PATTERNS OF PARLIAMENTARY RECRUITMENT IN THE DAWN OF THE BULGARIAN TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY[1]

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Abstract

Contemporary parliamentary research pays growing attention to the personal composition of the legislative institutions. The background of MPs proved to be not only a function of the transforming parliaments in democratizing societies, but a factor for these very transformations as well. Apart from the shift in the profiles of MPs across time and different terms in office, there is a lot of variation across party families and individual parties. This paper argues that the major Bulgarian parties had different recruitment patterns in the dawn of democratization and democratic consolidation. On the one hand, the successor of the former communist party selected candidates with high status in the old regime. These were people with considerable professional and political experience who could classify as professional politicians. On the other hand, the united opposition selected among candidates uncommitted to the old regime and therefore politically, and to a large extent professionally, inexperienced as long as the membership in the communist party was a precondition for successful professional career. The advent of a party representing the interests of the Turkish and Muslim population brought another cluster of MPs with corresponding origin.

МОДЕЛИ НА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРЕН ПОДБОР В ЗОРАТА НА БЪЛГАРСКИЯ ПРЕХОД КЪМ ДЕМОКРАЦИЯ

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Резюме

Съвременните изследвания върху парламентарните институции обръщат все по-голямо внимание на техния персонален състав. Предишният опит на депутатите се доказа не само като функция на трансформиращите се парламенти в демократизиращите се общества, но и като фактор за самите тези трансформации. Отвъд промените в профилите на депутатите във времето и в различните мандати, съществуват големи разлики между партийните семейства и отделните политически партии. Тази статия има за цел да покаже, че в началото на демократизацията и консолидацията на демокрацията в България, основните политически партии са възприели различни стратегии за парламентарен подбор. От една страна, наследникът на бившата комунистическа партия подбира кандидати с висок статус по време на стария режим. Това са личности със значителен професионален и политически опит, които могат да бъдат определени като професионални политици. От друга страна, обединената опозиция избира измежду кандидати, необвързани със стария режим и следователно политически, а в голяма степен и професионално, неопитни, доколкото членството в комунистическата партия е било предусловие за успешна професионална кариера преди 1989 г. Появата на партия, представляваща интересите на турското и мюсюлманското малцинство в страната, води до появата на трета група депутати, произхождащи от средите на тези малцинства.

Introduction

The early research on professionalization of parliamentary elites begins with Max Weber and his definition of the professional and unprofessional politician. The fleeting nature of the MPs' term in office suggests certain strategies prior and after their election in order to achieve specific goals related to their political development. Successful strategies lead to the

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institutionalization of professional cores of political elites who, in the terms of Weber live from, but not for politics. The larger are these cores, the greater is the professionalization of representative elites.

Professionalization, however, is not limited to the parliamentary careers of MPs. Their experience is of utmost importance. Experience in political organizations and civic movements provide lawmakers a much broader vision of social realities and expectations. This experience contributes to the organizational skills of the representatives, which are important for their parliamentary work involving active interaction within the institution and outside it with other agents, as well as voters. Experience gained in the executive and the administration, as well as in local government is an important condition for the successful work of legislators. The familiarity with the functioning of these structures provides MPs with a deeper understanding of the issues and technology of government. The educational level of the MPs, their professional orientation and pre-political career is also very important part of their professional qualities as legislators.

There are a number of studies focusing on the personal characteristics of MPs that concentrate on the determinants of the professionalization of representative elites (Putnam 1976; Riddel 1995; Best and Becker 1997). More recently, Heinrich Best and Maurizio Cotta (2000) published an edited volume with a focus on the development of representative elites in eleven European democracies. The study offers a three-dimensional approach where party families, personal characteristics and time are the analytical dimensions. In later work, the authors analyze the dynamics of selection through six background characteristics across Europe (Cotta and Best 2007). The first characteristic is the gradual reduction of the representatives of aristocracy in the legislative assemblies and its role in the process of democratization. The second refers to the role and importance of the experience of MPs in the structures of state administration before being elected. The third focus of the study is the dynamics of women's representation. The other three characteristics relate to the regional origin of MPs, their education, and experience gained party structures.

Political recruitment is central to most of the studies of representative elites. A number of authors define selection as the initial and most important step in the career of professional politicians (Blondel 1973; Mezey 1979; Norris 1997; Norris 1999; Engelstadt 2006). The selection of candidates for parliamentary seats is not only an intermediate level between the party politics and national politics. It is rather a filter that can pave the way of a politician to a higher post, to institutionalize her as a parliamentarian or to reject her. The latter usually means the end of her political career. There are three major players in the process of elite recruitment. These are the candidates seeking parliamentary seats, parties that select and voters who choose.

The forms of interaction between players are interactive and can vary. Following the logic of rational choice we can define the political selection as equilibrium between demand and supply of candidates where players follow successful or unsuccessful strategies to achieve their preferences, depending on their degree of awareness. In this game the selectorates play a key role. These are the political parties, which functionally connect voters and candidates. Following specific recruitment strategies, political parties institutionalize specific patterns of representation. Therefore, describing the representative elite as an aggregate category in an improper concept. It could be specified rather, that types of representative elites exist in parallel within the same polity. In stable West European democracies, these types were historically determined and evolved, following the developments in Western societies mainly related to modernization. In post-communist countries where fragile democratic traditions were interrupted by persistent totalitarian regimes, modernization took place before democratization. This suggests more specific models of representation in these countries. In this paper we will examine the patterns of elite recruitment to the first Bulgarian Parliament after the fall of communism in 1989 in an attempt to identify the initial patterns of political representation in the country.

Selection and professionalization of representative elites

The foregoing shows that selection is crucial to the professionalization of a politician. What are the factors for successful selection? A recent study conducted by Siavelis and Morgenstern (2008) shows that institutional factors are not decisive. This finding supports the theoretical assumption that candidates, selectorates, and electorates adapt their strategies according to the rules of the game, which indeed are the institutional prerequisites. This means that successful recruitment depends on the individual characteristics of candidates, allowing them to build successful strategies and to adapt in a changing institutional conditions and changing demands of the selectorates and the electorate. The existing literature is relatively uniform in terms of these characteristics. The main among them are: gender, ethnicity, age, regional origin and educational qualifications, occupation before the start of political career, experience in political parties, local government, the legislature or the executive. These characteristics determine different models of selection and professionalization of representatives according to their experience and qualifications.

Building on the more general theory of modernization, Cotta and Best examined long-term processes of democratization and professionalization of the representative elites as an explanatory tool for the evolution of representation in its varying forms in different countries (2007, 7-13). To trace these processes, they study the dynamics in the profiles of MPs in time. The authors define three groups of characteristics as relevant for this purpose. The first covers those, which associate the representative with the represented. The second includes the skills and qualifications that allow the representative to be selected and to carry out successfully the duties for which he was elected. The third group consists of characteristics that define the interactions of the "representative with other representatives ... and with the institution of representation" (2007, 16).

Best and Cotta defined three models of representation. The first, designated as "traditional" is a "*representation by peers*" (2007, 17), which defines as key factors the first group of characteristics. According to that model, if a group within the society finds its interests threatened by others, it prefers to be represented by candidates originating from itself believing that they will protect the interests at stake. Such model is well suited to national minorities and is implemented in several countries where members of a given minority sustainably support their ethnic party regardless of competence or experience of its candidates.

The extension of suffrage and the need for effective representation leads to the replacement of the peers by professional politicians. This means that democratization precedes, and somehow provokes professionalization. The latter makes political characteristics more important than social ones. This process increases the distance between voters and their representatives, and gradually allows for the emergence of professional representative elites – politicians, chosen for their narrow political abilities apart from their socio-cultural characteristics. The growing distance between voters and politicians, however, provides grounds for Best and Cotta to write about cycles in the model of representation and to suggest "reversal" of the cycle and return, if not completely, then to some extent, to the traditional model of representation (2007, 18). This idea is consistent with the theory of Pareto for the circulation of elites (Pareto 1935, § 2051 - § 2056; Higley and Pakulski 2007, 12; Marshall 2007, 25-41). Hypothetically we can assume that the process occurs in varying degree and direction across individual parties, given their crucial role for the selection, and consequently for the professionalization of representatives.

Although the theoretical model of Cotta and Best is also applied to the study of representative elites in post-communist countries (Best and Edinger 2003), such extension of the scope of validity of its conceptual framework requires the inclusion of some additional features, as well as setting of the model of representation emergent with the regime change. The specificity of some of these societies requires the inclusion of ethnicity to the cluster of social

characteristics. In the context of the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, this feature is much more important than religion, which is included in the model of Cotta and Best. These societies are relatively homogeneous in terms of religion. Moreover, the totalitarian state systematically undermined the role of religion for a long time span. Probably for this reason any particular religious cleavages could hardly be found, and with the exception of Poland, religion is not among the main public issues for transforming societies in the region. On the other hand, compact ethnic minorities became a significant political factor just in the onset of transition. Among these are the Hungarian minorities in Romania and Slovakia, the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, the Russian minorities in Baltic States and the German minority in the Czech Republic. In addition, most of these countries have significant Roma minorities.

The other major addition refers to the group of political and professional experience. The nature of the old regime implies the absence of influential classes of managers, entrepreneurs, landowners and priests. However, party functionaries, administrative officials, and directors of state-owned, non-market enterprises, compose a large part of the higher strata, which requires their inclusion in the model.

Having in mind these clarifications and addressing the particular specificity of the post-communist context, we can conclude that the patterns of representation in the beginning of the transition vary greatly. This variation depends on three main factors: the introduction of lustration mechanisms; existence of organized opposition and/or dissident movements at the end of the old regime; and the presence of compact ethnic minority/minorities. In countries where regime change is not accompanied by lustration measures and restrictions, the former communist parties select and nominate candidates, whose professionalization has developed during the old regime. If during the regime there were organized opposition movements, it is very likely that their selection will include professionalized opposition activists. Conversely, if the opposition parties and movements occur in parallel with the regime change, then the selection will be among candidates without previous experience and significant status. In countries with large ethnic minorities, which have felt oppressed or threatened during the old regime in any form and seek representation of their group interests, ethnic parties emerge, following the principle of traditional selection. These different patterns of elite recruitment occur in parallel within the process of liberalization and democratization. This in turn implies that the political parties are becoming determinants of the parallel existence of alternative models of representative elite.

The liberalization of the regime in Bulgaria and the subsequent democratization began late. The lack of lustration mechanisms favored the old elite in the transforming political system and provided an opportunity for its political legitimization. Organized opposition occurred in parallel with the changes, preceded by repressions over the largest minority in the country. These factors suggest a model of representation where the former Communist Party selected professionalized and experienced candidates. Opposition parties could not rely on experienced candidates. They did not have time and sufficient capacity to implement quality selection, which lead to many problems at a later stage. Simultaneously, a party of the Turkish minority appeared which took a traditional model of selection by choosing candidates recognized as exponents of its group interests. To sum up, three distinctive patterns of representation occurred in Bulgaria in 1990, embodying the continuum between traditional and professional representation.

To confirm the empirical validity of the above assumption, we will use the BGMP Dataset V1.2 (Author 2010), containing values of 52 variables relating to personal characteristics of all Bulgarian MPs in the period 1990-2010 split in seven parliamentary terms. In the present paper, only the data for the Seventh Grand National Assembly will be used.

Empirical evidence: the case of the 7th Grand National Assembly in Bulgaria

The elections for a Grand National Assembly on June 10 and 17 1990 were conducted under mixed electoral system, agreed at the "round table". The country was divided into 200 single-member and 28 multimember districts, for the distribution of 400 seats. Majoritarian candidates were elected through two-round system, while for the multimember districts a proportional system with party lists and 4% threshold was applied (Karasimeonov 2006, 53). The domination of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in single-member districts was unchallenged. Its candidates won 114 seats in single-member districts and 97 seats in the multimember districts, thereby forming single-party majority.

The opposition in the face of the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) won 69 seats in single-member and 75 seats in multimember districts. The newly formed party of Ahmed Dogan – Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) managed to win 12 seats in multimember districts and 11 in single-member districts. From that moment onwards, MRF became an indispensable participant in Bulgarian political life.

The Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU) managed to get 16 seats in the multimember districts. Two independents, two representatives of the Fatherland Union and one of the Social Democratic Party and the Joint Unit of Labour were elected in single-member districts. The election results were not a radical change in terms of power, dislike other post-communist countries (2006, 58). In fact, the old elite was to a large extent replicated in the new institutional environment.

The average age of MPs in the 7th Grand National Assembly was 49.3 years. The distribution of data is normal, and the median is very close to the mean of 50 years. Half of the MPs were aged between 41 and 57 (respectively 25th and 75th percentile). The youngest and the oldest MPs were respectively 24 and 81 years old. In comparison, the average age at first democratically elected Czech Parliament is 43.4 years (Mansfeldová 2003, 48), in the Lithuanian – 45.4 years (Matonytė 2003, 58), and in the Hungarian in – 46 years (Ilonszki 2000, 221).

The relatively high average age of MPs is indicative of the reproduction of the elite of pre-democratic period. Three quarters of the MPs were aged over 41, which means that their primary socialization and professional development have gone through the early years of the regime. The younger and perhaps more reform-minded MPs were only a quarter of the members of parliament – 102 people.

Table 1 shows the distribution of MPs by party lists and age groups. Age groups are defined according to the 25th, 50th and 75th percentile. The purpose of such table is to identify significant patterns of age distribution by parties, while maintaining comparability of age groups. The data show that the Bulgarian Socialist Party relied equally to candidates of all categories except the youngest. These were people aged over 41. It can be assumed that they owed their professional and political careers to the old regime, and remained loyal to the party after the fall of communism. The younger MPs constituted only 18 percent of the representatives of the BSP.

Table 1. Age of MPs in the 7th Grand National Assembly by party

		Age categories				Total
		< 41	41-49	50-56	> 56	
Party list	BSP	39	64	60	56	219
		17.8%	29.2%	27.4%	25.6%	100,0%
	UDF	48	25	29	45	146
		32.7%	17.0%	19.7%	30.6%	100,0%
	MRF	11	7	1	4	23
		47.8%	30.4%	4.3%	17.4%	100,0%
	BANU	2	3	10	1	16
		12.5%	18.8%	62.5%	6.3%	100,0%
	Independent	1	0	0	1	2
		50.0%	.0%	.0%	50.0%	100,0%
	Other	1	1	0	2	4
		25.0%	25.0%	.0%	50.0%	100,0%
Total		102	100	100	109	411
		24,8%	24.3%	24.3%	26.5%	100.0%

The age structure of the MPs from the Union of Democratic Forces presents a different model. The main part of the MPs of the union was from the groups below 25th and above 75th percentile. These data indicate that the party relied both on young, reform-minded candidates, and elders whose socialization took place before the communist regime.

The data show that the two main political forces in the first democratically elected parliament after the communist regime relied on two opposing models of selection of candidates for parliamentary seats. These two models are indicative not only of the political vision of the two main political opponents by that time, but also of the potential of functionaries and supporters, which they had. The youngest group of lawmakers in the 7th Grand National Assembly was that of the MRF. Almost half of the representatives of the movement were within the group of MPs below 41 years of age. This shows that the MRF had another model of recruitment – young politicians with no previous experience. This gives us grounds to assume that in the first Legislature of Bulgaria after the regime downfall, the three major parties undertook three different approaches to selection. The age structure of representation of BANU also demonstrated a unique pattern. The main accumulation is in the group 50-56 years, which means that lawmakers selected by that party are by large part of a single generation. These findings give us grounds to assume that the distribution in Table 1 is not accidental. To verify this assumption, we calculated the usual statistics used in the analysis of qualitative data. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the 0.01 level, which means that the correlation between the age group of MPs and their party affiliation is not due to chance. The values of the symmetric coefficients Φ, Kramer's V and the Contingency coefficient also demonstrate highly significant values.

Regarding gender equality, the 7th Grand National Assembly can be defined as extremely conservative. From a total of 412 lawmakers sworn in office during the term, only 34 or just about 8% were women. This trend appears typical for first democratic parliaments in Central and Eastern Europe. In the first democratically elected Czech Parliament women held one-tenth of the seats (Mansfeldová 2003, 49), while in Lithuania the number share was 8.5% (Matonytė 2003, 59).

Table 2. Gender structure of MPs in 7th Grand National Assembly

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Party list	BSP	195	24	219
		89.0%	11.0%	100.0%
	UDF	138	9	146
		93.9%	6.1%	100.0%
	MRF	23	0	23
		100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	BANU	15	1	16
		93.8%	6.3%	100.0%
	Independent	2	0	2
		100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Other	4	0	4
		100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		377	34	411
		91.7%	8.3%	100.0%

In Bulgaria, most women were elected with the support of the BSP – 24. Although the UDF and the MRF selected younger candidates, they lagged behind in terms of gender equality. There were no women among the MPs of MRF. Out of the total number of women in the Assembly, 24 or 70.6 percent were elected in multimember districts, indicating that the parties considered the chances of success of female candidates in single-member districts as relatively weak.

Regarding the ethnic composition of the Assembly data show a similar picture (Table 3). MPs with ethnic origin other than Bulgarian are only 29 or 7.1%. 219 MPs entered parliament with the support of the BSP, out of which 214 Bulgarians, four Jews and one Turk. MPs from the UDF were 141 Bulgarians, four Jews and two Roma. From a total of 23 representatives of the MRF, 18 or 78.3 percent were ethnic Turks. Among the other five there was an ethnic Russian and three Bulgarian Muslims. All other MPs were of Bulgarian ethnic origin.

Table 3. Ethnic structure of the 7th Grand National Assembly

		Ethnicity				Total
		Bulgarian	Jewish	Roma	Turkish	
Party list	BSP	214	4	0	1	219
		97.7%	1.8%	.0%	.5%	100.0%
	UDF	141	4	2	0	147
		95.9%	2.7%	1.4%	.0%	100.0%
	MRF	5	0	0	18	23
		21.7%	.0%	.0%	78.3%	100.0%
	BANU	16	0	0	0	16
		100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Independent	2	0	0	0	2
		100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Other	4	0	0	0	4
		100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		382	8	2	19	411
		92.9%	1.9%	.5%	4.6%	100.0%

At the dawn of the new Bulgarian democracy parties proved to be very conservative with regard to ethnic minorities, although they included a small number of representatives of various ethnic groups in their lists. While over one-fifth of the MPs of the MRF were not ethnic Turks, the majority of them were Muslims, which does not make the movement different in this aspect. The conservative approach to the ethnic composition of representation in parliament is confirmed by the statistical analysis. The Chi-square test shows highly significant value. The symmetric coefficients indicate strong correlation between party affiliation and ethnicity as well.

Data in Table 4 present the distribution of MPs through party affiliation and the category of the settlement where they were born. More than a half of the MPs were born in villages and small towns. Out of the remaining, 27.3 percent were born in regional centers and 15.1% in the capital. The distribution by party affiliation shows that most of the MPs born in villages were nominated by MRF and BSP. In the group of MRF the total share of deputies who were born in villages and small towns amounted to 69.5 percent. The figures for BSP are similar – 62.5 percent of its MPs were born in villages and small towns. The data for UDF shows quite different picture. MPs born in small towns account for 16.3 percent of the members of this party and those born in villages, regional centers and the capital were equally represented. Although lawmakers born in the regional centers were fairly distributed among the main party groups, 66 percent of those born in Sofia, were elected with the support of UDF.

Two basic patterns of representation according to the category of the birthplace of MPs and their party affiliation can be derived from the data. The first pattern includes representatives of MRF and the Socialist Party, whose MPs originated mainly from villages and small towns. The second pattern is the one of UDF, where the bulk of the MPs were born in Sofia and the regional centers.

Table 4. Regional origin of the MPs in the 7th Grand National Assembly

	Category of the settlement					
	Village	Small town	Regional center	Capital	Abroad	Total
BSP	87	50	61	16	5	219
	39.7%	22.8%	27.9%	7.3%	2.3%	100.0%
UDF	40	24	40	41	2	146
	27.2%	16.3%	27.2%	27.9%	1.4%	100.0%
MRF	11	5	5	1	1	23
	47.8%	21.7%	21.7%	4.3%	4.3%	100.0%
BANU	4	5	3	4	0	16
	25.0%	31.3%	18.8%	25.0%	.0%	100.0%
Independent	1	0	1	0	0	2
	50.0%	.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Other	2	0	2	0	0	4
	50.0%	.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	145	84	112	62	8	411
	35.3%	20.4%	27.3%	15.1%	1.9%	100.0%

Table 5 shows that the level of education of legislators in the 7th Grand National Assembly was very high – 92.2 per cent had higher education, out of which 32.3% with scientific degree. Only 5.6 percent of the MPs had secondary education, and three MPs had just primary. In comparison, in the first democratically elected Czech parliament MPs with university education were 74.6 percent (Mansfeldová 2003, 50). In Lithuania the share was higher than in Bulgaria – 95.5% (Matonytė 2003, 55), in Estonia – 83.2 (Ruus 2003, 70), and in Hungary – 88.5 (Ilonszki 2000, 221).

Most of the graduates have been elected with the support of the BSP, while most of the MPs with secondary education were in the group of UDF. Among the MPs of the MRF, the proportion of those with higher education was also very high. 58 percent of the MPs with a scientific degree were in the group of BSP, and 36 percent in the one of the UDF. The allocation of graduates without a degree was similar – 55 percent of them were elected with the support of BSP, and 32.4 with the support of UDF. The advantage of the BSP to the UDF in both categories was about 22 percent.

Table 5. Education of the MPs in the 7th Grand National Assembly

	Education					
	Primary	Secondary	College	Higher	Scientific degree	Total
BSP	2	3	1	142	71	219
	.9%	1.4%	.5%	64.8%	32.4%	100.0%
UDF	0	19	1	82	44	146
	.0%	13.0%	.7%	56.2%	30.1%	100.0%
MRF	1	1	4	14	3	23
	4.3%	4.3%	17.4%	60.9%	13.0%	100.0%
BANU	0	0	0	13	3	16
	.0%	.0%	.0%	81.3%	18.8%	100.0%
Independent	0	0	0	1	1	2
	.0%	.0%	.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Other	0	0	0	4	0	4
	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	3	23	6	256	122	410
	.7%	5.6%	1.5%	62.4%	29.8%	100.0%

Most of the graduates at the Assembly were lawyers – 20.9%; engineers – 19.3% and economists – 14.2%. The share of medics and linguists was considerable as well. However, the proportion of specialists in social sciences, whose education Cotta and Best define as particularly relevant to parliamentary work, is only 7 percent (Table 6). In the group of BSP, the specialists in technical sciences were more than the lawyers and economists

The distribution across major and party affiliation demonstrates highly significant relationship. The distribution does not change when controlled for gender, regional origin, or method of election, which means that majors were evenly distributed among these categories and significant differences, can be observed only at the party and ethnicity levels because, as already noted, the party affiliation and ethnicity were strongly correlated.

Table 6. Majors of the graduates in the 7th Grand National Assembly

	Party list						Total
	BSP	UDF	MRF	BANU	Independent	Other	
Agrarian sciences	6	2	0	2	0	0	10
	2.8%	1.6%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	.0%	2.7%
Journalism and philology	12	17	5	1	0	0	35
	5.7%	13.8%	31.3%	6.3%	.0%	.0%	9.4%
Arts	5	9	3	0	0	0	17
	2.4%	7.3%	18.8%	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.6%
Economics	36	11	2	4	0	0	53
	17.0%	8.9%	12.5%	25.0%	.0%	.0%	14.2%
History	9	2	0	0	0	1	12
	4.2%	1.6%	.0%	.0%	.0%	25.0%	3.2%
Mathematics and natural sciences	6	12	0	0	0	0	18
	2.8%	9.8%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.8%
Medicine	26	12	0	1	0	0	39
	12.3%	9.8%	.0%	6.3%	.0%	.0%	10.5%
Law	41	25	4	5	1	2	78
	19.3%	20.3%	25.0%	31.3%	50.0%	50.0%	20.9%
Security and military	13	0	0	0	0	0	13
	6.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	3.5%
Engineering	45	24	0	3	0	0	72
	21.2%	19.5%	.0%	18.8%	.0%	.0%	19.3%
Philosophy and social science	13	9	2	0	1	1	26
	6.1%	7.3%	12.5%	.0%	50.0%	25.0%	7.0%
Total	212	123	16	16	2	4	373
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Political experience of MPs before their election can be conceptually divided into three main categories. The first covers political experience as functionaries and party leaders. Such experience is an indicator for the possession of certain organizational and technocratic skills which are vitally important for every professional politician. The second category embraces political experience at the ministerial level, and at senior administrative positions. The third category includes experience in local government as a mayor, deputy mayor or municipal councilor.

Table 7. Previous political experience of MPs in the 7th Grand National Assembly

	Partizan		Ministerial		Municipal	
	N	Column N%	N	Column N%	N	Column N%
BSP	67	55.4%	44	97.8%	15	78.9%
UDF	38	31.4%	0	.0%	1	5.3%
MRF	4	3.3%	0	.0%	0	.0%
BANU	9	7.4%	0	.0%	3	15.8%
Independent	1	.8%	1	2.2%	0	.0%
Other	2	1.7%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Total	121	100.0%	45	100.0%	19	100.0%

Table 7 shows the distribution of MPs by party and the three cumulative variables, representing previous political experience. The data show that most MPs had previous experience

in party structures – 121 or 29.4% of all MPs. Most of them were elected with the support of the BSP – 55.4% and UDF – 31.4%t. The difference between the two parties on the other two types of political experience is much bigger.

The vast majority of MPs with experience at ministerial and senior administrative positions were concentrated in the group of the BSP. Among the representatives of the UDF and the MRF there was no former minister or deputy minister. The figures regarding experience in local government are similar. Only one representative of the opposition had previous experience at the municipal level. This confirms the theoretical assumption that the old elite was reproduced in the new legislative term through successor of the communist party.

However, the parliamentary elite of the old regime was not reproduced in the 7th Grand National Assembly. The data in Table 8 indicate that 95.6% of the MPs entered parliament for the first time. The situation was similar to that in Hungary, where the proportion of freshmen in parliament was 94.8% (Ilonszki 2003, 31). The Polish parliament in 1989, also had a similar level of renovation – 91.9% (Wasilewski and Betkiewicz 2003, 42), while in Lithuania 100% of the lawmakers did not have any previous political experience, including parliamentary (Matonytė 2003, 61).

Thirteen MPs in the 7th Grand National Assembly, elected with the support of the BSP, had previous parliamentary experience; ten of them can be defined as institutionalized parliamentarians with four or more mandates. Among the representatives of the BSP was Stanko Todorov, who, with his nine terms in office was constantly present in parliament since 1954 and was member of all the parliaments during the communist regime, except the first one. He was Chairman of the National Assembly in two terms between 1981 and 1990. A similar case was Dobri Dzhurov, who was MP in seven parliamentary terms and minister of defense since 1962. From a total of eighteen MPs with previous parliamentary experience, five were in the group of BSP. Two were elected with the support of UDF. These were the oldest parliamentarians – Petar Dertliev and Ivan Ginchev who were members in the 6th Grand National Assembly. One MP with previous parliamentary experience was elected as an independent candidate, one with the support of the BANU and another one with the support of the Fatherland Union.

Table 8. Parliamentary experience of the MSs in the 7th Grand National Assembly

		Party list						
		BSP	UDF	MRF	BANU	Independent	Other	Total
Total number of parliamentary mandates	1	206	145	23	15	1	3	393
		94.1%	98.6%	100.0%	93.8%	50.0%	75.0%	95,6%
	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	5
		1.4%	1.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1,2%
	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		.0%	.0%	.0%	6.3%	.0%	.0%	,2%
	4	5	0	0	0	1	1	7
		2.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	50.0%	25.0%	1,7%
	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
		1.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	,7%
	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		.5%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	,2%
	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		.5%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	,2%
Total		219	147	23	16	2	4	411
		100,0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

All representatives of the MRF were freshmen in the legislature. The data in Table 8 support out theoretical assumptions. The successor of the Bulgarian Communist Party partially reproduced the old parliamentary elite, while the main opposition parties brought to the parliament new political generation.

Available data on the residence of 80% of the MPs show that more than a half of them (54.1%), at the time of their election lived in Sofia. 9.2% were from the regions of Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas, while the remaining 36.7% represent other regions of the country (Table 9). In terms of proportions, most representatives of Sofia and the three major cities of Bulgaria were among the members of the UDF –61.1% and 14.8% respectively. The representatives of BSP were almost evenly split between the capital and the countryside apart from the three larger cities. The structure of representation of MRF and BANU was similar.

The data in Table 10 suggests that BSP had the most solid basis for selection at the national level. Almost 60% of its MPs were elected in the districts were they have been born and developed their careers. The ratio is much lower for UDF – 36.4% and negligible for the rest of the parties. When controlling for the type of district − single-member or multimember, the picture is different; 46.2% of the UDF MPs elected in single-member districts had been born and lived in the district against 25.5% for those elected in multi-member district. This means that UDF relied on local people in the majoritarian ballots, while promoting party functionaries in the proportional lists. This suggests that the party applied differentiated approach. It strived to ensure the election of key party leaders by placing them on elective positions in the list and is to win as many seats as possible in single-member districts through the nomination of renowned local individuals. The strategy of the BSP was different; 51.9 % of the MPs elected in single-member districts were local residents against 63.8% for those elected in multimember districts. The large number of local persons elected through the proportional lists probably means that BSP relied on them to collect more votes for the party lists and to increase its electoral success.

Table 9. Residence of MPs by the time of election

		Residence			
		Sofia	Cities	Towns	Total
Party list	BSP	94	13	82	189
		49.7%	6.9%	43.4%	100.0%
	UDF	66	16	26	108
		61.1%	14.8%	24.1%	100.0%
	MRF	6	1	4	11
		54.5%	9.1%	36.4%	100.0%
	BANU	8	0	6	14
		57.1%	.0%	42.9%	100.0%
	Independent	1	0	0	1
		100.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Other	2	0	2	4
		50.0%	.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		177	30	120	327
		54.1%	9.2%	36.7%	100.0%

Table 10. Regional coherence of representation in 7th Grand National Assembly

	Party list					
	BSP	UDF	MRF	BANU	Independent	Other
District of birth is the same as the district of election	61.2%	31.1%	3.3%	2.9%	1.0%	.5%
District of residence is the same as the district of election	55.3%	38.8%	1.2%	3.5%	.0%	1.2%
Districts of birth, residence and election are the same	57.6% 51.9%* 63.8%**	36.4% 46.2%* 25.5%**	2.0% 4.3%**	3.0% 6.4%**	.0%	1.0% 1.9%*
* Single-member districts ** Multimember districts						

Conclusion

The empirical data on MPs in the 7th Grand National Assembly show that the main hypothesis of this paper can be considered valid. In the first legislature after the regime change, the three main parties – BSP, UDF and MRF had different and specific patterns of selection of MPs. The MPs from BSP were people with high social status at the time of the old regime, both at the national, the regional and the local level. They were from the generation which was socialized during the construction of the communist regime, thus allowing for the reproduction of the old elite in the new political context.

The UDF recruitment pattern was different. The union selected candidates who did not have substantial ties to the old regime. These were people from the generations preceding and following the one, most represented in the group of the BSP. The pattern of selection of MRF can certainly be defined as traditional. The movement selected candidates close to their electorate, which was easily identified.

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