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**Party Competition in Post-Communist Europe:
The Great Electoral Lottery**

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Abstract

This article suggests that the academic emphasis on rational choice and political-sociological approaches to party development has led to a misleading impression of convergence with Western patterns of programmatic competition and growing partisan identification in the Central European party political scene. As an alternative thesis, the author argues that the very character of ‘transition’ politics in Eastern Europe and the necessarily self-referential nature of the parliamentary game has structured party systems in those countries, and that the differences between the party systems in this region are critically related to experiences under communism (–a political-historical explanation). The paper argues that, in order to cope with a practical lack of public policy options in major areas such as the economy, parties have had little choice but to compete over operating ‘styles,’ rather than over substantive (ideologically based) programmatic alternatives. The development of parties incumbent in government since 1989 may be compared to the development of catch-all parties in Western Europe in terms of the competitive logic of weakening/ avoiding ideological positions in order to embrace a large constituency. However, successful parties in Eastern Europe lack the ‘baggage’ of an ideological past and the history of mass membership and a class or denominational clientele – *their* defining characteristic is that they try to appeal to all of the people all of the time.

Introduction

Few institutional developments are more critical to democratic consolidation in Eastern Europe than the development of stable and representative parties, competing with accuracy and intensity over the salient issues of the day. Where parties fail it will hardly matter how efficient other institutions of state may have become during the transition from communism; the new system as such will lack legitimacy and will be vulnerable to take-over or sustained inefficiency and instability.

With the shift in the academic literature from an emphasis on transition in Eastern Europe to one of democratic consolidation,¹ the issue of party competition in the region should logically move centre-stage and indeed it has: we understand far more about the competitive staying power of the communist successor parties in particular² and there is a growing body of literature examining patterns of competition and party strategy in individual countries and across the region as a whole.³

In what follows I attempt a further overview of trends of party competition in the region using Western models of party competition as a heuristic, and by drawing from the already rich theoretical debate and empirical data. The paper argues that the academic emphasis on rational choice and political-sociological approaches to party development in Eastern Europe to date has tended to give a misleading impression of stabilisation, convergence with Western patterns of programmatic competition and growing partisan identification across the Central European party scene. Even in those two cases seeing an indisputable shift toward programmatic competition – Poland and Hungary – these systems too remain peculiarly vulnerable. The reasons for this become clear once the political challenges of post-communist reform are factored back into the analysis. Once political constraints are taken into account it is apparent that the pressures of dismantling the communist system have left little space for substantive competition over policy options in major areas such as the economy. Political parties in government in this region have been harnessed to an agenda of necessary reforms and yet when running for election must still be seen to compete and to offer electoral alternatives. To do the latter convincingly, parties have learned how to compete over operating styles rather than over programmatic substance and voters, as a result, have reasonably developed doubts about the meaningfulness of their electoral choices along the lines of the joke: ‘Don’t vote: the government will get in.’

The term ‘valence issue’ is commonly used in electoral studies to describe ‘issues on which all parties declare the same objective but dispute each other’s competence in achieving the desired policy.’⁴ In post-communist Europe, political entrepreneurs may or may not be explicit in declaring ‘the same objectives’ – but they have had to attempt reform policies in practice, because elections *are* free and incumbents can be evicted from office if conditions are seen to deteriorate too steeply or with little prospect of improvement. (There is one substantive strategic choice available to political entrepreneurs, however, and that is to stall or to abandon the reform process for short term electoral gain – this strategy has proven economically devastating to the countries concerned and the paper will discuss why that choice has been taken in some states and not others later). Since there is little choice in policy to be had, politicians in the region have had little alternative to appeal to ‘who they are’ and their own credible skills rather than to substantive policy commitments when running for office. The political party system thus offers electoral accountability but not policy accountability, since the electoral system is capable of getting rid of parties but not, it seems, of shaping policies in critical areas of government. For the remainder of this paper ‘programmatic competition’ is understood as a competition where “parties announce identifiable and differing commitments to realise binding political decisions and collective goods they intend to deliver to society, were their representatives elected to political office”⁵ – with special attention being paid to the ‘binding’ part.

Party Competition in Central Europe – A Road Map...

When asking the basic analytical question of ‘what explains the evolution of party systems in Eastern Europe,’ the most prominent answers of the last ten years have fallen broadly into two types of explanations. On the one hand, economic theories (in which the median voter is the central actor in politics), have focused on the likely preferences of winners and losers in transition; an approach dominated in the early 1990s by Herbert Kitschelt.⁶ (More recently Kitschelt has combined arguments from winners and losers with complex path-dependency arguments from interwar and communist legacies.) On the other, we have seen political-sociological theories, focusing on the idea that parties express stable underlying social identities, with theorists attempting to identify which underlying social identities have proven most salient in ‘transition.’ This approach is exemplified by Geoffrey Evans’ and Stephen Whitfield’s argument that post-communist parties will position themselves on the major social cleavages emerging from economic development, levels of ethnic homogeneity and the historic status of the state.⁷ There is insufficient space here to do justice to the full theoretical debate as it has emerged, however, it is worth outlining some of the basic controversies arising from these two theoretical approaches: economic and political/sociological.

To take the economic approach first; the claim that party competition is *likely* to have a socio-economic basis has been highly dependent upon rational choice reasoning; such theories have tended to admit little autonomy of the political. To assume, *a priori*, the primacy of economic rationality over politics in determining the bases of political development in Eastern Europe, however, is arguably ill-advised in a region renowned for its historical étatism and for the autonomy of elites in dictating political developments. Pure applications of rational choice logic have come close to assuming an institutionally ‘frictionless’ environment – also a dubious theoretical starting point in the case of a transition from totalitarianism. Theories of party system development based on the logic of electoral preferences among winners and losers must, in addition, carry strong assumptions about the representative nature of political parties; they must assume that parties will *offer* a well-defined choice about being pro-market or not, and that parties will *compete* on the basis of offering clear and consistent alternative opportunities – if not at the beginning of the transition, then soon, essentially once marketization gets underway.

In practice in this region, however, political parties emerged overwhelmingly from *within* the parliamentary system, not out of the economic fault-lines or cleavages within society. Instead of emerging from the grassroots, the Central European parties that have thrived in the 1990s emerged from the parliamentary factions of the umbrella anti-communist movements or from the old communist or communist satellite parties. In developing out of the organisations of and against the regime – *i.e.* out of the ‘black and white’ divide of the revolution – the capacity of parties to help form and to manipulate electoral preferences was accentuated from the very beginning, whilst the expressive and representational functions ideally attributed to parliamentary parties in a liberal democracy were minimised.⁸ Economic rationality arguments, which depicted Central European politics as emerging from, or in lock-step with, the tangible ‘pocket-book’ logic of the electorate, were misleading about the institutional ordering of political life as we could (with hindsight!) observe it. Moreover, the assumption that parties would emerge and eventually locate themselves along axes comprised of pro-market and pro-state positions would require that parties gravitate ‘naturally’ towards rational equilibrium solutions even when short term electoral interests might dictate radically different behaviour. Most importantly of all, mainstream Central European politics proved more essentially pro-market in its practice, if not in its promises, than many of us had dared anticipate. Through 1993 and 1994 even ‘post-socialist’ camps revealed their pro-market colours when elected to government in both Hungary and Poland. The stuff of party competition therefore, remained unresolved by inferences from the distribution of economic resources.

Political-sociological theories have also had trouble accommodating the parliamentary route of party development after 1989. If we take political-sociological theories of party development to be based on the idea that parties express stable underlying social identities, such theories face a major problem in identifying which social identities ‘count’, since parties in this region did not emerge slowly from known social divides but extremely rapidly out of a revolutionary regime divide – *i.e.* out of the anti-communist blocs elected to parliament in the first free elections. Since parties entered parliament having represented society only as a protesting anti-communist mass it has proven extremely difficult to demonstrate a deeper connection to social cleavages; the development of any stable identification being carried further into question by persistently high rates of voter volatility. This is not merely a methodological problem, moreover.⁹ The more essential fact is that, even if stable social identities had existed in 1989, the process of political, social and economic transformation over the last ten years has thrown these societies into a period of quite exceptionally rapid evolution.

In order to accommodate the idea of rapid change political sociologists have tended to resort to the abundant evidence that at least the most fundamental structural cleavages in societies – such as class, religion or ethnicity - have *tended* to prove productive of political identities elsewhere. However, if the communist experience is taken seriously then even ‘classic’ social divides are decidedly open to question: the assumption that socio-economic divisions will drive party competition assumes that parties are free to articulate a real choice between distribution and market, but this is arguably not the case in post-communist transition until there is a return to something approaching sustained economic growth;¹⁰ the assumption by Evans and Whitfield that one can distinguish clearly between established and non-established states ignores the fact that every post-communist state underwent a politically exploitable crisis of identity following the collapse of communism. Similarly, if it is assumed that quantitative distributions of nationalities dictate the likelihood of nationalistic politics it remains unclear precisely when, with what quantity of national heterodoxy, this cross-cutting cleavage may kick-in. To the contrary, one might argue that issues such as immigration, foreign investment, security and/or foreign ‘dominance’ (read ‘Western’ or ‘Russian’) or less than stable neighbours might make extreme national/ethnic homogeneity as productive of nationalist politics as ethnic heterodoxy, given the anxiety-producing character of the post-communist transformation. As with theoretical approaches focusing on economic rationality, political-sociological analyses have tended to leave little room for issues of political, institutional or elite power, either in regard to existing institutional opportunity structures, the capacity of elites to mobilise constituencies or to manipulate electoral preferences.

The questions of what attaches parties to society and of where parties have come from have more recently prompted the development of path-dependency theories of political development that seek to recognise and to integrate the impact of interwar and communist historical legacies – the great difficulty here being to isolate in rigorous ways the impact of the communist system as such.¹¹ In this vein, *Post-Communist Party Systems* (1999) by Kitschelt et al. examines the extent to which programmatic appeals and constituency linkages characterise new party systems in four cases, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, and in explaining the roots of these linkages the authors offer a sophisticated sequential model of party development that emphasises the interwar and communist legacies in shaping cleavage formation in the new democracies.¹² Kitschelt et al. make an extremely powerful case for the integration of legacy arguments in explaining, in particular, the evident variation in degrees of programmatic competition among the various countries. Their development model also, critically, suggests that electoral institutions (electoral laws and executive-legislative relations) only become important as exogenous determinants of party competitive strategies over time, having been essentially endogenous to the political process in the early 1990s, the immediate post-revolutionary years.¹³ One of the most controversial aspects of *Post-Communist Party Systems*, however, is that it does not make it clear whether, how or why political pro-

cesses and ‘cognitive legacies’ from the interwar period have somehow survived and remained salient – in this theory, apparently *more* salient – than those cognitive legacies of the communist period. Indeed, Kitschelt et al. appear to operate with extremely strong assumptions about the tenacity and vitality of interwar legacies, democratic legacies in particular. This raises important issues of how, by what means (and among whom?) should these competing models have survived, not just in some vague form of personal memory, but with sufficient coherence and personnel to ‘trump’ the distribution of power and resources left over from the communist order.

In pursuit of this last issue this paper suggests that, if it is possible to indicate that all party political elites in transition have a significant capacity to frame and to manipulate electoral choices then actually, the nature and strength of possible political legacies in terms of programmes and ideas, *whatever* their origins, are less important than Kitschelt et al. imply. This is not to adopt a *tabula rasa* approach; the communist legacy is clearly critical in determining who is around to do what with any credibility. However, Kitschelt et al. argue that “the parties of Central Europe are parliamentary-centred”¹⁴ – but this can be stated far more strongly; those parties that have proved successful since 1989 have been essentially parliament *born-and-bred*, developing all-embracing electoral strategies and policies that revealed them to be far more flexible/pragmatic than a strong emphasis on pre-1989 legacies/path dependency arguments would necessarily imply. The nature of the post-communist transition is such that parties, in order to be successful, have had to adapt to extraordinarily constrained conditions of party competition, the early constraints of profound economic reform being extended further by the growing policy imperatives of European Union, and in three cases, of NATO integration.

As already mentioned in the introduction, in addition to theory-driven analyses of competition there has already been much in-depth analysis of the adaptation of former communist parties to power in Poland and Hungary.¹⁵ In addition to the latter pieces, which are notable for examining the substance of political programme development in one part of the political scene, there are also a growing number of single country-based studies, typified by expert historical accounts of individual elections and of how elected parties subsequently *act* in government.¹⁶ Crucially, the evidence these substantive articles present tends to emphasise the continuing autonomy of party from electorate, the importance of the communist inheritance and the nature of the transition itself in establishing party constellations and political opportunity structures, and, above all, the weakness of the programmatic element of party competition in a good deal of contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. Bearing these findings, and the broader theoretical literature on Western European party competition in mind, what follows is an alternative model of party competition in Central Europe, more than three elections down the line.

An Alternative Model

If we take the most telling indicator of party system stabilisation to be the absence of new parties, then Central European party systems without exception remain unstable. Poland, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Bulgaria and Romania have all seen the emergence of either new parties, new coalitions, party-mergers, or party-makeovers amounting to a significant shift in party identity within the last few years. Several countries, moreover, look set to see the disappearance of previously successful post-communist political parties from the electoral map. If we take this to be mere surface instability, and search instead for stability in allegiance to ideological blocs (thus investigating “deep volatility” in voting), then we hit on a significant measurement problem. The conventional measurement of voter volatility by bloc across the left/right divide cannot be applied easily in a region where the policy limitations imposed by reform mean that most mainstream parties feel constrained to endorse free market reform and to minimise redistribution. Dismantling the planned economy, ending economic stagnation, the decline in living standards and European Union entry (the latter being dependent upon the former) have tended not

so much to provoke clear and consistent left-right competition as to prove valence issues. Where pro-market positions were not clear in rhetoric they have emerged in practice – once parties have been elected to government.¹⁷ Over time, therefore, as the valence character of dismantling central planning and pushing for growth has become clear, it has made it increasingly difficult to place parties decisively on a left/right scale and, I would argue, potentially misleading to try.

With the left/right division in economic terms excluded, finding a measure of economic attitudes that coheres well with anything approaching party ‘blocs’ becomes extremely difficult. The solution for many analysts has been to come up with new typologies and to try to monitor shifting voter support between their assigned ‘blocs’ accordingly.¹⁸ However, even these efforts are compelled into measurement problems since throughout the last ten years major parties in most countries have been either sufficiently vague in policy terms or have changed their character radically enough to make the coherent monitoring of voter shifts by ‘bloc’ as an indicator of system stability – however that bloc is labelled – questionable. The more interesting analytical questions are surely those of how major parties continue to shift their ground in order to compete while compelled to remain essentially pro-market-liberalisation when in government and, secondly, of why once explicitly pro-liberalisation parties might abandon this supposedly core ideological trait for, typically, populist and far more economically unpredictable and reckless stances (see ‘Slovakia’ – below). For the analyst, however, the capturing of economic orientation in voting must surely remain a discrete but critical factor. A measure for allegiance to a political bloc, say, across a religious/secular divide that excludes economic attitudes is, in conditions of basic economic fragility – hardly able to demonstrate party *system* stability one way or another. Even in those few cases where there is evidence of stabilisation in party identification and social cleavage, most obviously, across religious divides, these specific cases can tell us very little about the longer term stabilisation of the party system *in toto*.

The argument of this paper is that continued party system instability may be shown to be a direct consequence of the *type* of party competition emerging in Eastern Europe, more specifically, a consequence of a dominant type of electoral strategy. In claiming the existence of a dominant competitive strategy the focus is only on those parties that have proved successful in post-1989 electoral politics, namely on those parties and coalitions that have been incumbent in government after 1989. The article is based on the party systems of Poland, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Romania and Bulgaria, countries selected on the principle of ‘most similar systems design’¹⁹ insofar as they all experienced a Soviet-type-system for a similar period of time; forty years. After 1989, moreover, these states are all in intention at least, parliamentary systems²⁰ – in contrast to the states of the former Soviet Union. In addition of course none of these states participated in war since 1989, the element that clearly distinguishes party political developments in the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

The paper seeks to explain two things: firstly, the origins and character of successful electoral strategies in this region after 1989, the second; to try to explain why different countries have developed different constellations of political parties. The paper’s working hypotheses are as follows: the explanatory variable accounting for a dominant electoral strategy in the region is the existence of fundamental political constraints in transition – i.e., the dominance of valence issues in party competition. The explanatory variable accounting for different constellations of party competition in different countries, is that of state-society relations under communism; the experience of communism in different countries varied according to the intensity of the system in shutting down non-Party/non-ideological social organisation. This variable considers the degree of societal repression or mediation under communism as a determinant of who is available to ‘play’ the dominant strategy and in what credible forms, after 1989.

On the question of state-society relations, Following Kitschelt et al. this paper will characterise communist regimes as having taken three forms:²¹ patrimonial communism²² (Romania, Bulgaria), national-

accommodative communism²³ (Hungary and Poland) and bureaucratic-authoritarian communism²⁴ (Czech and Slovak Republics – as the Czechoslovak state). By focusing on the question of repression and “Communist Particisation” of society, however, the paper argues that the legacies of patrimonial and bureaucratic-authoritarian communist regimes (Romania, Bulgaria and the Czech and Slovak republics) are more similar than Kitschelt et al. have suggested, leaving the legacies of the less successfully repressive national-accommodative regimes as the most ‘favourable’ i.e., conducive to programmatic competition (and not bureaucratic-authoritarian legacies – as Kitschelt et al. argue). The main difference between patrimonial and bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes, this paper argues, is not so much in the different character of political elites available after 1989, but in the more basic issue of a country’s economic development and in the reasonable prospects for rapid success in transition in economic terms; i.e., it has made more sense for a former communist apparatchik in Romania to sell himself as a populist whereas a former apparatchik in the Czech Republic or Slovakia could sell himself as a technocrat. All have had to attempt reforms in practice, but since economic reforms in the Czech Republic would clearly succeed more quickly than in Romania it has made electoral sense for the former apparatchik in the Czech Republic to be explicit about trying. Finally, given the three varying types of communist experience in these case studies and the existence of one dominant competitive strategy in the region as a whole, the paper’s aim is to capture the *limitations* of interwar and communist legacies in explaining the type of party politics emerging after 1989.

The Catch-All Party and Cartel Party in Western Europe

In Western Europe, Otto Kirchheimer concluded by the 1960s that the era of the mass integration party was passing, and that, as a result, West European party systems were faced with the more or less irresistible rise of what he termed ‘catch-all parties.’²⁵ “The mass integration party” he argued, “the product of an age with harder class lines and more sharply protruding denominational structures, is transforming itself into a catch-all ‘people’ party. Abandoning attempts at the intellectual and moral encadrement of the masses, it is turning more fully to the electoral scene, trying to exchange effectiveness in depth for a wider audience and more immediate electoral success.”²⁶ Kirchheimer then went on to list five characteristics of the new catch-all party:

- a ‘drastic reduction of the party’s ideological baggage’
- a ‘further strengthening of top leadership groups’
- a ‘downgrading of the role of the individual party member’
- a ‘de-emphasis of the class gardee, or of specific social-class or denominational clientele in favour of the recruitment of voters among the population at large.
- securing access to a variety of interest groups, to secure electoral support via interest group intercession.²⁷

In this way, Kirchheimer depicted a party that has sundered its close links with the mass electorate and has become remote from the everyday life of the citizen, even though for electoral reasons, the democratic catch-all party must continue to express widely felt popular concerns. Compared to mass parties the catch-all party performed the function of expressing public grievances and concerns subject essentially to changing tactical considerations, where before it would have been driven to a more consistent representation of certain interests and principles by both its ideology, and by the explicitly identified interests of its favoured class (or religious) constituency. In Western Europe of course, the shift was not to pure pragmatism or populism, but one away from strict ideological goals toward more tactically modulated principles, post-modern issues and a much greater concentration in general upon policy issues which would cause

minimum resistance in the community. Kircheimer presented the German CDU and SPD as classic catch-all parties which had effectively diluted their original ideologies in order to widen their voter-base.

While party systems in Western Europe have continued to develop beyond the catch-all model (not least to the ‘cartel model’²⁸), the original model remains enlightening when applied to post-1989 East Central Europe. In Western Europe a very particular socio-economic shift in the 1960s is said to have precipitated the shift to catch-all party strategies. The 1960s saw a gradual evolution away from class and religious identities to more diverse political identities, based among things, on the new social movements of the time. In communist East Central Europe, in contrast, the developments through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were those of ideological stagnation, and in post-invasion Czechoslovakia and in Bulgaria and Romania the complete suppression of political identity beyond communist orthodoxy. The less orthodox routes and indeed less successfully repressive routes were goulash communism in Hungary, where Janos Kadar experimented with a second economy, and consumer communism in Poland, where intense borrowing from the West led to bankruptcy, the birth of the Solidarity movement and finally martial law. Nevertheless, both Hungary and Poland had, in essence, remained essentially closed, if relatively accommodative, authoritarian regimes. In revolutionary East Central Europe, would-be party politicians woke up after 1989 to the instant problem that they now had to find issues on which to compete, and to compete successfully. Here, ‘instant’ catch-all parties emerged as the optimum strategy for dealing with the lack of strong partisan political identities typical in the post-communist era. Such parties succeeded by seeking the conditional support of the electorate, competing on the open market rather than attempting to develop and to narrow that market.

Instant Catch-All Parties in Post-Communist Europe

One of the defining features of the East/Central European transition in its earliest years was that political strategists did not and could not know the nature and strength of political cultural continuity after communism. This made their position profoundly different from that of politicians developing ‘cartel parties’ in Western Europe – where cartel parties emerged out of traditions of inter-party cooperation, an abundance of state support and a high degree of issue and policy definition in the realm of transparently agreed societal goals. In post-communist Europe political strategists coming out of the most repressive regimes did not know which specific constituencies could now be mobilised in terms of partisan political identities, nor did they know the reform-pain thresholds of their electorates.²⁹ The first elections in each of these states were more like plebiscites on the basic issue of being ‘for change’/‘against communism,’ than anything resembling a multidimensional party competition. Only Hungary has had a constellation of political parties in 1998 resembling that in 1990 but, as we shall see, Hungarian parties that have retained consistent names have nevertheless changed significantly in their apparent political orientations. In these plebiscitary first elections across the region the broad-based anti-communist coalition movements, (with dissident groups at their core), performed most successfully, the exceptions here being Romania, an ambiguous case where the National Salvation Front included dissident intellectuals but was quickly dominated by a faction, led by Ion Illiescu, still affiliated to the values of communism even though its leadership had rejected the Ceausescu regime. Another ambiguous exception is Bulgaria, where change had been spurred by the younger generation *within* the Party and a duly revamped Bulgarian Socialist Party held onto power against a still diffuse opposition. In each case cases though, it is apparent that the most credible agents of change were elected. In countries with strong dissident movements then the victory was for anti-communist blocs that carried these long-time opponents of communism.³⁰

What these changes would look like in practice and what the electorate would stand by way of hardship could still only be guessed at in 1990 and 1991, however. It is important to recall that the ostensibly monolithic anti-communist civic movements were essentially only loosely knit networks – coalitions, but

more commonly, collections of groups whose diversity of opinion was successfully masked by their common rejection of communism. As broad coalitions they carried the most general agendas into these elections – they were for all good things – democratisation, marketisation – freedom and prosperity. Not only were these anti-communist movements full of various, still only vaguely categorised factions, but even within the factions there was little by way of political discipline in terms of consistent allegiance to groups. In the case of dissident circles there was considerable suspicion surrounding the idea of party discipline as such, deriving from the dissident philosophy of anti-politics and personal integrity, developed through the 1970s and 1980s. (For example, when the Czech Civic Forum finally splintered in 1991 it occurred in part over the issue of whether party organisation and discipline were necessary at all: the technocratic right argued it was essential, and the liberal dissidents objected that it contradicted the very spirit of the movement.) Once the decision to become a party had been taken, however, elites were free to formulate a party structure and party type unconstrained by any institutional legacies; they were not only quite new entities, but by emerging in parliament these parties were instantly known – instantly electoral players.

It is a critical step in party development that the instant catch-all parties to emerge after 1989 on the whole organised themselves by forming parliamentary groups or factions from within already elected monolithic parliamentary blocks – the civic blocs: Solidarity in Poland, the Civic Forum and the Slovak Public Against Violence in Czechoslovakia, the Union of Democratic Forces in Bulgaria, and the usurped National Salvation Front in Romania.

The fact that the first stages of instant catch-all party building occurred within the parliamentary arena would have extremely important consequences for party-identification. The figuring-out of political strategies on the basis of competition for political space as seen from within the existing parliamentary arena was necessarily an exceptionally top down process, and a highly abstract intellectual process at that. Consequently, a type of party emerged which was formed, initially without reference to known or predictable constituencies (the exceptions here being Poland and to a lesser extent in Hungary, where opposition forces were strong and clearly embedded in social constituencies, offering politicians significantly less room for manoeuvre than in *both* former patrimonial and bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes). These new parties, or rather, the factions which now emerged and instituted themselves as parties, had tremendous freedom to define the new social reality themselves, to define the political space in relation to how other competing elites defined it – rather than as a response to any evident cleavages or new disputes within post-communist ‘society’ as such (beyond the question of the status of the communists – the most obvious controversy in the aftermath of the revolution). However, political strategies did face two major contextual constraints: the first was that of tremendous social and institutional flux. The second was that the possible arena of party competition was severely circumscribed by the new political constraints of transition as such: the standards for economic reform were clear – half-measures, as attempted in Hungary and Poland in the last decades of communism, in Czechoslovakia in the very last years – had failed – and liberalisation and full restructuring could no longer be avoided anywhere if productivity was to improve and sustainable growth to return; a view emphatically endorsed by Western advice. Only a few years later the standards for European Union entry were presented as *faits accomplis* from the West; as policies around which there was little room for competition insofar economic growth and European entry were still seen as not simply public goods but public necessities. The issues implicit in marketisation and harmonisation with Union norms duly emerged as valence issues. The critical consideration then for political strategists was an estimation of the reform pain-threshold of their societies.³¹

The overwhelmingly valence nature of party competition *in practice* meant that the most entrepreneurial parties have developed a strategy for distinguishing themselves competitively by an emphasis on, respec-

tively; reform priorities in terms of the sequencing of reforms, credibility on the delivery of reforms, and most importantly, on the chosen *modus operandi* of the party – in other words, on the operating *style* or at most, operating morality, of the party – something that falls far short of a coherent ideological position. In the bid to capture the largest constituency, such parties only explicitly dare the most consensual of commitments (often regardless of feasibility), and have sought only the most highly conditional form of support, in this respect, they share the competitive logic of Western European catch-all parties – they attempt to open up the electoral market – but they clearly lack the ‘baggage’ of an ideological past and the history of mass membership and a class or denominational clientele;³² indeed, more than that, instant catch-all parties must necessarily avoid competing over ideological programmatic commitments as far as possible since any new government will be harnessed to an agenda of ‘necessary reforms,’ something they must then attempt to manage without destroying their own popularity; stalling and half-measures being one obvious compromise solution in cases where public tolerance for reform pain looks low. The defining characteristic of ‘instant catch-all parties’ is that they try to appeal to all of the people, all of the time.

Those exceptional cases of ‘instant catch-all parties’ which possess a distinct mass base – the communist successor parties – have, with the exception of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, maintained a section of their former mass bases despite *repudiating* the ideological connection of communism. The failure of ‘historical parties,’ the relative failure of constituency or interest-based parties (in other words – more predictably *programmatic* parties) and the continuing success of these instant catch-all parties might imply that communism, but in particular communism of the patrimonial or bureaucratic-authoritarian type, had a significant impact in destroying or eroding pre-communist, but also communist-era partisan political identities. More obviously, however, the emergence of a dominant electoral strategy across the board reflects the extreme restrictions in policy choices faced by East European countries in transition; restrictions that ‘nostalgic parties’ can only fail to wish away.

The region has seen the emergence of three very specific forms of instant catch-all party: technocratic, nationalist and populist. By technocratic I mean parties which claim to have the technical expertise which will carry the population through the transition (in emphasising professionalism one might argue that these come closest to the Western model of ‘cartel party’, except that they do not operate in party-colluding, ‘cartelised systems’). By populist I mean parties which try to mobilise the entire electorate by convincing them that they, above all other parties, care most about the ordinary person.³³ In the case of nationalists, the party tries to mobilise the population on the basis of national identity - but clearly, many ideas and policy options may be logically attached to the basic principle of national identity.³⁴ The styles that have been chosen have been highly contingent on the specific communist legacy of 1989 in terms of the background and disposition of political elites created by the communist experience, and the credibility with which they might adopt one, or a combination of these three strategies. The critical point distinguishing Polish and Hungarian competition is that in both countries before 1989 the continuous need for the Party to evolve to sustain even a minimum of legitimacy allowed for the existence of non-ideological, reformist technocratic elites within the Party, and these elites proved capable of transforming themselves into credible *transition* technocrats after 1989. Consequently, their historical ideological legacy has proved negligible in its impact on eventual policy choice,³⁵ (in contrast to the Czech case, where the Communist Party is barely reconstructed even to the point of retaining the Communist Party name – uniquely in the region). By allowing for the existence of technocratic parties on both sides of the systems divide after 1989, Poland and Hungary emerged with a stable mainstream core of parties that were explicitly pro-reform. A legacy of national-accommodative communism was also that relatively open social divides had survived, and these proved capable of supporting stable religious and peasant parties after 1989 which added further structure to Polish and Hungarian political life, allowing for more nuanced, programmatic politics around a relatively explicit reform consensus.

Technocratic, nationalistic and populist principles are all highly, indeed, maximally flexible in how they can be used to legitimate any policy after the fact; their identities as parties hardly commit them even to a basic left-right preference on policy making, be it left or right as considered for cultural or economic issues.³⁶ Because of their fundamentally non-committal nature as parties (beyond their standard claim to be pro-reform in principle) instant catch-all parties retain a huge amount of flexibility in terms of what actual policies they choose to campaign on, what policies they will adopt once in power, and leeway in deciding precisely how to develop, as parties, in the future. The most decisive historical inheritance has been that those not *irredeemably* identified with the former regime straightforwardly opted for self-identification as anti-communist – an identification which continues to play a prominent role in party competition in each of the case countries. By competing on their various *modus operandi* (the application of expertise, the pursuit of national realisation and the solution of grievances respectively) elites may obscure the lack of realistic policy options during the transition, even as they provide extreme leeway in terms of ultimate policy choices. Such identities are ideal – and entirely rational – for elites coping with the extreme demands of post-communist transformation, but they have distinct consequences for the emergence of party competition, and the democratising benefits that are supposed to come with it. A party that defines policy ‘on the hop’, i.e., in an ad hoc fashion after it has been elected, creates many problems; not only is it difficult for an opposition party to pin down a governing party’s faults, but it is also extremely difficult to develop clear lines of party identification, not only for individuals, but also for interest groups and civil institutions. Without clear party identification beyond the generalities of being communist/anti-communist or nationalist versus populist, the isolation of civil society from the state, and the instability, if not vulnerability of the democratic party system as such may be perpetuated.

Of course, each type of strategy; nationalist, technocratic or populist, hardly exists in a pure form – most instant catch-all parties blend elements of all three with one aspect typically dominating, though in turn, the central style may shift. A variety of problems have arisen with this new type of party. Where only one instant catch-all party has emerged – essentially having hit upon the strategy first – it tended to dominate the new party system to such a degree as to make party competition extremely difficult – the Czech Civic Democratic Party, the Slovak Movement for a Democratic Slovakia and the Party of Social Democracy in Romania being cases in point – all legatees of either patrimonial or bureaucratic-authoritarian communist regimes. When more than one catch-all party has emerged and competition appears between various forms of the new types of catch-all party – essentially the case by the mid 1990s in Bulgaria, Romania and eventually in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, say between nationalists and populists, populists and technocrats, or between a combination of all three, party competition has remained at an extremely high level of political abstraction, and where civil society is weak and international pressure on specific policy options extremely strong, politicians have had few incentives or pressures to develop party competition on a less abstract basis, since all are set to pursue only a modification of what is in many respects an international policy agenda. However, in those two countries which have seen the development of more than one credible *technocratic* party, Poland and Hungary, we are seeing the development of a significantly deeper degree of party competition. In Poland and Hungary the reform communists have managed to reinvent themselves as credible technocratic, social liberal parties of the centre left, in contrast to the classically liberal technocratic parties of the right and so, emerging out of a competition sharing many common terms, it has been possible to identify a higher degree of policy debate, ideological definition, and assertive criticism about the validity of, and room for manoeuvre within the policy restrictions implicitly imposed by the expectations of international institutions, the European Union in particular.

Before turning to the evidence and a discussion of why it is that some countries have developed more than one instant catch-all party and why they have adopted the operating styles that they have it is important to recall, when gauging politicians’ incentives to shift strategy from a vague ‘instant’ catch-all strategy to a

more precise and accountable form, that those parties which chose ‘ideological’ or ‘constituency-based’ strategies over non-ideological instant catch-all strategies have done badly – and in countries escaping patrimonial or bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes they have done badly from the very start. Whether or not those attempting to revive historical identities, (*e.g.* social democracy, Catholic populism, agrarianism, xenophobic nationalism) have been the direct heirs, or even in some cases, the former members of historical parties, or whether the attempts have been made by entrepreneurial young politicians looking to cash in on some previous historical success, (*e.g.* the Slovak National Party) those that gambled on their societies possessing the kind of deep and still politicised divisions of the interwar period have been disappointed.

Players, Credible Strategies and Constraints

When accounting for the character of party competition after 1989 we need to consider not only the nature of the communist legacy (especially the personnel of party politics after 1989 and what competitive strategies are credibly open to them), but also contingent aspects of the transition itself – critically, the existence of a huge core of policy constraints plus the basic level of economic development and thus the prospects for economic growth. The predominance of valence issues in the transition, I would argue, is the critical factor in understanding why a dominant competitive strategy has emerged across the entire region. Where a single instant catch-all party becomes hegemonic in a given system, moreover, the temptation for that party to thwart competition, to rewrite the rules of the game in terms of electoral rules and constitutional rights between the executive and the legislature, becomes high – as evidenced by government proposals to radically rewrite electoral laws in the incumbents’ favour in Slovakia in 1998, and in the Czech Republic in 2000, where the formerly hegemonic Civic Democratic Party maintains a minority Social Democrat government in order to extract constitutional changes (*i.e.*, more majoritarian electoral legislation and curbed presidential powers). This is an important factor when considering the point at which institutional rules (as Kitschelt summarises it – the division of power between executive and legislature, and electoral rules) may become an exogenous constraint on competitive strategy. Arguably, institutional rules become consistently guiding constraints in the formation of party strategy only when politics and political expectations becomes routinised. Arguably radical reconfigurations of the party scene – made possible by the unpredictable character of instant catch-all competition – stall the routinisation of politics by constantly reintroducing uncertainty. For post-patrimonial and post-bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes therefore, institutional constraints remain endogenous so long as instant catch-all party politics predominates.

Patterns of Competition

National-Accommodative Communism, the Cases of Poland and Hungary

The more accommodative character of these communist regimes had critical consequences not only for the nature of the opposition to emerge after 1989 – *i.e.*, oppositions with roots in surviving and clearly identifiable public divisions – but also for the nature of the communist parties themselves. The communist parties in both Hungary and Poland were possessed of young, non-ideological, indeed deeply pragmatic reform factions able to transform their communist parties, after 1989, into credible, pseudo-leftist pro-reform forces. The reformed Polish and Hungarian communist parties after 1989 emphasised their technical expertise – ‘the cult of the manager’ above all. National-accommodative communism, in allowing for structured forms of internal opposition and repeated attempts at reform of the state and the economy,³⁷ allowed for the existence of credible and explicitly pro-reform technocratic elites on both sides of the regime divide after 1989. In Poland these two technocratic parties emerged from the two main forces of national-accommodative communism in the 1980s – from the reform wing of the Polish United Workers

Party - the communist party - and from the unified anti-communist opposition movement, the trades union, Solidarity.

Poland

Depending on initial economic conditions and past experience of reform, the shift from central plan to market could still permit a wide variety of reform strategies. In Poland, however, economic conditions in 1989 were dire, and piecemeal reforms in the 1980s had failed. The familiar controls of central planning had collapsed but no market system had evolved to replace them and the system had continued in 'cosy stagnation.'³⁸ The policy of radical shock therapy: macroeconomic stabilisation, to be followed by systemic change thus emerged clearly as a valence issue immediately after the revolution; the main debate among economists being over whether to introduce macroeconomic stabilisation policies first or in conjunction with systemic reforms. The evidence that marketisation has remained a valence issue comes from the fact that both Solidarity governments (1989-1993/1997-); those with roots in the anti-communist trades union movement of the 1980s, and the government of Social Democracy of the Polish Republic (1993-1997) – the successor party to the Polish United Workers Party – have all continued restrictive economic policy. All governments in Poland since 1989 have made explicit promises to continue the process of economic reform and to pursue European Union entry – and all have done so in practice. Even at the harshest point of shock therapy, in the early 1990s, the Solidarity governments were informally supported by the successor to the Polish United Workers Party (communist party) the Social Democracy of the Polish Republic (SdRP); the latter's only hope of electoral survival was to prove that they were a credible and responsible democratic party, and not the old regime in disguise.

Three years of reform later, following a controversial abortion law, fears that the Church was too interventionist in political life and in the context of growing social costs as a consequence of economic shock therapy, the SdRP were elected as technocratic modernisers with a social conscience in 1993. (Precisely by virtue of being heirs to the PUWP (and its assets), the former communist technocrats retained some resonance as leftists.) In their election campaign they portrayed themselves as non-ideological professionals and in government they were revealed as social liberals. Election effectively gave SdRP the chance to prove that they really were an entirely new party – democratic and non-recidivist. SdRP's allies in the new government, the Polish Peasant Party allies – a former communist satellite party reestablishing its credibility as a party of the countryside, emerged as protectionist and statist and the more reluctant reformer.³⁹ The government document "Strategy for Poland – Euro 2006", promised sustainable growth and gradual disinflation to meet EMU criteria by 2006 – a strategy the SdRP pursued until beaten in 1997 (in parliamentary seats – their vote rose by 6 percent) by a new alliance of the right – Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS). From 1997 to the time of writing AWS has run a reformist government in coalition with the Freedom Union, the party of secular radical neo-liberal reformers led by Poland's first shock therapist; Leszek Balcerowicz. Balcerowicz resigned as Finance Minister and the Freedom Union pulled out of government in summer 2000 after AWS failed to be consistent in its support for Balcerowicz's more radical market strategy.

It is evident that the character of state-society relations under national-accommodative communism in Poland had a defining impact on the constellation of parties current in the Polish mainstream. When politics is dominated by valence issues, politicians are necessarily forced back to resort to who they are and the skills/resources they possess to appeal to the electorate. Where technocrats can credibly do so their clearest strategy is to appeal precisely to their technocratic skills – where elites may have roots in sections of society that dissented from communism such elites may appeal to these connections as a source of identity, reformist credibility and/or nationalist prestige. The metamorphosis of Leszek Balcerowicz from pure technocrat economist, bent on installing as much market reform before *politics* intervened, to the

ever-more coherently liberal free-market politician is highly illuminating. It has occurred, I would argue, out of the necessity of competing as a party politician (rather than as Solidarity's Mr Fix-It) against other credible reformers, as it transpired – the SdRP. Balcerowicz's Freedom Union (UW) nevertheless went into the 1997 Polish election campaign on the slogan "left, right but always forward," thus continuing to emphasize the party's credibility as reformist over and above any form of ideological partisanship. The evolution of the right in Poland has also been driven by the competence of the communist successor party in other ways. Solidarity Electoral Action emerged in response to the 1993 victory of the SdRP. When Solidarity fell apart in 1991 the right splintered so severely as to lose their place in parliament in the 1993 election.⁴⁰ Having learnt that if they stood divided they would fall, a grouping of almost forty right wing/nationalist/religious groupings coalesced into an extremely broad coalition – the AWS – whose election campaign stood on national, religious, but most essentially, on anti-communist principles. They thus translated their dissident identity into one of positive emphasis on national and religious values. In other words they presented their roots as principled Catholic Poles who had opposed communism.

Since the 1997 election the AWS has lurched towards more vocal religiosity and nationalism. This reflects their lack of agreement and coherence over 'technical' economic reform issues, for which they had relied upon their coalition partners, the Freedom Union. The AWS floundered in the run up to the October 2000 presidential elections, (which the SdRP incumbent, Aleksander Kwasniewski, won outright in the first round), having lost momentum in economic policy and beset by scandal, all the more damaging since AWS had sold itself as the 'unbribeable' political force in 1997. If AWS is to compete with the SdRP and the UW in the future it is precisely in the realm of the valence issues – economic policy in particular – that the nationalist and religious grouping will have to develop – it no longer being enough to rely upon the regime divide. There is, however, an alternative competitive option dependent largely on the direction of EU accession talks; namely, a slide into nationalist and religious populism, and protectionism in the face of an unenthusiastic EU. The idea that nationalism and populism is not electable to govern alone in Poland, is arguably entirely contingent on the EU's willingness to deliver on their promises of early Polish accession. It has been widely assumed that EU enlargement has a purely benevolent effect on the shaping of party competition in Central Europe. However, the most logical opposition strategy against technocratic modernisation – aimed at EU entry – is charismatic/populist nationalism – and if the EU fails to deliver it seems fair to say that this strategy may thrive as domestic disappointment and resentment grow.

With the SdRP emphasising reform, secular identity, pro-Europeanism and the desire to mitigate the worst social costs of transition and Balcerowicz's Freedom Union as secular, pro-European, anti-communist and free-marketier, one could more optimistically predict that, as the strength of anti-communist feeling fades and the economic situation improves (the latter also being contingent on EU accession and with it – Polish currency stability and continuing investment), these two parties might enter into an ever more sophisticated debate on an economically left/right basis. The logic of this set-up looks well set to lead the parties to compete over alternative policy agendas and not just over alternative absolute values about the way society should operate.

Hungary

Even more than Poland, Hungary illustrates the inescapability of economic reform at the heart of transition politics. In Hungary the first post-communist government, conservative and nostalgic, with dissidents at its core, tried to continue the gradualist economic approach of the previous regime; introducing restrictive monetary, budgetary and income policy only in steps after 1990 in order to avoid what was feared would become destabilising public mobilisation. In 1994, however the Hungarian Democratic Forum were deselected in favour of former communists, by this time a party of young technocratic modernisers,

and it was this government, the Hungarian Socialist Party under Gyula Horn, that not only continued large scale privatisation but also launched radical stabilisation ('shock therapy'), cutting back the bureaucracy and social security benefits and kick-starting foreign direct investment.⁴¹ In the second half of the 1990s, in order to compete with the latter, another dissident party – FIDESZ, the former Young Liberals, moved from liberal left ground to a combination of technocratic economics and pragmatic nationalism – thoroughly replacing the Hungarian Democratic Forum as the dominant party of the 'right.'

As the only country emerging with what looked like instant party politics in 1989 – Hungary is often cited as the great exception to the problem of party systems development in the region. And yet in Hungary, as elsewhere, political success has followed the most obviously catch-all of all the Hungarian parties, the ex-communist Hungarian Socialist Party, victorious with a landslide victory in 1994 and FIDESZ – who had also resorted to catch-all electoral strategies by May 1998, when they defeated the Socialists. By 1998 FIDESZ had evidently discovered the mix of technocratic politics and nationalism that allowed them to maximise their credibility both as a party of young technocrats and as a party with roots in the dissident movement. In the run up to the 1998 election FIDESZ introduced specific issues and problems regarding European Union entry and claimed that it would be a tougher negotiator, particularly on agricultural issues, thus setting apart a pragmatic nationalist FIDESZ stall from both the nostalgic nationalism of the Hungarian Democratic Forum and more entirely pro-European stance of the Hungarian Socialist Party. The Hungarian Socialist Party, the word 'socialist' in its title notwithstanding, had projected itself not as ideological, nor even of the left so much as a party of technocratic *modernisers* - modernisation, as Bozoki has pointed out, being equated with secular pro-Europeanism and the imitation of all things 'modern' and pro-European Union.⁴² Another flexible term was also invoked to describe the Hungarian Socialist Party; like Schroeder's SDP in Germany, the HSP designated itself as 'Blairite'.

What is apparent in Hungary is that parties emphasising pre-communist identity rather than competence have either stayed in, or been pushed to the political margins. The socially conservative, religious, traditionalist, nostalgic, Hungarian Democratic Forum has been electorally punished (winning 3.1 percent of the vote in May 1998) by parties who emphasise their pragmatism and their desire to look forward rather than backward. Hungarian nationalist nostalgia as a catch-all strategy proved fatally flawed, the barrier against it being the impossibility of combining rapid entry into the European Union with any nationalism that would most naturally emphasise the shared interests of Hungarians in what used to be 'Greater Hungary'; i.e., among the Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring states of Slovakia and Romania. The more populist Hungarian Smallholders Party has fared better, winning 13.8 percent of the vote in the first round in May 1998, having adopted a catch-all strategy of extreme conservatism and populism (e.g. making claims to be pro-EU entry even as it vowed to prevent the sale of farm land to foreigners – a law entirely incompatible with EU entry). Recent scandals, however, have pushed the Smallholders too to the margins. In the main, the dissident or historical parties have been beaten by parties that understood EU entry and economic reform as valence issues and developed competitive strategies on that basis, leaving some electoral space in the countryside for those adopting populist opposition to that agenda, *à la* Meciar. As in Poland therefore, you have the development of technocratic parties of former communists and anti-communists, opening up mainstream Hungarian politics to substantial competition between like-parties.

Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Regimes

Czechoslovakia is our one case of a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime; the political trajectory of the GDR being rendered unique by German reunification. In Czechoslovakia, regime stagnation and extreme ideological conformity after the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 precluded the development of credible reformist cadres *within* the Party and perpetuated the severe suppression of political opposition, leaving such opposition as there was fragmented and isolated from society at large. As the Polish dissident

Adam Michnik commented at the time, “The underground in post-1968 Czechoslovakia...includes ...small groups of déclassé oppositionists whose spiritual atmosphere resembles the first Christian communities hiding in the catacombs more than they resemble an illegal political opposition movement.”⁴³ A critical consequence of this regime type was that when Czechoslovak communism ended it ended late in the chain of falling regimes, and through revolutionary mass overthrow – not by pact. A Communist Party unable to reform itself and yet unwilling to unleash a blood-bath in the heart of Europe eventually capitulated to two ‘civic-blocs’; the Czech Civic Forum and the Slovak Public Against Violence. These opposition entities amalgamated highly disparate groupings, tenuously linked to the society they claimed to represent, pulled together by the dissident intellectuals emerging from the cellars.

The problematic legacy of bureaucratic-authoritarianism in terms of the potential constellation of political parties was that the dissidents were neither rooted in, nor particularly representative of social divisions – nor were extant social divisions transparent. Consequently, if these dissidents, or those cleaving to them in the civic movements, were to be electorally entrepreneurial they entered into the political fight in necessarily abstract, and if they were sensible, in vote-maximising terms. As for the communists, the failure of the state to seriously attempt reform before 1989 rendered legates of the Communist Party devoid of reformist credibility; revealing the Party to be lacking in the critical mass of leadership and membership with the will to transform the Party into a substantively new form. What has been striking about subsequent Czech and Slovak political developments is their focus upon issues of transition as such and reliance on the transition itself to be productive of political identities and issues (most notably, economic reform, questions of anti-communist retribution and, in more recent years, corruption). What both cases suggest, moreover, is extreme contingency in the development and adaptation of electoral strategies in the aftermath of bureaucratic-authoritarianism – party politics lacks stabilising roots in either the debates or identities of dissident movements, deep and transparent societal cleavages or communist reform movements – it is therefore easily dominated by instant catch-all strategies. This is not to that history does not count: it has determined who can credibly play with what strategy.

The Czech and Slovak party systems today cannot be understood without reference to the pre-empting of party competition within Czechoslovakia prior to its partition on January 1st 1993. From the revolution onwards, the Czech and Slovak Republics respectively carried separate party systems, and each became dominated by a single party - Vaclav Klaus’s technocratic Civic Democratic Party in the Czech case, and Vladimir Meciar’s populist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia in Slovakia – increasingly framed against each other as the most credible champions of the ‘national interest’ during the dispute over the future of the Czechoslovak state. Following the Czech partition of the state after the June 1992 elections, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and the Movement for a Democratic Party (HZDS) became the founding parties of the newly independent states, and as such both capitalised considerably on state-building nationalist legitimisation in addition to their original instant catch-all operating styles.

Czech Republic

The stagnation of the Czechoslovak economy since 1988 meant that reforms had already been debated and half-hearted reforms attempted prior to the regime collapse. After November 1989, however, a sharp drop in output created the pressure for a serious economic reform agenda. Marketisation emerged as a broad but vague consensus, but when Valtr Komarek was charged with economic policy and seemed to propose gradual reforms and 1968-style continued faith in central state intervention and social market prospects it was clear that he was running against high expectations of more rapid change. Given the particular orthodoxy of Czechoslovak communism the political imperatives of dismantling state control of the economy apparently struck the civic movement leaderships even more strongly than those in Hungary and Poland, and within a few months more radical market solutions emerged as a strong consensus within

the civic movements, an approach obliquely endorsed in the first, plebiscitary elections of June 1990. A major problem for would-be political entrepreneurs therefore was to figure out how now – with elections pre-set for 1992, they might distinguish themselves, with marketisation a valence issue - in the absence of clear social divisions or constituencies. Politicians had thus to tie in the agreed question of marketisation to issues of competence (for populism *before* reform could just look crypto-communist) or to other signifiers of regime change, something which the more entrepreneurial parliamentarians within the civic blocs rapidly began to explore; extreme forms of instant catch-all strategy duly emerged as optimal. For the credible technocrats in the Civic Forum, Czech economists with roots in the old regime ‘grey zone’ of non-political professionals, the clearest path forward was to take the idea of competence in managing economic reform to its furthest logical point. Vaclav Klaus, the Civic Forum’s Finance Minister, and founder of a new Civic Democratic Party within parliament, duly began to present radical market reform as a scientific path to democracy and prosperity.⁴⁴ By presenting the ideology of neo-liberalism not as an ideology open to contestation but as something approaching a scientific formula for the return to Europe (one of the major promises of the Civic Forum in June 1990), Vaclav Klaus in effect coopted the pre-1989 culture of political orthodoxy for a new party’s political advantage.

As the Civic Forum’s Federal Finance Minister from 1990 to 1992, and Czech Prime Minister from June 1992 to 1997, Vaclav Klaus authored an economic reform programme that combined restrictive economic policy and an unwillingness to impose bankruptcy, and to begin with these strategies produced marketisation, growth and extremely low social costs in the Czech republic. Having achieved an economic ‘miracle’ of low unemployment and low inflation Klaus seized the political higher ground. His new Civic Democratic Party, emerging in parliament in early 1991 out of the Civic Forum,⁴⁵ set an agenda that promised that all democratic goods, such as European Union entry and the return of liberal social values, would flow essentially from economic change, and this neo-liberal brand of technocracy proved extremely hard to compete against until the onset of economic recession in 1997. Rivals and critics were uniformly dismissed as ignorant of economics, crypto-Bolshevik or utopian. Following the partition of Czechoslovakia in 1992, the Civic Democratic Party faced a splintered opposition until the lack of restructuring, subsequent recession and corruption scandals finally brought down his governing coalition in November 1997 – a collapse which introduced an interim government led by the head of the Central Bank, and a call for early elections, in June 1998. Until 1997, however, the Civic Democratic Party, seen as supremely competent on the economy, had successfully deprived competing parties of that same, essential credibility.

The contingency of Czech political strategy is indicated by the fact that once economic conditions began to worsen, Klaus lost the unique leverage gained through authorship of economic success and support for the Czech Social Democracy Party (CSSD) steadily rose. The CSSD is the legatee of the interwar party forcibly merged with the communists in 1948. It had failed to enter parliament in the first free elections in 1990, but had nevertheless emerged as a parliamentary player when former Civic Forum members established the a parliamentary Social Democratic Party *within* parliament via a new party caucus. From within parliament then, the Social Democrats reputation grew as a supporter of a state regulated market, as a strong critic of Klausite economic reform and as more generally representative of principles derived from the Socialist International, presented in the Czech Republic in the reformist terms of kick-starting economic growth, fighting against corruption and crime, creating a financial policy and ensuring independent courts.

The campaign for early elections, held in June 1998, revealed a degree of disarray and voter volatility which took many commentators by surprise. With the Civic Democratic Party weakened through scandal, the underdevelopment of party profiles in the Czech Republic was starkly exposed; Klaus’s popularity,

having plummeted through Christmas 1997, quickly rose again in the last months before election. The Freedom Union, a breakaway faction from the Civic Democratic Party, looked as though it might manage to redefine a moderate conservative space on the electoral scene but failed to establish a distinct profile in its few months of campaigning. A Pensioners Party arose out of nowhere to gain promises of 10 percent support and the far-right Republicans and the far-left Communists gained another 20 percent in opinion polls, despite both being taboo as coalition partners. The Czech Social Democracy Party meanwhile emphasised anti-corruption, a rejection of ‘arrogance in power’ and what it termed ‘social investment’, but the practicalities of these issues remained ambiguous and their opinion polls support wavered massively from one week to another. While on a close reading of their manifesto the Social Democrats looked like a traditional social democratic party, the main thrust of the campaign was the promise of social cohesion, civic society - the very same goals of the dissident Civic Movement back in 1992 – *i.e.* an alternative agenda of change still framed in reference to the communist experience; a less brutally individualistic version of transition.

With Klaus’s reformist credibility tarnished by recession the Civic Democratic Party switched tactics in June 1998 to play on the charismatic strategy of portraying Klaus, as an individual, as synonymous with Czech transformation. The party’s election slogan in 1998 was a classic of transition populism: ‘If you believe in yourself – vote Klaus’ – a reduction of political preference to a question of individual self-esteem. More destructive of competition, however, was Klaus’s insistence that the ODS remained the country’s only democratic party, whilst all others were to be understood as anti-*system*. On the last day of campaigning, the ODS placed notices across the country proclaiming ‘Mobilisace,’ (as in 1938) calling on the people to defend their freedom while they may. Klaus’s political eviction back in November 1997 was explained away as a political assassination; the manifesto referred to ‘the road from Sarejevo’ and drew parallels with the Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

Following the victory of Milos Zeman’s Social Democrat party in 1998 Klaus astonished Czech commentators by putting the ODS behind a Social Democrat minority government by means of an opposition agreement, though the CSSD had been denounced only weeks before as an enemy of the democratic state. Through the opposition agreement the ODS have extracted an electoral law introducing more majoritarian electoral rules; the new law effectively evicts emerging competitors on both left and right from the political game. If these institutional changes and unexpected alliances indicate profound political uncertainty, so too does the basic contingency and opportunism evident in the development of political identity among the main political players. Instead of seeing the emergence of two core technocratic parties as we do in Poland and Hungary, in the Czech Republic, the ODS’s technocratic credibility – overblown in the early 1990s - has been tarnished by recession, pushing a shift towards populism and Euro-skeptic nationalism – thus drawing a new line between itself and the Social Democrats. This has left room for an emerging group of technocratic pro-Europeans rightist parties who might benefit from their wish to normalise the Czech ‘right’ and take out Klaus’s revolutionary bombast – if the new electoral law will allow them to.

The Social Democrats meanwhile house both genuine ‘68-er’ leftists and former communists (including its leader – Milos Zeman) and frustrated younger would-be technocrats. The CSSD thus carry both more genuine leftism and more tenuous reform credibility than either of the successor communist parties in Hungary and Poland. The Social Democrats in government have been forced to tread an unhappy path in terms of their own developing electoral identity - they have proved more diligent in pro-EU legislation (the recession left them little choice), but in gaining some of the marketising credibility that hitherto had accrued only to the CDP they have damaged their more leftist credentials. Facing that inevitability in 1998 Milos Zeman had declared himself Prime Minister of a ‘Suicide Government’ and commented ‘We have suffered a victory.’⁴⁶

It is worth noting, moreover, because the Czech press discuss little else on their front pages, that the issue of political corruption is also proving destructive of more programmatic competition. The accusation of corruption provides perfect fodder for populist mobilisation; populism, writes Meny, “is founded above all on a moralistic vision of the world: the healthy, bold and hard-working people have conserved national virtues against the exploiting, technocratic, profiteering, fraudulent and corrupt minority in power [or previously in power]...corruption is instrumental in disqualifying the elites.”⁴⁷ When *all* political sides accuse each other in similar vein, however, the more immediate result is that the electorate becomes disgusted with their political system – a result born out by Czech opinion polls which carry persistently low esteem for both government and parliament, which have focused on corruption as an obvious political weapon. Fights over corruption as with competition over credible delivery of change, remains the contingent politics of the *modus operandi* rather than politics of programmatic alternatives. Since scandals may be real or invented moreover, corruption offers a particularly murky political route.

Slovakia

The instant catch-all strategy to emerge in Slovakia was far more straightforwardly opportunist than that devised by Klaus in the Czech Republic. In Slovakia, a former communist and lawyer, Vladimir Meciar, developed a party of increasingly hegemonic status by observing what other parties were doing, why they were failing and by duly positioning his own, extremely entrepreneurial party in the space that remained. Vladimir Meciar’s Movement for a Democratic Slovakia had emerged as a faction from the anti-communist Public Against Violence in 1991 – i.e., in parliament. In 1990 as the Public Against Violence’s prime minister, Meciar had supported Klausite reform and been pro-liberalisation and marketisation – in accordance with the post-revolutionary consensus. The subsequent Slovak experience of federal economic policy was unfavourable however; between 1990 and 1992 the Slovaks experienced three times the unemployment levels of the Czechs and one-ninth of the foreign direct investment. Moreover, by 1992, Czech dogmatism in terms of the refusal to moderate federal policy to accommodate Slovakia’s structural disadvantages – even to offer a rhetorical recognition of their existence – rendered radical marketisation an increasingly untenable position for any Slovak political entrepreneur.

Through 1991 and 1992 Meciar situated his Movement between Slovak Nationalists and Christian Democrats, who were attempting, and failing, to resurrect historical political identities, and Slovak liberals, who demonstrated their social isolation by persisting in support of federal economic reform – against all odds – only to fall on their own swords in June 1992 by entering into an electoral coalition with the Czech Civic Democratic Alliance (an ODS ally and the one openly nationalist party in the Czech Republic!). In addition, moreover, Meciar’s Movement for a Democratic Slovakia had increasingly gained ground by criticising the technocratic economic policies coming from Prague as unfair, even as it maintained a broadly pro-reform position. Meciar’s rising dominance of Slovak politics throughout the 1990s is indicative of two things: first, of the success of bureaucratic-authoritarian communism in separating dissident elites from societal roots and, second, of the vulnerability of Slovak political development to contingent phenomena; e.g., the extent to which initial Czech economic dogmatism distorted marketisation as a valence issue in Slovak political life. In these conditions Meciar developed the most electorally sensitive strategy: populism and a seemingly bottomless self-serving pragmatism on the policy front.

Following Slovak independence Meciar’s Movement could hardly openly continue the radical reform policies that it had increasingly criticised in the federation, and yet economic reform was far from complete. Meciar floundered and reacted through 1993 and 1994, with restrictive monetary policy and growing budgetary imbalances, stalling of the privatisation process and populist slogans, in an attempt to keep the process on track but with lower social and electoral costs. The Movement duly haemorrhaged the sincere reformers it had housed under the federation and was finally ousted in a no-confidence vote in March

1994. As in the Czech Republic in 1998, however, the loss of one hegemonic instant catch-all party revealed the disarray in the rest of the party scene. The subsequent interim coalition of non-Meciar forces was deeply divided and yet sufficiently responsible to introduce enough reforms to bring great economic pain just before fresh elections occurred in six months time. When these coalition partners fought against each other in the subsequent campaign, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia was re-elected. The new Meciar government (1994-1998) continued with half-measures, but this time more decisively so, combining these with systematic corruption and an increasingly virulent, xenophobic and racist form of populist nationalism.

That formerly pro-market parties – such as Meciar’s Movement for a Democratic Slovakia – should resort to demagogic politics e.g., declaring policies of joining the EU and accusing the EU of conspiring to humiliate the country, pro-market rhetoric accompanied by the abandonment of free market principles for fiscal expansionism and reckless borrowing etc. is one obvious way out of the competition dilemma posed by too many major competitive issues being valence issues – i.e., an attempt to pool constituencies through charismatic grievance mongering (populist) and reckless public spending. As already mentioned, however, the economic costs of this strategy are electorally as well as economically devastating – in Meciar’s case, leading to his ouster in 1998 and transforming his once diverse electorate into a hard core of rural pensioners and the lower-educated. Until Meciar’s regime became more explicitly authoritarian, i.e., by 1997-98, the parties of the opposition had had tremendous difficulties in formulating appealing programmes to counter Meciar’s populism, failing for years to escape from reactive campaigning and inter-party bickering. By 1998, however, Slovakia was internationally isolated, corruption scandals engulfed the government and, fortunately, a blatantly gerrymandering pre-election electoral law finally jolted the hitherto fragmented opposition into a common electoral bloc. In the face of Meciar’s growing belligerence the latter could fight together on a positive, if basic, restatement of the Slovak democratic and marketising project. In government since 1998, however, the bloc has suffered from continual internal friction – it is, after, all, an ideologically unnatural alliance that survives on the minimal condition of a common rejection of Meciarism.

Slovakia’s latest political innovation is a party calling itself *Smer* (Direction), formed in 1999 and led by the Party of the Democratic Left’s former rising star Robert Fico. *Smer* is essentially a one-man party and Fico – who regularly garners 30 percent support in the polls, is Slovakia’s most popular politician after Meciar. *Smer* is a technocratic instant catch-all party in an extreme form. Fico claims that the combination of his leadership and special ‘committees of experts’ (*Smer*’s entire structure if you discount the political unknowns selected to run on its party lists) will cut through Slovakia’s endless ‘politicking’ and solve Slovakia’s ills as they are heard from the *vox populi*. Fico’s appeal comes from his capacity to tap into popular discontent with the lack of accountability in Slovak politics – between Meciar’s chronic unpredictability and a governing coalition of such unnatural bedfellows as former communists and the Christian Democrats they used to lock up. In this light, the Slovak electorate, not surprisingly, finds some real appeal in a man who presents the transition purely as a technical problem deserving of undivided professional attention. It is often said that populism and technocracy are incompatible; *Smer*’s proposed slogan for elections in 2002, however, is ‘no more promises’ a negation of the basic principle of accountable party politics and a brilliant fusion of populist and technocratic appeal.

Patrimonial Communist Regimes– Romania and Bulgaria

As with bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes, political strategists emerging from patrimonial communism could have little certainty about the scope or nature of their liberated electorates, but given their economic conditions and political and economic history, even less scope for relying on the idea of radical change and major economic restructuring as popular notions. The most rational electoral strategy therefore has

been to promise change without pain – and that promise, and the resulting slow and stuttering pace of reform, on the whole, is what we have seen – with instant catch-all strategies of various types being used to cover what is essentially stony electoral ground. If one looks at the structuring of political strategies after the bureaucratic-authoritarian communism of Czechoslovakia, it is apparent that Czech and Slovak party developments have been highly contingent upon transition-specific events such as the partition of the federation⁴⁸ and in reaction to major reforms that in themselves have revealed new areas for political contestation – not so much about redistribution as about corruption, institution-building and market-regulation. Romania and Bulgaria have faced the same unavoidability of painful economic reform; the same lack of internal societal cleavages/clear constituencies; the same lack of societally rooted political elites, and to cap it all – both have possessed even less scope for contestation over the pace of reform since rapid reform looked likely to introduce truly severe societal dislocation, hardship and consequently, electoral punishment. The result has been instant catch-all strategies so evasive of reform issues or lacking in realistic reform proposals that when coupled with economic failure, they have tended to make party elites look either impotent or corrupt or both in the face of intractably difficult economic conditions. Only when economic conditions have gone to extremes of hyperinflation – as in Bulgaria in 1997, have governments been free to take an active reformist line.

Although the actual transfer of power in Bulgaria and Romania differs dramatically there are some critical points of similarity in terms of communist legacy, the most apparent being the continuing dominance of former communist party forces in society and the diffuse and profoundly inexperienced nature of the opposition. The nature of the transfer of power itself, however, had significant impact on where new political forces could locate themselves. Whereas in Bulgaria the pressure on the Communist Party had really come from within the Party itself, as a generational conflict – thus providing the Party reformists with some initial credibility as reformists per se (which they lost steadily when in government from 1990 to 1991 and then entirely from 1990-91/1994-97). The overthrow of Ceausescu in Romania, described by Ken Jowitt as a ‘movement of rage’, came in a violent battle between the exhausted people and the megalomaniac regime. It was extremely unclear in the aftermath of the Romanian revolution which parties had roots where, since, despite the fact that the National Salvation Front had been put together by political insiders, all emergent elites repudiated any connection to the former regime. The ‘mode of extrication’ from communism of itself therefore was productive of credible and less credible paths of political development for the elites involved.

Romania

The National Salvation Front emerged as a far more ambiguous terminator of the previous regime and the previous political economy than did the Czechoslovak Civic Forum or the Public Against Violence. The victors of Romania’s first elections were the NSF’s Ion Iliescu as president with 85 percent of the vote and the National Salvation Front, with 66 percent of seats in the Assembly of Deputies and 67 percent of those in the Senate. The elections were held too soon for parties other than the Front to organise effectively, the Front also maintained power over the media and refused to allow independent stations, in addition to suppressing the electoral material of their rivals. Like the Civic Forum in the Czech Republic the NSF presented itself as a force of change but this time, in emphatically painless terms. In the aftermath of the revolutionary blood-letting the continuation of political conflict was to be avoided and the NSF called for an “original democracy” and offered “unity in word and action”; or yet more starkly, as the NSF’s Silviu Brucan put it; “Our ideology consists of five points: more food, more heat, more electricity and light, better transportation and better health care.”⁴⁹ With an electoral base apparently made up of former party officials, peasants and unskilled workers, the Front proceeded to re-establish a hybrid and very weak and apparently unstable form of vaguely reformist neo-communist rule – populism – in effect – that

failed to disband the vicious *securitate* apparatus of the previous regime. With such ease of continuity there were few incentives to begin serious structural reforms. After attempting to govern for three years through (inflationary) spending and populism – reform without pain – however, the PSDR⁵⁰ implemented stabilisation packages in early 1994. In other areas, notably privatisation, the PSDR also proceeded incrementally and inconsistently, to slowly marketise the economy – its populist rhetoric notwithstanding.⁵¹

As Pop-Eleches has argued in his discussion of ‘The Art of Half-Way Reforms’ as practiced by the PSDR – the PSDR government’s policy was far more pragmatically reformist in practice than the party’s rhetoric had implied – a practice taken up by the Democratic Convention immediately after its election in 1996. This timidity in claiming explicit authorship and responsibility indicates a persistently high level of political uncertainty as to what the Romanian electorate will ‘take’ at the same time as an awareness that continuing stagnation is also a vote loser – thus economic stabilisation represents an unavoidable hurdle in electoral terms if incumbents wish to stay ‘electable’. This is not to say that Romania is a political *tabula rasa*, but that has taken years of trial and error before Romanian governments have ascertained electoral tendencies. In such conditions it is has been safer to compete on consensual issues (that it would be preferable to have no major shocks) than otherwise.

The nationalist catch-all elements of mainstream Romanian political life can be shown to follow sheer government-forming expedience. Following the 1992 elections the PSDR required the parliamentary support of the nationalist Greater Romania Party, the Romanian Socialist Labour Party, and that of the ultra-nationalist and populist Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR), whose power base stood in the ethnically divided region of Transylvania. The PSDR hesitated to bring the unpredictable, (and internationally embarrassing) PUNR into government, but capitulated in 1994. When the Greater Romania Party and the Socialist Labour Party withdrew, the PSDR became dependent on the PUNR and the tensions between the two parties deepened. The hope that the pragmatism of being in government might deter the PUNR’s nationalist extremism proved mistaken⁵². The PUNR dragged the PSDR into a heightened nationalist rhetoric (the Ceausescu regime had, of course, used nationalist mobilisation) and the PSDR’s discrete ambitions to foster good relations with the west and to deliver on the evidently publicly popular goods of EU and NATO membership were damaged both by association and by their own adjustment. When the PUNR split from the PSDR only months before the 1996 election, the always troubled legislative process in Romania practically ground to a halt. (It is worth noting, however, that the PSDR and PUNR were nevertheless similar in competitive terms. Both came out of the Ceausescu aparat, both relied on nepotism and patronage to build clientelistic networks, and both have emphasized “personalities, conspiracy theories, and heady rhetoric over political institutions or economic programmes”⁵³).

According to Patapievici, five ‘values’ had coordinated the PSDR/Iliescu regime: 1) reform meant readjustment, not change; 2) the structures of the socialist state were good in essence but had been distorted by Ceausescu; 3) a geopolitical orientation towards the West was risky, so Romania should basically stick with the East; 4) the competent people were those trained in the Communist style; 5) patriotism necessarily presupposed nationalism.⁵⁴ As economic conditions deteriorated, the PSDR government duly resorted to increasingly extreme nationalist legitimation. For the 1996 elections Iliescu ran a highly personalised and sporadically nationalistic campaign, accusing the opposition essentially of wanting to sell out Romania to the Hungarians.

The 1996 elections, it was hoped, would act as the revolution postponed, having resulted in the victory of the opposition Democratic Convention of Romania (DCR) and its presidential candidate, Emil Constantinescu, and a plurality in parliament. The Democratic Convention, however, has proved a slowly evolving monolith; it has always been fraught with tensions, having emerged as a grouping of eighteen parties and political organisations. It is indeed a testimony to the anti-communist solidarity achievable against the

Iliescu regime that it took until 1995 for the Convention to lose the Social Democratic Party and a number of smaller liberal parties, and it still entered the 1996 race as a broad ‘civic’ alliance dominated by the National Peasant and Christian Democratic Party along with the National Liberal Party and the National Liberal Party-Democratic Convention. Even so reduced, the minimal common ground of the Convention is on the desire for reform and in anti-communism. Having learned the lessons of the 1992 election, where their negative moral campaign against ‘neo-communism’ and ‘crypto-communism’ failed against the exaggerated promises of the PSDR, the elections in 1996 were dominated by neutral, technical language. Religious faith had also become a must for election candidates, commensurate with a growing religious feeling in the population.⁵⁵ Evidently the nationalist catch-all strategy was now challenged by an emerging technocratic agenda. As part of the DCR effort to mark a departure from PSDR practices, the DCR manifesto, “The Contract With Romania” was specific in policy proposals, including twenty promises to the rural population, young people, women, pensioners, business people, taxpayers and people working in education, health culture and defense. These promises were presented as concrete measures and deadlines were established for their fulfillment. The DCR was clearly attempting to introduce the concepts of accountability, seeking to provide clear criteria by which to measure the delivery of outcomes. Having made such promises, including social protection, however, no indications were made of where the resources would be found.⁵⁶

In order to form a cabinet, the DCR went into coalition with the nationalist Magyar’s Democratic Forum and the Social Democratic Union, which, despite declaring itself as centre-left is in reality scarcely different in its policies from the supposedly centre-right DCR. As Popescu points out, the ideological differences in Romanian mainstream parties are hard to distinguish – the only genuinely right-wing party – the Liberal National Alliance, which favours radical changes, obtained less than 2 percent of the vote. Moreover, there is, in fact, no traditionalist leftist party in the Romania landscape since all parties, including the ‘socialists,’ have favoured the development of a market economy in practice if not in rhetoric, even as they emphasized the idea of welfare protection. It is a telling indicator of the scale of problems faced in the Romanian economy, the fear among the more democratic elites that the costs of real reform would not be borne by the voting population, and the flexibility afforded by an instant catch-all strategy, that the DCR declared its intention of liberalising the economy only *after* taking power in 1996.⁵⁷ Subsequent coalition in-fighting, corruption and state incapacity moreover, has severely stalled these reform aspirations in practice, hence the likely return of Iliescu to the presidency in a more openly technocratic guise. As with the anti-Meciar forces of Slovakia, the tensions of party definition and factional interest have continued to plague the Democratic Convention of Romania since it gained power. At the time of writing Iliescu is poised to return as Romanian president.

Bulgaria

Georgi Karasimeonov has identified Bulgaria as a case of ‘delayed differentiation,’⁵⁸ and this can be explained in terms of the failure of the anti-communist technocratic party, the United Democratic Front, to produce a credible reform package during its brief spell in government, from 1991 to 1992, the relative success of the Bulgarian Socialist Party in promising a ‘gradual transition’ and the horrendous economic consequences of BSP economic policy when in government from 1994 to 1997. If located anywhere party competition appeared stalled across the most basic axis of being communist or anti-communist. Up until the 1994 elections the aggressive anti-communism of the UDF provoked reactions from the only partially reformed BSP which in turn resulted in unstable governments and a legislature blocked and fragmented by eventual internal party splits and regroupings both in the UDF and the BSP (the UDF evolving from fifteen units to one party between 1990 and 1997).

Between 1993 and 1994 Bulgaria saw a non-party technocratic cabinet and attempts to form new political groupings ‘between’ the BSP and UDF, both of whom seemed to be alienating and frustrating the electorate with their fruitless and insubstantial confrontations. These new groupings, the Democratic Alternative for the Republic (DAR) in particular, nevertheless opted for programmes of such vagueness (the DAR campaigned for ‘national reconciliation’) that they failed to achieve the 4-percent threshold to enter the parliament in 1994. In the 1994 elections the Bulgarian Socialist Party, in coalition with BANU and the Political Club Ekoglasnost, won an overwhelming victory with 52 percent of the vote⁵⁹ – the first majority government in parliament since 1989. The BSP had evidently managed to capitalise on the public’s disappointment with the haphazard technocratic governments between 1990 and 1994 which had brought only economic stagnation, little reform, growing foreign debt and rising crime; problems mainly associated with the UDF despite the fact that the UDF was only in power as such in 1992. Despite having promised accelerated reform and Czech-style coupon privatisation – with its egalitarian appeal – in 1994, the Bulgarian Socialist Party in power proved reluctant reformers and reckless subsidy-givers and public spenders in practice, and the Bulgarian economy moved toward crisis and hyperinflation by the beginning of 1997. Demonstrations brought the Socialist government to an end two years before their mandate expired, and in early elections in April 1997 the UDF won 52 percent of the vote – a revamped and rationalised party under Ivan Kostov, and with a technocratic reformist president in the form of Peter Stoyanov. This new government, moreover, has persisted on an exceptionally difficult course following the seven year delay in implementing reform.

Conclusions

Persistent elite autonomy, resulting from the top-heaviness of the party system and the lack of deep party competition on policy may be functional in one respect; it may provide critical administrative and policy-making flexibility in managing the transition and creating pragmatic coalitions. Such practical autonomy nevertheless makes it impossible for the electorate to hold politicians to account for their actions other than attempting to judge their own country’s performance in the interim in the broadest possible terms – they can then reject one peculiarly non-committal group for another. In the meantime, it remains impossible for electorates to anticipate what a party will do *in practice*. The most obvious illustration of how flexible, indeed, necessary, nationalist, populist and technocratic principles have been in reality lays in the fact that Hungarian, Polish and Romanian ‘post-communists,’ Slovak populists and Christian Democrats and Czech technocrats of all shades have all implemented fiscal austerity measures.

All three types of catch-all party I would argue have strong potential to generate instability – technocrats stand in danger of trivialising or failing to deal with real political conflicts of interest by insisting that their chosen ‘method’ must not be contravened, or, in more populist mode, by insisting that experts can resolve everything; both options being a gift to populists or extremists who can then claim that only they understand those who have lost in the transition. Technocrats who present European Union entry as a panacea are opening the way to populists and nationalists when entry becomes problematic. Populists may tend to authoritarian practices since the claim of talking for ordinary people may be used to justify practically any policy under the sun, making purely populist government highly, if not completely unpredictable, and consequently extremely difficult to oppose. As for nationalist governments, state-building nationalism may be benign in theory but in practice, most notably where it has combined with populism, this has tended to be extremely exclusive in practice in particular where the smallest and most vulnerable minorities – such as the Roma – have been concerned.

Several particular problems may arise from the nature of party development in the region, the most obvious being the difficulty in establishing stable partisan identification and consequently system stabilisation when parties remain identified more by ‘modes of operation’ than by any coherent ideological labels such

as left and right. Crewe suggested that “a rapid turnover of parties in the early 1990s is likely.... The development of partisan self-images among voters is therefore likely to be an identification with a political tendency (nationalism, liberal cosmopolitanism, Catholic values etc.) rather than with a particular party,”⁶⁰ and yet one may ask what these tendencies may amount to in conditions of persistent instant catch-all competition, where these limited political identities or tendencies may be co-opted by one highly flexible group after another. When parties with the word ‘socialist’ or ‘social democratic’ in their names, such as the Hungarian Socialist Party or the Party of Social Democracy of the Polish Republic, turn out to implement austerity measures and radical economic reform in the same vein as those proposed by the proclaimed neo-liberals and liberals, and when self-proclaimed Czech libertarians team up with self-proclaimed Czech social democrats to stitch up the opposition (the result of the June 1998 Czech opposition agreement) then voters are unlikely to feel that their vote is deeply meaningful. Aware that voters might be suffering from a sense of the inadequacy of accountability, one can imagine political entrepreneurs in turn beginning to capitalise on that very fact. Indeed, such a strategy is already clear in the case of the Slovak party ‘Direction’. Here we see a young politician emphasising the idea that transition is, in sum, an unpredictable and essentially technical problem, and offering his party unashamedly as one of experts who should be trusted like philosopher kings. Instead of offering deeper accountability, Direction tries to make a virtue out of offering none at all – taking technocratic politics to its logical, supposedly benign dictatorial conclusions.

Another, critical implication of having party competitions characterised by low commitment and identification in terms of policy, and dominated by policy-taking, rather than policy-making behaviour, is that we need to reexamine what we understand by executive strength in the region. Shugart defines executive strength as ‘the degree to which the executive is able to put an independent stamp on the legislative output of the system, i.e., executive strength equals those powers derived not from partisan support in the legislature but those that derive from authority vested constitutionally in the office regardless of whether the executive enjoys a legislative majority.’⁶¹ According to Shugart, “parliamentary executives are by definition weak and characterised by a high degree of party strength.” Clearly where parties are non-committal beyond the very broadest statements of intent, even a parliamentary executive retains extraordinary autonomy in policy definition.

The prospects for party political development in our six cases vary but, according to this model, prospects for the deepening programmatic qualities of party competition are considerably better in Poland and Hungary than elsewhere. It is unusual these days to see these four countries placed together, but in several important respects the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania face similar challenges, in that they are all suffering the political disarray and instability inherent in an instant catch-all party system where only one or no credible technocratic parties exist. The Czech Republic currently operates under considerably more political uncertainty than either Hungary or Poland, as indicated by election turnout for the upper house, the Senate in 1998, of only 20 percent and by a protest movement calling itself ‘Thank you, now leave,’ which in 1999 declared a request that all political leaders stand down; 25 percent of those polled said they would vote for any new party emerging out of the protest movement.

Finally, it is widely assumed that the commitment to European Union enlargement is a political asset for Central Europe; the prospect is said to motivate and safeguard the process toward democratic consolidation insofar as it exacts policy and institutional standards across the board. One might argue that this could have a debilitating effect, arresting party development and party competition at a partial equilibrium precisely by excluding from political competition those substantive, grassroots and ideology-based policy conflicts around which Western European party systems evolved, however, one could counter this kind of argument with the comparative point that this would hardly matter if competition of sorts nevertheless

was managed and these countries began, like Germany in the aftermath of war, to converge with current EU standards of law and living. If EU enlargement is stalled, however, then the pegging of reform to the idea of necessary conditions for EU entry may have proved a hostage to fortune. As Meciar in Slovakia made clear, once you give up on the idea of Union entry, (or, what would be more dangerous still, are *forced* to give it up), then valence issues are far less clear, and a whole new ballgame begins. In the meantime, however, so long as valence issues remain dominant, and until growth opens up the possibility of real policy adjustments in socially ameliorative directions, it is hard to see how this electoral experience could encourage a sense of personal political agency among the voting public; a potentially serious hostage-to-fortune in terms of persuading populations into the participatory optimism of democracy.

¹The shift is arguably premature, and perhaps more indicative of normative assumptions about East/West convergence than reflective of developments on the ground. See Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde's "What has Eastern Europe taught us about the democratisation literature (and vice versa)?" in *European Journal of Political Research* 37 (2000): 517-539, for a criticism of the focus on consolidation and an excellent discussion of the conceptual problems involved in the terms 'transition' and 'consolidation.'

²See, for example Pop-Eleches, Grigore, "Separated at Birth or Separated by Birth? The Communist Successor Parties in Romania and Hungary," in *East European Politics and Societies* 13,1 (Winter 1999); Anna Gyzmala Busse's "Determining the Public Image and Support of Political Parties in East Central Europe, 1992-1996," paper prepared for the APSA Annual Meeting, Boston 1998; Andras Bozoki, "The Ideology of Modernization and the Policy of Materialism: The Day After for the Socialists," *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 13,3 (September 1997); Attila Agh's "Partial Consolidation of the East-Central European Parties: The Case of the Hungarian Socialist Party," in *Party Politics* 1,4 (October 1995) – and John T. Ishiyama's "Communist Parties in Transition," in *Comparative Politics* (January 1995) – to name but five.

³For early, theory-driven debates on prospective trends see Herbert Kitschelt's "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe," *Politics and Society* 10 (1992): 7-50, and his follow-up "Party Systems in East Central Europe: Consolidation or Fluidity," *Studies for Public Policy* 241 (1995), University of Strathclyde; Geoffrey Evans's and Stephen Whitfield's "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe," in the *British Journal of Political Science* 23 (1993): 521-548. For comprehensive collected case studies and discussion see Gordon Wightman's *Party Competition in East-Central Europe* (Edward Elgar, 1995) and Paul G Lewis's *Party Structure and Organisation in East-Central Europe* (Edward Elgar, 1996) – which provides an excellent critical review of the applicability of Western European party models to the Central European experience in Chapter 1 – and, most recently, Herbert Kitschelt et al.'s *Post-Communist Party Systems* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). Individual country case studies are too numerous to list but many will be cited later when I turn to comparisons.

⁴Kitschelt, *ibid.*, 1999. p. 137.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶In particular 'The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe' (1992); 'Party Systems in East Central Europe: Consolidation or Fluidity' (1995), and most recently, *Post-Communist Party Systems* (1999); a standard-setting book co-authored with Zdenka Mansfeldova, Radoslaw Markowski and Gabor Toka.

⁷Geoffrey Evans's and Stephen Whitfield's "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe," in the *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993): 521-548

⁸In the absence of such an expressive/representational function, parties may more easily manipulate electoral preferences, either through bypassing a controversial issue altogether, or by inferring a mandate where no mandate has in fact been given, (for instance, by insisting, after an election, that a certain action is an 'essential' aspect of national identity, most represents the interests of 'the people', or is the only 'feasible' option).

⁹Other articles attempting to identify emerging partisanship in single or double country studies have also been dogged by data problems. In their article, 'Left Turn in PostCommunist Politics: Bringing Class Back In?', Szelenyi et al. argue for the growing importance of class as a determinant of party choice, however, here parties are designated 'leftist' simply according to party label, and the authors only measure positive partisanship and correlate this to social class. As Ivor Crewe has pointed out, however, where only positive support and not relative preferences are taken into account 'negative partisanship', i.e., the strength of antipathy towards one or more enemy parties, is ignored, a measurement failure which may seriously skew interpretations of data; where substantial proportions of partisans are more strongly repelled by the enemy party than attracted by their own, 'negative' partisans may behave electorally like 'strong partisans.' Szelenyi's nominally increasing positive correlation of class to 'leftist' voting over time may thus be misleading regarding socio-economically driven partisanship. In a more recent article by Evans and Whitfield, 'The Structuring of Political Cleavages in Post-Communist Societies: the Case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia,' conclusions are drawn about the contrasting bases of political cleavages in Czech and Slovak society on the basis of one data set taken from national samples in the spring of 1994 – a period of acute political crisis in Slovakia, when the Meciar government was ousted by a vote of no confidence, and therefore hardly the fairest point of comparison with the Czech Republic.

¹⁰The political costs of being economically irresponsible in transition and pursuing policies of fiscal expansionism/reckless borrowing are extremely high. Those abandoning fiscal prudence have suffered the withdrawal of World Bank and International Monetary Fund support, the withdrawal/non-development of foreign investment, rapid infla-

tion followed by collapsing exchange rates and attacks on the currency, hence more inflation and capital flight; the consequences of the above being that severe output collapse continues – a guaranteed vote loser. The above path has also led to the substantive loss of domestic control over economic policy to international lenders, not only a vote loser but a dire humiliation for any incumbent. As for prudent redistribution, this requires growth, and in the cases this paper examines – Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Romania, the Czech and Slovak Republics – only Poland and Slovakia saw an aggregate increase in GDP between 1990-1998 – Slovakia by 0.6 percent, Poland by 4.5 percent; (Bulgaria –3.3; Hungary –0.2; Romania –0.6 and the Czech Republic –0.2). *World Bank Development Report 1999/2000*, p. 250.

¹¹For a really striking and compelling approach to this problem see Jason Wittenberg's 'Did Communism Matter: Explaining Political Continuity and Discontinuity,' MIT Ph.D thesis, April 1999.

¹²Another methodologically rigorous look at the dimensions of party competition in Eastern Europe comes from John Huber and Ronald Inglehart's 'Expert Interpretations of Party Space and Party Locations in 42 Societies,' in *Party Politics* 1,1 (January 1995): 73-111. Huber and Inglehart focus on the meaningfulness of left/right distinctions, however, the Huber and Inglehart survey was also completed early, this time in 1993, thus preceding some of the major and most striking twists in Central European politics to date – the willingness of 'left-wing' social democratic parties to embark on radical austerity measures and benefit cuts being among the most striking.

¹³*Ibid.*, Kitschelt et al., 1999, p 12.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 434.

¹⁵See endnote 2.

¹⁶ I.e., which cover the "policy outputs and outcomes" that Kitschelt et al. do not study – though their interviews are based on *impressions* of both election and 'normal' everyday politics.

¹⁷For illustration of the difficulty of sustaining credible anti-reformism see Pop-Eleches's discussion of the Romanian Party of Social Democracy – which, having worked hard to project itself as opposed to reform proved considerably more pragmatic in its government of the economy, approving a radical stabilization programme in early 1994. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹⁸As Wittenberg notes in his discussion of the methodological problems of identifying party blocs, the typologies that have already emerged are many and various: "Janos (1994) identifies four types of affiliation: civic liberal, neo-populist, technocratic right, and technocratic left. Dellenbrant (1993) describes a melange of nationalist, ethnic, agrarian, communist, socialist, and Christian democratic parties. Even for Hungary [the primary case in Wittenberg's study], Korosenyi (1993) classifies the major parties as either left or right. For Markus (1994) the division is between traditionalists and Westernizers. Kolosi et al. (1992) see the system as tripolar: social democrats, Christian-nationalists, and liberals. Agh (1993) detects legalistic-paternalistic, nationalist-populist, religious-Christian, and literary-artistic *sub*-currents within the traditionalist discourse. Bozoki (1992) observes no less than seven important political tendencies: conservative bolsheviks, pragmatic technocrats, reform communists, social democrats, radical and liberal democrats, democratic populists, and populist and religious conservatives" – as Wittenberg points out, the rule for selecting a typology is that it accords with the research and helps to illuminate the point of theoretical interest – thus, citing Carl Friedrich: "so the thing be understood, I am indifferent as to the name" (Wittenberg, Jason. [1999] 'Did Communism Matter? Explaining Political Continuity and Discontinuity' – Ph.D thesis, MIT).

¹⁹"Most similar systems design seeks to compare political systems that share a host of common features in an effort to neutralize some differences while highlighting others....[it] seeks to identify the key features that are different among similar countries and which account for the observed political outcome." Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics* (Routledge: 2000), p. 27. In the light, Albania's descent into clan rule excludes it and the former GDR may be excluded on the basis that German reunification represented an exceptional fusion of one party system with another. The GDR's integration into NATO and the EU as part of a reunified Germany also, obviously removes the importance of entry into those institutions as valence issues of competition. This covers the universe of non-USSR cases.

²⁰It must be admitted that there has been much contingency in the institutional situation in these six cases, given the break-up of the Czechoslovak federation in 1992, the persistent weakness of Romania's parliament, the recent shift to the direct election of Slovakia's president and Poland's eventual settling, in 1997, on a constitutionally encoded bicephalic executive.

²¹*Ibid.*, 1999. See Chapter 1.

²²Kitschelt et al. describe patrimonial communist regimes as “likely to emerge in historical settings where a traditional authoritarian regime...ruled over societies of poor peasants, weak cities, a thin layer of ethnic pariah immigrant entrepreneurs and merchants, a small and geographically concentrated industrial working class, and a corrupt coterie of administrators dependent upon the personal whim of the ruler....communist insurrectionists were political entrepreneurs without a proletarian mass following who built political power on the mobilisation of dissatisfied elements of the intelligentsia.... Once having assumed power...communist parties easily crushed weak urban middle-class organisations. Patrimonial communists then constructed an industrial society at an initially dizzying pace by squeezing the peasantry and subsidizing the emerging heavy industries....patrimonial communism...relies on vertical chains of personal dependence between leaders in the state and party apparatus and their entourage, buttressed by extensive patronage and clientelist networks” *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²³The source of national-accommodative communism was the vitality of anti-communist (and anti-Soviet) political forces at the close of World War II. In Poland, open opposition was never fully suppressed and compromises were forced from the domestic communist regime that effectively allowed ‘traditional’ (i.e., pre-communist) constituencies to survive as coherent forces. In Poland, the Roman Catholic Church, peasantry and intellectual elite were granted concessions after 1956, which, though constantly in contention ever after, meant the preservation of clear societal cleavages throughout the communist era. Perhaps most importantly of all, the power of the people to bring the state to crisis was made manifest at least once a decade between the war until 1989. In Hungary anti-communist forces re-emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, having been crushed in the late 1950s following the Soviet invasion of 1956. The brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising was eventually converted into a social-contract that conceded the necessity of compromise, if not of dialogue between state and society, and the re-opening (albeit palliative) of entrepreneurial activity and Hungarian intellectual debate. As is also true of Poland, however, while constituencies and social divisions may have remained relatively public in these states, the political story was not one of continuing interwar party forms but of new and evolving alliances against communism. The significant Hungarian opposition parties to emerge in the late 1980s – the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Free Democrats, were not direct successors of Hungary’s interwar historical parties but outgrowths of the anti-communist opposition movements of the 1970s, Pop-Eleches, *ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁴Kitschelt et al. distinguish these as regimes where “communism occurred in countries with considerable liberal-democratic experience in the inter-war period, [and] an early and comparatively advanced industrialisation.... The discipline of a revolutionary party created outside of and against existing political institutions and the rise of a modern professional state machinery under pre-communist rule made the new communist regimes more resistant than other modes of communist rule to patronage and clientelist politics.” *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁵Otto Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems” in La Palombara and Weiner, eds., *Political Parties and Political Development* (1966).

²⁶“The Catch-all Party,” in Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (1989), p. 52.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 58 and p. 59.

²⁸Katz and Mair have argued that the ‘cartelisation’ of party politics can occur as catch-all parties develop away from questions of wholesale reform and toward issues of social amelioration (p. 19)... With parties competing less on the basis of their representative capacities and rather more on the basis of their effectiveness in policy making...[cartel] competition takes place on the basis of competing claims to efficient and effective management” (*ibid.*) ...[thus] parties are groups of leaders who compete for the opportunity to occupy government offices and to take responsibility at the next election for government performance... Parties are partnerships of professionals, not associations of, or for, the citizens.” The cartel model assumes a critical role of state support in shaping the party system: “the state...becomes a fount of resources through which these parties not only help to ensure their own survival, but through which they can also enhance their capacity to resist challenges from newly mobilised alternatives” (*ibid.*, p. 16). Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair “Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party,” in *Party Politics* 1,1 (January 1995). Now, it may be tempting to suggest that states in transition, in addition to formal state resourcing of parties, can offer far more significant resources via government corruption during the privatisation process and the peddling of state favours, thus making the cartel model suggestive in the sense of showing how parties might seek to collude to *nominally* compete over technical proficiency in order to oligopolise the exploitation of public assets. However, following Paul G. Lewis’s excellent critique, I still find the ‘cartel model’ unsatisfactory – as Lewis points out “party systems in East-Central Europe are just not developed or stable enough either to enable the key party players to be clearly identified [authors’ note: at least in the ear-

lier years] or for the likely candidates to agree on either shared political perspectives or mutual interests,” *ibid.*, 1996: 12.

²⁹Poland being the exceptional case, owing to the organisational experiences of the Solidarity movement.

³⁰Hungary may look like an exception here, since the most deeply rooted dissident party, the Alliance of Free Democrats, lost to the emergent conservative and populist Hungarian Democratic Forum, however, the latter, by virtue of their conservatism, may also be interpreted as an ‘antidote party’ – as the most different.

³¹As illustrated by the tendency in country’s where the social costs of reform will be particularly heavy of governments claiming to be more wary of the market (such as Meciar’s regime into the mid 1990s and Iliescu’s regime in Romania until defeated in 1996) – but actually being more reformist than their rhetoric would have implied – in Meciar’s case continuing many of the liberal policies of the Czechoslovak federal government in the independent state of Slovakia, despite having thrived on a criticism of these policies before 1992. By 1996, however, the Meciar regime had resorted to an all-out exploitation of power – and the reformist economic policies too were abandoned.

³²Panebianco has pointed out, that “contrary to widespread opinion, Kirchheimer’s catch-all party was not an organization whose electoral following was so heterogeneous as to represent the whole social spectrum and whose connection with its original class *gardée* had completely disappeared” – Kirchheimer’s parties simply opened their doors to additional social groups. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power* (1988), p. 264.

³³Peter Wiles argued that populism is moralistic rather than programmatic, loosely organised and ill-disciplined; a movement rather than a party, that its ideology is loose, anti-intellectual, and strongly opposed to the ‘establishment.’ Populism, he argued, like other movements, is corrupted by success, and since populism is “so unsophisticated and lacking in ideological stability, this degeneration comes with unusual and tragic speed.” As Wiles said, “populism is a syndrome, not a doctrine”, Peter Wiles, Chapter 7, in *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics*, edited by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (The Macmillan Company, 1969).

³⁴For an alternative range of categories see Andrew Janos’s “Continuity and Change in Eastern Europe: Strategies of Post-Communist Politics” *East European Politics and Societies* 8,1 (Winter 1994). I would maintain, in contrast to Janos, that the resemblance of Klausite liberalism or Meciar-style populism with interwar Central European liberalism or populism is so slight as to require a new categorisation.

³⁵The Hungarian Socialist Party introduced Hungary’s first major austerity package in March 1995, leading to an estimated 12 percent drop in average annual income, and pushed ahead with the privatisation of major sectors of the economy.

³⁶For an excellent analysis of a two-dimensional version of the left/right divide in Hungary, see Andras Bozoki, *ibid.*

³⁷This explanation comes from John T. Ishiyama, *Comparative Politics* (January 1995).

³⁸In 1989 Poland suffered from chronic shortages, hyperinflation, a large budget deficit and an external debt that it had not hope of servicing – in 1988 hard currency debt was five times the convertible currency exports in that year *Transforming Socialist Economies*, Martin Myant (Edward Elgar, 1993), p. 68.

³⁹See Raymond Taras, ‘Voters, Parties and Leaders,’ in *Transition to Democracy in Poland*, Richard Staar, ed., Macmillan. pp. 47-75.

⁴⁰The Liberals, the Solidarity Peasant Alliance, the Centrum, and the Coalition for the Republic failed, with Solidarity, to cross the five percent barrier and the Fatherland coalition lacked the eight percent required for coalitions. Almost thirty-five percent of voters chose parties which failed to enter the Sejm. Frances Millard, “The Shaping of the Polish Party System, 1989-1993,” in *East European Politics and Societies* 8,3 (Fall 1994): 491-492.

⁴¹Pop-Eleches, *ibid.* p. 126.

⁴²Bozoki, *ibid.*

⁴³In *Letters From Prison* (California University Press, 1985), p. 50.

⁴⁴For a more detailed examination of Czech and Slovak party development at this point see this author’s ‘The break-up of Czechoslovakia: the impact of party development on the separation of the state,’ in *East European Politics and Societies* 11,3 (Fall 1997).

⁴⁵In early 1991 the Civic Forum officially split between Klaus’s professedly ‘Thatcherite’ CDP and a more social liberal ‘Civic Movement,’ led by then Foreign Minister, Jiri Dienstbier.

⁴⁶*Prague Post*, June 24, 1998.

⁴⁷P. 120: ‘Politics, Corruption and Democracy,’ in *European Journal of Policy Research* 30,2 (September 1996): 111-123.

⁴⁸See Innes, *ibid.*

⁴⁹Quoted in Pop-Eleches, *ibid.*, p. 120.

⁵⁰The PSDR started out as the National Salvation Front – the anti-Ceausescu force of the revolution in 1990, changed its name to the Democratic National Salvation Front, in 1992, and finished up as the PSDR in July 1993.

⁵¹Pop-Eleches, G., *ibid.*, p. 127.

⁵²Tom Gallagher, “Nationalism and Post-Communist Politics: The Party of Romanian National Unity, 1990-1996,” in Lavinia Stan, ed., *Romania in Transition* (1997), p. 36.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 25

⁵⁴In Liliana Popescu, “A Change of Power in Romania: The Results and Significance of the November 1996 Elections” in *Government and Opposition* 32,2 (Spring 1997): 186

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 182-83.

⁵⁸“Parliamentary Elections of 1994 and the Development of the Bulgarian Party System,” in *Party Politics* 1,4 (1995): 579

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 581-82 .

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁶¹Shugart, “The Inverse Relationship between Party Strength and Executive Strength,” *British Journal of Political Science* 28 (1998): 3.