

Runaway State-Building:
The Development of Political Parties and States in
Contemporary Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic

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Warsaw is a city of less than two million inhabitants -- rather modest by world standards - - yet its city government now consists of 779 elected politicians, which is surely a world record.¹ Moreover, this number does not include the city administration, the unelected public employees who certainly outnumber the elected ones.

In 1996, the Slovak government announced a plan to “decentralize” the state. In the space of the following two and a half months, the number of officials employed in the field administration of the state jumped from 12,000 to 19,000. Over the same period, the number of people working in local self-government actually declined.

A final example to round out the picture: in 1999, Poland elected its first regional parliaments, the institutional showpieces of the government’s much-trumpeted plan to “rebuild the state.” Among the first acts of these newly constituted parliaments was to vote on their own salaries. The overwhelming majority of these 16 parliaments voted their speakers higher salaries than the country’s president, the head of state. They became the highest paid public officials in Poland.

As these examples illustrate, the process of state-building in post-Soviet Eastern Europe has been difficult even among such transition front-runners as Poland and the former Czechoslovakia. Even in these best-case scenarios, the state seems to be getting bigger, less accountable, more expensive, and less efficient. Moreover, the state administration is politicized, the state budget in a chronic state of crisis, and the economic levers of the government blunt and ineffective. Yet, this element of post-Soviet politics -- the retooling and redeployment of bureaucracies inherited from the Soviet state -- remains relatively understudied in comparison to such other areas of state-building as constitutional design, privatization, and nationalism.

This paper provides a theoretical framework to explain why the state looks bigger than ever ten years after revolutions that were based in large part against a monolithic state apparatus.

¹ For comparison, San Diego, a similarly sized American city, has eight elected politicians in local government. New York, which is considerably bigger, has 81. See Witold Kieżun (2000) in Gazeta Wyborcza.

Generally speaking, state-building may be conceived in terms of change along two dimensions: the effectiveness of the state apparatus and its size.² Based on my research, I will argue that the pattern of state-building in much of post-Soviet Eastern Europe is one of runaway state-building. This pattern obtains where state-building produces states that are both ineffective and rapidly increasing in size. Thus, runaway state-building does not simply describe rapid growth in state size. If a state is growing in size but also making gains in effectiveness, it is not an example of runaway state-building. Unfortunately, the latter dynamic is rather the exception than the rule over the past ten years in Eastern Europe.

I will argue that the pattern of runaway state-building is the result of the intertwining of party-building and state-building. Namely, political parties use state resources to mobilize support since they cannot amass sufficient resources from such traditional bases as party membership, business associations, or labor unions. In doing so, they swell the state, politicize its personnel, and hobble its effectiveness. Ironically, one of the chief instruments parties use to appropriate state resources for their own party-building strategies is "administrative reform." The complete discrediting of the Soviet-era state that occurred in 1989 has provided the new generation of democratically elected party politicians exceptional license to "reform the state." In practice, "reforming the state" has meant reorganizing the tasks and personnel of the public administration. And, as one official I interviewed in the Polish city of Lodz told me, "Reorganization is one of the best ways to put your people in the state."³ Because state-building is occurring at the same time that political party systems in this region are in the process of definition, reforming the state often gives way to the temptation to remake the state to the party of reform's benefit. Hence, state-building becomes a tool of party-building. It is hardly surprising that the kind of state resulting from this dynamic is not the efficient and effective

² Historically speaking, building an effective state apparatus de novo has meant increasing its size and resources. Of course, after the establishment and consolidation of a state apparatus, the link between size and effectiveness becomes more complicated. In the latter case, the state may be made more efficient by reducing its size -- as Margaret Thatcher tried to do in Britain in the 1980s. This is rather a case of state reform than state-building, however. It implies the prior existence of a state apparatus possessing a certain basic level of effectiveness and authority. The Soviet states in Eastern Europe after 1989 lacked these.

³ Personal interview with author on June 26, 2000. The name is withheld to protect the interviewee.

bureaucracy of Weber's ideal type, that it seems ever larger and more cumbersome. Moreover, the irrationalities resulting from this path of institutional development create public policy problems that invite new forms of state intervention, leading to a self-perpetuating cycle of state reform and state growth.

The lineage of this argument is the “new institutionalist” school (Shefter 1994; Skocpol 1985; March and Olsen 1984). Its specific flavor derives from the work of Martin Shefter on political party development in the United States and Western Europe. Shefter’s explanation of how political parties develop relies crucially on their relationship to the state and state bureaucracies. Arguing from the historical record of the United States and Western Europe, he posits that political parties have often been built by raiding the state to distribute patronage. The distribution of patronage, political clientelism, corruption -- whichever term one prefers -- can all serve as instruments for party-building according to Shefter, and whether they do so depends on the timing of party-building and state-building. If party-building precedes or roughly coincides with the establishment of state bureaucracies, then party-builders incline toward strategies based on political patronage, the supply of which they derive from their access to state power.

Surprisingly, Shefter’s framework, though developed in the historical context of 18th and 19th century Europe and America as suffrage was being expanded and modern state bureaucracies constructed, is remarkably useful for capturing the situation prevailing in Eastern Europe since 1989. The revolutions of 1989 also brought a sudden and complete expansion of suffrage. Overnight, democratic party competition was reintroduced. Of course, new political party structures had to be established and built up. In the case of the discredited but not disbanded Communist parties, it was necessary to reorient the sprawling party machine in the changed political landscape. Finally, the political-structural transformations unleashed in 1989 -- from a centrally planned to a market economy and from a Leninist to a democratic regime -- necessitated a massive restructuring of the state bureaucracy. In short, post-Soviet Eastern Europe, like the 19th century United States or Italy, faced the same challenge of reconciling the processes of building democratic party structures and modern, autonomous, state bureaucracies.

The primary goal of this paper is to present a theoretical framework for the argument just outlined. As a secondary goal, the paper will seek to provide a limited test of the argument. Even if this test is too limited to rigorously confirm or disconfirm the argument, it should demonstrate its plausibility. Methodologically speaking, I test the argument by employing classic, case-study based comparative politics. The comparative strategy is to match cases on the independent variables in order to exclude rival hypotheses and focus on the effects of the party-building on state-building.⁴ Namely, I choose three states that match closely in terms of their recent political history (as Soviet satellite states), their rate of economic development (as the economic leaders of post-Soviet Eastern Europe), their proximity to Western Europe (all three border West European countries), and political-cultural lineage (all three are within the sphere of Catholic Europe).⁵ Thus neither the formal institutions of Communism, economic factors, geopolitical situation, nor political culture as such can explain the significant differences in state-building that have occurred in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia over the past ten years. In Slovakia the state-building dynamic has been very dramatic in terms of growth and party-capture. In the Czech Republic, the process has been relatively stable by these measures. Finally, Poland has been somewhere between the other two cases. The evidence used in these case studies will combine process-tracing of institutional change in both party structures and bureaucratic organization, government records on employment in public administrations, government data on public finance, and field interviews conducted with politicians and state officials in the period from May through October of 1999 and June through October of 2000.

A second methodological note is necessary. Because state-building is too large a concept to explore both theoretically and empirically in the space of one paper, I will focus on one particular area of the state-building problem in my three national case-studies. That area is the reform of the public administration, a project with which each of these countries has

⁴ For more on the strategy of matching cases in small-n comparative research, see David Collier (1991) p. 16 and King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) pp. 140-141.

⁵ Religion is an admittedly crude measure of political culture, but the geographic border between different religious blocks, such as Islam or Orthodoxy, often coincides with political cultural differences.

experimented in the post-Soviet decade, with quite different results. Thus, my use of the term state-building is somewhat different than is often found in the political science literature. In that literature, state-building is usually conceptualized either in terms of international relations⁶ (as a battle over territory and sovereignty) or in terms of modernization, which occurs through bureaucratic rationalization. In both of these conceptions, state-building is conceived of favorably. Of these two lines of analysis, the second, which conceptualizes state-building in terms of administrative modernization, more closely fits the argument I will develop here. In contrast to much of that literature, however, I am exploring cases in which state-building fails to achieve greater administrative rationalization, though it certainly does achieve more administration.

The question of how state-building is occurring in post-Soviet Eastern Europe is an important one not only because -- inexplicably enough -- it seems to have escaped the attention of political scientists almost entirely.⁷ From an academic point of view, then, this research is valuable because it treats an important and, thus far, neglected aspect of democratization and systemic transformation. Unlike much of the literature on contemporary Eastern European politics, this study does not take democratization as the endpoint of its investigation, but explores the implications of democratization for other areas of domestic politics. Second, this study should be rewarding for scholars of Eastern Europe because it links political patterns in this region to comparable historical patterns in the United States and Western Europe. Finally, runaway state-building is also a process with very real consequences for people in this part of the world. It represents a drain on public resources -- which, it goes without saying, are scarce -- and is a drag on the transformation of the economy as a whole (World Bank, 1996: 113-115). Politically speaking, it means that the articulation of social interests and public policy questions occurs in a political arena structured by patronage principles.

The layout of the paper is as follows. First, I present a review of the literature. The next

⁶ For a good example of this line of analysis see Charles Tilly, Capital and Coercion.

⁷ I will discuss the literature on the subject in the next section.

section develops the argument of the dissertation. Third, I present a methodology for observing and measuring the dependent variable empirically. This is followed by a discussion of my case-studies with regard to the independent variable and, finally, a brief conclusion.

A Review of the Literature

How has the literature dealing with the post-Soviet transformation in Eastern Europe dealt with the state? It would be tempting to say that, by and large, it has ignored it, but this is not entirely fair. Among American and West European scholars writing on state development in Eastern Europe after communism, there have been two dominant tendencies.⁸ The first has been to look at what the Hungarian political scientist Attila Agh calls the “big power triangle” of state-building (1998: 87-94). By this term, he means the big questions of democratization and institutional design, such as the choice between presidential and parliamentary systems, the role of the courts, the choice of electoral law, the separation of powers, and so on. Examples of this kind of work include most of the works on democratization (Fish 1998; Diamond and Plattner 1997). The second dominant tendency has been to look at the de-etatization of the economy, which in practice has meant studying privatization (Cohen and Schwartz 1998; Frydman and Rapaczynski 1994; Sachs 1991). Where this second strand of work has not focused on privatization, it has usually been concerned with the welfare state in the post-Soviet context (Kramer 1997; Åslund 1997).

In each of these approaches, the state figures prominently in the analysis but, as explanations or even portraits of the development of post-Soviet state in the first ten years of its existence, they are both disappointing. The “big power triangle” approach is disappointing because it never gets beyond high politics at the national level. Viewed at this level, state-building in the frontrunner countries of the former Soviet-bloc -- like Poland, Hungary, the

⁸Admittedly, this division of the literature may seem somewhat arbitrary to some readers. It is intended to frame the literature in such a way as to contextualize my own argument, not to reflect the entire field. One could, for instance, cite the literature on nation-building, but this literature is less directly related to the low politics of bureaucratic reform and public policy that I am considering here.

Czech Republic, and to a lesser extent Slovakia -- looks very successful. When, however, one looks at low politics in these countries -- which is the kind of politics encountered by the majority of citizens on a day-to-day basis -- the reality is a lot less edifying.⁹ The popular, and by no means unfounded, perception is that bureaucrats are too numerous, politicians insufficiently accountable, and the state too expensive for the services it delivers. The second, more economic approach is disappointing when it comes to understanding state-building because the questions here tend either toward the technical or the narrow -- or both.¹⁰ The goal is not to explain state formation, but market formation; therefore, the state tends to remain under-problematized in these accounts.

The low politics of post-Soviet state-building have received more careful scrutiny among scholars from Eastern Europe -- no doubt, because they feel closer to the problem. These scholars have looked at the state from a more sociological point of view than the approaches noted above. They have noted, for example, that the state has grown continuously since 1989. They have also been very sensitive to the ironies of runaway state-building after political revolutions originally driven by avowedly liberal, sometimes even anti-political political philosophies (Bartkowski 1996). The problem with the scholarship on the state coming out of Eastern Europe is not that it has missed the problem, but rather that it has under-theorized it.

One example is Witold Kieżun (2000), a Polish academic specializing in public administration who is alarmed by the growth of the state in Poland since 1989. He argues that Polish state is growing faster than the economy's capacity to support it, even given the rapidity of Polish economic growth in comparison with the rest of Eastern Europe. Kieżun points out that the size of the public sector in post-Soviet Poland is quickly catching up to and even surpassing

⁹ An note on my use of terminology is necessary. I use the phrase "low politics" here in a different sense than is usual. In the conventional usage, "low politics" essentially means domestic politics and is contrasted with "high politics," meaning diplomacy and international relations. I use the term here to distinguish between extant studies of post-Soviet state-building, which focus on the "high politics" of institutional design and the market transition, and what I am proposing -- a focus on the process of personnel replacement and bureaucracy building.

¹⁰ Lest I overdraw this sketch of the scholars of privatization, I should mention that there are recently a number of more explicitly political analyses of privatization in the former command-economies of Eastern Europe (Cohen and Schwartz, Fish).

that in the West. The thrust of his argument is that a still peripheral, developing economy like Poland cannot afford this kind of state-building. The weak point of Kiezun's analysis, however, is in explaining why state growth has spiraled out of control in Poland. He points to four traits of bureaucracy that are common the world over but have become particularly acute in post-Soviet Poland, referring to them as the four riders of the Polish bureaucratic apocalypse. These are gigantism, luxury, arrogance of power, and corruption. Except for the last of these factors, this list reads rather as a description of the phenomenon rather than an explanation of it.

Another Polish political scientist, Jerzy Bartkowski (1993), draws attention to the irony of post-Soviet state-building given the guiding philosophies of most revolutionaries in 1989, namely, "social neoconservatism and extreme market liberalism" (146). Bartkowski notes, for example, the steady increase in the number of state employees as well as the size of their salaries since 1989 "despite the tenets of these doctrines" (146). In explaining the unexpected resilience of the state after 1989, Bartkowski advances two arguments, one economic and one political.

The economic explanation is that the post-Soviet state has grown simply as a result of the transformation from a command- to a market-economy, which necessitates, at least initially, that the state take an active economic role.¹¹ Since the collapse of Communism, the state has had to do very different tasks than before. For example, under Communism, there was full employment. The introduction of unemployment as an inevitable byproduct of a market economy, therefore, necessitated the construction of a new administrative apparatus for paying out unemployment benefits, retraining workers, gathering labor market statistics, and so on. Moreover, because private capital is insufficiently developed to undertake large-scale investments, these fall on the state.

While the economic explanation has much merit, ultimately it does not constitute a satisfactory theory of the process of runaway state-building in much of Eastern Europe after 1989. First, why has runaway state-building continued unabated over the course of the 1990s

¹¹ I also heard this argument from the Slovak economist Miroslav Beblavy in a personal interview in Bratislava on October 9, 2000.

even as the state's role in restructuring the economy has begun to diminish? Indeed, according to many economic observers of Eastern Europe, the "transformation is over."¹² By the economic explanation, then, the role of the state should have been shrinking rather than increasing as the private sector grew more robust. The second important question unexplained by this hypothesis is why the rates of state growth have varied so much between cases at similar points in the economic transformation process. The Czech Republic, in contrast to Poland and Slovakia, has been largely immune to the phenomenon of runaway state-building. Third, it is mistaken to assume, as the economic explanation implicitly does, that the restructuring of the state to handle its new economic tasks occurs in an instrumentally rational, efficient manner. In short, it is assumed that there is a constituency for administrative reform in these countries that is sufficiently organized, secure, and politically strong to thwart the ambitions of political parties seeking to benefit from state restructuring. In reality, however, the necessity of administrative reorganization often provides the vehicle by which party patronage takes place, and the widespread popular conviction is that politics has indeed become rife with corruption in Eastern Europe.

In addition to this economic explanation, Bartkowski advances a political one. Namely, he argues that the growth of the state is partly the result of the weak position of elected politicians during the period of systemic transformation. Because the processes of economic change and democratization are intertwined in Eastern Europe, politicians cannot derive sufficient legitimacy from "procedural democracy" alone; they also need "results-based democracy" (162).¹³ Thus, these politicians are unable to resist social pressures to use state power in order to intervene in the economy and redress market outcomes. This hypothesis is, I believe, a step in the right direction; however, it is left insufficiently developed to be satisfying theoretically. I will advance an explanation that draws on Bartkowski's insight about the politics

¹² This pronouncement is often made about the three countries at the focus of this dissertation, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, which have experienced relatively high levels of economic growth in the 1990s. That said, such pronouncements need to be taken with a large grain of salt, of course.

¹³ For a fuller description of these terms see Claus Offe (1992) cited in Bartkowski, p. 162, footnote.

of state-building. First, however, I must mention a third response among Eastern European social scientists to the process of state-building there.

This other school has analyzed the runaway growth of the Eastern European states since 1989 from the perspective of decentralization. Like Kiezun, they point to the proliferation of public officials, the mind-boggling patchwork of state organizations dealing in any one policy area, and the poor quality of state services. Unlike Kiezun, though, they point to one cause for this state of affairs, over-centralization of the state. They maintain, namely, that the this runaway growth is the result of an overly centralized state apparatus, in which central level decision makers lack adequate knowledge of locally rooted problems and, to make matters worse, that they are insufficiently accountable to the citizens whose problems they are trying to solve (Cite Regulski, Gilowska, Strejkova, Gorzelak, Niznansky). According to these analysts, the enthusiasts of decentralization, the only systemic solution that can rein in the growth of the state and improve the effectiveness of its services is to turn over policy-making powers and finances to lower levels, locally accountable, elected institutions. They envision a system based on the principle of subsidiarity.

The Czech sociologist Michal Illner is a good example of this school. He is particularly critical of the mushrooming of branch offices of central government ministries in the post-Soviet states (1997). In the vacuum of any regional-level institutions, each central ministry creates its own network of mid-level offices, according to its own criteria and according to its own logic. The result, writes Illner, is “an excessive growth of employment in the public administration during the last years” (24).

This line of argument about decentralization is currently very much in vogue in Eastern Europe -- as well as among Western advisor institutions such as the World Bank and the European Commission. Indeed, it forms the basis for government plans to create new regional levels of government in each of the three countries I will be using as case-studies. As an explanation for the development of state-building in Eastern Europe over the last ten years, however, it is less than satisfying. Indeed, as Kiezun points out, in Poland, the government’s

plan to decentralize the state in 1998 had the perverse effect of creating ever greater numbers of public officials, both elected and appointed adding some 46,000 new people to the public sector payrolls in the course of the first year after the reform took effect (Kiezun, 2000). This figure is, ironically enough, equal to the total amount of people working in the Polish state administration in 1990, at the dawn of post-Soviet state-building. Kiezun also points out that, in many cases, the 1998 decentralization muddled the division of labor between different levels of public administration, thereby not only failing to improve the quality of state services but in the short run worsening it. As I mentioned in the introduction, something similar happened in Slovakia in 1996, after Meciar's "decentralization" of the state administration. The link between runaway state-building and state centralism is certainly more complicated than the enthusiasts of decentralization in Eastern Europe would admit. Over-centralization may be one of the features of runaway state-building rather than its cause.

What are the lessons to draw from this brief review of the literature? The most important is that there is a generally perceived problem in the nature of state-building as it has occurred in Eastern Europe since 1989. So far, Western analysts have for the most part overlooked it, while Eastern European academics have done a good job of describing though not of theorizing it. Even if the Western theorists and the East European critics of post-Soviet state-building have tended so far to write past each other, all is not lost, however. There are, I believe, analytical frameworks within the field of comparative politics broadly considered that can prove extremely useful when applied to state-building in contemporary Eastern Europe.¹⁴ The work of the political scientist Martin Shefter (1994), in particular, is enlightening in this regard, and it is within Shefter's framework that I frame the argument of this dissertation, which I lay out in the following section.

¹⁴ Mention some other major writers on the state. For example, Weber's description of the inexorable march of bureaucratization seems to be on the mark in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, this account is not satisfying since, as I argue, the bureaucratization of Eastern Europe is often not the result of increasing rationalization and the dominance of a legal-rational basis for authority; on the contrary, this bureaucratization is usually the result of patrimonial, patronage-based legitimation of the ruling party. Secondly, Weber's march of bureaucratization is uneven across cases in Eastern Europe, and these differences need to be explained.

The Argument: Weak States and Weak Parties

As mentioned in the introduction, Shefter's work deals with the inter-relationship of state- and party-building. He argues that the coevolution of these two institutions structures national political systems. The essential idea behind this theory is a simple one, and Shefter formulates it nicely in the following passage:

The relationship between these two institutions [political parties and the state apparatus] is of great significance for a number of reasons. First, it has major consequences for the structure of political parties and for the electoral strategies they are able to pursue. If political parties are the stronger institution, they will be in a position to extract patronage from the bureaucracy and to distribute it to the cadres who conduct their campaigns and the voters who support their candidates; if parties are weaker than bureaucracies, they must find some alternative means of mobilizing popular support. Second, and more generally, the strength of parties relative to bureaucracies has an important bearing upon the character of the political system as a whole. (1994: 61)

Figure 1 (below) depicts the typology of state-building implied by this argument. If parties are well organized and command popular support but the state administration is not insulated¹⁵ from the influence of elected politicians (box I), then parties will be able to dominate both the electoral and administrative arenas to generate patronage (61). If both parties and state apparatus are strong (box II), then parties will not be in the position to raid the state for patronage resources. On the other hand, parties in this scenario will be able to deliver on electoral promises to voters, given the existence of a stronger, more effective state. The third possible scenario is weak parties and a strong state (box III). This would be a system of soft authoritarianism, with democratically elected parties unable to make credible policy promises to voters because the real power lay in the state's hands. The last possibility (box IV) is a combination of weak parties and a weak state. In practice, such a system could take several forms. It could be a regime of notables, "where local dignitaries dominate the electoral arena and use their influence to extract

¹⁵ Political influence over the state may come in many forms, the power to appoint and dismiss, the degree of discretionary power over budgets, the power to veto policy, and the ability to intervene in the making and implementation of policy.

patronage from the bureaucracy for distribution to their personal clients" (62). Alternately, it may take the form of a corporatist state in which economic interest groups colonize the state and help their politicians to win elections.

*Figure 1: A Typology of States and Parties*¹⁶

		<i>Political Parties</i>	
		Strong	Weak
<i>State Admin.</i>	Strong	Responsible Party (II)	Bureaucratic State (III)
	Weak	Political Machine (I)	Regime of Notables/Corporatist State (IV)

The process of runaway state-building,¹⁷ the focus of this study, occurs when the state administration lacks sufficient autonomy to defend itself from parties seeking patronage resources. Thus, it occurs in political systems that fall into boxes I or IV. In any of the four categories, the state may grow quickly in a short period of time. Only in scenarios I or IV, however, is this growth fueled by the motive of finding patronage for political party-building. In the bureaucratic state scenario (box III), on the other hand, state-building may be rapid and large-scale, but it will presumably be matched by gains in effectiveness since the goal is state power not party patronage.

Immediately after 1989, at the beginning of post-Soviet state building, all of Eastern Europe's¹⁸ political systems belonged in box IV. The state apparatus inherited from the

¹⁶ Adapted from Shefter, p. 62.

¹⁷ Lest the reader get the wrong idea about Shefter's work, I should make it clear that the term runaway state-building is my own coinage. Indeed, Shefter is not concerned with state-building as such, though it constitutes an important part of his theoretical framework. A scholar of political parties, Shefter devotes his attention to one causal implication of this framework -- what kind of political parties the coevolution of parties and state produces. In this study, however, I focus on the framework's other causal implication, what kind of states the relationship produces. In the end, of course, these outcomes are two sides of the same coin.

¹⁸ I am not including the former Soviet Union here. The delegitimization of the Soviet state in the 1990s was a more complicated story and beyond the scope of this chapter.

Communist regime had been thoroughly delegitimized, and electoral politics was dominated not by political parties but by loose umbrella movements mobilized against the Communists. Once the Communists were overcome, these movements fell apart. Among, my three case-study countries, differences began to emerge over time. In the Czech Republic, the party system stabilized quickly and the current form of the state administration was set relatively early; in short, the Czech Republic migrated toward the "responsible party" model (box II). Slovakia, on the other hand, saw the rapid rise of a single dominant, party that used its political dominance to shape the electoral and state arenas to lock in its position; it moved toward machine politics, from box IV to box I. Finally, the Polish party system has remained in a state of underdevelopment and fragmentation throughout the 1990s, and successive governments of different political stripes have waged a long-running, though inconclusive, war over the shape of post-Soviet state-building; Poland is still a curious combination of corporatism and a regime of notables (box IV). Both Poland and Slovakia have been characterized by runaway state-building.

The relative strength of political parties and the state administration is the critical factor in Shefter's argument. The next step in the argument is to specify what factors determine the respective strength of these institutions. The timing of democratization and state-building is, of course, extremely important (56). In cases such as the United States, where the development of modern political parties (in the Jacksonian period) long preceded bureaucratic reform movements such as the Progressives, parties controlled the apparatus of the state and used it for their own aggrandizement. Of course, in comparison to the U.S., the time span for democratization and rebuilding the state administration in Eastern Europe has been very compressed; however, it is clear that the learning curve for holding elections and running campaigns has been a lot steeper than the one for reforming the state administration.

Aside from the relative timing of party- and state-building, however, Shefter also mentions two other factors that structure the strength of each side in this relationship. In the case of the state administration, the concept of "constituencies for bureaucratic autonomy" is crucial. The constituency for bureaucratic autonomy is a class, either within or outside of the state, that

envisions a legal-rational basis for organization of the state administration as opposed to a clientelistic, ethnic, or local one. As Shefter notes, this constituency is usually "drawn from the professional and upper middle classes and from those elements of the local notability that do not enjoy privileged access to the locally dominant party" (59). They favor modernizing reforms for the state, such as the institution of standardized civil service exams.

In the case of parties, the critical factor is the mode of political mobilization. Here Shefter makes a distinction between externally and internally mobilized political parties (pp. 32-36). Internally mobilized parties are, in Shefter's words, parties that "have been founded by elites who occupy positions within the prevailing regime and who undertake to mobilize a popular following behind themselves in an effort either to gain control of the government or to secure their hold over it" (30). These are, in short, the insider parties. Externally mobilized parties, in contrast, are "established by outsiders who did not hold positions within the prevailing regime and who organize a mass following either in an effort to gain entry into the political system for themselves and their supporters or in an effort to overthrow that system" (30). According to Shefter, a party's origins as either internally or externally mobilized have enduring effects on how it seeks to win and then hold power, in particular, on whether it does so by means of patronage or not. Externally mobilized parties tend, Shefter argues, to eschew patronage-based strategies because the outsider status of their leaders means that they do not have access to state patronage at the time of their founding, using other means to attract a following.

Having laid out the general framework of the argument, I will in the remainder of this section apply it to the context of runaway state-building in Eastern Europe. Runaway state-building occurs because political parties have developed more quickly than constituencies for bureaucratic autonomy can be put together. Political parties use access to state resources, in particular to public employment, as means of patronage in the process of party-building. That the distribution of patronage is the primary means for building loyalty ties in political parties is the result of the inhospitable environment for party mobilization left behind by the Soviet system. To flesh out this argument, it is necessary to take up its two parts in turn: (1) the difficult

conditions for party-building in post-Soviet Eastern Europe and (2) the weakness of the state administration in fending off parties seeking to raid it for patronage. Together, these two conditions have meant the near total absence of both externally mobilized parties and strong constituencies for bureaucratic autonomy -- in short, the absence of the conditions for the "responsible party" style of government of box II in the typology presented above. As the remainder of this section will argue, these conditions -- which will be recognizable to observers of post-Soviet politics across Eastern Europe to a greater or lesser degree depending on the case in question -- are the direct legacy of the Soviet system.

First, consider the development of party systems. As a rule, people do not join political parties in these countries. There are some exceptions, such as the former Communist parties, which inherited large organizations from the previous regime and some of whose former nomenklatura members feel uncertain enough in the post-1989 system to stick together for protection. As a result of their very small memberships, political parties have neither financial resources from membership dues nor strength of numbers to use in the arena of party competition. Moreover, people in Eastern Europe do not participate in politics if they can possibly help it.¹⁹ The stark division between the public and private spheres was one of the defining traits of the region's political culture as it developed under Soviet rule, and this trait has proven more durable than Soviet rule itself. The political scientist Ken Jowitt described this division as follows:

The Party's political monopoly and punitive relation to the population produced a "ghetto" political culture in Eastern Europe. The population at large viewed the political realm as something dangerous, something to avoid. Political involvement meant trouble. Regime-coerced political activity (not participation) sustained and heightened the population's psychological and political estrangement. At the same time, the Party could not be everywhere. So Leninist parties traded de facto privatization in nonpriority areas for active Party control and penetration of priority areas. (1992: 288)

Minus the observations about forced participation by a monopoly political party, this description

¹⁹ For an excellent, empirically grounded treatment of the weakness of civil society in contemporary Eastern Europe, see Howard (1999).

of political culture in pre-1989 Eastern Europe also captures the reality today. People are no longer forced into political activity, and, in fact, they do not participate at all.

The legacy of Leninist political culture also influences the process of party-building in deeper ways. The first is that the culture of political non-participation keeps civil society at a level of extreme underdevelopment. There are too few civil society organizations serving as public watchdogs and checks on the exercise of state power, and those that do exist are often too weak to matter.²⁰ Hence, institutional mechanisms for disciplining political parties, such as competition for votes in elections, do not have the same disciplining force that they do in established democracies. In terms of party-building, the underdevelopment of civil society reduces the risks of strategies based on the distribution of patronage. Political parties are not that likely to be punished for appropriating public resources for their own benefit, especially if they are careful to avoid blatant abuses of power.

The legacy of Soviet rule has decreased the effectiveness of external mobilization as a means of party-building. The reluctance of ordinary citizens to participate in politics, beyond perhaps voting at election time, makes it difficult to build followings on the basis of the kind of appeals that externally mobilized parties make. Recall Shefter's description of the basis on which externally mobilized parties build ties of loyalty with their supporters: first, through the voters' memory of making extraordinary sacrifices to affiliate with the party prior to its winning power (32); second, through the ability of party leaders to use solidary and ideological (not material, i.e. patronage) inducements to reward their supporters (33); finally, through the commitment of party leaders to an ideological program, for which they will not be willing to sacrifice their legitimacy by resorting to patronage (33). The strength of these kinds of loyalty ties is very weak, at best, in post-Soviet Eastern Europe, where the shadow of the previous regime implicates all political leaders -- both the anti-communists and the former communists

²⁰ Bartkowski (1996) also argues the political culture of this region favors a strong role for the state. Because this political culture is traditional, civil society is weak and cannot act as a counterbalance to an expansive state. Moreover, the traditional values of collectivism, solidarity, and unity -- rather than individual rights and civic participation -- translate into a state-building style marked by paternalism and arbitrary rule.

alike. Except in Poland, most of the voters for externally mobilized, that is anti-communist, parties had not made any great sacrifices for their party before 1989; nor did they afterwards for that matter. Thus, most of the post-1989 parties could not draw on any memory of earlier solidarity in the face of adversity. Moreover, these were conservative revolutions, not dedicated to any particularly charismatic ideologies other than ending the then prevailing system. To the extent that these revolutions can be said to have had an articulated ideology, it was one of market liberalism and constitutionalism, which was a demanding standard for societies embarking on a painful process of market transition. Not surprisingly, the commitment of most party leaders to this ideology, such as it was, proved equally fragile once it became clear what market reform meant.

If post-Soviet societies are deaf to external mobilization, as described above, the activists and leadership of the majority of post-1989 political parties also have little incentive to push for bureaucratic autonomy, especially if they come to power. Elected politicians have short time horizons. The half-life of political parties is much shorter in Eastern Europe than in established democracies, which increases politicians' uncertainty about future elections. If their party enters future elections weakened by the defection of a popular leader -- or even if it does not exist at all -- their tenure in politics can easily be cut short. The uncertainty of a career in electoral politics increases the allure of one in the state, which provides greater insulation from the vicissitudes of electoral competition.

In the preceding analysis, I have argued that the manifold frailties of political parties in post-Soviet Eastern Europe have meant low payoffs for strategies of external mobilization. Indeed, in the case of the famous anti-communist movement Solidarity, at one time the very definition of an externally mobilized party, the continuation of party-building in a post-Soviet context necessitated the shift from external to internal mobilization. Now, the analysis will turn to the state administration itself. It is necessary to characterize the state at the end of Communist rule and the beginning of democratic politics in order to answer the question of why it has proven so fertile a resource for the patronage-based strategies of Eastern Europe's new political parties.

Why has it proven so ineffective as a constituency for bureaucratic autonomy?

First, it cannot be emphasized enough that, from the perspective of the state administration, 1989 was a moment of utter demoralization and delegitimization. The Soviet state in Eastern Europe was entirely colonized by the Communist Party (See Ilner 1997; Gross 1989; Jowitt 1992). Indeed, the Communist period represented the most extreme version imaginable of codependent state- and party-building. What made it so extreme was that a single party with a monopoly on political power was able to raid the state bureaucracy with impunity. Theoretically speaking, one might argue that where one party has a monopoly on power, it would not be necessary to rely on distributing patronage because that party would not need to compete with other parties. In reality, however, because the state was illegitimate in the eyes of most citizens²¹ and because the Communist party could not sustain its rule by force alone, it used a combination of patronage and forced dependency to build support, or at least acceptance. It is important, of course, to distinguish between the nature and scale of patronage in the Soviet system and in post-Soviet politics. As Fish (1995) persuasively argues, the Soviet system did not so much build support through patronage as it quelled opposition through forced dependency. This was true for the majority of the public. For the political elite, loyalty to the Communist party was ensured through a system of institutionalized privileges, the so-called *nomenklatura* system. The important point for the argument here is that by 1989, state and the party in Eastern Europe were entirely coterminous and that this put bureaucrats in an extremely disadvantageous position at the beginning of the 1990s. They could not credibly propose a program of bureaucratic autonomy that would at the same time maintain their positions.

In addition to the infelicitous incentives inclining party politicians to engage in short-term thinking in questions of staffing the state administration, there is another trait of party activist and leadership in post-Soviet politics that needs to be mentioned. That is their lack of experience in public administration -- with the notable exception of former Communist Party members. Not

²¹ This was especially the case in the Soviet satellite countries of East Central Europe.

surprisingly, this inexperience makes it more difficult to put together constituencies for bureaucratic autonomy. As I discovered in my field interviews, many party activists believe that the problems of the state administration stem from the continued presence there of Communist-era career bureaucrats. Indeed, when the anti-Communist coalitions first came to power in the early 1990s, their first task was to replace state officials wherever they could. In their view, it is necessary to remove these officials and replace them with others who have the right anti-Communist credentials. Beyond such credentials, most politicians have an ill-formed idea of what bureaucratic professionalism entails. Indeed, it is not uncommon today to hear tales, for example, of farmers or travel agents being appointed to hospital boards by the dominant local political party.²² Needless to say, this vision of public administration reform does not qualify as a constituency for bureaucratic autonomy.

A second reason that parties have had such an easy time raiding the state administration is the lack of effective legislation establishing the code of rules and procedures of classical bureaucratic organization. As Max Weber (1946)²³ pointed out, bureaucratic organization is a form of legal-rational authority and as such depends on the existence of universally applied, formal rules. The most important of these are, first, meritocratic rules governing appointment and advancement of all personnel. These rules should reward the attainment of specialized knowledge. The second important rule type, according to Weber, is those establishing a clear distinction between the holder of an office and the office itself. That is to say, not only is the selection and advancement of officials governed by universally applicable rules, so too is the behavior of officials once they have come to office. Offices are occupied, not owned, by officials; therefore, they should not be a source of economic gain to the official.

Of course, there is a big difference between Weber's ideal type and bureaucracy as it actually exists all over the world. Moreover, there is an important difference between the formal codification of these principles in legislation and the actual practice of state administration.

²² See Walewski (1999), "Swoj w radzie" [Their Own People on the Governing Board].

²³ See especially pages 196-244.

Much of the state administration Eastern Europe, however, lacks even the formal legislation safeguarding these two principles. Particularly problematic is legislation concerning the employment and advancement of personnel. For most of the 1990s, Poland lacked a law on employment in the state administration, meaning there were no standard guidelines for hiring and firing state personnel.²⁴ Slovakia still lacks this kind of legislation, the most recent attempt to adopt a law on the civil service administration having been defeated because it was seen as rewarding the post-Communists.²⁵

The legislative framework for prosecuting official corruption is also weak. In many critical areas, it does not exist. For example, one common problem is the corruption of the courts. A recent report on Poland published by the World Bank went so far as to publish the going price list for buying off judges according to the type of legal infraction. As the chief of the Polish parliamentary committee for administration and internal affairs, Jan Rokita, pointed out in a recent interview, Polish judges still have legal immunity from prosecution, which makes them an “interest group blocking the war against corruption” (Quoted in Gadomski, Gazeta Wyborcza). As long as such legislation is weak, however, it constitutes another failed barrier against runaway state-building. Appointments to the state administration become the coinage of party patronage since they can often be translated into personal financial rewards for the appointed.

In summary, the legacy of soviet rule created conditions in both the party system and the state administration conducive to runaway state-building after 1989. In the party system, the legacy of a demobilized civil society has made the payoffs for external mobilization very low. Of necessity, then, parties have turned to patronage to mobilize support. In the state administration, the colonization of the state by the Communist Party led to its utter delegitimization, seriously retarding the development of constituencies for bureaucratic autonomy and leaving it vulnerable to parties seeking patronage resources. In the following

²⁴ Personal interview with the Councillor to the Head of the Prime Minister’s Chancellery. Warsaw, June 20, 2000.

²⁵ Personal interview with a political specialist at the branch office of USAID in Slovakia. Bratislava, October 17, 2000.

section, I will present an empirical look at the phenomenon of runaway state-building in the three case-study countries of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

Runaway State-Building Up Close & An Introduction to the Cases

Thus far, I have considered how state-building in Eastern Europe has been treated in the extant literature and outlined a different argument than is presented there. Now, I want to turn away from the abstract realm of theory and discuss how I plan to ground my argument in concrete cases from the region. The first part of this effort will be to define a methodology for empirically describing the phenomenon of runaway state-building. There is not space in this paper to provide an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, but I will offer a preliminary sketch by presenting some aggregate statistics.

For the purpose of semantic simplicity, the term runaway state-building consolidates two related variables into one dependent variable describing the nature of the state-building process. These two variables are state size and state effectiveness.

Under the term “state size,” I have in mind the scale and rapidity of the growth of the post-Soviet state in the 1990s. These are variables that can be measured relatively precisely with government statistics on public sector employment and government statistics on public expenditure. Of course, care must be taken in using such data for cross-national comparisons, as methods of counting and differences in national systems may mean that some recalibration of the measuring scheme is necessary.

The growth of the personnel of public administration in Eastern Europe can be looked at according to three levels of detail. First, the broadest measure is the number of all employees in the public sector of the economy. This includes not only elected politicians and bureaucrats but also people like municipal firemen, teachers in public schools, employees in state-owned enterprises, and so on. Obviously, this figure needs to be interpreted with many caveats. For instance, the size of this figure will be strongly influenced by the nature of privatization, which is not the subject of this study. It is useful, however, insofar that it allows one to gauge the overall

relation of the public sector to the private one. The simple observation that the total number of public employees is growing over the course of the 1990s, despite privatization, would be an interesting finding. A second measure of the growth of personnel is to look strictly at the level of state bureaucracy, that is, only the appointed officials working in offices of public administration -- not libraries, schools, state-owned enterprises, and the like. This measure controls for the influence of privatization. The problem with this measure is, however, that it excludes another important level of administration and public policy, the elected officials. It is a peculiar feature of post-1989 political development in Eastern Europe that there has been an explosion in the number of local, elected politicians responsible for administering public policies that until very recently were the province of appointed bureaucrats. Recall that the Warsaw city government includes 789 elected officials. Because the decentralization of policy competencies has not been matched by fiscal and budgetary decentralization anywhere in the region (Gilowska 1999 and 2000; Niznansky 1998 and 1999; Illner 1997), the distinction between local government and the state administration is still too unclear for local governments not to be considered as -- and therefore counted among -- the administration of the state. Therefore, the final measure is to look at the number of elected officials over time. An accurate picture of the growth of public administration in Eastern Europe over the last 10 plus years needs to be a composite of these three levels of analysis.

Doing the kind of three-level analysis described above would be a paper in itself. Since public administration reform forms the basis of comparing runaway state-building among my cases, I will focus on the size of the public administration. Table 1 compares the growth of the public administration in Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic in the 1990s, listing the number of appointed (but not elected) officials in these countries. It includes only bureaucrats, not public employees delivering some specialized service, such as librarians, police, or firemen. This table reveals distinct differences among these cases in terms of state growth. Poland has seen the number of state officials in the central administration triple in the course of a decade. In all, the number of officials has almost doubled. The growth of the Slovak state has not been

quite so large over the whole of 1990s, but its rate of growth at certain key points under HZDS was faster than anywhere else. For example, after returning to power in 1995, HZDS reorganized the state administration, at which point the number of officials in the newly reconstituted field administration jumped by 50% in one year. Since that point in time, the number of officials employed in municipal offices in Slovakia (that is, under local-level self-governments, which are outside of the national government's jurisdiction) declined by approximately a quarter. The other levels of the Slovak state, which are staffed by appointees of the national government and hence the biggest political parties, grew over the same period. In contrast, the Czech state has been relatively stable over the last decade. It is larger now than it was in 1993, just after independence, but not appreciably so.

*Table 1: Size of Public Administration Compared*²⁶

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Level of Governance										
						<i>Czech Republic</i>				
Central State	--	--	--	8961	8642	8519	9631	10717	10583	10980
State Field Admin.	--	--	--	16433	--	--	18010	--	--	17115
Municipal Offices (self-govt'l)	--	--	--	38862	--	--	51843	--	--	60694
Total				64256			79484			88789
						<i>Slovakia</i>				
Central State	--	--	--	5804	5900	6262	7774	7865	7951	8049
State Field Admin.	--	--	--	--	11146	12446	19587	22709	21040	18533
Municipal Offices (self-govt'l)	--	--	--	20935	21210	21092	20069	16182	17360	16445
Total				--	38256	39800	47430	46756	46351	43027
						<i>Poland</i>				
Central State	46062	60794	68728	88561	102700	110208	115503	119104	126204	--
State Field Admin.	29167	32500	36000	26800	30700	31300	31286	44383	45042	--
Municipal Offices (self-govt'l)	83428	77000	89400	107600	96100	101355	106719	111931	114934	--
Total	158657	170294	194128	222961	229500	242863	253508	275418	286180	--

²⁶ Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to find good statistics on employment in the Czech Republic and Slovakia before 1993. As to sources, the statistics for Slovakia are drawn from two sources: (1) "Concept for Decentralization and Modernization of the Public Administration," Viktor Niznansky, Plenipotentiary for the Reform of the Public Administration of the Government of Slovakia (March 2000); and (2) a statistical publication entitled "Pracovníci a priemerne mesačne mzdy," [Employees and Average Monthly Wages] Slovak Statistical Office: Bratislava, various years). The Czech statistics were provided by INFOSERVIS of the Czech Statistical Office, Prague. The figures for Poland come from Rocznik Statystyczny [Statistical Yearbook] (The General Statistical Office: Warsaw, various years).

Of course, another important dimension for considering state growth is that of the budget. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give this issue the full attention it deserves; however, the general outlines of budgetary spending in the case-study countries analyzed here are clear enough.²⁷ Comparatively speaking, these states are living well beyond their means. As the World Bank noted in a recent World Development Report, "In the Visegrad²⁸ countries, for example, government spending exceeded half of GDP in 1994, compared with just above 20 percent of GDP (on average) in Chile, Colombia, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Turkey -- countries whose incomes per capita were comparable or slightly higher" (1996: 113).

The other half of runaway state-building is the effectiveness of state power. State effectiveness, is clear enough intuitively but trickier to define and measure precisely. As mentioned earlier, I mean to measure state effectiveness through an examination of public administration reform. For the purposes of the argument here, I measure state effectiveness in terms of the autonomy of the public administration from the influence of political parties.²⁹ To what extent does policy practice reflect the logic of ideal-typical bureaucracy and to what extent does it reflect the logic of patronage. By the logic of ideal-typical bureaucracy, I mean the attributes of the Weberian conception of bureaucracy: legal-rationalism, standardized rules, meritocratic criteria for appointment and advancement, the separation of office and office holder. Each of these national case-studies has undertaken some form of reforming the public administration: to what extent has such reform benefited the dominant political parties?

To conclude, this section has presented a methodology for observing and measuring the

²⁷ A later chapter will treat state spending in detail. One of the reasons that this topic is so complicated is that it requires aggregating central government spending, subnational government spending, and public spending going through so-called extra-budgetary funds.

²⁸The Visegrad countries consist of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary.

²⁹ Admittedly, this is a less than perfect measure, as state autonomy and state effectiveness are not the same thing. On the other hand, state autonomy is generally considered a requisite of effective state power, so that the absence of the former implies the absence of the latter. A more complete measure of state effectiveness would require the comparison of my national cases across different policy areas where the state is involved, for example, regional policy or health care. This kind of analysis is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

dependent variable. On the basis of comparing data on the number of public officials across cases, I have argued that runaway state-building has occurred in Poland and Slovakia but not in the Czech Republic, where the growth of the state apparatus has been more restrained. The second half of runaway state-building -- the absence of gains in state effectiveness to match state growth -- will be developed in the following section, which looks at the character of party-building across cases and relates it to developments in the public administration.

Strategies of Party-Building

The development of party systems in post-Soviet Eastern Europe has been by all accounts a rough-and-tumble process. As the Polish political scientist Krzysztof Jasiewicz observed in the early 1990s, “The parties [in Eastern Europe] are not really parties in either the American or the West European sense. With the exception of the renamed communists and a few veteran opposition groups, the parties are brand new. They have no tradition, no apparatus, no organizational history, no established rules of conduct” (1992: 66). From the perspective of party-building, 1989 was zero-hour. Aside from the sprawling apparatus of the thoroughly discredited Communist Party, there were no political party organizations to speak of. Even powerful anti-Communist organizations like Solidarity were not parties but movements whose disparate elements were (loosely) held together by their common opposition to the Communist Party. To a one, these anti-Communist movements were the spectacular victims of their own success, falling apart shortly after the fall of the Communist Party.³⁰ This vacuum in post-1989 political organization was short-lived, however. As quickly as the old organizational forms were discarded, a free-for-all of political competition and innovation arose in their wake. In this environment of intense competition, general political inexperience, lax control, and increasing public disengagement from politics in general, patronage came to be powerful instrument for

³⁰ In Poland, the anti-Communist movement was Solidarity. In the Czech Republic, it was Civic Forum (Obcanske Forum) and in Slovakia, Public Against Violence (Verejnost Proti Nasili). In citing party acronyms, I use the acronyms formed according to the relevant national language, not according to the translation of the parties' titles into English.

party-building. It was not long before politicians discovered the state to be the biggest reservoir of patronage resources.

What has party-building looked like in Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic since 1989? The immediate and primary causal variable in the argument I am making is the extent to which political parties make use of state resources in order to mobilize politically. On this variable, there are considerable differences between these cases. In Slovakia, the parasitism of political parties on the access to state resources is greatest. In the Czech Republic, it is least. Poland falls somewhere in the middle, with considerably better organized party structures than Slovakia, but with much greater fluidity than in the Czech Republic.

Slovakia

As I argued when presenting the typology of parties and states in Figure 1, Slovakia's party system has evolved into one based on machine politics. Over the course of the 1990s, party competition consisted, on the one hand, of a patronage-based coalition of political opportunists in the government and an unruly and internally divided coalition of permanent outsider parties united only in their opposition to the government, on the other. For most, though not all, of this period, the government party was HZDS, a nationalist-populist party under the leadership of Vladimir Meciar. The opposition was a hodge-podge of former Communists (SDL), Christian Democrats (KDH), Greens, ethnic Hungarians (SMK), and classic liberals (now called SDK). Lacking any uniting principles, the opposition simply adopted a program of anti-Meciarism for most of this period.³¹ As the Slovak political observer, Miroslav Kusy notes, "The long-term dividing line in Slovakia leads neither between the left and the right, nor between the liberals and the conservatives, but, since Vladimir Meciar came to power, simply between the ruling coalition and the opposition" (1998: 45). The programmatic fundamentals of both HZDS and the opposition are weak. When in power, both camps have used the state make up for the deficiencies of their

³¹In the words of one opposition party leader, Jan Langos of the Democratic Party, "The opposition fell into the trap of anti-Meciarism, speculating about incomprehensible tactical maneuvers and turning circles like a dog chasing its own tail, instead of agreeing on a clear alternative" (Schutz 1997).

internal political organization by distributing patronage and trying to rig the electoral arena in their favor. HZDS has, however, been far more aggressive in doing so. To use Shefter's terminology, externally mobilized parties are absent from Slovak politics. Nor is there an influential constituency for bureaucratic autonomy. To the extent that one exists, it constitutes a small group within the opposition SDK, but they are weak even within the framework of the opposition coalition.

The current features of the Slovak party system trace back to the movement for national independence at the beginning of the 1990s. Shortly after the 1989 Velvet Revolution in the then Czechoslovakia, a nationalist wing formed within the Slovak anti-Communist umbrella group Public Against Violence (VPN). Meciar, then one of the leaders of VPN, broke with the rest of the leadership in 1991 and founded a new party HZDS, which soon took away most of VPN's support. HZDS became the voice of Slovak nationalism, and the liberal elements of VPN (the most likely constituency for bureaucratic autonomy, later to become the SDK) damaged themselves politically by criticizing Slovak nationalism. HZDS's demands for greater Slovak autonomy brought them enormous short-term political success, but also the dissolution of Czechoslovakia on January 1, 1993.³²

On January 1, 1993 Meciar's government entered independence in a strong political position. His HZDS party controlled 74 of 150 seats in parliament, operating in an informal coalition with the Slovak National Party. Meciar's HZDS began fragmenting almost immediately after the independence, however. To hold their organization together, the HZDS leadership used their near majority in parliament to build up a hugely corrupt and clientelistic party apparatus. The party's half-hearted program of nationalism and populism was unable to

³² There is some question whether HZDS originally wanted full independence for Slovakia. Its nationalism was always qualified, never committing the party to a platform of Slovak independence. Mečiar even insisted that his proposal for the declaration of Slovak sovereignty did not mean the end of the Czechoslovak federation: "No, it does not. According to the valid constitution of 1968, it has been envisaged already for fourteen years that one as well as the other Republic can adopt its own constitution -- thus such a step is not considered a willful step [toward dissolution]." (See "President receives Mečiar and Dubček; Mečiar interviewed on state set-up." *BBC* May 6, 1992.) In this way, Mečiar capitalized on Slovak economic fears without committing his party to the more risky separatist position.

overcome public disappointment with the economic reform process.³³ Meciar's difficulties in consolidating a nationalist ideology that would provide a stable basis for building HZDS as a political party organization can be seen in the turbulence of Slovak politics after 1993, which was marked by corruption, institutional gerrymandering, and the ongoing fragmentation of Meciar's HZDS party. Support for Meciar fell from a high of 74% in October 1992 to 21.3% in January 1994. Support for his HZDS party fell from 37% in June 1992 to 17.2% in January 1994 (Fisher 1994, 7). By March 1994, HZDS had lost 17 deputies (Fisher and Hrib, 1994, 21). These losses forced Meciar into a formal coalition with the arch-nationalist Slovak Nationalist Party.

On March 11, 1994, Meciar's government lost a vote of no confidence, and a new government was formed among the anti-Meciar opposition. The opposition government was extremely heterogeneous, as noted earlier. It was also extremely short-lived, losing in the national elections the following October as Meciar's HZDS built a new parliamentary majority with the SNS and an splinter group from the SDL, the Association of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS).

After regaining power in the October 1994 elections, HZDS purged political opponents from the press, key state ministries, and canceled a number of privatization projects initiated by the previous government. This purge was dramatized by the first post-election session of the national parliament, which lasted for two whole days and which was devoted exclusively to replacing all of the major posts in the state with members of HZDS, SNS, and ZRS. The purge then extended in a no less dramatic fashion to the lower echelons of the state administration. The government parties created so-called Action Committees, whose job it was to sift through the lower ranks of the state administration to replace opposition sympathizers with government loyalists. In 1996, a team of Slovak sociologists headed by Professor Lubomir Faltan did extensive interviews with the field administration of the Slovak state to investigate the extent of party influence there. These interviews extended down to the lowest level of the state

³³ HZDS refused to choose between capitalism or socialism in its economic policy. In an interview published shortly after Slovakia gained its independence, then Prime Minister Meciar introduced his government's guiding economic philosophy as "neither socialist nor capitalist" (Quoted in Fisher 1993, 42).

administration, the district, and also included interviews with elected members of local government. The researchers found that the first criterion for employment in the state administration was political affiliation. Nor did this political criterion apply to only the top positions in the state administration. It applied to practically the whole office: heads of departments even clerks within departments.³⁴ Indeed, I was told by a longtime observer of Slovak politics working with USAID in Slovakia that, under HZDS, it was not unheard of that even a town librarian or museum head be replaced with a member of HZDS or one of its coalition partners.³⁵

In October of 1998, the government of HZDS, SNS, and ZRS was defeated in national elections. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the behavior of the new government vis-a-vis the state administration has been reminiscent of HZDS's.³⁶ One of its first acts was to replace not only the heads of ministries, but all of the chief positions in the field administration of the state.³⁷ In a short time after coming to power, the new government had replaced over 2000 officials in the state administration.³⁸ Respondents in my interviews in Slovakia agreed that the changes had not extended as far down the ranks of the state as they had under HZDS but that they had been considerable nonetheless. As mentioned above, the opposition coalition consisted of very disparate elements and was united only in their anti-Meciarism. Indeed, the new government consisted of four political blocs and ten parties, including post-communists, liberals, greens, and ethnic Hungarians among others. So far, dividing up the spoils of power has been the primary means of holding the government coalition together.

Poland

Describing party politics in contemporary Poland, the Polish political scientist Jan Pastwa

³⁴ Personal interview with Lubomir Faltan, October 17, 2000.

³⁵ Personal interview in Bratislava, October 3, 2000. This claim was confirmed anecdotally in another interview I had in Bratislava with a different source. I learned that the source's mother, who worked as a secretary at a district office in the provinces, had been forced to join HZDS after the election in 1994 or else lose her job.

³⁶ Mention all the interviews in which this sentiment was expressed. Garfasova, Beblavy, Matijek, Faltan, and more.

³⁷ These include mainly the prefects and vice-prefects.

³⁸ *Economist*, Jan 16, 1999, p. 48.

recently observed, “Once there was the mono-party nomenklatura. Now, there has appeared a multi-party nomenklatura. Each party tries to gain as many positions possible for its people” (Quoted in Bogusz, 2000).³⁹ The linkage between political parties and appointments to positions in the state administration has constituted one of the loudest and most persistent themes of Polish party competition since 1989. In contrast to Slovakia, however, patronage politics has not been dominated by national-level political machines in Poland. Instead, Polish patronage politics has been a combination of regionally-based and corporatist-based party machines -- the result of strong regional patterns in voting as well as the continued influence of labor unions in politics. The scramble among parties for access to state resources has also been intensified by the greater turnover in national governments.

In the 1970s and 80s, Solidarity emerged as the strongest, organized opposition to the Communist Party in the entire Eastern Bloc, but even before the first fully free parliamentary elections in 1991, it had fragmented into numerous factions. No single figure managed to unite a majority of the Solidarity movement behind a vision of political and economic reform. Instead, Solidarity began to crumble internally as a result of a so-called “war at the top.” The process of fragmentation was only exacerbated by the Polish electoral system. Until 1993, parliamentary elections were conducted under a system of pure proportional representation. As a result, in the 1991 parliamentary elections twenty-nine parties won seats, rendering any majority coalitions extremely fragile.

The “war at the top” had the effect of severing the party ties between Solidarity's reform-minded wing of liberal intelligentsia, such as Michnik, Balcerowicz, and Mazowiecki, and the organizational backbone of the rank and file, which was grouped around the leaders of the

³⁹ Moreover, according to Pastwa, this new nomenklatura-style politics is worst at the subnational level of self-governments.

Solidarity trade union, most notably Lech Walesa and Marian Krzaklewski. Over the last decade, the former group has constituted the Polish constituency for bureaucratic autonomy as well as rapid economic reform. This wing of the post-Solidarity camp organized itself into a tightly knit, programmatically focused, though electorally unimpressive political party now called the Free Union (UW).⁴⁰ The rest of Solidarity fragmented into a panoply of parties after the war at the top: trade unionists, nationalists, religious conservatives, and more. Until the defeat of the post-Solidarity camp in the 1993 parliamentary elections, these two wings shared power in an uneasy arrangement, in which UW provided technocratic guidance, and the trade union core of Solidarity political support. During this period, the Solidarity governments were repeatedly accused of filling state positions with their supporters, and because of the massive reorganizations of the state administration that followed the 1989 revolution (especially the establishment of local government), there was some truth to this charge.

In 1993, the post-Solidarity government collapsed and a reformed communist party (SLD) returned to power in coalition with the Peasant Party (PSL). This, too, was an uneasy coalition, and the Peasant Party used their coalition-maker status to bully the SLD into allowing them to raiding the state for patronage. This, in fact, was primary reason given by the then government plenipotentiary for reforming the public administration when he resigned six months after the election. In an open letter to the Prime Minister, he wrote, “The nomenklatura model of administration was the characteristic trait of the whole PRL [i.e. Soviet] era; Minister Strak [the head of the state administration (PSL)] has in the course of a few months recreated this model, ruining with his personnel policy a four-year effort at cadre stabilization and depoliticization of the state administration” (Kulesza: May 28, 1994).

In 1997, however, the SLD-PSL coalition fell, and a new coalition was formed. It was a

⁴⁰ UW can realistically expect somewhere between 5 and 15 percent of the national vote.

coalition of UW with a reconstituted post-Solidarity political organization, Electoral Action Solidarity (AWS). AWS was a new creature on the political scene, hearkening back to the memory of the Solidarity coalition but constructed (under the guidance of Marian Krzaklewski) on an entirely different principle. Krzaklewski wanted to reunite all of the conservative political elements of the old Solidarity coalition under one political organization led by the Solidarity trade union.⁴¹ In practice, the glue that held his organization together was the distribution of state offices and resources among the constituent political parties of AWS. His leadership innovation in Solidarity, then, was to change the strategy of party-building from one of external to internal mobilization, from one based on Solidarity the national movement to Solidarity the trade union with political connections. Once in power, AWS very aggressively went about staffing any state position it could with one of its own appointees. Indeed, before the election the leader of AWS, Marian Krzaklewski, had publicly promised his party members that he had 4,000 positions in the state to fill.⁴² The wholesale reorganization of the administration strained AWS's relations with its coalition partner UW from the very beginning of their government. In June of this past year, UW left the government after AWS tried to replace the UW-mayor of Warsaw.

Over the course of the 1990s, there have been several attempts to modernize the state administration in Poland, but the needs of party-building have tended to transform these attempts at reform into new sources of patronage for political parties. The most recent example of this is the decentralization of the state that occurred in 1998. The genesis of the reform was purely technocratic, as it was the fruition of two decades of policy research by academics specializing in economics, geography, and sociology (Gorzalak and Jalowiecki 1999). These technocratic reformers were mostly associated with the Unia Wolnosci political party. They intended decentralization to improve the efficiency of governance and to make Poland compatible with European Union norms (Regulski 1999). In its finally enacted form, however, decentralization

⁴¹ Ultimately, Krzaklewski wanted AWS to be one political party but accepted a transitional confederation of several political parties, such as the religious conservatives (ZChN), the nationalists (ROP), and so on.

⁴² This promise is mentioned again and again in Polish sources dealing with the 1997 parliamentary election and Krzaklewski's strategy of rebuilding the Solidarity coalition. See for example Czubinski 2000, p. 399; Kosobudzki 1999, p. 113; and Hirsz 1998.

proved a much greater boon to the biggest political parties than to local and regional governments. For the former, it created thousands of new, elected positions, either from scratch or by transferring them from the state administration to local governments. For the latter, the decentralization left them in no better financial position -- the biggest problem for local governments throughout Eastern Europe -- but saddled them with more policy responsibilities (Gilowska 2000).

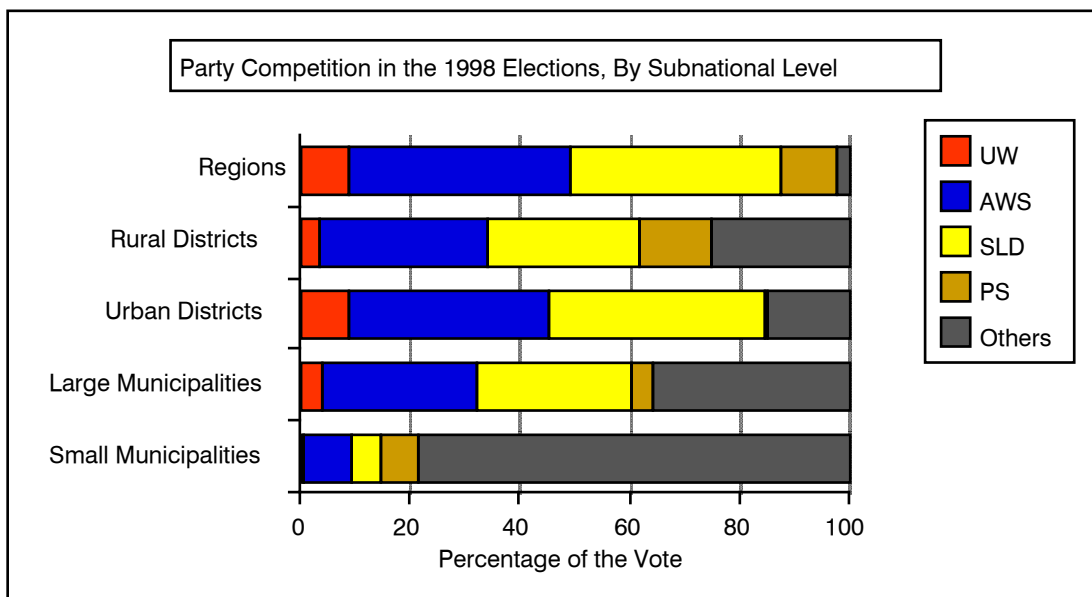
The trade union elements of AWS quickly appreciated the value of decentralization for party-building. They had reason to hope for success in subnational elections to newly created public posts, as their namesake Solidarity had traditionally been organized at the local level. Indeed, one of the Solidarity government's first acts in 1990 had been to pass legislation establishing municipal-level self-government. According to the political scientist Pawel Swianiewicz, the local governments in Poland in 1990 were almost coterminous with Solidarity: "Most of the new counselors are bound up with the Solidarity movement. More than 40% of seats belong to Civic Committees organized by Solidarity before the election of 1989. Many others are members of 'Farmers' Solidarity' or are formally independent but bound up with the same political tradition" (93).

How does the Polish state look since the decentralization of 1998? Put bluntly, decentralization has become the instrument for new forms of political patronage. Though the political rhetoric accompanying the 1998 decentralization suggested that the central state would decrease in size and scope of activity, the official statistics suggested the opposite trend. In 1999, the number of bureaucrats employed in the public administration grew by 46,000 employees, which was an increase of 12 percent over the previous year.⁴³

Figure 2:⁴⁴

⁴³ "Biurokracja rosnie w sile." [Bureaucracy Grows in Strength] *Polityka*. July 8, 2000: 53.

⁴⁴ Two notes regarding this figure: first, the party PS was an electoral coalition of the Peasant Party (PSL) with a small, left-wing party called the Union of Labor (UP). Second, the category small municipalities consists of towns with populations under 20,000.



Source: Zarycki, 1999: 42.

The elections to the newly created regional and district-level posts held in October 1998 presented enormous mobilizing opportunities to the national political parties. The elections involved an huge number of candidates, over 260,000 people for roughly 65,000 posts. By way of comparison, the national parliamentary elections of 1993 attracted 10,600 candidates and those of 1997 7,600 (Zarycki, 1999: 40). The three main national parties -- AWS, SLD, and UW -- dominated the elections, especially at the newly created regional and district levels (Figure 2 above). At the rural district (*powiat ziemskie*), urban district (*powiat grodzkie*), and voivodship levels, the share of the vote not given to national level parties fell to 25, 15, and 2 percent respectively. At the local level (the *gminy*), non-party candidates were quite successful, as they had been in previous local elections. The electoral rules favored the large, national parties, especially the government party AWS.⁴⁵ While AWS's projections of a major victory showed themselves to be overly optimistic, they were the most successful party in the elections.

One of the most controversial aspects of the decentralization of power that occurred in 1998 was the salaries of the new elected officials. Indeed, it would hardly be an exaggeration to

⁴⁵ For a full description of the electoral rules employed as well as their biases, see Zarycki p. 39.

say that the new subnational self-governments have gained far greater public attention for the salaries of their governors than for any other aspect of their operation. It was front-page news when it was announced that, in several cases, the salaries of the heads of the new regional parliaments exceeded both that of the national President and Prime Minister.⁴⁶ The salaries of the other members of the sejmiks also seemed shockingly large to the public, since even the lowest salaries were often multiples of the average Pole's wages.⁴⁷ The size of the salaries was all the more stunning given the small size of the region's budgets. In theory at least, the wages of subnational local officials had been regulated since 1990, by a decree of the government's Council of Ministers. This decree set limits on the wages of civil servants, but only those wages that were financed through money from the central government. It contained a provision, however, that allowed these limits to be exceeded by several times if the money came from the subnational government's own revenues. This loophole effectively removed any restrictions on elected officials salaries.⁴⁸

The Czech Republic

The development of the Czech party system in the 1990s has been a lot more settled than

⁴⁶ In the wake of the scandal about the salaries of newly elected subnational officials, one of the newspapers for the Malopolska region, Gazeta Krakowska, did an exposé on the salaries of the elected government officials in the region. Only one elected official refused to disclose his salary to the paper's reporters. As yet, there is no legal obligation to make this kind of information public. I quote directly from the notice that the paper then printed about him, as it is a good example of how the local politicians are often viewed by the public: "Mayor B. was the single elected official in Malopolska who did not want to disclose his earnings to us. Although he is formally employed in the Office of the City and Municipality [*Gminy*] of Swiatniki Gorne, we were unable to contact him at work there for five days running. We were always told either "he just left a moment ago" or "he will be here in a moment" or "he left on important business." Despite our numerous attempts, none of his colleagues would pass our request on to him, instead hanging up the phone without discussion. To see such manners in this office suggested that the transition from a municipality office to a city one was perhaps too great a shock. Messages left on the voice-mail of Mayor B.'s cellular phone also showed themselves to be of no avail. The salary of the Mayor of Swiatnik Gorne will remain the most closely guarded secret of the office." See Gazeta Krakowska "Portfel Samorzadowca" [The Pocketbook of the Regional, District, and Local Politicians] 5 March 1999.

⁴⁷ I came across many examples of this in the Polish region where I based my research, Malopolska. One of the regional newspapers, Gazeta Krakowska, asked all of the mayors, heads of powiats, and ministers of the regional sejmiks in the region about their salaries and then published the results. The lowest salary, three thousand zloty per month, was for the mayor of the town of Makow Podhalanski. Even this salary, however, was twice the average salary for the Malopolska region. Moreover, other mayors were earning salaries as high as 7.6 thousand zloty per month. See "Portfel Samorzadowca," Gazeta Krakowska.

⁴⁸ See "Portfel samorzadowca," Gazeta Krakowska.

in the previous two cases. After the initial (and inevitable) disintegration of the anti-communist umbrella movement Civic Forum in 1991, the features of the Czech political party system were set in more or less the form that they appear today. The entry of new parties has been negligible. The party system consists of three major parties with a tightly knit, centralized organization and one party confederation (Ctyrkoalice) that is behaving increasingly like one party.

Initially, however, the Czech party system looked like any other in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. There was one big anti-communist umbrella group called Civic Forum (OF) comprised of no fewer than twelve political groups. These ranged from the libertarian ODA on the one hand to the reform socialists of the Prague Spring on the other. Lacking a structured party apparatus, OF was a party of personalities, showcasing president-playwright-former dissident Vaclav Havel, Foreign Minister-former dissident Jiri Dienstbier, and charismatic technocrat-finance minister Vaclav Klaus. As a member of the OF coordinating center Jan Urban declared shortly before the elections that the organization would "certainly not become a political party with card-carrying members, or central, regional, and district committees." Urban added that he expected some of the party's constituent groups to leave immediately after the elections.

His prediction proved correct. In February 1991, Vaclav Klaus broke with the Civic Forum, taking most of its members with him, in order to develop a coherent party base for the economic reforms. A self-proclaimed Thatcherite, Klaus seemed never to tire of extolling the virtues of the free market and proclaiming that the end of his economic reforms was a "market without adjectives" -- especially adjectives such as "social democratic." ODS espoused a vision of a centralized, unitary state that could quickly transform the economy according to market principles. How much credit ODS can take for the success (and occasional crises) of the Czech economy is a debatable point, but it has doubtless been a constituency for bureaucratic autonomy in the construction of the Czech state. ODS, for example, has consistently opposed decentralization on the grounds that decisions about economic questions should be made by experts, not politicians. Klaus became Prime Minister in 1992, and his Civic Democratic Party (ODS) headed the government until 1997. For most of the post-1989 period Klaus's government

did not have to make major concessions to coalition partners.⁴⁹

ODS became the Czech party of state, and its hegemony allowed it to remake the state to a far greater degree than any party in Poland. Inevitably, ODS's control of the state apparatus also strengthened its party organization, and the element of patronage politics was never entirely absent (Kopecky, 1995). There were questions, for instance, about privatization. It was widely suspected, though never proven, that ODS had used some of the revenues from the privatization of state property for its political campaigns.

Unlike in Slovakia, where HZDS also functioned as the party of state for most of the 1990s, ODS was constrained from large-scale patronage politics by the existence of an organized opposition -- in addition to its ideological vision of the state as described above. From 1994 on, the Social Democrats (CSSD) were the fastest-growing party in Czech politics. In Shefter's terms, the Social Democrats were an externally mobilized party. As their party organization had been constructed outside of power, their leaders and membership had not been attracted by the lure of patronage. It was also not a post-Communist party, living off the organizational assets inherited from the previous system. Rather the party was built on a socio-economic constituency of left-leaning voters. Social Democratic leaders strongly criticized ODS's role in privatization and promised to carry out a so-called "Operation Clean Hands" if elected. The 1996 parliamentary elections saw greatly increased support for the Social Democratic Party (CSSD) and an erosion of ODS's position in parliament.

In 1998, the CSSD won a plurality in the country's parliamentary elections and formed a new government. Unlike the major governmental turnovers in Poland and the Czech Republic described above, the victory of the Social Democrats in the Czech Republic was not followed by extensive replacement of state appointees or a massive restructuring of the state administration. First, this was because they were an externally mobilized and cohesively organized party. They did not have to pay off political allies for their support. Second, their victory was big enough to

⁴⁹ In the Czech Republic, the old communist-dominated labor organizations collapsed or barely struggled on after 1989, whereas in Poland, the legacy of strong labor organizations untainted by communist collaboration made for a powerful constituency against the economic reforms.

allow them to form a government, but they lacked a majority. Therefore, they could not antagonize their political rivals such as ODS so egregiously that they would call a vote of no confidence.

What, then, were the factors that allowed the Czech Republic to escape the cycle of runaway state-building? To a certain extent, Klaus's ODS party showed itself willing to raid the state's resources to acquire resources for party-building on the patronage principle. There were two important differences from the other cases, however. First, the coinage of party patronage in the Czech Republic was different than in Poland. In the Czech Republic, party patronage was derived mainly from the privatization of state property. The country's voucher style of privatization, which was focused on moving as quickly and completely as possible, facilitated this. In Poland, on the other hand, party patronage has come more in the form of state employment -- either as a bureaucrat or as one of the legions of elected officials. The second difference is in the location of the constituency for bureaucratic autonomy. In the Czech Republic this constituency was relatively influential in the (ODS) government. Moreover, there was also a constituency for bureaucratic autonomy in the political opposition, the CSSD, which could credibly promise state reform. This was not the case in Poland. In Poland, the constituency for bureaucratic autonomy was limited to one relatively small political party UW, which had fragile relations to both of the major political formations in national politics. UW's ambivalent attitude toward the post-Communists was based on their years of opposition to the Soviet regime during the 1970s and 80s. The fragility of their relations with the trade union base of the post-Solidarity camp was the result of their liberalism in political questions. Finally, a third difference is in the stability of the Czech party system relative to the Polish and Slovak ones. In the continual ferment of party politics in Poland and Slovakia -- with the ceaseless coalescence and dissolution of political parties in these countries -- the demand for party-building resources is much higher than in a country with more established political parties. The costs of maintaining an organization are lower than the costs of establishing one.

To summarize the main points that emerge from this comparison of how three post-Soviet states have developed since 1989: first, there is a close connection between party-building and state-building. The reversion to the disfunctionalities of the Soviet state -- hyper-bureaucratization, centralism, ineffectiveness -- is greatest where party-building has rested on access to state resources, such as control over funds, nomination of positions. Second, the growth in the size of the state has been least dramatic in that case where overt institutional change to the state administration has been smallest, i.e. in the Czech Republic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me restate the basic argument of this paper. The starting point of this analysis is the intuition that to understand the problem of state-building in post-Soviet Eastern Europe it is necessary to direct the analysis to two inter-related factors, namely, to the problem of simultaneous party-building and state-building. This is a problem common to peripheral and late-developing states and, as such, treated in the literature on state-building (Shefter 1994; Silberman 1993). Moreover, in the context of contemporary Eastern Europe, this problem needs to be understood in terms of the legacy of the Soviet state itself, whose strong imprint still informs the thinking and mentality of the politically elites engaged in the party-building process.

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