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Refereed article

Political Parties in Europe and South Asia and Unwritten Rules: Patterns, Differences, and Similarities of Party Structures

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Summary
This article traces indicators for the "unwritten rules" that shape the functioning of political parties. Unwritten rules are taken to be ideas and patterns of meaning that are not formalized, but that nevertheless still influence and inform the political choices and actions of both individual and collective actors. For these unwritten rules to be able to exert influence, they need to be appreciated and shared by a considerable number of actors. Unwritten rules can, furthermore, have effects in most formal political settings on both the input and output level of the political process.
The first two working hypotheses presented in this article are that: a) unwritten rules shape party structures and b) that these unwritten rules can show similarities to each other even if the political system indicators are simultaneously very different. To test these hypotheses, the article undertakes an exploratory discussion of party structures in two Asian — India and Pakistan — and two European countries — France and Germany. The next hypothesis presented in the article is that: c) despite these apparent differences, similarities can be found with regard to four core factors shaping both the party system and the parties themselves: (1) the role of key persons and/or political families; (2) the stability of the parties; (3) the role of ideological currents; and, (4) the role of women, as well as patterns of gender representation and participation in the parties. In a final hypothesis, it is then proposed that: d) any similarities with regard to these dimensions can be explained by the comparable unwritten rules that are at work in them.

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Introduction

In this article we want to trace indicators for the "unwritten rules" that shape the functioning of political parties. Our understanding of unwritten rules is based on the discussions of the research context presented in the editorial of this issue, and also in the featured article by Ursula Birsl and Samuel Salzborn. As such, we take unwritten rules to be ideas and patterns of meaning that are not formalized but that nevertheless still influence and shape the political choices and actions of both individual and

collective actors. For these unwritten rules to exert an influence, they need to be welcomed and shared by a significant number of actors. Unwritten rules can, if widely embraced, have effects in most formal political settings, on both the input and output level of the political process.

As is described in the contributions to this issue just referred to, the emerging research field around the notion of unwritten rules thus links into the concept of "informal politics," and also to sociological institutionalism — which argues that individuals follow institutional rules because they are considered socially appropriate (as compared to instrumentally advantageous). The theory of unwritten rules thus incorporates and complements these approaches. It applies them particularly to a conceptualization of the rules that determine individual and collective action (or inaction) vis-à-vis political representation and participation.

Our first two working hypotheses to be tested are that: a) unwritten rules shape party structures and b) that these unwritten rules can show similarities even if the political system indicators are simultaneously very different. To further investigate these hypotheses, we will engage in an exploratory discussion of party structures in two Asian — India and Pakistan — and two European countries — France and Germany — that differ according to their type of political system, their Freedom House ranking, and the number of political parties existing in their system. Our next hypothesis is that: c) despite these apparent differences, similarities can be found with regard to four core factors shaping both the party system and the parties themselves: (1) the role of key persons and/or political families; (2) the stability of the parties; (3) the role of ideological currents; and, (4) the role of women, as well as patterns of gender representation and participation in the parties. As a final hypothesis, we propose that: d) any similarities with regard to these dimensions can be explained by the comparable unwritten rules that are at work in them. This occurs independent of the fact that the written rules — in the sense of the political system type or the number of political parties in existence — differ considerably.

We would like to emphasize that it is a deliberate and reasoned choice on our part to conduct our exploratory analysis in four country cases that differ in many of the classical of political systems analysis and the measurement of democracy:

- Independent from — or despite — these differences, as will be explained striking similarities can be found with regard to the four dimensions sketched above: (1) the role of key persons and/or political families; (2) the stability of the parties; (3) the role of ideological currents; and, (4) the role of women, as well as patterns of gender representation and participation.
- These similarities between the phenomena are our point of departure for exploring them and the reasons behind them. As it is our hypothesis that similar phenomena are related to similar unwritten rules, this means we want to find indicators for these comparable unwritten rules. Even if across the four cases all of the classic system variables are different, the unwritten rules can still be

similar — as they are explicitly *not* dependent on the formalized political system. On the contrary: they are not formalized, and can even contradict those formal structures.

- We have followed the suggestion made in the editorial to choose Asia and Europe as two regions for comparison for the reasons outlined there, and also in the contribution by Birsl and Salzborn: The relationship between these two regions has been long-standing and historically stable, while furthermore they are two highly relevant regions in the current international economic and political setting. However, how both became "regionalized" and what (geographical) areas and states they are composed of remain contested. Based on the findings of global history studies — mainly regarding the idea of "entangled modernities" — and on scholarly work regarding the transcultural flows between the two regions, we take the entanglement of both regions (rather than their differences or their opposition) as a point of departure. Accordingly, we repudiate the conventional conceptualization of Asia and Europe as regions with *different* and *specific* political features. In our exploratory discussion of unwritten rules and political parties in both regions we want, as explained above, to trace any similarities between them. Doing this will help build a stronger basis for further working hypotheses regarding what makes political order work — or fail — beyond the realm of formal institutions, rules, and norms.

Our discussion henceforth will focus on analysis of the four dimensions described above for each country case. Before discussing these, for each case the political system type will first be presented, being followed by a sketch of the key features of the country in question's party system.

Political parties in India and Pakistan: key persons, stability, ideologies, and gender roles

What Germany and France are for European integration in terms of key engines of postconflict regional integration after centuries of political contestation and war, both India and Pakistan are for the current state of South Asia's regional (non)integration and its entrenched political and military contestations. Despite the latter two countries emerging out of the same colonial polity, inherited political culture, and apparent body of colonial legacies, their paths diverged to a significant extent soon after the violent Partition of 1947 in terms of democratic development, challenges, and threats thereto.

While India managed to establish a system of democratic governance, including a vibrant party system largely adhering to democratic electoral politics, Pakistan has continued to be marred by cycles of autocratic regression — as well as by fragile and limited efforts at hybrid democratization. However, both polities share significant markers as regards the unwritten rules governing their electoral and party politics. Furthermore, both polities have been challenged — albeit with a significantly

differing intensity and scope — by the violent contestations of nonstate actors against the state, as well as by political parties and groups vis-à-vis other political parties and groups — be it, for example, by right-wing or ethnopolitical parties and their associated militant wings or groups.

As compared to both of the European cases discussed below, these two South Asian states face a greater degree and range of heterogeneity in their political structures, sociopolitical cleavages and inequalities, and (in)formal, parallel governance systems — political as well as legal. These exist alongside a heightened tendency toward fundamentalist contestations over political authority and legitimacy, as well as competing claims regarding normative ordering and power argues Kenneweg (2008).

Similarly to other countries throughout Asia, India and Pakistan are no exception to the rule of highly personalized and dynastic politics with national as well as subnational politics being to varying — but more often than not significant — degrees dominated by kinship/appendage politicians, as the key political individuals across different types of political systems, cultures, as well as regimes. As has been elaborated elsewhere in greater detail by Derichs and Thompson (2013), "gender, power, and pedigree" often coincide given the number of female dynastic political leaders in Asia — in particular in South Asia and specifically in the country cases at hand, namely India and Pakistan.

India's political system

Most polities in South Asia have in common an overall lack of intraparty democracy and the dominance of political dynasties and kinship systems at multiple levels of the polity, This leads to a generally high degree of personalized electoral and party politics, and ultimately — with the exception somewhat of India, although one might dispute that — to hybrid democracies (see Kenneweg 2008; Wagner 2007). Despite the different trajectories of South Asia's postcolonial party systems, Wagner (2007) highlights that a characteristic pattern of aspiring to intraparty democracy has emerged throughout the region. This features a paucity of programmatic depth to party and election manifestos, entrenched political patronage and corruption (even the criminalization of politics in the words of Gosh 2008 and Kochanek 2010), and high levels of personalization — all posing challenges to the institutionalization of parties as intermediary institutions. These practices also facilitate the informal governance of political parties and groups, alongside further encouraging competing normative and patronage claims.

In its 2013 ranking, Freedom House classified India as "free," attributing a borderline 2.5 for the country's overall rating ("free"), 3.0 for the status of its civil liberties ("partly free"), and 2.0 for its political rights. This ranking is explained, among other factors, by: a number of "high-profile scandals implicat[ing] several politicians and bureaucrats in corruption" (with the subsequent heightened profile of

Anna Hazare's anticorruption movement and its successful strategy of street politics), violent contestations, clashes, and insurgencies between members of different social groups and regional communities, ideologically- or communitarian-driven insurgencies such as the Naxalites movement, along with incidents of electoral violence (Freedom House 2013b).

India's party system

The "puzzle of the governance of India" and the country's fairly stable accommodation of diversity is nevertheless in most aspects and arenas representative of a stratified and segmented "minority democracy," one marred by clientelistic governance and strong "ancient regime structures" according to Chatterjee, Harris, and Kaviraj (as cited in Harris 2010: 56–57). The party system is classified currently as "multiparty system," one that has undergone significant post-independence changes and challenges: first and foremost among these "the 'deinstitutionalization' of Indian politics [that] extends to most other party political formations, which are little more than (if at all) loose followings of more or less charismatic political leaders" alongside this there has been an increased criminalization and polarization-cum-ideologization of political parties since the 1980s onward (Harris 2010: 59–60; see also, Ghosh 2008: 85). In recent years, regional parties have become more and more significant beyond local- and state-level politics, entering large coalition governments at the central level's "multiparty system of a competitive nature" (Harris 2010: 61, van Dyke 2010: 67).

The role of key persons in Indian politics

Focusing on the level of national as well as provincial (party) politics, the highly personalized nature of Indian politics goes hand-in-hand with the dominance of political families. The most prominent of these is the Nehru–Gandhi Dynasty, which has held sway over power for long periods in postcolonial India — be it through daughters, sons, wives, and now grandsons of one of India's founding fathers, Jawaharlal Nehru, in formal as well as informal positions of political leadership — but mostly by holding sway over one of India's most powerful political parties, the Congress Party. The emergence of new parties, i.e. representing the Dalit community — has also often led to focus in the public's perceptions being placed on a few key politicians standing at the helm of the party.

In this regard, interesting is the recent case of anticorruption politician Arvind Kejriwal and his party's challenge to, among others, the country's ruling political dynasty. He heads the recently established Aam Admi Party, which was extremely successful when up against the ruling Congress Party in recent elections — its "stunning electoral debut" meant Kejriwal immediately became "chief minister of India's national capital region in what supporters hope would mark a turning point in the nation's fraud-ridden politics" (Aljazeera 2013). The new party, which has

broken away from Ana Hazara's nonpartisan movement, aims to challenge traditional elitist politics and its high degree of corruption and criminalization, instead following a policy of transparent, moral, antiestablishment rule. It will furthermore attempt to ensure the continuation of these initial electoral successes in the upcoming May 2014 elections — which are "seen as a sign that the powerful Nehru–Gandhi dynasty, which has given India three prime ministers since independence in 1947, may be about to lose office on a national scale" (Aljazeera 2013).

The stability of India's party system

Van Dyke (2010: 68, 71, 73) regards Indian political parties and the multiparty system as in a "state of extreme flux," being marked by fragmentation, factionalism, an increased propensity toward volatile, multilevel coalition-building, and fluid policy alliances. The exception is the state of Kerala, with its institutionalized party and coalition system of predominantly Communist parties based on "long-term support in castes or communities in constituencies located in particular geographic regions" (van Dyke 2010: 78).

Countering "minority democracy," the previous decade saw the significant political mobilization of subalterns and marginalized communities through group-specific political parties and party leaders (for example ethnicity- or caste-based ones); however, they are "far from being democratic in their own functioning" or from amounting to a genuine, nondependent form and scope of political citizenship for the remaining subalterns (Harris 2010: 61).

Ideological currents

The emerging pattern is one of vertically as well horizontally interlinked cleavage-based politics in multiple and dynamic intersecting configurations situated within, in the words of van Dyke, India's "patronage democracy" (2010: 79; see also, Malik et al. 2009: 90). These cleavage-based politics might manifest themselves in the form of dualistic left vs. right or progressive, social justice-oriented vs. conservative/fundamentalist axes but not alone. Regional parties are more difficult to classify than for example the Hindu fundamentalist BJP is, predicted to be a frontrunner in the upcoming May 2014 elections. Interesting again is the Aam Admi Party or parties representing particular social groups, such as the Dalit community, which are more difficult to classify ideologically — at least in the sense of the European political party spectrum.

The role of women in Indian (party) politics

Ahead of the 2014 national elections, India's ranking of 108 (out of 141) positions the country comparatively below world and regional averages given that 11 percent of Lower House and 26 percent of Upper House legislators are women (IPU 2014;

Fleschenberg and Derichs 2008: 31–34). Despite repeated efforts made and legislative drafts introduced to the Lower House during the past two decades, there is still no quota provision for women's representation at the national level — one reason for women's continued low level of political representation (quotaProject 2014a). This is an expression of powerful unwritten rules and values existing in India's patriarchal gender ideology, and the effects that they have on the country's political culture, electoral practices, and public political arenas.

While at the subnational level constitutional amendments have ensured a critical mass of 33 percent of women in local politics (due to reserved seat provisions), no voluntary quota regulation has been so far endorsed or codified by the country's political parties for other subnational levels (quotaProject 2014a). Initially intended as a bottom-up process by women activists and other supporters of local-level reserved seats, these seats have not led to a political mainstreaming of women into public politics or subsequent quota provisions — voluntary or codified — at higher levels of the polity. A key reason for this is the resistance of male politicians, their concern for their own power privileges and perks, along with the androcentric nature of Indian politics — wherein only few women, often from political families and/or an elite background, manage to influence regional and national politics and break the unwritten rules of androcentric (party) politics (see Fleschenberg and Derichs 2008: 33f.).

The neighboring country of Pakistan is characterized by significant similarities as well as differences to India, ones which will now be analyzed in more detail.

Pakistan's political system

In the same annual assessment, Freedom House ranked Pakistan in 2013 as "partly free" — attributing 4.5 for the country's overall rating, 5.0 for the status of civil liberties, and 4.5 for political rights. This ranking is based, among other aspects, on: (a) "a delicate power struggle between the politicians, military, and judiciary," (Freedom House 2013c), in other words the transversally as well as spatially constrained and precarious democratic functioning of key political institutions — including political parties and elected representatives at multiple polity levels; (b) "pervasive" levels of entrenched corruption; (c) multiple configurations of the intersectional discrimination and repression of subnational groups, religious minorities, and women; (d) high levels of violent conflict, militancy, and insurgency in various parts of the country, leading to extraordinary numbers of people internally displaced; and, (e) a high degree of criminalization, violent contestation, and insecurity in electoral and party politics. Despite the 2008 and 2013 national elections and the continued functioning of key political institutions, Freedom House (2013c) in its most recent ranking considered Pakistan not to be an electoral democracy.

Pakistan's party system and ideological currents

With regard to political parties, Freedom House experts are of the opinion that "the institutional capacity and internal democratic structures of political parties — some of which are based more on personalities than ideologies or platforms — remain weak. Some political parties also have armed or militant wings" (Freedom House 2013c). This leads to protracted and widespread violence in critical urban spaces such as Karachi. In stark contrast to Europe and its South Asian neighbor, the entrenched de-institutionalization of political parties in Pakistan is even more significantly caused by informal structures as well as by specific, overarching powerful veto actors — namely the military-cum-bureaucratic establishment. Malik et al. (2009: 176) highlight that "the policy process in Pakistan has typically bypassed political parties, with effective power going to unelected advisers of heads of government, civil and military bureaucrats, and the courts."

As a consequence, it is rather difficult to follow a European-style ideological systematization of the existent political parties in Pakistan. Of course, we can find so-called progressive, conservative, left- or right-wing, religious, or secular political parties, but such political party classifications are not based only on a significantly different connotation of the terms mentioned above, but are also considerably less meaningful as regards describing party positions and potential allegiances in a highly shifting, de-institutionalized context marked by a high level of informal-cum-personalized structures.

The role of key persons in Pakistan's politics

That said, certain other factors are shared in common with India: (a) personalism, i.e. political parties as vehicles of power for individual leaders and/or political families — leading to forms of "dynastic democracy"; (b) regional parties, as well as the importance of local politics and powerbases for multiple levels of the polity; and, (c) factionalism and party-based kinship confederations, which result within political parties in a lack of "ideological allegiance to a program but rather by individuals within a party" (Malik et al. 2009: 176–177).

The stability of Pakistan's party system

It appears that in recent years Pakistan has been witnessing a similar phenomenon to India, in terms of subnational/regional party formation and significance — developments challenging the ideological polarization of the 1970s to 1990s (Gillani 2013). In different parts of the country, regional-/province-based parties continue to emerge as key actors in electoral politics — most of them ethnopolitical parties with often militant (youth) wings, ones lead by influential members of political families or proclaimed charismatic leaders. This is the case for the Awami National Party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for multiple regional Baloch secular parties in Balochistan,

and for the Muttahida Quami Movement in Karachi/Sindh. Their provincial leverage provides them with political significance at the national level, either as coalition partners on the center stage or on the provincial one alongside with the nationally ruling party. Gillani (2013) is of the opinion that the emergence of politically successful regional parties will ultimately add to Pakistan's political cohesion despite their seemingly apparent particularistic agendas.

Similarly to India, political analysts such as Rasul Baksh Rais point toward the existence of a minority democracy that features a "distrust of the political class" and its leaders — more often than not party leaders and workers — due to corruption, nepotism, mismanagement, and group discrimination — be it against religious minorities, women, or "lower castes" (2008: 119, 128–129, 432ff.). In contrast, positive discrimination has hitherto neither led to the establishment of cleavage-based politics and parties nor to the successful political mobilization of Pakistan's subalterns within party-based electoral politics in the sense of a democratic surge having occurred.

The role of women in Pakistani (party) politics

With its world ranking of 66 (out of 141) since the last national elections of 2013, Pakistan is the seventh-best performing predominantly Muslim nation when it comes to women's political representation. This is in tune with world averages, and moreover comparatively ahead of regional ones: 20.7 percent of legislators in the Lower House and 17 percent of legislators in the Upper House are women (IPU 2014). Due to a constitutional provision, reserved seats guarantee women 17 percent of political representation — a figure that has been exceeded in a couple of past elections due to women running for general seats not covered by the Constitution. There have been no voluntary quotas adopted by political parties. Two facts are interesting though: (a) women running for general seats are predominantly from political families and dispose of a high socioeconomic status, and are thus not representative of Pakistan's otherwise diverse and sociopolitically highly marginalized women; (b) women taking up reserved seats are only indirectly elected through political party lists, and are left without their own political constituency and political leverage vis-à-vis a rather androcentric and often misogynist party elite and public (quotaProject 2014b; Fleschenberg and Derichs 2008: 33f.).

The recent elections have also shown, once again, the power of the unwritten gender rules and practices underpinning electoral politics. Given misogynist gender role prescriptions, millions of Pakistani women are not able to exercise their political citizenship — regardless of codified nondiscrimination clauses in the Constitution and despite the laws governing elections and political parties. This can be due to the fact that they do not own an identity card, are not registered as voters, or are not allowed to participate in elections as this would mean to venture into the public sphere — be it in gender-segregated or gender-mixed polling stations. In addition, and in

contrast to the other countries portrayed in this comparative, exploratory article, voting bans are part of Pakistan's electoral politics in some parts of the country. These are sometimes even written out and signed, highly effective decisions that have been made either by the informal institution of a *jirga* (tribal assembly) or are informal agreements between local authorities and party representatives from across the political spectrum — in clear violation of the codified rules of the Constitution and the Election Law (which do not prescribe sanctions in case of noncompliance). Demands by civil society representatives, in particular regarding women's activities, to impose sanctions against such informal rules and practices have not been successful so far despite repeated and widespread campaigning.

Parties in Germany and France: key persons, stability, ideologies, and gender roles

Germany and France are, like Pakistan and India, neighboring states, ones which had been in conflict with each other for many years until the project of European unification started in 1952. By a decade later, both countries had signed a mutual Friendship Treaty. Today, both are situated at the heart of the European Union, and have a tradition to be considered as the "motors of European integration." The political systems of the two countries differ, though — with Germany being organized as a parliamentary democracy and France as a semi-presidential system. As will be discussed, the patterns and the functioning of political parties differ considerably between them as well. The German case is the first one to be analyzed.

Germany's political system

Germany, as noted, has been a parliamentary system since the end of the Second World War; leaving behind its national socialist past, Germany has become a stable democracy since 1945. According to Freedom House, Germany is ranked as "free" — with it obtaining the top possible score of 1.0 with regard to both political and civil rights (Freedom House 2013a).

Germany's party system

Political parties in Germany are core actors in the political system. Article 21 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) attributes to them the task of decisively influencing the formation of the political will. Germany currently has six major parties (see the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2013): the *Christlich-Demokratische Union* (CDU) and *Christlich-Soziale Union* (CSU, only active in Bavaria) are the two Christian Democrat parties. They won the last German election in September 2013 by a large majority, and hence the chancellor still comes from CDU, even if the Christian Democrats have entered in a grand coalition with the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland* (SPD). The Social Democrat Party is Germany's oldest existing party. The *Freie Demokratische Partei* (Free Democrat Party, FDP) is Germany's

organized seat for political liberalism. The FDP has participated in most (West) German governments since the 1950s. That it missed the 5 percent quota in the September 2013 election and is no longer represented in the Bundestag represents a major fissure in the party's history. The Greens (*Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*) are the second youngest German party. They developed only in the 1970s and 1980s. The *Linkspartei* (Left Party) is the youngest party represented in the Bundestag. It was founded in 2007 when the SPD dissident group Election Alternative for Social Justice (WASG) and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) merged. The Left Party has always been the opposition in the Bundestag, but it has previously governed in several of the Eastern federal states in coalitions with the SPD.

German parties reveal the following picture with regard to the four aforementioned dimensions (the considerations hereafter are based on a broader study in Wiesner 2014: 300–307):

The role of key persons in German politics

Charismatic politicians play a relatively small role in the German party system: they obviously often hold leading positions in the parties, but they cannot change camps at will and rearrange the party system by founding one new party after another — as is the case in France.

Traditional political families also play a minor role in Germany. The political personnel of parties are recruited, rather, via the parties' youth organizations or via activities within the parties. Once a person entered a party, personal networks are very important for the political career of an individual — many of them classical old boys networks, even if in the times of Chancellor Merkel some "girls networks" have developed as well.

The stability of German party politics

German political parties are very stable: very rarely in the federal republic has one of the parties represented in the Bundestag broken down, split, or merged with another one. Germany also has a relatively small number of important parties. While the first elected Bundestag consisted of ten parties, very soon — and up until the 1970s — West Germany had a stable three-party system. In the 1980s the Green Party emerged as a fourth force. After German reunification, most of the former Eastern parties merged with their Western counterparts — except for the PDS, which, as noted, merged in 2007 with the Western-based WASG to form the Left Party as the new fifth force (Niedermayer 2006: 111–115).

German parties are marked by a high level of party discipline, which is kept up by both party members and deputies with regard to votes and to presenting themselves for elections. The voting discipline in a parliamentary group (*Fraktionszwang*) is rarely broken. Votes or campaigns that diverge from the core party line are very rare

as well. One reason for this is that a member — and in particular a deputy — openly acting or voting against the party line may face divers kinds of sanctions by the intra-party-institutions (there are numerous mechanism laid down in the party rules). If a member of the Social Democrat Party, for instance, candidates in elections as individual candidate when there is another regular party candidate, he or she must be excluded from the party. Another explanation for the remarkable stability of German parties is that all elections in Germany — with the exception of most local and European Parliament ones — usually stipulate a 5 percent threshold for entry into parliament. This presents a severe obstacle to smaller parties seeking to establish themselves as full members and competitors in the country's party system.

Finally, coalitions across the left–right divide have been formed regularly in Germany; currently there is a "grand coalition" between the CDU/CSU and the SPD in the Bundestag for the third time in history. Grand coalitions have also happened in several of the federal states.

It is currently an open question whether the changes that occurred with the last federal election — the FDP did not reenter the Bundestag, while the newly founded EU-critical party Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*) fared as well as the FDP and narrowly missed the entry threshold — will develop into stable tendencies.

Ideological currents

German political parties were founded in the middle of the 19th century, which is comparatively early for Western Europe. The newly established parties related to four traditional pillars of value and belief systems: Liberalism, Conservatism, Catholicism, and Socialism. These in turn referred to three lines of conflict: those between church and state, cities/countryside, and different social classes (Niedermayer 2006: 109–115). Today, the ideological orientations of the existing parties can be characterized as follows: The Christian Democrats have been advocating a conservatism based on and oriented toward the values of Christendom and the two Christian Churches in Germany (Catholics and Protestants), but values interpreted in a modern way — especially by the liberal wing. There are not many religious activists in their ranks. The SPD can be characterized as center-left, oriented toward a well-established welfare state, social justice, and wealth redistribution. The Greens are still oriented toward the political goals of the movements of the 1970s — peace, gender equality, and environmental protection — but similar to the Social Democrats they acted in a pragmatic way when they were in government. The Left Party advocates the critiquing of Capitalism and the importance of a strong welfare state (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2013; Schmidt 2010: 86–90).

The role of women in German (party) politics

In the IPU ranking of women MP shares, Germany with the Bundestag (the first parliamentary chamber) currently occupies 19th position and hence scores best of all four countries discussed here. 36.5 percent of the Bundestag's MPs are women (IPU 2014). On average, German political parties were found to have less female than male members. Consequently, most of the parties introduced gender quotas that usually apply both for internal elections within the parties as well as with regard to local, regional, and federal election lists: the CDU has a female quota of 33.3 percent, while the CSU in 2010 also introduced one of 40 percent. The SPD uses a gender quota of 40 percent, referring to either men or women — in practice this works as a 40 percent quota for women though, as men rarely are underrepresented. The FDP does not use gender quotas and includes the lowest number of both women members and women MPs of all main German parties. The Greens have a 50 percent gender quota. Moreover, as a rule, they usually name two leading candidates for elections, one man and one woman. The Left Party uses a 50 percent women's quota and has the highest number of women members among the German parties discussed; however, its voters are mostly older men. Most German party quotas work as long as there are women candidates for the posts available; there is no way around them except if no woman stands for election. The quotas obviously contribute to Germany's comparatively good ranking in the IPU's classification scheme.

France's political system

France has had a presidential system since the late 1950s, when the constitution of the parliamentary Fourth Republic was amended in support of this. The country is also classified as "free" by Freedom House, being attributed a score of 1.0 (Freedom House 2013a). The French party system differs significantly from the German one in several respects (the following considerations are based on a broader study in Wiesner 2014: 132–150):

France's party system

In the French semi-presidential system, parties still have an important role — albeit a less important than in Germany — because they name the candidates both for presidential elections and also for the ones of the National Assembly, the local and regional parliaments, and the EP.

The main French parties are: the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP), today's representative of the ideological currents of Gaullism that follows the former *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR) (Schmidt 2000: 198–219). The UMP governed from 2007 to 2012, with a majority in the parliament and UMP member Nicolas Sarkozy as president. French socialists today are mainly represented by the

Socialist party (*Parti Socialiste,* PS), which was founded in 1969 (Stephan 2000: 151–171). The PS consists of several political clubs; moreover, it has witnessed the splitting of the *Mouvements Républicain et Citoyen* (MRC) and the Left Party (*Parti de Gauche*) during the last two decades. Since the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections, the PS has been the majority party in parliament — President Hollande is a PS member too. The dominant green party *Les Verts* was founded in 1984 and joined the government first in 1997 and again in 2012 (Hangen 2000: 243–265). In November 2010 *Les Verts* merged with *Europe Écologie*. The Communist party (*Parti Communiste Francaise,* PCF) split from the Socialist Party in 1920; however, the PCF has been part of a coalition government with the PS on several occasions (Obrecht 2000: 222–243). The noncommunist extreme left consists of the three parties *Lutte Ouvrière* (LO), *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR), and *Parti des Travailleurs* (PT). In presidential elections, the three parties together have regularly taken home 10 percent of the votes (Raynaud 2006: 66; Winock 2003b: 431). The *Front National* (FN), finally, is an extreme right party that has had considerable electoral successes in local, European, and presidential elections (Minkenberg 2000: 270–280).

The French majority voting system has led to an underrepresentation of smaller parties in the National Assembly. When a proportional voting system is used, like in elections to the EP, parties like the Greens and the FN win many more seats.

Besides this structural factor, French political culture is marked by a general prejudice against parties. This culture is oriented toward the strong role of the state, the nation, and the republic — and parties are often seen as divisive forces. Instead of naming themselves parties, many such entities thus rather call themselves movements or unions.

The role of key persons in French politics

Political parties in France are based much more on the pivotal role of key political personalities, individuals who can change political parties or even camps much more easily than is the case in Germany. They usually take their supporters with them and hence can easily form new parties, as has happened several times in recent decades. The importance of key persons is partly due to the aforementioned majority voting system in the constituencies, a setup that favors candidates from big parties. In France some political families do exist, where a tradition of being politically active or of being a MP is passed on — mostly from father to son.

The stability of French party politics

French political parties developed three to four decades later than the German ones did. Splits, being refounded, name changes, and reconfigurations of political parties are much more frequent occurrences in France. The French party system is thus much more characterized by change than the German one is. In comparison, there

are more important parties in France than there are in Germany. Moreover, political clubs based on the different ideological currents play a major role in party life. Finally, there are several deeply embedded conflicts in the French party system, especially with regard to the left–right divide. Therefore there is no tradition of coalitions between left and right in France; there were only forced "*cohabitations*" there when the president and the ruling majority did not belong to the same political camp.

Ideological currents

In France, ideological currents are more important than the actual parties themselves are. Key issues for the formation of the party system were the conflicts between republicans/monarchists, Clericalism/Laicism, and between preserving the status quo/being progressive. The main currents today are as follows: Traditionalists stand in the counterrevolutionary tradition and are right-wing conservatives or extremists. Today they are represented mainly by the FN and other Christian fundamentalist groupings (Prévotat 2003: 37–40). Nationalists, meanwhile, share some of the Gaullist ideological heritage (see below), but argue from an ethnocentric perspective. They are also present in the ranks of the FN (Milza 2003: 335–345).

Liberals judge the French revolution and the values that can be associated with it positively. French liberals support a strong state and are somewhat against economic liberalism (Rousselier 2003: 73–118). Christian Democrat*s*, who have a marginal role as compared to the Gaullists, are advocates for solidarity, decentralization, and European integration. Liberals and Christian Democrats have often united in political parties, firstly in the now-defunct UDF (Eilfort 2000: 174–195). Like the liberals, Christian Democrats are marginalized today. Their old parties no longer exist, and it is still an open question whether the *Mouvement Democrate* (MoDem) can become a new home for them.

Republicans also have a positive view of the French revolution. They strongly argue in favor of the French republican concept, which advocates the revolutionary values of "*liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité*" (freedom, equality, brotherhood). Republicanism cannot be associated with one single political camp (Christadler 1999: 35, 44). Gaullism, traditionally linked to the personality of Charles De Gaulle, is sometimes characterized as democratic Cesarism or Bonapartism. It stresses the key role of a directly elected president who is the representative of the nation (Berstein 2003a: 153–180; Winock 2003b: 483–490). Gaullism's ideological heritage has been of key influence in France until today.

Socialism also places emphasis on France's revolutionary tradition. Until now, the Socialists have never officially adopted a reformist or pragmatic position (Winock 2003a: 189–191, Winock 2003b: 535–540). French Communists, meanwhile, rhetorically argue for class struggle and the fulfilment of revolutionary goals (Winock 2003b: 379–383). The French green movement, as in Germany, is based on the ideas

of the movements for ecology, peace, and women rights that took shape in the 1970s (Hangen 2000: 243–265). The *noncommunist extreme left* officially opposes Stalinism. Nevertheless, the three extreme left parties — LO, LCR, and PT — are much more oriented toward the orthodox Marxist–Leninist tradition than the PCF is. Therefore, they distance themselves from so-called "pragmatic communists," highlighting instead the role of the working class and the revolutionary tradition (Raynaud 2006, Winock 2003b: 423–430).

The role of women in French (party) politics

In France's first parliamentary chamber 26.9 percent of MPs are women. According to the IPU's ranking, France thus occupies 38th position (IPU 2014). These numbers seem surprisingly low given that since 2000 all parties in France have been obliged by the *Parité* Law to have an equal number of women and men on their election lists. However, women are still far from being equally represented in French politics, especially in the higher ranks of the parties and in most of the state´s political institutions. This is partly due to the fact that parties can avoid making equal nominations by paying a fine, and thereby are able to maintain the established male majority (Bereni 2006). The Greens and the Socialist Party, however, do both have a women's quota of 50 percent.

Comparative discussion and conclusions for further research

The overview presented here has indicated that certain similarities with regard to the research dimensions sketched in the introduction can be detected in both the Asian and the European cases. While the political systems and key features of the party systems — such as the number of political parties — differ considerably, similarities do occur with regard to all four of the research dimensions identified at the outset: (1) the role of key persons and/or political families; (2) the stability of the parties; (3) the role of ideological currents; and, (4) the role of women, as well as patterns of gender representation and participation in the parties.

In sum, our exploratory account supports our hypothesis that unwritten rules shape the functioning of political parties, at least to a certain extent. It has also given considerable backing to our hypothesis that these unwritten rules can show similarities across countries, even if the respective political system indicators therein are very different. In conclusion, therefore, the discussion outlined in this article has given credibility to our hypothesis that these similarities can be explained by similar unwritten rules being at work in each of the country cases:

(1) The important role of key persons and key political families is a phenomenon that can be found in France, India, and Pakistan. This speaks in favor of related unwritten rules structuring political parties, their functioning, and the recruitment of their personnel in all three. In other words, in each can be found: an important role for political heritage in a literal and personal sense, or even with regard to the role of

family membership for passing on political power — a sort of neopatriarchalism and neofeudalism; the nontransparency and impenetrability of the political class; the reproduction of existing differentiations with regard to social classes and access to power; the impermeability of social classes altogether; and finally, a key role for charismatic leaders. On the other hand, in the German system all these unwritten rules seem to have far less of an impact.

(2) In the same vein, it is apparent that similarities with regard to the stability of the party system can be detected too: frequent changes and fragmentation in the party system can be found in France, India, and Pakistan. This pattern thus might be linked to a core role being played by political personalities and/or political families, who in the case of a conflict of interests can relatively easily change the name or structure of a party — or create an entirely new one. In this respect, the French party system seems to be more similar to the Indian than to the German one.

This again speaks in favor of several similarities existing between France, India, and Pakistan with regard to the unwritten rules that structure both their parties and their party systems: namely, key persons are more important than parties; changes of political parties are effected for strategic and personal reasons; and, the role of parties overall seems to be more related to the success of political key persons than to the party as a grouping and a structure. The German party system, on the other hand, seems to be more dependent on the role of parties as stable structures, and on key persons integrating themselves into these structures and working within them. Stability is enforced by the existence of certain formal rules, like the sanction mechanisms for dissenters; however, as the French example of the *Parité* Law shows, the existence of a formal mechanism in itself does not guarantee that it will actually be implemented. This fact speaks in favor of the notion of German unwritten rules complementing the formal party rules and pushing individuals to accept that the party as a structure is more important than their personal role is. In Germany, consequently, a person that wants to have a career must enjoy it in accordance with that party structure, and not in dissenting from it or even breaking with it.

(3) The role of ideological currents is much stronger in France than it is in Germany, which is linked to the relative weakness of the party apparatus in France and the simultaneous relative strength of key persons there. Political leaders in France, then, seem to be much more the torchbearers of a certain ideological current than stewards of a certain political party — a pattern that can also be detected, and in an even more pronounced way, in India and Pakistan. This again hints at certain similarities existing between the unwritten rules in France, India, and Pakistan, which fits closely which what has been said above: not only persons but also ideological currents and groupings seem to be more important than the party structures are in these countries. Analyzing how the importance of these ideological camps fits with the changes related to the strategic moves of key persons is a matter for further research however. In Germany, on the other hand, these ideological camps not only

seem to be less important but also to fit better into the parties' structures than they do in the other three countries.

(4) The role of women in all four cases seems to be influenced by unwritten rules regarding gender roles. Looking first at the European ones, in both Germany and France formal rules have developed that are aimed at strengthening the extent to which women are politically represented in their respective polities: most German political parties have introduced quotas for women, while France has introduced the principle of *parité*. With regard to representation and membership in political parties, however, both countries show a lower number of women than men. In France there are, despite *parité*, even less women MPs than there are in Germany, which scores comparatively well in the IPU ranking. One reason for this result may be that German quotas are not as easily avoided as the French *parité* rules are. But these findings as well speak in favor of different unwritten gender rules existing between the two countries, which influence the recruitment and the political careers of women in political parties and lead to different patterns of gender representation in Germany and France. Those unwritten rules at least partially conflict with the formal rules in place in each to promote gender equality. As such rules have already been well discussed (see, for example, Norris and Inglehart 2001), this finding does not come as a surprise.

Second, the comparative discussion has indicated that one cannot assume that unwritten gender rules are similar even between Western and/or European countries. In particular, in Germany the formalized gender equality rules in political life — somewhat surprisingly — seem to be in much better alignment with the unwritten gender rules than they are in France. In support of this observation is the fact, for example, that in the aftermath of the Strauss-Kahn affair in France many of the country's women complained about open sexism existing in French political and public life.

In the South Asian cases, powerful unwritten gender rules significantly shape each's political culture and electoral practices. The cases of India and Pakistan show one decisive similarity with regard to the unwritten rule of the key role of political families: in both countries coming from prestigious stock can soften the effects of misogynist unwritten rules. In India women that manage to influence regional and national politics often come from political families and/or an elite background; this is also the case in Pakistan for most women running for general seats.

But, second, the discussion still hints at decisive differences nevertheless existing between India and Pakistan. The first and most striking one of these is that Pakistan — which is ranked much lower than India by Freedom House — scores significantly better than India when it comes to gender representation. At first sight, this is related to the fact that in India there are no quotas at the national level — while in Pakistan the formal rules, in the shape of a constitutional provision, guarantee women a minimum of 17 percent of political representation.

In an overall comparative perspective across both Europe and Asia, when it comes to the unwritten rules that hinder the introduction of women's quotas in India it is obvious that they not only exist in Pakistan as well but also that they furthermore have shaped (and continue to shape) most Western party systems too. This is as a result of a number of factors: the resistance of male politicians and the nonrecognition of women's underrepresentation, which is a problem for political legitimacy; male politicians' concern for their own power privileges; and, the overall androcentric nature of politics itself. These unwritten rules only seem to have softened over the years in the two European cases that were discussed. However, in today's France and Pakistan they limit the effectiveness of the formal rules in place: in France, *parité* rules can be avoided by paying a fine; in Pakistan, women taking up reserved seats are only indirectly elected through party lists and are left without their own political constituency and political leverage vis-à-vis a rather androcentric and often misogynist party elite and public.

Finally, Pakistan is home to powerful unwritten gender rules that affect the freedom of women to exercise their constitutionally provided political rights, circumstances that represent a clear case of the dominance of unwritten over written rules. India, as the current debate on violence against women there has underlined, is also capable of extreme cases of female oppression. In this respect, the unwritten gender rules in the two European cases are much more favorable for women (as open oppression and violence is much less acceptable), and therefore France and Germany in comparison seem to be more similar with regard to gender rules than with regard to the other three dimensions discussed above.

To conclude, the similarities and differences that have been discussed obviously should not be overemphasized. However, the discussion presented here has shown that they are at least well worthy of being subjected to more thorough study: the picture that has emerged is not at all one that positions European and Asian political parties as dichotomous. Apparent similarities with regard to the four dimensions discussed here seem to show up in particular between France and India. Considerable differences exist between the two European countries Germany and France, as well as between the two Asian neighbor countries India and Pakistan. The biggest differences seem to exist between Germany and Pakistan. These differences and similarities seemingly cannot simply be attributed either to the type of political system or to the characteristics of the party system in place, let alone to the ranking awarded by Freedom House.

The findings support our core hypothesis that the described similarities can be ultimately explained by the similar unwritten rules that are at work in each case. It is our recommendation, therefore, that the hypotheses on unwritten rules structuring party politics that have been developed in the course of this article should henceforth be taken up as the starting point and basis for further empirical studies on these key topics.

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