
Ten Years of Political Transformation in Croatia

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Electoral Politics in Croatia 1990 – 2000 *

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Summary

An analysis of the normative/institutional level of the Croatian politics shows that the constitutional arrangements at the levels of the social system and the political sub-system could be labelled as democratic, while the constitutional solutions that regulated the relations among major political institutions could turn out to be insufficient. Hence the semi-presidential system of government in the Croatian wartime/transitional context provided an appropriate institutional framework for authoritarian regressions in the processes of political decision-making and in the content of political decisions.

The domination of the president of the state in Croatia's political life did not stem solely from the existing constitutional arrangements; it also rested on a set of additional premises of activity: a) a decade of harmony between the president and the parliamentary majority; b) the charismatic/clientelist nature of the ruling party; c) a rather weak and suppressed opposition to the ruling party by the unconsolidated opposition parties; and d) the expressive model of orientation of the actors in political activity.

Based on the above account of the institutional/political order and the activities of the major actors, it can be surmised that the democratic consolidation in Croatia at the beginning of 2000 was in its incipient stage. Also, the frequent and profound changes in the structure of the cleavages and the electoral systems as well as the frequent party factioning stood in the way and slowed down the consolidation of the representational level of political system. Nevertheless, a certain level of consolidation is testified to by the four cycles of non-violent parliamentary elections, the peaceful alternation of the parties in power, the contextually relatively low fluctuation of voters, the moderate fragmentation of the parliament, and the acceptance of the parliamentary rules of the game by the majority of the population.

Elections are among the most important political processes in the new democracies, the “central element” of all transitional processes (Puhle, 1997, p. 149). The first free elections marked the beginning of the transformation of totalitarian into democratic po-

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litical system. In the former Yugoslav federation these elections practically not only delegitimized the old political regime but the state community as well and thus paved the way to the creation of an independent Croatian state. Although the Croatian elections of 1990 cannot formally be considered the founding but only the pre-founding democratic elections (Nohlen/Kasapović, 1996, pp. 43 ff.), they were nevertheless the most significant elections in recent Croatian history.

Generally, the elections following the pre-founding and the founding elections are assigned not only the usual functions they have in stable democracies but many additional functions as well. Primarily, they are expected to provide for the peaceful alternation of the parties in power and to advance the stabilization and the consolidation of democracy. A broad scope of functions and expectations attributed to elections by the masses and the elites alike fostered hyper-electoralism as the most prominent feature of electoral politics.

In the first decade of the democratic transformation in Croatia, four cycles of elections for the first chamber (House of Representatives) of the parliament were held (in 1990, 1992, 1995, and 2000). This means that its formal mandate was shortened from four to, on the average, two and a half years. In the same period there were also two electoral cycles for the second chamber (House of Counties) of the Parliament (1993 and 1997), and three cycles of presidential elections (1993, 1997, 2000); also, one national constitutive plebiscite was held in 1991.

Opinions on the political significance and consequences of hyper-electoralism are divergent. Some authors claim they are typical and all in all positive for the first period of democratic transformation (Pridham, 1995, 24). It is thought that frequent elections facilitate and routinize peaceful alternation of power: the first such alternation is sometimes listed as the minimal, and the two alternations without any violence either from “above” or “below” as a significant indicator of the consolidation of a democratic regime (Huntington, 1991, 266). Other authors, on the other hand, claim that hyper-electoralism only obscures the realities of many post-communist countries. The elections serve as a means of survival and legitimation of “electoral dictatorships” and “dictatorial democracies” since the formal democratic practices run counter to the – directly or indirectly – restricted scope of elections; this results in the emergence of authoritarian or semi-authoritarian parliamentary and presidential democracies (Juchler, 1997).

In the first transitional period, hyper-electoralism should be assessed contextually. If both the external and the internal factors foster democratic consolidation, then democratic elections may help a political system on the whole to fulfil many of its functions. Since, due to sweeping, rapid and uncertain changes of the systems, citizens’ political preferences also change relatively fast¹, frequent elections make for a better link between the voters’ preferences and the political conflicts. This also creates better conditions for the institutional channelling and resolution of potentially violent social and political conflicts. Frequent elections accelerate the political profiling and the organizational structuring of political parties as well as the recruitment of new political elites.

¹ See volatility in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia (Olson, 1998, 460), and Lithuania (Krupavicius, 1998, 486). Also Tóka, 1998.

The importance of elections has increased the importance of electoral systems as institutional forms of arranging electoral processes. Thus they are categorised as either key “constitutional arrangements” (Lijphart, 1991), major (Merkel, 1996) or very important political institutions of the new democracies (Flores Juberias, 1996; Nohlen/Kasapović, 1996; Ishiyama/Velten, 1998; etc.). On the basis of a decade-long transformational experience it can be concluded that certain electoral systems on the whole,² or their component parts or technical elements,³ are particularly favourable for the consolidation of certain political institutions and political regimes in general.

An increase in the significance of electoral systems in the eyes of political elites and the variety of expectations attached to them have given birth to strong institutional reformism as the second important feature of the electoral politics in Croatia. In ten years, all the central models of the electoral systems for the first chamber of the Parliament have been remoulded: the absolute majority system (1990), the segmented system with the equal ratio of direct and closed list seats (1992), the segmented system with the preponderant share of the closed list seats (1995) and the proportional representation (2000).

Comparatively, there has been no new democracy in Central and Eastern Europe with such frequent and radical changes of electoral systems in a mere decade. In the entire transitional region there has been no country that in ten years carried out three big, “typological” electoral reforms (1990, 1992, 2000). No state has held absolute majority, plurality, and proportional representation in only ten years i.e. applied the majority, segmented, and proportional electoral model for the first chamber of the Parliament. In the most consolidated new democracies (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia), and in the democracies that are following in their footsteps but lagging behind (Slovakia, Romania), one type of electoral system has been maintained and only some of its structural components or technical aspects have been changed. All these countries adopted and implemented the proportional representation in its many varieties; only Hungary introduced a compensatory electoral model. In the other transitional countries the type of electoral system has changed only once when the majority electoral system was replaced by the proportional representation (Latvia, Moldova) or a combined model (Albania, Lithuania, Macedonia, Russia, Ukraine); also, a combined model was substituted by the proportional electoral system in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.⁴

² “The spectrum of electoral systems that foster consolidation ranges from the proportional representation with electoral thresholds to the segmented or compensatory electoral systems that in a fairly balanced way combine the elements of proportional and majority elections” (Merkel, 1006, 47). Also, the electoral systems of plurality and absolute majority, and the pure proportional representation jeopardize democratic consolidation (46). Herbert Kitschelt claims that the proportional representation – together with a plethora of other institutional and socio-structural factors, including more frequent elections following the collapse of a communist regime – contribute to the programmatic structuring and consequently to the democratic consolidation of the party systems of the post-communist countries (1995, 451-458).

³ See the analysis of the impact of the size of constituencies (Velten/Ishiyama, 1998) and the legal electoral thresholds on the character of representative bodies (Beichelt, 1998).

⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina is a special case; it has not had an autonomous electoral legislature since the end of the war in 1995 (see Tomić/Herceg, 1999).

The intensive institutional reformism in Croatia has introduced some innovations, even rarities in the contemporary electoral politics. Among them: 1. the way in which the electoral rights of the “diaspora” have been institutionalized; 2. the legalization of the virile right (the right of appointment); and 3. the understanding and the structure of segmented electoral model.

The 1990 Constitution legalized the right of all Croatian citizens, regardless of their place of abode, to take part in the presidential and parliamentary elections i.e. the elections for the first chamber of the Parliament. This constitutional provision did not refer to the right of the expatriates in the usual sense of the word (the part of the electorate that, due to prolonged emigration lives outside the borders of Croatia) to participate in the Croatian parliamentary and presidential elections but only to those with the Croatian citizenship. So it turned out that this right was, primarily, intended for the Croatian citizens residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who are one of the three constituent peoples of that state. Putting the fundamental political motives of such an interpretation of this constitutional right aside (the motives stemmed from the contradictory Croatian politics towards Bosnia and Herzegovina that can – particularly in its informal aspect – be labelled annexationist /Calic, 1996/), this represented a conspicuous deviation from the practice of a small number of countries that legalized the electoral rights of their diaspora.⁵

In the 1995 elections, the “diaspora” elected a fixed number (12) of representatives in a separate electoral unit and on separate electoral lists. The rationale was that that number of representatives – a tenth of the regular composition of the House of Representatives – corresponded to the size of the electorate living abroad – approximately, one tenth of the electorate living in Croatia. However, it turned out that this was a somewhat fictitious electoral body since only 107,772 or 27% of the expatriate voters actually cast their ballots – mostly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thanks to such electoral law, they were allotted 12 seats, which markedly depreciated the voting value of a seat outside the country (8,981 votes) and made it three times “cheaper” than the value of a seat in the country (30,217 votes). Since the political dominance of HDZ among the Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the diaspora was indisputable, the direct political effect of that right was an increase in the absolute parliamentary HDZ majority in the House of Representatives: without the expatriates’ votes HDZ would have had 54.8%; with them it obtained 59.1% of the seats (see Kasapović, 1995).

Due to the protests over the motives and the effects of the institutionalization of the electoral rights of the “diaspora” by the Croatian opposition and the international political public, the 1999 electoral reform modified that right. According to this new electoral law, the number of the representatives of the “diaspora” in the House of Representatives would be determined on the basis of the so-called non-fixed standard method i.e. depending on the number of voters abroad participating in the Croatian elections and not on the size of the formal electoral body. Since the intention of this method was to level

⁵ The political representation of the diaspora in the parliaments of other contemporary European democracies such as Italian and Portuguese, does not have any substantial but only symbolic aspect. See also the examples of Columbia (Nohlen, 1993, 471-473), Angola, Guinea-Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands (Nohlen/Krennerich/Thibaut, 1999, 68, 192, 464), and others.

off the value of the votes within and without the country, first the voting price of a seat in the country was determined; based on this, the number of representatives chosen outside the country was decided.⁶ Although this method reduced the number of the “diaspora” representatives to six (had the old provision remained in effect, in the 2000 elections the “diaspora” would have had the right to choose 14 representatives, the number elected in each of the ten constituencies in the country), the political influence of their mandates were not negligible at all. Together with the five representatives of ethnic minorities, elected by means of special electoral rules, they “torpedoed” the absolute majority of the winning electoral coalition of SDP and HSLs (50.7%) and reduced it to plurality (47%) and made the formation of the majority coalition government dependent on other political parties. At the same time, thanks to the “diaspora” representatives, the HDZ (prior to its factioning) was for a time the strongest parliamentary group in the House of Representatives.

The virile right (the right of appointment) was typical for the pre-modern history of elections (Sternberger/Vogel, 1969; Noiret, 1990). It referred to the right of heads of state (monarchs, dukes, presidents, governors, etc.) to appoint to the central representative body of their states a certain number of representatives. The appointed delegates were called virilists.⁷ There are two groups of virilists: (a) *ex-officio* appointed representatives i.e. those who are appointed to this position due to their eminent status in the government or ecclesiastical hierarchy; and (b) the representatives appointed by the will of the head of state, independent of their status. The virile right has survived in some of its forms in the contemporary electoral/political practice, mostly of non-European countries (see Nohlen, 1993; Nohlen/Krennerich/Thibaut 1999).

The virile right was legalized in the contemporary Croatian electoral history in the 1990 Constitution.⁸ According to a constitutional provision, the president had the right to appoint five representatives to the House of Counties. Thanks to his right of arbitrarily deciding who is prominent enough to obtain a seat in this House, the then president seized this opportunity to increase the absolute majority of his party in the House of Counties. In 1993, after having appointed five representatives – either HDZ members or its acolytes – this party’s absolute majority (58.7%) almost turned into the two-third majority (61.8%). After the second elections in 1997, the president (because of interna-

⁶ First, the total number of valid ballots in Croatia (2.774.280) was divided by the total number of the seats available in all ten electoral units (140) in order to get the average voting price of a seat (19.816). Then the total number of the valid ballots in the electoral unit abroad (125.655) was divided by the average price of a seat in the country (19.816) to get the number of seats for this unit (6.3). Then, these 6 seats were divided among the electoral lists according to the D’Hondt method. All these 6 seats went to the HDZ, with more than 90% of the foreign vote.

⁷ The virile right is deeply rooted in the Croatian electoral history of the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (see Polić, 1908; Sirotković, 1967, 1981).

⁸ This Constitution even envisioned the right of presidents to become representatives in the second chamber of the Parliament for life, after the completion of their mandate. In the first round of the constitutional reforms in autumn of 2000, the ruling coalition abolished the right of appointment, and in the second round in March 2001 it abolished the House of Counties. The reforms replaced the semi-presidential system of government by the parliamentary system, and the bicameral parliament with the unicameral one.

tional and internal political reasons) made use of his right of appointment in a somewhat different manner. Together with some HDZ people he appointed two representatives of the Serbian ethnic community in Croatia, so that the absolute HDZ majority (65.1%) slightly decreased (64.7%). The then Croatian president decided on the appointment of these representatives completely autonomously i.e. formally, he was not obliged to consult any political body or civic institution. This makes this right more exclusive in the Croatian legislation than, for example, in Latin American states (Nohlen, 1993).

The segmented electoral model was introduced in the 1992 electoral reform and lasted until 1999, when an electoral reform replaced it with the proportional representation. It was applied in the 1992 and 1995 elections for the upper House of the Parliament. In the inter-election period it was modified, so that the former variant differed from the later.

A segmented electoral model combines the principle of representation, the rules of decision-making, and the structural elements of the majority electoral system and the proportional. The purpose is to reconcile the fundamental goals of the majority and the proportional elections: the creation of a parliamentary majority capable of forming a stable government and the fair political representation of major political interests and social groups in the parliament. In order to achieve this, there are combinations of single-member and multi-member constituencies, individual and closed-list competition, and the majority and the proportional rule of deciding electoral winners. The central structural feature of the segmented model is the system of voting with two votes: one for the candidates from their constituencies and the other for electoral lists in multi-member constituencies.

The segmented systems are distinguished according to:

- the type of electoral patterns which are combined (the proportional representation and the plurality, or the proportional representation and the absolute majority);
- the numerical ratio of the direct and the closed list seats (the prevalence of the direct or the list seats, or an equal number of both);
- the manner of combining electoral patterns (dependent or independent relationship between the majority and the proportional electoral pattern).

Central to the typologization of the segmented models is the type of the relationship between the majority and the proportional electoral pattern. If this relationship is entirely independent i.e. if the distribution of the direct and the list seats is carried out separately, these are the entrenched (Nohlen/Kasapović, 1996, 32-35) or superpositional segmented models (Massicotte/Blais, 1999).⁹ The Croatian electoral model belongs to this type.

⁹ Louis Massicotte and André Blais (1999) use the term “superpositional” for the independent segmented models in which the majority and the proportional electoral patterns are applied in the entire country (geographically homogeneous mixed system) versus the co-existent systems in which the majority system is applied in one part of the state, and the proportional system in the other (geographically mixed system).

Essential for this type of the segmented electoral model is the ratio of the direct and closed list seats. Since it affects the political outcomes of elections, it was radically altered. While in 1992 this ratio was balanced (60:60), in 1995 the balance precariously tipped in favour of the closed list seats (80:28). This change suited the political interests of the ruling party which eschewed the risk of a head-on political confrontation with the united opposition in single-member districts. Thus, this change of the fundamental dimension of the segmented electoral model in Croatia was an expression of a change in the relationships among the Croatian political forces and the assessment of the ruling party that its advantage in relation to the opposition was not big enough to secure a sufficient number of seats in the winner-take-all system. Since the opposition soon displayed its propensity towards the same political logic, according to which electoral systems directly depend on the transient political interests and the will of a part of political actors,¹⁰ the segmented electoral model proved to be not only a politically utterly dispensable institution but also more suitable for political engineering than the proportional representation or the majority electoral systems.

Since the stabilization of the electoral model is thought to be one of the requirements for the consolidation of party systems (Beyme, 1997, 25; Hofferbert, 1998, 423; etc.), it is obvious that there have been no consolidation incentives from the institutional and representative level for the legislative and, consequently, the other levels of the political and social system.

The structuring and consolidation of political parties and party systems are mostly affected by electoral systems among the institutional, and by the structure of cleavages among the social factors.¹¹ However, in Croatia, in the last decade, the evolution of the party system has primarily been affected by the structure of the social cleavages, of which electoral systems have been part of.

The party structure of the Parliament after the first free elections in 1990 primarily reflected the dominant cleavage between the (Yugoslav) centre and the (Croatian) periphery, manifested in the division of the bulk of the electorate into the proponents of the Croatian independence and the Yugoslav unionists; the latter group indiscriminately included the unitarists, the federalists, and the confederalists. This age-old Croatian polarizational pattern included the sub-polarizational ethnic cleavage between the Croatian majority and the Serbian minority, as well as the functional cleavage socialism/anti-socialism or regime/anti-regime (Zakošek, 1991; Kasapović, 1996, 175 etc.). The territo-

¹⁰ On the eve of the 2000 elections, the then six leading opposition parties came up with their own proposal of an electoral system. Encouraged by the apparent weakening of HDZ's political clout and the strengthening of the united democratic opposition, they advocated the preservation of the segmented electoral model but with the altered ratio of the closed-list and the majority seats. The parties which for almost ten years had systematically advocated the introduction of proportional representation, now promoted the idea of extending the majority segment of the elections within the mixed model i.e. an increase in the number of majority votes from 28 to 40.

¹¹ There are other consolidating factors of the party system such as the existence of the historical party systems, the manner and the form of the transformational conflict, social traditions and the coalition in the distribution (Merkel, 1997a, 338), and the degree of the organizational modernization of politics and political conflicts (Puhle, 1997, 146).

rial and the functional dimensions of this cleavage came to light in the major party/political bipolarization into the Croatian, anti-socialist, rightist bloc on the one hand, and the pro-Yugoslav, pro-socialist, leftist bloc on the other. The major champion of the first bloc was the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) as the strongest opposition party, and the champion of the other bloc the reformed Croatian League of Communists (SKH), transformed after the first elections into the Social-Democratic Party (SDP). The domination of the polarizational pattern center/periphery used to be the central socio-structural assumption of the two-party electoral competition and the establishment of the two-party parliamentary system after the first elections. This process was further facilitated by the absolute majority electoral system. In the first and the incomplete legislative period from 1990 to 1992, the effective number of parliamentary parties was 2.1 (Laakso/Taagepera, 1979; Taagepera/Shugart, 1989).

The traditional cleavage center/periphery disappeared together with the Croatian independence, while the territorial/cultural cleavage was renewed after the war in the new forms and with the new content (Zakošek, 1998, 47). During the war and the semi-war of 1991-1995, the conflictual arena was mostly nontransparent, the polarizational patterns unclear, and the civil social, political, and ideological conflicts suppressed. The wartime homogenization contributed to the annihilation of the political and the ideological identity and the rallying of most voters around the party in power. After the parliamentary elections of 1992 and 1995, the party system was closest to the dominant-party system. In structuring such a system, electoral models did not play a secondary role. The plurality elections within a segmented model were the chief institutional means of promoting HDZ into the dominant party. This was also facilitated by the weakness of the opposition parties and their inability to respond appropriately to the institutional challenges in elections by forming the "bloc" coalitions as an expression of the state of emergency in the country and the nature of the party system.

The outlines of the new multiple conflicting arena began to emerge at the end of the war and immediately after it. Besides the territorial/cultural cleavage, there surfaced the ideological/cultural (traditionalism-modernism)¹², and the socio-economic cleavage (labour-management).

Two key conclusions ensue from what has been said. The first is that the frequent and profound changes in the structure of the cleavages and the electoral systems hindered and slowed down the consolidation of the representational level of the political system. The second is that the outlined structure of the cleavages affected the consolidation of the political parties and the party system to a larger extent than the electoral models. It was responsible for the poor support base of the parties in the society, since the changes in the polarizational patterns meant that the parties changed and lost their traditional social strongholds. The changes in the polarizational patterns fomented party factioning.

No major Croatian party has avoided some serious factioning in the last ten years. The first big wave of factioning after the collapse of the communist regime and the dis-

¹² This split corresponds, basically, to the cultural cleavage of traditionalism-westernization (Markus, 1997, 14, 18, etc.).

integration of Yugoslavia almost ruined the successor SDP. First, it split along the regime/anti-regime line, and then along the Croatian/Serbian ethnic line. The ruling HDZ split in 1994 due to the intra-party bickering regarding the policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Some Croatian political scientists define this as a separate dimension of the center/periphery cleavage /Zakošek, 1998/). In 1997, HSLHS divided into two liberal parties mostly along the polarizational line modernism/traditionalism. HSS factioned throughout the decade in a mild form along different polarizational lines. HSP, the largest party of the Croatian radical right split several times and fused again with its factions due to the internal ideological polarizations, including the long-lasting polarization fascism/anti-fascism. The strongest Croatian regional party (IDS) split along the center/periphery line; its centrist faction broke off (see Malenica, 1996).

This factioning for a time led to an increase in the nominal number of parliamentary parties and, consequently, to an increase in the formal degree of the parliament fragmentation. Since the newly created parties differed ideologically, the party factioning increased the degree of the Parliament's ideological polarization. The rightist parliament bloc included those party factions and prominent representatives who were only "semi-loyal" to democracy. On the whole, however, the party factions did not last long and were not able to make their political presence felt. The Croatian politics proved the "rule" according to which factions harm the parent party only in the short run, while in the long run such behaviour proves fatal for the factions themselves.

Despite unfavourable institutional and socio-structural conditions, some formal measures of the degree of the consolidation of the Croatian party system are surprisingly propitious.

First, the average net-volatility¹³ was relatively low; in the period 1990-1995 it was 17.4, lower than in the post-communist democracies that are democratically more consolidated than Croatia (Olson, 1998, 460; Krupavicius, 1998, 486; Anderson, 1998, 579). The effective number of parties in the parliament was very low, 2.1 (1990), 1.9 (1992), 2.7 (1995), and 4.8 (2000). The formal transition from the two-party system and the dominant party system to a moderate pluralist system was primarily made possible by the introduction of the proportional representation for the 2000 elections. From 1990 to 1997, the degree of the ideological polarization in the Parliament systematically decreased due to the shift of SDP towards centre-left, and the shifts of other major opposition parties either towards center-left or center-right.

The slow consolidation of the party system and, consequently, the entire representational system, were affected by the shifting structure of the cleavages, the constant changes of the institutional rules of electoral competition and the frequent party factioning. The proof of the existence of a degree of the consolidation of the Croatian party system is the fact that there have been four cycles of non-violent parliamentary elec-

¹³ Net-volatility expresses voting losses and gains of political parties between two electoral cycles and is considered indicative of the "surface stability" of the relations between voters and political parties. On the other hand, gross-volatility expresses voters' tendencies to vote for different parties in different elections and is considered indicative of a deeper structure of the stability of the relations between voters and political parties (Lane/Ersson, 1997, 179-180).

tions, the peaceful alternation of the parties in power, the contextually low volatility of voters, the moderate parliamentary fragmentation, and the acceptance of the parliamentary rules of the game by the majority of the population (Kasapović, 1998, 120).¹⁴

List of Party Names

ASH	Action of Social Democrats of Croatia (formerly SSH)
DA	Dalmatian Action
HDS	Croatian Democratic Party
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
HKDS	Croatian Christian Democratic Party
HKDU	Croatian Christian Democratic Union
HND	Croatian Independent Democrats
HNS	Croatian People's Party
HSLs	Croatian Social Liberal Party
HSP	Croatian Party of Rights
HSS	Croatian Peasants' Party
IDS	Istrian Democratic Assembly
KNS	Coalition of National Agreement (HSLs, HDS, HKDS, SDH)
LS	Liberal Party
PGS	Alliance of Primorje and Gorski kotar (former RDS)
RDS	Democratic Union of Rijeka
SBHS	Slavonian Baranian Croatian Party
SDH	Social-Democratic Party of Croatia
SDP	Social-Democratic Party (former SKH-SDP)
SDS	Serbian Democratic Party
SDSS	Independent Democratic Serbian Party
SKH-SDP	League of Communists of Croatia-Party of Democratic Changes
SNS	Serbian People's Party
SSH	Socialist Party of Croatia

¹⁴ Beyme lists six criteria of the consolidation of a party system: the minimalization of extremism and violence, the clear structure of the cleavages, the separation of the territorial and functional representation, the reduction of the voters' fluctuation, and the ability to form coalitions. "No country in Eastern Europe satisfies all six criteria of consolidation". (Hungary and the Czech Republic are nearest to that /1997, 52/). These are at the same time the criteria of the consolidation of parliamentary systems. The additional criteria are: two electoral cycles without violence from above or below, the acceptance of the alternation of power and the internalization of the rules of the parliamentary system game by the majority of the population as "the only game in town" (Beyme, 1999, 299).

Table 1: Electoral Systems and Party Systems in Croatia 1990-2000*

Year	Classification of electoral systems	No. of seats in the parliament**	Constituencies			Form of candidacy	Ballot form	Levels of seat allocation	Mode of seat allocation	Nominal no. of parl. parties***	Effective no. of parl. parties***	Rose index of proportionality****
			Number	Seats	Mean seats							
1990	absolute majority system in single-member districts	80	80	1	1	individual	single vote	single-member districts	absolute majority; 2 nd round plurality among candidates with more than 7% votes	7	2.1	73.6
1992	segmented electoral system	120					two votes	single-member districts	plurality			
		60	60	1	1	individual	personal vote	national multi-member districts	threshold of 3%; D'Hondt	9	1.9	88.7
		60	1	60	60	closed lists	list vote					
1995	segmented electoral system	108					two votes	single-member districts	plurality			
		28	28	1	1	individual	personal vote	national multi-member district	threshold of 5% for single parties, 8% for 2-parties elect. coalitions, 11% for 3 or more parties elect. coalitions; D'Hondt	10	2.7	89.0
		80	1	80	80	closed lists	list vote					
2000	proportional representation in multinumber districts	140	10	14	14	closed lists	list vote	multi-member districts	threshold of 5%; D'Hondt	11	4.8	84.4

* The table was basically made according to the methodology from: Rose, R. (ed.), 2000: *International Encyclopedia of Elections*.

** The number of seats in the first chamber of the parliament: the Social-political Council 1990-1992 and the House of Representatives 1992-2000, minus the representatives of the "diaspora" and the ethnic minorities who had been elected by means of special electoral rules (1992, 1995, 2000).

*** The nominal and the effective number of parties refer only to those parties that obtained seats in the elections for the regular make-up of the House, and not to the parties of ethnic minorities that got into the House due to special electoral rules.

**** Rose's proportionality index for 1992 and 1995 refers solely to the proportional segment of elections.

Table 2: Election Results to the first chamber of the Croatian Parliament 1990-2000

Year	1990	1992	1995	2000
Electorate	3,528,579	3,558,913	3,634,233	3,686,378
Ballots cast	84.47	75.61	68.79	76.53
Invalid votes	3.89	2.21	3.31	1.66
Valid votes	96.11	97.79	96.69	98.34
Political parties	in percent			
HDZ	41.93	44.71	45.23	24.38
SKH-SDP, SSH	34.97			
KNS	15.34			
independents	4.12			
SDS	1.62			
HSLs		17.72	11.55	
HSLs-SDP (PGS, SBHS)				40.84
HNS-HSS-LS (ASH, IDS)				15.55
HSP		7.07	5.01	
HKDU-HSP				5.28
HNS		6.70		
SDP		5.53	8.93	
HSS		4.25		
DA-IDS-RDS		3.18		
DA				0.23
HSS-IDS-HNS-HKDU-SBHS			18.26	
ASH			1.67	
HND			3.00	0.25
SNS		0.11		0.54
others	2.04	9.77	6.35	13.95

Table 3: Composition of the first chamber of the Croatian Parliament 1990-2000

Year	1990		1992		1995		2000	
	seats	%	seats	%	seats	%	seats	%
total representatives	80	100	138	100	127	100	151	100
Political parties								
HDZ	55	68.75	85	61.59	75	59.06	46	30.46
SKH-SDP, SSH	20	25						
KNS	3	3.75						
independents	1	1.25	5	3.62	4	3.15	3	1.99
SDS	1	1.25						
HSLs			14	10.14	12	9.45	24	15.89
SDP			11	7.97	10	7.87	44	29.14
HNS			6	4.35	2	1.57	2	1.32
DA-IDS-RDS			6	4.35				
HSP			5	3.62	4	3.15	4	2.65
HSS			3	2.17	10	7.87	17	11.26
SNS			3	2.17	2	1.57	1	0.66
IDS					4	3.15	4	2.65
HND					1	0.79		
HKDU					1	0.79	1	0.66
ASH					1	0.79		
SBHS					1	0.79	1	0.66
LS							2	1.32
PGS							2	1.32

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