but it remains to be seen whether Borisov and GERB would support or covertly stall such efforts. Finally, in another first, the Bulgarian parliament now contains two nationalist far-right formations—the PF in the pro-government bloc and Ataka in opposition. Both parties have proposed radical anti-minority and xenophobic policies. The likelihood of these policies being implemented is lowered by the pro-European orientation of the governing coalition partners and the political opportunism of both far-right leaders. However, the mainstreaming of xenophobic speech is a possibility that should raise concerns.

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Does increasing district magnitude increase the number of parties? Evidence from Spain, 1982–2011

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Countries with electoral systems that create opportunities for small parties to win seats tend to have fragmented party systems (e.g. Taagepera and Shugart, 1989; Cox, 1997; Benoit, 2002; Clark and Golder, 2006; Taagepera, 2007). Yet we cannot necessarily conclude from this correlation that changes in electoral institutions will result in changes in the party system. In particular, many studies have asked if electoral fragmentation precedes and causes national-level electoral system reform (e.g. Grumm, 1958; Lipson, 1964; Shamir, 1985; Benoit, 2001; Colomer, 2005; Remmer, 2008; Negretto, 2009). These studies recognize that permissive electoral systems are often adopted following the rise of new electoral challengers as parties seek to accommodate the emerging status quo or to protect themselves from the rising electoral threat. The implication is that Duverger's (1954) famous hypothesis that permissive electoral systems like PR tend to generate multiparty systems

may have it backwards. "PR is the result rather than the cause of the party system in a given country" (Grumm, 1958, 375).[1] "Multi-party systems occur before and not only subsequent to the adoption of proportional representation which … reduces the relevance of Duverger's second law or hypothesis" (Colomer, 2005, 12). "Alterations of electoral rules tend to reinforce rather than precipitate changes in patterns of political representation" (Remmer, 2008, 6). If these studies are correct, then changes in electoral rules may have little to no effect on the party system.

Scholars have used various methods to attempt to get around the endogeneity question to isolate the effect of electoral institutions from the context that generated them. For example, studies comparing election results held under PR and plurality rules in the same country (e.g. those with mixed systems) find that the larger magnitude districts have more parties win votes (Moser and Scheiner, 2012; Riera, 2013) and there is less strategic voting against small

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[1] Quoted in Colomer (2005), 1).

parties (Johnson and Pattie, 2002). An alternative approach is to use time-series data to specifically look at whether voting patterns change after reforms. Yet the limited time-series studies reach mixed conclusions about the effect of changing electoral rules. Reforms that should make it easier for small parties to gain representation (increasing average district magnitude or assembly size or lowering the required threshold to win seats) have no immediate effect on voting patterns (Remmer, 2008; Best, 2012) although electoral system reforms do seem to affect party system fragmentation in the medium term (Best, 2012). Thus the degree to which party systems can be electorally engineered by changing electoral rules remains an open question.

Yet large institutional shifts do not occur randomly-if there are not unrepresented political actors clamoring for change, electoral system reform is unlikely to occur. Electoral system reforms are major (and thus rare) political events and are likely to be hotly contested because they govern the pathway to power. Thus it is not surprising that major shifts in the electoral formula (e.g. increases in average district magnitude), changes in the assembly size, or an adjustment in the minimum threshold needed to achieve representation at least partially reflect the balance of power within the political system and actors' calculations about their political effects. But because major shifts in electoral systems do not occur randomly but instead often occur when the party system has evolved beyond the previous system, it is not surprising that Colomer (2005), Remmer (2008) or Best (2012) find there is little change in the party system in the elections immediately after the reform is enacted. These politicized reforms are poor cases for evaluating the short-term causal impact of the electoral system on the party system that develops. Yet that does not mean that reforms could not have an independent effect in other circumstances, only that these effects are difficult to isolate.

To really understand if electoral system reforms have an effect on the party system, we need to focus on cases where explicit endogeneity issues are less likely to exist. One solution to this problem may be to move beyond national-level dynamics to focus on subnational ones. As district-level electoral data has become more widely available, cross-sectional studies have shown that there is a correspondence between electoral permissiveness and electoral fragmentation at the district level (e.g. Taagepera and Shugart, 1993; Singer and Stephenson, 2009; Moser and Scheiner, 2012; Singer, 2013; c.f. Lachat et al., forthcoming). Yet there is an additional advantage of looking at electoral dynamics at the subnational level that existing district-level studies have not taken advantage of: district-level political institutions are not constant over time. Because district boundaries generally do not change in many PR systems (since they generally correspond to existing political boundaries), countries need to reallocate seats across districts as populations shift. More importantly, the reallocation of seats in a PR system differs from national-level electoral system reforms in that it is usually done by a pre-established formula, not by political negotiations that reflect differences in partisan interests across districts (Grofman and Handley, 2008). The direct endogeneity between electoral fragmentation and the adoption of permissive electoral rules that makes it difficult to isolate

the causal impact of electoral system reforms at the national level should thus be much less important in explaining the process of subnational electoral system reform, making these scenarios an ideal context to evaluate the causal nature of Duverger's Hypothesis. No study I am aware of, however, has analyzed whether increases (decreases) in district magnitude result in increased (decreased) district-level electoral fragmentation in subsequent elections; existing time-series studies are cross-national while district-level studies are cross-sectional.

In this paper, I test whether shifts in district magnitude over time have an effect on election outcomes in Spain. Observers of Spanish politics have linked the nature of the national party system to the design of the electoral system (Gunther, 1989; Hopkin, 2005; Lago and Martinez, 2007) but most of these studies have looked at the evolution of the party system at the national level.[2] But Spain is an ideal case to look at these questions for several reasons. Most districts have relatively small magnitudes (the median district magnitude is 5) and small changes in district magnitude in districts of this size can have a relatively large effect on party viability (Cox, 1997). The redistribution of seats across districts occurs before every election, providing multiple changes to examine. These changes are exogenous to political calculations, stemming from geographic swings and not partisan swings in the previous elections. Finally, the total number of seats in the parliament and the geographic composition of the districts do not change from election to election; all that changes is the number of seats that are available in each district. Thus I can compare trends in districts over time.[3]

District-level electoral data from elections conducted between 1982 and 2011 show changes in district magnitude change the number of parties receiving votes and winning seats. Specifically, a fixed effects analysis that isolates the effects of changes within districts shows that while marginal increases in district magnitude do not increase the raw number of parties seeking office, they do generate an increased disbursement of votes and an increased number of parties winning seats. Changes in electoral rules seem to affect the composition of the party system via both their psychological and mechanical effects. Thus the results provide a strong confirmation of the causal logic that underlies Duverger's hypotheses: changes in the electoral rules that make them more permissive do generally generate increased party fragmentation.

1. The hypothesized effect of changes in electoral rules on party system fragmentation

Electoral system scholars distinguish between the mechanical and psychological effects of electoral rules. As district magnitude increases, the share of the vote required to win a seat decreases and thus it becomes easier for parties to win seats. Holding the distribution of votes constant, the mechanical effect of increasing the number of seats available is generally to increase the number of

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[2] Lago (2009) is a notable exception.

[3] One main drawback of Spain as a case is the relatively short time span for which data is available.