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RUNAWAY STATE BUILDING
How Political Parties Shape States in Postcommunist Eastern Europe

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IN much of Eastern Europe postcommunist state administrations have grown steadily, often dramatically, ten years after revolutions that were pitted in large part against a monolithic state apparatus.[1] This article seeks to explain why, by linking the growth of state bureaucracies to the difficulties of party-system consolidation: the number of personnel has expanded most in countries where party-system development has stalled. In Poland, which has battled party fragmentation and government instability since the collapse of the Solidarity movement, the number of personnel in the central state administration tripled between 1990 and 1998. In Slovakia, which saw the rise of a dominant party machine, the national-level administration nearly doubled between 1993 and 1998. By contrast, in countries where party systems consolidated quickly, such as the Czech Republic and Hungary, state administrations have expanded little or even contracted.

I will argue that the surprisingly common pattern of explosive administrative growth, or what I term "runaway state building,"[2] results

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[1] A number of scholars have pointed to the surprising resilience of the state after communism, including Anna Grzymała-Busse, "Political Competition and the Politicization of the State in East Central Europe," *Comparative Political Studies* 36 (December 2003); Vladimir Gimpelson and Daniel Triesman, "Fiscal Games and Public Employment," *World Politics* 54 (January 2002); Jerzy Bartkowski, "Państwo i wielka przemiana," in A. Jasińska-Kania and J. Raciborski, eds., *Naród, Władza, Społeczeństwo* (Nation, power, society) (Warsaw: Scholar, 1996); Witold Kieżun, "Czterej jeźdźcy apokalipsy polskiej biurokracji," *Kultura* 3 (March 2000); and the World Bank, *Corruption in Poland: Review of Priority Areas and Proposals for Action*, Report by the Warsaw Office of the World Bank, October 11, 1999.

[2] This term departs from the conventional usage of "state building." Traditionally, state building has referred to the process by which the state gains greater power over or autonomy from society—by war making and/or by bureaucratizing; see Charles Tilly, "War-Making and State-Making as Organized Crime," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Bernard Silberman, *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1–4. In either case, expansion implies increasing state capacity. In contrast, runaway state

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from the intertwining of party building and state building, which creates ideal conditions for patronage politics.[3] The postcommunist region is characterized by societies disengaged from politics and states delegitimized by their communist past. The former constitutes a severe obstacle to party-building strategies based on popular mobilization, while the latter presents a tempting opportunity for patronage-style party building based on influence over recruitment to the state administration and promotion within it. These two social facts generate strong pressures for parties to substitute patronage for mass support in building themselves as organizations. This patronage swells and politicizes the administration, hobbling its effectiveness.

This argument would seem to fly in the face of pluralist theories of politics, whose premise is that elections enable voters to "vote the rascals out." Why should the introduction of electoral competition after communism not lead to more rationalized state building? I will argue that electoral competition can, in fact, constrain patronage-led state building when it is robust and institutionalized—restrictive conditions for this region. Robust competition implies that no party is dominant. Institutionalization means that elections present voters with the choice among a manageable number of stable parties with familiar coalition-building preferences.[4] Party systems that meet these criteria provide the conditions for building coherent governments and credible oppositions. Only rarely have post–Communist Party systems provided these conditions, however. A number have been dominated by political machines. Others have been highly fragmented and volatile. In either case, competition

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building is driven not by interstate competition or bureaucrats seeking legal-rational legitimation but by elected politicians seeking patronage resources for the task of party building. Thus, in runaway state building, a bigger state is a sign of both patronage and state *under*development; see Herbert Kitschelt, "Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities," *Comparative Political Studies* 6 (August–September 2000); Simona Piattoni, "Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation," in Piattoni, ed., *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 200–206; and James Scott, "Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 63 (December 1969).

[3] Following Martin Shefter, I define patronage as "a divisible benefit that politicians distribute to individual voters, campaign workers, or contributors in exchange for political support"; see Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 283 fn. 3. These benefits may take many forms. I focus here on positions within the state administration.

[4] See Scott Mainwaring, *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 3–4; Peter Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); James Toole, "Government Formation and Party System Stabilization in East Central Europe," *Party Politics* 6, no. 4 (2000), 458; Goldie Shabad and Kazimierz Slomczynski, "Interparty Mobility among Political Elites in Post-Communist East Central Europe," *Party Politics* 10, no. 2 (2004); and Marcus Kreuzer and Vello Pettai, "Patterns of Political Instability: Affiliation Patterns of Politicians and Voters in Postcommunist Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38 (Summer 2003).

did little to rein in the wide-scale patronage to which this region is predisposed by the sequencing of party building and state consolidation.

In many ways, the 1989 revolutions represented a telescoped version of Martin Shefter's celebrated thesis about the sequencing of state building and party building: if party building precedes the consolidation of state bureaucracies, then party builders incline toward patronage strategies.[5] The reintroduction of electoral competition *before* the consolidation of the postcommunist state administration opened the door to patronage politics, enabling underdeveloped and resource-hungry parties to raid the administration. Postcommunist countries, like the nineteenth-century Italian and American cases described by Shefter, faced the challenge of reconciling the processes of building democratic party structures and modern state bureaucracies. The 1989 revolutions brought a sudden and complete expansion of suffrage requiring new party structures. The dual transformations from a centrally planned system to a market economy and from a Leninist to a democratic regime necessitated major restructuring of the administration.

Yet, while Shefter's sequencing thesis is very appropriate, it cannot explain the *variation* in state building after communism. If democratization before state consolidation were sufficient to produce patronage-led state building, there should not be examples of moderate expansion in the region. I will argue that Shefter's theory underestimates the extent to which electoral competition constrains patronage. In probing the dynamics of state building in Eastern Europe, this article reappraises Shefter's framework in a pluralist light. By showing its limitations in critical test cases, this research suggests how Shefter's thesis may be refined, strengthened, and made more applicable to new cases.

Finally, because the number of possible causal variables dwarfs the sample of cases available for testing, it is necessary to hold some of them constant to get analytical leverage. To exclude rival hypotheses and focus on the effects of party building on the state, I will compare Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. These countries match closely in terms of their recent political history (as Soviet satellite states), their rate of economic development (as front-runners of the region), their proximity to Western Europe, and their political-cultural lineage (all being within the sphere of Catholic Europe).[6] Thus neither the formal institutions of communism, economic factors, and geopolitical situation nor political culture as such can explain the significant differences among them in their state building after communism.

[5] Shefter (fn. 3), 14–60.

[6] I will address a more nuanced political-cultural hypothesis below.

I. The Phenomenon of Runaway State Building

As a unit of analysis, the state is one of the more contentious within social science. Any study of state building runs into the problem of how widely or narrowly to define the state itself. Define it too broadly and one's theory needs to incorporate a multitude of variables to explain something like the magnitude of expansion; different elements of the state, such as the educational system and the military, may expand for different reasons. This problem is accentuated when there are only a few cases, and adding variables wipes out analytical leverage. Define the state too narrowly and the generalizability of one's causal inferences suffers.

To test the hypothesis that the ability of party competition to constrain patronage determines the magnitude of administrative expansion, I have settled on the following balance between these internal and external validity considerations: I define the state bureaucracy as the set of nonelected, publicly funded positions of administration of the central government and its branch offices.[7] Of the multiplicity of groupings within the state, this is the set of positions most directly linked to the national government for their organizational character, composition, and functioning.[8] It is also where the *nomenklatura* system left its strongest mark on organizational culture.[9] Thus, these positions are most directly the rewards of national-level party competition. If a relationship between patronage politics and expansion cannot be established here, it is unlikely that it can be established in other parts of the state.

It is important to be clear about what is not included in this definition of the state and why it is not included.[10] First, I am not yet looking at local administration (for which, see below). Local governments were

[7] Specifically, this includes the central ministries and offices, their branch offices, the territorial administration, state inspectorates, and tax offices.

[8] In each of these countries, it is considered an abuse of power to place political appointees in any office below that of deputy minister or advisor to the minister. Department heads, deputy department heads, and other staff below these levels are supposed to be professional appointments.

[9] Other areas of the state have proved less open to patronage than the administration. Welfare agencies, for example, were less directly linked to the *nomenklatura* system. Moreover, even lower-level positions in the welfare system—such as nurses and teachers—require more specialized knowledge and professional expertise than those in the administration, which serves as a barrier to patronage. Author's interviews with Jaromír Vepřek, head of Tým DG Plus, a Czech health care policy consultancy, Prague, July 27, 2001; Zuzana Šranková, Orava Project for Democracy in Education, Bratislava, July 11, 2001; and Józefina Hrynkiewicz, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warsaw, June 21, 2001.

[10] In her analysis of patronage in these countries, Grzymała-Busse (fn. 1) uses a wider operational definition of the state: the public administration. However, the public administration includes personnel whom the national government does not appoint, most notably the local-level administration; therefore, local administration growth cannot be taken as evidence of national-party patronage. The second problem with the public administration is that it includes different categories of personnel across countries.

established in these three countries in 1990. From their inception, they were granted autonomy from the central government in hiring personnel and guaranteed their own resource base through fixed formulas for sharing tax revenues with the center. Therefore, looking at national-level party politics cannot be expected to provide much leverage in explaining local bureaucratic expansion. Second, my definition does not include the military, though it does include administrative positions in the Ministries of Defense and the Interior. Including the military would introduce a range of international factors and cloud the focus on domestic politics. Another major element excluded by this definition is state-owned enterprises, since developments here are largely driven by market forces. Last, I exclude personnel employed in state welfare services. The reason, again, is not that patronage is absent from this sphere but simply that its link to personnel expansion is less direct than in the state administration.

Figure 1 presents the cumulative growth in the number of personnel in each national-level state administration from 1993 to 2000 (see Appendix 1).[11] The number of personnel in Slovakia and Poland grew by 71 and 55 percent, respectively. The Czech administration barely budged, increasing by only 16 percent.[12] The timing of expansion differed greatly as well. Slovakia's was concentrated in a two-year period, while Poland's was constant over time.

One might surmise that the Slovak and Polish administrations expanded so much more not because of patronage but because they were adding capacity while the Czechs were not. However, if personnel are added because they meet real needs and are meritocratically selected, then the effectiveness of the administration should rise in at least rough proportion to its growth in size. This was certainly not the picture of Slovak and Polish state building conveyed in the author's interviews with state officials from 1999 to 2001. Nor do other independently collected data—such as Kaufmann, Kraay, and Zoido-Lobaton's *Governance Matters* survey—suggest that Poland or Slovakia has built state capacity commensurate with the magnitude of expansion. Table 1 presents each country's score on their index of "government effectiveness," a measure that "combine[s] perceptions of the quality of public service provision, the quality of the bureaucracy, the competence of civil serv-

[11] Unfortunately, Czech and Slovak data are unavailable before 1993.

[12] The post-1998 numbers for Poland are adjusted to reflect personnel reassigned to regional governments after that country's 1998 decentralization. Even comparing all three countries from 1993 to 1998 to avoid this complicating factor shows the same ranking: 82 percent Slovakia, 48 percent Poland, 16 percent Czech Republic.

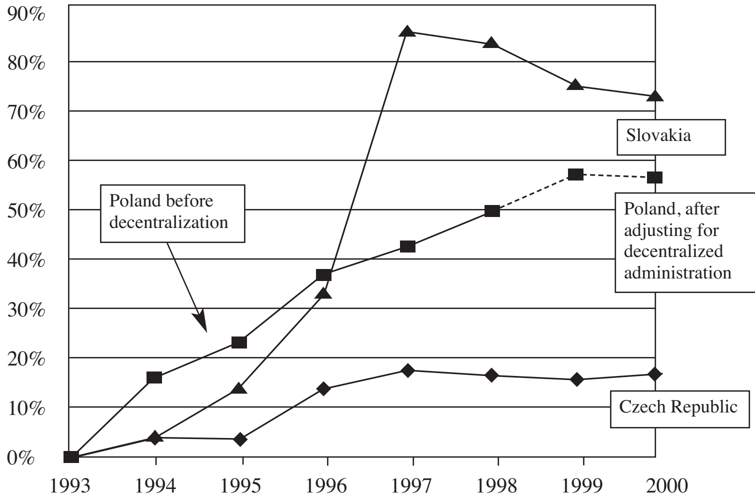

FIGURE 1
CUMULATIVE GROWTH OF NATIONAL-LEVEL STATE ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

SOURCES: See Appendix 1.

TABLE 1
GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS SCORES BY COUNTRY AND YEAR

Country	*1996*	*2000*
Czech Republic	0.6	0.71
Poland	0.47	0.39
Slovakia	0.18	0.28

SOURCE: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, in *Governance Matters III: Governance Indicators for 1996–2002*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper #3106, http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/pubs/govmatters3.html (accessed August 30, 2004). This measure assigns a minimum value of −2.5 for the least effective states and 2.5 for the most effective ones. I have used figures from 1996 and 2000 because they most closely match the period analyzed here.

ants, the independence of the civil service from political pressures, and the credibility of the government's commitment to policies." As these data show, the fastest-growing states were neither those with the most capacity at the end of the period nor those with the greatest gains in capacity relative to their starting points.

II. What Causes Runaway State Building? Rival Hypotheses

What are other possible explanations for the expansion of the state administration after communism? The comparative politics literature suggests a number of alternatives. It is not my intention to rule them out definitively, only to show their shortcomings before setting forth a patronage explanation that offers the best fit for the variation observed.

Some have pointed to economic factors, arguing that postcommunist states have grown as a result of taking on new tasks during the transformation from a command economy to a market economy and as a result of economic growth more generally.[13] While this explanation certainly accounts for some of the expansion, the magnitude and rapidity of Polish and Slovak expansion seem above and beyond the demands of economic restructuring; after all, the transition obviated tasks such as central planning at the same time that it introduced new ones. Furthermore, why has the magnitude of expansion varied so much between these three countries, which are at similar points in the economic transition? A comparison with countries at different stages of transition also casts doubt on the hypothesis that state growth follows economic growth: according to the secondary literature, the administrations of Bulgaria and Russia grew by 33 and 53 percent at the same time that these countries' economies contracted by 9 and 17 percent.[14]

Perhaps it is a question of formal institutions: constitutions and legislation. But how then can we explain the differences in expansion among countries with similar institutions? Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia are all parliamentary democracies.[15] For most of the 1990s

[13] Noting the latter argument are Bartkowski (fn. 1); and Gimpelson and Triesman (fn. 1).

[14] These additional data on administrative expansion capture general trends but may not to be directly comparable with the Polish, Czech, and Slovak data, since they were collected by other scholars and may use different classification schemes. The data for Bulgaria, covering the 1990–95 period, come from Tony Verheijen, "The Civil Service System of Bulgaria: Hope on the Horizon," in Verheijen, ed., *Civil Service Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (Cheltenham, U.K.: Edward Elgar, 1999), 126. The Russian data, covering the 1993–99 period, come from Gimpelson and Triesman (fn. 1), 158. The rate of economic expansion is calculated using real per capita GDP in 1995 U.S.$ for the first and last years for each country; see World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (2002 CD ROM).

[15] Poland's presidency is stronger, but it is not a presidential system. As tempting as it is to attribute the Slovak state's expansion to its winning independence in 1993, this explanation has two important shortcomings. First, Czechoslovakia was a federal state, and the Slovak Republic had had its own state apparatus—republican governments, ministries, and branch offices—since 1968; see Dušan Hendrych, "Transforming Czechoslovakian Public Administration: Traditions and New Challenges," in Joachim Hesse, ed., *Administrative Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 45–47. Second, the timing of Slovak expansion suggests that party political factors were paramount. As Figure 1 shows, the lion's share of expansion took place not in the first years after independence but later, in a concentrated spike from 1996 to 1997. This spike coincided with a blatantly self-serving "reform of the public administration" undertaken by the governing political machine, which I describe below.

there were no notable differences in legislation governing party finance[16] and the civil service.[17]

Third, one might point to European Union accession; perhaps the need to implement EU law leads to bureaucratic expansion.[18] Again, however, this explanation fails to account for the large differences among countries similarly situated vis-à-vis EU accession. Moreover, timing proves problematic: the signs of growth were evident immediately after 1989, though the process of screening did not begin in earnest until 1997–98.

Finally, one might look to political culture. Herbert Kitschelt has argued that Poland and the former Czechoslovakia belong to different bureaucratic traditions.[19] Arguments of this nature would posit an alternative explanation that precedes and in part explains both the failure of party-system development as well as the dramatic expansion of the state in some cases but not in others. The final part of this article offers a comparison of local-level administrations to control for national differences in bureaucratic culture. This evidence suggests the limitations of the bureaucratic tradition explanation.

III. A Postcommunist Party-Systems Explanation

Rather than economic transition, institutional difference, European integration, or political culture, my argument finds a party political logic in the expansion of postcommunist state bureaucracies. However, my formulation of this argument differs from Martin Shefter's, who has argued that where democratic politics precedes the consolidation of state bureaucracies, patronage politics is the rule. In looking at Eastern Europe, it is apparent that Shefter's insight is at once very appropriate *and* too sweeping. There are many cases where patronage predominates but

[16] The first serious attempt at regulating party financing was in Poland but was not until 1997, well after the greatest expansion of the administration; see Marcin Walecki, ed., *Finansowanie polityki: Wybory, pieniądze, partie polityczne* (Financing politics: Elections, money, political parties) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2000).

[17] Because Poland lacked a civil service law until 1997, there were no standard guidelines for hiring and firing state personnel. After 1997 it passed two civil service acts within approximately a year. The first, legislated by the postcommunists, was perceived as a political gambit by the following post-Solidarity government and replaced with a new version. The irony, of course, is that this is precisely the kind of maneuvering that civil service legislation is supposed to prevent. Slovakia and the Czech Republic lacked this legislation until after 2001.

[18] Barbara Nunberg, *Ready for Europe: Public Administration Reform and European Union Accession in Central and Eastern Europe*, World Bank Technical Paper no. 466 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2000).

[19] Kitschelt, "Accounting for Outcomes of Post-Communist Regime Change: Causal Depth or Shallowness in Rival Explanations" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, September 1–5, 1999).

also a number where it does not. Postcommunist states may be *predisposed* to patronage politics, but they are not *predestined* to it. Where robust party competition has developed, the legacies of demobilized societies and delegitimized states have not sufficed to produce patronage politics. What is needed is a theory that can explain both the cases where patronage has led to runaway state building and those where it has not.

The theory proposed here has three elements:

1. demobilized societies,
2. delegitimized states, and
3. the logic of party-system competition.

Focusing on the social context and historical sequencing of democratization and state building, the first two elements represent a Shefterian take on postcommunist state development. The third has more in common with a pluralist view of the relationship between parties and the state.

Demobilized Societies: The "Motive" for Patronage Politics

The communist regimes' suppression of civil society and forced participation in a party-defined public sphere ingrained a suspicion of political participation in European societies.[20] The appeal of slogans such as the Czech Civic Forum's—"Parties are for [Communist] party members; the Civic Forum is for all"—captured the public's ambivalence toward parties.[21] In the New Democracies Barometer (NDB) initiated by Richard Rose, only 5 percent of respondents voiced trust in political parties, the lowest score for any public institution, while 50 percent were skeptical and 45 percent voiced outright distrust.[22] Party identification is far lower than in Western Europe,[23] with electors "much more likely to be able to name a party they would *never* vote for than a party that they identify with."[24]

[20] See Richard Rose, *Mobilizing Demobilized Voters in Post Communist Societies*, Studies in Public Policy, no. 246 (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 1995); and Marc Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Ekiert and Kubik offer a caveat in their survey of protest events, suggesting that postcommunist society is more mobilized than is generally recognized. As they also note, however, "the magnitude of protest is by and large lower than in more established democracies"; see Ekiert and Kubik, *Contentious Politics in New Democracies: Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Former East Germany since 1989*, Central and Eastern Europe Working Paper Series, no. 41 (Cambridge: Harvard University, Center for European Studies, 1997), 31. Thus, their "contentiousness" measure does not contradict the widely noted low identification with political parties.

[21] Quoted in Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and Its Alternatives: Understanding Post-Communist Societies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 155. See also Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 245–47.

[22] Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer (fn. 21), 85–88, 153–57.

[23] Rose (fn. 20), 20–24.

[24] Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer (fn. 21), 157.

In demobilized societies such as these, it is difficult to build and maintain party organizations on the basis of mass membership.[25] Due to their small memberships, most parties cannot maintain organizations on the basis of membership dues; therefore, state jobs are used to keep party organizers available for party work.[26] Lacking strong ideological or programmatic ties to voters, party organizations are unusually top-heavy, depending on a small core of popular personalities and party activists to win votes. Satisfying this "internal constituency" and their hangers-on, again through access to state resources, is essential to winning votes at election time.[27]

Delegitimized States: The "Means" for Patronage Politics

The second shared feature of postcommunist countries was the delegitimization of the state administration as the Soviet system disintegrated.[28] After 1989 the public tended to see administrative officials as remnants of the *nomenklatura* system—or, as one Polish phrase put it, the *mierni ale wierni* (mediocre but loyal).[29] Aside from the lingering resentment of the privileges formerly accorded to the *nomenklatura*, the

[25] Party membership in Poland has been estimated at no higher than 1.5 percent of the electorate; the comparable figures for the Czech Republic and Slovakia are 6.4 and 3.1 percent, respectively. Party membership figures in Western Europe are around 9 percent; see Aleks Szczerbiak, "Party Structure and Organizational Development in Post-Communist Poland," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 17 (June 2001), 111–12. The West European figure is calculated as a simple average of the party membership figures for the fourteen countries as reported in Szczerbiak (p. 112).

[26] The conventional wisdom is that public sector salaries in this region are too low to be attractive. While many are—notably nurses' and teachers' salaries—those of state administrative officials are quite attractive in relative terms. In Poland, for example, the average central-level official's salary was 44 percent higher than the general average in 1998, and in Slovakia it was twice as high; see *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland* (Warsaw: GUS, 1999); and Plenipotentiary for the Reform of the Public Administration, *Strategy of Public Administration Reform in the Slovak Republic,* http://www.mesa10.sk/vs/ (accessed June 19, 2001). This is not to mention the opportunities for rent seeking as a state official.

[27] See Barbara Geddes, *Politician's Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 40–41. The availability of public funding and interest groups may also have an impact on parties' demand for patronage. Though small in size, public funding has been available in all three countries since the early 1990s and so cannot account for differences in patronage. One might also hypothesize that organized interest groups were stronger in the Czech Republic, allowing its parties to do without patronage or membership. The scholarship emphasizes these groups' weakness, however; see Mitchell Orenstein and Raj Desai, "State Power and Interest Group Formation," *Problems of Post-Communism* 44 (November–December 1997).

[28] Again, I am not speaking here of the welfare state, which was generous under communism, providing free health care, education, and housing–though the necessity for informal payments was notorious. Many still expect the state to provide these services. My characterization of the administration as delegitimized is not, therefore, intended to describe the welfare state, and I exclude it from the personnel data. See Rose (fn. 20), 19; E. Kapstein and M. Mandelbaum, eds., *Sustaining the Transition: The Social Safety Net in Postcommunist Europe* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997); and Linda Cook, Mitchell Orenstein, and Marilyn Rueschemeyer, eds., *Left Parties and Social Policy in Postcommunist Europe* (Boulder Colo.: Westview Press, 1999).

[29] Janusz Letowski, "Polish Public Administration between Crisis and Renewal," and Olga Vidláková, "Administrative Reform in the Czech Republic," in Hesse (fn. 15), 5, 9, 70–71.

public remembered the corruption and informal connections needed to get things done.[30] These associations still color public perceptions; in the NDB III's questions about trust in public institutions, the category "civil servants" evoked more skepticism (61 percent of respondents) than any other institution except the media—with 28 percent voicing outright distrust and only 11 percent trust.[31] More broadly, 1989 represented the collapse of a "hollowed out," posttotalitarian state that had long since lost its sense of historical mission and that was staffed by officials no longer sure of their own place.[32]

All of this put bureaucrats in a disadvantageous position after 1989. They could not credibly propose a reform program that would maintain their positions. At the same time, the revolutionary regime change gave elected politicians from the former opposition extraordinary license to reform the state. As I discovered in field interviews, the anticommunist coalitions in the early 1990s considered their first task to be replacing "red" officials wherever possible. Parties had a relatively easy time raiding the administration because, until recently, much of the region lacked civil service legislation.

Party Competition and the Logic of Governance

The postcommunist legacies of demobilized societies and delegitimized states are necessary but not sufficient conditions to produce patronage-led state building. Robust party competition determines whether the predisposition to patronage politics will become the practice of patronage politics. As noted earlier, a pluralist view would argue that elections discipline governing parties by allowing voters to punish or reward them.[33] Two important assumptions lie behind the pluralists' faith in the disciplining power of elections, however. First, the mechanism of vertical accountability depends crucially on party-system institutionalization, especially in new democracies.[34]

Underinstitutionalization means that, rather than having to choose from a manageable number of familiar and relatively stable parties, vot-

[30] Rose, Mishler, and Haepfer (fn. 21), 124–25.

[31] Ibid., 154. The NDB III survey includes fifteen public institutions. See also World Bank (fn. 1), 7.

[32] Linz and Stepan (fn. 21), 48–49.

[33] Guillermo O'Donnell calls this mechanism "vertical accountability." Party-system institutionalization also enhances "horizontal accountability," parties holding each other accountable, especially between elections; see O'Donnell "Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies," in A. Schedler, L. Diamond, and M. Plattner, eds., *The Self-Restraining State* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 29–30, 42–44.

[34] Given voter disengagement from politics in Eastern Europe, it may seem that these are uninstitutionalized systems. However, institutionalization is a continuous, not dichotomous, variable; see Mainwaring (fn. 4), 22–26. Moreover, institutionalization varies considerably in this region, both across countries and over time; see Shabad and Slomczynski (fn. 4); Kreuzer and Pettai (fn. 4); and Toole (fn. 4).

ers are faced with too many party choices, many of them new, unfamiliar, and having uncertain prospects. A variety of measures of institutionalization have been proposed:[35] in this article, I will consider underinstitutionalized party systems to be those characterized by extreme multipartism (high fractionalization),[36] unstable party organization (high volatility[37] and high party turnover),[38] and unfamiliar patterns of coalition building (low party-system closure).[39] The second assumption, as basic as it may seem, is the absence of dominance: no party enjoys overwhelming organizational advantages over the rest.[40]

If party competition is to constrain patronage, it must produce *both* coherent governments *and* credible oppositions. The party-system variables of institutionalization and dominance set the parameters for the relationship between government and opposition—which I will refer to as the logic of governance (See Figure 2).

The less institutionalized the party system, the more difficult it is to generate vertical accountability. Extreme underinstitutionalization favors the creation of incoherent governments and less than credible oppositions—which I term the weak governance logic (box IV). The organization of both the government and the opposition blocs reflect the fact that the party system contains too many parties, which are organizationally unstable and which have unfamiliar coalition-building preferences. It is difficult to build governments of programmatically compatible parties; instead the tendency is to cobble together big, heterogeneous coalitions, with patronage as the emollient smoothing over programmatic differences.[41] The general instability of party organiza-

[35] Shabad and Slomczynski (fn. 4) have measured institutionalization in terms of interparty switching. Consonant with the analysis here, they find that the rate of party switching has decreased significantly in the Czech Republic though not in Poland. Kreuzer and Pettai (fn. 4) measure institutionalization in terms of the electoral success of nonestablished parties: start-ups, splinters, and mergers. On one dimension of institutionalization, the emergence of career politicians, Shabad and Slomczynski offer a caveat on the Polish-Czech comparison, finding that reelection rates for MPs have been increasing in both countries; see Shabad and Slomczynski, "The Emergence of Career Politicians in Post-Communist Democracies: Poland and the Czech Republic," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 17 (August 2002).

[36] Mainwaring (fn. 4), 89, 128–31.

[37] Ibid.; O'Donnell (fn. 33), 30.

[38] Toole (fn. 4), 458; Mainwaring (fn. 4), 123.

[39] Mair (fn. 4), 199–223; Toole (fn. 4).

[40] I have in mind what Giovanni Sartori describes as "predominance": one party is significantly stronger than the rest and is supported by a winning majority. Elections matter in such systems since the strongest party can be turned out of government if it cannot find a supporting coalition; see Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 1:131–201.

[41] This is a key difference between my conception of robust competition and Grzymała-Busse's, in whose formulation fractionalization is an unqualified good because it disperses power; Grzymała-Busse (fn. 1), 1131. While overconcentration of power (such as in Mečiar's Slovakia) is harmful, too much dispersion creates its own incentives for patronage, as described above. As long as no party is dominant, some degree of concentration is beneficial because it increases vertical accountability and creates parties whose survival does not depend on winning the next elections.

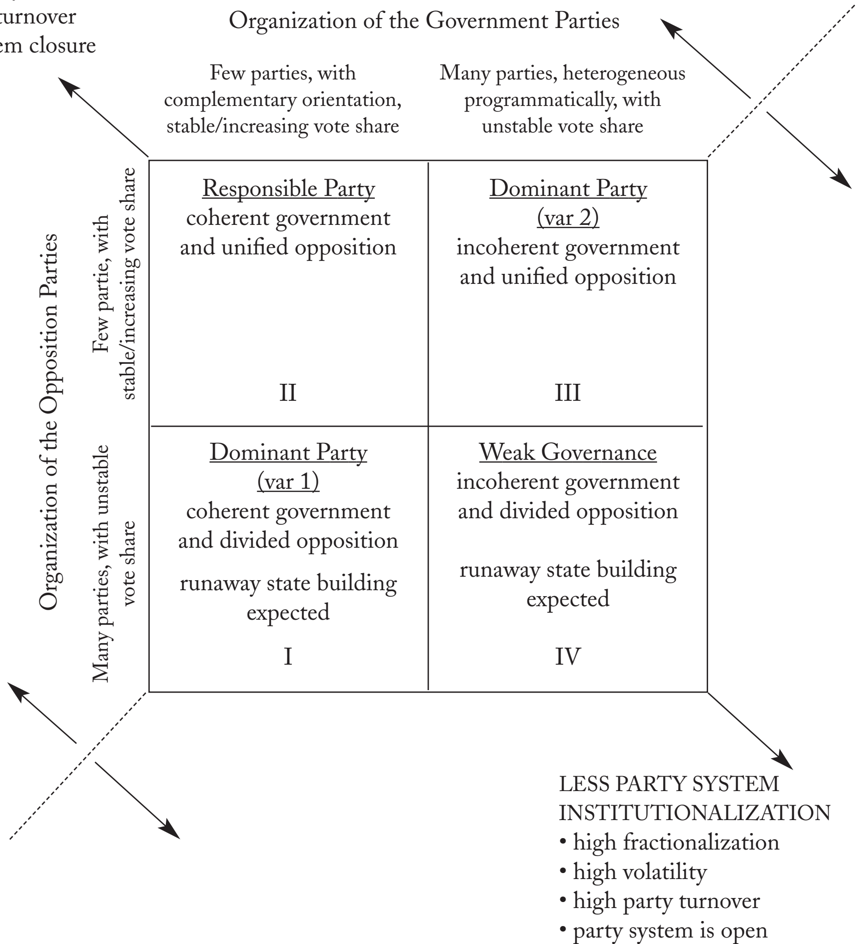

FIGURE 2
PARTY SYSTEM INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE LOGIC OF GOVERNANCE

tions shortens the time horizons of government coalition members; they are more likely to capture organizational advantages from state patronage than in systems where, having more stable vote shares, parties feel less need to create such party-building advantages. Absent reliable information on parties' coalitional preferences, voters are unsure what kind of government a vote for a particular party will produce. Multi-

partism, party instability, and unclear coalition preferences also weaken the ability of the opposition to present itself as a credible alternative to the government.

In the weak governance logic, patronage is maximized but not monopolized by a large number of small government parties. The larger the government, the more difficult it is for voters to monitor patronage seeking by individual parties within it—which creates an incentive for each party to engage in patronage from which it alone profits but the costs of which (in voter disapproval) are shared out across the coalition. Because government majorities are too tenuous to risk radical intervention in the administration, systematic purges are unusual. Without a civil service code, hiring is easy, however. The result is localized and uncoordinated interventions, which are difficult to monitor but which steadily add up.

It is not uncommon for democratic transition to give rise to dominant parties. The fact of dominance creates a certain degree of overall institutionalization—since the dominant party controls a large and relatively stable vote share and tends to set the terms for government formation—but it is an uneven and incomplete kind of institutionalization, producing a different logic of governance. The rest of the system is left underinstitutionalized, composed of small, unstable, and unpredictable parties. Reflecting this uneven development, aggregate measures of party-system institutionalization will fall between those of the weak governance and responsible party logics. Such systems tend to produce either an overweening government and an ineffectual opposition (the dominant party, variant 1 logic of governance) or an ineffectual government and an intransigent opposition (dominant party, variant 2).

When the government includes a dominant party and the opposition are too divided to provide a credible alternative (variant 1), then the government parties can be expected to monopolize and maximize patronage. Intervention in the administration takes the form of purges, ousting officials unsympathetic to the political machine and affecting the entire administration, potentially down to the lowest levels. Variant 2 of the dominant party logic, on the other hand, occurs if the party machine loses an election, which in free elections is always a possibility. The party machine, now in the opposition, is able to block the new government's policies, while that government faces the problem of uniting its many heterogeneous parties to attack the accumulated advantages of the machine. Given their history of rivalry, each of the new government parties fears that administrative reforms will benefit the other coalition members more than itself. The result is preservation of the status quo: no new expansion but no significant rollback of the former government's policies.

Finally, when party systems exhibit increasing institutionalization and no party is dominant, they create the conditions for vertical accountability—the responsible-party logic of governance. Absent extreme multipartism, governments can be formed from a small number of programmatically compatible parties, and patronage is not needed to build and maintain a majority. Voters are less likely to dilute their vote among many opposition parties, enhancing the opposition's credibility. Increasing stability of party organization means parties can survive without being in government. The emergence of familiar patterns of coalition building allows voters to better predict how their vote will affect the eventual composition of the government. Given the sequencing of party building and state consolidation, it is naïve to expect that competition can ever eliminate patronage, but the opposition is able to minimize this patronage by threatening to make it an issue in future elections.

Operationalizing measures of party-system development is difficult in new democracies, so an explanation of my indicators is in order. First, the logic of governance is a cluster of attributes, including the coherence of the government, the fractiousness of the opposition, and the organizational stability of the parties comprising both. These attributes will be described in the descriptive studies of the three countries, but I also provide a compact measure in the fractionalization index of the government and opposition blocs (see Table 2). This is simply a modified version of Laakso-Taagepera's index of the number of "effective parties," so that,[42]

$$\text{Government or Opposition Fractionalization} = \frac{1}{\sum p_i^2}$$

where p_i is the fraction of parliamentary seats in the overall government or opposition bloc won by the i-th government or opposition party.

The weak-governance logic, for instance, would be characterized by high fractionalization indexes for both government and opposition.

The other measures describe the party-system parameters determining which logic of governance obtains. First, dominance refers to the electoral advantage of the largest party or electoral coalition relative to the next most popular alternative. It can be measured as the difference in vote share (vote differential) between these two entities.[43]

[42] Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera, "'Effective' Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe," *Comparative Political Studies* 12 (1979), 3–27, 4.

[43] Sartori (fn. 40), 193.

TABLE 2
PARTY POLITICS COMPARED
(1990–2000)[a]

	Poland	*Slovakia*	*Czech Republic*
Party System Measures			
Vote differential			
1st election	0.3%	10.1%	36.3%
2nd election	4.9%	22.5%	15.7%
3rd election	6.7%	24.6%	3.2%
4th election	—	0.7%	4.6%
Fractionalization			
1st election	10.8	5.1	2.2
2nd election	6.2	3.2	4.9
3rd election	9.9	4.7	4.1
4th election	—	9.7	3.7
Volatility			
1st election	—	—	—
2nd election	34.5%	51.9%	67.3%
3rd election	54.2%	37.3%	28.7%
4th election	—	55.1%	17.5%
Party turnover			
1st election	—	—	—
2nd election	1.46	0.57	1.08
3rd election	0.90	0.67	0.27
4th election	—	0.45	0.55
Party-System Closure	Open	Semiopen	Closed
Logic of Governance Measures			
Government bloc fractionalization			
1st election	6.7[b]	2.5	1.0
2nd election	3.5	1.0	1.8
3rd election	6.8	1.7	1.9
4th election	—	6.2	1.0
Opposition bloc fractionalization			
1st election	6.1	3.2	2.6
2nd election	3.1[c]	3.9	4.3
3rd election	3.5	5.4	2.3
4th election	—	1.6	3.0

SOURCES: See Appendix 3.

[a] Table 2 covers all of the elections from 1990 to 2000. These were 1990, 1992, 1996, and 1998 for the Czech Republic; 1990, 1992, 1994, and 1998 for Slovakia; and 1991, 1993, 1997 for Poland.

[b] The extreme fluidity of government coalitions between 1991 and 1993 makes this difficult to calculate precisely. I counted the seat shares of all parties that received cabinet posts in the Bielecki and Suchocka governments in order to make this calculation. The rest were classified as opposition.

[c] This measurement greatly understates the fractiousness of the Polish opposition bloc in 1993 since most opposition parties failed to gain seats in parliament and so are not counted in the opposition fractionalization index.

Overall party-system fractionalization is measured using the Laakso-Taagepera index.[44] In underinstitutionalized party systems, an important problem arises in applying this formula: what counts as a party? Does an electoral committee of several small parties that band together in order to pass a minimum threshold for representation count as one party? My indicator of fractionalization considers such a grouping as several parties. This operationalization accords most clearly with the logic of my hypothesis: party competition constrains patronage by providing voters with real choices in elections. The more these choices are between heterogeneous coalitions lacking a clear uniting position, the less meaningful the choice presented to the voter. Once in parliament, such coalitions tend not to behave as one party. Therefore, I use the postelection allocation of parliamentary seats to the political groupings within these electoral alliances to compute fractionalization.

I use electoral volatility and party turnover to measure parties' organizational stability. In volatile systems, parties lack stable support bases, and their vote shares fluctuate sharply from one election to the next.[45] Related to volatility, turnover measures the inflow and outflow of parties across elections. High turnover means that the cast of competing parties differs from one election to the next. My operational definition of party turnover counts how many parties enter and leave the party system in each election:[46]

$$PT_t = \frac{(\text{inflows} + \text{outflows})_t}{(\text{number of parliamentary parties}_{t-1} + \text{number of parliamentary parties}_t)/2}$$

Again, I count electoral alliances as the sum of the parties within them.

Finally, party-system closure is a measure developed by Peter Mair to mark when party systems develop familiar and stable patterns of coalition formation.[47] Open systems are unstable and offer few cues to voters on the formation of governments after the election. In closed systems, familiar patterns of party behavior make government formation predictable given a certain set of election results. Underlying this distinction are three dimensions capturing the degree of party-system closure. Openness on each dimension yields the weak governance logic

[44] Laakso and Taagepera (fn. 42).

[45] The volatility index measures the net change in the vote shares of all parties across elections; see Mainwaring (fn. 4), 28. Because frequent splits and mergers represent lack of institutionalization, I count splits and mergers as fully new parties. This maximizes volatility, but does so consistently while avoiding difficult judgment calls about party continuity.

[46] Toole (fn. 4), 458.

[47] Mair (fn. 4).

and closure the responsible-party one. Incomplete closure—party systems that are closed in some respects but not others—favors a dominant-party logic of governance.

The first aspect of closure is "alternation of government," which refers to when and how much the party composition of the government changes when it alternates.[48] In closed systems, government alternations are regular—occurring after, not between, elections—and wholesale, producing either complete or no change in government composition. In open systems, alternations are partial—with the coalition containing both new parties and old ones from the previous government—and are as likely to occur between elections as after them: government alternations between elections remove politics from the influence of voters. A third possibility is irregular but wholesale alternation. This is the pattern in the dominant-party logic: because of the bitter divide between the political machine and the underorganized opposition, alternations are wholesale. Absent a loyal opposition, votes of no-confidence are common and alternations between elections more likely.

The second dimension concerns the predictability of "governing formulas." If familiar combinations of parties make up government coalitions, the system is closed. If innovative party combinations are acceptable as governing coalitions, the system is open. Innovative governing formulas also characterize the dominant party logic, given the opposition parties' "my enemy's enemy is my friend" coalitional principle.

Finally how open is "access to government"? In open systems, the instability of governing coalitions means that coalition makers are willing to overlook programmatic differences with outsider parties if they can furnish the requisite votes to make a government. The same is true in the dominant-party logic, as the opposition's underorganization allows space for newly generated parties; there is not full openness, however, because many alliances across the government-opposition divide are unthinkable. In closed systems, outsider parties are excluded.

IV. Data: Comparing Postcommunist Party Systems

The task now is to apply these distinctions empirically, linking party system development and the resultant logic of governance to the dynamics of patronage in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

[48] I define alternation as any recomposition of the government coalition or major restructuring of the cabinet, such as the replacement of the prime minister.

POLAND

Since the collapse of the Solidarity movement, the Polish party system has remained underinstitutionalized, generating unstable governments and fractious oppositions. There were eight governments between 1990 and 2000, plus one provisional government that failed to gain a majority and one major reorganization in 2000. Although an emotional divide remains between post-Solidarity and postcommunist political groupings, the programmatic differences are as great within these camps as between them. During the 1990s, both camps underwent major reconfigurations and reversals of fortune.

In 1991 an unmodified PR system brought twenty-nine parties to parliament, leading to shifting coalitions for the following three governments. In the 1993 elections almost all the post-Solidarity parties failed to meet the amended electoral law's minimum threshold, leading to the singular result of 34.5 percent of the vote being cast for parties that failed to enter parliament. Those elections also saw the reemergence of the postcommunists, who banded together in an heterogeneous electoral alliance called the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). The SLD contained no fewer than thirty parties, trade unions, and social movements.[49] It formed a coalition with the opportunistic Polish Peasant Party (PSL) from 1993 to 1997. The shakiness of this coalition was attested to by the fact that it produced three governments in four years—despite the absence of most of the post-Solidarity opposition from parliament. In 1997 the post-Solidarity parties copied the SLD's model of electoral confederation, forming the Electoral Action "Solidarity" (AWS). Like the SLD, AWS contained thirty-plus parties, trade unions, and social movements, which were divided along socioeconomic, religious, and nationalist lines.[50]

Throughout this turbulence, no party possessed a significant electoral advantage: the average vote differential was 4 percent (see Table 2). Though this prevented the kind of dominant-party logic that emerged in Slovakia, it reflected not the stabilization of competition but the weakness of political parties across the board. After breaking down the various electoral alliances into their constituent parties and other groupings, the fractionalization score of the Polish party system was consistently very high, more than twice that of the Czech Republic or of Slovakia before 1998. Volatility and turnover also remained

[49] Aleks Szczerbiak, "Interests and Values: Polish Parties and Their Electorates," *Europe-Asia Studies* 58 (1999), 1432.
[50] Ibid., 1431.

high, with volatility actually increasing. It was also the least closed of the three party systems. As shown in Table 3, four out of eight alternations of government were partial (in 1990, 1991, 1992, and 2000).[51] Five out of the eight occurred between elections (in 1990, 1992, 1995, 1996, and 2000). Poland also showed the greatest innovation in governing formulas.[52]

The recurring problem of Polish politics was how to produce a coherent government, which led to a pattern of inconsistent, ad hoc interventions in the administration by the many political groupings in each of its governments. Unlike Slovakia, no one party ever monopolized patronage. The effect of patronage on the state administration was nicely summarized by Jan Pastwa, head of the Polish civil service under the AWS government: "Once there was the monoparty nomenklatura. Now, a multiparty nomenklatura has appeared. Each party tries to gain as many positions possible for its people."[53] Pastwa's was only the latest in a long series of such assessments. From the period of the first Solidarity governments (1991–93):

> Since the time of the accession to power of the Solidarity camp, this is our third cabinet, and once again we have new people who are even less prepared to govern. Once more they are replacing even less important officials in the ministry, governors, heads of department of various state institutions. Changes are most often based on political criteria; the personnel merry-go-round continues, and there is even less place in it for stability and professionalism.[54]

Under the postcommunist governments of 1993–97, a new wave of patronage interventions in the administration prompted the resignation of the government's plenipotentiary for public administration reform, who wrote in an open letter to the prime minister, "The *nomenklatura* model of administration was the characteristic trait of the whole PRL

[51] I do not count the aborted government of 1992; had it gained approval, however, it would have been a partial alternation.

[52] The coalition restructurings of the early 1990s defied full enumeration in Figure 3. After 1993 the governing formula appeared to simplify: the field of coalitions reduced to the SLD together with the Peasant Party (PSL) and AWS together with Freedom Union (UW). Appearances were misleading, however, because the coalition of AWS-UW was more in the nature of an umbrella group than an alliance of two parties. As in Slovakia, new parties were easily generated because access to power was open.

[53] Quoted in A. Bogusz, D. Macieja, and Z. Wojtkowska, "Jak urządza się SLD," *Wprost* (June 25, 2000).

[54] Quoted in Letowski (fn. 29), 2. On patronage in the Polish administration, the World Bank (fn. 1) reported: "Other forms of high level corruption are manifested in nepotism in public sector appointments. . . . This tendency is exacerbated by the practice of making political appointments down to medium levels in the administration" (p. 9). See also Michał Matys, "Nie możesz być niczyj," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (June 2–3, 2001); Kieżun (fn. 1), 8–11; and Ewa Jakubkowska, *Corruption in Procurement in Poland: Analysis and Recommendations,* www.batory.org.pl/ftp/program/przeciw-korupcji/publikacje/corruption_procurement.rtf (accessed August 30, 2004).

Table 3
A Chronology of Governments with Composition by Main Political Groupings (1990–2000)[a]

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Czech Republic	ELECTION: 1 Gov't Party 3 Opp'n Parties	→	ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 4 Gov't Parties 5 Opp'n Parties	→	→	→	ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (no recomposition) 3 Gov't Parties 3 Opp'n Parties	→	ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 1 Gov't Party 4 Opp'n Parties	→	→
Slovakia	ELECTION: 4 Gov't Parties 4 Opp'n Parties	GOV'T FALLS: Wholesale Alternation (no recomposition) 4 Gov't Parties 6 Opp'n Parties	ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 1 Gov't Party 5 Opp'n Parties	→	GOV'T FALLS: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 3 Gov't Parties 4 Opp'n Parties ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 3 Gov't Parties 9 Opp'n Parties	→	→	→	ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 8 Gov't Parties 2 Opp'n Parties	→	→
Poland	ELECTION: Shifting coalition of gov't parties. GOV'T FALLS: Partial Alternation Shifting coalition of gov't parties	ELECTION: Partial Alternation Shifting coalition of gov't parties	GOV'T FALLS: Partial Alternation Unable to form a gov't GOV'T FALLS: Partial Alternation 8 main gov't parties 21 Opp'n Parties	ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 6 Gov't Parties 6 Opp'n Parties	→	GOV'T FALLS: Wholesale alternation (no recomposition) 6 Gov't Parties 6 Opp'n Parties	GOV'T FALLS: Wholesale alternation (no recomposition) 6 Gov't Parties 6 Opp'n Parties	ELECTION: Wholesale Alternation (full recomposition) 11 Gov't Parties 8 Opp'n Parties	→	→	GOV'T REORGANIZATION: Partial Alternation 10 Gov't Parties 9 Opp'n Parties

[a] Wholesale alternation means complete or no change in the party composition of government. In the figure above, these possibilities are noted as either "full recomposition" or "no recomposition."

[communist] era; Minister Strąk [the head of the state administration (PSL)] has in the course of a few months recreated this model."[55]

In the ongoing crisis of keeping the coalition together, there was little oversight of how parties acted in the ministries and no coherent direction for state reform.[56] Unlike Slovakia, it was difficult to fire people from the Polish state (governments were not strong enough to risk that kind of intervention), but in the absence of civil service regulations, it was not difficult to hire them. As Figure 1 shows, the effect was additive: the state administration grew steadily regardless of who was in government.

SLOVAKIA

The development of the Slovak party system divides sharply into two periods,[57] although in both, to quote one observer, "The long-term dividing line . . . [led] neither between the left and the right, nor between the liberals and the conservatives, but, since Vladimír Mečiar came to power, simply between the ruling coalition and the opposition."[58] From 1992 to 1998, the logic governance was dominant party (variant 1): one party, Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), enjoyed overwhelming organizational and institutional advantages over a fragmented and weak opposition. It outpolled its nearest competitors by an average of 23.5 percent in elections.[59] After 1998 the logic was dominant party (variant 2): though still the biggest vote getter, Mečiar's party was unable to find coalition partners, and the fragmented former opposition parties formed a shaky governing coalition composed of eight parties.[60]

[55] Michał Kulesza, "Szanowny Panie Premierze," *Polityka* (May 28, 1994). See also Louisa Vinton, "Power Shifts in Poland's Ruling Coalition," *RFE/RL Research Report* (March 18, 1994), 7–10.

[56] See Wojciech Taras, "Changes in Polish Public Administration, 1989–1992," in Hesse (fn. 16), 14, 20–21.

[57] Martin Bútora et al., *The 1998 Parliamentary Elections and Democratic Rebirth in Slovakia* (Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs, 1999).

[58] Miroslav Kusy, "Slovakia '97," *Perspectives* 9 (1998), 45.

[59] HZDS's popularity was based on nationalism and Mečiar's charisma. After Slovakia's independence in 1993, HZDS's appeal began to decline, and it used its control over the machinery of government to maintain its position through patronage. Meanwhile, the Slovak opposition parties underwent continuing fragmentation, their popular appeal tarnished by the memory of their ambivalence toward Slovak independence. In 1994 the opposition parties succeeded in bringing down the HZDS government with a vote of no-confidence. Their success was short-lived, however, as HZDS swept back into power in elections five months later. HZDS then ruled in coalition with two very junior and compliant parties, who shared in the spoils of patronage. See Tim Haughton, "HZDS: The Ideology, Organization, and Support Base of Slovakia's Most Successful Party," *Europe-Asia Studies* 53 (July 2001).

[60] Ironically, HZDS was undone by its own dominance. Hoping to disqualify a number of opposition parties, it changed the electoral law just months before the 1998 election to require *all* parties, even those in electoral alliances, to win 5 percent of the vote for representation; see Bútora et al. (fn. 57). Unintentionally, it forced the opposition to cooperate at last and form a single party, the Party of the Democratic Coalition (SDK). Although technically one party, SDK was a confederation of five parties that broke apart after the election. In computing fractionalization and turnover, I treat it as five parties.

On the measures party-system institutionalization, Slovakia generally ranked between Poland and the Czech Republic. Its overall fractionalization was relatively stable until 1998, standing well below Poland's and only somewhat higher than the Czech Republic's. It saw lower turnover than Poland's but about the same as the Czech Republic's; however, whereas Czech turnover resulted from the steady outflow of the smallest parties (simplifying voters' choices), in Slovakia it resulted primarily from the inflow of parties (frustrating accountability). Reflecting the frequent splitting and merging of parties, Slovakia's electoral volatility remained stubbornly high.

Slovakia's party system was more closed than Poland's but more open than the Czech Republic's. As in Poland, government alternation was irregular, with two out of six alternations coming between elections (in 1991 and 1994). Unlike in Poland, however, these alternations were wholesale in character. Beyond the fact that most parties would not form a coalition with HZDS, there was no clear formula for building a government coalition: governing formulas were at once unpredictable *and* familiar.[61]

Party intervention in the Slovak administration produced a quite different pattern of expansion than in Poland. If, in Poland, the successful official's maxim was "You can't be no one's,"[62] in Slovakia under Mečiar it was "You can't be the wrong person's." To be on the wrong side of the party line after a change of government often meant replacement, even for those low in the ranks. Unlike the Polish governments' ad hoc and incremental interventions in the administration, the Mečiar governments' were systematic and concentrated.

After the election of the first HZDS government in 1992, "Purges took place throughout the state administration and media; officials at all levels were frequently replaced by political supporters, regardless of whether they possessed the necessary professional qualifications."[63] Under the second HZDS government of 1994–98, the use of patronage expanded. After the election, the government devoted an all-night parliamentary session to purging all major state posts, but its most radical gambit was the "reform of the public administration" in 1996–97. Announced as a decentralization of the administration, it doubled the

[61] In the early 1990s the opposition coalition consisted of Public against Violence, the Christian Democratic Movement, and the Democratic Party. In 1994 the composition shifted, now including the postcommunists, the Democratic Union, and the Christian Democratic Movement. The year 1998 saw another change with the inclusion of the SDK, the Movement for Civic Understanding, and the Hungarian party.

[62] Matys (fn. 54).

[63] Sharon Fisher, "Slovak Government's Personnel Changes Cause Controversy," *RFE/RL Research Report* (May 27, 1994), 10.

number of district-level state offices and added a new regional level of administration, expanding the territorial administration by more than ten thousand positions. As this territorial administration was being restructured, so-called action committees sifted through the ranks to replace opposition sympathizers with government loyalists.[64] The reform also redrew boundaries to create progovernment electoral districts.

When HZDS was not in government, it blocked attempts by the former opposition to reverse its colonization of the state. A very different relationship between the ruling parties and the state administration obtained under the two non-Mečiar governments of March–October 1994 and 1998. As the data in Figure 1 show, there was only moderate personnel growth in 1994 and a small decline after 1998. Attempts by these governments to replace HZDS appointees met with strong opposition from Mečiar's supporters. After a handful of top officials, such as the chairman of the Supreme Auditing Office, were replaced by the 1994 government, several thousand HZDS supporters demonstrated in Bratislava.[65] Mečiar admitted that the number of officials in question was not large but vowed retribution.[66] After 1998 the SDK-led government encountered similar opposition. Its most public failure, however, was its inability to push through its carefully planned revision of the public administration reform mentioned above. Unable to hold together its parliamentary majority and facing withering opposition from HZDS, the government accepted a face-saving reform that left the boundaries and institutions of the Mečiar reforms intact.[67]

The Czech Republic

In contrast to the uniformly underinstitutionalized Polish party system and the more regularized but less competitive Slovak system, the Czech system presented voters with a manageable number of stable and familiar parties that engaged in predictable coalition formation—which produced both coherent, organizationally stable governments and credible, organizationally stable oppositions.[68] The anticommunist umbrella

[64] A leaked internal party document entitled, "The Main Tasks of HZDS," stated that HZDS "should work to strengthen its position within Slovak society by continuing to reshuffle personnel within the state administration and diplomatic corps"; see Vladimír Krivý, "Slovakia and Its Regions," in Martin Bútora and Thomas Skladony, eds., *Slovakia 1996–1997: A Global Report on the State of Society* (Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs, 1998), 59.

[65] Fisher (fn. 63), 11.

[66] Ibid., 11.

[67] Peter Kunder, "Vyhrali politici: porazili reformu," *Sme* (July 6, 2001); Marek Vagovič, "Reformné K.O.: Skutočnú reformu verejenej správy parlament odmietol," *Domino-Forum* (July 12–18, 2001).

[68] In another contrast, the Czech parties located themselves on a clearly distinguishable left-right, socioeconomic issue spectrum; see Herbert Kitschelt et al., *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

group, Civic Forum, broke apart in 1991, but unlike the anticommunist groups in Poland and Slovakia, it broke into a limited number of self-labeled parties rather than an assortment of social movements, politicized trade unions, and electoral confederations. Two major parties emerged from Civic Forum. The Civic Democratic Party (ODS), led by Václav Klaus, was self-consciously fashioned on the example of Thatcher's conservatives. The second party, the Social Democrats (ČSSD), defined itself as an alternative to ODS's neoliberal policies. Although still weak in the 1992 elections, ČSSD was the fastest-growing party in Czech politics from 1993 on. The increasingly competitive nature of the party system was evident in the decreasing vote differential. In 1992 ODS enjoyed a 15 percent lead on its closest competitor; by 1996, this lead had shrunk to 3 percent, and in 1998 ODS trailed ČSSD by 4 percent.[69] In ČSSD, voters had a clear and credible threat to punish the ODS government. An economic crisis coupled with a party financing scandal resulted in the fall of Klaus's government in 1997. In the following elections, ČSSD formed a minority government, which ODS—now the second largest parliamentary party—officially tolerated.

Reflecting the growing institutionalization of the Czech party system, fractionalization, volatility, and party turnover all declined. Fractionalization was lower than in Poland, marginally lower than in Slovakia, and steadily declining over time. After an initial spike caused by the disintegration of Civic Forum, electoral volatility declined rapidly. This combination of low vote differential, low fractionalization, and low volatility reflected robust competition: two stable parties—whose organizational strength enabled them to survive outside of government—anchored the party system. There were fewer governments in the Czech Republic than in Poland and Slovakia (four as opposed to six and eight), and unlike in Poland and Slovakia, each alternation occurred after elections, never between them.[70] Alternations were wholesale and governing formulas familiar.[71]

With fewer government turnovers, there were fewer opportunities for administrative reshufflings, and the Czech administration experi-

[69] In opinion polls between the 1992 and 1996 elections, ČSSD support ranged between 12 and 21 percent; see John Fitzmaurice, *Politics and Government in the Visegrad Countries* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 130.

[70] There was one partial exception here: a technocratic caretaker government oversaw the transition after ODS's fall in November 1997 until the next elections in June 1998.

[71] Until 1998 governments were led by ODS in coalition with the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) and Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) as junior members. During that time, the opposition consisted primarily of the Social Democrats and the outsider Communist and Republican Parties. Access to government was closed, as the latter two were excluded.

enced greater autonomy from party politics.[72] When governments changed, administrative turnover was limited to the top leadership of the ministries. As Figures 1 and 2 show, the Czech Republic saw much less growth in the size of the administration, but ranked higher in terms of both effectiveness and gains in effectiveness. In his recent study of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Krause undertakes a comprehensive review of government party influence on state institutions. Although, as Krause notes, there were instances of patronage seeking,

> most political institutions in the Czech Republic behaved in a manner consistent with horizontal accountability. The frequency of accountability violations among political institutions remained low and their scope remained relatively small. Furthermore, most of the Czech Republic's accountability violations prompted formal investigation and sanction.[73]

This description nicely conforms to this argument's prediction about the responsible-parties logic in postcommunist states, namely, that the timing of party building and state consolidation in the Czech Republic—as in the rest of the region—generated pressures for patronage, but unlike the rest of the region, the existence of a credible opposition and predictable patterns of government formation constrained those pressures.

In this light, the government crisis of 1997 deserves further comment because it was precipitated by a party financing scandal around ODS.[74] It might seem that this incident showed the failure of party competition, but I would argue the opposite. The existence of a viable opposition party enabled voters to punish ODS in the 1998 elections, electing ČSSD. ČSSD's minority government was made possible by the so-called Opposition Agreement between ČSSD and ODS, which granted ODS a number of parliamentary positions (but no ministerial

[72] One does not find in accounts of Czech administrative development the same emphasis on politicization as in Poland and Slovakia. See, for example, the country studies by Hendrych, Pomahač, and Vidláková, in Hesse (fn. 15); and Michal Illner, *The Territorial Dimension of Public Administration Reforms in East Central Europe*, Institute of Sociology Working Papers (Prague: Czech Academy of Sciences, 1997). Even in more critical accounts, such as Abby Innes's, the claim that ODS sought patronage in the administration is tempered with the qualifier that it did so regarding the "top-flight" and "senior" positions; see Innes, *Czechoslovakia: The Long Goodbye* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 232. By contrast, accounts of Slovakia and Poland emphasize that patronage occurred extensively at the middle and lower levels.

[73] Kevin Krause, "Accountability and Party Competition in Slovakia and the Czech Republic" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2000), 72.

[74] Each country studied here has had party financing scandals, with Poland's ongoing Rywin Affair the latest example. Moreover, as Krause writes of the ODS scandal, "The scale of the acknowledged donations is relatively small, even by the standards of Czech politics, and only a few such donations were uncovered"; Krause (fn. 73), 78. The most damaging charges—that ODS manipulated privatization in exchange for campaign contributions—were never substantiated, even after an extensive audit by the American firm Deloitte and Touche; see Andrew Stroehlein, "The Czech Republic, 1992 to 1999," *Central Europe Review* (September 13, 1999), http://www.ce-review.org/_archives99.html (accessed November 14, 2004).

portfolios) and the right to consult on major political decisions in exchange for not initiating no-confidence votes. Though viewed by some Czech critics as an "unholy alliance," in reality the Opposition Agreement allowed the formation of a programmatically coherent minority government while preserving a credible opposition.[75] It also prevented the kind of postelection administrative purge that had occurred in Slovakia or the shuffles that took place in Poland. Finally, the Opposition Agreement brought about a further simplification of the party system, as four smaller parties combined in order to challenge ODS and ČSSD. When their vote share allowed them to do so in the 2002 elections, ČSSD jettisoned ODS. The end result of the 1997 crisis, then, was to deepen the bipolar character of the party system.

V. Controlling for Culture: Local Politics and Local State Building

Extrapolating from Kitschelt, an alternative hypothesis to the party competition one offered here is that runaway state building results from national bureaucratic culture. This section will briefly test this hypothesis by comparing local-level and national-level state building within Poland and the Czech Republic. In both countries, local governments enjoyed considerable autonomy from the national government.[76] They were responsible for hiring local personnel, and the central government gave them their own fiscal resources via fixed tax-sharing formulas. Since local party systems in both countries produced the weak governance logic, the theory here would predict runaway state building at the local level in both. Conversely, the hypothesis about national bureaucratic culture would predict the same pattern of state building at the local level as obtained at the national level: runaway growth in Poland, constrained growth in the Czech Republic.

An aggregate analysis of the first three local elections (1990, 1994, and 1998) throws the underinstitutionalization of local-level party politics into sharp relief. These elections were dominated by independent candidates and temporary electoral alliances. Candidates associated with national-level parties claimed only 47 percent of local seats in the

[75] See Andrew Roberts, "Demythologising the Czech Opposition Agreement," *Europe-Asia Studies* 55 (December 2003), 1275–76.

[76] In Slovakia, Mečiar's machine saw local governments as a threat and curtailed their financial resources from 1992 to 1998; see Phillip Bryson and Gary Cornia, "Fiscal Decentralization in Economic Transformation: The Czech and Slovak Cases," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52 (May 2000). Consequently, local governments had no capacity for administrative expansion, and personnel actually decreased in number by 17.7 percent between 1993 and 1998.

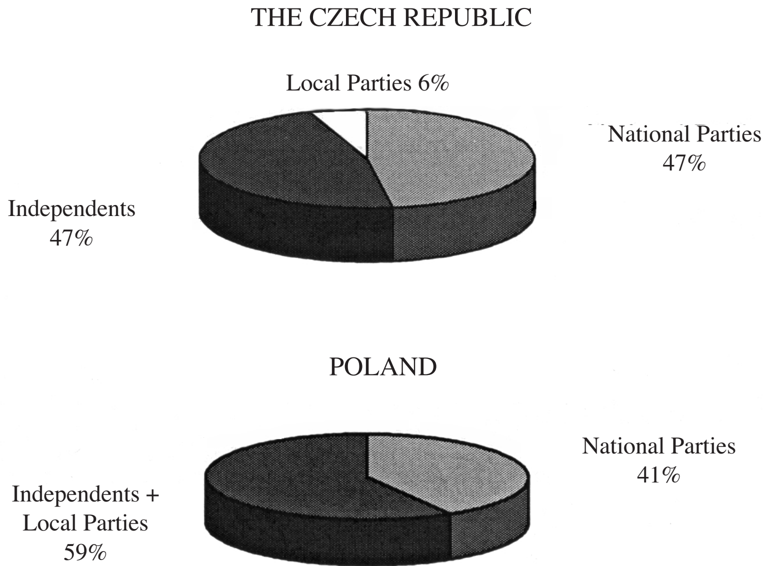

FIGURE 3
THE REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN
LOCAL ELECTIONS

SOURCES: *Statistical Yearbook of Czechoslovakia* (Prague: ČSÚ, 1991); *Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic* (Prague: ČSÚ, 1995 and 1999). Polish sources: Joanna Regulska, "Democratic Elections and Restructuring in Poland 1989–91," in John O'Loughlin and Herman van der Wusten, eds., *The New Political Geography of Eastern Europe* (London: Belhaven Press 1993); and Szczerbiak (fn. 25), 90. The figures for Poland are computed from the 1990 and 1998 local elections since the 1994 results are not available.

Czech Republic, and 41 percent in Poland. Government formation was fluid and open at the local level.[77]

Contrary to the national bureaucratic culture hypothesis, Poland and the Czech Republic both experienced considerable expansion of personnel in local state administrations. As before, the data below include only administrative posts that were appointed or hired by local governments. From 1993 to1998, the Czech and Polish local bureaucracies grew by roughly a half and a third, respectively. (See Figure 4 and Appendix 2.) Czech state building was not guided by some more developed bureaucratic culture than that of its neighbors; when the constraint of robust party competition was absent, the force of sequencing—party

[77] Ales Kroupa and Tomas Kostelecky, "Party Organization at the National and Local Level in the Czech Republic since 1989," in Paul Lewis, ed., *Party Structure and Organization in East-Central Europe* (Cheltenham, U.K.: Edward Elgar 1996).

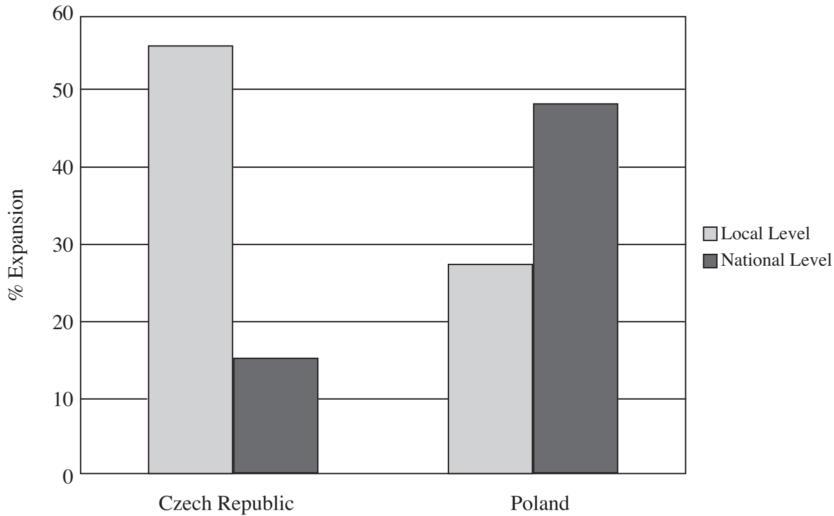

FIGURE 4
PERCENTAGE EXPANSION OF LOCAL- AND NATIONAL-LEVEL STATE ADMINISTRATION COMPARED

SOURCES: See Appendix 2.

building before state consolidation—fueled patronage in the Czech Republic as well.

VI. CONCLUSION

This comparison of how three postcommunist states have developed shows a close connection between party building and state building. It also demonstrates, however, that postcommunist states, though predisposed to runaway growth, are not doomed to it. Thus, in institutionalized party systems with robust competition, elections can constrain patronage-led expansion. By combining a pluralist focus on electoral competition with an appreciation of the sequencing of state building and party building, this framework extends Shefter's thesis to new circumstances. Arguing that it is a mistake to focus on timing alone, it also amends Shefter's thesis, incorporating the crucial variable of party competition and specifying how it can be conceptualized.

This analysis raises a number of intriguing questions that cannot be answered here. First, why did party-system development differ so greatly among these relatively similar countries? It is my belief that the

ability of party systems to develop into stable, bipolar competition is a by-product of a deeper societal variable, the salience of national-religious cleavages vis-à-vis socioeconomic cleavages. While the Czech parties quickly differentiated themselves along a socioeconomic spectrum, in both Poland and Slovakia nationalist and religious cleavages intersected the socioeconomic one in unpredictable ways.[78]

Second, how sustainable is runaway state building? This is a question that only another ten years of data will answer. Perhaps EU membership will isolate state bureaucracies from parties. One might plausibly argue, however, that the EU will only provide new resources for patronage. A key advantage of the framework proposed here is that it allows for change over time; if and when party systems stabilize, the character of state building will change.

Finally, how well does this theory travel to other postcommunist states? My aim has been to formulate a clear hypothesis and a set of cross-national measures for testing it. Three cases are, of course, not enough to prove a theory, but the preliminary indications look promising. Hungary, for example, whose party system has also been identified as one of the earliest to stabilize,[79] is one of the rare states in the region to actually have reduced the size of its bureaucracy.[80] Bulgaria, whose system looks more like Poland's, saw rapid expansion during the same period.[81] It will be the task of further research to expand the scope.

[78] Kitschelt et al. (fn. 68).
[79] Toole (fn. 4).
[80] Nunberg (fn. 18), 280.
[81] Verheijen (fn. 14), 126

Appendix 1: The National-Level State Administration Compared (Number of Positions)

		1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
	Central	NA	NA	NA	8,961	8,642	8,519	9,631	10,717	10,583	10,980	11,661
CR	Branch	NA	NA	NA	29,706	31,446	31,431	34,291	34,617	34,377	33,628	33,363
	Combined	NA	NA	NA	38,667	40,088	39,950	43,922	45,334	44,960	44,608	45,024
	Central	NA	NA	NA	5,804	5,900	6,262	7,774	7,865	7,951	8,049	—
SR	Branch	NA	NA	NA	16,319	17,077	18,885	21,568	32,954	32,337	30,381	—
	Combined	NA	NA	NA	22,123	22,977	25,147	29,342	40,819	40,288	38,430	37,880
											→Poland decentralizes	
	Central	46,062	60,794	68,728	88,561	102,700	110,208	115,503	119,104	126,204	122,361	106,502
PL	Branch	29,167	32,500	36,000	26,800	30,700	31,300	31,286	44,383	45,042	25,474	23,675
	Decentralized Units	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	32,085	48,491
	Combined	75,229	93,294	104,728	115,361	133,400	141,508	146,789	163,487	171,246	179,920	178,668

Sources: *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland* (fn. 27), years 1991–2000; "Oficjalne dane o zatrudnieniu," *Wspólnota* (January 20, 2000), 11 (for the 2000 figures for Poland); the Czech Statistical Office. Data requested from the Office's Infoservis. August 2001, Prague; The Slovak Statistical Office. Data requested from the Office's Infoservis, July 2001, Bratislava.

Appendix 2: The Local State Administration Compared (Number of Positions)

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*Growth '93–'98*
CR	NA	NA	NA	38,862	42,817	49,624	51,843	60,818	61,470	58.2%
PL	83,428	77,000	89,400	107,600	134,300	138,523	132,521	141,225	137,292	27.6%

Sources: *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland*, years 1991–2000; the Czech Statistical Office. Data requested from the Office's Infoservis, August 2001, Prague. 41

Appendix 3: Parliamentary Seat Shares

The following tables break down the major electoral alliances into their main constituent political groupings, which I used in computing fractionalization and party turnover. My source for the 1993 Polish parliament was *Wykaz 2000 Osób Sprawujących Władzę w RP* (Register of 2000 Persons Holding Higher Office in Poland) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Wiejska, 1994). The figures for the 1997 Polish parliament come from Włodzimierz Wesołowski, *Partie: Nieustanne Kłopoty* (Parties: Ceaseless Troubles) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IfiS PAN, 2000), 134. I have simplified the SLD alliance into four subgroupings because of the limitations of the available data. For the Slovak figures, I am indebted to Kevin Deegan Krause. The rest of the calculations did not involve electoral alliances; these data on party seat shares are available online: University of Essex, *Project on Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe*, http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections (accessed August 30, 2004).

Poland

1993 Elections (Sejm)			
Electoral Coalition Name	*Party Name*	*Party Acronym*	*Number of Seats in Parliament*
Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)	Social Democrats of Poland	SdRP	76
	All-Poland Association of Unions	OPZZ	10
	Union of Polish Teachers	ZNP	12
	Other Subgroupings		34
	Independents		39

POLAND *(cont.)*

1997 Elections (Sejm)			
Electoral Coalition Name	*Party Name*	*Party Acronym*	*Number of Seats in Parliament*
Electoral Action "Solidarity" (AWS)	Solidarity	S	62
	Conservative People's Party	SKL	18
	Union of Christian Nationalists	ZChN	25
	Confederation for an Independent Poland	KPN	9
	Center Understanding	PC	13
	Catholic Families	RK	18
	Christian Democratic Party	PChD	5
	Self-Governmenters	SRz	12
	Independents		13
Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)	Social Democrats of Poland	SdRP	94
	All-Poland Association of Unions	OPZZ	13
	Union of Polish Teachers	ZNP	4
	Other Subgroupings		20
	Independents		33

SLOVAKIA

1990 Elections (Slovak National Council)			
Electoral Coalition Name	*Party Name*	*Party Acronym*	*Number of Seats in Parliament*
Hungarian Alliance	Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement	MKDM	8
	Coexistence	ESWS	6
1992 Elections (Slovak National Council)			
Hungarian Alliance	Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement	MKDM	5
	Coexistence	ESWS	9

	1994 Elections (Slovak National Council)		
Common Choice (SV)	Party of the Democratic Left	SDL	13
	Social Democratic Party of Slovakia	SDSS	2
	Green Party of Slovakia	SZS	2
	Agrarian Party?	HP	1
Hungarian Alliance	Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement	MKDM	7
	Coexistence	ESWS	9
	Hungarian Civic Party	MPP	1
	1998 Elections (Slovak National Council)		
	Democratic Party	DS	6
	Christian Democratic Movement	KDH	16
Party of the Democratic Coalition (SDK)	Slovak Green Party	SZS	4
	Democratic Union	DU	12
	Social Democratic Party of Slovakia	SDSS	4