

The Rise of the Partisan State? Parties, Patronage and the Ministerial Bureaucracy in Hungary

JAN-HINRIK MEYER-SAHLING

It is problematic to classify the relationship between political parties and the state in post-communist Hungary as a case of low or no party patronage and state politicization. A study of the ministerial bureaucracy reveals that the passing of public administration reforms has not provided an effective constraint against politicization, and that the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy has increased over time in terms of extent, intensity and scope. Comparison of four post-communist governments in Hungary permits one to relate the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy to the desire of governing parties to enhance their political control over the formulation and implementation of public policies under conditions of polarized political competition between former communists and their political allies, on the one side, and anti-communist parties, on the other.

Research on the transformation of the post-communist state argues that the intertwining of party building and state building in post-communist Europe provides ‘ideal conditions for party patronage’.¹ Hungary is commonly cited as an outlier in the region in that it has experienced the least patronage, operationalized as the number of public administration personnel and its rate of increase over time. The negative growth of state personnel and thus the apparently negligible relevance of patronage for Hungary is related to factors such as the country’s status as a front runner in the area of public administration reform, in particular the adoption and implementation of civil service legislation shortly after the change of regime, the presence of a ‘critical opposition’, and the early institutionalization of ‘responsible party

Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling is a Lecturer in European Politics at the University of Nottingham. His main research interest lies in the comparative study of executives and the reform of the public sector in Europe, with an emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe. His articles have been published in *Journal of European Public Policy*, *West European Politics* and *Public Administration*. The author is grateful to László Andor and Zsófia Czoma for comments and suggestions on drafts of this paper.

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government', all of which are said to have prevented the use or abuse of the state apparatus for the provision of jobs to party supporters.²

This study re-examines the arguments surrounding the relationship between political parties and the state in post-communist Hungary. It examines to what extent, in what ways and why patronage matters for the ministerial bureaucracy. Patronage is understood as the staffing of public offices – here the ministerial bureaucracy – on the basis of political criteria. This definition differs from the broader understanding of patronage as the distribution of specific goods in exchange for political support, in that jobs form but one kind of special benefit that can be handed out to party supporters.³ At the same time, the focus on patronage as the provision of jobs in the ministerial bureaucracy overlaps with usage of the concept of 'politicization' in comparative public administration research. Politicization is typically referred to as 'the substitution of political criteria for merit criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, rewards and disciplining of members of the public service'.⁴ The terms 'patronage' and 'politicization' are therefore used interchangeably in this essay.

Taking issue with the results of recent research, this study presents a three-fold argument on party patronage and the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in post-communist Hungary. First, it argues that civil service legislation has not provided an effective constraint against the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in Hungary. Rather, governing parties can potentially control the staffing of the entire ministerial bureaucracy. The presence of civil service legislation is therefore not sufficient to infer that the post-communist state is not politicized nor can it be considered to be a sufficient brake on the politicization of the state. Second, the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in Hungary is, and over time has become, far more extensive and intensive than has hitherto been appreciated. The politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy has been especially important for the senior ranks, as evidenced by large turnover after changes of government and by the obvious political connections of appointees to positions that are nominally part of the permanent civil service. At the same time, the core structures of the central government ministries have generally been less subject to politicization below the senior level, but there are signs that the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy is creeping downwards, increasingly involving the wider, non-managing civil service.

Third, it is argued that the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in Hungary results less from the logic of building and maintaining party organizations than from the attempts of governing parties to address problems of governance under conditions of polarized political competition between former communists and anti-communist parties. Under these conditions, new governing parties have an incentive to initiate personnel turnover in the

ministerial bureaucracy and to insert officials who combine political loyalty and expertise for the sake of initiating and implementing public policy change and of conceivably managing the distribution of particularistic goods – patronage understood broadly – to party supporters. The consolidation of party organizations of parties both on the left and on the right has facilitated the politicization of the state, in that it has enhanced the access of parties to politically associated experts, promoting the rise of the partisan state in post-communist Hungary. In contrast to the literature on patronage in Central and Eastern Europe, this study therefore concludes that the polarization of political competition and party strength rather than party weakness and the absence of a critical opposition produce the politicization of the post-communist state.

Public Administration Reform and the Parties' Reach into the Ministerial Bureaucracy

In Hungary, governing parties have the possibility of reaching deeply into the ministerial bureaucracy. They can potentially exercise political discretion over the staffing of the entire ministerial bureaucracy. Hungary is the front runner in the area of public administration reform in post-communist Europe, in particular civil service reform.⁵ This record is usually assumed to create conditions that limit party patronage and the politicization of the state.⁶ Hungary was indeed the first country of Central and Eastern Europe to adopt and implement civil service legislation in 1990 and 1992. Subsequently, Hungary has passed three more civil service reforms, in 1997, 2001 and 2002–3, each of which led to the revision of the formal–legal basis governing personnel policy in the ministerial bureaucracy. This legislation has gradually institutionalized rules and procedures that reduce the possibilities for governments and their ministers to staff the ministerial bureaucracy on the basis of political criteria.⁷ State secretaries and senior and higher civil servants are required to hold a university degree; higher civil servants have to be recruited on the basis of a formal procedure for open competition, and they have to pass a basic examination upon entry to the civil service; senior civil servants and state secretaries have to pass a special examination after taking up their post; the political rights of civil servants are restricted in that they may not hold posts in a political party and are obliged to resign from the civil service if they run for elections at the national level; civil servants at all levels generally enjoy permanent tenure; they can be dismissed only in exceptional circumstances; and they have a prospect of pursuing a career in the civil service that takes into account criteria for merit and seniority.

It is, however, problematic to relate the degree of politicization to the adoption of civil service legislation because the formal–legal framework

incorporates a number of discretionary instruments that ministers can use to politicize personnel policy. Even if state secretaries have to meet certain criteria upon their appointment, members of the government have the authority to select and de-select them at all times. The assignment and reassignment of officials to positions at the rank of senior civil servant, representing levels 3 to 5 in the ministerial hierarchy and responsible for managing ministerial departments and divisions, are also subject to the discretion of the minister of the day. Ministers and the prime minister can set up ministerial cabinets with ministerial and political advisers up to five and ten per cent respectively of the overall ministerial staff. Members of the government can also freely appoint and dismiss titular state secretaries and government commissioners for the sake of performing specific tasks in the interest of ministers, the prime minister or the government. Finally, civil service legislation also provides ministers with possibilities to intervene in the appointment, promotion, transfer and dismissal of civil servants in higher, middle and lower-ranking positions. In Hungary, these personnel decisions are formally taken by administrative state secretaries as professional heads of the ministerial organization, and not by an independent civil service commission. Because the appointment of administrative state secretaries may be politicized by the governing parties, incumbent ministers may exercise indirect political discretion through the administrative state secretary.⁸ As a consequence, civil service legislation in Hungary provides enough political discretion for governments to influence the staffing of both the senior and the non-managing ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy, suggesting that the presence of civil service legislation is generally not sufficient to prevent the politicization of the state.

When the Party Never Stops: Patronage and the Growth of the Ministerial Bureaucracy

In Hungary, the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy has been intense but it has been concentrated in the senior ranks. However, there are signs that politicization is creeping downwards into the non-managing ranks. Patronage is generally difficult to identify and measure. Eschenburg emphasizes that the essence of patronage is found in the motive or intention of the appointing authority.⁹ Patronage occurs when the motive for the appointment of a person is incompatible with the official function of the office, for instance the appointment to a public position on the basis of partisan, special interest criteria. In order to estimate the precise extent of patronage in the ministerial bureaucracy, it would be necessary to identify the motive of the person who took the personnel decision, or the person on whose behalf the personnel decision was taken, for each and every position in the ministerial bureaucracy.

Even if this were possible, for instance, on the basis of an endless number of interviews, one would still have to address the problem that interviewees have good reason to conceal their true intention, because this would entail the confession that they have not acted in accordance with the official and functional requirements of the office but with special interests in mind. Similar to corruption, patronage therefore belongs to the realm of 'covert politics'.¹⁰

In an attempt to develop indicators to capture the extent of patronage, recent research examines the size of public sector employment or a particular category of public sector employment, its growth over time, and the growth of government wage bills.¹¹ To the extent that these studies refer to Eastern Europe, Hungary is usually identified as the case that has experienced the least patronage since the number of public administration personnel is said to have even contracted during the 1990s, while other countries have experienced positive – in some cases excessive – growth.

However, the rate of growth of administrative personnel is a problematic indicator of the measurement of patronage. First, the growth or reduction of administrative personnel over time is not necessarily the product of party patronage but may result from the reform and reorganization of public administration, or public sector restructuring more broadly. In Hungary, for instance, the greatest drop in state administrative personnel occurred between 1995 and 1997 as a result of the Bokros austerity programme, which included the goal of cutting back the personnel of administrative institutions by 15 per cent in order to reduce the government wage bill. Conversely, the biggest increase in the size of the central state administrative personnel occurred in 1999 after the self-governing social security organs were recentralized and as a result were transferred and reclassified from their former status as a public corporation at the local government level. In both cases, personnel fluctuations were thus unrelated to the presence or absence of party patronage.

Second, studies of patronage usually assume that parties turn to public sector jobs as a reward and selective incentive for their supporters.¹² The assumption that the growth in administrative personnel indicates patronage implies that parties hire new personnel but do not fire the personnel recruited by their predecessors in government, and that they therefore feed the supporters and organization of their political competitors. When taking office, parties should therefore have a strong incentive to dismiss officials who are associated with the opposition parties, and the discussion (above) of Hungary's civil service law suggests that governing parties in Central and Eastern Europe do in fact have the discretion to do so. As a result, they can save budgetary resources for purposes that correspond more closely to their interests. This consideration is especially relevant when taking into account that public finances were under severe pressure in most countries during the first decade after the change of regime.¹³

Third, the size of administrative personnel is a contingent indicator for patronage in that it depends to a large extent on the countries under scrutiny, the portion of public sector employment examined and the period of time studied. When looking at the size of the ministerial bureaucracy, here without the prime minister's office, Table 1 shows that during the period 1993–2003, the size of the civil service in general and the ministerial bureaucracy in particular did indeed shrink until 1998 and 1997 respectively but has since grown, exceeding its original 1993 level. Moreover, Table 1 reveals that the staff trajectory of different ministries has taken very different directions. On the one hand, the ministry of economic affairs and its predecessors shrank by 45 per cent until the end of 2000. On the other hand, the ministries of cultural heritage, education, and youth and sports, as the successor ministries of the ministry of culture and education, grew by 62 per cent during the 1990s. In both cases, the staff trajectories reveal at best half the story in so far as patronage is concerned.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF CIVIL SERVANTS BY EMPLOYING MINISTRY

	1993	1994	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Interior	594	569	549	526	648	640	538
Health						309	335
Welfare	438	477	427	344	381		
Agriculture	478	495	440	437	451	608	727
Economic Affairs						805	755
International Economic Relations	424						
Industry & Trade	652	1,369	1,087	1,005	677		
Defence	120	124	111	135	131	143	191
Justice	315	267	335	318	283	297	321
Environment	383	374	381	370	464	454	528
Transport	389	337	342	342	301	331	378
Foreign Affairs	1,633	1,618	1,745	1,578	1,772	1,835	1,887
Cultural Heritage						241	253
Education						458	653
Youth and Sport						89	117
Culture and Education	630	696	584	506	551		
Finance	579	569	591	572	620	576	520
Social and Family Affairs						324	252
Labour	237	225	236	286	318		
<i>Total Ministries</i>	<i>6,872</i>	<i>7,120</i>	<i>6,828</i>	<i>6,419</i>	<i>6,597</i>	<i>7,110</i>	<i>7,455</i>
<i>Total Civil Service</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>104,092</i>	<i>107,061</i>	<i>104,646</i>	<i>103,296</i>	<i>108,249</i>	<i>111,746</i>

Source: Ministry of Interior.

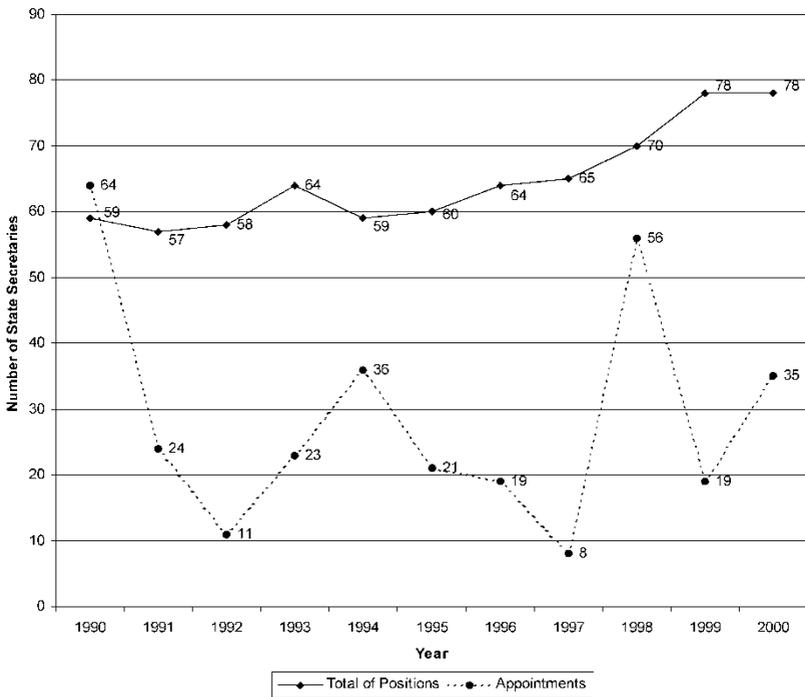
At first glance, the contraction of the ministry of economic affairs suggests that patronage has been irrelevant in this sector and that the state is indeed retreating 'from rowing to steering', in that the transition to a market economy has led to the redundancy of many administrative functions and units.¹⁴ On the one hand, the figures for the ministry of economic affairs, and for several other ministries, hide that staff changes have resulted from the reorganization of ministries. For instance, the ministry of economics received units responsible for labour market policy and vocational training in 1998 from the former ministry of labour. By contrast, in 2001, departments dealing with research and development were shifted to the ministry of education, and the departments for international trade were transferred to the ministry of foreign affairs, causing continuous fluctuations in staff across ministries. The figures also conceal that the ministry of economic affairs is usually identified as a central player in the provision of party patronage broadly understood, including the provision of contracts, services and funds. In 2000, for instance, the ministry developed and subsequently managed the so-called Széchenyi Plan. The Széchenyi Plan was originally launched by the Orbán government as a development programme for the revitalization of the small and medium-sized business sector in Hungary, one of the core constituencies of the centre-right parties. However, the opposition parties charged the government that the programme allows the governing parties to direct public money to 'associated businesses' because of the application of soft eligibility criteria for the allocation of grants.

On the other hand, there are good grounds to relate the staff increase in the successor ministries of culture and education to party patronage. Here, the increase in the size of the ministries can indeed capture some degree of party patronage but also indicates more broadly that reorganizations provide excellent opportunities to dismiss unwanted personnel and to hire 'friendly' staff into new units or new ministries such as the ministry of youth and sports, controlled by Fidesz (Alliance of Young Democrats) between 1999 and 2002, or the ministry of informatics, under the control of the SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats) since 2002. Second, what is not visible in Table 1 is that party patronage in terms of providing jobs to party supporters is often concentrated in the back offices of the ministries, such as newly established marketing offices or research centres, leading one observer to the cynical comment that 'for these guys, the party never ends'. All these examples suggest that, if staff numbers and evidence from interviews are valid indicators, there are signs of an increase rather than a decrease, or a stabilization on a low level of party patronage in the ministerial bureaucracy as well as in the periphery of the ministries.

Finally, aggregate figures on the size of the state cannot capture the extent to which different positions within the state bureaucracy are affected by party

patronage. For Hungary, the politicization of the senior ranks of the civil service and the identification of an appropriate dividing line between politics and administration has been a matter of continuous debate.¹⁵ In particular, administrative and deputy state secretaries, who are nominally the top two ranks of the senior civil service, have been subject to politicization. Four features of politicization stand out. First, Figure 1 shows that the number of positions available for the appointment of state secretaries has increased by more than 30 per cent, from fewer than 60 in the early 1990s to more than 80 since the Socialist–Liberal government under Prime Minister Medgyessy took office in 2002. Second, the changes of government in 1990, 1994, 1998 and 2002 each triggered a large turnover among state secretaries, as new governments replaced the state secretaries they inherited from their predecessors in government. Turnover rates varied from more than 90 per cent under the

FIGURE 1
TURNOVER AMONG STATE SECRETARIES



Source: Compiled by author.

Note: Elections were held in 1990, 1994 and 1998.

Antall government that took office in 1990 and roughly 60 per cent during the Horn government (which took office in 1994), while both the Orbán (1998) and the Medgyessy governments (2002) replaced about 70 per cent of the state secretaries who had served the previous government.¹⁶ Because the replacement and new appointment of state secretaries clearly peak in the aftermath of political leadership changes, this kind of turnover can be taken to indicate the use of political criteria in staffing state secretary positions. However, Figure 1 also shows that turnover and appointments are not restricted to periods of political change but persist – though at lower levels – during a government's term in office.

The third feature concerns the career pathways of newly appointed state secretaries. In Hungary, state secretaries are primarily recruited from outside the ministerial bureaucracy such as other organs of public administration, academia, the private sector, interest groups and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, it is not unusual to find state secretaries with some kind of political background such as a former position in government as political state secretary, or a career as member of parliament, or a party functionary, employee or activist. In fact, the civil service law forbids the simultaneous holding of party or elected office and a post in the civil service but considers it sufficient that new state secretaries resign from their political position upon their appointment to a state secretary post. Governing parties are therefore confronted with very few effective constraints upon the use of partisan criteria to staff positions of state secretary.

The most striking features of the politicization of state secretaries in Hungary, however, is not simply their recruitment from settings other than the ministerial bureaucracy, and thus a personnel policy that contradicts the principles of a professional and politically neutral civil service as well as the most common modes of senior personnel politicization in West European countries.¹⁷ Rather, the politicization of the senior civil service is characterized by the appointment of state secretaries who are returnees, in the sense that these officials have earlier been appointed to senior positions of the ministerial bureaucracy under governments formed by parties from the same political spectrum; they leave the ministries when their party is voted out of office and work in the private sector or academia or at a political party; and they return to the senior ranks of the ministries when their party or bloc of parties is voted back into government.

For instance, when taking office in 1994, the Horn government appointed state secretaries who had already served in the senior bureaucracy during the last socialist government led by Prime Minister Németh. These officials left the state administration in 1990 or shortly afterwards, mostly to take jobs in the private sector rather than at the MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party), and they were 'invited' to return to the ministries when the MSZP won the

elections in 1994. These 'new' state secretaries did not work as party officials during their period outside government office, but their career background inevitably associates them with the MSZP. Most of these state secretaries were representatives of the 'late Kádárist technocracy' who gained growing influence over government management from the early 1980s and began to dominate the ruling communist MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) in the late 1980s.¹⁸

Similar patterns of recruiting a large proportion of returnees into state secretary positions reproduced themselves after the 1998 and the 2002 elections. When the coalition of Fidesz, the MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) and the FKG (Independent Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Civic Party) took office in 1998, it appointed state secretaries who had already served in senior positions during the first centre-right government between 1990 and 1994, in particular officials who had been recruited late in the term and thus closer to the 1994 elections. In 2002, when the second Socialist–Liberal coalition took office, the ministries witnessed another influx of state secretaries whose faces were well known from the Horn – and often even the Németh – years. This 'mode of partisan politicization', that relies on the replacement of inherited officials by returnees, partisans and outsiders after changes of government, has therefore become increasingly stable in post-communist Hungary.¹⁹ While hard data for the comparison of governments and ministries is unavailable for the turnover of senior officials below the state secretary ranks, there are signs that the politicization of the senior civil service has begun to reach deeper into the service, in particular at the level of head of department, and it increasingly follows the same mode of politicization as that of state secretaries.

The exception to the mode of partisan politicization to the senior bureaucracy was the first democratically elected government, formed in 1990 by parties of the former democratic opposition under Prime Minister Antall. In contrast to its successors, the Antall government recruited its senior officials primarily from the lower managing ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy and thus from among the officials who had pursued careers during the communist regime. This initially friendly takeover of the senior bureaucracy after the change of regime was a short-lived phenomenon, however, as the Antall government soon adopted a far more assertive approach to senior personnel policy. In sum, a closer look at the ministerial bureaucracy reveals that patronage and politicization have indeed been very important in post-communist Hungary. The politicization has been concentrated at the top of the ministerial civil service but it has changed its defining features from the Antall government to its successors, suggesting an intensification of the use of political criteria for the staffing of the senior bureaucracy. Moreover, there is a trend that political parties are

tightening their grip on the ministerial bureaucracy in that the politicization of the civil service is expanding downwards.

In the Hungarian case, the approach of political parties to governing the state has therefore come to look quite similar to the approach of the communist party before the change of regime. Political reliability and party control have again become virtually necessary conditions for an appointment or promotion to the senior ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy. At the same time, appointees are required to possess policy and administrative expertise, suggesting a preference for the selection of red-and-expert officials that was characteristic of personnel policy during the late-communist regime.²⁰ The striking difference from the communist regime, however, is that the new centre-right parties that emerged from the former democratic opposition seem to have successfully emulated their political 'competitor' from before the change of regime as regards governing the state bureaucracy. To be sure, the democratic alternation of parties in government implies that post-communist parties cannot maintain long-term control over the ministerial bureaucracy. But for the time they form the government, the mode of senior personnel politicization in Hungary suggests that parties of both the right and the left approach the governance of the state in ways that are very similar to the ruling communist parties before the change of regime.

The Structure of Political Competition and the Politicization of the Ministerial Bureaucracy: Towards an Explanation

The discussion of patronage and politicization in the ministerial bureaucracy suggests that, contrary to the findings of earlier research, it is problematic to classify Hungary as a case of low or no patronage. Rather, patronage has been important and it has grown in terms of both extent and intensity, casting doubt on the arguments brought forward by Grzymala-Busse that the politicization of the state is a function of the 'absence/presence of a critical opposition' or by O'Dwyer it reflects that the 'institutionalization and robustness of post-communist party systems'.²¹ This section briefly examines how these arguments fare when applied to the ministerial bureaucracy in Hungary. Subsequently, the section explores an alternative explanation of state politicization in Hungary. It argues that it is problematic to assume that political parties turn to the provision of jobs in the ministerial bureaucracy for the sake of ensuring their organizational survival. Instead, it is argued that the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy is driven by the attempts of governing parties to enhance political control over policy making and implementation under conditions of polarized party competition between ex-communist and anti-communist political forces.

First, by the conceptual standards of Grzymala-Busse, Hungary has had a 'critical opposition' only since the elections of 1998 and not before.²² After the

1998 elections, the centre-right Fidesz–MPP (Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Party) formed a coalition with the agrarian FKGP and the conservative MDF, while the socialist MSZP and the liberal SZDSZ went into opposition. The MSZP–SZDSZ opposition can be classified as ‘credible’ in the sense that both parties had been in government; they had a clear ‘profile’ in that they had not dramatically altered the ideological appeal over the previous years nor did the opposition leaders regularly change their partisan affiliations; and, finally, the opposition was to become ‘contentious’ in the sense that it would vigorously monitor and criticize the governing coalition. Under these circumstances, we should expect less politicization and thus a stabilization or conceivably even the contraction of the size of administrative personnel. However, as shown above in Table 1, this is exactly the time when the ministries started to grow. Moreover, the crucial change from a more moderate ‘mode of bounded politicization’ to a mode of partisan politicization occurred after the change of government in 1994, not in 1998.

At the same time, it is more problematic to classify the pre-1998 opposition as a *critical* opposition. Between 1994 and 1998, the MSZP and the SZDSZ ruled in an oversized coalition commanding 71 per cent of the seats in parliament. At the same time, the centre-right opposition underwent a process of restructuring.²³ The centre-right parties certainly provided a contentious and vocal opposition, but the Fidesz only ‘grew into’ the dominant party of the centre right party during this period: it had not yet acquired the credibility of a former governing party, and it had only just completed an ideological reorientation from a radical liberal, anti-communist party into a liberal, national, conservative party of the centre-right. In these circumstances, the MSZP and the SZDSZ would therefore have found ideal conditions for the politicization of the state, but this is also the period when state employment in general decreased most radically. Moreover, the explanation is doubtful when examining the politicization of the senior civil service because a very different type of government–opposition relationship in 1998 returned the same mode of politicization as in 1994. Finally, the presence of a critical opposition is doubtful for the period before 1994, when the MDF ruled in coalition with the KDNP (Christian Democratic People’s Party) and the FKGP because the MSZP, which could have qualified as a critical opposition, remained small, with only 8.6 per cent of the parliamentary seats, and, as Ágh argues, ‘for two years, it was forced into a political ghetto’ before emerging as the main force on the centre-left of the party system.²⁴

O’Dwyer’s argument, that the ‘institutionalization of party systems’ and the ‘robustness of party competition’ prevent the growth of administrative personnel, encounters similar problems when applied to the ministerial bureaucracy in Hungary.²⁵ When party competition started to show most signs of institutionalization, namely in 1998 and subsequently, the state administrative

personnel began to grow, while periods with lower levels of party system institutionalization witnessed the negative growth of ministerial personnel. To be sure, these reflections on the staff development in Hungary do not refute the argument that a critical opposition and the institutionalization of party systems reduce the possibilities and incentives for political parties to use the state for the provision of patronage jobs. However, they question the suitability of the indicators of party patronage and state politicization and possibly the applicability of the arguments to the ministerial bureaucracy.

So how can we explain the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in post-communist Hungary? First, in contrast to the literature on party patronage in Central and Eastern Europe, I argue that the incentive of political parties to supply jobs for their supporters in order to ensure their organizational survival does not apply well to the logic of personnel policy at the level of ministerial bureaucracies. Rather, the appointment of potentially incompetent partisan officials to senior ranks in the ministerial bureaucracy may be entirely dysfunctional. Not only does it have the potential to weaken the general policy-making capacity of the government but it may even undermine the capability of governing parties to pursue a patronage strategy and thus to distribute particularistic goods such as contracts and services to their supporters. The costs of appointing an incompetent partisan official to the senior ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy may therefore far outweigh the benefits of having satisfied the office-seeking aspirations of one party supporter. At the level of central government ministries, I therefore follow the executive politics literature and argue that the logic of personnel policy is instead primarily driven by the desire of governing parties to control the bureaucracy and to make use of the expertise of ministerial bureaucrats for the sake of preparing and implementing public policies.

Second, in accordance with the literature on party patronage, I argue that the structure of political competition is indeed central to the explanation of state politicization in Central and Eastern Europe. Yet I argue that it is especially the polarization of political competition between former communist parties and their political allies, on the one side, and anti-communist parties, on the other, that creates pressure for the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in post-communist Europe. In conditions of political polarization, changes of government do generally imply major ideological reorientations of government policy. On the one hand, new governing parties are therefore in need of technical and procedural expertise in order to develop new policies and to effect changes in the management of existing policies. On the other hand, principal-agent analysis suggests that governments and their members will be reluctant to rely on the expertise of ministerial bureaucrats who are associated with their political competitors and predecessor in government, bearing in mind that bureaucrats may have an incentive to use their

superior expertise strategically, misrepresent it or hide it altogether. If a change of government takes place in a context of polarized party competition, the members of the new government can therefore be expected to face problems of trust *vis-à-vis* the ministerial bureaucracy, which will create an incentive for the new governing parties to replace inherited officials with trusted appointees.²⁶ However, new governing parties will be able to replace inherited officials only if there is a supply of suitable personnel alternatives that promise a mix of political responsiveness and governmental expertise, because otherwise they could fall into the potentially costly patronage trap outlined above. Governing parties therefore need to have developed the capacity to access personnel alternatives, be this within their own party organization, in the private sector, in academia, or inside the ministerial bureaucracy itself.

While political polarization can generally be expected to create pressures for the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy after changes of government, I assume here, in accordance with Frye, that in Central and Eastern Europe the polarization of political competition is especially 'atrocious' when former communist parties and anti-communist parties are divided into two ideological camps.²⁷ As a result, the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in post-communist settings can be expected to rise if two conditions are met: first, the structure of political competition is characterized by a polarization between former communist forces and their political allies on the one side and anti-communist parties on the other; and, second, governing parties can rely on the supply of personnel that combines political loyalty and governmental expertise to fill ministerial posts.²⁸

Two alternative constellations can also be derived from the 'politicization hypothesis' presented here. First, irrespective of the structure of political competition, the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy will necessarily be limited if governing parties lack a supply of personnel alternatives. Second, irrespective of the supply of alternative personnel, the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy can be expected to be lower if the political competition for government formation is less polarized; this is because new governments will find it less difficult to trust the ministerial bureaucracy and will thus lack an incentive to initiate major personnel changes in the first place.

These hypotheses can be examined by tracing the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in Hungary. Our discussion compares the four governments that have held office since 1990 and concentrates on the senior ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy. In particular, the theoretical perspective must be able to explain why the first freely elected government formed by three centre-right parties of the former democratic opposition opted for the more moderate politicization involving the promotion of officials from the lower ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy, while subsequent governments

have consistently opted for far more intense, partisan politicization. However, the discussion also shows that the politicization hypothesis and its alternatives gain support when examining the politicization differences at lower levels of aggregation, such as differences between governing parties of the same coalition.

The Polarization of Political Competition and the Politicization of the Ministerial Bureaucracy in Hungary

At first glance, we would expect that the Antall government, formed by parties of the former democratic opposition, faced the most serious problem of trust because the change of government was embedded in a change of regime and the new government was facing the remnants of the communist cadre administration. The Antall government should have had a clear incentive to replace the officials inherited from the communist regime with trusted officials from its own circle. However, it appears that the Antall government took office in a politically much less polarized context than its three successor governments, providing conditions for the formation of relations of mutual trust between the members of the new government and the ministerial bureaucracy. Moreover, the Antall government differs from subsequent governments in that it was unable to turn to an alternative administrative elite to replace the inherited communist bureaucracy. In other words, even if the Antall government had wanted to initiate major personnel changes it would have hardly had the means to do so.

The origins of the friendly takeover of the ministerial bureaucracy by the Antall government in the summer of 1990 can be traced to the events surrounding Hungary's transition to democracy. First, the legacy of the late communist regime, in particular the personnel policy and the public policy record of the Németh government, facilitated the formation of trust between the senior bureaucracy and the members of the Antall government. Political hardliners among senior bureaucrats were effectively forced to leave the administration during the Németh years, while reform-oriented officials were promoted or brought into the administration from academia, for example. Moreover, the Németh government pursued economic policy reforms that sought to pave the way for the establishment of a market economy. This helped senior officials to start developing a reputation of support for the objectives of the 'dual transformation'.

Second, the round table talks of Hungary's pacted transition provided an opportunity for the Antall government to mitigate problems of trust in relation to the ministerial bureaucracy. At the time of their appointments in 1990, most of the administrative state secretaries, for example, were well known by the new Prime Minister Antall and, to a lesser extent, by the new ministers.

Many of them had represented the ministries at the national round table talks in the spring of 1989. During the negotiations, this new generation of senior officials was able to signal to the representatives of the parties of the democratic opposition that they supported the change of regime and associated policy changes.

Third, the Antall government lacked access to alternative personnel with governmental expertise to fill the posts in the ministerial bureaucracy. The lack of a sufficiently large pool of experts associated with the former democratic opposition at the time of government and regime change meant that the new governing parties effectively lacked the possibility of initiating a large-scale purge of the ministerial bureaucracy. The first generation of ministers themselves lacked experience in government. They had entered the political scene shortly before or during the period of regime change, and none had previously worked in a government ministry close to political power. The three governing parties also lacked an infrastructure that could provide specialist support for the development of policies outside the ministries. Even if some academics were recruited into the ministerial bureaucracy, ministers were almost completely dependent on their ministerial staff in the policy-making process. In these circumstances, Prime Minister Antall recognized that it was impossible to replace the entire ministerial bureaucracy after the change of regime. Instead, it was considered necessary to work with those senior officials who were expert staff but had not held formal positions in the MSZMP in order to make the far-reaching reform ambitions of the first government work.

This is not to say that the government was exposed to no politicization pressures. The parliamentary factions of the governing parties, in particular the MDF parliamentary faction, exerted pressures on Antall to assert more control over the staffing of the senior bureaucracy. The MDF was founded in 1987 by populist writers and intellectuals as a political movement rather than a political party. Adopting the image of a 'rightist-centrist people's party' during the 1990 election campaign, the MDF continued to accommodate several political currents under its roof including a moderate-pragmatic, a conservative and a radical-populist wing.²⁹ The members of the Antall government represented the moderate-pragmatic strand of the MDF, whereas radical-populist and conservative factions were underrepresented in the cabinet. The approach of the latter two factions to Hungary's bureaucracy was based on the radical anti-communist assumption that the completion of the change of regime requires a 'thorough cleansing' of the bureaucracy from all connections to the former ruling party, MSZMP.³⁰ Such ideological considerations of some parts of the governing parties prevented the formation of trust. In consequence, the anti-communist factions within the MDF questioned Antall's approach to senior personnel policy, calling for the exclusion

from the policy-making process of senior officials associated with the communist regime and the insertion of trustworthy officials into the senior ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy.

The position of the anti-communist factions within the MDF does therefore also support the politicization hypothesis formulated above at a lower level of aggregation, in that it demonstrates that individual factions within governing parties can demand the tightening of political control and so push for the politicization of personnel policy. As long as Antall's position was largely uncontested within the governing coalition, he could contain these pressures for politicization. However, during the first parliament the party system moved from a tripolar to a bipolar structure of political competition. The rapprochement between the MSZP and the SZDSZ after 1991–92 pulled the MSZP out of its 'political ghetto' and, as a result, the ideological division of the regime over how to deal with the communist past no longer cut across the historically dominant socio-cultural divide but reinforced it.³¹ Ágh, for instance, argues that under these conditions the Hungarian party system began to exhibit the 'permanent marks of a polarized pluralism'.³² The growing polarization of political competition during the first parliament, together with the fading popularity of the governing parties in the context of political and economic crisis, the gradual disintegration of the governing parties, and Antall's deteriorating health condition, weakened his position within the governing coalition while strengthening the influence of the anti-communist wing. As a result, the government gradually stepped up the level of political control over the ministerial bureaucracy and, by the time the second parliamentary elections approached in the spring of 1994, most of the first generation of state secretaries had been replaced by appointees who were politically sympathetic to the centre-right parties.

In contrast to the Antall government, all subsequent governments took office in circumstances that created pressure for and facilitated the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy. All three governments were formed in a climate of political polarization that created demand for personnel change in the managerial ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy, in particular, and all three governments were formed by political parties that had developed the capacity effectively to bring their own administrative elite to government to prepare and manage public policies.

The remainder of this section briefly looks at each of the three subsequent governments that were in office from 1994 to 1998 (Horn government), 1998 to 2002 (Orbán government) and since 2002 (Medgyessy/Gyurcsány) before discussing the facilitating role played by ministerial bureaucrats themselves in the politicization game in Hungary.

First, in 1994, the Horn government took office in a context of polarization between the MSZP and its political ally SZDSZ, on the one side, and the

anti-communist centre-right parties, on the other. This created an incentive for the new government to initiate personnel changes. In particular, the Horn government had an incentive to replace the state secretaries who were appointed by the Antall government. The state secretaries who were appointed by the Antall government owed their careers to the former government, and their loyalty to the MSZP–SZDSZ government was therefore called in question. Accordingly, the main victims of the 1994 senior personnel turnover were the state secretaries recruited by the Antall government to the ministries only after 1990, whereas state secretaries who had been continuously employed in the administration since the late 1980s had a higher chance of survival.

Second, the MSZP sought to distinguish itself from the centre-right parties by stressing its policy achievements and its experience in running the state and the economy before the change of regime.³³ In the 1994 elections, the MSZP became the largest party, with the slogan ‘Let Competence Govern’. Márkus argues that ‘the vote contained a twofold message: a refusal of ideologically determined policy-making . . . and moderate support for Westernization. . . . The well-known faces and familiar style of the ex-Communists offered a sense of stability and security, after the turmoil of the first post-89 government and its policies’.³⁴ Accordingly, the MSZP promised not only a ‘government by experts’ but, as Bozóki argues, more precisely a government by those experts who had handed over the country ‘in good order’ (the Németh government) in the spring of 1990.³⁵

As a consequence, the MSZP was effectively able to bring back its own administrative elite – officials who had already been appointed to senior positions under Németh and earlier. MSZP ministers also benefited from their past experience. All MSZP ministers had gathered experience in the administration or in government before 1990, giving them a good prior knowledge of senior officials’ professional capabilities, preferences and political orientations. In addition, ministers could take advantage of the rather well-developed national organization of the MSZP and its broad-based social networks, both in policy development and in their search for appropriate candidates.³⁶ In contrast to the centre-right parties in 1990, the MSZP was therefore not constrained by a lack of supply of personnel with adequate governmental expertise, and this facilitated the shift towards a partisan mode of politicization in 1994.

Third, there were considerable differences in the politicization of ministries led by the MSZP and those that were under the control of the small coalition partner SZDSZ, providing evidence that the hypotheses formulated above can also account for differences across political parties within governing coalitions. Like the MSZP, the SZDSZ had an incentive to initiate changes in the senior ranks of the ministries; however, it was far more constrained in tackling problems of political trust than the MSZP. SZDSZ ministers shared many of the problems that had already puzzled Antall’s ministers in

the early 1990s. They were largely dependent on the ministries for the development and drafting of policies, as they lacked both experience in government and the opportunity to rely on a party infrastructure that could provide policy-making support from outside. SZDSZ ministers were also exposed to pressures from the parliamentary faction to avoid the promotion of senior civil servants to state secretary ranks because senior civil servants were associated with the political views of the MSZP, potentially creating an opposition to the ministers within the ministries. As a result, the culture and education ministers tapped the backbone of SZDSZ support to staff the state secretary ranks of the ministry: the intelligentsia of the capital city Budapest. By contrast, for the SZDSZ ministers heading the ministries of interior and transport, it became a matter of necessity to seek co-operative relations with the inherited senior officials of the ministries, as the SZDSZ had difficulties in recruiting suitable staff from the wider social environment of the party that could have been appointed to state secretary ranks.

Fourth, the approach of the centre-right parties that formed the Orbán government in 1998 shares many more similarities with the MSZP in 1994 than with the centre-right parties of the Antall government in 1990. These similarities and differences across governments suggest first of all that the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy is not driven by the ideology of governing parties but by other factors. Indeed, the impetus for the politicization of the ministries came again from the heightened polarization between ex-communist political forces and radical anti-communist forces on the right of the political spectrum. Fidesz and its political allies regarded the Horn government essentially as a reincarnation of a pre-transition socialist government, especially owing to the appointment to the helm of government and administration of personnel who had already been in senior positions during the Németh administration. The radical anti-communist stance of the centre-right parties led them to associate virtually the entire ministerial bureaucracy with the former communist regime. The governing parties therefore had a motive to initiate personnel turnover even further down the ministerial ranks and they had little faith in promoting officials from within the ministries to state secretary ranks.

At the same time, the Orbán government had access to a pool of politically associated personnel with governmental expertise who could fill the vacant posts in the ministerial bureaucracy, and it took the opportunity to reactivate many state secretaries who had already acquired experience in government in the early 1990s under Antall. Moreover, the government could tap a far larger pool of potential appointees from other sectors of society than the Antall government could in 1990, since Fidesz in opposition had invested in the formation of social networks.³⁷ Hence there was no necessity for the Orbán government to pursue a gradual takeover of the senior bureaucracy as the

Antall government had done in the early 1990s. Instead, the personnel policy legacy of the Horn government, the continuous political polarization between left and right and the organizational development of the centre-right parties reproduced the personnel policy features of the Horn years.

Finally, the change of government in 2002 indicates the stabilization of a mode of politicization that relies on large turnover and the appointment of returning officials, party affiliates and outsiders to the senior ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy. The Socialist–Liberal government under the leadership of Prime Minister Medgyessy took office in a climate of again intensified political polarization between left and right, which created pressures for politicization. Yet both the MSZP and, by 2002, the SZDSZ were able to turn to a pool of politically sympathetic appointees to staff the senior ranks of the ministries, many of whom had already gathered experience in the administration at an earlier point of their career. As a result, the 2002 change of government reproduced a mode of politicization very similar to the changes of government in 1994 and 1998.

Since the two camps – ex-communist MSZP plus the liberal ally, SZDSZ, on the one side, and the anti-communist Fidesz plus the smaller parties of the right on the other – have consolidated, political competition has increasingly taken on a friend-and-foe logic that leaves little room for non-affiliates. In particular, in government and politics, and hence also in the ministerial bureaucracy, officials are effectively forced to take sides if they seek to advance. During the mid- and late 1990s, it was still very common that ministerial bureaucrats below approximately the top three ranks would try to stay outside the political games in order to secure the longer-term security of tenure. With the increasing stabilization of a mode of politicization that relies on the appointment and reappointment of politically associated experts from outside to the senior ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy, higher and middle-ranking officials have started to read the writing on the wall, which indicates that career progress requires political commitment to either of the two sides. One of the most recent products of this politicization of careers within ministries is the establishment of a new platform, the ‘Third Wave’, associated with the MSZP party organization. This loose grouping consists exclusively of people from the ‘apparatus’, that is, the various public sector organizations, in particular the central state administration. Members tend to be young, and the Third Wave considers itself to stand outside or cut across the traditional, ideologically defined platforms within the MSZP. Again, these kinds of development look very familiar when compared with the communist state bureaucracy before the change of regime.

As a result, the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy is indeed creeping downwards. However, the downward politicization is not simply a product of party incentives for political control: it is reinforced by

bureaucratic responses to a changing structure of career incentives. The adaptation of civil servants to these changing incentives also indicates that the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in general, and a mode of partisan politicization in particular, are effectively being institutionalized, for by the time officials have reached a certain level they almost inevitably join the troops of politically associated experts who switch between the ministries, the private sector, academia and politics, the highest prize being the appointment as a minister and not as an administrative state secretary. Quite clearly, the conclusion therefore is that the politicization of the state has become – again – a central feature of Hungarian political life.

Conclusion

This study has taken issue with claims that post-communist Hungary has successfully contained pressures for the politicization of the state. Concentrating on the ministerial bureaucracy, it has shown that governing parties have a deep reach into the ministries, in that they can potentially exercise political control over the staffing of the entire ministerial civil service. It has also shown that patronage and politicization have been concentrated in the senior ranks of the ministerial bureaucracy, although there are signs that the politicization is increasingly affecting the non-managing ranks of the civil service.

Finally, in seeking to trace the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy in post-communist Hungary, the study has argued that the politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy has primarily been driven by the polarization of political competition between the ex-communist MSZP and its political ally SZDSZ, on the one hand, and the anti-communist parties, in particular Fidesz, on the other. In these circumstances, new governing parties have been confronted with major problems of political trust *vis-à-vis* the ministerial bureaucracy because they associate ministerial bureaucrats with the policies and interests of their political competitors. Governing parties therefore have an incentive to replace ministerial bureaucrats with their own trusted appointees, but the extent to which they can do so depends on their capacity to recruit officials who combine political loyalty and governmental expertise. As parties of both the left and the right have gradually developed this capacity, the Hungarian trajectory suggests that the partisan politicization of the ministerial bureaucracy remains stable, at least so long as the political competition is dominated by the divide between ex-communist and anti-communist parties. The argument presented here therefore turns the dominant explanations of the literature on party patronage in Central and Eastern Europe on their head: the polarization of political competition and party strength, rather than party weakness and the absence of a critical opposition, produces the politicization of the post-communist state.

NOTES

1. See Conor O'Dwyer, 'Runaway State Building: How Political Parties Shape States in Postcommunist Eastern Europe', *World Politics*, Vol.56 (2004), pp.520–53 (p.521).
2. As argued by Anna Grzymala-Busse, 'Party Competition and the Pace of State Reform', paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, 27–31 Aug. 2003; Anna Grzymala-Busse, 'Political Competition and the Politicization of the State in East Central Europe', *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.36, No.10 (2003), pp.1123–47; O'Dwyer, 'Runaway State Building'.
3. See Martin Shefter, 'Party and Patronage: Germany, England and Italy', *Politics and Society*, Vol.7, No.4 (1977), pp.403–52.
4. Quoted from B. Guy Peters and Jon Pierre (eds.), *Politicization of the Civil Service in Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.2.
5. See Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, 'Getting on Track: Civil Service Reform in Post-communist Hungary', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6 (2001), pp.960–79.
6. See Grzymala-Busse, 'Party Competition and the Pace of State Reform'; Grzymala-Busse, 'Political Competition and the Politicization of the State'; O'Dwyer, 'Runaway State Building'; Antoanetta Dimitrova, 'The Europeanization of Civil Service Reform in Central and Eastern Europe', in Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds.), *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp.71–90.
7. For the further empirical analysis and conceptual foundation of the argument, see Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, 'The Institutionalization of Political Discretion in Post-Communist Civil Service Systems: The Case of Hungary', *Public Administration*, Vol.83, No.3 (2006), pp.693–716.
8. See László Vass, 'Politicians, Bureaucrats and Administrative Reform in Hungary: Who Stops Whom?', in B. Guy Peters and Jon Pierre (eds.), *Politicians, Bureaucrats and Administrative Reform* (London: Routledge 2001), pp.83–92.
9. Theodor Eschenburg, *Ämterpatronage* (Stuttgart: Curt E. Schwab, 1961).
10. See, for example, Wolfgang Müller, 'Patronage by National Governments', in Jean Blondel and Maurizio Cotta (eds.), *The Nature of Party Government: A Comparative European Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2000), pp.141–60.
11. See, for example, Jorge Gordin, 'The Political and Partisan Determinants of Patronage in Latin America 1960–1994: A Comparative Perspective', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol.41 (2002), pp.513–49; Grzymala-Busse, 'Party Competition and the Pace of State Reform'; Grzymala-Busse, 'Political Competition and the Politicization of the State'; O'Dwyer, 'Runaway State Building'.
12. See Miriam Golden, 'Electoral Connections: The Effects of the Personal Vote on Political Patronage, Bureaucracy and Legislation in Postwar Italy', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.33 (2003), pp.189–212.
13. See, for example, Martin Brusis and Vesselin Dimitrov, 'Executive Configuration and Fiscal Performance in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.8, No.6 (2001), pp.888–910; Vesselin Dimitrov, Klaus Goetz and Hellmut Wollmann (eds.), *Governing After Communism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).
14. See Barbara Nunberg (ed.), *The State After Communism: Administrative Transitions in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: The World Bank 1999).
15. Discussed in András Körösiényi, 'A közigazgatás politikai irányítása és a patronázs', *Valóság*, Vol.40, No.12 (1997), pp.46–71; István György, 'The Civil Service System of Hungary', in Tony Verheijen (ed.), *Civil Service Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1999), pp.131–58; Zoltán Szente, 'Közigazgatás és politika metszéspontján: a miniszterek és az államtitkárok rekrutációja Magyarországon, 1990–1998', *Századvég*, Vol.13 (1999), Summer, pp.3–52; László Andor, *Hungary on the Road to the European Union: Transition in Blue* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000); László Vass, 'Politicians, Bureaucrats and Administrative Reform in Hungary: Who Stops Whom?', in Peters and Pierre (eds.),

- Politicians, Bureaucrats and Administrative Reform*, pp.83–92; Tamás Fricz, 'Kormányváltások vagy "rendszer-váltások"?! Az eddigi kormányváltások személyi és szervezeti következményei Magyarországon, 1990–2003', in Péter Sándor, László Vass, Ágnes Sándor and Ágnes Tolnai (eds.), *Magyarország politikai évkönyve* (Budapest: Democrácia Kutatások Magyar Központja Alapítvány, 2004), pp.122–39.
16. In 1990, the number of appointments is higher than the number of positions because a few positions experienced two personnel changes within about six months or even less. For the other election years, the values represent the appointments within the entire year of 1994 and 1998. Because new governments took office in the summer, in both cases a few appointments were still made by the outgoing government in the first half of the year.
 17. See, for example, Edward C. Page and Vincent Wright, 'Conclusion: Senior Officials in Western Europe', in Edward C. Page and Vincent Wright (eds.) *Bureaucratic Elites in Western European States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999), pp.266–79.
 18. See Erzsébet Szalai, *Post-Socialism and Globalization* (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 1999).
 19. The mode of partisan politicization is one of four modes of politicization that indicate correspondence to different western modes of politicization and divergence from western traditions of politicization. Partisan politicization points to a distinctive, post-communist mode of politicization: see Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, 'The Changing Colours of the Post-Communist State: The Politicization of the Senior Civil Service in Hungary', *European Journal of Political Research* (2007 forthcoming).
 20. The similarities can be drawn further. For instance, the mobility between the ministerial bureaucracy, the party (headquarters), the economy, and what is now referred to as the third sector, are more common career paths of senior appointees than careers that are limited to the ministerial bureaucracy alone.
 21. See Grzymala-Busse, 'Party Competition and the Pace of State Reform'; Anna Grzymala-Busse, 'Political Competition and the Politicization of the State in East Central Europe'; O'Dwyer, 'Runaway State Building'.
 22. Grzymala-Busse provides several criteria to distinguish a critical opposition: see her 'Party Competition and the Pace of State Reform', p.10.
 23. See Ágnes Batory, *Hungarian Party Identities and the Question of European Integration*, Sussex European Institute Working Paper No.49 (Brighton: University of Sussex, 2001).
 24. See Attila Ágh, 'Defeat and Success as Promoters of Party Change: The Hungarian Socialist Party after Two Abrupt Changes', *Party Politics*, Vol.3, No.3 (1997), pp.427–44.
 25. O'Dwyer, 'Runaway State Building'.
 26. See Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, 'Civil Service Reform in Post-Communist Europe: The Bumpy Road to Depoliticization', *West European Politics*, Vol. 27, No.1 (2004), pp.69–101.
 27. Timothy Frye, 'The Perils of Polarization: Economic Performance in the Post-Communist World', *World Politics*, Vol.54 (2002), pp.308–37. This is not to say that other political divides do not matter for the politicization of the bureaucracy, but the pressure can be expected to be particularly serious if former communist and anti-communist forces face each other.
 28. Obviously, a third condition is that the formal-legal basis of personnel policy makes possible the politicization of the bureaucracy. However, we can consider the formal-legal basis to be endogenous to the politicization hypothesis. If governments feel constrained by civil service legislation because they are troubled by problems of trust *vis-à-vis* the ministerial bureaucracy, they can amend the law in order to increase the 'degree of political discretion' built into legislation and thereby increase their opportunities to politicize civil service policy: see Shefter, 'Party and Patronage'; Meyer-Sahling, 'Civil Service Reform in Post-Communist Europe' and 'The Institutionalization of Political Discretion'.
 29. See András Körösenyi, *Government and Politics in Hungary* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p.36.
 30. See Mihály Bihari, 'Change of Regime and Power in Hungary', in Sándor Kurtán, Péter Sándor and László Vass (eds.), *Magyarország Politikai Évkönyve* (Budapest: Ökonómia Alapítvány, 1991), pp.32–47.

31. Herbert Kitschelt, Zdenka Mansfeldova, Radoslav Markovski and Gábor Tóka, *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999); Batory, *Hungarian Party Identities*.
32. Attila Ágh, 'The Year of Incertitude', in Sándor Kurtán, Péter Sándor and László Vass (eds.), *Magyarország Politikai Évkönyve* (Budapest: Demokrácia Kutatások Magyar Központja Alapítvány 1994), pp.16–37.
33. See Anna Grzymala-Busse, *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
34. Quoted from György Márkus, 'Cleavages and Parties in Hungary after 1989', in Kay Lawson, Andrea Römmele and Georgi Karasimeonov (eds.), *Cleavages, Parties, and Voters: Studies from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), pp.141–57 (p.148).
35. See András Bozóki, 'The Ideology of Modernization and the Policy of Materialism: The Day after the Socialists', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol.13, No.3 (1997), pp.56–102 (p.78).
36. See Attila Ágh, 'Partial Consolidation of the East–Central European Parties: The Case of the Hungarian Socialist Party', *Party Politics*, Vol.1, No.4 (1995), pp.491–514.
37. See Tamás Fricz, 'Democratization, the Party System and the Electorate in Hungary', in Mária Schmidt and László Gy. Tóth (eds.), *Transition with Contradictions: The Case of Hungary 1990–1998* (Budapest: Kairosz Publishing, 1999), pp.93–124.