

UC Irvine
CSD Working Papers

Title

Types of Cabinet Durability in Central Eastern Europe

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8cv4134w>

Author

Mueller-Rommel, Ferdinand

Publication Date

2005-10-01

CSD Center for the Study of Democracy

An Organized Research Unit
University of California, Irvine
www.democ.uci.edu

Of the general variables that might help to account for differences in cabinet decision-making processes, the durability of cabinet appears of special importance: In the literature, cabinet duration is seen as an indicator for the effectiveness of cabinets and the stability of the democratic regime.¹ The fact that an unwritten rule in nearly all democracies considers the first 100 days of a new cabinet as a “period of grace” shows that time plays a crucial role in the organization of government. Short-lived cabinets are seen as ineffective policy-makers, because “they do not have sufficient time to develop sound and coherent policies, and they lack the power to carry them out largely as a result of legislative interference” (Lijphart 1984: 165). In a more normative sense, short-lived cabinets reflect governmental incapacity to respond effectively to the aspirations or grievances of citizens in democracies. Conversely, long-lasting cabinets have better opportunities to develop internal cohesion and control. When cabinets endure we should, for instance, observe a better control of cabinet over legislative appointments and a more effective impact on the setting of the parliamentary agenda. This is particularly true when the same ministers or prime ministers are re-appointed in cabinet. Furthermore, it has been shown that long lasting cabinets are not only more effective, but also less conflict oriented in the decision-making processes (Frognier 1993:48).

The duration of cabinets in Western Europe has been studied widely. Most of the research focuses on explanations why some types of cabinets last longer and why cabinets tend to last longer in some countries and not in others. The various explanatory factors for cabinet duration in Western democracies are examined basically under three approaches:

The cabinet structure approach, which looks at the size and the number of parties in government, the ideological composition of governments, the coalition types and the presence or absence of core or dominant parties. (Dodd 1976; Nikolenyi 2004; Strom 1990; Van Roozendaal 1997; Warwick 1979)

The legislature approach in which the characteristics of party strength in parliament (e.g. fractionalisation and the effective number of parties in parliaments) are linked to the duration of cabinets. (Blondel 1968; Druckman 1996; Sanders/Herman 1977; Taylor/Herman 1971; Toole 2000)

The external approach that evaluates the impact of factors such as unpredictable political events, the state of economy and the bi-cameral system on the duration of cabinets. (Storm et al. 1988; Druckman/Thies 2002; King et al. 1990; Luebbert 1984; Warwick 1994)

All three approaches measure the stability or instability of cabinets in days, months or years of their duration in office. However, virtually none of these studies have explored the duration of ministers and prime ministers as an indicator of cabinet stability. This is most surprising since cabinets consist of ministers and prime ministers that hold cabinet positions. One can assume

¹ The author is grateful to the Center for the Study of Democracy at the University of California, Irvine, where this article was written in spring 2005.

that the duration of these political actors has also a significant effect on the capacity of governmental decision-making in cabinet. Empirical research on Western Europe, for instance, suggests that expertise in cabinet decision-making is likely to become greater as ministers and prime ministers acquire more experience in office (Rose 1975; Blondel/Müller-Rommel 1993). Ministers and prime ministers who stay in office for a longer period are more politically experienced and more familiar with administrative rules than those who remain in cabinet only for a relatively short time. The relevance of ministers' and prime ministers' duration in cabinet becomes particularly evident in Central Eastern Europe (CEE), because in several of these countries, the turnover of cabinets was high during the early years of transition. Yet, this turnover did not always coincide with ministerial or prime ministerial instability. In many cases, ministers and prime ministers remained in office after the formation of a new cabinet (Blondel/Müller-Rommel 2001).

This chapter offers a comparative description and classification of cabinets, ministers and prime ministers duration in Central Eastern Europe. It first defines the date of the "birth" of democratic cabinet "life" in post-communist countries. Second, it describes systematically the duration of post-communist cabinets, ministers and prime ministers during the first fourteen years (1990-2003). Overall, we shall attempt to answer the following questions: Which are the first democratic governments (founding cabinets) in post-communist Central Eastern Europe (CEE)? What are the appropriate indicators for measuring cabinet duration in CEE? What are the patterns of cabinet, ministerial, and prime ministerial duration in these countries? Do the theoretical assumptions and empirical findings about the duration of coalition types, which have been developed in the *cabinet structure approach* hold true for CEE cabinets? Which are the most stable cabinet systems in CEE?

Founding Cabinets

The first problem that needs to be examined is the "birth" of cabinets in post-communist systems. Which are the first democratic cabinets in post-communist CEE? Are they the first governments after the first free election in countries before independence? Or are they the first governments formed after the first free elections in sovereign national states? These are important questions as out of the ten CEE countries studied here only four had been sovereign states during the communist era (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania), while the others were sub-state units of former federal states (Soviet Union: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia; Yugoslavia: Slovenia; Czechoslovakia: Czech Republic, Slovakia).

In eight countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) the first democratic government was formed a few years after the first free election but before the post-communist constitution was adopted. During these years, the transition from the communist to the democratic system was markedly influenced by the loose organisational structure of most political parties. Additionally, the structure of most cabinets in the transition phase was similar to the structure which prevailed under communist rule with a large number of ministries and pyramidal arrangements in the cabinet (i.e., with a "presidium" to which the Prime Minister and a number of Deputy Prime Ministers belonged). Furthermore, in the Baltic states, the first free elections took place in 1990, followed by the formation of the first non-communist cabinets. Formally and legally these first post-communist cabinets operated not in independent states, but in sub-state units (Klingemann/Taylor 1995ff). They only became politically independent from the Soviet Union in 1991 and adopted their constitutions in 1992/93. The same

holds true for Slovenia, where the first non-communist government was formed after the first free election in 1990, but before state independence in 1991. In Bulgaria and Romania, on the other hand, an interim “Constituent Assembly” together with an interim government was at first responsible for drafting a new constitution. Only after the constitution was approved by parliament (or by referendum) did new elections take place and the interim democratic government resigned and was replaced by a fully responsible party cabinet.

For the purpose of this study, “founding cabinets” are defined as being in office after a free election *and* after the new democratic constitution had been adopted by parliament or by referendum. Cabinets in office in the period of “democracy under construction”, that is the years after the first free election but before the adaptation of the constitution are therefore excluded from the analysis.

“Founding cabinets” of eight countries in CEE may be classified by one of the following three characteristics: (see Table 1)

- *National sovereignty* Founding cabinets are defined as being created after the first free election in a politically independent state with an adopted post-communist constitution. The cabinets in Estonia 1992, in Latvia 1993, in Lithuania 1992, and in Slovenia 1993 belong to this category.
- *Statehood collapse* In two countries, the founding cabinets are defined as being formed after free elections and after regime collapse (Czech Republic 1993, Slovakia 1993). Thus, the democratic government of former Czechoslovakia is excluded from the analysis.
- *“Constituent Assembly”* In this category the founding cabinets are defined as being formed after the first free election and after a revised constitution was approved by an interim “Constituent Assembly”. (Bulgaria 1991, Romania 1992).

Two CEE countries do not fall into these categories: In Poland, the first free election took place in 1991 although the “little constitution” was passed parliament in 1992 only. However, the 1991 founding cabinet operated on the basis of a temporary Constitution, which was based on the 1952 Polish Constitution. In Hungary, the former communists dissolved their party and created a new Hungarian Socialist Party, which approved an amended Constitution defining Hungary as an independent democratic state in October 1989. The first free general election took place in March and April 1990 and the first non-communist cabinet, which came into office in May 1990 was at the same time the founding cabinet.

Patterns of Cabinet, Ministerial, and Prime Ministerial Duration

In comparative studies on party government it is generally agreed that a cabinet should be defined by means of three criteria: the same prime minister continuously in office, the same party or parties in government and the same legislative period. The duration of cabinets is conventionally measured by the number of days or years that cabinets are in office (Warwick 1994). The first cabinets in the dataset on CEE are the empirically defined “founding cabinets”. (see Table 1) The last cabinets included in the data are those that stayed in office up to the latest parliamentary election, prime ministerial resignation or change of coalition parties before December 31st 2003. Those cabinets which were in office on December 31st 2003 are thus excluded. On the basis of this definition, a total of sixty-eight cabinets were formed in ten CEE states from early 1990s to the end of 2003.

Table 1: Regime transition and founding cabinets

Country	Date of Independence	Date of Adoption of Constitution	First Free Elections	First Non-Communist cabinet	Founding cabinet
Bulgaria	-	12.07.1991	10.06.1990 ²	07.12.1990	08.11.1991
Czech Republic	01.01.1993	16.12.1992	08.06.1990 ³	29.06.1990 ⁴	01.01.1993 ⁵
Estonia	06.09.1991	28.06.1992	21.03.1990	03.04.1990	21.10.1992
Hungary	-	18.10.1989	25.03.1990	23.05.1990	23.05.1990
Latvia	06.09.1991	06.07.1993 ⁶	21.03.1990	05.05.1990	04.07.1993
Lithuania	06.09.1991	25.10.1992	24.02.1990	17.03.1990	02.12.1992
Poland	-	17.10.1992	27.10.1991	23.12.1991	23.12.1991
Romania	-	08.12.1991	20.05.1990 ⁷	01.10.1991	13.11.1992
Slovakia	01.01.1993	01.09.1992	08.06.1990	29.06.1990 ⁸	12.01.1993
Slovenia	25.06.1991	23.12.1991	08.04.1990	16.05.1990	12.01.1993

The measurement of ministerial and prime ministerial duration is based on the total number of days/years each person has held a ministerial or prime ministerial position. Ministers or prime ministers who returned in a different cabinet and/or in a different ministerial portfolio are counted as one observation. Thus we measure the “political experience” and not the “portfolio experience” of ministers. (Huber/Martinez-Gallardo 2002) Included in the dataset are all ministers and prime ministers, who held a position in the cabinets identified above. From the founding cabinets until the end of 2003, 48 persons served as prime ministers. There were 901 ministers during the period and they occupied 1199 ministerial posts.

¹ Election to Constituent Assembly

³ Czechoslovakian Federal Assembly

⁴ Czechoslovak federal government, inauguration of first Czech state government on 30.06.1990

⁵ Government in office as Czech state government since 02.07.1992

⁶ Reimplementation of the 1922 Constitution

⁷ Election to Constituent Assembly

⁸ Czechoslovak federal government, inauguration of first Slovak state government on 28.06.1990

In the following sections we look at cabinet, ministerial and prime ministerial duration. We secondly merge the empirical findings into a single index, in order to provide a more precise picture of cabinet stability in CEE.

Cabinet duration

If one bears in mind that the democratic system was new in CEE, the cabinet system performed surprisingly well in ten countries during the phase of institutional transition and consolidation. Between 1990 and 2003, political parties became more stable than those of Western Europe; cabinets developed similarly to those in Western Europe (Blondel/Müller-Rommel 2001). On average, these cabinets lasted 1.6 years; this is only slightly below the duration of Western European cabinets between 1950 and 1983 (1.8 years) (Budge/Keman 1990: 161).

There are appreciable variations in single countries over time and cross-nationally. Cabinets lasted longer by far in Hungary and the Czech Republic perform. In Hungary two out of four and in the Czech Republic one out of four cabinets lasted nearly four years. In contrast, the most unstable cabinet systems are found in Latvia, followed by Romania, Lithuania, Poland and Estonia. Nine of the ten cabinets in Latvia, nine lasted between 0.19 and 1.26 years.

Variations of cabinet duration over time indicate that several countries are on the way to consolidate their cabinet systems, as cabinet duration increased from 1990 to 2003: In Bulgaria, the first cabinet was in office for 1.14 years while the sixth cabinet held office for 4.17 years. A similar observation can be made for Slovakia (0.18 years in the first and 3.96 years in the last cabinet under observation) and for Slovenia (1.20 years in the first and 2.05 years in the sixth cabinet). Only in Lithuania has the duration of cabinets decreased from 2.9 years (first cabinet-excluding the caretaker cabinet) to less than one year (last cabinet under observation).

Table 2: Duration of Party Cabinets (in years, 1990-2003)

Country	Government										Mean excluding all caretakers	Mean all caretakers	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
Bulgaria	1,14	1,80	0,27	2,05	0,27	4,17						2,29	1,62
Czech Republic	3,50	1,49	0,53	3,99								3,00	2,38
Estonia	2,03	0,45	0,54	1,08	0,28	2,04	2,83	1,19				1,31	1,31
Hungary	3,58	0,56	3,97	3,89								3,00	3,00
Latvia	1,19	1,26	1,15	0,48	0,67	0,63	0,19	0,44	0,80	2,51		0,93	0,93
Lithuania	0,28	2,94	0,79	2,43	0,45	0,99	0,68					1,38	1,22
Poland	0,45	0,79	0,49	1,36	0,92	1,73	2,60	1,36	1,36			1,32	1,23
Romania	1,76	2,04	0,27	1,29	0,04	1,66	0,02	1,02				1,34	1,01
Slovakia	0,18	0,66	0,32	0,74	3,88	3,96						1,62	1,62
Slovenia	1,20	1,86	1,05	3,27	0,48	2,05						1,65	1,65

Source: Müller-Rommel, Fettelschoss, Harfst (2004: 878-892)

Empirical work on cabinet duration in Western democracies has shown that single party majority cabinets tend to be more durable than coalition cabinets and that majority cabinets are generally more durable than minority governments. Moreover, research on Western democracies confirms that minimal winning cabinets are also more durable than surplus coalitions (Powell 1982; Lijphart 1999).

In the ten countries examined here three conclusions can be drawn with respect to 61 of the 68 cabinets of the period (seven cabinets were of a caretaker character). *First*, 4 of these 61 cabinets were of the single party majority type, while two thirds (49) were coalition cabinets. Single party majority cabinets were only formed in Bulgaria and Lithuania, while coalition cabinets existed in all ten countries. Overall, single party majority cabinets were, as in Western democracies, on average more durable (2.5 years) than the coalition cabinets (1.7 years). *Second*, nearly three fifths (39) of the cabinets in CEE belonged to the majority type, while one third (22) consisted of minority cabinets. The duration of these cabinet types in CEE are similar to the ones in Western democracies. Majority cabinets are clearly more durable (2 years) than minority cabinets (1 year). *Third*, the number of minimal winning coalitions (19) was close to the number of surplus coalitions (16). Minimal winning cabinets were formed in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, while surplus coalitions existed in Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Both types of cabinet systems only existed in Latvia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Overall, the duration of minimal winning coalition (1.9 years) was nearly the same as the duration of surplus cabinets (2 years), while multi party minority cabinets were clearly less durable. (1.1 years) This finding deviates from observations in Western democracies, where minimal winning cabinets are usually more durable than surplus coalitions.

Duration of Ministers in Office

If the cabinet is perceived as an important arena for policy-making, and if political experience is a relevant predisposition for decision-makers in cabinet, then variations of ministerial duration are likely to play an important part in the working of cabinet government. Ministers with a long tenure in cabinet gain, for instance, expertise in a wide range of policy fields and develop closer links to other ministers and civil servants, which helps to pursue certain policy outcomes. In Western Europe ministerial duration is twice as large as cabinet duration. Almost half of ministers were in office for more than four years and one in five ministers served more than seven years (Bakema 1991: 74f).

In CEE the picture looks remarkably different (see Table 4). 901 men and women have been cabinet members, an average of 90 ministers per country in about thirteen years. This means that the turnover of ministers was very high in most countries, particularly during the phase from transition to democratic consolidation (1990-1996). The countries with the highest number of ministerial posts are Poland (137), Bulgaria (107) and Romania (105). There was only a small ministerial turnover in Slovenia (69), Latvia (71), Czech Republic (72) and Slovakia (73).

Table 3: Duration of Cabinet Types (in years, 1990-2003)

Country	Number of Cabinets	Types of Cabinet										Average Cabinet Duration ^a
		Majority Cabinet	Minority Cabinet	Caretaker Cabinet	Single Party Majority	Single Party Minority	Coalition Cabinet	Minimal Winning Cabinet	Surplus Cabinet	Multi-Party Minority Cabinet		
Bulgaria	6 (1)	3,11	1,47	0,27	3,11	1,14	1,8		1,8	1,62		
Czech Republic ⁴ (1)		3,5	2,74	0,27	3,99	2,5	3,5		1,49	2,38		
Estonia	8	1,39	1,17		1,16	1,35	1,39		1,19	1,3		
Hungary	4	3				3		3		3		
Latvia	10	1	0,82			0,93	0,64	1,38	0,82	0,93		
Lithuania	7 (1)	1,52	0,68	0,28	1,86	1,14		1,22	0,68	1,22		
Poland	9 (1)	1,59	0,87	0,49	1,36	1,31	1,59		0,62	1,23		
Romania	8 (1)	1,32	1,36	0,03	1,02	1,5		1,32	2,04	1,01		
Slovakia	6	2,08	0,7		0,66	1,82	1,46	3,96	0,74	1,62		
Slovenia	6	2,09	0,77			1,65	2,57	1,63	0,77	1,65		
Mean Average	6,80	2,06	1,17	0,27	2,49	1,17	1,7	1,86	2,08	1,13	1,60	
N Cabinets	68	39	22	7	4	8	49	19	16	14		

^a Caretaker Cabinets (in bracket) not included in duration measurement

Source: Müller-Rommel, Fetzelschoss, Harfst (2004: 878-892)

On average, ministers in CEE were in office for 2.0 years, which has been significantly lower than in Western Europe where ministers were on average 4.5 years in office (Bakema 1991: 74). If the duration in office is indeed a first measure of ministerial experience and if a minimum duration of three years is needed for a politician to be effective (Rose 1975), then the majority of ministers in CEE did indeed not have enough time to develop ministerial expertise.

Ministerial duration in CEE has two main characteristics. *First*, it differs widely across countries. Ministers in Slovenia, for instance, stay in office nearly twice as long as ministers in Bulgaria. Post-communist countries can therefore be classified into two groups, one in which the percentage of ministers with more than three years duration in cabinet is relatively high (Czech Rep, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia) and the other in which the average duration of ministers in office is clearly below three years (Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Lithuania). Among the countries with truly ephemeral ministers are Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland. Only in three countries a relevant number of (ten and more) ministers remained in office for more than three years (Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia). *Second*, ministerial duration in cabinet differed over time. Nearly every third minister in CEE (29 percent) stayed in office for less than one year, while a total of 47 percent of all ministers remained in office between one and three years. Only 206 out of 901 ministers held a cabinet position for more than three years.

If expertise in decision-making is likely to emerge as a result of the existence of a group of senior ministers, then the majority of cabinets in CEE consisted of “non-professional” ministers. On the other hand, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia belong to the group of countries with the most experienced ministers in CEE.

Duration of Prime Ministers in Office

Prime Ministers are typically the most powerful members of cabinets (Müller/Philipp 1991: 136). In principle, they can decide on all policy issues in which they have a special interest. Yet a minimum of three years duration in office appears needed for a prime minister to become an effective decision maker. Duration can therefore provide some indication of the political impact of the head of government on cabinet and national policy-making.

Up to the end of 2003, 48 persons served as prime ministers in the ten CEE countries. They lasted 2.4 years in office, but the variations around the average are large; one third of all prime ministers (15 out of 48) held office for less than one year. This includes one prime minister from each country, two from Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria as well as three out of six from Lithuania stayed in office for less than a year. Meanwhile, forty percent of the prime ministers remained in office between one and three years and about thirty percent remained in office for more than three years. Among them, nine prime ministers stayed in office for more than four years. These were Klaus (Czech Republic) and Meciar (Slovakia) 5 years each; Laar (Estonia) 4.8 years; Vacaroiu (Romania) 4.1 years while Zeman (Czech Republic), Horn (Hungary), Buzek (Poland), and Dzurinda stayed in office for 4 years each. The record is held by Dronovsek of Slovenia, who stayed in office for 9.4 years, before becoming president of his country.

Country	Number of Ministers	Average Duration	Up to 100 Days		Up to 1 Year		1-2 Years		2-3 Years		3-4 Years		4 Years and Above	
			%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Bulgaria	107	1,50	21,5	23	14,0	15	34,6	37	22,4	24	0	0	7,5	8
Czech Republic	72	2,50	0	0	22,2	16	29,2	21	15,3	11	9,7	7	23,6	17
Estonia	80	1,98	1,3	1	25,0	20	30,0	24	25,0	20	8,8	7	10,0	8
Hungary	89	2,39	0	0	18,0	16	28,1	25	19,1	17	23,6	21	11,2	10
Latvia	71	1,76	2,8	2	26,8	19	40,8	29	11,3	8	12,7	9	5,6	4
Lithuania	98	1,57	4,1	4	37,8	37	25,5	25	20,4	20	10,2	10	2,0	2
Poland	137	1,69	7,3	10	25,5	35	40,9	56	9,5	13	10,2	14	6,6	9
Romania	105	1,89	5,7	6	24,8	26	24,8	26	25,7	27	8,6	9	10,5	11
Slovakia	73	2,51	0	0	28,8	21	17,8	13	8,2	6	28,8	21	16,4	12
Slovenia	69	2,63	0	0	20,3	14	15,9	11	24,6	17	23,2	16	15,9	11
TOTAL	901	2,0	4,3	46	24,3	219	28,8	267	18,2	163	13,6	114	10,9	92

Source: own calculations on the basis of the CEE minister data bank, Centre for Democracy, University of Lüneburg

Table 4: Duration of Ministers (in years, 1990-2003)

Overall, 66 percent of the prime ministers in CEE seem not to have stayed in office long enough to exercise a major policy impact and only one third (thirteen) of prime ministers can be assumed to have had enough time to develop and implement effective policies.

Table 5: Duration of Prime Ministers (in years, 1990-2003)

Country	Number of Prime Ministers	Average Duration of Prime Ministers	Up to one Year		Up to three Years		Three Years and Above	
			%	N	%	N	%	N
Bulgaria	6	1,62	33,3	2	50,0	3	16,7	1
Czech Republic	3	3,31	33,3	1			66,7	2
Estonia	5	2,09	20,0	1	60,0	3	20,0	1
Hungary	4	3,00	25,0	1			75,0	3
Latvia	6	1,55	16,7	1	83,3	5		
Lithuania	6	1,43	50,0	3	33,3	2	16,7	1
Poland	7	1,58	28,6	2	57,1	4	14,3	1
Romania	6	1,35	33,3	2	50,0	3	16,7	1
Slovakia	3	3,25	33,3	1			66,7	2
Slovenia	2	5,16	50,0	1			50,0	1
TOTAL	48	2,43	32,4	15	33,4	20	34,3	13

Source: own calculations on the basis of the CEE minister data bank, Centre for Democracy, University of Lüneburg

Cabinet Duration and Stability

In this analysis, stable governments have been defined by the duration of the cabinet itself as well as by the ministerial and prime ministerial duration. Table 6 provides a comparative overview about cabinet durability in CEE countries during the 1990's. The findings can be summarised in three ways: *First*, the average ministerial and prime ministerial duration in office was higher than the duration of the cabinets itself. While prime ministers have been in office for 2.4 years and ministers for 2 years, the duration of cabinets in CEE lasted only 1.6 years. Thus, the stability of political actors in cabinet was greater than the cabinet structure. *Second*, cabinet duration is closely linked to ministerial and prime ministerial duration. Countries with long lasting cabinets, such as Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have indeed the highest duration of ministers and prime ministers, while ministerial and prime ministerial duration is relatively low in countries with short-lived cabinets such as Latvia and Lithuania. However, whether the duration of political actors in cabinet determines cabinet stability or whether the type of cabinet influences the stability of the ministers and prime ministers remains in question. *Third*, and most importantly, cabinet stability differs substantially from country to country.

In order to find the most stable cabinet systems, we constructed a stability index. This index consists of the separate ranking of the average cabinet, prime ministerial and ministerial duration by country. The highest value of duration is a “1”, while the lowest is a “10”. Hungary, for instance, has the highest average cabinet duration in CEE countries (3 years). It is therefore scored as “1” while Latvia, with the lowest average of cabinet duration (.9 years) scores “10”. Since cabinet duration is closely linked to prime ministerial and ministerial duration, the mean of the single ranking scores of cabinet, prime ministers, and ministers duration for each country produces a rank order of cabinet stability in CEE. Slovenia, for instance, had the highest average duration of prime ministers and ministers all over CEE, while the average cabinet duration was only third best in CEE. However, the overall mean of the rank ordering adds up to 1.3, which suggests that Slovenia performed best in the overall cabinet stability. Three other countries also received remarkable stability results (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia). A second group of countries that performed moderately on the cabinet stability index consisted of Estonia, Poland, and Bulgaria. Finally, the most unstable cabinet systems existed in Romania, Lithuania, and Latvia.

Table 6: Cabinet Stability Index for CEE (1990-2003)

Country	Average Duration in Years			Rank order
	CAB (rank)	PM (rank)	MIN (rank)	Mean Rank CAB, PM, MIN
Slovenia	1,65 (3)	5,16 (1)	2,54 (1)	1,3
Czech Republic	2,38 (2)	3,31 (2)	2,35 (4)	2,6
Hungary	3,00 (1)	3,00 (4)	2,37 (3)	2,6
Slovakia	1,62 (4)	3,25 (3)	2,41 (2)	3,0
Estonia	1,31 (8)	2,09 (5)	1,90 (6)	6,3
Poland	1,23 (6)	1,58 (7)	1,67 (7)	6,7
Bulgaria	1,62 (5)	1,62 (6)	1,45 (10)	7,0
Romania	1,01 (9)	1,35 (10)	1,93 (5)	8,0
Lithuania	1,22 (7)	1,43 (9)	1,55 (9)	8,3
Latvia	0,93 (10)	1,55 (8)	1,61 (8)	8,7
TOTAL	1,60	2,43	1,98	

++++++

Cabinets in CEE display large differences in the duration of ministers, prime ministers and cabinets. This was to be expected in view of the different transformation processes to democratic consolidation in the single countries under consideration. Although this analysis does not make it possible to determine how far the different patterns of duration have a direct or indirect impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of cabinet decision-making, it nonetheless suggests that some countries would be likely to have a lower degree of effectiveness and efficiency in the process of cabinet decision making. If long-lived cabinets with a high duration of ministers and prime ministers are indeed considered as being more effective and efficient policy makers - as suggested by Lijphart 1999, Powell 1982 for Western democracies - then the cabinets in Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia can be regarded as the most effective and efficient while the ones in Latvia, Lithuania and Romania clearly belong to the less effective and efficient cabinet decision-making types.

Bibliography

- W. Bakema (1991). The Ministerial Career, in: J.Blondel/J.L.Thiebault(eds), *The Profession of Government Ministers in Western Europe*. London: Macmillan, pp. 70-98.
- J.Blondel (1968). Party Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies, in: *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, pp. 180-203.
- J. Blondel/F. Müller-Rommel (eds.)(1993). *Governing Together*. London: Macmillan.
- J. Blondel/F. Müller-Rommel (2001). *Cabinets in Eastern Europe*. London: Macmillan/Palgrave.
- I. Budge/H. Keman (1990). *Parties and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- L. Dodd (1976). *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- J. Druckman (1996). Party Factionalism and Cabinet Durability, *Party Politics*, 3: 397-407.
- J. Druckman/M. Thies (2002). The Importance of Concurrence: The Impact of Bicameralism on Government Formation and Duration, *American Journal of Political Science*, 46: 760-771.
- A.Frogner (1993). The Single Party/Coalition Distinction and Cabinet Decision-Making, in: J.Blondel/F.Müller-Rommel (eds.), *Governing Together*. London: Macmillan, pp. 43-76.
- J.Huber/C. Martinez-Gallardo (2002). Cabinet Instability and the Accumulation of Experience in the Cabinet, Columbia University, mimeo
- G. King et.al. (1990). A Unified Model of Cabinet Dissolution in Parliamentary Democracies, *American Journal of Political Science*, 34: 846-871.
- A. Lijphart (1984). *Democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- A. Lijphart (1999). *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- G. Luebbert (1984). A Theory of Government Formation, *Comparative Political Studies*, 17: 229-264.
- W.Müller/W. Philipp (1991). Prime Ministers and other Government Heads, in: J.Blondel/J.L.Thiebault (eds), *The Profession of Government Ministers in Western Europe*. London: Macmillan, pp. 136-152.
- F. Müller-Rommel/K. Fettelschoss/P. Harfst (2004). Party Government in Central Eastern European Democracies, *European Journal of Political Research*, 43: 869-894.
- C. Nikolenyi (2004). Cabinet Stability in Post-Communist Central Europe, *Party Politics*, 10: 123-150.
- B.Powell (1982). *Contemporary Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- D. Sanders/V. Herman (1977), The Stability and Survival of Governments in Western Democracies, *Acta Politica*, 12: 346-377.
- K. Strom (1990). *Minority Government and Majority Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- K. Strom et.al. (1988). Contending Models of Cabinet Stability, *American Political Science Review*, 82: 923-941.
- M. Taylor/V. Hermann (1971). Party Systems and Government Stability, *American Political Science Review*, 65: 28-37.
- J. Toole (2000). Government Formation and Party System Stabilization in East Central Europe, *Party Politics*, 6: 441-461.
- P. van Roozendaal (1997). Government Survival in Western Multi-Party Democracies, *European Journal of Political Research*, 32: 71-92.
- P. Warwick (1979). The Durability of Coalition Governments in Parliamentary Democracies, *Comparative Political Studies*, pp. 465-498.
- P. Warwick (1994). *Government Survival in Parliamentary Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.