

# THE “NORMALISATION” OF PARTY SYSTEMS AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN EASTERN EUROPE

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## **Abstract**

Eastern European elections are regarded as outlying cases in international research. According to scholars, the reason for it lies in a low institutionalisation of political parties. In this article, I focus on the development that occur in the institutionalisation of party systems in the course of the first multiparty elections. Theories about party system formation and strategic voter behaviour let suggest that the party system stabilises and nationalises after several elections. It is only with sufficient experience that political parties and voters have enough information to act strategically and to adjust their behaviour to the new electoral systems. A novel database on electoral results on the district level that I constructed allows me to test those hypotheses by measuring “party nationalisation” and “wasted votes” for the first time for Eastern Europe. Both indicators are calculated with innovating measures for Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova and Romania. Even if the countries (in contrast for instance to Central Europe) have few democratic experience, four of those party systems after one and a half decades reached almost “normal” values. But Russia still lacks a well institutionalised party system.

**Keywords:** democratic consolidation, electoral laws, party systems, transition, voting behavior

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