Statehood, secularization, cooperation: explaining democratic survival in Inter-War Europe ; Stein Rokkan's conceptual map revisited

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Statehood, Secularization, Cooptation: Explaining Democratic Survival in Inter-War Europe - Stein Rokkan's Conceptual Map Revisited

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Abstract: This article addresses itself to the crisis of democracy in inter-war Europe which saw the breakdown of one democratic regime after the other with Czechoslovakia as the only survivor case in Eastern and Central Europe by the end of this period. lt is cast within the framework of Stein Rokkan's seminal conceptual map of Europe which is expanded in order to account for countries and variables originally not included in his analytical scheure. The analysis leads to the following conclusion: where the state building was weak and the legacy of empire strong, or where secular nation building was still impaired by deeply rooted religious sentiments, or where significant segments representing major cleavages where not coopted into a constitutional compromise, the chances for democratic survival in inter-war Europe were slim indeed. The conclusion applies to the inter-war era alone, but it clearly has implications for contemporary Europe. Noting that statehood and secularization ranked high an the agenda of communist Eastern Europe, the authors raise the paradoxical question if the success of democracy in this part of the world may in fact be a by-product of the extent to which the now defunct communist regimes were successful in promoting their pet goals.

The reestablishment of sovereign regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the formation of new states in the former Soviet Union since 1989 has created new hopes for a democratic Europe. Albeit that these hopes are met with healthy amounts of scepticism from the scholarly community, nevertheless a sense of euphoria certainly characterized the political scene at the beginning of this decade.

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It is all too easy to forget that a similar euphoria on behalf of democratic regimes has occurred once before. After the Versailles Treaty, the Europe of the early 1920s saw a number of democratic regimes established within the new states built on the ruins of the German, the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian and the Ottoman empires. However, twenty years later democratic optimism was replaced by a conception of democracy as a beleaguered form of government in this part of the world clinging to the Atlantic rim. All the states of central and Eastern Europe, with the exceptions of Switzerland and Czechoslovakia had fallen to various forms of authoritarian and totalitarian rule.

Two rather obvious questions may be raised from this rather elementary observation. To what extent can the inter-war experience be said to have any relevance in the present situation? To what extent can this past crisis of democracy be explained or understand in terms of macro oriented structural theories?

The First question cannot be empirically answered; it calls for speculation. But if we explore the second question, and if we arrive at some satisfactory structural models, some implications of relevance for the first question may still be derived.

Stein Rokkan's seminal conceptual map of Europe was an attempt to integrate crises in state- and nation-building processes wich conditions for democratic survival such as the extension of citizenship rights and the establishment of stable political cleavages in parliaments and amongst the voting population (Rokkan, 1975; 1983).

Another important and more recent contribution is the notion that the accumulation of crises within a short time span in itself may be detrimental to the survival of a democratic regime. We will refer to this proposition as agglutination theory. Giovanni Sartori's distinction between moderate vs. extreme pluralism is one example of such a theory (Sartori, 1966; 1976). Sartori's concern for the "Weimarization" of new states strikes a deep chord with the scepticism about the survival of democracy in Eastern Europe today within the political science community.

This fear must be contrasted to the Anglo-Saxon developmental optimism expressed e.g. in Almond's and Verba's belief in stable democratic development (Almond & Verba, 1980; Almond & Powell, 1978; Powell, 1982; Huntington, 1968). One may even refer to it as a form of Anglo-American ethnocentric bIas. A bias also shared by the only political scientist who ever became president if the USA, Woodrow Wilson.

Another bias, prominent in many of the commentaries to the present situation in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, is a rather simplistic juxtaposition of 'state' vs. 'nation'. Rokkan's analytical scheme goes beyond this. He points out that in solving the crises of state- and nation-building, regimes may Break down, but they may also be consolidated. lf this were not the case, we could not understand the political contrasts between structurally

similar pairs such as Bosnia and Switzerland or the Netherlands and Northern Ireland.

But Rokkan's framework includes a third bias. His conceptual map ends with the Iron Curtain. He mainly draws an the experience of 18 West and Central European states. (Rokkan, 1975, pp. 578-79).

We will try discuss the survival of democracy in inter-war Europe in an attempt to minimize or at least reduce the above mentioned biases.

A Revised Conceptual Map of Europe

Rokkan identifies two dimensions as the basis of his conceptual map of Europe:
- An East-West axis; based an the strength of city networks and political centre formation, and
- A North-South axis; based an the integration of state and church - strong in the Protestant North and weck in the Catholic South (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, p. 30).

The core of the East-West dimension is a symmetrical triad of states. In the centre, city-belt states characterized by strong commercial city networks and weck political centres, surrounded by Eastern and Western empire states, characterized by strong political centres and weck commercial city networks. The city belt is centred an an axis running from Venice to Flanders across the Alps and along the Rhine.[1]

As far as the Western empire states are concerned, we will keep Rokkan's original classification. Denmark, Britain, France and Spain epitomize early and strong European state formation. At the saure time all these states became centres of vast overseas empires.
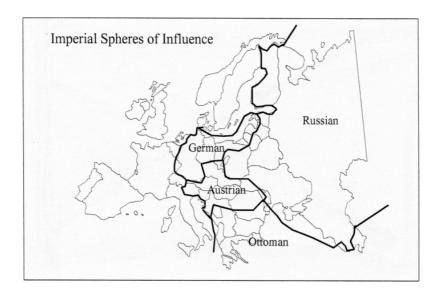
The concept of Eastem empire states functions less well in our context for two reasons. First, it may be argued that parts of these territories include city-belts of considerable importance. The role of the Danube for Austria-Hungary (and for the Ottoman Empire until 1878), the importance of the river system to the development of Russia from Novgorod to Kiev and the importance of the Baltic cities and the Hanseatic League to the development of Prussia-Germany are all cases in point.

Secondly, it may be argued that these territorial units were primarily integrated as early landlocked empires (see figure 1), and that state-building as such was secondary to the empire fonnation. A territorial classification of empires must take into consideration imperial aspirations and confrontation as a primary criterion. Prussia-Germany and Austria-Hungary we will consider

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[1] In a recent paper, focusing an the city belt of the sixteenth century, Pål Bakka (1994) suggests a revision of Rokkan's conceptual map which ties in neatly with our own proposal (cf table 1).

defence empires, built up militarily over the centuries to defend Europe against incursions from the Eurasian steppes. Nevertheless both of those defence systems went through a considerable state-building experience at least with respect to their core territories. The German term Mark covers this concept well and Rokkan's term Empire states picks up this dimension. Russia and the Ottoman empires we will basically consider external with aspirations to expand into Europe.[2] These systems are closer in structure to Eisenstadt's concept of historical empires (Eisenstadt, 1963), where the concept of stateness was indeed relegated to a subordinate position.

At the rim of Rokkan's symmetrical conceptual map he places Western and Eastern Periphery states, characterized by weak political centres and late statehood. The concept of Eastern periphery states, needless to say, will be meaningless within our revised framework, since the external Empires represent Europe's Eastern border. Instead we will employ the term devolved states to the territories that gained statehood in the historical process of dismantling the empires from 1878 to 1919. Two types of Eastern devolved states may be distinguished; those devolved from the defence empire states, after the peace treaty of Versailles, and those devolved from the external

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[2] This classification is somewhat at odds with the Russian national tradition of portraying Russia as a Christian defence empire against yellow and Muslim hordes, as evidenced by such concepts as the Byzantine heritage and Moscow as the third Rome.

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historical empires after the Balkan wars and the peace treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Versailles.

The North-South axis in Rokkan's framework is based on the religious status of the European territories as they emerged after the peace treaties of Westphalia and Osnabrück in 1648. The importance of this dimension is, however based on later political events, notably the conflict between state and church over control of the school system during the nineteenth Century. Needless to say this three way classification of countries as Protestant, mixed or secularized Catholic and counter reformatory, is too limited for an all European framework. We will include Orthodox as well as Muslim areas in our revised version, while retaining the crucial distinction in terms of integration or lack thereof between state and church. We will employ a fourfold classification of countries according to the relative autonomy of the religious hierarchy from the political elite.

As for the Protestant countries, particularly the Lutheran Evangelical, we would argue that they represent total integration and subordination of religious leadership to the state. In the mixed Protestant and Catholic countries as well as the substantially secularized Catholic and Orthodox countries we would argue that the autonomy from religion has given the state an upper hand, albeit that church interests exist with a potential for independent influence an the citizens. In the counter reformation Catholic countries as well as in the non-secularized Orthodox countries, we will argue that there is a potential for dualism between religious and secular authority. It should be noted that this potential is higher in the counter reformation countries. In the non-secularized Orthodox countries this potential for direct independent church opposition to the state is weaker, but it is enhanced by traditional ties often of a clientelistic nature. The last category comprises the Muslim areas. In these areas secularization is at direct odds with the religion. Indeed in modern Turkey this may be considered a major political and social cleavage in the society. The possibility of coexistence between secularized political forces and fundamentalist Muslims within the same regime is very much in doubt. Conflicts will tend to have regime consequences. The application of the above criteria results in a revised conceptual map of Europe (Table 1).

The countries and areas appearing in italics have the common denominator that democratic regimes established in the early 1920s did not survive the interwar period. With their commitment to parliamentary democracy and their vulnerability to the vicissitudes of extreme multi-partism, the constitutions of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (Dellenbrant, 1994) and Poland (Grzybowski, 1994) were inspired by the German Weimar Republic and the Third French Republic. The breakdown came in the form of a series of coups and military take-overs: in Poland by Marshal Józef Piłsudski in May 1926; in Lithuania by Smetona again in 1926; in Estonia by Prime Minister Konstantin Päts in 1934; in Latvia by Prime Minister Kärlis Ulmanis in 1934. Hungary experienced parliamentary

Table 1 Democratic Survival: A Conceptual Map.

Religious heritage	Late, Devolved Western periphery states	Early states formed in the cores of Western Seaward Empires	City-belt Europe	States based an former core nations of Eastern Defence Empire States	Late, Devolved States From Eastern Defence Empire States	Late Devolved states from Eastern External Historical Empires	Eastern External Historical Empires
Protestant countries	Norway	Denmark Great Britain		Sweden	Finland	Estonia Larvia	
	Prot	Prot		Prot	Prot.	Prot	
Mixed or substatially secularized countries	(Ulster)	France	The Netherlands Switzerland Prot/Cath Belgium (Wallonia)	Germany	Czecho-Slovakia (Bohemia Moravia)	(Ukraine)	Russia (S. U.)
	ProL/Cath	Cath/Sec	CatIvsec	Pror/Cath	Cath/Sec	Orth/Cath/-Sec	Orth/Sec
Counter-reformation countries & non-. secularized orthodox countries	Eire	Spain Portugal	(Flanderr?)	Austria Hungary	(Slovakia) Italy (Slove-Croatia)	Lithuania Poland Cath Romania Bulgaria Yugoslavia (Serbia) Greece	
	Cath	Cath	Cath	Cath	Cath	Orth	
Muslim countries						Albania (Bosnia, Kosovo) (Bulgarian Muslim minority) MUS/Sec,	Turkey MUS/Sec

democracy for a few short days in the after breakdown of B61a Kun's ill-fated Soviet Republic an 1 August 1919, but the democratic government was overthrown by Admiral Horthy who made himself temporary regent, pending the selection of a royal family (Heinrich, 1986, pp. 21-2). The Hungarian case is extreme, but not atypical for the countries or areas appearing in italics in table 1. With a democratic experience of there years under Stambolisky in 1920-23, Bulgaria actually stands out as one of the leading democracies in the Balkan area. The royal coups of Romania (1920) and Yugoslavia (1929) are well known. The development towards authoritarianism and totalitarianism in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece (Zink, 1992) are even better known.

Reading the conceptual map diagonally from the South-East corner of the North-West comer, we observe that the chances of democratic survival improve. From the above discussion of some of the case, it is clear that there is considerable variations in the forms of transition to authoritarianism in the cases that failed. Nevertheless the structure of the conceptual map also seems to indicate that the two macro dimension of the framework have an impact. A pattern clearly emerges.

The dimensions of Rokkan's original conceptual map as well as those of our own revised version, are complex and composite. To further clarify the pattern of democratic breakdown and survival, we need to look at the two dimensions and attempt to extract the essential components necessary to an explanation of the pattern.

Two Crucial Dichotomies

For our purpose an essential distinction will be made between those European states with a historical tradition of state building and those states which primarily had remained empires at the outset of World War I. Almost all the states included in Rokkan's original conceptual map belong to the former category. In our framework the states exposed to state building include the Western periphery states, the Western empire states, the city belt states, the Eastern defence empire states and the states devolved from the Eastern defence empire states after 1918. Despite the fact that we have argued that the Eastern defence empire states have a strong element of imperial identity, we will nevertheless argue that certainly Sweden and Prussia-Germany, but also Austria-Hungary, at least as for their Austrian and Hungarian core populations, had experienced considerable state and nation building prior to World War I. On the other hand, we will argue that the external Russian and Ottoman historical empires had experienced much more limited state building efforts on part of their rulers. We will further argue that the states that had devolved from these empires since the latter part of the 19th Century, shared this lack of state

a shared experience of Roman law, feudalism, statebuilding and relatively early national revival. We have labelled this group of states *the Charlemagne Heritage*, since most of them have been influenced by the existence of the Holy Roman Empire in the early Middle Ages. The other group of states, known as *the External Challengers*, consists those contries that do not share these traditions and have belonged to the Russian or Ottoman empires. It is tempting to add that they also share a common Byzantine heritage the strength of which varies with the relative importance of Orthodoxy. Moreover the lack of a strong feudal tradition has enabled ancient local authority relationships such as kinship and clientelism to survive better than in the rest of Europe to the present day. This tendency is admittedly stronger in the South than in the North.

The North-South dimension has also been dichotomized. We consider the strength and autonomy of political authority vis à vis religious leadership to be essential. It is religious autonomy as such which is important, but rather the consequences thereof in terms of the platform it creates for legitimizing counter movements threatening the regime. The first group of countries includes the Protestant states and the substantially secularized states. The former could even use servants of the church to strengthen bureaucracy, whereas the latter have successfully managed to isolate religious interest from governance. The second group counts the predominantly Catholic states of the counter reformation, the non-secularized Orthodox states and the Muslim countries and areas. In the case of the Catholic countries, the conflicting influence from the *Ecclesia* is obvious. In the non-secularized and Muslim countries secularization within the regime has proven almost impossible. Secularization in Russia and Turkey could only take place after Lenin and Atatürk respectively had overthrown the old regimes, and here secularization rather served to strengthen the non-democratic option much in the same way that religion had legitimized traditional authoritarianism during the old regimes. When we sort the countries and areas according to the two dichotomies a very clear pattern emerges (see Table 2).

All the countries which remained democratic at the outset of World War II belong in one cell. They share *the Charlemagne Heritage* and they are all either Protestant or substantially secularized. Eire is the only exception being a counter reformation country. Moreover one important country, Germany, had become a Fascist dictatorship despite its solid position in the group of Protestant/secularized countries with a state building tradition.

The common factors conducive to democratic survival in the inter-war period seem to be closely associated with state building and state autonomy. In a sense, Max Weber (1978) would hardly have been surprised at this finding given his emphasis on the close association between the consolidation of state authority through the monopoly of legitimate violence an the one hand and the

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Table 2 Democratic Survival: A Classification of European Countries in the Inter-War Period. (Short-lived and semi-independent state formations are parenthesized.)

Religious heritage	The City Belt, Empire-States and states devolved from these Empire states.	External Eastern Historical Empires and States devolved from these Empires.
	The Charlemagne Heritage	*The External Challengers*
Predominantly	Denmark	*Estonia*
Protestant Countries	Sweden	*Latvia*
State and Church	Norway	
Integrated	Finland	
	Great Britain	
	The Netherlands	
	Switzerland	
	Germany	
Secularized Catholic	France	*Russia (USSR)*
or Orthodox Coun	Belgium	*(Ukraine)*
tries	Czechoslovakia	
Dominant State		
Catholic Counter	Eire	*Lithuania*
Reformation Coun		*Poland*
tries, Orthodox and	*Spain*	*Romania*
Muslim Countries	*Portugal*	*Bulgaria*
Continued Dualism	*Austria*	*Yugoslavia (Serbia)*
between State and	*Hungary*	*Greece*
Ecclesia	*Italy*	
	(Croatia)	*Albania*
	(Slovakia)	*Turkey*

relative autonomy of the bureaucracy an the other hand, as twin bases for a rational form of government. In relation to Rokkan's original emphasis an internal differentiation bases an City-structures, our analysis highlights the common state and cultural tradition derived from Roman Law, secularized power, a strong bureaucratic apparatus and legitimized national identity. These factors are by no means absent in Rokkan's work, but our results may suggest that an even more immediate connection exists between successful state and nation building an the one hand and successful democratic regimes an the other. It is tempting to employ Weber's old concept of rationality.

Macro Context vs Internal Factors

The contrast to much of the existing literature with its emphasis an internal and contemporary factors is rather stunning. To some this can be accounted for by the preponderance of case studies rather than comparative works. But as mentioned above an number of comparative theories also exists mainly emphasizing internal factors. Agglutination theories are cases in point. If we apply e.g. Sartori's theory to our framework, we should expect at least as a good a fit as we have obtained.

In an early article - which comes closer to theory building than most contributions within this field - Sartori (1966) identifies a number of factors that may make the difference between the moderate kind of pluralism in stable democracies and extreme kind of pluralism in unstable democracies:
- the timing of the franchise (the extension of the suffrage)
- the timing of proportional representation (PR)
- the number of cleavages
- the structure of cleavages the degree of party organization

The logic is simple and straightforward. A rapid process of democratization results in extreme multi-partism. The political market is literally flooded with new political entrepreneurs hoping for parliamentary representation. PR represents a low parliamentary threshold and serves as yet another incentive for the hopeful political entrepreneurs. The sooner it is introduced, the more likely it is to contribute towards extreme multi-partism. The more dimensions of conflict there are in a society and the more complex a cleavage structure it has, the more likely it is that it will serve as a *niche* for a large number of political parties; and last, but not least, the more poorly organized the political parties are, the more room there would seem to be for more political parties. A low level of mass mobilization serves as a yet another incentive for the hopeful political entrepreneurs.

And the other way around, a slow process of democratization makes for moderate multi-partism, perhaps even for the British kind of two-party politics. Majority representation serves as a barrier against extreme multi-partism; and the longer majority representation is retained, the more likely it is that the party system will become moderate. The fewer cleavages there are in a society and the simpler its cleavage structure remains, the less room there is for the extreme kind of multi-party politics; and last, but not least, the better organized the established political parties are, the less leeway there is for new political entrepreneurs in the political arena. A high level of mass mobilization serves as a deterrent against fragmentation of the party system.

When we apply Sartori's model in a crude way to our fourfold table, it is readily seen that democratic survivors as well as breakdown cases include coun-

tries that fulfil Sartori's criteria for agglutination as well cases that do not. Table 3 illustrates the application of Sartori's criteria for Norway, Sweden and Finland, all classified by us as survivors. Norway and Sweden would be predicted as democratic survivors by Sartori's theory as well as by our framework, but Finland represents a clear case of agglutination and should therefore not have survived as a democratic regime according to the logic of Sartori's model.[3]

The same exercise can be carried out an the non-survivors in our framework. If we compare the major states which emerged out of the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire, one cannot help being struck by the demise of democracy in the less agglutinated cases of Austria and Hungary and by the survival of democracy in Czechoslovakia, a recent entry into the state community as of 1919 and a clear-cut case of agglutination.

The Third Factor: Structural and Practical Cooptation

These examples show that Sartori's criteria do not work as indicators of democratic survival in the inter-war period. Our framework would seem to work somewhat better, but it too fails to account for two of the cases, Germany and Eire. According to our model democracy should have survived in Germany and should not have survived in Eire.

We would propose that a third factor be added to our analysis in order to account for these deviations: the integration of cleavages through meso-level cooptation. Two forms of cooptation are well documented in the literature: structural cooptation in the form of various types of consociational devices and practical cooptation in the form of broadening the Base of the regime by including the elites of groups representing cleavages hitherto excluded from power. *Our basic argument is that successful completion of state building and clear autonomy from religious authority were not sufficient to make a state safe for democracy in the inter-war period. The survival of democracy also requires that the elites of all or most relevant cleavages be integrated into governance or into a position of strong influence upon the government.*

The survivors explained by our model in table 2 are all cases either of structural or practical cooptation of major social elites. Structural cooptation is well known in the Netherlands; the great compromise of 1917 and *verzuiling*

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[3] In all fairness, it should be noted that the logic of our own model is contingent upon the original classification and Finland is admittedly a border-line case. In table 1 it was classified as devolved from an Eastern Defence Empire State, i.e. Sweden of which Finland was an integral part until the Swedish-Russian War of 1809, rather than as devolved from an Eastern External Historical Empire, i.e. Russia from which Finland seceded in 1917. Moreover, anti-Swedish sentiments dominated Finnish Nationalism at least periodically prior to independence from Russia.

Table 3 Three Nordic Democratic Survivors Classified by Sartori's Criteria.

State	State mation	Demo-cratic regime	The fran-chise	PR	Number Parties Domi-Clea-	Structu-of ages	Degree Partyor ganiza tion
Sweden	1520 (The Wasa bellion)	1914	1911 M 1921 U	1911	3 Sos. vs (Wor-owners) Sos.& Agr. (Urban	Simple (one pre domi-cleava- the o-subsu med)	High
Norway	1814 (Horne Rule) 1905 dep.)	1884	1898 M 1913 U	1921	4 Sos. vs (Wor-owners) Sos. & Agr. Rural) Sos.& Chr. vs reli-	Simple (one pre domi-cleava- the o-subsu med)	High
Finland	1809 (Auto-nomous terr. tical structu- 1906 (Home Rule) 1917 (Indep)	1906	1906	1906	4 Sos. vs (Wor-owners) Sos.& Agr. Rural) Swe-nish guage)	Mode- (Three strong cleava-)	Medium (Low rural party penetra tion)

(Lijphardt, 1968), in Belgium; the *familles spirituelles* (Lorwin, 1971), in Switzerland; *Proporz* (Lembruch,1967a, 1967b; Dahl, 1966; Kerr, 1972). Practical cooptation in the form of political compromises are known from Scandinavia; the Red-Green compromises (Lindström), from Czechoslovakia; the *Petka* - the Committee of Five (Bradley, 1992; Bankowicz, 1994), from Great Britain; the World War 11 government of National Unity and McDonald's Labour government (McKenzie, 1964), from France; Léon Blum's Popular Front Government and subsequent integration of all parliamentary groups into governmental politics.

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Structural cooptation certainly was not unknown in our deviant German case. Thus, the two major parties of the Weimar regime, the Catholic *Zentrum* and Social Democrats had developed a societal organizational network which had similarities to e.g. Dutch *Verzuiling*. (Craig, 1978, pp. 499-511). But contrary to die Dutch compromises, the Weimar compromise excluded major forces. The exclusion of Communists was maybe not so important as the virtual exclusion of the Nationalist, Conservative, rural and Eastern political segment. This segment was *not* removed from competitive politics at the polls, but it had little or no incentive to join the constitutional regime compromise. Ort the contrary anti-regime sentiment became a progressively more important component in the politics of the Right. This withdrawal from the parliamentary bargaining process by a major segment of the country's political and military elite makes Germany different from all the above mentioned cases of democratic survivors. Even so it is noteworthy that the events leading up Hitler's *Machtergreifung* in 1933 took place to a large extent within the procedural framework of the constitution. In our context it is important to note that not only Hitler and his follower, but also the President of the Republic and Hitler's two predecessors as chancellor - von Papen and von Schleicher - both represented the excluded segment from the formation of the Weimar republic.[4]

Our opposite deviant case - Eire - the only democratic survivor among the non-secularized states, can also be explained by our third factor. In the constitutional compromise which paved the way for the foundation of an Irish Republic, a major segment was excluded, like in Germany. The Nationalist segment under the leadership of Eamon de Valera, which refused to accept the secession of Ulster, was initially not part of the formation of the democratic regime. Like in Germany, this segment subsequently came to power within the framework of the constitution and de Valera was elected President of the Republic. But unlike Germany, the democratic constitution was not subverted by the nationalists. On the contrary, their parti, the *Fionna Fail,* became the central party of the Irish state. It benefitted from the existence un an unresolved national issue, Ulster, which contrary to the German grievances, could not be expected to be resolved by unilateral action alone. Thus in Eire, a rather peculiar combination emerged: a ruling party which obtained electoral strength by advocating a *raison d'etat* that was definitely not part of the constitutional compromise and an opposition deeply committed to that very compromise.

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[4] 1t should be kept in mind that this endevour addresses itself to the survival of democracy as such and not to explaining the emergense of various totalitarian and authoritarian forms of government. We are well aware that to scholars concerned with i.e. the rise of fascism, Germany can hardly be considered a deviant case. For an effort to account for the rise of fascism within the framework of a similar comparative conceptual tradition sec Hagtvet & Rokkan, 1980.

The third factor would thus seem to account for the two deviant cases, Germany and Eire. By the 1930s, German democracy finds itself in a no-win-situation with ruling political elite not committed to the constitutional compromise faced by an opposition even less committed to Weimar. At the same time, Irish democracy is in a no-lose-situation with a governing not overwhelmingly committed to the democratic compromise, but repeatedly returned to power at the polls, faced by an opposition whose very existence depends an that very compromise.

Conclusion

Where the state building was weak and the legacy of empire strong, or where secular nation building was still impaired by deeply rooted religious sentiments, or where significant segments representing major cleavages were not coopted into a constitutional compromise, the chances for democratic survival in inter-war Europe were slim indeed. Of our two initial questions we feel that this answers the second one about the structural determinants of democratic survival.

Today, all European states again pledge themselves to a democratic form of government. Our first question about the relevance of the inter-war experience as a means to predict the fate of there fledgling contemporary democracies can still be answered only speculatively. We will, however, try to make an assessment based on our structural findings.

This assessment is indeed paradoxical. If our model is correct, the best prospects for democratic survival can be found where there is a strong tradition of statehood and where society has been secularized. But there very criteria were an top of the agenda set by the communist regimes, which emerged after World War 11. We are therefore faced by the following paradoxical question: Will democratic survival in Eastem Europe and the former Soviet Union depend upon the extent to which the once ruling communists were actually successful in promoting their self proclaimed goal?

The third factor, elite cooptation, is more dependent upon the political cultures that are emerging now. But, it is no less paradoxical. Some of the traditions for elite cooptation in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are in themselves far from democratic. Clientelism, kinship and corruption are hard to reconcile with democracy, but may nevertheless fulfil a purpose in the progression towards democracy.

These two paradoxes are lessons from the past. It remainst to be seen whether the future of Europe will be guided by the logic of the past; or as former Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko once put it when asked about the prospects for nuclear disarmament: "I'm neither an optimist nor a pessimist, but 1 would nevertheless like to hope" (Fredriksson, 1982).

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