slovakia (ZRS) | 43,809 | 1.30 | 0 |

time after the elections, the new government took measures to improve the poor situation in minority rights: SMK became a member of the government coalition; and the government approved legislation allowing bilingual school documentation and adopted the law on the use of minority language.

The West remained engaged in domestic political developments in Slovakia. In September 2002, another crucial election determining the country's integrationist ambitions was held. The election campaign became an important focus of international actors who were alarmed by pre-election polls showing the lead of Mečiar's HZDS. High-ranking US and EU officials had concerns with Mečiar's return to power. Therefore, the 2002 pro-vote campaign by Slovak NGOs, supported predominantly by American foundations, was financially even stronger than the 1998 pro-vote electoral campaign.²⁹ The West succeeded in making Euro-Atlantic integration the central issue in the 2002 elections, overshadowing the socio-economic issues campaigned on by the HZDS (such as the Dzurinda government's poor record on unemployment and corruption). Dzurinda's Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) tried to capitalize on the government's progress in integration and its strong international support. Indeed, the party's appeal lay 'in its role as the guarantor of Slovakia's entry into international clubs' (Haughton and Rybar 2004, 130).

Table 4. Membership in international and regional organizations.

| | Slovakia | Croatia |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Council of Europe | Czechoslovakia: 7 May 1990 (SGS) and 21 February 1991 (M); The Czech and Slovak republics separate 29 June 1993 (M). | 4 May 1992 (SGS); 6 November 1996 (M). |
| European Union | 16 December 1991: Association or Europe Agreement with Czechoslovakia; Europe Agreement signed (into force): October 1993 (January 1995); Official application for EU membership: June 1995; Invited to negotiations: December 1999; Full Membership: 1 May 2004. | Stabilization and Association Agreement (2003). |
| Central European Initiative | 1990 | 1992 |
| NATO | 2002 (M) | 2009 (M) |
| Visegrad-CEFTA | Czechoslovakia: 15 February 1991 (M) | na |
| OECD | 1 May 2000 (M) | na |
| WTO | 1 January 1995 (M) | 30 November 2000 (M) |

Special guest status (SGS), Membership (M).

The elections resulted in the second Dzurinda center-right government, which was accorded room for manoeuvre to pursue radical socio-economic reforms during 2002–2006. The West rewarded Slovakia with membership in the EU in 2004, in NATO in 2002, and in other IOs (see Table 4).

Croatia

Domestic context

The Croatian case demonstrates even more convincingly how nationalism and state building can complicate democratic consolidation. Croatia became independent in 1991 and spent most of the early 1990s involved in violent conflicts within its own borders and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The territorial fragmentation and economic disruption resulting from the so-called ‘homeland war’ (1991–1995) shaped its political development in the early years of transition. The case of Croatia also demonstrates that democratization can go hand in hand with the rise of nationalism, in conformity with Mansfield and Snyder’s (1995, 80–89) thesis. The government weakened by democratization efforts often uses nationalist propaganda to maintain its short-run viability at the expense of long-term peace and democracy. This may, under certain circumstances, result in violent conflicts, exemplified by wars between Serbia and Croatia in the first half of 1990s.

The Croatian political scene from the first post-communist elections in 1990 until 2000 was dominated by Franjo Tudjman and his ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). Tudjman won early presidential elections in 1992 and 1997, and the HDZ prevailed in parliamentary elections repeatedly in 1990, 1993 and 1995. The Yugoslav wars, which resulted in thousands of deaths and refugees and the emigration of many young, educated and urban people, changed the composition of the electorate in favour of the ruling regime, whose support came primarily from rural, less educated and older segments of society (Fisher 2006).

One of the principal objectives of Tudjman’s ‘Croato-centric’ programme for political change was to build an independent state based on Croatian national and religious values, and to enhance pan-Croatian solidarity (Cohen 1997, 78). The constitution (referred to as the ‘Christmas Constitution’) portrayed Croatia as the ‘national state of the Croatian nation’ and relegated Serbs to the status of a minority, in contrast to their previous position as one of the Yugoslav Republic’s constituent nations (Cohen 1997, 81). The homeland war had significantly contributed to the raise of Croatian nationalism, producing a societal consensus on the importance of national unity, which Tudjman was able to exploit in justification of his authoritarian measures (Fisher 2006).

‘Tudjmanism’ in Croatia, like ‘Mečiarism’ in Slovakia, was a political rule characterized by nationalist tendencies and authoritarian methods of governing. But Tudjman’s political leadership had even more damaging effects on democratization in Croatia and on its rapprochement with the European mainstream. Tudjman’s executive-centered and anti-pluralist rule led to the concentration of political, economic and social power in the hands of the president (e.g. president-controlled domestic security services) and his party. The governing party imposed severe limitations on the independence of the judiciary, interfered with media, manipulated elections and intimidated and suppressed the political opposition.³⁰ In the economic sphere, corrupted privatization and economic mismanagement created a small class of wealthy entrepreneurs, represented by rich Croatian expatriates and local busi-

nessmen closely connected with the ruling HDZ. Although the opposition parties won more than 40% of the vote in all parliamentary elections since 1990, they were unable to capitalize on this support to seriously challenge the governing coalition. Representing the entire political spectrum, the opposition parties were divided on key political issues. The HDZ skillfully used 'divide and rule tactics' to weaken the opposition by co-opting some conservative and nationalist opposition parties and buying off their prominent politicians. This prevented these opposition parties from emerging as a strong unified alternative to the HDZ and weakened their integrity in the eyes of the electorate (Fisher 2006; Haughton and Fisher 2008). Furthermore, Tudjman was able to skilfully neutralize domestic discontent by taking advantage of popular political apathy.

The role of international actors

Because of the Yugoslav conflicts in the early 1990s, international actors prioritized peace and stability over the promotion of democracy in Croatia, in line with the argument that security is the precondition for successful democratization. Democracy is, then, the best way to promote security, since democracies do not fight each other (Oneal and Russett 1999). The peace-building efforts of various international actors – the EU, the OSCE, the UN and NATO – transformed the Balkan region into what Vukadinovic (2001) calls a 'crisis management laboratory'.

International actors used multiple mechanisms to bring peace, stability and democratic change in Croatia, including military intervention, followed by the deployment of UN and NATO troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina; economic instruments, such as loans from international financial institutions conditional on cooperation with the International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague (ICTY), various peace-building and integrationist initiatives, as well as civil society building. The EU concluded the Stability Pact and later Stabilization and Association Agreements with countries of South EE, prioritizing regional cooperation as a means to promote peace and stability in the region. Each cooperation agreement included peace and stability requirements including the protection of human and minority rights, the right for refugees to return to their homes, and democratic reforms. The Clinton administration launched the so-called South-EE Cooperation Initiative, not only to promote peace and stability, but also to demonstrate the crucial role of NATO and the USA in post-cold war European security and to prevent Russia from becoming the main player in Balkan affairs (Vukadinovic (2001), 449–50).

Notwithstanding these positive efforts to build democracy, there were also negative international influences that contributed to the rise of Tudjmanism. One of these factors was the rising influence of Serbian nationalism and of nationalist Croat émigrés, who financially supported Tudjman. The Croat émigré community was much more successful in influencing the Croatian political scene than were nationalist émigrés in Slovakia (Cohen 1999, 18). The political support for Tudjman by Western governments, motivated by the need to counteract Milosevic's power, also had a negative impact. For example, Germany overtly supported Tudjman's regime by formally recognizing Croatia in January 1992. This action provoked accusations by Serbs that Germany carried its old plan to achieve dominance over the Balkans, called by Milosevic a policy in the interest of the 'German-Catholic alliance' (Mahmutcehajic 2001). Another example is the US support for the presidential candidacy of Tudjman's foreign minister, Mate Granic, in the 2000 elections. This type of

international support was attributed to great power politics rather than the benevolent desire to promote democracy (Janos 2000).

Most Western observers and domestic opposition forces, however, openly criticized the non-democratic tactics of Tudjman's ruling party, particularly its minority policies and media manipulation. The West sought to isolate the Tudjman regime as another Balkan pariah state comparable to that of Milosevic's regime in Serbia. The EU suspended Croatia's accession negotiations and participation in the PHARE program, and the country's application for WTO membership and its participation in NATO's PfP were set aside. The domestic opposition was well aware of the extent of isolation, as transition laggards such as Albania, Moldova or Turkmenistan were invited to take part in PfP. International isolation aggravated already severe domestic economic problems, eroded the regime's popular support and discouraged foreign investors.

From the domestic point of view, most Croats regarded their country as historically part of the European community of nations, voting for Tudjman because of his promise to return Croatia to Europe and to liberate it from the Balkans. Instead, his authoritarian and nationalist tactics served to isolate the country. Although the population's perception of the EU was influenced by the ambiguous role of the EU in war termination, popular support for Croatia's EU membership gradually increased from 34% in 1994 to 54% in 1998 (Haerpfer 2002, 122).

Meanwhile, the West combined political pressures with democratic support, attempting to bring about democratic change in Croatia by applying the successful 'Slovak model' of civil society building. The IRI held out the Slovak opposition, which had successfully unified to oust Mečiar's ruling regime in 1998, as a model to emulate. Slovak NGO activists shared their experience with their Croatian counterparts in their efforts to promote democracy abroad through numerous exchanges and seminars sponsored by international donors (such as the USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives and OSI) (Fisher 2006, 143). The ruling party clearly feared the application of the 'Slovak model' in Croatia and launched a smear media campaign against the US organizations (Fisher 2006, 143).

In addition to helping Croatian opposition parties to overcome their differences and build the coalition for the 2000 parliamentary elections, Western NGOs attempted to strengthen the Croatian NGOs, considered a substitute for a weak and fragmented political opposition. But in contrast with the Slovak NGO community, the inability of the Croatian NGOs to act in a unified fashion signified that international actors played a crucial role in launching the Slovak-style get-out-the-vote campaign in Croatia (Fisher 2006, 147). In particular, the National Democratic Institute (NDE) not only helped the opposition parties to organize their electoral campaigns but also provided training and financial assistance to Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections (GONG), a Croatian NGO that played an important role in monitoring the 2000 elections.³¹ GONG was instrumental in establishing the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (GLAS 99), a group of more than 148 NGOs, modelled on Slovakia's OK' 98, with the objective of encouraging electoral turnout. On Election Day, more than five thousand GONG-trained election monitors assisted at polling stations throughout the country (Jasic 2000, 166).

The election campaign in Croatia was modelled on a strategy that had met with great success in the 1998 Slovak elections. Over 75% of voters participated, and the 'Opposition Six', a group of opposition parties of varying ideological strains who had campaigned together on an integration platform, captured 95 of 151 seats

Table 5. Results of parliamentary elections in Croatia on January 3, 2000.

| Political group | Votes | Distribution of votes (%) | Distribution of seats (%) |
|--|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Social democratic party/croatian social liberal party (SDP-HSLS) | 1 138 318 | 39.25 | 71 |
| Croatian democratic union (HDZ) | 784 192 | 27.04 | 40 |
| Croatian peasants' party/liberal party Croatian people's party/Istrian democratic assembly/croatian social democrats' action | 432 527 | 14.92 | 24 |
| Croatian party of right /croatian Christian democratic union (HSP-HKDU) | 152 699 | 5.27 | 5 |
| Representatives of minorities | 21 342 | 0.73 | 5 |
| Representatives of croatians abroad | 107 928 | 3.73 | 6 |

in the Parliament, thus handing HDZ a decisive defeat (Table 5). They formed a new centre-left coalition government under the premiership of Ivica Račan, chairman of the Social Democratic Party.³² The new government immediately launched economic reforms, increased judicial independence, implemented legislative measures to protect minority rights and grant independence to media and curbed powers of the security services; in addition, the Parliament passed constitutional amendments that limited the powers of the President. The winner of the 2000 presidential election, Stipe Mesic, the last leader of Yugoslavia's rotating presidency, also pledged to enact far-reaching reforms.

Nonetheless, splits quickly began to appear within the government coalition. Only the reformed HDZ, which returned to power in late 2003 under the leadership of Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, was able to make real progress on the road to Europe by signing the EU Stabilization and Association Agreement in 2003, cooperating with the ICTY and starting EU accession negotiations in 2005 (Haughton and Fisher 2008, 447). As in Slovakia, international actors influenced the post-election developments in Croatia. The EU, concerned with the return to power of the reformed HDZ in 2003, warned that Croatia could become internationally isolated if the far-right Croatian Party of Rights leader Anto Dapic was included in the Sanader government and thus forced the HDZ government to cooperate with an ethnic Serbian party (Haughton and Fisher 2008, 449). The West has been trying to make Croatia a model for its neighbours by demonstrating to them the rewards of cooperation with the West: NATO offered Croatia a membership in April 2009 and the country is expected to join the EU by July 2013 (Table 4).

Conclusion

An examination of the cases of Croatia and Slovakia yields insight into the international influences on democracy building. First, international influences cannot be simply relegated to secondary importance when explaining democratic outcomes in post-communist countries. International actors can, at a particular time, context and under particular circumstances, strongly influence the democratic transformation of domestic politics through the effective combination of political pressures and assis-

tance, backed by the promise of membership in IOs, irrespective of national particularities. Figure 3(a and b) shows a radical improvement in democratization scores for both Slovakia and Croatia after the 1998 and 2000 parliamentary elections, respectively, which could be viewed as ‘critical junctures’ setting off path-dependent processes of democratic consolidation in these two countries. The 1998 parliamentary elections in Slovakia, ending the authoritarian-cum-nationalist Mečiar era, have been seen as a ‘second transition’ (Deegan-Krause 2003). The current Slovak political scene has become ‘Westernized’ with its pure ideological government–opposition cleavage with the centre-right government and the centre-left opposition. While lagging behind Slovakia in democratization scores because of a decade of much stronger authoritarian rule under Tudjman reinforced by war, Croatia started with one advantage after 2000: the death of the HDZ founder, leading to a rebranding of the party under the new leadership.

Second, the actual *degree* of influence of external actors depends on the domestic context of democratizing countries. ‘Contested’ transitions present particularly important opportunities for international influences (Pridham 1994, 17). Both Slovakia and Croatia experienced prolonged, domestically contested political transitions, and their dynamics illustrate this point. The most serious challenge to democratization in these countries proved to be *ethnic nationalism*. Putting the question of ethnicity aside, both countries possessed domestic conditions present in successfully democratizing countries, including the positive historical legacies of Habsburg imperial rule, relatively high levels of economic development, proximity to the West, competitive electoral regimes and a vibrant civil society. In particular, Slovakia’s democratic institutional framework showed remarkable robustness, preventing Mečiar from imposing the closure achieved by Tudjman and allowing pro-democratic governments to successfully consolidate democracy after 1998.

Third, the long-term and durable effects of democratic change also depend on the West’s willingness to remain engaged in the region. Ultimately, the success of democratic consolidation in post-communist countries will depend on their integration into Western institutional structures. In particular, EU membership generates strong support for democracy because it is irreversible. It is a cumulative process of economic and political integration that provides assurances to various domestic actors. However, the strategies of the EU and NATO enlargements are based on geographic proximity, meaning limited integrationist prospects for some transition economies.

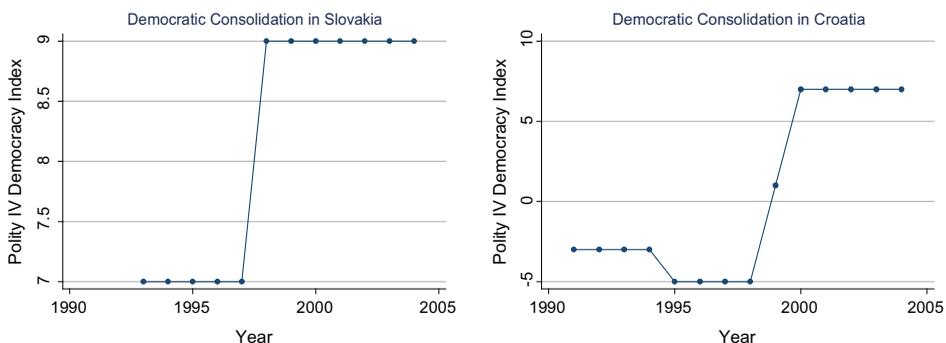


Figure 3. (a) Progress in democratization in Slovakia (Polity 2 democracy index, POLITY IV); (b): Progress in democratization in Croatia (Polity 2 democracy index, POLITY IV).

While my findings underscore the recent trend emphasizing international influences on democratic change in studies of democratization, it does not seek to set up external influences as a ‘freestanding alternative explanation’ (Jacoby 2006, 626) to explanations centering on domestic factors. Instead, I argue for interplay between international and domestic aspects of democratic development, combined with the promise of membership in a regional organization. The analysis also cautions that it may not always be the case that international influences will lead to a positive impact. We need clearer explanations for how geostrategic and security factors impact democratic change, for they can result in inconsistent and negative international influences, as the case of Croatia demonstrates.

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Notes

1. The first group includes Lipset (1959); Moore (1966); Rueschemeyer et al. (1992); Przeworski et al. (1996). The second group includes Rustow (1970); Di Palma (1990); Fish (1998), and writings by Juan Linz, Guillermo O’Donnell, Alfred Stephan, and Philippe Schmitter.
2. Following Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, Collier and Collier (1991) established a common framework for analysing critical junctures in political science. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out. While the study of critical junctures has gained popularity recently, the idea has a long intellectual history, going back to work of Karol Polanyi (1944) and Moore (1966).
3. The role of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany inspired its Hungarian and Czech counterparts, and the German electoral system of proportional representation was considered suitable for unstable and fragmented political parties in many EE states.
4. In addition, Bastian (2008) identifies the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – a comprehensive, long-term conflict prevention strategy – as one of the most important external anchors in the Western Balkans.
5. Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions (1993).
6. See Article F.1. of the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam and Article 13 of NATO Treaty, which allow only for a voluntary exit with one-year notice (Reiter 2001).
7. The EU PHARE funded Civil Society Development Foundation that supports NGOs operating in the areas of minorities, human rights, social activities and the environment.
8. Command economies were characterized by central planning and administrative control, a semi-monetized financial system, soft budget constraints and the absence of property rights (Kornai 1992).
9. Nation of Transit Country Reports 2002, Freedom House.
10. The first Slovak government, formed in late 1989, was led by Milan Čič, the Minister of Justice of the last communist government. The government resulted from a pact between the old communist elite and representatives of the Public Against Violence. This ‘government of national understanding’ was a transitional government, set up only to administer the country until founding elections in 1990.
11. During the Mečiar years, a series of authoritarian actions invoking international criticism included frequent violations of the Constitution, the adoption of a legislature facilitating the concentration of political power in the hands of the ruling elite, insider privatization, exclusion of the opposition from oversight of key governmental institutions, government interference with the media and poor protection of minority rights Mesežnikov (1998).
12. Szomolányi (1997, 6) defines party–state corporatism as a situation in which ‘the dominant ruling party or parties either establish party-affiliated or controlled interest group monopolies in a certain field ... or establish parallel interest groups that compete with independent societal interest groups ...’

13. On the institutional framework in Slovakia during Mečiar's premierships, see Haughton (2003).
14. Under Article 110 of the Slovak Constitution, the president can appoint and dismiss the prime minister. President Kovac used this power to remove Mečiar from office after 1994 by a vote of no-confidence (Haughton 2003, 273).
15. While in the first years of transition, Slovaks were mostly concerned with social insecurity, unemployment, crime, and 'national unity', political culture, democracy and the rule of law later became prominent (Bútorová 1997).
16. SNS chairman Jan Slota and ZRS chairman Jan Lupták (quoted in Duleba 1997, 8) in their interviews for the Russian ITAR-TASS press agency stated: 'The Slovak Republic should not enter into various military blocs, and should preserve its neutrality ...'
17. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, spokesman for Russian President Yeltsin, supported the 'Slovak model' of democratization in the following way: 'In Slovakia, things are not done undemocratically, just differently. As a sovereign country, Slovakia has a right to do so, a right denied by the 'Bolshevik' West ...' (Duleba 1997, 8).
18. European Commission, Commission Opinion on Slovakia's Application for Membership of the European Union. Bulletin of the European Union, Supplement 9, 1997.
19. Slovakia was relegated to a group of states that included Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, which were lagging behind in economic terms; however, Slovakia was nearly twice as wealthy as these four countries. Its GDP per capita exceeded that of Poland and Estonia; on purchasing power per capita, only Slovenia and the Czech Republic performed better in 1997 (Henderson 1999, 221).
20. The US ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, and the US ambassador to Slovakia expressed worries about the confrontational character of domestic politics.
21. For instance, US Ambassador Ralph Johnson and the EU Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Hans van den Broek criticized the new electoral law for its failure to meet international standards of transparency and fairness. See: International Republican Institute Final Report and Recommendations: 1998 Parliamentary Elections in Slovakia, January 31, 1999.
22. Some supporters of the Mečiar government favoured the integrationist agenda. They were not discouraged by the government's schizophrenic foreign policy because they were presented with the assurances of the government's good integrationist intentions. Simultaneously, anti-integrationist voters, who embraced the concept of neutrality combined with anti-American sentiments, were assured that Mečiar was protecting national interests and independence from foreign influence (Samson 2001, 375).
23. Mečiar's HZDs and its coalition partners had difficulty building their own transnational linkages. They did not ideologically conform to the European party groups because of their dubious democratic credentials, or they lacked viable partners. The HZDS was able to establish bilateral links only with Berlusconi's Forza Italia, the SNS with the French National Front, and the ZRS' only with the International Federation of Worker's Parties in Paris.
24. On transnational party linkages, see Pridham (1999).
25. European Commission, Agenda 2000, 'Commission Opinion on the Slovakia's Application for Membership of the European Union,' Bulletin of the European Union, Supplement 9 (1997).
26. Foreign donors established a Donors' Forum, which included such institutions as the Civil Society Development Foundation, the Open Society Institute (OSI), the Foundation for a Civil Society, the Charles Stewart Mott, Foundation, the German Marshall Fund, the British Know How Fund, the Fund of Canada, and USAID (Fisher 2006, 140–41).
27. International Republican Institute Final Report and Recommendations: 1998 Parliamentary Elections in Slovakia, January 31, 1999.
28. This massive civic movement in 1998 contrasts with a rather passive acceptance of the collapse of communism by the majority of Slovaks in 1989 (Bútorová and Bútorová 1999).
29. NGOs funded primarily by the USA spent more than \$1.2 million on a get-out-the vote campaign (Mudde 2002).
30. For example, during the first six months after taking power in Croatia, the Tudjman government replaced 280 judicial officials (Cohen 1997, 87).

31. In addition to NDE, GONG was supported and financed by many foreign institutions, including USAID-OTI, OSI, Westminster Freedom House, as well as by Embassies of Canada, Japan, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, USA and Greece. See GONG: Parliamentary Elections, Croatia January 2 and 3, 2000, Preliminary Report.
32. The first government coalition consisted of two centre-left parties: the Social Democratic Party (the successor to the Yugoslav League of Communists) and the Croatian Social-Liberal Party (HSLs). The second included the Porec group of centrist parties: the Liberal Party, the regional Istrian Democratic Congress, the Croatian People's party and the Croatian Peasants Party.

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