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Article:

Online Appendix: Additional information on data and measurement

Additional information on the time period covered in the statistical analysis

The dataset considers almost all democratic electoral periods (280 in total) in these countries in the post-war period. The following time periods for each country were considered (the number of electoral periods provided in parentheses): Austria 1949-2008 (18), Belgium 1946-2010 (20), Bulgaria 1990-2009 (6), Czech Republic 1990-2010 (6), Denmark 1945-2007 (23), Estonia 1992-2007 (4), Finland 1945-2007 (17), France 1946-2007 (15), Germany 1949-2009 (16), Greece 1974-2009 (11), Hungary 1990-2010 (5), Ireland 1948-2007 (16), Italy 1946-2008 (16), Latvia 1993-2011 (6), Lithuania 1992-2008 (4), Netherlands 1946-2010 (19), Poland 1991-2007 (5), Portugal 1975-2009 (12), Romania 1990-2008 (5), Slovakia 1990-2010 (6), Slovenia 1990-2008 (5), Spain 1977-2008 (9), Sweden 1944-2010 (20) and United Kingdom 1945-2010 (16).

Note Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta are excluded, all of which have the population below 1 million, so is Croatia, which joined the EU only after the data collection was completed.

Additional information on specification of mergers for the empirical analysis

In our large-n analysis we exclude merged parties (listed in Table 1) that were to a large degree continuations of one of the constituent parties. We use the change in the merged partys name as a criterion for selecting our cases. Specifically, we only include cases in which the name of the merged party is different from any of its constituent parties. This criterion reflects more reliably the differences in parties strength than those based on their

Table 1: List of merger parties

Party	Country	Year of merger
The Greens	Austria	1987
Flemish Block	Belgium	1979
Bulgarian Agrarian National Union	Bulgaria	1992
Union of Democratic Forces	Bulgaria	1997
Euroleft	Bulgaria	1998
Free Democrats-National Social Liberal Party	Czech Republic	1995
Freedom Union - Democratic Union	Czech Republic	2002
Red-Green Alliance	Denmark	1989
Pro Patria (Fatherland)	Estonia	1992
Moderates	Estonia	1996
People's Party	Estonia	1998
People's Party Moderates	Estonia	1999
Estonian People's Union	Estonia	2000
Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica	Estonia	2006
Left Alliance	Finland	1990
National Centre of Independents and Peasants	France	1951
Socialist Party	France	1971
Centre of Social Democrats	France	1976
Democratic Force	France	1995
Union for a Popular Movement	France	2002
All-German Party	Germany	1961
Greens/Alliance'90	Germany	1993
Left	Germany	2007
Union of the Democratic Centre	Greece	1976
Italian Democratic Party of Monarchical Unity	Italy	1959
Unified Socialist Party	Italy	1966
National Alliance	Italy	1973
Democrats of the Left	Italy	1998
Daisy	Italy	2002
Union of Christian and Centre Democrats of Centre	Italy	2002
Democratic Party	Italy	2007
For Homeland and Freedom	Latvia	1995
Alliance For Homeland and Freedom	Latvia	1997
Latvian Christian Democratic Union	Latvia	1997
Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party	Latvia	1999
For Human Rights in a United Latvia	Latvia	2007
Latvia first party and party Latvian way union	Latvia	2007
Social Democratic Party "Harmony"	Latvia	2010
Unity	Latvia	2011
National Alliance "All for Latvia" - Homeland and Freedom	Latvia	2011
Lithuanian Christian Democrats	Lithuania	2001
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party	Lithuania	2001
Union of Farmers' Party and New Democracy Party	Lithuania	2002
Liberal and Centre Union	Lithuania	2003
Homeland Union	Lithuania	2004
Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats	Lithuania	2008
Christian Democratic Appeal	Netherlands	1980
Green Left	Netherlands	1991
Christian Union	Netherlands	2003
Polish Peasant Party - People's Agreement	Poland	1992
Freedom Union	Poland	1994
Polish Party of Christian Democrats	Poland	1999
Democratic Left Alliance	Poland	1999
Conservative Peasant Party - New Poland Movement	Poland	2002
Left Bloc	Portugal	1999
Social Democracy Party of Romania	Romania	1993
Social Democratic Party	Romania	2001
Democratic Union	Slovakia	1995
New Agrarian Party	Slovakia	1997
Hungarian Coalition Party	Slovakia	1998
Direction-Social Democracy	Slovakia	2005
United List of Social Democrats	Slovenia	1993
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia	Slovenia	1994
SLS+SKD Slovenian People's Party	Slovenia	2000
Union of the Democratic Centre	Spain	1978
Popular Party	Spain	1989
United Left	Spain	1994
Liberal Democrats	United Kingdom	1988

membership or electoral size. The change in a partys name is usually one of the key contested questions in merger negotiations because it indicates the extent to which the fused party is just a continuation of the larger party. Thus, smaller parties should be keen on name change, but are unlikely to achieve this goal if they are in a weak bargaining position, as would be the case if they have limited electoral and organizational relevance.

The merger between the Homeland Union (TS) and Christian Democrats (LKD) in Lithuania in 2008 provides a good illustration of this argument. In the last general election preceding this merger the TS obtained 14.8 percent of vote and 17.7 percent of seats while the LKD gained only 1.4 percent of vote and no seats. However, unlike what one would expect on the basis of the electoral size criterion, the name of the merged party was the hyphenated combination of the names of both parties. This is because the LKD, despite its limited electoral appeal, was in a relatively strong bargaining position due to its relatively strong organization, several local strongholds, the possession of a well-known label and the determination of the TS to unite all centre-right parties.

Additional information on the specification of merger termination (our dependent variable)

Reflecting our earlier conceptualizations, we measure merger terminations as splits from merged parties that lead to the reinstatement of parties similar to one or several of the initial constituent parties. In order to identify such splits, we adopt two strategies. First, we examine whether handbooks on political parties explicitly link the formation of a splinter party with a constituent part of the merged party. For example, Sagar (2009, 318) states that 'many members' of the Liberal Democrats, a splinter of the Daisy party established in 2007, 'had been members of the Italian Renewal', which was one of the constituent parties of the Daisy party. Second, in the absence of such information, we examine the overlap between the elites (members of the national legislature first and foremost) and ideological positions of the constituent parties of the merged parties and splinter parties formed by members of

these merged parties. We code splits as failures if we observe the overlap in the case of the majority of these elites, and especially if the leader of the splinter party also comes from this particular constituent party.

Some mergers in our dataset (for example, the Union of Democratic Centre in Spain) were very complex in that they involved more than five parties. We code as terminations the splits of such mergers if they involve members of a distinct group of constituent parties as opposed to recruiting members from across most parties that were involved in the formation of the merged party. Table 2 summarizes the variation in our dependent and predictor variables.

Measurement of the change in legislative performance after merger

The post-merger change in legislative strength is computed as the percentage ratio of the seat share of the merged party and the sum of the seat share of the merged party and the total seat share of its component parties before a merger. The index can theoretically take values from 0 to 100, where 0 indicates that the merged party gained no seats while the constituent parties obtained at least some legislative representation before a merger. Conversely, the value of 100 indicates that the merged party gained at least some seats after the merger while the constituent parties had no legislative representation before the merger. The value of 50 indicates that the seat share of the merged party was equal to the total seat share of constituent parties before the merger. For two cases where both the merged party and all of its constituent parties gained no seats, the value of the measure is assumed to equal 50.

The following example illustrates the computation of the values of this measure. If the constituent parties together obtained 10 percent of seats before the merger, and the merged party gained 5 percent, then the value of the measure for this case would be equal to 5 / (10 +5) * 100 = 33.3. Higher values of this measure indicate a stronger relative performance of the merged party and therefore reduce the probability of a merger failure.

This measure is preferable to the ratio between the seat share of the merged party and

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the total seat share of its constituent parties because the latter measure is problematic to compute when the constituent parties had no representation. The measure is also advantageous compared to the absolute difference between the seat share of the merged party and its constituent parties, because the latter measure does not account for the (highly plausible) possibility that the effect of the change in legislative strength would depend on the initial legislative strength of the constituent parties. For example, the post-merger decline in legislative strength of 1 percentage point should have a stronger effect on merger failure when the total seat share of the constituent parties is 5 percent as compared to, say, 20 percent.

Measurement of electoral system disproportionality

As mentioned in section 4.1, Lijphart's effective electoral threshold (Lijphart, 1994) in the last parliamentary election is used to capture the parliamentary entry barrier (H3). This measure integrates information on two key dimensions of electoral systems affecting their disproportionality, namely, district magnitude and legal threshold. While the mean or median district magnitude is frequently used in the literature for measuring electoral system disproportionality, legal thresholds of the size between 3 and 5 percent play a key role in excluding small parties from the legislature in Central and Eastern European countries (Birch, 2003). The effective threshold is therefore a more appropriate measure of electoral system disproportionality than district magnitude. While Taagepera (2002) proposes a different measure of the nationwide threshold, it seeks to capture the share of the vote necessary for obtaining at least one legislative seat. Lijphart's threshold, while not without its own shortcomings, is nevertheless better suited for measuring the share of the vote required for fair (i.e. proportional) representation.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on core variables

Variable	Min	Median	Mean	Max	SD	N
Merger termination	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0		502
Pre-merger seat share	0.0	4.0	5.5	21.6	5.0	502
Post-merger legislative strength	0.0	50.0	47.8	100.0	21.5	502
Parliamentary threshold	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.1	502
Number of parties	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.0		502
Ideological similarity	0.0	2.0	1.4	2.0	0.7	502
Mean ln (age)	0.0	2.0	2.1	4.1	0.9	502
PEC	0.0	1.0	0.6	1.0		502

Additional information on the risk profiles guiding the small-N case selection

To understand how the two mergers selected for an in-depth study compare with the result of the sample in terms of the probability of merger failure, we computed the 'risk profile' of each merged party in our sample. Specifically, we first estimate the model with only those predictor variables that were statistically significant in the main analysis presented in the manuscript. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3. Second, we use the 'predict' function in the statistical environment R to compute, for each observation in our sample, the estimated hazard ratio between this observation and the reference value, which is constructed using the mean values on all predictor variables in our sample. The values of this relative risk quantity below (above) 1 therefore indicate that the failure risk for this specific observation is lower (higher) than the risk for the party that has mean values on all predictor variables. As a final step, we take the average relative risk across all years for which the party is included in our sample.

We found that the average risk of the failure of the GroenLinks merger in the first ten years after its formation was the lowest in our sample of 68 merged parties. The value of relative risk for this party was 0.15. The relative risk of failure of the United Socialist Party merger, averaged across all years in which this merged party exited (1966-1969), was the second-highest in our sample, and the value of relative risk for this party was 6.07.

Table 3: Cox PH model used for the selection of cases for in-detail analysis

	Model 1
Pre-merger seat share	0.10**
	(0.04)
Post-merger electoral change	−0.03**
	(0.01)
Mean ln(age)	0.78
	(0.49)
Pre-electoral coalition (PEC)	2.74**
	(1.16)
Mean ln(age) * PEC	−1.54**
	(0.40)
AIC	114.63
Num. events	15
Number of observations	502
PH test	0.63

$^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$

It is also worth noting that the risk profiles obtained from the full model presented in the manuscript are very similar to those derived from the reduced model presented in Table 3. Specifically, the GroenLinks had the risk profile of 0.19, which was the fourth-lowest in the sample, and the Italian case had a score of 6.79, or the third-highest in the sample.

References

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