

**FROM OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT COALITION:
UNITY AND FRAGMENTATION WITHIN THE
DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION OF ROMANIA**

Steven D. Roper
Pace University

INTRODUCTION

Over the past eight years, there has developed an important literature on Eastern European party and parliamentary systems. This literature has examined the nature of these systems by creating party classifications or addressing the process of parliamentary institutionalization (Roskin 1993; Olson and Norton 1996). However, relatively little of this literature has explored the nexus between Eastern European party and parliamentary coalitions. While theories of parliamentary activity have been developed to explain the composition of ruling coalitions (Riker 1962; Dodd 1976) or committee system behavior (Krehbiel 1991), these theories often fail to consider the development of what I term a "party electoral coalition." This type of coalition is composed of individual member-parties that form an electoral coalition which is transformed into a parliamentary coalition. The German Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Socialist Union coalition would be an example of a party electoral coalition, and these coalitions have figured prominently in the creation of parliamentary coalitions throughout Western Europe; however, they are even more important in Eastern European parliaments because of the large number of parliamentary parties. This article examines the broader relationship between party electoral and parliamentary coalitions by examining Romanian opposition politics. Romania provides an excellent case study in which to explore why Eastern European party electoral coalitions are so temporary. By understanding the nature of party electoral coalitions, we will better understand the difficulty of political transformation in this region.

THE CASE OF ROMANIA

In this article, I examine why the Romanian opposition movement and its party electoral coalition, the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR), fragmented in early 1995 and how this fragmentation actually assisted the CDR in the 1996 national elections. Based

on a 1994 survey of CDR party leaders. I provide evidence which demonstrates that these elites had different perceptions regarding the nature of this coalition. Moreover, the fragmentation of this coalition provides some general evidence concerning the nature of these coalitions, and in the context of Romanian politics, the splintering of the Romanian opposition movement has already had a significant consequence for the future of Romanian politics. Before addressing those issues which contributed to the fragmentation of this coalition, it is instructive to discuss the basic features of this party electoral coalition.

In November 1991, Romanian opposition parties began their initial discussions concerning the formation of a party electoral coalition, and the CDR was the result of these discussions. Although many of the members of the coalition have changed since its inception in late 1991, there was a core group of parties in the CDR when this survey was conducted in May 1994: The Civic Alliance Party (PAC), the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR), the Liberal Party '93 (PL '93), the National Liberal Party-Democratic Convention (PNL-CD), the National Peasants Party-Christian Democratic (PNT-CD), the Romanian Ecological Party (PER) and the Social Democratic Party of Romania (PSDR). In addition, several associations and civic organizations are still members of this coalition. These associations include organizations such as the Civic Alliance and the Association of Former Political Detainees of Romania. While these associations did not field their own parliamentary candidates, these associations promoted the candidates of the CDR and had a significant influence on the internal structure of the organization. These associations have representation on the CDR Executive Committee and the Convention Council, and they are responsible for adopting protocols and directives which involve CDR political strategy and tactics.

The CDR was initially conceived as a party electoral coalition for the local elections in March 1992. Because of the success of the CDR in these local elections, this coalition contested the national elections in September 1992. The CDR did not perform as well as expected in the national elections, and throughout 1993 and 1994, party divisions emerged within the coalition which ultimately led to its fragmentation by February 1995. By the June 1996 local elections, only the PNT-CD, the PER and the PNL-CD remained in the CDR.¹ The CDR was reorganized by the time of the 1996 local

elections, and its candidates won the mayoral contests in many major Romanian cities including Bucharest and approximately 19% of the city and county council seats.

The success of the CDR continued in the November and December 1996 national elections. In the parliamentary elections, the CDR received approximately 30% of the vote and about 36% of the seats in both houses (*Libertatea* 1996). The CDR was able to form a coalition government with UDMR and the Social Democratic Union (USD) which is composed of the PSDR and the Democratic Party National Salvation Front (PD FSN). The coalition selected Victor Ciorbea as the new prime minister. In addition, the CDR presidential candidate Emil Constantinescu defeated then-President Ion Iliescu in the second round of elections. Following the obvious success of the CDR, there was a great deal of enthusiasm that necessary reforms would finally be enacted by the parliament, and certainly, the pace of economic reforms has been much more rapid under the Ciorbea government than under the Vacaroiu or Stolojan governments.

However, during the 1996 national elections, there were disagreements between the CDR and the USD concerning a pre-electoral agreement. Moreover, the USD contains a party, the PSDR, which had already left the CDR, and immediately following the elections, members of several liberal parties including the PNL-CD and the National Liberal Party (both members of the CDR) began discussions concerning the formation of a single liberal party (*Libertatea* 1996). In addition, another CDR party, the Romania Alternative Party (PAR) proposed a fusion with the PAC (another party which had left the CDR). While this coalition government has endured for over a year, there have been a number of episodes which demonstrate the volatility of coalition politics. Petre Roman, leader of the USD and Speaker of the Senate, indicated in August that his party would withdraw support from the ruling coalition if the pace of economic reforms was too rapid. Moreover, UDMR indicated that it would leave the coalition if the government did not pass an education law which would provide minorities linguistic and educational rights.

While the Ciorbea government has lasted a year, there are still many questions facing the CDR. How will the CDR transform itself from a party electoral coalition into a parliamentary coalition and from an opposition coalition to a government coalition? Will the CDR be able to unite in policy-making, and will the CDR be able to

work with parties which had earlier left the coalition? These are important questions because the current coalition government does not enjoy a significant majority, and if there are defections from the coalition, the government might not be able to sustain a vote of confidence. In addition, this is the first opportunity for the former opposition to form a government. The success or failure of the CDR as a government and parliamentary coalition will have a significant impact on the future of Romanian politics.

The internal politics of the CDR over the past three years provides possible evidence for the future of the CDR as a government and parliamentary coalition. The fragmentation of the CDR in 1995 provides insight into the policy disagreements which have shaped this coalition since its inception. Therefore in order to understand the future of the CDR, it is important to understand why the CDR fragmented in 1995. To that end, I explore whether the CDR assisted its member-parties in developing a broad electoral base which ultimately provided the coalition the ability to pursue a unified agenda in the parliament. In order to assess these transformations, I examine attitude consistency among the CDR party elite using a survey instrument which was conducted in the Spring of 1994. I hypothesized that if elite attitudes regarding the CDR as an electoral and party coalition were largely congruent, then elite attitudes regarding the CDR as a parliamentary coalition would be similar. Moreover, congruence among elite attitudes would enable the CDR to be a more effective parliamentary coalition and would prevent the coalition from fragmenting. However, the data indicate that there were different perceptions of the CDR depending on whether the CDR was analyzed as an electoral, party or parliamentary organization. The data provide evidence which would support the hypothesis that the CDR has not assisted member-parties in developing a broad electoral platform. However, the data do not support the hypothesis that the CDR has not assisted member-parties in pursuing a unified parliamentary agenda. These conflicting elite attitudes indicate that there were significant divisions within the coalition and provide evidence as to why the CDR splintered in 1995. Moreover, the differences among the CDR elite in 1995 provide a basis for understanding potential conflicts among the CDR and the USD elite in 1997.

SURVEYS OF ELITES

This survey of the CDR party elites was the first Western survey of this population. Because surveys have not previously been conducted on the CDR elites and because the voting records of MPs have not been made available to the general public, this survey presents the first data that exist on this important group within Romanian politics. Most surveys conducted on Romanian parties use the electorate as the level of analysis. Organizations such as the Institute for Romanian Public Opinion (IRSOP), the Group for Social Dialogue (GSD) and the Institute for Marketing and Surveys (IMAS) conduct such mass-based surveys. These surveys have provided important insights into the ideological connection between voters and Romanian parties. Surveys conducted by Western scholars have also generally utilized the electorate as the level of analysis. For example, a recent survey conducted by Whitefield and Evans (1994) measures the placement of parties in Romania as a function of voter perceptions.

While Romanian and Western scholarship has examined party development as a function of voter perceptions, there has been a lack of research on party development as a function of elite perceptions. The surveys that have been conducted on Romanian elite opinion have focused on issues of public policy rather than party development. Research conducted by Crowther and Roper (1996) on Romanian and Moldovan MPs examines the process of parliamentary institution-building and public policy decision-making rather than party development.

Elite opinion is important to assess because of the relationship between voters and parties. Mosca (1939, 50) defines an elite class by the manner in which it "performs all political functions and monopolizes power." The elite create the system of governing and electoral procedures. Moreover as Diamond, Linz and Lipset argue, democratic stability requires "a widespread belief among elites...in the legitimacy of the democratic system" (1990, 9). Pridham (1990) also maintains that political elites are extremely important during the process of democratic transition. In the new democracies in Eastern Europe, the elite serve an important role in the process of democratization.

While the elite have a significant effect on the process of democratization, the term "elite" as used in this article does not denote

a specific group within the society. One approach to elite analysis emphasizes that there is no single unitary elite. While elites are an important class within the political system, "the elite does not exist as a singular collectivity, but rather the political and administrative leaders of a system are very diverse and incongruent in perspective" (Eldersveld, Kooiman and van der Tak 1981, 4). Studies by Sartori and Almond argue that there are ideological differences which cause elite conflict. Riggs (1964) argues that generational differences can produce elite conflict.

Because a singular political elite does not exist, the first issue confronting those that research elite perceptions is to specify who are the elite. Numerous definitions of elites specify "party elites" as a subgroup within the elite class (Field and Higley 1985, 6). However, one is still left with the difficult task of defining a "party elite." Is a party elite defined by the personal attributes of the individual elite or the position that the individual holds? If a party elite is defined by personal attributes, which attributes are important? If a party elite is defined by the positions they hold, which positions are important? Pridham (1987b) argues that the selection of respondents and elite identification is the most difficult task in survey preparation. Similar to earlier studies conducted by Eldersveld (1964), Eldersveld, Kooiman and van der Tak (1981) and Pridham (1987a), this research defines a party elite based on the position that the individual holds rather than personal attributes. The personal attributes of individuals are important in their selection for positions within the party; however since such attributes may be necessary but not sufficient, this study defines a specific group as a party elite based on their position rather than personal attributes.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This article explores attitude consistency among the CDR party elite using a mail survey which was conducted between March and May 1994. This survey provides evidence as to why the CDR fragmented. For this survey, county party chairpersons were defined as the party elite population. I choose to define this population as the party elite for four reasons. First, every party within the CDR had county party chairpersons. While some parties had greater county representation than others, every party within the CDR maintained some form of county representation. Because every party within the

CDR had chairpersons at the county level, surveying this population allowed for comparability across the CDR member-parties.

Second, because many of the parties within the CDR had county party offices throughout Romania, surveying this population allowed for comparability among the regions of Romania. Third, these county party chairpersons are important individuals within the party organization. Many of these chairpersons were parliamentary candidates of the CDR, and almost 15% of those chairpersons surveyed were also MPs. Fourth, county party chairpersons are an already identifiable elite within the CDR member-parties. Similar to the work of Eldersveld, Kooiman and van der Tak (1981), I am defining a party elite based on the pre-existing conceptions that elites within the CDR member-parties already possessed.

This survey assessed elite opinion consistency and whether the CDR assisted its member-parties in developing a broad electoral base and a unified parliamentary agenda by presenting questions in three areas: (1) The CDR as an electoral organization, (2) the CDR as a party organization and (3) the CDR as a parliamentary organization. The survey comprised a total of twenty-four close-ended questions with one open-ended question, and one question that required respondents to rank. Of the seven parties in the CDR, three parties decided not to participate in the survey. The PAC, the PNL-CD and the PER refused to provide the names and addresses of their county chairpersons.² Even though three CDR member-parties did not participate in the survey, two of the parties which chose not to participate (the PNL-CD and the PER) are the two least important parties as ranked by the survey. Moreover in earlier interviews which I conducted, the leaders of other CDR member-parties indicated that the PNL-CD and the PER had very few county branches. Therefore the fact that these two parties did not participate does not substantially increase the amount of sample bias. However, the fact that the PAC did not participate in the survey is more problematic. Based on the survey responses, the PAC was the third most important CDR member-party. In addition, the PAC has several county branches. However, it is not clear that the refusal of the PAC to participate in the survey introduced a substantial amount of sample bias. Following pre-testing and back-translation procedures,³ a total of 121 surveys were mailed to county party chairpersons of the CDR. In six cases, I received a "return to sender." Therefore, there were a total of 115 surveys that actually went to active county

branches. Sixty-nine surveys were returned for a response rate of 60%.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Aggregated Results: The CDR as an Electoral Organization

The aggregated survey results are analyzed in three sections that reflect the three issues areas in which questions were constructed. The aggregated results for the first area, the CDR as an electoral organization, are quite interesting. There were certain questions in which a consensus emerged among the respondents regarding the CDR as an electoral organization. As reported in Table 2, almost 90% of respondents answered that the CDR would stay together in its present form until the next elections. Of course shortly after these data were analyzed, four of the parties defected from the CDR.

In addition as shown in Table 1, there was an overwhelming consensus among the respondents that the CDR failed to win the number of seats in the 1992 parliamentary elections that they expected. Almost 83% of respondents answered that the CDR obtained less seats than expected. When asked why the CDR received less seats, there was a dispersion of responses. As shown in Table 1, there was no consensus on why the CDR did so poorly in these elections. Of those respondents that answered "other motive" only 6% reported in an open-ended question that the CDR did poorly because of electoral fraud. This response rate was somewhat surprising given the accounts of Romanian electoral fraud that exist in the literature (Carey 1993). However, this finding supports Shafir's contention that the CDR campaign strategy and not electoral fraud was the primary reason why the coalition did poorly in the parliamentary elections (1992, 4).

Given the responses to the previous questions, it was anticipated that the respondents would not have a favorable opinion regarding the CDR as an electoral coalition. However as Table 2 shows, 85% of respondents either completely or partially agreed with the statement that the CDR was an electoral coalition "crowned by success." Those respondents that answered that the CDR was a successful electoral coalition might be making an overall assessment of the CDR based on both the 1992 local and parliamentary elections. CDR candidates in the 1992 mayoral and city council elections did extremely well, especially in large urban areas.

TABLE 1
Aggregate Results: CDR as an Electoral Organization

In the 1992 elections, the Democratic Convention obtained:

More seats than I expected	2.9%
The number of seats that I expected	14.5%
Less seats than I expected	82.6%
Don't know	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%

If your answer to question number 1 was "less seats than I expected," what do you think was the main reason for the fact that the Democratic Convention did not get the results that you expected?

Poor strategy in the electoral campaign	27.0%
Television subordinated to the Powers	28.6%
Lack of financial resources	17.5%
Lack of politicians with leadership qualities	6.3%
Other motive	20.6%

The electoral campaign of the Democratic Convention was:

Very good	0.0%
Good	49.3%
Poor	47.8%
Very poor	2.9%
Don't know	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%

The process of the selection of the candidates of the Democratic Convention for the election was:

Very good	1.4%
Good	39.1%
Poor	43.5%
Very poor	13.0%
Don't know	2.9%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%

The associations of the Democratic Convention had too great an influence over the selection of the candidates for the election.

Complete agreement	13.0%
Partial agreement	55.1%
Partial disagreement	17.4%
Total disagreement	7.2%
Don't know	5.8%
Prefer not to respond	1.4%

TABLE 2:
Aggregate Results: CDR as an Electoral Organization

Will the Democratic Convention stay together until the next elections under its present form?

Very likely	40.6%
Likely	49.3%
Unlikely	5.8%
Highly unlikely	4.3%
Don't know	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%

The Democratic Convention has been an electoral coalition crowned by success.

Complete agreement	25.0%
Partial agreement	60.3%
Partial disagreement	10.3%
Total disagreement	1.5%
Don't know	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	2.9%

When asked about the electoral campaign of the CDR, a clear division emerged among respondents. While 49% responded that the campaign was "good," almost 48% responded that the campaign was poor. This division among respondents continued when asked about the selection process of candidates for the 1992 parliamentary elections. While just over 40% answered that the selection process was "very good" or "good," 56% of respondents answered that the selection process was "poor" or "very poor." Finally, when asked about the influence of the CDR associations in the selection of candidates, 68% of respondents answered that these associations "had too great an influence" in the selection of candidates. This was one of the major reasons which led to the fragmentation of the CDR.

These results indicate that as an electoral organization and coalition, there were deep divisions within the CDR. While there was a consensus that the CDR performed less than expected in the 1992 parliamentary elections, there was no consensus among the respondents as to why the CDR did so poorly. Moreover, there was a division among the CDR county party chairpersons as to the CDR's electoral strategy. There was a portion of the respondents that felt that the campaign and selection of candidates was good. However in

many cases, a majority of the respondents felt that the electoral strategy and selection of candidates was poor. Later, I will discuss the party cleavages that explain this division within the CDR.

Aggregated Results: The CDR as a Party Organization

The results of those questions which dealt with the CDR as a party organization indicate that there was a general consensus regarding the structure of the CDR as a party organization. An overwhelming 93% of respondents answered that the CDR will not become "a party in its own right" (see Table 3). In addition, almost 57% of the respondents answered that the PD (FSN) should not become a CDR member-party. This is an interesting result given that the PD (FSN) is now part of the government coalition with the CDR.

However on questions concerning individual member-party platforms, there was a division among respondents. Almost 38% of the respondents answered that the differences in the programs of the individual member-parties of the CDR were "very big" or "big" (see Table 3). Again, this shows the disagreement which existed in the CDR prior to its splintering. In addition, over 40% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the CDR was assisting member-parties in creating a comprehensive, large party platform. Therefore, there existed a faction within the CDR leadership that did not believe that the CDR was assisting individual member-parties in drawing-up comprehensive platforms, and as a consequence, a large percentage of the respondents felt that the differences in the political platforms of member-parties in the CDR were "big." The fact that 40% of those county party chairpersons surveyed responded in this manner is surprising given that they are members of an electoral and parliamentary coalition. Almost half of this particular elite believed that differences between parties were large and that the coalition was failing to assist member-parties. This is an important result when considering the ability of the CDR member-parties to transform themselves into more catch-all parties. Moreover, this may indicate why several CDR parties left the coalition.

When asked to rank the member-parties of the CDR from most to least important, there were certain established patterns but no consensus among the respondents, except in the case of the PNT-CD. Almost 91% of the respondents ranked the PNT-CD as the most important party within the CDR. However in positions two through

TABLE 3
Aggregate Results: CDR as a Party Organization

The differences between the political programs of the parties within the Democratic Convention are:

Very big	6.1%
Big	31.8%
Minor	50.0%
Negligible	9.1%
Don't know	1.5%
Prefer not to respond	1.5%

The Democratic Convention will ultimately become a party in its own right.

Very likely	0.0%
Likely	4.5%
Unlikely	22.7%
Highly unlikely	71.2%
Don't know	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	1.5%

The Democratic Convention has helped and is helping opposition parties to draw comprehensive large party platforms.

Complete agreement	5.9%
Partial agreement	44.1%
Partial disagreement	27.9%
Total disagreement	13.2%
Don't know	4.4%
Prefer not to respond	4.4%

Should PD (FSN) be allowed to become a member of the Democratic Convention?

Yes	17.9%
I am not sure	22.4%
No	56.7%
Don't know	1.5%
Prefer not to respond	1.5%

seven, there was no clear consensus among the respondents. Four parties received over 20% of the second place responses. Three parties received over 20% of the third place responses. Although the exact placement of parties in positions two through five is not clear, what is clear is that the PNL-CD and the PER were the two least important parties as measured by the responses. While the participation of these two parties in the survey would have possibly had some effect on their placement, it is clear that the majority of the county party chairpersons of the CDR viewed these two parties as the least important. Therefore, the decision of the PER and the PNL-CD to stay in the CDR was certainly based on the inability of these parties to successfully compete in elections on their own.

Aggregated Results: The CDR as a Parliamentary Organization

While there was a division in elite opinion concerning the CDR as an electoral and party organization, there was a consensus among county party chairpersons regarding the CDR as a parliamentary organization. When asked about the voting consistency of the CDR MPs, over 82% of the respondents answered that the CDR MPs vote "very similarly" or "similarly" (see Table 4). In addition, 84% of the respondents either completely or partially agreed with the statement that the CDR was a successful parliamentary coalition. Therefore while there was a division among respondents regarding the CDR as an electoral and party organization, there seemed to be overwhelming consensus regarding the CDR as a parliamentary organization.

What can account for this consensus regarding the voting patterns and success of the CDR as a parliamentary organization? In earlier interviews that I conducted, there seemed to be a great deal of skepticism among the CDR party elites regarding the voting consistency of the CDR MPs. Because individual and even party votes are almost always never made available to MPs and party members, there was suspicion among party elites who I interviewed that voting among the CDR MPs on select issues was not consistent. I believe that one of the reasons why respondents were so favorable about the CDR as a parliamentary organization is because on crucial votes, there was the perception that the CDR MPs had voted consistent with the leadership's position. The perception was that the CDR MPs did not vote consistent with the CDR leadership on only a few, less

significant issues. Perhaps these results reflect the nature of minority party status in a parliamentary democracy. Because minority parties have a limited role in the creation of public policy, there are less expectations placed on party MPs as compared to leaders of the majority party or parties during an election. Moreover even though these party leaders were favorable towards the CDR as a parliamentary coalition, it is clear that this favorable attitude was not enough to maintain the coalition. Now that the CDR is part of a government coalition, it will be interesting to see whether the CDR party elite believe that the CDR government MPs vote similarly.

TABLE 4
Aggregate Results: CDR as a Parliamentary Organization

In parliament, the members of the Democratic Convention vote:

Very similar	16.2%
Similar	66.2%
Different	8.8%
Very different	1.5%
Don't know	5.8%
Prefer not to respond	1.5%

The Democratic Convention is a parliamentary coalition which has enjoyed success.

Complete agreement	20.3%
Partial agreement	63.8%
Partial disagreement	5.8%
Total disagreement	4.3%
Don't know	1.4%
Prefer not to respond	4.3%

Aggregated Results: Conclusions

The aggregated survey results indicate that the CDR party elite tended to be much more critical of the CDR as an electoral and party organization than as a parliamentary organization. While there was a general consensus of the party elite concerning the CDR as a parliamentary organization, there was a division among the elite regarding the CDR as an electoral and party organization. On questions concerning the conduct and strategy of the 1992 parliamentary

elections, over 50% of the respondents judged the CDR a poor or very poor electoral organization.

In addition as Table 3 reports, on average 40% of respondents were negative regarding the CDR as a party organization. As noted earlier, a large percentage of the CDR elite believed that the organization was not assisting member-parties in developing broad, comprehensive platforms. As a consequence, there was a belief among a large segment of the respondents that the difference in the programs of the CDR member-parties was large.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Variable Party Results: The CDR as an Electoral Organization

In order to more fully understand the nature of the CDR elite opinion, I analyzed the survey results based on a party variable. By isolating for a party variable, we can examine the response cleavages that exist between the elites of individual CDR member-parties. This provides a further opportunity to understand why certain parties stayed in the coalition while other parties left. Once again, the survey results will be analyzed in three sections which reflect the three issues areas in which questions were constructed.

In terms of the responses to the issue of the CDR as an electoral organization, an interesting pattern emerges when the party variable is isolated. As Tables 5 and 6 show, the responses of respondents from the PL '93 and the PSDR represent two extremes with the responses of respondents from the PNT-CD and the UDMR in the center. Respondents from the PL '93 were the most critical of the CDR as an electoral organization while respondents from the PSDR were the most favorable regarding the role of the CDR as an electoral organization. The fact that the PL '93 respondents were critical of the CDR is not surprising given that this party left the coalition. However, it is surprising that the PSDR respondents were so favorable towards the coalition and yet, PSDR President Cunesco was one of the primary individuals responsible for fragmenting the coalition.

TABLE 5
Variable Party Results: CDR as an Electoral Organization

In the 1992 elections, the Democratic Convention obtained:

Responses	PL · 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
More seats than I expected	9.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
The number of seats that I expected	0.0%	20.0%	15.0%	15.4%
Less seats than I expected	90.9%	80.0%	80.0%	84.6%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

If your answer to question number 1 was "less seats than I expected," what do you think was the main reason for the fact that the Democratic Convention did not get the results you expected?

Responses	PL · 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Poor strategy in the campaign	36.7%	22.8%	26.3%	27.3%
Television subordinated to the Powers	18.2%	36.6%	21.1%	36.7%
Lack of financial resources	9.1%	18.2%	26.3%	9.1%
Lack of politicians with leadership qualities	27.3%	0.0%	5.7%	0.0%
Other motive	9.1%	22.8%	21.2%	27.3%

TABLE 6
Variable Party Results: CDR as an Electoral Organization

The electoral campaign of the Democratic Convention was:

Responses	PL · 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Very good	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Good	27.3%	48.0%	65.0%	46.1%
Poor	63.7%	52.0%	30.0%	53.9%
Very poor	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The Democratic Convention has been an electoral coalition crowned by success.

Responses	PL · 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Complete agreement	18.2%	40.0%	21.1%	7.7%
Partial agreement	54.6%	48.0%	68.4%	76.9%
Partial disagreement	9.1%	12.0%	5.3%	15.4%
Total disagreement	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	9.1%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%

In addition, the fact that the response rates for the PNT-CD and the UDMR respondents were almost identical is quite surprising. In interviews which I conducted, members of the UDMR indicated that the CDR member-party which they felt was the most critical of their organization was the PNT-CD. These party leaders felt that the nationalistic component of the PNT-CD ideology created policy and personality differences with the UDMR. The results of this survey point to a consensus between the PNT-CD and the UDMR party elites regarding the CDR as an electoral organization that would not have been anticipated. This finding is confirmed by recent results from the 1996 second round of presidential elections. IRSOP conducted exit polls following the second round which found that the UDMR supporters voted consistently for Constantinescu rather than Iliescu.

Variable Party Results: The CDR as a Party Organization

The consensus between the PNT-CD and the UDMR party elites disappeared when the respondents were presented questions regarding the CDR as a party organization. Instead of the PNT-CD and the UDMR occupying the middle-ground, on issues of party organization the PNT-CD and the UDMR, on average, represented the polar extremes (see Tables 7 and 8). There was a difference in how the CDR elites viewed the organization. While the UDMR respondents were very favorable towards the CDR as an electoral organization, the respondents from this party were the most critical of the CDR as a party organization. While the UDMR respondents were generally the most critical of the CDR as a party organization, respondents from other parties were also quite critical of the CDR as a party organization, including the PL '93.

For example on the question of whether the CDR assisted member-parties in creating a comprehensive party platform, an average of 43% respondents from all parties felt that the CDR had not assisted member-parties. If respondents from the PNT-CD are not included in the analysis, almost 48% of respondents answered that the CDR had not assisted member-parties. The PNT-CD respondents were generally favorable towards the CDR as an electoral organization, and they were the most favorable towards the CDR as a party organization. This result is not surprising given the fact that among all respondents, the PNT-CD was overwhelmingly chosen as the most important party within the CDR. Perhaps what is surprising

TABLE 7
Variable Party Results: CDR as a Party Organization

The differences between the political programs of the parties within the Democratic Convention are:

Responses	PL ' 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Very big	9.1%	4.8%	5.6%	7.7%
Big	18.2%	20.1%	33.3%	61.5%
Minor	54.6%	58.3%	50.0%	30.8%
Negligible	9.1%	12.5%	11.1%	0.0%
Don't know	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%

The Democratic Convention will ultimately become a party in its own right:

Responses	PL ' 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Very likely	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Likely	18.2%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unlikely	9.1%	12.0%	29.4%	46.2%
Highly unlikely	72.8%	84.0%	70.6%	46.2%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%

TABLE 8
Variable Party Results: CDR as a Party Organization

The Democratic Convention has helped and is helping opposition parties to draw comprehensive large party platforms.

Responses	PL ' 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Complete agreement	0.0%	8.0%	10.5%	0.0%
Partial agreement	36.4%	56.0%	36.8%	38.5%
Partial disagreement	27.3%	24.0%	26.3%	38.5%
Total disagreement	27.3%	8.0%	15.8%	7.7%
Don't know	9.1%	4.0%	0.0%	7.7%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%	7.7%

Should PD (FSN) be allowed to become a member in the Democratic Convention?

Responses	PL ' 93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Yes	27.3%	8.0%	22.2%	23.1%
I am not sure	9.1%	16.0%	16.7%	53.4%
No	63.6%	68.0%	61.1%	23.1%
Don't know	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	7.7%

is that respondents of the UDMR, a party that was judged by almost 30% of all respondents as the second most important party in the CDR, were the most critical of the CDR as a party organization. This demonstrated a real weakness within the coalition.

On the issue of the CDR party structure, the division between respondents from the PNT-CD and the UDMR continued. While the PNT-CD respondents were most adamant that the PD (FSN) should not become a member of the CDR, respondents from the UDMR were the least opposed. While the PNT-CD respondents overwhelmingly rejected the admission of the PD (FSN), a majority of respondents from the UDMR answered that they were not sure whether or not this party should be admitted into the CDR. This is an interesting result given that the PNT-CD as part of the CDR has now had to form a coalition government with the PD (FSN) as part of the USD.

Variable Party Results: The CDR as a Parliamentary Organization

On the issue of the CDR as a parliamentary organization, once again the placement of the parties changed. While there was a general consensus among all respondents regarding the CDR as a parliamentary organization, there was some slight variations between parties. On this issue, the PL '93 and the PNT-CD represented the polar extremes (see Table 9). The PL '93 respondents tended to be the most critical of the CDR as a parliamentary coalition followed by respondents of the UDMR, but the difference between these two groups in their rating of the CDR as a parliamentary organization was less than 3%. Interestingly however, the PL '93 had one of the largest percentage of respondents that completely agreed with the statement that the CDR is a successful parliamentary coalition. This demonstrates that there was an internal division within the PL '93 itself regarding the parliamentary success of the CDR.

While respondents from all parties were favorable towards the CDR as a parliamentary organization, respondents from the PNT-CD were the most favorable towards the CDR as a parliamentary organization (see Table 9). Again, this is not surprising considering that the PNT-CD MPs form the largest single opposition faction in parliament. On the question of voting patterns among the CDR MPs, only respondents from the PNT-CD did not respond "don't know." This could indicate a higher level of communication between the PNT-CD county party chairpersons and the PNT-CD MPs.

Table 9
Variable Party Results: CDR
as a Parliamentary Organization

In parliament, the members of the Democratic Convention vote:

Responses	PL '93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Very similar	9.1%	24.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Similar	63.6%	72.0%	60.0%	66.7%
Different	9.1%	4.0%	10.0%	16.7%
Very different	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know	9.1%	0.0%	10.0%	8.3%
Prefer not to respond	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%

The Democratic Convention is a parliamentary coalition which has enjoyed success.

Responses	PL '93	PNT-CD	PSDR	UDMR
Complete agreement	27.3%	28.0%	15.0%	7.7%
Partial agreement	45.5%	64.0%	70.8%	69.2%
Partial disagreement	9.1%	0.0%	5.0%	15.4%
Total disagreement	9.1%	4.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Don't know	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	9.1%	0.0%	5.0%	7.7%

Variable Party Results: Conclusions

The results from this analysis indicate that the CDR member-parties had different conceptions about the nature of the organization. For example while respondents from the UDMR were the most positive regarding the CDR as an electoral coalition, these same respondents were the most critical of the CDR as a party coalition. In addition while respondents from the PL '93 were the most critical of the CDR as an electoral and parliamentary coalition, these respondents were much more positive of the CDR as a party coalition. In addition, the results indicate a similar response pattern among certain parties on select issues which would not have been expected.

CONCLUSIONS

This survey of CDR county party chairpersons was the first survey to be conducted of this important group within the CDR elite. Both the aggregate and party variable results indicate that while there was consensus among these party elite on several issues, there

were also numerous party and policy differences which caused a division among elites across parties. These data provide evidence of the internal weakness of the CDR coalition and reasons why the CDR fragmented. Based on the aggregated results, there are several conclusions one can draw about the CDR. First, the aggregated results show that almost half of these party elites did not believe that the CDR assisted member-parties in their transition towards becoming more broad-based, catch-all parties. Because these parties have not transformed themselves into broader political organizations, the platforms of these parties remain rather narrow. This explains why a large portion of the respondents believed that there were "big" differences in the programs of the member-parties of the CDR.

Second, these respondents were much more critical of the CDR as an electoral and party organization than as a parliamentary organization. Therefore, these respondents had different conceptions of the CDR based on the functions of the organization. Respondents were highly critical of the CDR's capacity to fulfill its electoral and party functions. However, respondents were very favorable in their assessment of the CDR as a parliamentary coalition. One possible explanation as to why CDR county party chairpersons were much favorable towards the CDR as a parliamentary organization is because these individuals are not MPs. It is precisely because of their involvement with the CDR as an electoral and party coalition that caused them to be critical. Because county party chairpersons are not MPs, perhaps they are less critical of this function of the CDR.

The results from the analysis of respondents from specific member-parties indicate that respondents had different views regarding the efficacy of the CDR either as an electoral, party or parliamentary organization. While respondents from the UDMR were highly critical of the CDR as a party organization, these respondents were much more favorable of the CDR as an electoral and parliamentary organization. In general, respondents from the PNT-CD were the most favorable towards the CDR as an electoral, party and parliamentary organization. As stated earlier, this is not a surprising finding given the importance of this party in the CDR organization. Moreover, the PNT-CD remained the core party of the re-constituted CDR.

These differences among respondents regarding the CDR support the argument that the CDR has not been completely successful in the incorporation and transformation of Romanian opposition

parties into broader parties. Based on the survey results, a segment of the CDR elites believed that the coalition has failed to assist Romanian opposition parties in their transformation into broader-based political organizations. One of the reasons why the CDR failed to assist parties in the creation of broader catch-all platforms was because there was a disagreement among the member parties regarding the very nature of the CDR. Because elites within the member parties viewed the success, goals and policies of the CDR differently, there was a great deal of difficulty in finding the common ground necessary to bridge the ideological and personality divisions to bring these parties closer together. As the data from this survey indicate, the splintering of the CDR reflected significant internal party divisions which existed within the coalition.

Ironically, the fragmenting of the CDR has probably assisted the coalition in overcoming these internal divisions and enabled the CDR to be more successful in the 1996 national elections. Parties such as the PAC and the PL '93 are no longer members of the CDR. This means that some of the tensions within the coalition have been reduced, but the possible merger of the various liberal parties and the fusion of the PAR with the PAC might mean an eventual return of the tensions within the CDR. This coalition must further unite in order to avoid a future fragmentation. Moreover, the CDR has formed a government with previous members of the coalition (e.g., the PSDR). The findings of this survey do not suggest that the CDR post-electoral enthusiasm should be abated. Rather, these findings suggest that the CDR as a government coalition must continue to reduce the internal divisions which fragmented the coalition in 1995 in order to effectively govern into the next century.

NOTES

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1. For the 1996 national elections, the reformed CDR contained the following parties: The PNT-CD, the PNL-CD, the PPR, the National Liberal Party (PNL), the Romanian Ecological Foundation (FER) and the Romania Alternative Party (PAR) as well as the associations affiliated with the CDR.

2. In order to prepare the survey for mailing, I contacted each of the seven CDR member-parties. I arranged meetings at the national party headquarters in Bucharest at which time I asked for the names and mailing addresses of the party's county chairpersons. Three parties refused to participate in the survey. The vice-president of the PER claimed that he did not have a copy of the county chairperson mailing addresses at the national office. A member of the PNL-CD Executive Committee stated that the entire committee would have to agree to provide me with the list. While he claimed that he would respond to my request, I never received any correspondence from the PNL-CD leadership. The national president of the PAC informed me that he did not believe that the county chairpersons of his party would be able to intelligently respond to the survey, and therefore, he refused to make the mailing addresses available to me.

3. I originally translated the survey questions and Professor Eugen Gergely of the Department of English at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu assisted in the back-translation of the survey from Romanian to English. Once the back-translation was complete, the survey was pre-tested using the CDR city party chairpersons. Pre-testing occurred in February 1994 and was conducted in the Transylvanian cities of Brasov, Cluj and Sibiu.

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