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Post-Communist Paradox: How the Rise of Parliamentarism Coincided with the Demise of Pluralism in Moldova

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Post-Communist Paradox: How the Rise of Parliamentarism Coincided with the Demise of Pluralism in Moldova

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I. INTRODUCTION

Among the constellation of states with interesting constitutional stories to tell, tiny Moldova holds a unique place. It is one of only a handful of countries that has ever switched the structure of its constitutional system midstream without experiencing a democratic breakdown. Whereas some countries, such as Nigeria, have been able to adopt a different kind of constitution following their return to democracy – after a military or authoritarian regime has been swept from power – only a handful have ever managed to change their institutions midstream without experiencing such an intervening crisis. Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Lemongi assert, in fact, that “during the entire period from 1950 to 1990, there were only three instances in which democratic regimes passed from one institutional system to another ... France changed in 1958 from a parliamentary to a mixed system, while Brazil changed in 1960 from a presidential to a mixed system, only to return to presidentialism in 1963.”¹ Since then, the only other democracy or semi-democracy² to have changed its constitutional system in this way was Moldova.

Moldova is unique, moreover, regarding the *direction* that it moved. As Przeworski and his colleagues further tell us, in all of the empirical examples where a midstream switching of constitutions occurred, countries have moved in only one direction: *towards* presidentialism. “Countries that adopt presidential institutions,” Przeworski and his colleagues

¹ Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Lemongi (Przeworski et al.), “What Makes Democracies Endure?” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (January 1996), p. 49.

² Exactly what kind of democracy was present in Moldova at the time of its constitutional switch, in 2000, is a point of contention. Freedom House ranks Moldova as “partly free.” In Larry Diamond’s schema, Moldova qualifies as an “electoral democracy.” See Larry Diamond, “Thinking About Hybrid Regimes,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April 2002), p. 31. M. Steven Fish, meanwhile, groups Moldova along with Georgia, Macedonia, Mongolia, and Romania into the category of “democratizers”—countries that “are not full-blown democracies,” but which have “all made substantial gains and sustained their progress during the 1990s.” See M. Steven Fish, “The Dynamics of Democratic Erosion,” in Richard D. Anderson, M. Steven Fish, Stephen E. Hanson, and Philip G. Roeder, *Postcommunism and the Theory of Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 55-56.

assert, “are stuck with them.”³ When viewed in this light, the experience of tiny Moldova turns out to be an even greater anomaly. After all, Moldova not only changed its constitutional system midstream, but it also moved *from* presidential *to* parliamentary government. Though talk of the need to change to parliamentary or to presidential institutions can be heard among scholars in reference to many of the world’s imperfect democracies,⁴ Moldova remains the only known example of a country today that has shed presidential in favor of parliamentary government without first experiencing an intervening breakdown in its democracy.⁵

However, despite this – and also despite what the mainstream literature on democratization and comparative constitutionalism might suggest – Moldova’s experience under parliamentary government has not at all assisted its consolidation of democracy, and it has hindered, rather than helped, guarantee the pluralism of its polity. Under Moldova’s first post-Soviet presidential constitution, adopted in 1994, Moldovan politics exhibited a high degree of pluralism,⁶ making Moldova stand out among its post-communist neighbors. Under the new parliamentary constitution that was adopted in 2000, however, Moldova’s political pluralism – as measured by the degree of opposition in government – has been severely curtailed. Under parliamentarism, a parliament dominated by one party has been able to exclude political opponents in Moldova in a way that was impossible under presidentialism. This is a result that many leading scholars of democratization would not have predicted.

³ Przeworski et al (fn. 1), p. 47.

⁴ For example, see Avraham Brichta and Yair Zalmanovitch, “The Proposals for Presidential Government in Israel: A Case Study in the Possibility of Institutional Transference,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (October 1986), pp. 57-68.

⁵ See Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Lemongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), where the authors chart all of the instances of institutional switching up to 2000.

⁶ For example, Lucan A. Way, “Pluralism by Default in Moldova,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (October 2002), pp. 127-141; and Lucan A. Way, “Moldovan Democracy in Comparative Perspective,” *East European Politics and Society* (forthcoming, 2004).

In this essay, I seek to explain how this institutional paradox came about in Moldova. My argument proceeds in four parts. Part II sets the stage by examining the communist legacy in Moldova. It paints a portrait of what was happening in Moldova after independence but before the country adopted its first post-Soviet constitution in 1994. Part III examines the democratization literature on comparative constitutionalism and tries to situate the rise of presidentialism in Moldova within it. Importantly, this literature claims that parliamentary constitutions should assist democratic consolidation better than presidential ones, and would seem to predict that Moldova should have functioned worse under its new presidential system of government than under a parliamentary one. Part IV, in showing this not to be the case, examines the reasons politicians in Moldova abandoned presidentialism in 2000 and adopted a parliamentary form of government instead. It then explains how politics in the country became increasingly less open and more autocratic as a result. In Part V, the Conclusion, I compare the decline of pluralism in Moldova with similar trends in other post-communist countries, and close by suggesting avenues for further inquiry and research.

II. THE COMMUNIST LEGACY IN POST-SOVIET MOLDOVA

After the close of the Second World War, Joseph Stalin annexed Moldova and made into an all-union republic of the Soviet Union. Suddenly, Moldovans found themselves separated by an *international* border from their Romanian brethren. Moldova differed in one very important respect, however, from the three Baltic republics that had similarly been annexed following the Second World War. Moldova, unlike Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, had *not* been an independent country during the interwar years. Rather, it was part of Romania. Still, like the three Baltic republics, tiny Moldova found itself bullied by much

larger powers for the entirety of its history, as it was passed from one great power to another. The Moldovan people yearned to be set free from the Soviet yoke. When freedom finally came, in late 1991, it was no longer politics but geography that now ensured Moldova's enslavement: the tiny country was stuck between Romania and Ukraine, two much larger, more powerful, and more corrupt neighbors. It was also sandwiched between the old Soviet Union and the rapidly expanding European Union. Teetering on the cusp between the East and the West, Moldova's politics turned into a struggle over which way it should turn.

At the beginning of Moldova's democratic transition, in 1990 and 1991, the opposition party, known as the Popular Front, advocated pro-Romanian cultural reforms for the newly independent state. The Frontists wished for Moldova to reintegrate into Romania and for the country to reassert its original borders – roughly akin to the boundary line of Bessarabia, the western region of the country where ethnic Moldovans had traditionally lived – as those borders had existed prior to 1918. The Popular Front was met, however, with increasing resistance from non-Moldovan speakers within the republic. As a result of the Popular Front's nationalism, divisions within Moldovan society began to grow. A 1990 public opinion poll found that 54.8 percent of ethnic Moldovans, as compared with only 8.8 percent of Russians and 8.4 percent of Ukrainians, desired independence from the Soviet Union.⁷

The emergence of a post-Soviet legislature influenced by the Popular Front gave the sudden impetus for violent conflict to erupt between Moldovans, the mainly Russian-speaking population in the eastern province of Transdnister, and the Turkic-speaking Gagauz people in the south. In the eyes of the latter two groups, Moldova's then-legislature – its Supreme Soviet – held too radical of a position against the country's national minorities. As a result,

⁷ See Charles King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2000), p. 147.

the Transdnistrians and Gagauz made moves to create their own governments, and eventually declared separate republics. The “Republic of Gagauzia,” carved out of five regions in August 1990, chose Comrat as its capital. The “Dnester Moldovan Republic” (DMR) proclaimed independence in eastern Moldova in September 1990, and made Tiraspol its capital.⁸

Things would come to a boil in Transdnister in the subsequent years. A brief but bloody conflict over the territory left 1,000 people dead or wounded and produced 130,000 internally displaced persons and refugees in 1992.⁹ Politicians in Transdnister clung to their independence from Moldova, a move that was not surprising: after all, the region was not a part of Moldova historically, like Bassarabia had been. It had, moreover, received special favor in Soviet times because of the loyalty of its party cadres to Moscow, and because it was much more industrialized than the rest of Moldova. In fact, Transdnister was the first locale outside of Russia – but within the CIS – to which the Russian government sent troops to stop ethnic violence in the post-Soviet period.¹⁰ With the passage of time, the DMR began to function as a de facto independent state: it had its own flag, constitution, “national” anthem, and currency (the DMR ruble). It also held regular elections, had its own president and parliament, and maintained an army of 5,000-6,000 men.¹¹ The region, thanks to its Soviet-era arms factories, could manufacture arms to protect itself, and could equip not only its own army but also sell weapons to other hotspots, such as Kosovo and the North Caucasus.

As Moldova became splintered along ethnic and political lines, different parts of the country turned in different directions. Ethnically, there were divisions between the Romanian-

⁸ In May 1991, of course, the Moldovan legislature voted to remove the Soviet yoke and declare Moldova itself an independent state. Yet this move was rejected by the Transdnistrians and Gagauz.

⁹ King (fn. 7), p. 178.

¹⁰ It was General Alexander Lebed’s arrival in Transdnister in 1993, in fact, to intercede on the part of the ethnic Russians seeking independence from Moldova, that launched the Russian general’s political career.

¹¹ King (fn. 7), p. 205.

speaking Moldovans, the Russian-speaking population that dominated the eastern part of the country in Transdnister, and the Gagauz people who lived in the south.¹² These ethnic groups translated their preferences into different policy positions, separating those who wanted Moldova to reunite with Romania from those who wanted reunification with Russia from those who wished for Moldova to remain independent. Whereas in many post-communist states there were two dominant groups competing for political ascendance – or perhaps multiple groups whose political preferences could nonetheless be grouped politically into two dominant camps, as in Ukraine – in Moldova a three-ringed circus emerged.

The ethnic divisions also contributed to Moldova's acute "simultaneity problem." At the time of independence, Moldova's democratic consolidation was complicated by the fact that the country need to transform its political system, its economy, and its borders all at the same time. The simultaneity problem hampered many post-communist transitions, making them more complicated and perilous than the previous transitions from authoritarianism in Southern Europe and Latin America.¹³ As Michael McFaul explains, "the agenda of change in the postcommunist world has been wider.... Debates about the organization of the economy and border disputes ... within the state were on the table at the same time that negotiations about the political rules of the game were taking place."¹⁴

The borders issue as it concerned Moldova was especially important and complex. Along with Georgia and Azerbaijan, Moldova experienced perhaps some of the most bitter

¹² King (fn. 7), p. 147.

¹³ On the debate concerning whether these different transitions can be compared, see the debate between See Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, "The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists: How Far to the East Should They Attempt to Go?" *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Spring 1994), and Valerie Bunce, "Should Transitologists Be Grounded?" *Slavic Review*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 112-113. A reply to Bunce's argument by Schmitter and Karl can be found in, Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, "From Iron Curtain to Paper Curtain: Grounding Transitologists for Students of Postcommunism?" *Slavic Review*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Winter 1995)

¹⁴ Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 10.

border disputes of any post-Soviet country.¹⁵ The Russians in Transdnister and, to a lesser extent, the Turkic-speaking Gagauz people in the southern part of the republic both tried to secede. Some have argued that, as a result of the former conflict (the latter was resolved by giving the Gagauz semi-autonomy), Moldovan politics indeed should be analyzed as taking place in what were two different and *de facto* independent states.¹⁶ (I have declined to explain the situation in this way, both because it will enormously complicate the story I am telling, and also because it has been treated in adequate detail by other authors.¹⁷)

Despite its many problems, however, Moldova turned out to be surprisingly pluralistic when it came to its politics. Moldova's politics were characterized by what Lucan Way has called "pluralism by default."¹⁸ The term is used to describe the situation where political competition among elites survives, although not because leaders are especially democratic – or because societal institutions are particularly strong – but rather because the government is too fragmented or the state too weak to impose authoritarian rule. To be sure, Moldova suffered from economic disarray and a weak civil society. Like other post-Soviet states, it also had a weak and ineffective economic system and a long legacy of authoritarian rule. But what separated Moldova from some of the other Soviet republics was this sense of pluralism that emerged during its transition. During the immediate post-Soviet period, ethnic divisions played an important role Moldova. They were partly responsible – along with the country's

¹⁵ "The Hazards of a Long, Hard Freeze," *The Economist* (August 21, 2004), pp. 40-41.

¹⁶ See, for example, Charles King, "The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States," *World Politics*, Vol. 53, (July 2001), pp. 524-52.

¹⁷ For example, see Stuart J. Kaufman, "Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova's Civil War," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Autumn 1996), pp. 108-138.

¹⁸ Lucan A. Way, "Pluralism by Default in Moldova," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (October 2002), pp. 127-141 (p. 127). To some extent, Moldova's pluralism was also caused by its weak economy. Aside from the Central Asian states, it was the most rural of the post-Soviet states (because of its small size, though, it has the highest population density). Still, its per capita gross income in 1990 was 65 percent that of Albania, 32 percent of that found in Belarus, and 7 percent of that found in the United States. Moreover, only 46 percent of its population live in an urban setting. For more information on Moldova's economy, see Lucan Way (fn. 18), pp. 127-128.

political institutions, as we are about to see – for making Moldovan politics politically diverse.¹⁹

III: PRESIDENTIALISM AND THE FIRST MOLDOVAN REPUBLIC, 1994-2000

In the early 1990s, a fierce debate ensued among academics regarding what kind of constitutional system would be best for new democracies or democratizing states to adopt.²⁰ It based itself around the emerging literature on “neo-institutionalism,” which, without denying the importance of the social context of politics and the motives of individual actors, nonetheless attributed an independent role to political institutions for structuring actors’ preferences and channeling them in the political arena. The neo-institutional scholars argued, in essence, that political outcomes were determined by the institutional settings in which they took place.²¹ For a long time, these scholars promoted parliamentary over presidential government.²² One of the seminal essays on the topic, written by Juan Linz of Yale, warned

¹⁹ Politics, of course, was not the only thing that ensured Moldova’s pluralism. Culture and geography also played their part. During the transition period, the nature of the opposition in Moldova changed dramatically. Whereas Moldovans were for the duration of Soviet annexation largely a peripheral and largely rural minority, a threatened and largely rural population on the outer edge of an enormous empire (see King (fn. 7), p. 168), after 1991 they became the majority ethnic group. Several steps were undertaken to make instill the Moldovan culture above the cultures of other ethnic groups, including attempts to nationalize the Moldovan language (such as changing to a Latin script and making all government employees take Moldovan classes if they did not speak the language). Geographically, Moldova has traditionally been divided into two broad regions: the most Romanian-speaking Bessarabia, which lies to the west, and the slightly smaller and mostly Russian-speaking Transnistria, which lies to the east. With the exception of a period of ethnic fighting immediately after independence, the government has largely be inclusive. In 1989, the county’s population, according to the Soviet census, was about 4.3 million, although there has been a lot of immigration in the post-communist period, after 1991. See King (fn. 7), pp.: xv-xvii.

²⁰ See, for example, Juan J. Linz, “Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does it Make a Difference?” in Linz and Arturo Valenzuela (eds.), *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 3-87, and Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, “Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism and Presidentialism,” *World Politics*, Vol. 46 (October 1993), pp. 1-22

²¹ See James G. March and John P. Olsen, “The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life,” *American Political Science Review* 78 (June 1984), 734-49

²² See Juan J. Linz, (fn. 20); Arend Lijphart (ed.), *Parliamentary Versus Presidential Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach (fn. 20).

constitutional framers of the “perils of presidentialism,” advancing the view instead that parliamentary government was more likely to lead to democratic stability.

Among other things, Linz argued that parliamentarianism better represents the diversity of opinions within society, is more flexible in allowing quick executive change-over in times of crisis, and is more likely to result in an experienced leader occupying the executive office by preventing novice politicians who do not possess party track-records from being elected.²³ In defense of parliamentarianism, Linz pointed out further that most of the stable democracies in post-war Europe had been parliamentary and that only one presidential regime has truly withstood the test of time—the United States. “The superior historical performance of parliamentary democracies is no accident,” wrote Linz.²⁴ Among its other plusses, the parliamentary system was said to be more stable and more conducive in ethnically and religiously divided societies. Others scholars, including Adam Przeworski, point out that “parliamentary regimes last longer, much longer, than presidential ones.”²⁵ In contrast to parliamentarianism, on the other hand, presidential democracy was criticized, on the theoretical level at least, for its rigidity.

Many of the aforementioned neo-institutional scholars who wrote about the importance of constitutions, however, approached the subject as if *ancien regime* elites and

²³ For empirical support, Linz examined the many democratic breakdowns in the presidential regimes of Latin America. Linz’s critics, however, have countered his findings by showing that parliamentary regimes might be just as prone to democratic instability in areas of the world, such as Africa, that are just as similarly economically disadvantaged. They have also posited that presidential regimes may, indeed, even hold important advantages over their parliamentary cousins, including their far greater accountability for government decision-making (given that presidents are directly elected) and their establishment of a system of checks to oppose, or balance, the power of legislatures. Then again, some scholars question whether there is much of a difference in these different constitutional frameworks in the first place. See Some scholars continue to debate the significance of these constitutional distinctions. For example, see Alan Siaroff, “Comparative Presidencies: The Inadequacy of the Presidential, Semi-Presidential, and Parliamentary Distinction,” *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 42 (2003), pp. 287-312.

²⁴ Juan J. Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 1 (1990), p. 52.

²⁵ Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Lemongi (fn. 1), p. 47.

opposition forces during the period of these countries' transitions were operating in a blank slate, or *tabula rasa*, and could adopt whatever kind of constitution they wanted. For example, one prominent scholar who has tried to explain institution-building in Eastern Europe, Jon Elster, likens constitution-making in these countries to sailing a boat "at open sea."²⁶ His analysis seems to suggest that the constraints on constitution-makers during this time were either small or non-existent:

To explain constitution-making in Eastern Europe—and elsewhere—one has to ... identify the constraints (if any) that limit the freedom of choice of the constitution-makers. Usually these constraints are weak or non-existent because constituent assemblies tend to have (or to arrogate for themselves) what the Germans call *Kompetenz-Kompetenz*—the power to determine their own powers.²⁷

Elster's implication is that opposition forces, upon taking power, could make any kind of constitution they desired. The reality, however, could not be further from the truth. A closer look at some post-Soviet institutions reveals that constitution makers in these countries functioned within the constraints of Soviet era institutions, and in fact were heavily influenced by them as well; they were not functioning with a blank slate at all.

Moldova is a case in point. There, the constitution-making process highlights the effects of path-dependency and of a country's recent legacy. In Moldova, the country's pre- and post-constitutional legislature, reflecting Soviet times, was consistently able to constrain the president's power to a degree not witnessed in other post-Soviet states.²⁸ Indeed, in Moldova, parliament blocked the concentration of executive authority during the time of constitution making, leaving the prerogative and responsibility of writing Moldova's first

²⁶ See Jon Elster, "Constitution-Making in Eastern Europe: Rebuilding the Boat in the Open Sea," *Public Administration*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (Spring-Summer 1993), pp. 169-217; see also generally, Jon Elster, Claus Offe and Ulrich K. Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Open Sea* (1998).

²⁷ Jon Elster, "The Role of Institutional Interest in East European Constitution-Making: Explaining Legislative Dominance," *East European Constitutional Review*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (1996), pp. 63.

²⁸ See, on this point, Lucan Way (fn. 6), p. 130.

post-Soviet constitution for itself. And yet, though this would lead us to theorize that the constitution should have been a parliamentary one – not because that was better for democracy but because parliament was the one writing it – in fact Moldova’s parliament created a *presidential* constitution. It did this, moreover, while excluding Moldova’s president, Mircea Snegur, from having any say whatsoever in the constitution’s design, even though parliament was itself at the time controlled by the Agrarian Democrats, a party in which Snegur was a leading figure.

Between 1991 and 1994 – following independence but before the adoption of its new constitution – Moldova had been governed under the institutional framework it inherited from the Soviet Union. The country began its post-Soviet life, therefore, in a way not altogether different from that of its neighbors in the Commonwealth of Independent States. In 1991, Snegur, then a leading opposition figure,²⁹ became Moldova’s first popularly elected president. He was, as in many former Soviet republics, the sole serious candidate for the post, and ran unopposed, winning 98.17 percent of the vote.³⁰ Still, the institution of a presidency was not created, at the time at least, as part and parcel of a new constitution. Rather, Snegur’s the new “presidency” had been superimposed over the old Soviet-era institutions that were in

²⁹ The opposition force in Moldova in the late 1980s was known as the Popular Front, and the Frontists’ rhetoric proved to be increasingly nationalistic. It called for the recognition of Moldovan as the official language of the state and adopted other measures sure to alienate Moldova’s many ethnic minorities. Snegur eventually broke away from the Frontists when he found that their pro-Romanian policies could not be reconciled with what other electors wanted.

³⁰ See King (fn. 7), p. 158 (Table 9).

place before it.³¹ The result was a constant power struggle between the executive and legislative branches that, as in other post-Soviet countries, could not easily be resolved.³²

In 1994, a resolution came about when a new constitution was adopted by parliament. The powers granted to Moldova's president, as Figure 1 in the Appendix points out, were rather weak compared to the powers granted by new constitutions to other post-Soviet presidents. In Figure 1, my colleague Andrei Kounov and I provide a chart that adopts Shugart and Carey's 1992 presidential power schema for the post-Soviet constitutions.³³ Still, these powers were stronger than the powers granted to presidents in many other East European countries, including neighboring Romania. And they were *very strong* when we consider that they were granted by parliament in the first place.

In Shugart and Carey's schema, Moldova's 1994 constitution would be called "premier-presidential."³⁴ The literature on democratization and comparative constitutionalism had mistakenly asserted that most of the post-Soviet constitutions are presidential. In fact, few of them are presidential at all. With the exception of Estonia and Latvia, which are pure parliamentary republics, the only undisputable claim we can make about the post-Soviet states is that they have *presidents* as heads of state. However, a *presidential* regime is one characterized by a "mutual independence" of president and parliament. This means that each branch maintains its own legitimacy and is elected separately from the other. It also means,

³¹ See Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), for an in-depth analysis of how presidency came about in the Russian/Soviet case, first for Gorbachev as the first (and last) president of the Soviet Union, then for Yeltsin as the first (popularly elected) president of the Russian Republic. It can be argued that other Soviet republics that elected presidents in the early 1990s were following Russia's example.

³² Russia experience similar confusion during the First Russian Republic, in existence between 1991 and 1993. For a more detailed analysis of the institutional structure of Russia's First Republic, see Michael McFaul (fn. 14), Chapter 4 (pp. 121-160).

³³ Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Chapter 8 (especially pp. 148-158).

³⁴ Kounov and Mazo (fn. 33).

moreover, that each branch is elected for a fixed term of office—a term that cannot be dismissed, shortened, or altered for any reason (other than impeachment) by the other branch.

The post-Soviet constitutions, however, are almost all *semi*-presidential. In other words, they have a president who serves as head of state and a prime minister who serves as head of government. The existence of the prime minister leads to some overlapping competencies, as far as the appointment and dismissal of the cabinet are concerned, between president and parliament. If the appointment game is not played carefully, the executive branch can interfere with the legislature's term, usually by dismissing it and calling for new elections (as in Russia). Such a system of government, however, is not presidential or even, as scholars such as Stephen Holmes and M. Steven Fish have asserted, "super-presidential."³⁵ This is not to say that it there cannot be a strong presidency in place under such a system. In fact, in Russia, Ukraine, and the Central Asian states, there is. But the constitutional *regime type* itself, because of the existence of the prime minister and because of the ability of one of the branches to interfere with the fixed term of the other, is *semi-presidential* (although it might warrant being labeled, in many cases, "super semi-presidential").

The term semi-presidential was first coined by Maurice Duverger, a French constitutional scholar, and used to describe the system of government created by the French Fifth Republic.³⁶ Matthew Shugart and John M. Carey refined the concept to emphasize that there are substantial differences among semi-presidential regimes. They came up with a system of classification based roughly on the distribution of power between the two

³⁵ See Stephen Holmes, "Superpresidentialism and Its Problems," *East European Constitutional Review*, Vol. 2 (1993/94), pp. 123-126; M. Steven Fish (fn. 2), pp. 54-95 (calling Russia "super-presidential" throughout). See also Peter Reddway and Dmitri Glinski, *The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms: Market Bolshevism against Democracy* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 2001).

³⁶ Maurice Duverger, "A New Political System Model: Semi-Presidential Government," *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 8 (Spring 1980), pp. 52-69.

executives, the president and the prime minister. Countries in which the prime minister exerts greater power are labeled “premier-presidential” while countries in which the president wields the real authority are known as “president-parliamentary” regimes.³⁷ Moldova is an example of a premier-presidential system of government, although its first constitution was adopted too late to be including in Shugart and Carey’s analysis. Still, since the time of Shugart and Carey’s writing, a spate of new constitutions have been adopted in Europe. Indeed, Kaare Strom and Octavio Amorim Neto note that semi-presidentialism is now the most prevalent regime type in all of Europe.³⁸ Two other scholars, Acir Almeida and Seok-ju Cho, argue that as many as 30 percent of all of the countries classified as “free” or “party free” by Freedom House in the world today possess semi-presidential constitutions.³⁹

Despite the best efforts of Mircea Snegur, the leader of Moldova who came to power in an uncontested election in 1991, to create a presidential republic, a semi-presidential system was adopted according to parliament’s wishes when Moldova adopted its first post-Soviet constitution in 1994. In this sense, Moldova followed the suit of many other post-Soviet and East European states, in that it did not adopt outright presidentialism, but rather (seemingly) copied the semi-presidential model of the French Fifth Republic—a then much-discussed blueprint for import being considered by many of the constitutional framers in the

³⁷ Other scholars, however, such as Giovanni Sartori, have ridiculed the distinction as being unnecessarily complicated and confusing. See Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry Into Structures, Incentives, and fOutcomes* (London: Basingstoke, 1997).

³⁸ Kaare Strom and Octavio Neto, “Duverger Revisted: Presidential Power in European Parliamentary Democracies,” Paper present at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, Georgia, 1999, available from the internet.

³⁹ See Acir Almeida and Seok-ju Cho, “Presidential Power and Cabinet Membership Under Semi-Presidentialism,” paper given at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 3-6, 2003, p. 2 (copy on file with the author). Moreover, as Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan write in *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*: “Books can and should be written on the subject of the problems of democracy created by semi-presidentialism in the (non-Baltic) post-Soviet and post-Yugoslavian states.” See Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 398.

region.⁴⁰ As mentioned, in 1994, the legislature excluded Snegur entirely from having any say in the designing of the country's constitution, even though it was controlled at the time by a party of which he was member. Under this system, Snegur still became Moldova's new president. Nonetheless, parliamentary weight could be felt throughout Moldova's politics. Although in Shugart and Carey schema Moldova's 1994 constitution would be called "premier-presidential,"⁴¹ Moldova's elected president was always outmatched by the country's legislature, which was consistently able to constrain his authority.

Why did Moldova adopt a semi-presidential institution, much like its neighbors, despite the fact that it was parliament that was responsible for dictating the country's institutional engineering? After all, it would presumably not be in parliament's favor to have an independently and popularly elected executive who could oppose its wishes. Rather, we would have expected Moldova's parliament, all other things being equal, to adopt a parliamentary system of government, whereby it would get to pick an executive of its own liking rather than allow popular sovereignty – and perhaps a game of unpredictable chance in the way of the people's vote – to decide who the country's chief executive should be. In general, scholars of democratization have developed poor theories to explain why certain types of constitutions are adopted over others. This is so despite the fact that academics have known for a long time which kinds of constitutions are most prone to conflict.⁴² Academic

⁴⁰ See Alfred Stepan and Ezra N. Suleiman, "The French Fifth Republic: A Model for Import? Reflections on Poland and Brazil," in H.E. Chehabi and Alfred Stepan (eds.), *Politics, Society and Democracy: Comparative Studies* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 395. The question of why this kind of system was actually adopted by so many states in Eastern Europe is an important one and has not been answered adequately in the literature. For a review of the theories put forth so far and an explanation of their inadequacies, read Eugene Mazo, "Post-Communism, Constitutionalism, and Democracy: Explaining the Origins and Consequences of Dual Headed Executive Structures in Eastern Europe" (Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University [in progress], Chapter 3).

⁴¹ Andrei Kounov and Eugene Mazo, "Reexamining Presidential Power in the Post-Soviet States," Working Paper, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA (February 2004) (available from the authors upon request).

⁴² While some studies are now trying to examine the cultural and institutional reasons why countries, especially post-communist ones, adopted semi-presidential systems, attention also need to be focused on the

theory, in other words, does not coincide with the experience of nascent democracies, as scholars recommend one option and most new democrats pick another.⁴³

The theories we do have tend to be parsimonious and rather weak. They also do not transfer to the post-communist context very well. In examining what determines the initial choice of a country's democratic institutions, Przeworski and his colleagues claim that:

Much of the answer can be gleaned from a casual glance at history. Countries that had monarchies but experienced no revolution transferred government responsibility from crown to parliament, ending up with parliamentary systems. Countries in which monarchy was abolished (France in 1848 and again in 1875, and Germany in 1919) and colonies that rebelled against monarchical powers (the United States and Latin America in the late eighteenth centuries) replaced monarchs with presidents.⁴⁴

Moreover, claims Przeworski, countries that emerged from colonialism also followed a distinct pattern as well. Countries emerging from colonialism after the Second World War would have typically inherited the parliamentary systems of their colonizers. But after their initial democracies fell, in order to distance themselves from their colonizers, they switched to presidential systems⁴⁵ – Nigeria is a case in point. Przeworski further hypothesizes, turning towards Latin America, that presidential regimes were more likely to follow military rule. The explanation given is that presidentialism “reflects the continuing role of the military ...

institutional and policy outcomes of this regime type. Those works that have specifically examined the impact of regime type focus predominantly of presidentialism and parliamentarism, and as Stephen Roper explains, “there has been much less research on the institutional and policy outcomes of semi-presidential regimes [which] is somewhat surprising given the recent popularity of this regime type and its adoption by several emerging democracies.” See Stephen D. Roper, “Are All Semi-Presidential Regimes the Same? A Comparison of Premier-Presidential Systems,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (April 2002), p. 263.

⁴³ The desire to provide better theories of why certain institutions are adopted in new democracies has direct relevance today. For example, when Afghanistan adopted a new constitution earlier this year, it also came dangerously close to choosing the perilous dual-headed executive structure for itself that I mentioned. More recently, the Governing Council in Iraq actually *did choose* this structure for its interim constitution. It also exists in Haiti. And there is even serious talk of Iraq adopting a “dual-headed” arrangement for its permanent constitution as well. This is thus an issue that scholars concerned with institutional engineering—and its economic consequences—should be paying more attention to. It remains unclear, however, why the literature on neo-institutionalism does not address the reasons behind why certain institutions are created, or how lawmakers negotiate over them in their bargaining process. While scholars are good at explaining how conflicts can be managed and what their economic effects are once they occur, the question of how they can be avoided *ex ante* is seldom raised.

⁴⁴ See Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, “What Makes Democracies Endure?” (fn. 1), pp. 47.

⁴⁵ Adam Przeworski et al. (fn. 1), p. 47.

because such regimes offer a clearer hierarchy.” By contrast, for Przeworski, the mode of transition does not appear to affect a new government’s choice of presidential institutions.

The problem with Przeworski’s hypotheses are that they do not at all explain constitutional decision making in Eastern Europe. The nascent democracies of Eastern Europe did not have histories of monarchical rule out of which parliamentary institutions would have emerged, as was the case in England or Scandinavia. Neither could it be said that these states had histories of colonialism in such a way that they would have adopted their institutions either as an inheritance from, or else as a reaction to, their colonizers. Of course, they surely all inherited, to some extent, Soviet institutions during their periods of Soviet domination.⁴⁶ But it would be a stretch to say that their adoption of presidential or parliamentary constitutions was done as a specific reaction *against* their communist-era institutions.

In addition, the military legacy in Eastern Europe was not a serious factor, and it did not play a role in constitutional decision-making, as it might have done in Latin America. And while some of the states in Eastern Europe did have a prior constitution before their Soviet annexation on which they could have relied, “past legacy” also does not provide an important consideration to speak of. Few countries adopted constitutions seriously resembling those they had in the past – in other words, before their Soviet annexation. This is because few of the republic – the Baltic ones being an exception – had an independent past to speak of. Even among the Baltic republics, only Latvia consciously chose this path. Thus, the post-communist cases of constitution-making do not adhere to the Przeworskian explanations of what accounts for the creation one regime type over another.

⁴⁶ Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

An alternative view has been put forth by Gerald Easter. For him, unlike for Przeworski, the “mode of transition” is the best explanatory variable of institutional choice. Easter contends that “the structure of old regime elites as they emerged from the breakdown phase best explains the preference for presidentialism exhibited in the NIS.”⁴⁷ A country’s choice of institutions, Easter argues, is a result of the “the strategy by which elite actors seek to gain access to the power resources of the state.” Easter’s claims that “the structure of old regime elites, as they emerge from the breakdown phase, determines institutional choice in the transitions phase. Variation in structure is determined by the continuity in the internal integrity of the old regime elites and by the extent to which old regime elites retain access to their power resources.”⁴⁸

Easter believes that three structural types emerged during the postcommunist transitions: consolidated elites, dispersed elites, and reformed elites. The consolidated elites came through the breakdown of dictatorship structurally intact, experiencing few cleavages or internal fragmentations. In these cases, “opposition forces were too weak to force old elites to alter the means of acquiring power” and these old elites were successfully able to *retain* their monopoly of power resources during the transition. Dispersed old regime elites, meanwhile, experienced internal fragmentation during the breakdown phase, making it easier for opposition forces to mobilize mass support against them. As a result, these elites were forced to *compete* for power in the same manner as the new political actors in the transition phase. Finally, reformed elites went through a transition that resembled a midpoint between the two processes described above. They did not come through the breakdown structurally intact, but

⁴⁷ Gerald M. Easter, “Preference for Presidentialism: Postcommunist Regime Change in Russia and the NIS,” *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1997), p. 184.

⁴⁸ Easter (fn. 47), pp. 186-87.

they do not experience internal fragmentation either. While some old regime elites were removed from power, others survived, and these latter ones were forced to *share* power with the opposition. As Easter explains it, “[t]hey are in a weakened position but still possess significant resource advantages over new actors during the transition phase.”⁴⁹

How did the variations in the structure of the transitions influence the choice of institutions adopted? Easter claims that opposition elites preferred parliamentary constitutions while old elites preferred presidentialism, the alternatives reflecting alternative strategies for securing access to the power resources of the state. As a result, three different institutional choices were chosen according to the structural variation that we found among old elites during the “breakdown phase”: presidentialism when old elites were *consolidated*, parliamentarism when they were *dispersed*, and mixed systems when they were *reformed*. Easter believes that three cases—Russia, Uzbekistan, and Estonia—bear this out.

Several theoretical problems, however, can be exposed with this argument. First, it is not clear what the difference is between the “breakdown” and the “transition” phases that Easter mentions. Second, the correlation between the mode of transition that occurs and the kind of constitutional structure that was adopted—even according to Easter’s own schema—does not always correspond. Russia and Uzbekistan, according to Easter, both wound up with “presidentialism.” This was despite his assertion that one had “reformed” and one had “consolidated” elites during the breakdown phase. Moreover, Estonia, where the elites were “dispersed,” even if it did not adopt presidentialism, still seriously *considered* a presidential model, we are told.⁵⁰ Easter does not account for this. Finally, the theory does a poor job of explaining the existence of semi-presidentialism. Why, in other words, would a set of

⁴⁹ See Easter (fn. 47), p. 187.

⁵⁰ See Easter (fn. 47), pp. 205-206.

consolidated elites opting for a presidential system, as the elites in Uzbekistan and Russia did, also opt to write an office of *prime minister* into their constitutions? This is the puzzling question that these theories simply fail to account for.⁵¹

The argument I put forth for why certain institutions were adopted has less to do with the nature of the transition and more to do with path-dependency. In many ways, semi-presidentialism was adopted when the superimposition of a presidential regime occurred over former Soviet institutions. While in the latter system, executives were prominent, in the former system legislatures were, which explains the problematic executive-legislative relations that resulted after new constitutions were adopted in the post-communist world.⁵² This “superimposition” theory, as I call it, explains why so many of the post-Soviet constitutions resembled French-style semi-presidentialism in look, even though they were not really based on the French model. Another explanatory variable might be geography. Moldova simply happened to live in a “semi-presidential neighborhood.” Not only had Russia adopted such a system in December of 1993 (although in that case it was forced through by President Boris Yeltsin, and not by the Russian parliament) but so had Romania. Moreover, soon Ukraine, Moldova’s powerful neighbor and economic lifeblood, would as well.

For our purposes, the real question we should be asking, however, is not why Moldova adopted its constitutional system, but what its effects were? Although any answer to such a

⁵¹ Moreover, the structural attributes of the elites does not necessarily tell us what we need to know about the strength of the opposition during the transition. Was the opposition unified (in which case it would have been a challenge for elites to deal with) or was it fractured (in which case it would not)? And does knowing whether it was unified or fractured, and to what extent in each direction, have anything to do with how it interacted with the opposition? In fact, a consolidated elite, theoretically speaking, should want a parliamentary constitution, not a presidential one. The reason is because if this elite happens to hold the majority of seats in parliament, they it can pick the leader of its choosing. A presidential regime, by contrast, allows allow an outside, someone from the opposition, to win the office of the presidency.

⁵² I thank Professor Timothy J. Colton of Harvard University for introducing me to this explanation and for pushing me to think through it during a conversation we had on March 6, 2004 in Austin, Texas. Colton was a respondent to a paper I presented at the Social Science Research Council’s Dissertation Development Workshop on Governance in Eurasia, University of Texas at Austin, March 4-7, 2004.

question is bound to be complex, the short answer in this case is that it increased pluralism in the country by creating what effectively were three separate centers of power. On one hand, Moldova's semi-presidential constitution provided a strong role for the president to play; but it also created, in addition to the presidency and parliament, a premiership in which the prime minister was subject to parliamentary confidence. As in other post-communist settings where such a system existed, as Thomas Baylis has explained, executive authority had to be shared, and this sharing, though it could potentially result in conflict, also led to a system of checks and balances, both on the part of president over parliament and on parliament over the president.⁵³ As Baylis explains it: "In all ... semi-presidential systems ... the existence of two separately chosen chief executives implies a situation of 'dual legitimacy'—precisely the weakness critics often attribute to presidential systems—and thus the potential for conflict over prerogatives."⁵⁴

New constitutions and political institutions, of course, did not instantly form realities in any of the countries of the post-communist world. Instead, they created a loose structure that political actors sought to shape in the interest of their own power and policy objectives. There was a "complex dialectic," as Juan Linz and Arturo Venezuels put it, between the rules of the game that are created and how different political entities function within them.⁵⁵ "Seen in this light," explains Baylis, "the struggles between presidents and prime ministers in East[ern] Europe are part of a broader competition for influence that also includes parliaments

⁵³ Thomas Baylis, "Presidents versus Prime Ministers: Shaping Executive Authority in Eastern Europe," *World Politics*, Vol. 48 (April 1996), pp. 297-323.

⁵⁴ Baylis (fn. 53), p. 300-301.

⁵⁵ Juan Linz and Arturo Venezuela, "Preface," in Linz and Venezuela (eds.), *The Failure of Presidential Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. xii. The quote is repeated in Baylis (fn. 53), p. 301.

and their leaders, individual ministers, constitutional courts, and other bodies.”⁵⁶ In Moldova, for example, a strong constitutional court proved important to maintaining stability. Still, under the new semi-presidential system, parliamentary weight could be felt throughout the country—balancing the desire of the president to take power for himself. It was parliament, after all, that wrote the constitution. As Fish explains about Moldova’s pluralism:

Moldova adopted a form of presidentialism that lodged considerable power in the legislature. Neither Snegur not his successor, Petru Lucinschi, could possibly ignore the legislature in the formation of the government or in policy making in general. Neither enjoyed the power of government afforded, say, the Russian president. Furthermore, the division of powers in Moldova, as well as the strength of the organized opposition grouped in part around Lucinschi, ruled out any attempt by Snegur to block a normal transfer of power, even had he been inclined to make such an attempt.⁵⁷

Yet formal, constitutional separation of powers was not the only thing that contributed to Moldova’s pluralism. The parliament that was elected in 1994 was itself divided. The electoral system chosen to elect deputies to Moldova’s 101-seat unicameral parliament was proportional representation, or PR, with the entire country serving as one electoral district. The threshold was set at 4 percent. The system was designed to ensure the development of political parties, and to make politics be based on policy positions rather than individual personalities. As Table 1 in the Appendix (on page 38) shows, 13 parties in total contested this election, with four of them crossing the 4 percent barriers. The Democratic Agrarian Party (PDAM), which consisted of reconstructed communists, received 43 percent of the vote, with three other parties receiving 22, 9.21, and 7.53 percent of the vote, respectively. Nine other parties failed to cross the 4 percent barrier. Table 1 in the Appendix shows how seats

⁵⁶ Baylis (fn. 53), p. 300.

⁵⁷ See M. Steven Fish (fn. 2), pp. 78-79. Steven Fish compares Moldova’s pluralism with Romania’s. Both countries shared a similarity in that “[t]he first presidents of postcommunist Moldova and Romania, Mircea Snegur and Ion Iliescu, respectively, had ... pretensions [to become dominant politicians] but never enjoyed anything resembling the personal authority and mass appeals of the leaders of [less pluralistic countries]. Both Snegur and Iliescu were political chameleons and quickly came to be seen as such by their electorates.”

were redistributed in the parliament and how many were granted to each party. As Table 1 demonstrates, the Agrarians received slightly more than a majority of the seats in parliament. Yet Moldova's institutions were designed in a way that did not allow the Agrarians to make major decisions by themselves. For many measures, a three-fifths majority was needed. This included, importantly, votes to approve the president's nomination of a prime minister. The result, given that a simple majority of votes was not enough to get things done, was that parliamentary politics had to remain pluralistic in Moldova.

IV. PARLIAMENTARISM IN THE SECOND MOLDOVAN REPUBLIC, 2000 TO PRESENT

There are three senses, I have been arguing, in which the evolution of Moldova's political institutions can be viewed as paradoxical. First, Moldova was different in terms of its constitutional adoption. The literature on this topic would seem to suggest that in a polity where the opposition dominates the transition, the result should be a parliamentary regime.⁵⁸ Even if one argues that in Moldova the opposition *did not* dominate the transition and that it was instead a balanced affair,⁵⁹ still, parliament single-handedly wrote the constitution. This is an odd occurrence among the post-Soviet states, and it makes the experience of Moldova more akin, in terms of constitution writing, to that of the Czech Republic or Estonia.

Second, Moldova was different from the other post-Soviet states in terms of the branch of government that dominated politics. The academic theory would suggest that presidential constitutions usually result from the desire of presidents to take as much power as they can swallow. But in Moldova, a semi-presidential constitution was written by parliament,

⁵⁸ See Gerald Easter, (fn. 47), 184-211.

⁵⁹ See Michael McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Non-cooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World," *World Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (January 2002), pp. 212-244 (especially see the chart on p. 227, where the balance of power during the transition for Moldova is coded as "even or uncertain").

and even, then parliament kept power away from the president.⁶⁰ Klaus von Beyme has claimed that “[s]emi-presidential systems in the former Soviet Union are either disguised dictatorships or—in the case of four predominantly Slavic republics—anocracies dominated by presidents. Parliament is in no case an effective counterweight to presidential power [in] constitutions made ‘by the tailor for the tailor’.”⁶¹ Moldova proved to be an exception to this.

Finally, Moldova was different in terms of how semi-presidentialism (or the existence of the president in general) helped make politics more pluralistic. Among other things, it gave Moldova’s parliament a “focusing theme” – deputies suddenly began to focus on what their *president* was doing – and thus helped parliament to avoid its own intra-legislative fissures.⁶² As aforementioned, the dominant literature on neo-institutionalism warns of the “perils of presidentialism” and suggests that parliamentary regimes should be better for democratic consolidation than presidential ones. Although there are academics who detract from this view, it is at least the dominant position in the field. Yet in Moldova, as we are about to see, it was the switch *to* a parliamentary regime – an unprecedented occurrence in the history of democratic constitutional politics – that caused democracy to be derailed, ultimately forcing Moldova down an authoritarian path.

Moldova, I have been arguing, was in general a weak state characterized by a situation in which no single actor had been able to gain outright control of the polity. As the last Part

⁶⁰ In this sense, the case of constitution making in Moldova was akin to a few in Eastern Europe—namely, Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. On constitution making in the latter three states, see Allison Stanger, “Leninist Legacies and Legacies of State Socialism in Postcommunist Central Europe’s Constitutional Development,” in Grzegorz Ekiert and Stephen E. Hanson, *Capitalism and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe: Assessing the Legacy of Communist Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 182-209. See also Jan Zielonka, *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe, Volume 1: Institutional Engineering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) (see the first chapter by Klaus von Beyme).

⁶¹ Klaus von Beyme, in Jan Zielonka (fn 60), p. 17.

⁶² See John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (New York: Harper Collins Publishing, 2nd ed., 1995), on how policy windows are created in politics. A good collection of essays on the policy process is found in Paul A. Sabatier (ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

demonstrated, political competition survived not because of the strength of the democracy, but because of the weakness of the state itself. There are other post-Soviet states where such a situation was at one time or another present,⁶³ including Belarus, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. In all of these other states, however, the presidents eventually managed to gain control of domestic politics and, by tinkering with the rules of the game or threatening and coercing their opponents, managed to silence their opposition once and for all. Moldova did not follow this path. In Moldova, parliament rather kept increasing *its* power. Of course, it did so always in response to a push by the president to gain more power for himself first. Still, Moldova's uniqueness can be found in the fact that parliament won each and every one of its battles with the president, until it was eventually able to change the constitution in such a way that it ultimately got to pick who the president would be in the first place.

After many years of negotiations, no resolution was forthcoming on the Transdnister conflict, which had lulled into a rather uneasy status quo. By the early 1990s, President Snegur had become the enemy of the pan-Romanian movement that sought to unite Moldova with its neighbor and was now committed to building an independent state. Yet Snegur was a chameleon, known for adopting the side in a political conflict that would benefit him the most. By 1996, he changed his tactics again, this time siding once with the pan-Romanianists. He called on the parliament to declare "Romanian" rather than "Moldovan" the state's official language.⁶⁴ While Snegur had always been very much a Moldovan nationalist, by 1994 the politics of ethnic identity had begun to cripple Moldova. His political maneuvering was

⁶³ See Lucan A. Way, "Pluralism by Default and the Challenges of Authoritarian State Building in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine," Paper presented at workshop on "Transitions from Communist Rule in Comparative Perspective," Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University (November 15-16, 2002) (on file with author).

⁶⁴ See Charles King (fn. 7), p. 160.

carried out, it turns out, in anticipation of the 1996 presidential election, an election he lost to his bitter rival, Petru Lucinschi, who was then speaker of the parliament.⁶⁵ Charles King writes of Lucinschi that “there was little ideologically to separate him from Snegur.”⁶⁶ What separated the two men was that the electorate was more tired of the latter than the former.

Like some other post-communist electoral systems, Moldova’s system of electing the president contained a second round run-off that was used in the event that no candidate attained a majority of the votes in the first round. As Table 2 in the Appendix (on page 38) shows, nine candidates entered the election, although Snegur and Lucinschi were the only serious contenders. After the first round, Snegur found himself with 38.75 percent of the vote compared to Lucinschi’s 27.66 percent. The communist candidate, Vladimir Voronin, came in a distant third with 10.23 percent, while no one else managed to break into double figures (see Table 2). This meant that a second round would have to be held. In it, Lucinschi’s managed to defeat Snegur, 54.02 percent to 45.98 percent. Snegur’s loss marked the first time that a post-Soviet president had lost his position to a *parliamentary* figure.

Despite his parliamentary experience, however, becoming a president seemed to have gone to Lucinschi’s head, and Lucinschi immediately began bullying Moldova’s parliament in the same way that his rival and predecessor tried to do. He quickly found himself facing problems akin to those of Snegur. In 1997, for example, in order to get the legislature to pass some of his desired reforms, Lucinschi threatened to call for early elections. The unicameral parliament responded quickly by getting rid of Lucinschi’s strongest supporter in parliament,

⁶⁵ After an illustrious career in Moldovan politics, Lucinschi had wound up speaker of the Moldovan parliament. But he had held an assortment of positions in the past, including some high ranking posts within the Communist Party during the late-Soviet period.

⁶⁶ See Charles King, (fn. 7), p. 162-163.

leaving the president with no voice in the legislature whatsoever. Once again, parliament had been victorious in confronting the president.

By 1998, a second set of parliamentary elections was held in Moldova. Their results were to usher in an important change. As Table 3 in the Appendix shows (see page 39), this time, again only four parties managed to win seats. However, the resurrected Communist Party, which had been banned in 1991, managed to get 30 percent of the vote and, after the redistribution of seats from wasted votes, to secure 40 of the 101 parliamentary seats. Headed by Vladimir Voronin, the Communist Party took a radically different policy position from either president or from the other parties that had served in parliament previously. It was much more pro-Russian in its foreign policy,⁶⁷ favoring membership in the CIS and increased ties with Russia, if not a reversal to the Soviet past.⁶⁸

The 1998 elections also brought an end to the Agrarian Democrats, who had dominated politics in Moldova since independence. Different factions within the party's ranks had supported three different Agrarian loyalists in the 1996 presidential race—Snegur, Lucinschi, and Andrei Sangheli—and by the time the 1998 elections came around, the Agrarians had become so fractured that they failed to win any seats. Moreover, new parties had begun to spring up in anticipation of the 2000 presidential election, the existence of each justified by nothing else than its support of its candidate. One such party, the Movement for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova (MDPM), which supported Lucinschi, secured a place in the new parliament by coat-tailing on Lucinschi's presidential victory of two years earlier.

⁶⁷ See King (fn. 7), p. 162.

⁶⁸ As an old resurrected party, the Communists were able to garner a sizable proportion of the vote from a rural population that had been disaffected with the poor state of Moldova's economy and had been affected by hardship in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse.

In 1999, Lucinschi once again tried to emulate the ways of his predecessor, Snegur, and of other post-Soviet leaders, and to create a stronger presidency for Moldova. A prolonged struggle between President Lucinschi and parliament over Moldova's form of government ensued. Fearing Lucinschi's intent to transform Moldova into a super-presidential republic, the confrontation ended when parliament finally managed to secure enough votes to amend Moldova's 1994 Constitution. On July 5, 2000, Moldova's parliament passed a constitutional amendment and changed the way the country's president would be elected from then on. Under the amendment, the president of the republic was now to be elected by parliament directly, rather than by direct popular vote. What the legislature voted to do, in effect, was to eliminate a popularly elected president. The head of the parliament, a former close ally of Lucinschi's, successfully lobbied an overwhelming majority of his colleagues to pass this amendment to the 1994 constitution, thus transforming the country from overnight a semi-presidential to a parliamentary regime.

In this way, along with Latvia and Estonia, Moldova became only the third state with a parliamentary form of government among the former Soviet republics, and the only such state within the CIS. However, contrary to what some analysts have written – and contrary to what Moldova's parliamentarians claimed at the time – Moldova did not become a pure parliamentary republic. Rather, it now resembled a new and rare regime typology that should, for analytical reasons, instead be termed “semi-parliamentary.” Although the president was now to be elected by parliament, he still served for a fixed term in office. He also retained the power to nominate the prime minister, who served alongside him and who was still the head of government. By retaining a *fixed* term after his parliamentary selection, the new president could not all of a sudden, like a prime minister, be brought down by parliament's vote of no

confidence. In short, the two branches, executive and legislative, still held on to their fixed term of office, but they did not have separate sources of popular legitimacy anymore.⁶⁹

What was the result of this change? The answer is that it was one of the greatest ironies of democratic constitutional engineering. Parliamentary government did not at all promote democratic consolidation in Moldova, despite what theories offered by authors like Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach might say.⁷⁰ Actually, the opposite result was achieved—democracy soon became less consolidated and was now marked by its *lack* of pluralism. After changing the Constitution, parliament no longer had a focusing point: an enemy against which it could unite and against which to channel its energies. Moldova's once united parliament quickly splintered into multiple factions as a result. Together, these factions could not reach a compromise over who should be elected the next president, however. The Communists, who held 40 of the 101 seats in parliament after the 1998 elections (as Table 3 demonstrates), insisted on their own candidate, party leader Vladimir Voronin. The center-right coalition, meanwhile, preferred its candidate, Pavel Barbalat,⁷¹ but lacked enough votes to elect him without the help of the Communists. Moldova's parliament, which for the first time found itself with the right to pick the new president, could not do so, and instead sank into a political crisis.

In the end, the parliament failed, in three attempts, successfully to choose *anyone* to be the new president. This allowed Lusinschi, the president to be replaced, to exercise his

⁶⁹ This regime type is actually similar to the mixed regimes of other countries where a fixed-term executives are appointed by the legislative body, including Switzerland, Bolivia (when no candidate manages to win by an outright majority), and others. On Bolivia, see Eduardo A. Gamara, "Hybrid Presidentialism in Bolivia," in Kurt von Mettenheim (ed.), *Presidential Institutions and Democratic Politics: Comparing National and Regional Contexts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 109-135.

⁷⁰ See Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach (fn.22), p. 1-22

⁷¹ Barbalat was then the respected chairman of Moldova's constitutional court.

constitutional prerogative of dismissing parliament and calling for new elections.⁷² Yet parliament's sudden dissolution and the subsequent early elections that followed in the wake of this event would prove to be bad for Moldova. The new parliament that came to power in early 2001 would be comprised of even fewer parties than the previous parliament. Not only did Moldova's political system now concentrate power in one branch of government to the exclusion of the others, but that branch, parliament, would now be dominated by a one entity, a single party that would manage to attain a supermajority of the seats. This effectively ended pluralism by default in Moldova. As Freedom House explained:

the subsequent early elections revealed the depth of Moldova's political crisis. The reforms put in place since independence were aimed more at divvying up power among leading personalities and parties than creating an effective and responsive government. Between 1991 and 1994, Moldova's first president, Mircea Snegur, concentrated power in his own hands. From 1994 to 1999, the Agrarian Party used its parliamentary majority to transfer most power from the president to Parliament. Under the constitutional amendment of July 5, 2000, a single party or coalition could wield considerable power if it gained enough seats to form a government and elect a president.⁷³

After Lusinschi dismissed parliament, early parliamentary elections were scheduled for February of 2001. Moldovans were largely not ready for this, and neither were their deputies.

The outgoing parliament, moreover, had been able to make two changes to Moldova's electoral institutions before its department that proved to have devastating effects.⁷⁴ The first was that it shortened the period during which parties were allowed to campaign from 90 to 45 days. This rule was meant to privilege incumbent parties, which already had name recognition among the electorate, and to encourage their greater development. Second, the electoral threshold that a party needed to cross was raised, again to make it more difficult for new

⁷² See Constitution of the Republic of Moldova (2000), Article 77(5): "If after repeat elections the President of the Republic of Moldova is not elected, the incumbent President shall dissolve the Parliament and establish the date of Parliamentary elections."

⁷³ Freedom House, "Moldova," in *Nations in Transit* (New York: Freedom House, 2003), p. 286.

⁷⁴ Freedom House (fn. 73), p. 286.

players to enter the fray, from 4 to 6 percent. Both changes were suggested by the Communist Party, which previously had garnered a plurality of the vote but, under the new constitutional changes, still did not have enough seats to elect a president on its own, without a coalition partner. The Communists believed that getting rid of “less powerful parties, extra-parliamentary political parties, and sociopolitical organization that were preparing to enter the electoral campaign” would leave four or five parties in parliament at most, while granting slightly more seats for the Communists themselves.⁷⁵

As Table 4 in the Appendix demonstrates (see page 40), however, these changes had far greater effects than ever intended. The results devastated pluralism in Moldova. The Communist Party, with 50.7 percent, won over half of the votes. Meanwhile, only two other parties managed to clear the 6 percent threshold: the so-called Braghis Alliance (BA), a group consisting of 17 left-leaning and centrist political organizations, which received 13.36 percent of the votes; and the Christian Democratic Popular Party (CDPP), which took home 8.24 percent. As Table 4 demonstrates, a total of 27 parties ran for seats, although 24 of them failed to clear the new 6 percent electoral threshold. Two of these, the Party of Rebirth and Conciliation (PRC) and the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), attained more than 5 percent of the vote and would have made it into Parliament under the old electoral rules. Instead, 28.33 percent of the vote was “wasted” on the 24 parties that failed to surpass the new threshold and had to be redistributed proportionally among the three lonely winners. After combining their percentages with these “gift votes,” which were handed out proportionally, the Communists held 71 seats, BA 19 seats, and CDPP 11 seats in the 101-member chamber.

⁷⁵ Freedom House (fn. 73), p. 286.

This was the first time that an unreformed Communist Party had come to power in any country in the post-communist era. It also marked the first time in a post-Soviet republic that self-proclaimed communists were poised to control not only the legislature but also the executive branch. Not surprisingly, the Communists were easily able to elect Vladimir Voronin, their leader, to be Moldova's third president. He received exactly 71 votes of the 89 votes that were cast—a number equivalent to the number of Communist deputies. Meanwhile, Moldova became the first post-Soviet state to elect a Communist as its new head of state.

V. MOLDOVA'S DEMISE OF PLURALISM IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

As of 2002, Moldova still qualified as an “electoral democracy” in Larry Diamond's schema,⁷⁶ but with its demise of pluralism its future remains far from clear. Parliamentary elites have increasingly engaged in what Andreas Schedlar calls the “menu of manipulation,”⁷⁷ only now the manipulating branch of government is parliament, not the president, and the manipulating entity is the Communist Party. In short, parliamentary government has not been good for Moldova—in fact, just the opposite. Parliamentarism coincided with the first-ever comeback of an unreformed, hard-line communist party in the post-Soviet world. And although the Communists won only slight more than 50 percent of the vote, they benefited enormously from the high electoral threshold, taking 71 of the 101 parliamentary seats. Moldova's center-right parties, by contrast, split their vote and failed to clear the threshold, thus getting shut out of political office altogether.

⁷⁶ See, generally, Larry Diamond (fn. 2).

⁷⁷ See Andreas Schedlar, “The Menu of Manipulation,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April 2002), pp. 36-50. I kindly thank Schedlar for forwarding me his article and discussing his arguments with me in person.

The Communists have since tried to silence political opposition, and parliamentary government in Moldova has led to a weakening of democratic freedoms. Without a presidency, “pluralism by default” has been harder to sustain, as the system possesses fewer “veto players” to check parliament’s power.⁷⁸ Moreover, though parliamentarism in Moldova may now bring a degree of government stability to the country that is unheard of in the post-communist world in general, it remains far from clear that government stability is at all a good thing for economic reform. As Anders Aslund explains: “Contrary to common belief, government stability has not been an advantage. The five countries with the most frequent changes of government [in post-communist Europe] are Poland, the three Baltic states, and Bulgaria, that is, four of the most successful reform countries. Their governments have lasted only a year on average.”⁷⁹ As Aslund further elaborates, a

plausible explanation is that more frequent changes in the executive mean that vested interests cannot control the government, which this [why it] becomes more transparent, more accountable, and less corrupt corresponding better to the public interest ... Many instinctively think that the best government arises if one party wins its own parliamentary majority. However, coalition governments have been more successful than one-party governments in the transition, and the most successful reform governments have been broad-based, multi-party coalitions. Illustrative examples are multiple Polish, Estonian, Latvian, and Czech governments.⁸⁰

The dilemma of why pluralism has vanished in the post-communist world remains far from answered, of course, but the pattern witnessed in Moldova is not unique. Like Moldova, many other post-Soviet states have experienced democratic backsliding and now can be characterized as hybrid regimes that teeter in a no man’s land somewhere between democracy

⁷⁸ George Tsebelis, *Veto Players* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002)), esp. Chapter 4.

⁷⁹ Anders Aslund, *Building Capitalism: The Transformation of the Former Soviet Bloc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 384-385.

⁸⁰ Aslund (fn. 79), pp. 385-386.

and dictatorship.⁸¹ While Moldova took longer to get there, it is unquestionable that it has followed this same path. The demise of political pluralism, indeed, has been documented in other post-Soviet states, including much larger powers like Belarus, Russia, and neighboring Ukraine. The question is, why has this occurred?

One scholar, Eric McGlinchey, who has successfully documented the demise of pluralism in Kyrgyzstan,⁸² advances the hypothesis that pluralism's demise has to do with the competition for economic resources. He finds that there was an abundant degree of political pluralism in Kyrgyzstan between 1991 and 1994. As in Moldova, of course, it was a case of "pluralism by default." Because the state was weak – rather than committed to democracy per se – political opposition was tolerated and a free and vibrant press existed. However, this pluralism eventually led to competition to control what happened to capital flowing into the country. Once Kyrgyzstan's president was able to take control of foreign investment and channel it into his own coffers, he quickly followed the lead of his neighboring Central Asian leaders by silencing his opposition and changed course to move the country in a radically different direction: *towards* increased authoritarianism.

Unlike McGlinchey, other scholars have emphasized a different independent variable: not money, but geography. For example, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way believe that "Western leverage" and "linkage to the West" is what sets some regimes on one course and others on another.⁸³ More to the point, Jeffrey Kopstein and David Reilly, in a new and

⁸¹ See, for example, Neil Robinson, "The Politics of Russia's Partial Democracy," *Political Studies Review*, Vol. 1 (2003), pp. 142-166.

⁸² Eric Max McGlinchey, "Paying for Patronage: Regime Change in Post-Soviet Central Asia" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2003).

⁸³ See, for example, Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "Ties That Bind? International Linkage and Competitive Authoritarian Regime Change in the Post-Cold War Era," Paper to be Presented at the Quality of Democracy Speaker Series, Center for Democracy and the Third Sector, Georgetown University, March 22, 2004, also available at <http://www.georgetown.edu/centers/cdats/speakerseries.htm>. See also Jason Brownlee's Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2003.

important article, also use “geography” and “distance from the West” to explain the “wide variation in postcommunist political and economic outcomes.”⁸⁴ Michael McFaul likewise adheres to this argument in explaining why some states, following their transitions from communist rule, became democracies, some dictatorships, and some got stuck in between. Specifically, McFaul alludes to a state’s “democratic neighborhood” and “distance from Brussels” – referring to the European Union – as the most important explanatory variables that have influenced the outcome of post-communist transitions.⁸⁵

In a way, however, Moldova’s case does not fit any of these theories. McGlinchey’s theory does not help because it is hard to argue that Moldova’s pocketbook ever changed radically during the post-Soviet period. Little foreign aid pored in from the United States, Western Europe, or elsewhere, especially when compared to the enormous amount that was given, in relative terms, to Ukraine and Romania, Moldova’s much larger and more strategically situated neighbors. Because Moldova had always been located on the edge of empires – on the edge of the Soviet Union in the twentieth century, and arguably on the edge of the expanding European Union in the twenty-first – it has been an economic backwater. Money has always been hard to come by, but this is not predominantly what set the country off track. The geography theses advanced by Hanson, Kopstein and Reilly, and McFaul, among others, also do not do a good job explaining what might have gone wrong. After all, Moldova is not located in Central Asia, and while one of its neighbors, Ukraine, has also recently experienced a decrease in pluralism, it certainly remains alive and well in Romania.

⁸⁴ Jeffrey S. Kopstein and David A. Reilly, “Postcommunist Spaces: A Political Geography Approach to Explaining Postcommunist Outcomes,” in Grzegorz Ekiert and Stephen E. Hanson (eds.), *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe: Assessing the Legacy of Communist Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 120-154 (the quote appears on p. 120).

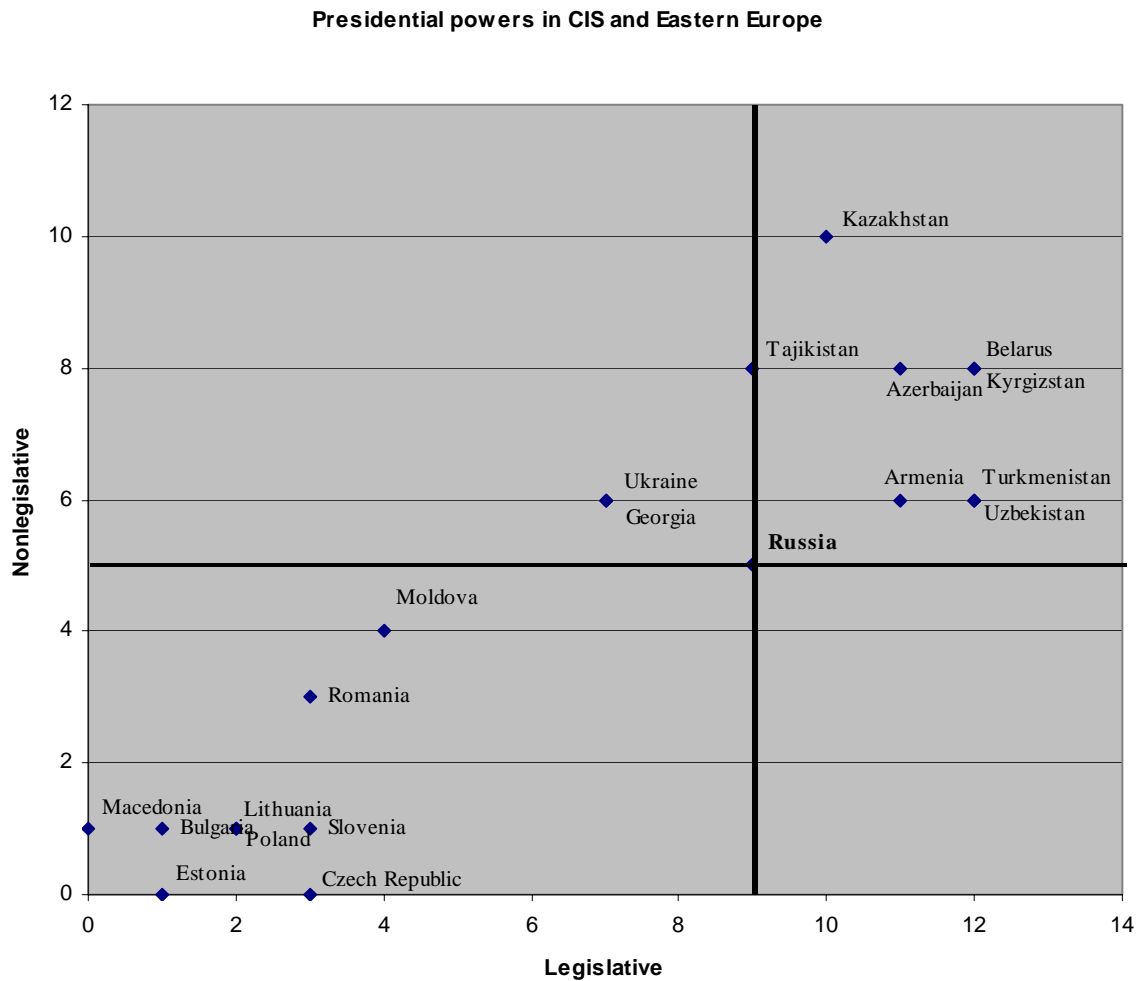
⁸⁵ See, in general, Michael McFaul (fn. 59).

Also, Moldova is arguably the same “distance from Brussels” as, say, Estonia and Belarus are, and yet the democratic outcome in all three states has been radically different.

In short, I have tried to advance a more institutional explanation, arguing that the move to a parliamentary system was rather what was responsible for abruptly ending pluralism in Moldova. The consequences of this move were unforeseen and certainly unintended. In light of them, however, social scientists in the democratization school should add an addition item to their agenda. It is time for scholars to stop asking whether regimes are actually democracies or autocracies, and to begin studying how and why a regime heading towards one ideal might suddenly change tracks to head in a new direction.

APPENDIX

FIGURE 1: PRESIDENTIAL POWERS IN POST-COMMUNIST PRESIDENTIAL AND SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL CONSTITUTIONAL REGIMES (BASED ON SHUGART AND CAREY'S MODEL)



Source: Eugene Mazo, "Duverger's Dilemma: Debating the Uniqueness of Semi-Presidential Constitutions in Eastern Europe," Paper Presented at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), Dissertation Development Workshop on Governance in Eurasia, University of Texas, Austin, March 4-7, 2004. Data compiled from Andrei Kounov and Eugene Mazo, "Reexamining Presidential Power in the Post-Soviet States," Working Paper, Stanford University, February 2004. (All data on file with the author.)

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF MOLDOVA'S 1994 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

PARTY/GROUPING	VOTES	% VOTES	SEATS	% SEATS
PDAM - Democratic Agrarian Party of Moldova (Partidul Democrat Agrar din Moldova)	766589	43.18	56	53.85
PSMUE - Socialist Party and 'Unitate-Edinstvo' Movement Bloc (Blocul electoral Partidul Socialist si Miscarea ""Unitate-Edinstvo""")	390584	22	28	26.92
BTI - Peasants and Intellectuals Bloc (Blocul Taranilor si Intelectualilor)	163513	9.21	11	10.58
AFPCD - Alliance of the Popular Christian Democratic Front (Blocul electoral Alianta Frontului Popular Crestin Democrat)	133606	7.53	9	8.65
BSD - Social Democratic Bloc (Blocul electoral social democrat)	65028	3.66	0	0
AFM - Association of Women of Moldova (Asociatia femeilor din Moldova)	50243	2.83	0	0
PDMM - Democratic Party of Labour (Partidul Democrat al Muncii din Moldova)	49210	2.77	0	0
PR - Party of Reform (Partidul Reformei)	41980	2.36	0	0
PD - Democratic Party of Moldova (Partidul Democrat din Moldova)	23368	1.32	0	0
AVRTM - Association of Victims of the Communist Totalitarian Regime (Asociatia Victimelor Regimului Totalitar Comunist din Moldova)	16672	0.94	0	0
PR - Republican Party of Moldova (Partidul Republican din Moldova)	16529	0.93	0	0
PEM - Ecological Party 'Alianta Verde' - Green Alliance (Partidul Ecologist 'Alianta Verde')	7025	0.4	0	0
PNC - National Christian Party (Partidul National Crestin)	5878	0.33	0	0
Independent Candidates (20)	45152	2.54	0	0
Total	1775377	100	104	100

SOURCE: International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) - Moldova (<http://www.ifes.md>)

TABLE 2: RESULTS OF MOLDOVA'S 1996 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

CANDIDATES	PARTY/NOMINATED BY	VOTES	% VOTES	VOTES (SECOND ROUND)	% VOTES (SECOND ROUND)
Mircea Snegur	PRCN	603,652	38.75	782,933	45.98
Petru Lucinschi	independent	430,836	27.66	919,831	54.02
Vladimir Voronin	PCM	159,393	10.23	-	-
Andrei Sangheli	PDAM	147,555	9.47	-	-
Valeriu Matei	PFD	138,605	8.9	-	-
Marina Livitchi	independent	33,115	2.13	-	-
Anatol Plugaru	independent	28,159	1.8	-	-
Iulia Gorea-Costin	independent	9,926	0.64	-	-
Veronica Abramciuc	independent	6,619	0.42	-	-
TOTAL		1,557,860	100	1,702,764	100

Legend

PRCN - Party of Rebirth and Conciliation of Moldova (Partidul Renasterii si Concilierii din Moldova)

PDAM - Democratic Agrarian Party of Moldova (Partidul Democrat Agrar din Moldova)

PCM- Communist Party of Moldova (Partidul Comunist din Moldova)

PFD - Party of Democratic Forces (Partidul Fortelor Democratice)

SOURCE: International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFEAS) Moldova (<http://www.ifes.md>)

TABLE 3: RESULTS OF MOLDOVA'S 1998 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

PARTY/GROUPING	VOTES	% VOTES	SEATS	% SEATS
PCM - Party of Communists (Partidul Comunistilor din Moldova)	487002	30.01	40	39.6
CDM - Electoral Bloc Democratic Convention of Moldova (Blocul Electoral Conventia Democrata din Moldova)	315206	19.42	26	25.74
PMDP - Electoral Bloc For a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova (Blocul Electoral Pentru o Moldova Democratica si Prospera)	294691	18.16	24	23.76
PFD - Party of Democratic Forces (Partidul Fortelor Democratice)	143428	8.84	11	10.89
PDAM - Democratic Agrarian Party (Partidul Democrat Agrar din Moldova)	58874	3.63	0	0
ACF - Electoral Bloc of the Civic Alliance Furnica (The Ant) (Blocul Electoral Alianta Civica Furnica)	53338	3.29	0	0
AFD - Alliance of Democratic Forces Electoral Bloc (Blocul Electoral Alianta Fortelor Democratice)	36344	2.24	0	0
PDSEM - Moldovan Party of Economic and Social Justice (Partidul Dreptatii Social-Economice din Moldova)	31663	1.95	0	0
PSDM - Social Democratic Party of Moldova (Partidul Social Democrat din Moldova)	30169	1.86	0	0
US - Electoral Bloc Socialist Unity (Blocul Electoral Unitatea Socialista)	29647	1.83	0	0
BSDS - Social Democratic Electoral Bloc 'Hope' (Blocul Electoral Social-Democratic 'Speranta')	21282	1.31	0	0
PS - Party of Socialists (Partidul Socialistilor)	9514	0.59	0	0
PR - Party of Reform (Partidul Reormei)	8844	0.54	0	0
UCDM - Christian Democratic Union (Uniunea Crestin-Democrata din Moldova)	8342	0.51	0	0
PUMM - United Party of Labour of Moldova (Partidul Unit al Muncii din Moldova)	3124	0.19	0	0
Plugaru Anatol	17736	1.09	0	0
Renita Valeriu	2983	0.18	0	0
Gheorghe Porcescu	2892	0.18	0	0
Pavel Creanga	2573	0.16	0	0
Other independent candidates (55)	64813	3.99	0	0
Total	1622987	100	101	100

Source: Project on Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe, University of Essex, UK, Electoral Database (<http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexElections.asp?country=MOLDOVA&election=md2001>); International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Database, and author's independent calculations.

TABLE 4: RESULTS OF MOLDOVA'S 2001 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

PARTY/GROUPING	VOTES	% VOTES	SEATS	% SEATS
PC - Communist Party (Partidul Comunistilor)	794808	50.07	71	70.3
BEAB - Electoral Bloc 'Braghis Alliance' (Blocul Electoral "Alianta Braghis")	212071	13.36	19	18.81
PPCD - Christian Democratic Popular Party (Partidul Popular Crestin Democrat)	130810	8.24	11	10.89
PRC - Party of Rebirth and Conciliation (Partidul Renasterii si Concilierii)	91894	5.79	0	0
PDM - Democratic Party of Moldova (Partidul Democrat din Moldova)	79757	5.02	0	0
PNL - National Liberal Party (Partidul National Liberal)	44548	2.81	0	0
PSDM - Social Democratic Party of Moldova (Partidul Social Democrat din Moldova)	39247	2.47	0	0
PNTCD - National Peasant Party Christian Democratic (Partidul National Taranesc Crestin Democrat)	27575	1.74	0	0
Valeriu Ghiletschi (independent candidate)	27511	1.73	0	0
BEPN - Electoral Bloc 'Plai Natal' [Native Land] (Blocul Electoral "Plai Natal")	25009	1.58	0	0
MSPOD - Socio-political Movement 'For Order and Justice' (Miscare Social-Politica "Pentru Ordine si Dreptate")	23099	1.46	0	0
PFD - Party of the Democratic Forces (Partidul Fortelor Democratice)	19405	1.22	0	0
PDAM - Democratic Agrarian Party of Moldova (Partidul Democrat Agrar din Moldova)	18473	1.16	0	0
AJE - Electoral Bloc 'Alliance of Lawyers and Economists' (Blocul Electoral "Alianta Juristilor si Economistilor")	14810	0.93	0	0
BECD - Electoral Bloc 'Fair and Justice' (Blocul Electoral "Credinta si Dreptate")	10686	0.67	0	0
BEE - Electoral Bloc 'Edinstvo' (Blocul Electoral "Edinstvo")	7277	0.46	0	0
MSPRR - Republican Socio-Political Movement 'Ravnopravie' (Miscarea Social-Politica Republicana "Ravnopravie")	7023	0.44	0	0
PtCD - Peasant Party Christian Democratic (Partidul taranesc Crestin Democrat)	4288	0.27	0	0
Ilie Donica (independent candidate)	1475	0.09	0	0
Valeriu Lapinschi (independent candidate)	1332	0.08	0	0
Mihail Kulev (independent candidate)	1075	0.07	0	0
Ana Golubenco (independent candidate)	1053	0.07	0	0
Vasile Severin (independent candidate)	1025	0.06	0	0
Vasile Trofim (independent candidate)	975	0.06	0	0
Iacob Mogoreanu (independent candidate)	971	0.06	0	0
Ion Pomana (independent candidate)	582	0.04	0	0
Dumitru Solomon (independent candidate)	478	0.03	0	0
TOTAL	1587257	100	101	100

Source: Project on Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe, University of Essex, UK, Electoral Database (<http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexElections.asp?country=MOLDOVA&election=md2001>); International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Database, and author's independent calculations.