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Embattled executives: Prime ministerial weakness in East Central Europe[☆]

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Abstract

In a period in which “strong” and even “presidential” prime ministers have arguably become more the rule than the exception in the major states of Western Europe, most prime ministers in the new democracies of East Central Europe appear to have been relatively weak figures. This article investigates the reasons for that relative weakness in the ten East Central European countries, which together have had 87 prime ministers in the 16 years since the fall of Communism. It evaluates several possible explanations: party system weakness, the institutional structure, elite recruitment patterns, and policy constraints. It then seeks to explain several notable exceptions to the prime ministerial weakness rule.

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Introduction

Within the space of a few weeks in the summer of 2004, the prime ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were forced from office, although each

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had served for only part of a full parliamentary term. Their successors did not fare notably better; the Czech Republic's Stanislav Gross stepped down in April 2005 and was followed by Jiří Paroubek, whose government was defeated in elections little more than a year later. Poland's Marek Belka left office after his coalition was soundly defeated in September 2005;¹ his rightwing replacement, although popular, was forced from office in July 2006. Slovakia's comparatively long-serving prime minister did not survive his country's new elections. Hungary's Ferenc Gyurcsány did, but, after acknowledging "lying" in order to win, had to face violent demonstrations calling for his removal. These cases have by no means been exceptional in those East European countries that adopted parliamentary systems after the fall of Communism. The ten states considered here have been led by 87 prime ministers over a period of some 16 years, an average term of under two years (see Table 1).

This brevity stands in sharp contrast to the pattern in most West European parliamentary systems, where average terms since 1990 have been more than twice as long. Gerhard Schröder served as German Chancellor for seven years; his predecessor Helmut Kohl (17 years) exceeded the records for longevity in office of both Konrad Adenauer and Otto von Bismarck. Britain's Tony Blair had been in office for eight years when he began a new term in May 2005; before him, Margaret Thatcher served for 12 years and even her ill-starred successor John Major served for more than six. Spain and the Netherlands have each had only three prime ministers since 1982, Austria just three chancellors since 1986. Notably, Greece and Portugal, which along with Spain underwent their own democratic transitions in the 1970s, have each had five prime ministers since 1989 and 1985 respectively.

Most of these executives have been regarded as "strong" figures, dominating their cabinets and their nations' media while enjoying disciplined if sometimes disgruntled parliamentary support.² Typically their personal standing has been seen as essential for their party's success. By comparison, the typical East European prime minister in the post-Communist period has rarely remained in office long enough to solidify his³ authority, much less to dominate his nation's politics. What explains this apparent weakness, with its evident consequences for the effectiveness of the region's governments?

An immediate suspect is the poorly institutionalized and volatile party systems of most of the new democracies, and I shall be especially concerned in this paper to explore the interrelationships between party system development and prime ministerial weakness. But other factors also deserve attention: the configuration of formal governmental institutions adopted after the fall of Communism, the circumstances of elite recruitment in the post-Communist period, the economic stresses of transition, and the impact of external forces such as the European Union and international

¹ The embattled Belka had earlier threatened to resign but was refused, and indicated he would join a new party (Kubicki, 2005; Herold, 2005b).

² This assertion is probably less applicable to smaller West European polities with traditions of consociational decision-making.

³ Poland's Hanna Suchocka has been the only woman out of the 87 to serve as prime minister to date in the countries considered here.

Table 1
Prime ministerial and party stability

Country	No. of PMs since 1990	Average term	Average partisan volatility	President	
				Elected?	IPP
(Eastern Europe)	(87)	(1.95)	(4.35)		
Poland	12	1.3	6.25	y	.52
Czech Republic	7	2.3	2.8	n	.26
Slovakia	6	2.7	4.2	y	.28
Hungary	6	2.7	2.2	n	.41
Bulgaria	9	1.8	2.8	y	.34
Romania	8	2.0	3.0	y	.35
Slovenia	6	2.5	4.0	y	.25
Estonia	10	1.5	6.5	n	.23
Latvia	11	1.4	7.75	n	.26
Lithuania	12	1.3	4.0	y	.44
(Western Europe)	(60)	(4.2)	(1.37)		
United Kingdom	3	5.3	0.0	n	
Germany	3	5.3	0.75	n	
Italy	9	1.8	2.25	n	
Spain	3	5.3	0.5	n	
Netherlands	3	5.3	1.75	n	
Austria	3	5.3	1.75	y	
Belgium	3	5.3	2.5	n	
Portugal	5	3.2	0.6	y	
Greece	5	3.2	0.8	n	
Norway	7	2.3	1.5	n	
Sweden	4	4.0	2.75	n	
Denmark	3	5.3	1.0	n	
Finland	5	3.2	1.25	y	
Ireland	4	4.0	1.67	y	

Note: For Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the number of prime ministers listed are those holding office from 1991. Figures for the Czech Republic and Slovakia include the Czechoslovak Prime Minister between 1990 and mid-1992. IPP = Index of Presidential Power, as calculated by Spörer (2004), 168.

lending agencies.⁴ I shall consider each of these in turn. I will also examine several cases that might be argued to be exceptions to the rule of ineffectual prime ministers: those of Václav Klaus, Vladimír Mečiar, Viktor Orbán, and, perhaps surprisingly, Mikuláš Dzurinda. My primary focus will be on the “core” East Central European countries, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, but I will also draw on evidence from Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and the Baltic states, for a total of ten cases.

Assessing prime ministerial effectiveness

Before proceeding, however, I must raise a difficult but unavoidable preliminary question. How, in fact, are we to determine whether a prime minister is “strong” (which I will equate here with “effective”), “weak” (ineffective), or somewhere in

⁴ I have not considered differences in the Communist or pre-Communist “legacy” of the countries examined, but on the surface they do not appear to be significant.

between? The length of a prime minister's continuous service in office provides something of a proxy for effectiveness, but only an inexact one. Like other executives, the prime minister may in some cases survive only by severely compromising his objectives or by limiting himself to acting as a broker or "juggler" among more powerful political forces.⁵ In principle the most attractive option for evaluating prime ministers would be to weigh the concrete policy accomplishments of each, but there are no sure ways of assessing the relative importance of those accomplishments and distinguishing between those attributable personally to the prime minister and those owing more to his cabinet, individual ministers, or external forces. Other possible criteria also have their drawbacks. Popularity as assessed by public opinion surveys or visibility in the media may not be reliable indicators of effectiveness. Moreover, distinguishing between weaknesses of a given incumbent and those of the prime ministerial institution itself may be difficult.

All that said, using the average length of service of prime ministers as a starting point for analysis has its advantages. The duration of a prime minister's service is often if not invariably an accurate reflection of his political support and thus of his ability to achieve his substantive goals. A brief term often means there is too little time to formulate and carry out an agenda. Early dismissal from office frequently follows government stalemate and may also reflect low popularity and unfavorable media attention. In examining the effectiveness of individual prime ministers it is necessary to analyze the details of their performance in office as well as the play of forces beyond their control, but in generalizing about a large number of cases the length of service criterion appears to convey reliably the differences in pattern between East and West.

Party systems and prime ministers

In any parliamentary system the relationship of the prime minister to his or her party and the strength and discipline of the party in the party system are critical to his or her success or failure. Even prime ministers facing substantial discontent within their own ranks—Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder are recent examples—may retain their positions if their party's parliamentarians are nevertheless willing to maintain internal discipline and if the party is able to discourage the defection of any coalition partners. Whether the party meets these conditions is partly a function of its institutionalization, as reflected in its parliamentary experience as well as its own cohesion and its ability to maintain the loyalty of much of the electorate.

That stable and well-defined party systems have for the most part failed to emerge in Eastern Europe is a frequent observation of the literature,⁶ although the four core East Central European countries are sometimes said to have fared best in this respect

⁵ I owe the term "juggler" to the useful typology of prime ministerial roles presented by Rose (1991, p. 19). Rose associates the "juggler" role in particular with multi-party government, noting that individual prime ministers may seek to take strong initiatives but are apt to face circumstances they cannot control.

⁶ There is an imposing body of writing on post-communist party systems. For example, Lewis (2000), Tworzecki (2003), Rose and Munro (2003); Millard (2004). Much has also been written on the "successor" parties (Curry and Urban, 2003; Grzymala-Busse, 2002).

(Bakke and Sitter, 2005).⁷ The supposed “consolidation” of democracy in the region has not been accompanied by a parallel consolidation of partisan competition. Numerous studies confirm the high volatility of electoral results, which both reflects and helps bring about a similar volatility in the region’s party systems, although it does not entirely explain the latter (Lewis, 2000, pp. 83–87; Bielasia, 2002, pp. 198–202).⁸ My own rough measure of party system volatility suggests that it is triple that found in the West (see Table 1 and the concluding section below).

In seven of the region’s ten countries⁹ it is in particular the reinvented former ruling Communist party that has retained its organizational continuity and become a consistent major electoral player, but even one of the most successful successor parties of the post-Communist period, that of Poland, has recently seen its popularity sharply erode. The Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) in fact split in 2004, with only the larger of its components limping back into the Sejm in the 2005 elections with just 11 per cent of the vote. Parties not linked to the former regime—with a few significant exceptions—have failed to sink roots in the population or inspire strong loyalties. Such parties have tended to fragment and in many cases have been displaced by newly founded ones. Internal conflicts, often revolving more around personalities than issue differences, have beset many parties and led to splits in some; discipline among parliamentarians has been shaky, and defections have been frequent. The consequence has been fragile coalition governments with limited ideological cohesion and short life-expectancies. Even those governments that survive have experienced frequent departures of individual ministers who have been charged with corruption, incompetence, or incompatibility with their colleagues.

That the civic movements united by their common desire to depose the former communist regime would have difficulty remaining together after its fall is not surprising. In spite of the impressive triumphs of Civic Forum and Public Against Violence in the June 1990 Czechoslovak elections, only segments of the two movements survived to contest the June 1992 vote that led to the breakup of the federation. In Poland the supporters of Solidarity had already splintered into several groups that won representation in the 1991 elections. The Hungarian opposition forces that contested that country’s first post-Communist election in March 1990 were represented by four different parties. That in each case the (former) Communists initially suffered crushing losses and appeared to have little future undoubtedly reduced still more any incentive their opponents might have had to remain united. It should be pointed out, however, that most of the small number of parties not

⁷ Herbert Kitschelt and his co-authors have argued on the basis of their study of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria (through 1997 or 1998) that in spite of the apparent fluidity of many of the region’s party systems, “we find a great deal of structure and only limited randomness in the patterns of representation and governance.” (Kitschelt, et al., 1999, p. 403).

⁸ There is some disagreement over whether such volatility has been decreasing or increasing. Bielasia notes that both electoral volatility and the effective number of electoral parties in post-Communist states remain greater than in countries in post-World War II Western Europe, Southern Europe, and Latin America at a comparable stage of democratic evolution.

⁹ The exceptions are Estonia, Latvia, and Slovakia, where the SDL, after initial successes, split and dropped out of the parliament in the 2002 elections.

descended from the Communists that have emerged as durable political contenders have at least some roots in the former opposition.

Parties that did not emerge from either the former ruling party or the opposition have by and large not flourished. The attempt to revive “historic” parties that predated Communist rule was not successful, probably because the forty or more intervening years were too many to bridge. The Hungarian Smallholders, the clearest initial exception, won less than 1% of the vote in the 2002 elections, while the Czech Social Democrats appear to have had few real links to the party’s predecessor, which was swallowed by the Communists in 1948 (Wightman, 1998). Former Communist-era “satellite” parties, like the ruling parties around which they orbited, retained sizeable memberships and benefited from having an organizational structure in place. But their complicity with the old regime was costly; in the four core countries, only the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) and the Czech Christian Democrats/People’s Party, both of which joined with elements of “historic” parties, remain significant political forces today. Entirely or mostly new parties have had to build whatever membership (usually small) and organization (usually modest) they could from the top down.

The search for a unifying principle that might attract a reliable clientele has proven difficult. Social class, the historic basis of most west European parties, has not served well as such a principle, probably owing to changes in the actual composition as well as the psychology of classes under Communism and after it. (As we know, the actual correlation between social class and partisan choice has sharply diminished in the West as well.) The major exception to this rule has been that of peasant parties, notably in Poland. Economic divisions have by no means disappeared, of course, and parties have sought to appeal to the “losers” and, less often, “winners” from economic reform; once in office, however, they have found their policy options sharply limited (Innes, 2002, p. 85, 100). Catholic or Christian Democratic parties have achieved some stability in several countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia), but their appeal appears to be limited to modest-sized segments of the electorate.¹⁰ Nationalism (directed against foreign influence and/or domestic minorities) and anti-Communism has been at the center of the attraction of a number of parties, but do not appear by themselves to guarantee enduring support. Parties emphasizing their opposition to corruption and narrow partisanship tend to benefit in the short run from such claims, but only so long as they are not tested in office themselves.

What have emerged for the most part in the region are what Innes has called “instant catchall parties” (2002, pp. 87–88), seeking to appeal across the lines of easily identifiable group interests on the basis of personality or putative competence; in some of these cases nationalism, anti-Communism, or other forms of populism are indeed part of the formula. The most successful parties that have targeted more specific clienteles are those primarily appealing to minority ethnic groups, such as Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania and Turks in Bulgaria; support for them has remained comparatively stable. But voters as a whole have responded to the choices

¹⁰ I exclude here Hungary’s Fidesz, even though it belongs to the Christian Democratic group in the European Parliament, since its origins were as a liberal party and its current appeal is to a broader conservative and nationalist public.

offered them with distrust if not scorn,¹¹ readily shifting their allegiances or not voting at all, which has led to the frequent appearance of “new” parties claiming to be untainted by the sins of existing ones.

Prime ministers seeking to build stable coalitions from this unpromising material face an unenviable task. Often their authority within their own parties is uncertain—in many cases the prime minister is not even party leader. The challenge a prime minister faces is still greater when his “party” is in fact an assemblage of separate groups. His ability to choose and to remove, or in some case to keep, cabinet members is frequently constrained. Often there is little real ideological proximity among coalition parties; they may have come together only because of a shared opposition to former Communists, authoritarian politicians, or extreme nationalists, or simply a desire to share in the perquisites of office. Personal rivalries may rule out certain combinations and make others highly tenuous. Loyalty and discipline within parties are low and, as noted, splits and defections are frequent. Under these circumstances prime ministers cannot easily acquire the legitimacy they need among elites and/or the public at large to be effective.

Poland’s Jerzy Buzek may serve as a cautionary example. Although he has been the only Polish prime minister of the post-Communist era to serve a full four-year term, his “party”—Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)—was in fact an alliance of some 40 groups, which began to fragment during his first year in office. (Lewis, 2000, p. 92, 166). In June 2000, following repeated clashes, the AWS’ liberal coalition partner, the Freedom Union (UW), left the coalition, leaving Buzek to soldier on at the head of a minority government. Under Buzek, according to Frances Millard (2003a, p. 71), “parliamentary discipline was woefully lacking; ministers defied their own government; and political leadership was notable by its absence.”¹² In the subsequent 2001 elections, neither AWS nor UW won enough votes to be returned to parliament. Between 2001 and 2005, the two prime ministers heading governments led by the post-Communist SLD suffered equal misfortunes. The three parties that fared best in the September 2005 elections—Law and Justice, Civic Platform, and Self-Defense—had entered the Sejm for the first time only in 2001.

The level of party system instability in Poland and accompanying prime ministerial turnover is exceptional, although it is virtually equaled in the Baltic states, each of which has had 10 or more prime ministers since winning independence (see Auers, 2002/2003, pp. 106–109). Among the four core countries, Hungary and the Czech Republic have fared best. Hungary now seems to be approaching something close to a two-party system, with Fidesz consolidating the conservative camp and the Hungarian Socialists the moderate left, with the latter’s Free Democratic partners in an often-strained coalition hovering around the 5% threshold. The Hungarian Democratic Forum, which led the first post-Communist government, barely survives, while the Smallholders and Christian Democrats, both partners in the two

¹¹ Surveys suggest that fewer than one in seven respondents feel any “trust” in their country’s parties (Lewis, 2000, p. 33). Rose and Munro (2003, pp. 54–59) report even lower figures from a 2001 New Europe Barometer poll.

¹² Buzek is said to have been widely viewed as a “front man” for the Solidarity leader Marian Krzaklewski, who supposedly chose him for the job (Millard, 2003b, p. 31; Ost, 2005, p. 161).

conservative governments, and István Czurka's right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party all appear to be extinct or in fatal decline. Hungary's party system thus appears to be the most "consolidated" in the region, but it should be remembered that its present configuration emerged only with the 2002 elections.

The Czech Civic Democratic Party (ODS) has recovered since splitting in the wake of corruption charges in the late 1990s, and the faction that left it, the Freedom Union, has seen its support dwindle; earlier parties descending from Civic Forum as well as the right-wing Republicans are now out of the picture. Internal divisions have damaged the Social Democratic Party, and the presence of a sizeable but largely unreconstructed Communist Party, to this point excluded from government participation, has limited its coalition options. The exclusion of the Communists, along with personality issues, led to a surprising alliance between the Social Democrats and their ostensible ideological rival, the Civic Democrats, that kept the minority government of Miloš Zeman in power from 1998 to 2002 (Kraus, 2003, pp. 56–59).¹³ It was succeeded in 2002 by a fragile three-party coalition enjoying just a two seat parliamentary majority; that coalition was led by three different prime ministers before its defeat in the 2006 elections.

Slovakia has undergone continual upheaval in its party system, with older parties splitting and new ones rising. Between 1998 and 2006, however, the government was led by a single prime minister, Mikuláš Dzurinda, at the head of broad coalitions initially brought together by their members' desire to block Vladimír Mečiar from returning to power. Mečiar's SZDS has suffered from defections and a steady decline in public support, but re-entered the government as a junior partner after the 2006 elections (see Pridham, 2003). Two parties new to the ballot in 2002—Róbert Fico's Smer ("Direction") and Dzurinda's SDKÚ (Social and Christian Democratic Union)—finished first and second, respectively, in 2006. The post-Communist Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) split and lost its place in parliament in 2002, and former President Schuster's Party of Civic Understanding dissolved itself.¹⁴ Two other parties that have existed since the 1990 Czechoslovak election, the Christian Democrats and the Hungarian coalition, along with another new party, the ANO (Alliance of New Citizens) of "media mogul" Pavol Rusko (Williams, 2003a, p. 3, 52), joined the SDKÚ in a center-right coalition in 2002. That coalition, following breakaways from the SDKÚ, was reduced to minority status in 2004 before collapsing in February 2006. The Christian Democrats and Hungarian coalition survived the 2006 elections, but ANO did not.

Institutional constraints

If the underdevelopment of parties and party systems explain many of the travails of prime ministers, inadequacies in the newly-created framework of governmental

¹³ See Kraus on the strategic considerations behind the "Opposition Accord" and some of its consequences. Kraus also argues that "a stable, pluralist party system is still not consolidated" in the Czech Republic (61).

¹⁴ The SDL merged with Smer at the beginning of 2005.

institutions may account for more. The countries considered here have all opted for variants of the parliamentary system, with members of the parliament chosen at least in part by proportional representation. The most influential Western model in most cases appears to have been the German one, although some countries, most notably Romania, were also influenced by the French “presidential-parliamentary” example. The results to date have fallen short of matching the German system of “chancellor democracy” (Köröseyi, 1999, pp. 200–205).¹⁵ Efforts to strengthen the “central executive capacity” of East European governments, while encouraged by the European Union, have enjoyed only limited success (see Goetz and Wollmann, 2001).

One significant institutional issue concerns the comparatively prominent position of East European presidents. On paper, all parliamentary systems possess “dual executives,” with the head of state (either a hereditary monarch or a president) carrying out ceremonial or “representational” functions and the head of government (the prime minister) in charge of the day-to-day business of government. There is always some potential for conflict where the powers of the two overlap or are otherwise ambiguous, or where the head of state seeks to utilize his or her symbolic status to influence substantive policy or personnel decisions. In Western Europe—with the exception of France—such conflicts have usually remained minor ones; the political primacy of the prime minister is widely accepted, with many prime ministers in fact appropriating some of the head of state’s symbolic functions. In Eastern Europe, the position of presidents has been stronger, often leading to open conflicts which have weakened the prime minister’s authority and at times frustrated his designs; in a few cases, presidents have helped force prime ministers out of the office (Baylis, 1996).

Why are East European presidents often more influential politically than their West European counterparts?¹⁶ The majority, six out of ten, are popularly elected, and thus can claim a mandate separate from that of the prime minister and the parliament to which the latter is responsible. Most West European heads of state, if not hereditary monarchs, are indirectly chosen.¹⁷ Perhaps more importantly, in an atmosphere highly distrustful of parties, presidents can claim to be “tribunes” above the partisan fray. The fixed presidential term, normally of five years, contrasts with the short average terms of East European prime ministers. Especially the first generation of presidents were better known than their countries’ prime ministers, and surveys all but invariably reveal that presidents are still more popular. The prestige of the presidency has continued to attract prominent candidates, including former prime ministers themselves: Klaus, Drnovšek (Slovenia), and Paksas (Lithuania) won the presidential office (although Paksas was subsequently impeached and removed), while Mečiar and Nastase (Romania) were defeated. Lithuania’s Brauzaskas is the only former president to have sought the position of prime minister. While the

¹⁵ See Köröseyi’s an illuminating discussion comparing the position of the Hungarian prime minister to those of the German chancellor and the prime ministers of Britain and Italy.

¹⁶ There is a sizeable literature on presidents (and surprisingly little on prime ministers) in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (Taras, 1997; Elgie, 1999).

¹⁷ Direct election, however, does not guarantee enhanced influence, as the cases of Ireland and Austria suggest, while indirectly chosen presidents such as Havel can in the right circumstances have considerable influence.

formal prerogatives of presidents are rarely much greater than those of Western European presidents¹⁸—a notable exception is that of the Polish president's veto power, which can be overridden only by a three-fifths vote—they have often been able to use their greater prestige to stretch their influence, particularly through their role in foreign policy, their formal appointment powers, use of the suspensive veto, and by referring legislation to the courts. One who has recently pushed the limits of his authority is Klaus, who ironically sought successfully to curtail presidential powers when Václav Havel occupied the same office.

Of course, other institutional factors have also influenced the position of prime minister. East European parliaments are often said to be more influential—or less effectively tamed—than their Western counterparts; Attila Ágh (1998, pp. 88–89) has argued that they have been “the most important and the least popular institutions in the region”.¹⁹ Lacking strong, disciplined majorities, prime ministers often cannot expect the swift legislative approval of their initiatives that many of their Western counterparts can. In countries such as Poland and Slovakia, parliament can vote no-confidence in individual ministers even if it cannot bring down the government as a whole.

In Western Europe, the size and effective organization of the prime minister's staff have greatly affected his or her ability to shape policy and maintain control over the cabinet—Germany's *Bundeskanzleramt* being a notable example. András Körösiényi noted in 1999 that the Hungarian Office of the Prime Minister had not been well equipped to coordinate governmental decision-making and could not “be compared” to the German Chancellor's Office in spite of its similar size. But Prime Minister Orbán, who took office in 1998, consciously sought to strengthen it, using the German institution as a model (Körösiényi, 1999, p. 197, 204–205, 220). Poland converted its Office of the Council of Ministers into a Chancellery in 1997 as part of a broader effort to strengthen the position of prime minister but the country's divisive politics and discordant coalitions have reportedly impeded its effectiveness (Zubek, 2001). According to a 2001 comparative study, neither the Czech Republic nor Bulgaria had yet managed to institutionalize a strong prime ministerial office (Goetz and Wollmann, 2001, p. 873, 875). In Slovakia, the prime minister's secretariat is just one part of a sizeable government secretariat, but Haughton suggests that under Mečiar the latter was “to all intents and purposes” the former (Müller-Rommel and Malova, 2001, p. 81; Haughton, 2005, p. 60). The staffs of several East European prime ministers must also compete with extensive presidential staffs, for example, in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic (Baylis, 1996, 313).

Hungary and Poland have adopted a German constitutional device designed to strengthen the prime minister's position—the “constructive vote of no confidence.” Under this provision, parliament cannot remove a prime minister on a vote of no-confidence unless it is able to elect a successor. While the rule may conceivably

¹⁸ A number of scholars have sought to compare the formal powers of East European presidents (Spörer, 2004). I am not aware of a similar comparison of the prerogatives of prime ministers.

¹⁹ In a later article, however, Ágh (2001, p. 103) argues that at least in Hungary the role of parliament was considerably diminished under the Orbán government

help account for the relative durability of Hungarian prime ministers, it does not seem to have been effective in Poland. As in the West, a prime minister's premature demise can usually be attributed to political pressures within his own party or coalition, not to a formal no-confidence vote.

Recruitment effects

What all of the 87 prime ministers of the countries under consideration had in common on taking office was a shortage of experience in democratic politics. To be sure, over half had been members of the ruling party or one of its satellites prior to 1989–1990, and a few had been party officials and to that extent engaged in the Communist version of bureaucratic politics; just a handful, however, had enjoyed any prominence under the old regime. On the other hand, only a small number—notably in Poland—had been active dissidents. Thus the great majority were relative political neophytes, in comparison to Western prime ministers, who have typically been career politicians with many years of partisan experience. To be sure, in the course of 16 years of democratic politics many East European leaders have become career politicians themselves, but ones without long experience behind them. Figures like Stanislav Gross, the former Czech Prime Minister who was just 20 years old at the time of the Velvet Revolution and began his pursuit of a political career almost immediately, are very much the exception (O'Connor, 2005). Gross' youth at the time he took office is less exceptional, however; thirteen East European prime ministers have been in their thirties when they began their terms.

While a few prime ministers have come from atypical backgrounds—such as museum administration (József Antall),²⁰ chemistry (Jerzy Buzek), climatology (Estonia's Andres Tarrand), or former royalty (Simeon II)—and a number were trained in law, by far the largest number, over one-third, were economists or in some cases businessmen or bankers.²¹ Several served as Finance Minister before (or in at least one case after) becoming prime minister. Presumably many were chosen at least in part because of their putative expertise rather than their political acumen or interpersonal skills; they were thought to be especially suited for wrestling with the severe problems of economic transition. But to the extent that they also brought with them a “technocratic” or even antipolitical mindset, most were less inclined to pursue grassroots organization or party-building; Václav Klaus, as we shall see, was a marked exception to this generalization.

It is tempting to blame political inexperience for many of the problems that have typically brought down prime ministers. These include the inability to navigate the shoals of coalition politics, unwillingness to compromise, authoritarian excesses, personality conflicts, insensitivity to popular discontent (“elitism”), a general absence of political *Fingerspitzengefühl*, and charges of corruption. (The link between

²⁰ Antall's father, however had been a governmental official and served as minister in Hungary's early postwar governments (Tökes, 1996, pp. 365–367). Antall's term was cut short by his death in 2003; otherwise he might have deserved inclusion among the “strong” prime ministers.

²¹ This appears to be a far larger proportion than that found among ordinary parliamentary candidates and deputies. See the tables in Millard (2004, pp. 171–172).

inexperience and accusations of corruption, which have contributed to the fall of a remarkable number of the region's prime ministers, would be worth exploring at greater length.) These deficiencies are not entirely unknown among Western heads of government, of course, but appear more likely to afflict those with limited practice in the arts of negotiation and persuasion. Moreover, when other political actors are similarly inexperienced—in other words, where there is not an established political culture of bargaining and compromise—conflict and failure would appear to be more likely. East European publics, it might be added, are also politically inexperienced and thus arguably less tolerant of (or resigned to) their politicians' foibles than Western publics have become.

The absence of an experienced political class and the high turnover in prime ministers have also meant that many prime ministers are all but unknown to the public when they first take office. They do not bring much "political capital" with them when they assume their positions and, given the unpopularity of many decisions they may be forced to make, find it hard to build up more. The average brevity of their time in office is not only a consequence of these difficulties, but also a causal factor that reinforces them.

Unpopular policies and external constraints

Incumbency has not been an advantage in East European elections. Kieran Williams has observed that through 2002 only three prime ministers in the ten states considered here were able to return for a new term without a break following elections. (A fourth was added in 2006 with the return to office of Hungary's Ferenc Gyurcsány.) Williams calculates that the average vote share for government parties in the election at the end of their term in office dropped from 53.54% to 36.59% (Williams, 2003b, as cited in Millard, 2004, pp. 106–108).

The punishment so consistently inflicted by the voters on governing parties and prime ministers cannot be explained solely by inexperience, incompetence, and corruption. The very difficulty governments have faced in attempting to manage the simultaneous political, economic, and cultural transformation in the wake of the fall of Communism has had its price. The familiar accompaniments to the rapid shift to a market economy—the initial drop in living standards, high unemployment, privatization controversies, accusations of corruption, a widening gap between the newly prosperous and those left behind—would have made it difficult for even the most skilled and honest politicians to retain their popularity. Even more than in established democracies, executive decisions that appear to be demanded for the long run often have negative consequences in the short term.²²

As Abby Innes has emphasized, however, the leeway available to East European governments in shaping economic and social policy is not great. First, under the pressure of international lenders and foreign economic advisers, and later under

²² Democratic politicians, of course, are everywhere prone to calculation based on the short time frames imposed by the electoral calendar, but the force of conflicting demands for decisions based on long-term considerations would seem especially compelling for leaders in new democracies (Pierson, 2004, pp. 112–115).

the arguably still greater pressure from the requirements and expectations imposed on candidate member states by the European Union, the region's governments have been forced to pursue relatively similar policies in these spheres in spite of their diverse compositions. Thus governments led by post-Communists have often been among the more vigorous in promoting privatization and austerity, and have paid an electoral price for doing so—the Socialist-led Hungarian government of Gyula Horn being a prominent example. To be sure, Innes may understate the variations in the degree to which, and the intensity with which, a neoliberal agenda is pursued in different countries and by different governments. But the temptation—certainly present in the West as well, but in somewhat smaller measure—for politicians to make promises in the economic and social spheres they are in no position to deliver is almost irresistible.²³ And the readiness of voters and rivals to punish them for their broken promises is entirely predictable.

Exceptions

Not all East European prime ministers can be accurately characterized as “weak” or ineffective. Given the argument to this point, it is now important to consider some apparent exceptions to it and to seek to explain how each one appears to have been able to evade or surmount the obstacles that have burdened his counterparts. The four cases I consider here are those of Václav Klaus (Czech Republic), Vladimír Mečiar (Slovakia), Viktor Orbán (Hungary), and—perhaps surprisingly—Mikuláš Dzurinda (Slovakia). Klaus and Dzurinda are two of the four prime ministers in the ten states who managed to return to office without interruption following new elections (the third is Slovenia's Janez Drnovšek and the fourth Hungary's Gyurcsány). Mečiar returned to power following elections just a few months after he had been deposed in 1994, while Orbán's party narrowly missed being returned to office in both 2002 and 2006.

Klaus remains one of the most intriguing figures in East European politics. As Czechoslovakia's Finance Minister under Marián Čalfa, a Slovak and former Communist not in a position to claim strong authority, Klaus dominated economic policy with his free market rhetoric and, after his party won the 1992 elections in the Czech lands, was largely responsible for engineering the country's breakup. As Czech prime minister he pursued an ambitious scheme of “voucher privatization” and boasted of economic successes unmatched in the region, scolding Western as well as domestic critics with whom he disagreed. His coalition won re-election by just a narrow margin in 1996, when the economy had already begun to falter, and he was forced from office in November 1997 amid banking scandals and charges of corruption. A short time later key ODS leaders and members of parliament bolted to form a new party (Orenstein, 2001, pp. 61–95; Orenstein, 1998). Yet Klaus' support of the ideologically improbable “opposition accord” was vital to the survival of the Socialist-led government named following new elections, and helped him retain some of his own influence. In 2003 he was chosen president, succeeding Václav Havel, with

²³ A notable example is the 2001 promise of Bulgaria's Simeon II to raise living standards within 800 days (Barany, 2002; Alexandrova, 2005).

the help, ironically, of Communist votes. In spite of the corruption allegations and a combative and dogmatic personal style that alienated many of his colleagues (including Havel), as President he has topped polls as the Czech Republic's most popular politician (Herold, 2005a).

There can be little doubt that Klaus' forceful personality, sometimes described as "charismatic," accounts for much of his success. But his ability to carve an effective party machine out of the broad opposition movement, Civic Forum (after first purging its more leftist elements) and the initial, somewhat illusory, appearance of economic success that did not seem to subject Czechs to the reform costs paid elsewhere in the region served him well. For some time, his ostensibly "Friedmanite" economic policies won the almost uncritical admiration of Western economists and lending agencies. He succeeded in reducing President Havel's powers, although the increasingly open tensions in his relationship with Havel probably contributed to his fall in 1997. His strategic pragmatism, as displayed in the opposition accord and his successful presidential candidacy, has since allowed him to achieve a notable comeback.

The political career of Slovakia's Mečiar parallels that of Klaus in many respects, even though the reputation of the former is considerably less savory (Haughton, 2005, pp. 139–140). Like Klaus, Mečiar created a well-organized and highly centralized political party, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), out of part of the former dissident movement, although neither he nor most of his associates were in fact dissidents. Also like Klaus, he enjoyed (and to an extent still enjoys) considerable personal popularity, particularly outside Bratislava, even while falling out with many leading co-partisans. He used his party's victory in Slovakia in the 1992 elections to negotiate with Klaus over the breakup of the common state. He outdid his Czech counterpart in his use of nationalism, his ruthlessness in dealing with enemies, and the degree to which his colleagues allegedly profited from privatization of the Slovak economy. His power struggle with President Kováč led to his temporary fall in 1994, but he was able to return to the prime minister's position following elections later that year. Like Klaus, he recently sought his country's presidency, but was defeated in a runoff election by another former HZDS stalwart (Krause, 2003, pp. 66–69).

For Viktor Orbán, too, the creation and shaping of a political party closely associated with his person has been a key to success. As a dissident, who first won wide attention with his bold anti-Communist speech at the reburial of Imre Nagy in June 1989, he and other Budapest students built Fidesz as a liberal youth movement that initially barred membership to anyone over 35. His accomplishment is still more impressive than that of Klaus and Mečiar in that he was able subsequently radically to remake his party as a conservative and nationalist force which succeeded in absorbing most of the support that initially went to the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Smallholders, and the Christian Democrats.²⁴ In 1998 Fidesz became the first Hungarian party whose skillful choreography of its leader's image—as youthful,

²⁴ Just as Klaus was able to free his party of some of the more moderate Civic Forum Leaders, Orbán was able to rid himself of his popular rival Gábor Fodor and his supporters, who left for the Free Democrats in 1993 (Tworzecki, 2003, p. 62, 119; Tökes, 1997, p. 130).

energetic, and a devoted family man—helped bring it victory (Gulyás, 2004, pp. 74–75). On taking office Orbán strengthened the Office of Prime Minister in order to enhance his control over the government (Körösenyi, 1999, p. 220; “Constitution Watch”, 1998, p. 14) and, in the words of one critic, sought to “presidentialize” Hungarian democracy.²⁵ During his four years as prime minister he won support but also stirred controversy at home and abroad by playing on nationalist themes, for example, by promoting the “Hungarian status law,”²⁶ and by seeking, through questionable means, to reduce opposition influence over the media (see “Constitution Watch”, 2000, pp. 18–19). He also presided over economic successes that went back in considerable measure to the austerity policies of his predecessors. His political style has been characterized as one of “ruthless pragmatism mixed with ideological zeal” (“Charlemagne”, 2002)—an apt description that could also be applied to Klaus. Unlike his conservative predecessor József Antall, he was not challenged by the relatively weak Hungarian president, but did have to contend with an activist Constitutional Court.

Slovakia’s Dzurinda would not appear at first glance to belong in this company or to have overcome the major obstacles other prime ministers have faced. The coalition of electoral convenience he led when he initially took office in 1998 was made up of five disparate parties; accordingly, he was forced to preside over a fragmented and contentious government in his first term. In 2000, however, he created his own party, the SDKÚ, and was able to return at the head of a more ideologically homogeneous center-right coalition following the 2002 elections, thanks in large part to the continuing fear of Mečiar and the HZDS and the disintegration of the postcommunist PDL. The coalition was reduced to minority status in 2004, however, and collapsed altogether in February 2006. Dzurinda himself was not popular. He was accused of “secretive behavior and conspiratorial talk” and a “domineering” leadership style; critics even likened him to Mečiar. In a 2003 survey only 4% of the respondents said they trusted him (Tancerova, 2003a,b; Haughton and Rybár, 2004, p. 128). Yet his government was able to bring Slovakia into the European Union—a possibility closed to the country under Mečiar—and to enact a neoliberal economic program that won the praise of American conservatives and excited the envy of some of the country’s neighbors.²⁷

The political and personal qualities shared by Klaus, Mečiar, and Orbán are notable. All three are closely identified with parties they helped create, and while those parties remain strong, it is not clear how well they would fare without their leaders (to be sure, Klaus as Czech President is now nominally non-partisan, but his party led the field in the 2006 parliamentary elections). All three have played on nationalistic themes with varying degrees of subtlety, with Klaus emphasizing a kind of economic

²⁵ Ágh argues (2001, pp. 101–105) that Orbán effectively sought to polarize Hungarian politics by promoting “majoritarian” rather than “consensus” democracy, a view seconded by Bozoki (2002, pp. 80–86).

²⁶ Waterbury (2006), views Orbán’s use of this issue as a conscious and successful strategy for building Fidesz.

²⁷ Gyarfasova (2004) remarks, that “paradoxically ambitious reforms kept Dzurinda’s coalition together.” However, she attributes the introduction of neoliberal reforms, including a “flat tax,” especially to “the charismatic young finance minister Ivan Miklos” rather than to Dzurinda himself.

nationalism that includes frequent criticism of the European Union. All three have been assertive (and at least in Mečiar's case authoritarian) and controversial leaders who have frequently clashed with colleagues, some of whom have left for rival parties.

Dzurinda shares the latter characteristic with the first three, but otherwise presents something of an anomaly. The coalitions he led proved to be far more fragile than those of the others, the party system less consolidated, and his personal appeal much smaller. However, the reforms his governments produced were arguably further-reaching than any that were enacted under Mečiar and Orbán, and at least equal to those under Klaus. To be sure, the Slovak reforms appeared to owe as much or more to the work of his ministers than to his own efforts (Haughton, 2005, p. 136, 135–139).

It is possible that Dzurinda was “more lucky than good”—a “free rider” in Rose's terminology (Rose, 1991, p. 22)—but his nearly eight consecutive years in office is now second only to the record in the East European parliamentary states set by Slovenia's Drnovšek between 1992 and 2002.

It is also worth pointing out that the Communist successor parties of Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria have not produced any strong prime ministers as yet, in spite of their relative success at the polls.²⁸ Post-communist party politicians have done better as presidents—Kwaśniewski (Poland), Iliescu (Romania), and Brazauskas (who subsequently became Lithuania's Prime Minister) are cases in point. But post-communist prime ministers have often found themselves under siege. In Poland and Hungary, they have been damaged by allegations directed at earlier connections with the secret police or the Soviet military, but that does not fully account for their comparative weakness.

Conclusions

There can be little doubt that the vulnerability of East European prime ministers is closely related to the volatility of their countries' party systems. In Table 1 I have compared the average continuing tenure in office of prime ministers since 1990 in the ten East European states and in fourteen West European states to an admittedly crude index of party volatility. I have calculated it by adding the number of new parties that have won parliamentary representation in each election to those that have lost it or disappeared altogether, and I have included other parties that have suffered dramatic losses or made dramatic gains—of 50% or more of their previous popular vote. The index represents the average score over elections since 1990. On both the average tenure and party volatility measures the Western European states—with the exception of Italy—do much better than the East European ones. Among the latter, Hungary, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic have the lowest volatility scores and the longest average prime ministerial terms (still only about two and one-half years), excepting Slovakia. Slovakia presents an anomaly, thanks to

²⁸ Drnovšek's Liberal Democrats might, however, be cited as a type of successor party—not to the Yugoslav League of Communists but to the Slovenian Association of Socialist Youth. Drnovšek's success is probably associated with his role in bringing democracy and independence to Slovenia, combined with what has been called his “remarkable political deftness.” (Bukowski, 1999).

Dzurinda: an average term of nearly three years combined with a high level of party system volatility.

If we look at the exceptions to the weak prime minister rule, we find politicians much of whose strength resided in a political party which they were instrumental in creating and in which they have been the dominant force. In elections in 2006 two of those parties still competed for the lead in their countries, although Mečiar's HZDS fell to fifth place. Klaus, Mečiar, and Orbán all appear to have been adept at power politics—particularly as applied to party-building—from the beginning of the post-Communist period. After Klaus formed the ODS, for example, he and his supporters are said to have “quickly consolidated their hold on the [Civic] Forum's local structures, forming a disciplined, hierarchically organized political machine.” (Tworzecki, 2003, p. 66.) Mečiar is credited with devoting “an unusual degree of attention to party organization, building a powerful network of regional and local party units” while maintaining centralized control (Krause, 2003, p. 67).²⁹ Under Orbán, Fidesz, as early as 1993, was transformed into a “hierarchically organized election party with a professional administration” (Balázs and Enyedi, 1996, p. 63, as cited in Millard, 2004, p. 144). Each leader has been accused of employing an autocratic leadership style and has dealt forcefully if not ruthlessly with his opponents; each has been quite willing to resort to populist and nationalist appeals. Once again, however, Dzurinda fits a part but not all of this profile.

Other prime ministers have not been so power-oriented or have not been as good at it. Their efforts to outmaneuver rivals in parties which they do not control and with which they are often not closely identified have frequently failed. Their political inexperience and in many cases “technocratic” bent have been costly. Although one might have expected the level and the benefits of experience of prime ministers to have increased over time and thus to have produced greater longevity in office, as occurred in Spain, Portugal, and Greece,³⁰ there is no strong evidence of such a trend. I calculate that the average number of prime ministers that have served in each country in the second half of the post-Communist period is 4.7, only modestly fewer than the 5.3 who served in the first half. Perhaps that is because the parties themselves have largely failed to mature and “consolidate,” and because both voters and party elites continue to be attracted to untainted “outsiders” when filling the post.

The significance of institutional constraints is harder to judge. The frequent ambiguity of newly-formulated constitutional and legal provisions that tends to accompany fledgling democracies can both offer opportunities and present challenges to prime ministers. Countries with relatively strong presidencies, such as Poland and Romania, have generally had weak prime ministers. On the other hand, both Klaus and Mečiar were able to battle their (institutionally weak) presidents for influence and largely prevail, albeit at some longer-term cost. Overall, while it has been argued that the “governmentalization” of East European executives has made gradual progress over time while

²⁹ For details, see the excellent study by Houghton (2001). Mečiar is said to have utilized regional governmental reform to greatly increase the number of patronage positions available for rewarding party loyalists (O'Dwyer, 2006, pp. 236–241; Waterbury, 2006, pp. 499–506).

³⁰ Morlino (2001, pp. 60–66) points out that in both Greece and Portugal constitutional amendments strengthening the prime minister were approved in the 1980s.

the influence of presidents and parliaments has receded (Goetz and Wollmann, 2001), it is not clear that many prime ministers have benefited.

All four “strong” prime ministers profited from what at least appeared to be economic successes while in office. But favorable economic results (at least as judged from the outside) have by no means helped others—most Polish prime ministers, for example, and recent Hungarian and Czech incumbents.³¹ Bad economic news almost invariably weakens prime ministers, it appears, but good news does not always help them. The close relationship we often observe between perceived economic performance and electoral outcomes in the West is less apparent thus far in the East. Nearly all prime ministers have supported their countries’ membership in the European Union, but they have not been rewarded for achieving entry. They have been ill-positioned to blame the Union or foreign advisors and investors for economic difficulties, although many of their opponents have been quite willing to do so.

There is no unambiguous way of measuring the importance of political inexperience in accounting for the weakness of prime ministers, although one suspects it is considerable. Natural political gifts, the cases of our “strong” prime ministers suggest, can surface in individuals coming from diverse backgrounds. The special kind of political experience that a few prime ministers (especially in Poland and Hungary) gained in the Communist years, on the other hand, does not necessarily carry over to democratic contexts. Prime ministers whose prior experience was in economics, banking, or business have not fared well on the whole, but Klaus and Drnovšek are noteworthy exceptions. No other type of occupational background appears to offer any greater advantage.

How much real difference, one might finally ask, does the weakness of prime ministers in fact make for the performance of the new political systems? I am inclined to share the view that even in Western Europe the position of prime minister is at least as much a symbolic one as it is one carrying with it the ability profoundly to influence events.³² Even what appear to be “successful” policies may have largely been the work of other ministers or bureaucrats, or of external forces; the prime minister’s role, certainly a vital one, is to rally public and elite support and project the image of strong and confident leadership—“dramaturgy,” as Murray Edelman has called it. For all the reasons outlined above, effective “dramaturgy” has proven difficult for East European prime ministers to carry out. Weak and newly-formed parties cannot project their leaders’ authority in the ways that strong, established, and disciplined ones can. The leader’s own ability to demonstrate authority is further constrained by underdeveloped institutions, political inexperience, and the often unhappy social and economic consequences of transition—all of which contribute to the weakness of parties as well. The sobering experience of the “core” East Central European countries since 2004 does not offer much reason for believing that the prospects of the region’s prime ministers will greatly improve soon.

³¹ Paczynska (2005) shows how in Poland political disaffection has accompanied generally impressive rates of economic growth—but also rising unemployment and inequality.

³² Edelman (1988, ch. 3) may go too far in suggesting that political leaders generally have no real impact on events whatever. See also Rose (1991, pp. 21–22).

Appendix A. Post-communist era prime ministers and presidents—Eastern Europe

	Born	in Office	Party	A	B	Occupation
<i>Prime ministers</i>						
<i>Bulgaria</i>						
Lukanov, Andrei	26.10.38	2/90–11/90	BSP	y	n	econ. official
Popov, Dimitar	26.6.27	12/90–11/91	np	n	n	lawyer
Dimitrov, Filip	31.3.55	11/91–12/92	UDF	n	n	lawyer
Berov, Lyuben	6.10.25	12/92–1/95	np	n	n	economist
Videnov, Zhan	22.3.59	1/95–12/96	BSP	y	n	youth official
Sofianski, Stefan	7.11.51	2/97–4/97	UDF		n	economist
Kostov, Ivan	23.12.49	5/97–6/01	UDF	n	n	economist
Simeon Coburg-Gotha	16.6.43	6/01–8/05	NMS	n	n	exiled king
Stanishev, Sergei	5.5.66	8/05–	BSP	y	n	historian
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>						
Čalfa, Marián	7.5.46	12/89–7/92	np	y	n	lawyer
Strasky, Jan	24.12.40	7/92–12/92	CDP	y	y	econ. official
<i>Czech Republic</i>						
Klaus, Václav	19.6.41	7/92–12/97	CDP	n	n	economist
Tošovský, Josef	28.9.50	12/97–7/98	np	y	n	banker
Zeman, Miloš	28.9.44	7/98–7/02	CSDP	y	n	economist
Spidla, Vladimír	22.4.51	7/02–7/04	CSDP	n	n	diverse
Gross, Stanislav	30.10.69	7/04–4/05	CSDP	n	n	lawyer
Paroubek, Jiří	21.8.52	4/05–8/06	CSDP	s	n	economist
<i>Slovakia</i>						
Mečiar, Vladimír	26.7.42	7/92–3/94	MDS	y	n	lawyer
Moravčík, Jozef	19.3.45	3/94–12/94	MDS	y	n	law professor
Mečiar, Vladimír		12/94–10/98				
Dzurinda, Mikuláš	4.2.55	10/98–7/06	CDM	y	n	econ. analyst
Fico, Róbert	15.9.64	7/06	Smer	y	n	lawyer
<i>Estonia</i>						
Savisaar, Edgar	31.5.50	5/90–1/92	PFE		n	historian
Vähi, Tiit	10.1.47	1/92–10/92	CP			engineer
Laar, Mart	22.4.60	10/92–8/94	PPU			historian
Tarrand, Andres	11.1.40	8/94–4/95	np			climatologist
Vähi, Tiit		4/95–3/97				
Siimann, Mart	21.9.46	5/97–3/99	CP			philologist, psychologist
Laar, Mart		3/99–1/02				
Kallas, Siim	2.10.48	1/02–3/03	RP			economist
Part, Johan	27.8.66	4/03–3/05	UR			lawyer
Ansip, Andrus	1.10.56	3/05–	RP	y		chemist, businessman
<i>Latvia</i>						
Godmanis, Ivars	27.11.51	5/90–8/93	LPF			physicist
Birkavs, Valdis	28.7.42	8/93–9/94				lawyer
Gailis, Māris	9.7.51	9/94–12/95	LW			
Šķēle, Andris	19.1.58	12/95–8/97	np			businessman
Krasts, Guntars	16.10.57	8/97–11/98	FFP			economist

(continued on next page)

Appendix A (continued)

	Born	in Office	Party	A	B	Occupation
Kristopans, Vilis	13.6.54	11/98–7/99	LW			
Šķēle, Andris		7/99–5/00	PP			
Bērziņš, Andris	4.8.51	5/00–11/02	LW			state official
Repše, Einars	9.12.61	11/02–3.04	NEP			banker?
Emsis, Indulis	2.1.52	3/04–12/04	GPU			biologist
Kalvītis, Aigars	27.6.66	12/04–	PP			agr. economist
<i>Lithuania</i>						
Prunskiene, Kazmira	26.2.42	90–1/91	Saj	y	y	economist
Vagnorius, Gediminas	6.10.57	1/91–7/92	Saj			economist?
Abišala, Aleksandras	28.12.55	7/92–12/92	np			physicist
Lubys, Bronislovas	8.10.38	12/92–3/93	np			
Šleževičius, Adolfas	2.2.48	3/93–2/96	DLP			engineer
Stankevičius, L.M.	10.8.35	2/96–11/96	DLP			economist
Vagnorius, Gediminas		11/96–5/99	HUC			
Paksas, Rolandas	10.6.56	6/99–10/99	HUC	y	?	engineer, pilot
Kubilius, Andrius	8.12.56	11/99–10/00	HUC	y	?	engineer
Paksas, Rolandas		10/00–6/01				
Brazauskas, Algirdis	22.9.32	7/01–6/06	LSDP	y	n	engineer
Kirkilas, Gediminas	30.8.51	7/06–	LSDP	y	n	party official
<i>Hungary</i>						
Antall, József	8.4.32	4/90–12/93	HDF	n	n	historian
Boross, Péter	27.8.28	12/93–6/94	HDF	n	n	manager
Horn, Gyula	5.7.32	6/94–6/98	HSP	y	n	state official
Orbán, Viktor	31.5.63	6/98–4/02	YD	n	y	law student
Medgyessy, Péter	19.10.42	4/02–8/04	np	y	n	economist
Gyurcsány, Ferenc	4.6.61	8/04–	HSP	y	n	businessman
<i>Poland</i>						
Mazowiecki, Tadeusz	18.4.27	8/89–12/90	DU	n	y	journalist
Bielecki, Jan K.	3.5.51	1/91–12/91	LDC	n	y	economist
Olszewski, Jan	20.8.30	12/91–7/92	CA	n	y	lawyer
Suchocka, Hanna	3.4.46	7/92–9/93	DU	s	y	lawyer, prof.
Pawlak, Waldemar	5.9.59	10/93–2/95	PPP	s	n	farmer
Oleksy, Józef	22.6.46	3/95–	DLA	y	n	party secretary
Cimozewicz, Włodz.	13.9.51	2/96–10/97	DLA	y	n	lawyer
Buzek, Jerzy	3.7.40	10/97–9/01	SEA	n	y	chemist
Miller, Leszek	3.7.46	9/01–5/04	DLA	y	n	party official
Belka, Marek	9.1.52	5/04–10/05	np	y	n	economist
Marcinkiewicz, Kaz.	20.7.59	10/05–7/06	LJ	n	y	physics teacher
Kaczyński, Jaroslaw	18.6.49	7/06–	LJ	n	y	lawyer
<i>Romania</i>						
Roman, Petre	22.7.46	1/90–9/91	NSF	y	n	professor
Stolojan, Theodor	24.10.43	10/91–10/92	np	y	n	economist
Vacarioiu, Nicolae	5.12.43	11/92–11/96	np	y	n	economist
Ciorbea, Victor	26.10.54	12/96–3/98	NPP		n	lawyer
Vasile, Radu	10.10.42	4/98–12/99	NPP	y	n	econ. historian
Isarescu, Mugur	1.8.49	12/99–11/00	np	?	n	economist
Nastase, Adrian	22.6.50	11/00–12/04	PSD	y	n	legal scholar
Tariceanu, Calin Popescu	14.1.52	12/04–	NL			businessman

Appendix A (continued)

	Born	in Office	Party	A	B	Occupation
<i>Slovenia</i>						
Peterle, Lojze	5.7.48	5/90–5/92	SCD	n	n	economist?
Drnovšek, Janez	17.5.50	5/92–3/00	LDS	y	n	economist (Dr.)
Bajuk, Andrej	18.10.43	3/00–11/00	SPP	n	n	economist (exile)
Drnovšek		11/00–12/02				
Rop, Anton	27.12.60	12/02–11/04	LDS		n	economist
Jansa, Janez	17.9.58	11/04–	SDP	y?	y	youth official
<i>Presidents</i>						
<i>Bulgaria</i>						
Mladenov, Petar	22.8.36	11/89–7/90	BSP	y	n	for. minister
Zhelev, Zheliu	3.3.35	8/90–1/97	UDF	y	y	philosopher
Stoyanov, Peter	25.5.52	1/97–1/02	UDF	n	n	lawyer
Parvanov, Georgi	28.6.57	1/02–	BSP	y	n	historian
<i>Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic</i>						
Havel, Václav	5.10.36	12/89–7/92	np	n	y	playwright
		1/93–1/03				
Klaus, Václav	19.6.41	1/03–	CDP	n	n	economist
<i>Slovakia</i>						
Kováč, Michal	5.8.30	3/93–3/97	MDS	y	n	econ. official
Schuster, Rudolf	4.1.34	5/99–6/04	PCU	y	n	mayor, writer
Gasparovic, Ivan	27.3.41	6/04–	MD	y	n	lawyer
<i>Estonia</i>						
Meri, Lennart	29.3.29	Fall 92–9/01		n		writer
Rüütel, Arnold	10.5.28	9/01–		y	n	agronomist
<i>Latvia</i>						
Ulmanis, Guntis	13.9.39	7/93–7/99		y	n	economist
Vike-Friitberga, Vaira	1.12.37	7/99–		n	n	psychologist (exile)
<i>Lithuania</i>						
Landsbergis, Vytaudas	18.10.32	3/90–11/92	Saj.			music scholar
Brazauskas, Algirdis	11.9.32	11/92–1/98		y	n	engineer
Adamkus, Valdas	3.11.26	1/98–12/02		n		environmental engineer(exile)
Paksas, Rolandas	10.6.56	12/02–4/04				engineer, pilot
Adamkus, Valdas		7/04–				
<i>Hungary</i>						
Göncz, Arpád	10.2.22	5/90–8/00	AFD	n	y	translator, playwright
Madl, Ferenc	29.1.31	8/00–8/05	HDF			law professor
Sólyom, László	3.1.42	8/05–	np	n	y	law professor
<i>Poland</i>						
Jaruzelski, Wojciech	6.7.23	1985–12/90	PUWP	y	n	general
Wałęsa, Lech	29.9.43	12/90–12/95	np	n	y	electrician
Kwaśniewski, Aleks.	15.11.54	12/95–12/05	DLA	y	n	functionary
Kaczyński, Lech	18.6.49	12/05–	LJ	n	y	lawyer

(continued on next page)

Appendix A (continued)

	Born	in Office	Party	A	B	Occupation
<i>Romania</i>						
Iliescu, Ion	3.3.30	5/90–11/96	DNSF	y	n	ideologist
Constantinescu, Emil	19.11.39	11/96–12/00	DC	y		geologist
Iliescu, Ion		12/00–12/04				
Basescu, Traian	4.11.51	12/04–	DP			ship captain
<i>Slovenia</i>						
Kučan, Milan	17.9.58	12/92–12/02	np	y	n	LCY leader
Drnovšek, Janez	17.5.50	12/02–	LDS	y	n	economist

NOTES: party affiliation (just prior to and/or while in office)

np = non-party

(Bulgaria)

BSP = Bulgarian Socialist Party

UDF = Union of Democratic Forces

NMS = National Movement Simeon II

(Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic)

CDP = Civic Democratic Party

CSDP = Czech Social Democratic Party

(Slovakia)

MDS = Movement for a Democratic Slovakia

CDM = Christian Democratic Movement

PCU = Party of Civic Understanding

MD = Movement for Democracy

Smer = Direction

(Estonia)

CP = Center Party

RP = Reform Party

PPU = Pro Patria Union

UR = Union for the Republic

PFE = Popular Front of Estonia

(Hungary)

HDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum

HSP = Hungarian Socialist Party

AFD = Alliance of Free Democrats
YD = Young Democrats/Hungarian Civic Party

(Latvia)

LPF = People's Front
LW = Latvian Way
FFP = Fatherland and Freedom Union
PP = People's Party
NEP = New Era
GPU = Green and Farmers' Union

(Lithuania)

Saj = Sajudis ("Unity")
LSDP = Lithuanian Social Democratic Party
DLP = Democratic Labor Party
HUC = Homeland Union—Conservative

(Poland)

DU = Democratic Union
LDC = Liberal Democratic Congress
CA = Center Alliance
PPP = Polish Peasant Party
DLA = Democratic Left Alliance
PUWP = Polish United Workers' Party
SEA = Solidarity Electoral Action
LJ = Law and Justice

(Romania)

NSF = National Salvation Front
NPP = National Peasant Party/Christian Democrats
NL = National Liberal Party
DNSF = Democratic National Salvation Front
NPP = National Peasant Party/Christian Democrats
PSD = Party of Social Democracy
DC = Democratic Convention
DP = Democratic Party of Romania

(Slovenia)

LDS = Liberal Democracy of Slovenia
SDP = Social Democratic Party

SCD = Slovenian Christian Democrats

SPP = Slovenian People's Party

A = former member of Communist Party?

y = yes

n = no

s = member of "satellite" party

B = former dissident? (This category requires a somewhat subjective judgement as to what constitutes "dissident" activity. Thus I have not listed Meciar or Kováč as dissidents; although both were expelled from the Communist Party after 1968, neither appears to have been active as a dissident prior to the Velvet Revolution.)

Occupation = principal occupation prior to 1989

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