**Central European University**

# "MINDSET MATTERS" UNDERSTANDING PRIME MINISTERS' PERFORMANCE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

By

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# Statement

*I hereby declare that this work contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. This thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person unless otherwise noted.*

Bojana Kocijan
May 2014

*To My Family*
*With Love and Gratitude*

## Abstract

This dissertation explores the role of political culture in leadership performance. The literature has hitherto only speculated about the role culture plays in how leaders perform. This study argues that mindset matters and demonstrates it largely accounts for prime ministers' integrity of conduct and effective governance that improves citizens' welfare. The study assesses the performance of 33 Eastern European prime ministers in democratic governance based on an original data collection using expert surveys. Prime ministers' performance in democratic governance requires delivering effective outcomes in European Union (EU) integration, economic and social policy making by concomitant respect for democratic institutions. Policy outcomes set as criteria for assessing performance requires establishing that prime ministers are the main policymaking actors. The study demonstrates that despite their formally weak Constitutional powers, most Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) prime ministers are perceived as strong in reference to their policymaking abilities. Findings of the study only partially confirm the negative culture thesis. CEE prime ministers are generally average politicians moderately respectful of democratic institutions and moderately committed to reforms that improve citizens' welfare. They neither greatly improve nor severely erode the democratic framework or policy outcomes in EU integration, economic and social policymaking. They are largely pro-European politicians valuing EU membership and engaging in activities that bring their countries closer to the EU. That they are more democratic than effective relates to the complexity of transitions and structural reforms. Polish and Estonian prime ministers perform best in democratic governance, while Latvian prime ministers perform worst, which is in line with generally higher corruption rates in Latvia than in other countries.

In reference to prime ministers' programmatic performance, the study finds cultural variables outperform demographic and contextual variables. According to path-dependent theories, old values carry over from the past and appear important under democracy. Leaders' mindsets, the study shows, are especially relevant in newly democratized settings where old norms and values continue to influence present developments. CEE prime ministers were socialized during communism, which was characterized by values different from norms required for democratic governance. Once transmitted into democratized settings, the old values manifested as populism, personalization of politics and corruption. Prime ministers characterized as populists and engaged in populist rhetoric are more likely to violate the democratic framework and deliver ineffective policies that erode citizens' welfare. While the study shifts the research focus from exploring aspects of prime ministers' position in the decision-making realm (procedural performance) to exploring the outcomes of their conduct and policymaking (programmatic performance) it also demonstrates that the relationship between different types of performance is not always symmetrical as literature suggests but very often asymmetrical. Prime ministers' better programmatic performance did not always increase their electoral prospects. The study suggests that contextual factors surrounding elections, rather than past record in office, explains why Eastern Europeans sanction leaders who perform well and frequently keep in office leaders who performed poorly.

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I deeply regret my mother could not live longer to witness the completion of this project, but I am always grateful for all she taught me and for all she has done for me. Because I am mostly indebted to my parents and my sister for their unconditional love, support and understanding, it is to them I dedicate this thesis.

I bear full responsibility for all errors and omissions I inadvertently made in what follows.

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## INTRODUCTION

A few decades ago Blondel noted, "If one reduces politics to its bare bones, to what is most visible to citizens, it is the national political leaders that remain once everything else has been erased" (Blondel 1987: 1). In contemporary democracies, political leaders are the most visible to citizens and the impression they leave on voters determines the voters' perceptions about democracy as a political system. After continuous disappointing performances, voters may stop discriminating between good and bad leaders, perceiving them all as "political crooks". Consequently, political leadership indirectly influences the quality of democracy by encouraging or discouraging political participation. Political apathy is an indicator of poor leadership performances, where voters may become less willing to defend democracy by eliminating politicians or groups with authoritarian ambitions. If leaders perform well, however, voters are reassured about democracy's intrinsic worth and its ability to deliver accountability, which in turn leads to better public perceptions of democracy.

Research on leadership performance is not a very advanced field of study. Previous research on assessing leadership performance is mostly qualitative, focused on leaders in Western democracies and is largely an object of political biographies. Comparative leadership research is limited and mostly descriptive, comparing one or very few isolated leadership cases. Consequently, explanations of leadership performance emphasize the importance of one group of variables over others. Leadership performance research was initiated in the United States (US) where scholars become intrigued about determinants of presidents' performance in office. Scholars largely argued that personal traits and skills are responsible for better or worse performance (Barber 1977, Lasswell 1969, Greenstein 1968, Brett 1997, Bolden et al. 2011, Bass and Bass 2009). Once leadership performance research caught the eye of European scholars, it was primarily emphasized that institutional difference is what explains the variance in what leaders can or cannot do while in office (Elgie 1995, Rose 1991, Helms 2005). Other scholars however argued that personal and institutional explanations fail to address the importance of the context that surrounds leadership (Simonton 1991, Kenny and Rice 1988, Hunter et. al 2007, Yammarino and Dansereau 2009, Masciulli et al. 2009, Haughton 2005, Walter and Strangio 2007: 64-85, Hartley and Benington 2011, Helms 2012a, Blondel 1987, Skowronek, 2011). Because the results of this cumulative research are mixed and inconclusive, in that when other

variables were entered into the picture the previous ones appeared less important, scholars argued that it is the interplay between personal, institutional and contextual variables that determines leadership performance (Hargrove and Owens 2003).

Literature on political leadership has hitherto only speculated about the role of political culture in leadership performance. Kemp, for example, emphasizes the importance of Australian leaders' democratic credos emanating from Australian egalitarian and democratic political culture that transcend party differences and largely account for the relative coherence and continuity of Australian governments (2008). Various scholars, however, acknowledged the importance of political culture as an important determinant for the overall prospects of democracy in a given country (Huntington 1991, Almond and Verba 1963, Higley and Gunther 1992, Roller 2005, Hogstrom 2013). For example, Lijphart argued consensus-oriented culture is a precondition for consensus democracies to take root and thrive (1999). In post-communist CEE, scholars observed a negative political culture among elites that only nominally accept democratic rules, but otherwise employ subtle techniques in forming a network of informal practices that erode the quality of institutional framework (Pehe 2009, Gallina 2008, Lengyel and Ilonszki 2012). Negative political culture among CEE elites is largely related to elites' socialization during a communist regime that valued norms diametrically opposed to the norms required for sustaining democracy. Some of the old values not supportive of democracy once transmitted in post-transitional establishments manifested in different forms of a negative political culture (Gallina 2007).

The study of the relationship between political culture and leadership performance is worth pursuing for both theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, it is important to clarify the role of political culture in leadership performance among other classic predictors. Previous research only speculated about the importance of cultural variables and these variables were never inserted into models of leadership performance. This is mostly because leadership research has so far been largely case specific and a lack of data did not allow testing hypothesis based on large data sets. In addition, because leadership performance research was mostly popular in old democracies, it is likely that the effect of democratic culture would have not played a significant role in explaining leaders' performance. In old democracies, long-

term experience with a culture supportive of democracy may discourage elites and leaders from manifesting aspects of negative political culture. This is not to say that leaders in old democracies are immune to manifests of negative political culture such as populism or corruption. Nevertheless, democratic experiences are more likely to pose barriers for politicians with authoritarian tendencies with regard to occupying top political posts. However, in newly democratized settings, where no such barriers exist, politicians with authoritarian tendencies can reach high-ranking positions more easily. This is why it is important to examine the role political culture plays in leadership performance along with personal and contextual variables. Consequently, models that fail to consider leaders' culture in its explanatory models are underspecified and may lead to biased conclusions. Leaders in new democracies are socialized in regimes that differ in values and norms from those required under old democracies. However, if these norms carry over and transmit into democratic establishments, then a gap is created between democratic institutions and the non-democratic commitment of actors who do not respect those institutions. A subtle erosion of democracy as a system and attitudes about its worth may prove dangerous in the long run.

From a practical perspective, if there is empirical evidence that leaders' mindset matters and that it matters on top of political hierarchy, then the direction of funds provided by democracy supporters and foreign aid agencies can switch from insisting on funding grass roots and civil society organizations to investing more effort in personal recruitment and changes at the top. CEE democratizations occurred in the context of a traditional decline of parties, extension of supranational institutions where becoming a member is of special worth and, more recently, an accelerated global crisis. This poses additional challenges to political parties and their leadership. Political parties should devise mechanisms to prevent the entry into politics of party leaders with undemocratic political mindsets, because these leaders eventually occupy prime ministerial posts and influence policy outcomes. Alternatively, political parties would need to set criteria and encourage quality politicians with credible mindsets to enter politics, because these politicians are more likely to deliver good governance that improves citizens' welfare when they take their turn in governing the country. If parties continue to be the main source of political representation in the future, careful candidate selection and assistance to parties' top personnel is where changes would contribute most to political progress. This is

especially prominent in a "leader-centered" age when voters look up to leaders and parties to their candidates as main drivers of media campaigns and governments. EU membership has proven unable to check domestic authoritarian tendencies, which is especially why assistance to top political personnel on a national level is important. Increased turnouts alone are not able to improve democratic governance in a given country, if voters keep electing leaders with poor commitments to democratic governance.

This dissertation contributes existing research on leadership topics in the following ways. First, it enlarges the scope of existing research by testing a leadership hypothesis on a larger set of data. Given that the thesis assesses the performance of 33 CEE prime ministers, the present study rests on the largest-to-date set of leaders for which the same type of data was collected to allow comparative assessments in quantitative analysis. This is the first study of leadership performance in one recently democratized region (Eastern Europe), given that this type of research previously focused only on old (Westminster) democracies. Selection of prime ministers from recently democratized settings allows for testing the effect of political culture on leadership performance. Second, the thesis develops a framework for assessing prime ministers' performance that is easily adaptable to assessing leadership elsewhere. Performance in democratic governance entails respecting democratic norms and effective policies in EU integration, economic and social policymaking, which are considered to most contribute to citizens' prosperity. Third, because prime ministers' performance is tied to policy outcomes as criteria for assessment, the thesis contributes to the knowledge about prime ministers' powers. Namely, leadership performance research must engage in a preceding research step that can account for the direct ability of leaders to influence policy outcomes for which they are held responsible. Finally, the study enhances knowledge about different types of leadership performance that were hitherto studied in isolation. To give an example, research was interested either only in the electoral performance of leaders or only in how they perform in office. Rarely did studies set the two types of leaders' performance against one another to understand properly the relationship between different aspects of performance.

Building on theories of political culture, democratic governance, prime ministers' powers, and retrospective voting, I suggest that leaders' mindset is what explains prime

ministers' programmatic performance. Programmatic performance is defined here as respect for democratic institutions and effective governance that improves citizens' welfare. In spite of their weak formal powers prime ministers are able to use various prerogatives to increase their powers in practice and to influence policymaking, which justifies assessing their performance in democratic governance. The relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance is most often asymmetrical and prime ministers that are successful in one type are not necessarily successful in another type of performance.

To explore the main questions in the thesis, I draw on an original expert survey data collection from nine CEE countries applicable to 33 prime ministerial terms from mid 1990 until June 2013. The results of the study's investigation demonstrate that CEE prime ministers are sufficiently powerful to influence policymaking. They have a moderate to strong ability to participate in decision-making, while most individual prime ministers are perceived as strong in reference to their policymaking powers. The study further finds that CEE prime ministers are generally average politicians with a moderate respect for democracy and effective governance. They are largely pro-European politicians who value EU membership and accommodate their behavior according to the requirements of the EU common project. Their better performance in relation to democratic conduct and the EU compared to performance in economic and social policymaking might relate to the complexity of post-transition economic and social restructuring. Country variation in prime ministers' performance is in line with corruption rates. Polish and Estonian prime ministers are the best performers in democratic governance, while Latvian prime ministers perform worst. Generally lower corruption rates in Poland and Estonia may relate to a generally lower tolerance of corruption by its elites and may be a reflection of prime ministers with more democratic mindsets. In contrast, higher corruption rates in Latvia may relate to more tolerance for corruption by Latvian elites and may point to prime ministers with generally less democratic mindsets.



In reference to the effect of political culture, the study finds that mindset matters and that prime ministers characterized by populism or engaged in populist rhetoric are more likely to violate the democratic framework and deliver policies that do not improve citizens' welfare. Populism, executive personalization, and corruption are manifests of a negative political culture

that is a carryover from the old regime and, once transmitted into the new democratic establishment, endangers democratic governance. This finding is supported by two new original data sets on populism, including expert surveys and coding of prime ministers' speeches. The study finds that prime ministers' programmatic success is only sometimes rewarded by re-election. Most often, however, the relationship between programmatic and electoral performance is asymmetrical and not symmetrical as suggested by previous literature. Prime ministers' good records of performance in the economy, EU integration and social policymaking do not increase their electoral chances. Contextual factors, the thesis suggests, including the availability of electoral alternatives, voters' perceptions, and political scandals, explain why Eastern Europeans only sometimes reward prime ministers who perform well and frequently re-elect those who perform poorly.

The thesis is structured in the following way. In chapter one, I review four important pieces of literature that chronologically answer the main research questions asked in this study. Literature on cabinet decision-making and prime ministers' powers are helpful in estimating prime ministers' real ability to influence decision-making. This is an antecedent to assessing prime ministers' performance in democratic governance because it increases the certainty that prime ministers were (in large part) able to influence policy outcomes set as criteria for assessment. Literature on democratic governance is used to develop a model for assessing leadership performance. Prime ministers' performance in democratic governance is defined as the ability to deliver effective outcomes in EU integration, economic and social policymaking by concomitant respect of democratic institutions. Literature on political leadership and political culture identified a pool of variables used for testing the effect of cultural, personal and contextual variables on prime ministers' programmatic performance. Three different types of prime ministers' performance are borrowed from the literature on assessing the success of public policies. The procedural aspect of prime ministers' performance is not an immediate interest of this thesis, but is briefly addressed in a discussion of prime ministers' powers. Prime ministers' programmatic performance is defined as performance in democratic governance. Economic voting literature is also used to test the effect of prime ministers' programmatic on electoral performance and to explain the symmetry or asymmetry between different types of performance.

In chapter two, I outline the case selection and the logic of using the prime ministerial term as the study's unit of analysis. I discuss the characteristics of institutional settings that are appropriate for selecting prime ministers and for evaluating their performance in democratic governance. Because this thesis is the first empirical attempt to assess the performance of a large number of CEE prime ministers, I outline the characteristics of expert surveys and explain their advantages over other methods. The chapter also addresses the study's limitations, which are inherent to any study interested in leadership performance.

In chapter three, I demonstrate the prime ministers' ability to exploit contextual, institutional and personal prerogatives to shift the balance of power closer to the center, thereby allowing them direct influence on decision-making. This is an important research step that clarifies prime ministers' contributions to policy outcomes in the context of dispersed decision-making characteristic to collective cabinets in parliamentary democracies. The chapter demonstrates how, despite the formally weak powers given to them by Constitutional provisions, prime ministers can use various prerogatives and, in line with veto player theory, can overcome important vetoes to achieve their policy preferences.

In chapter four, I present an empirical mapping of prime ministers' programmatic performance. Prime ministers' programmatic performance is defined as performance in democratic governance, which entails four dimensions: democratic conduct, EU integration, economic and social policymaking. Expert data is first discussed in the separate democratic governance's dimensions and where applicable compared to other data sources such as media reports. Then, expert data is discussed as an index of democratic governance, which is an aggregate of all four dimensions. To make the discussion of prime ministers' variable performance in separate dimensions of democratic governance possible, the prime ministers are categorized in three groups based on the scope–impact vision of their performance: "outstanding", "average" and "likely populists".

In chapter five, the study examines the effect of cultural, demographic and contextual variables on prime ministers' programmatic performance. The chapter outlines levels of

populism and executive personalization in individual prime ministers that originate from expert surveys and the coding of prime ministers' speeches. Other cultural variables of interest are prime ministers' previous political experience and the type of political experience during communism. Demographic variables, the effect of which is tested on prime ministers' programmatic performance, include the prime ministers' age at assuming office, their field of education and their political orientation. Contextual variables, the effect of which is tested on prime ministers' programmatic performance, are those related to prime ministers' immediate environment and include cabinet type, number of cabinet parties, term duration, the nature of the terms and circumstances leaving office. A political circumstance of period in office is a more distant variable that surrounds prime ministerial terms. Statistical analyses including ANOVA, bivariate and multiple regressions are used to test the hypothesis in this chapter.

In chapter six, prime ministers' programmatic performance is weighed against electoral performance. The focus of this chapter is whether a symmetrical relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance, as expected by previous literature, holds. Alternatively, the chapter looks at factors that can improve our understanding about prime ministers' variable performance across different types of performance.

# CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING PRIME MINISTERS' PERFORMANCE

In this chapter, I review three literatures, each targeted at answering one of the three main research questions asked in this study. Literatures on cabinet decision-making and prime ministers' powers are helpful for understanding and estimating prime ministers' real ability to influence decision-making. This is an important initial research step, because prior to assessing their performance, one has to be certain that prime ministers in large part influenced policy outcomes used here as criteria for such performance. Literatures on prime ministers' performance and economic voting will answer study's second question interested in criteria that are suitable for assessing prime ministers' performance and its different types. Literatures on political culture of elites and political leadership offer a pool of variables that can help in explaining variation in prime ministers' performance.

The chapter is divided in three parts, each addressing literatures that chronologically answer research questions. Literatures on cabinet decision-making and prime ministers' powers are reviewed first, because estimating prime ministers' real ability to influence decision-making is a preceding research step to assessing performance and looking for variables that explain variation in performance. In the second part of this chapter, I review the literature on prime ministers' performance and its different types; programmatic and electoral performance. This literature is important for establishing proper criteria of prime ministers' performance and understating relationships between its different types. Finally, I review the literature on political culture of elites and political leadership that identifies variables likely to account for variation in prime ministers' performance. In line with study's main argument that "mindset matters", political culture of prime ministers' manifested as populism and executive personalization are most important in explaining prime ministers' programmatic performance, while other variables identified in political leadership literature are less relevant.



### *1.1 Prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making*

In this section, literature on cabinet decision-making and prime ministers' powers will broaden understanding of prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making in real political contexts. Arguments offered in these literatures provide foundation to chapter three where prime ministers' powers are empirically established. This is a relevant research step, because before

assessing prime ministers' performance, one has to be convinced that they had the real ability to influence concrete policy outcomes, based on which their performance is assessed and for which they are held responsible.

### 1.1.1 Process-oriented literature

Process-oriented literature is interested in the *process* and *actors* that participate in cabinet formation, termination and decision-making. Prime ministers are considered as actors (among many others) who participate in cabinet process (Blondel and Thiebault 1991, Laver and Shepsle 1996, Strom 1990, Woldendorp et al. 2000, Gallagher et al. 2001, Budge and Keman 1990, Hennessy 2001, Blondel et al. 1993 and 2007, Blondel and Müller-Rommel et al. 1993, Farrell 1971). Cabinet decision-making research applicable to CEE is rare with few studies discussing the reasoning behind the institutional framework favoring strong prime ministers in some countries, especially Hungary and Poland (Körösényi 1999, Schiemann 2004, Zubek, 2001). Blondel and Müller-Rommel made the greatest contribution and improved cabinet decision-making knowledge in CEE by two edited volumes that are based on interviews with 300 ministers. The cumulative endeavor of their research advances understanding about origins, structure, composition and activities of CEE cabinets since the fall of communism (2001) and about factors that are important for efficient cabinet decision-making such as the structure of political system, political parties, prime ministers, individual ministers and administrative capacities of prime ministers' offices[1] (2007, see also Goetz and Wollmann 2001).

Cabinets in parliamentary democracies are collective bodies where all cabinet members participate and are jointly responsible for cabinet decision-making making. Some authors challenged this assumption arguing cabinets are *prime ministerial* and thus hierarchical emphasizing that the role of prime ministers is above ministers (Foley 2000, Suleiman and Rose 1980, Padgett and Abromeit 1994, Farell 1971). Other scholars insisted the *core executive* is not hierarchical but composed of a network of actors who depend on each other to influence

[1] In CEE, if prime ministers are strong, prime ministers' offices mostly have administrative capacity, while their political capacity increases if prime minister is weak. In Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary, these offices have administrative role, while in Latvia, Estonia and Czech Republic they are more influential in political matters. In Poland and Lithuania, these offices combine aspects of both administrative and political tasks (Blondel et al. 2007; 127 – 135).

policymaking (Rhodes and Dunleavy 1990, Dowding 1995). Inspired by the prime ministerial / core executive debate, Elgie (1997) proposed a *framework for comparative study of the executive politics* by developing six models[2] of cabinet decision-making. These models were further improved by looking also at *how* cabinet decisions are made and not only at *who* is in the position to make these decisions (Vercesi 2012).

Models of cabinet decision-making allow estimating powers to influence decision-making of each cabinet actor at any given time in any parliamentary or semi-presidential system. Cabinet models are not static however and many factors including electoral laws, cabinet type, crisis, natural disasters, political personalities and leadership styles may change the power constellation and induce a shift[3] from one cabinet model to another without a concomitant change in the institutional context. Cabinet models type of research is close to non-existent in CEE, however some original studies recently took off. Šarkutė[4] (2010) found Lithuanian cabinets are collective with elements of monocratic and/or bureaucratic models where prime minister is dominant, discussions in cabinet collegial, ministers not autonomous and prime minister's office influential in cabinet–decision making (2010: 19). In chapter three cabinet decision-making models are used to provide general estimates of powers of individual prime ministers.

[2] In *monocratic* government prime minister decides policy across all issue areas, while ministers are only agents of prime minister and bureaucrats mainly confined to policy implementation. In c*ollective* government, all actors can equally influence decision-making with no single actor able to dominate decision-making process. Decisions in cabinet are taken with participation of all ministers (collectivity) and all ministers must agree to a decision for which they are collectively responsible. In m*inisterial* cabinets, ministers can greatly influence decision-making in their ministries, without much reference to prime minister or other cabinet members. In b*ureaucratic* government, civil servants are responsible not only for policy implementation, but also for policymaking. In s*hared* government, a restricted number of people can equally influence policymaking in all important areas. In *segmented* government, few actors can significantly influence policymaking in one sector, with little or no cross-sectoral intervention between them. Segmented model is likeliest where main political actors have very specific policy interests or because time or other institutional constraints skew their attention to certain areas (1997: 225).

[3] Majoritarian electoral laws produce single party governments with strong parliamentary majorities, which increases prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making. In contrast, prime ministers in coalitions may be more prone to collective decision-making. External events like wars, natural disasters may require a more personalized leadership and monocratic cabinets. Financial crisis may require technocratic expertise and segmented cabinets, which allows elected politicians to distance themselves from the crisis and the responsibility for contributing to it (Körösényi, 2013). A popular leader is likely to lead a monocratic, while an unpopular leader a collective cabinet ( Elgie 1997: 231).

[4] Her research looks at configurations of internal (prime minister's office, ministers' and prime ministers' personal styles, ministerial autonomy, level of disagreement, professional experience of ministers), and external (presidency, interest groups, media, political parties, civil servants) factors for uncovering predominant cabinet model in Lithuania.

### 1.1.2 Power-oriented literature

Power-oriented literature is a part of the process-oriented literature, but is specifically interested in prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making directly (Farell 1971, King 1994, O'Malley 2005). The primary interest of power-oriented literature is to explain how and why prime ministers without much formal power become powerful in real political contexts. Some authors argue prime ministers' powers are related to the *institutional setting* (Rose 1991, Elgie 1995, Helms 2005, Haughton 2005). Highly proportional systems with low electoral thresholds allow small parties easy entry into the parliament, making coalition governments a norm and consequently weak Prime ministers (e.g. the Netherlands, Italy, and Israel). Other authors relate prime ministers' powers to their *interests* and *styles* (Elgie 1995). Not all prime ministers are interested in same policy areas[5]. Less consensual prime ministers, interested in policymaking, heading single party cabinets were found to have stronger ability to influence decision-making, compared to consensual prime ministers interested in cabinet organization heading coalitions (Muller, Philipp and Gerlich 1993). *Number of parties* is also important in determining prime ministers' powers. Prime ministers heading cabinets with many parties are likely to be weaker than prime ministers heading cabinets with fewer parties (King 1994: 154)[6]. Prime ministers' *popularity* may be an important electoral asset assisting prime ministers' powers (Jones 1991, Heffernan 2003). *Duration in office* could also influence prime ministers' powers. For example, CEE prime ministers three years or longer in office were perceived strong, while prime ministers in office for less than three years were perceived weak (Blondel et al. 2007).

In addition to structural or personal factors discussed above, certain political resources allow prime ministers to remove important veto players[7] from positions where they could

[5] West European prime ministers were found to be more involved in foreign affairs (Muller, Phillipp and Gerlich 1993, Goetz 2000), while East European prime ministers in economic policy, cabinet organization and rarely in foreign affairs or social matters (Blondel et al. 2007: 186).

[6] King (1994) was the first to categorize West European prime ministers as "strong" (Germany, the UK, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain), "medium" (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden) and "weak" (Italy, Netherlands and Norway).

[7] In a parliamentary democracy, many veto players (the president, Constitutional court, interest groups, political parties, ministers) can prevent or allow policy change. Few vetoes are however effective and in a position to effectively prevent policy change (O'Malley, 2005; 44). The most effective veto players are political parties, because they can withdraw their support for passage of the legislation and ministers who can slow down policy implementation. Ministers of finance may be effective vetoes because they have the ability to withhold funds for competing policies.

prevent policy change (O'Malley 2005, Jones 1991, Tsebelis 2002). According to veto player theory, fewer numbers of ideologically similar vetoes would increase prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making; however, policy change occurs in situations where veto theory would not expect policy change. O'Malley (2005) argues this is because prime ministers' have political prerogatives such as appointing and dismissing ministers, cabinet and parliamentary agenda setting, and calling elections that assist them in overcoming a large number of diverse vetoes. Accordingly, if one were to examine only Constitutional principles and institutional powers of prime ministers, one would fail to pinpoint the variation of prime ministerial power in real political contexts (Tsebelis 1995, O'Malley 2005).

Ability to *set parliamentary agenda* entails prime ministers' ability to pass legislation through the parliament (O'Malley 2005: 146). More specifically, parliamentary agenda setting may relate to proposing policies for deliberation, vetoing bills that would impose public burdens and calling confidence motions at the final stages of policy deliberation (Döring 2001). Prime ministers' ability to *call elections* is related to confidence motions prime ministers can use when electoral prospects of their parties are best, which allows them to control the behavior of parliamentary and coalition parties. They can tie a certain issue to a confidence motion that if not accepted leads to government failure, dissolution of the parliament and prospective elections, unless the new government results from reshuffling. If keeping the current government is in the interest of a parliamentary majority, confidence motions tied to an electoral threat increase costs of electoral defeat for prime ministers' opponents and increase their powers to influence decision-making (O'Malley 2005: 161-177, 182).

*Setting cabinet agenda* implies prime ministers' ability to choose the most favorable forum for decision-making and to propose solutions for cabinet disputes (2005: 233-254). As cabinet chairs, prime ministers have structural advantages over ministers that allow them to exert control over the decision-making process and to extract policy gains by restricting choices of others (2005: 252). They have more and more accurate information about the preferences of other cabinet actors, which allows them to set the most advantageous forum for decision-making. Unlike ministers, prime ministers have more time to devote to issues in each department, because they are in charge for cabinet co-ordination and not for running separate ministers. Prime

ministers generally do not compete with other ministers for limited funds to support policies, which gives them an impartial role in reference to arguments that occur between ministers about the distribution of limited funds (2005: 241). Prime ministers can veto proposals by not putting them on the agenda or by putting an item on the agenda when it is acceptable to most ministers. Superior knowledge about proposals' standing among ministers allows prime ministers to decide how a certain decision will be made; in full cabinet, or in the committee, unilaterally by prime minister or through negotiations. Finally, knowledge about different cabinet aspects increases prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making and allows them to propose non-negotiable "final offers" (2005: 247).

Controlling careers of other politicians is one of the most powerful tools prime ministers can use to influence decision-making (King 1994). By *appointing* ministers and cabinet personnel, prime ministers can put important veto players in places where they will support prime ministers' policies or can remove vetoes from positions where they would oppose prime ministers or can put them in portfolios where they agree with prime minister (O' Malley 2005: 207). By *dismissing* ministers and cabinet personnel prime ministers can remove veto players for offences committed or intended against prime ministers, which can also be a potent "psychological threat" (Tsebelis 1999). Nevertheless, dismissal powers are usually contingent on other factors, primarily on how dismissal influences support (or lack thereof) of removed actor's party, which can lead to government's failure. Consequently, members of prime ministers' parties are easier to remove than members of other parties or groups that can easily ally against prime minister (2005: 227).

In this section, important literature on cabinet decision-making that explains prime ministers' position within the cabinet and literature on prime ministers' powers contributed to our understanding of prime ministers' powers to influence decision-making in real political contexts. Specifically, models of cabinet decision-making help in positioning prime ministers within cabinets and specific political resources, next to Constitutional power provisions help in estimating prime ministers' powers in real politics. These literatures will provide foundation to chapter three where prime ministers' powers to influence decision-making will determine (at least generally) the extent to which policy outcomes that are criteria for assessing prime

ministers' performance, discussed in the next section, are their own contribution for which they can be considered responsible.

### *1.2 Assessing prime ministers' performance*

In the previous section, I reviewed the literature on prime ministers' position in wider executive-legislative arena and prime ministers' powers to influence decision-making. Based on this literature, prime ministers, regardless of their formally weak powers, can use political resources that allow them to influence political agenda directly. In this section, I review the literature on criteria for assessing prime ministers' performance. I first reflect on different criteria identified in the literature as indicators of prime ministers' performance and discuss different types of performance. I then develop an index of democratic governance and argue for its suitability for assessing prime ministers' performance as well as explain the importance of categorization of said performance. Finally, I review the economic voting literature that can aid in explaining asymmetrical relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance. These literatures give foundation to chapters four and six where questions about prime ministers' performance and the relationship between different types of performances are discussed.

#### 1.2.1 Establishing criteria for prime ministers' performance

Establishing criteria for prime ministers' performance is connected to methodological complexities and challenges, because there are no predetermined agreed upon criteria that would clearly point to leaders' (successful or unsuccessful) performance (Strangio et al. 2013). In the management and organizational studies, researchers assertively use correlations between company leaders' characteristics and styles and aggregate level outcomes such as company survival and profit to understand performance of managers (Strangio et al 2013). However, drawing an analogy between managerial and political leadership and assessing performance of political leadership based on GDP rates, inflation levels or unemployment in a given polity could only partially account for the performance of an individual leader. Macroeconomic indicators are not exclusively connected to leaders' activities, but are a result of many other internal and external forces. Performance of an individual leader can be better assessed by studying policy outcomes, which moves explaining change in dependent variable from understanding leaders'

powers to influence decision-making, discussed in previous section, to understanding the outcomes of that decision-making, which adds value to executive studies (O'Malley 2005: 292). Nevertheless, in democracies decision-making is dispersed (Hart t'and Uhr 2008) and in parliamentary democracies, decision-making is collective meaning that all decisions are made by participation of all cabinet members and all cabinet members are responsible for cabinet decisions, which makes singling out one actor (prime minister) as primarily responsible for cabinet decisions problematic. Additionally, even if one can establish unarguably that policy outcomes are suitable indicators of leaders' success, it is still not empirically clear, which policy outcome(s) are suitable to account for performance of individual leaders.

Methodological challenges of assessing leaders (discussed in detail in chapter two, section 2.6) are prime reasons why researchers studying Western leadership were reluctant to develop systematic normative frameworks for assessing individual leaders. Empirically, it is not certain if policy or political outcomes are indicators of leadership, or if duration in office or even leaders' popularity or integrity of conduct and respect for institutions more accurately indicate leadership performance (Strangio et al. 2013). Because duration in office and sometimes leaders' popularity are less contested indicators for assessing leadership, previous literature resorted to using these arguing they accurately account for leaders' success (Baylis 2007, Mueller–Rommel 2004). According to duration indicator, prime minister is successful if (s)he completes his/hers parliamentary term, which is a reflection of prime ministers' strong party backing and political support in the public allowing him/her to achieve substantive goals and forward their agenda. In contrast, a brief term means insufficient time to formulate and carry out agenda and an early dismissal from office may indicate low popularity (Baylis 2007: 84).

If only leaders' duration is used as performance criteria, Prime ministers Orbán (Hungary), Sanader (Croatia), Mečiar (Slovakia) and Klaus (Czech Republic) would all be identified as successful leaders, because all of them completed their parliamentary terms, had strong party backing and had good standing in opinion polls. Both popularity and term duration can be challenged on methodological and normative grounds. Long duration in office or leaders' good standing in opinion polls tells little about leaders' political impact and outcomes of leaders' decision-making. In addition, using term duration as an indicator of performance is limited to assessing only prime ministers in parliamentary democracies, but would allow for little variation

in assessing presidents who are directly elected and whose terms are fixed. Using popularity as an indicator of prime ministers' performance is also limited, because opinion polls are not readily available in all countries and for all leaders, preventing production of large datasets to test hypothesis. Leaders' popularity is also time-variant and prime ministers popular in the beginnings of their terms may not be equally popular at terms ends, which is another limitation connected to the use of popularity as an indicator of performance (Baylis 2007, Pakulski and Körösényi 2011).

Assessing leaders according to policy outcomes prevents oversimplified conclusions that would identify all long-lasting and/or popular prime ministers as successful, and all short-lasting and/or unpopular prime ministers as not successful. Term duration and/or leaders' popularity are more appropriate independent and not dependent variables to allow testing hypothesis between leaders' longevity in office and their political impact. It is not empirically straightforward that decades long premierships by Margaret Thatcher or Angela Merkel had anything to do with their success in policymaking. It is of course very possible that long terms are a reflection of their political support both by their parties and by voters, but firm conclusions would require empirical testing. Similarly, all short-lasting and unpopular prime ministers would (somewhat unjustifiably) be identified as unsuccessful. For example, Estonian Laar served two non-consecutive prime ministerial terms neither exceeding more than three years in duration. However, Laar is largely credited for Estonia's rapid economic development in early transition (Braithwaite 2008). Slovak Dzurinda had stood rather badly in opinion polls[8] and was an unpopular politician (Mesik 2012, Baylis 2007: 95), but the reforms his governments produced were arguably far reaching (Haughton 2005).

Because of explained reasons, I argue that evaluation of policy outcomes and integrity of prime ministers' conduct manifested as respect for democratic institutions and performance in the EU integration, economic and social policymaking (democratic governance) is a more accurate indicator of leaders' (prime ministers') performance. Unlike term duration or popularity, performance in democratic governance can offer better understanding of prime ministers' political impact, which is best measured through an intermediary estimate of the

[8] In 2003 survey only 4% of respondents said they trusted him (Haughton and Ribar 2004: 128)

relationship between leaders' activities and their impact on the societies by experts. This is not a completely novel approach to assessing leadership and was previously used to estimate performance of US presidents and prime ministers in British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand democracies (Schlesinger 1948, Schlesinger Jr. 1997, Theakston and Gill 2006, Hillmer and Granatstein 1997, Sheppard 1998, Azzi and Hillmer 2013, Schwanen 2003, Strangio et al. 2013). Nevertheless, the present study is an original attempt to assess prime ministers' performance in democratic governance and to understand reasons for better or worse performance in post-communist CEE democracies. Prime ministers' performance the thesis argues is however not uniform, and different types of performance, each type following its distinct conceptual and empirical logic, can be identified. Identification of different types of prime ministers' performance emphasizes variability of leaders' performance and broadens our knowledge about the relationship between different types of performance, as is discussed in the next section.

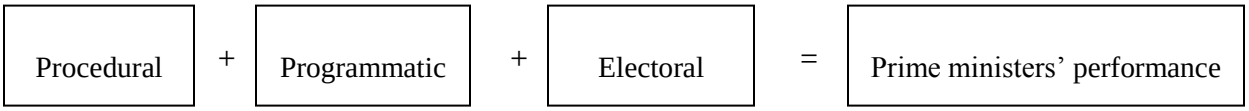
### 1.2.2 Types of prime ministers' performance

In the public policy literature, three types of policy successes are identified; process, programmatic and political success. Each type of policy success is best measured by different indicators and may be perceived differently by different individuals or groups (Marsh and McConnell 2010: 571). *Procedural* success entails evaluation of decision-making process especially focusing on its legitimacy (e.g. required majorities, respecting procedural rules) that is best measured by looking at legislative records, executive minutes or government reports. Policies are procedurally successful if issues are framed, options explored, interests consulted and decisions made in a legitimate manner. *Programmatic* success entails four sub-aspects; operational (has the policy been successfully implemented), effective (has it achieved desired outcomes), efficient (has the use of resources been efficient) and actor/interest (has the policy benefited particular class, interest group, community). In this study, only the interest aspect of programmatic performance is addressed, because prime minister is successful when he/she delivers policies that contribute to citizens' prosperity. Programmatic policy success is best measured by external evaluation, review by stakeholders, external audits, expert assessments, press releases or media commentary. Finally, *political* success entails policy's popularity and its

relationship to re-election chances of the incumbents, which is best measured by opinion polls and election results.

I argue that three types of policy successes are adaptable and useful in assessing performance of leaders (prime ministers). Accordingly, prime ministers' performance can be evaluated in procedural, programmatic and political terms. Figure one visually demonstrates different types of prime ministers' performance.

**Figure 1.1 Types of prime ministers' performance**




Prime minister is successful procedurally if cabinet decisions are delivered according to procedural rules. This study ignores procedural aspect of prime ministers' performance and focuses only on programmatic and electoral performance of prime ministers. Procedural performance is an important aspect of decision-making, however does not immediately influence citizens' well-being. Political impact of prime ministers is best accounted for by programmatic performance, understood in this study as *performance in democratic governance*, because programmatic performance is directly linked to prosperity of citizens. Electoral performance is the final benchmark of prime ministers' performance related to electoral accountability, where voters have the opportunity at the electoral moment to pass judgments about prime ministers' programmatic performance. Different performance types are best studied separately and only then can we examine their inter-relationships.

Figure one presents a symmetrical relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance and symmetry would be a direction of hypothesized relationship, because one would expect that good performance in one performance type match to good performance in another type of performance. However, it is not straightforward empirically that a successful prime minister is automatically re-elected, or that an unsuccessful prime minister is automatically not re-elected. For example, Mainwaring and Scully find that regardless of good democratic governance, Chileans remain dissatisfied with democracy, which may relate to

growing citizens' expectations generated by better democratic governance. In contrast, poor records in democratic governance sometimes capture large public backing. In Venezuela, late Chavez produced mediocre results in social and economic terms but garnered strong support among the poor and prevailed in multiple elections (2010: 123-4). Consequently, asymmetrical relationship between different types of performance is possible (Bovens et al. 2001) and sometimes odd combination of successful programmatic performance and unsuccessful electoral performance is addressed in chapter six. In the next two sections, I first develop index of democratic governance suitable to evaluate prime ministers' programmatic performance and then review economic voting literature that should help in explaining the relationship between prime ministers programmatic and electoral performance.

### 1.2.3 Prime ministers' programmatic performance

As indicated in the previous section, programmatic performance is one of the distinct types of prime ministers' performance, labeled in this study as *performance in democratic governance* and defined according to outcome-prosperity vision that is interested in prime ministers' democratic conduct and performance in several policy areas and its relationship to citizens' prosperity. In simpler words, performance in democratic governance accounts for prime ministers' political impact. Previous literature noted that in CEE undemocratic elites operate within democratically structured framework (Gallina 2008: 4, Pehe 2009). Elites with clearly undemocratic mentality use power for satisfaction of personal interest, thereby undermining democratic institutions that become less capable of limiting elites' ambitions (Gallina 2008: 64 – 71). Assessing programmatic performance as prime ministers' performance in democratic governance is suitable to gauge prime ministers' (un)democratic integrity, but also their policymaking effectiveness. Performance in democratic governance can shed a light on match (or mismatch) between prime ministers' conduct and effectiveness within democratic framework, which is directly related to citizens' prosperity.



Index of democratic governance as criteria for evaluating prime ministers' programmatic performance is developed by adopting and adapting concepts found in theories of democratic governance. Democratic governance is a relatively new label that recently appeared in the literature (Mainwaring and Scully 2010, March and Olsen 1995, Bevir 2010, Norris 2012,

Dominguez and Shifter 2013). Democratic governance is interested in democracy's instrumental ability to deliver effective policy outcomes that improve citizens' welfare, but also its intrinsic democratic value. As an extension of democratization literature, democratic governance shifts research from assessing regimes' democratic characteristics (democratic performance), extent of citizens' participation in decision making (quality of democracy)[9], quality of public services and policy implementation (quality of governance/government)[10] and assessing policy outcomes (government effectiveness) to studying *interactions* between any of these dimensions. The main theme in democratic governance is democracy's capacity of producing policy outcomes that improve citizens' prosperity. Consequently, operation of democracy entails two separately functioning dimensions (democratic structure and effective policymaking) that only in their interaction produce political impact. As a label, democratic governance should not introduce additional conceptual confusion already present in democratization literature, because it denotes studies interested (solely) in the *interaction* of effective policymaking under democratic structure. The debate however will most likely continue about indicators most suitable for effective policymaking and democratic structure.

Some studies of democratic governance stay at the level of assessing the regime's capacity to deliver effective outcomes under democracy (Mainwaring and Scully 2010, Norris 2012), while other studies recognize the importance of leadership in influencing policy outcomes (Dominguez and Shifter 2013, Helms 2012b). Norris (2012) argues the most successful in delivering economic growth, social welfare and citizens' security are regimes that combine democratic accountability and responsiveness with effective state able to implement policies serving the public interest. Mainwaring and Scully define democratic governance as governments' ability to deliver goods and guarantee rights that improve citizens' economic

[9] Quality of democracy studies either focus on a degree to which polities feature democratic characteristics (Bühlmann et al. 2011, Altman and Perez-Linan 2001, Copedge 2001, Andreev 2008, Diamond and Morlino 2005, O'Donnell et al. 2004, Hogstrom 2013, Foweraker and Krznaric 2003, Mansfeldova and Ruksanova Guasti 2010) or a degree to which citizens participate in decision making processes (Levine and Molina 2011, Roberts 2009, Beetham 2004, Shin Chu, 2004, Ciobanu 2009, Abente-Brun 2007). Quality of democracy studies are less interested in democracy's capacity to deliver effective outcomes. Consequently, quality of democracy studies would not consider regimes that introduce bad policies as less democratic, if these were delivered in a procedurally democratic manner (Levine and Molina 2011).

[10] Quality of governance literature is interested in the quality of public services, quality of policy formulation and implementation and can arrive at conclusions that quality of government(ance) matters more than countries' levels of democracy (Kaufmann et al. 2010, Rothstein and Teorell 2012, Putnam 1994).

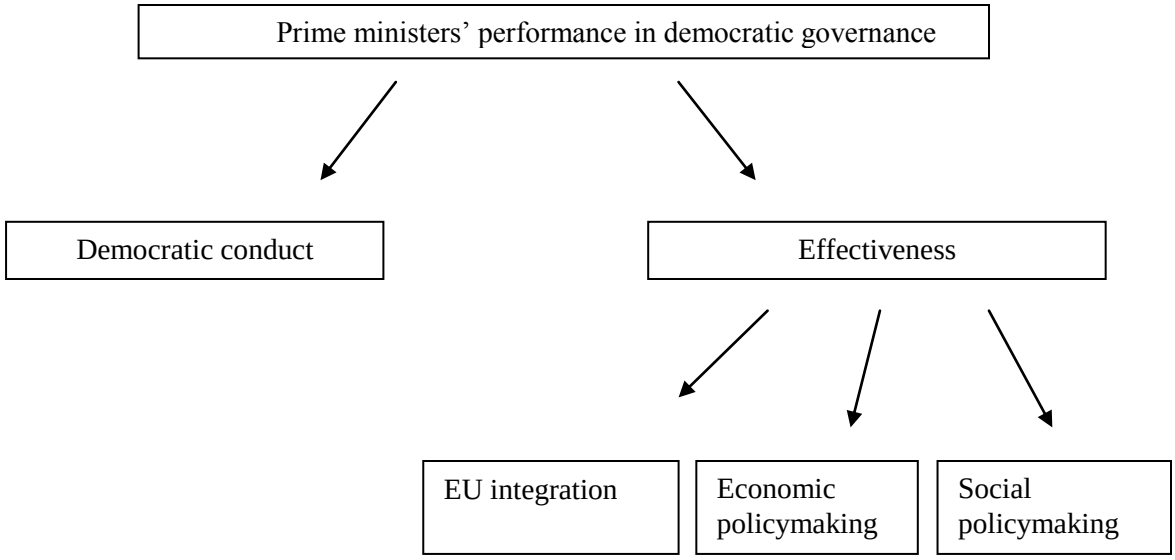
prosperity, welfare and security. Indicators used in their study are regime level measures of the level of democracy, the rule of law, control of corruption, economic growth, inflation, poverty, employment, education, and security (2010: 12). The study, applicable to Latin American countries in the past fifteen years, found positive correlations between levels of democracy and policy areas that profoundly influence citizens welfare, while lower levels of democracy are related to worse records in economic growth, emphasizing the close relationship between weak institutions and widespread corruption and clientelism (Ibid: 123).

Several studies place the aspect of leadership at the center of democratic governance. Dominguez and Shifter (2013) explore how Latin American leaders and institutions confront tasks of managing economic and social affairs while representing heterogeneous societies with heightened demands and expectation of more effective democratic governance. Helms addresses the importance of leadership in democratic governance by focusing on aspects of poor leadership and bad governance among presidents and prime ministers in the G8 democracies. He defines bad governance as bad economic policies and violations of central norms of liberal democracy. Poor leadership is defined as ineffective leadership failing to achieve its self-set goals because of leaders' incompetency, ignorance, or rigidity and as inefficient leadership that achieves some of its goals incurring unreasonably high costs because of improper use of resources. While poor leadership is generally not able to produce good governance, it is possible that effective leadership results in bad governance if leaders are focused more on their own power status and personal interests rather than advancing the common good (Helms 2012b: 5-6). For Helms, the interaction between weak, ineffective and undemocratic leadership explains bad governance. His study is somewhat limited in that it is applicable to (only) "bad" instances of leadership and governance and we are not able to learn if opposite qualities of bad leadership (competency, flexibility or expertise) automatically mean good governance. Leadership studies would need to spend more time on investigating frequently odd combination and reasons for strong (or effective) leadership and bad governance and weak (or ineffective) leadership and good governance, which is discussed in this study in chapter four and five.

Based on conceptualization of democratic governance in previous literature as interaction between democracy and effectiveness, in figure two index of democratic governance (IDG) is

developed as a criteria adopted in this study to estimate prime ministers' programmatic performance. IDG is composed of two separate dimensions; democratic conduct[11] assessing prime ministers' (un)democratic integrity and respect for democratic institutions and effectiveness assessing prime ministers' performance in the EU integration[12], economic[13] and social[14] policymaking area.

**Figure 1.2 Prime ministers' performance in democratic governance**




Selection of four dimensions that compose an aggregate IDG is justified both theoretically and practically. In CEE, political and social change practically (in largest part) involved the EU integration, economic and social restructuring and embracing norms of democratic conduct. Theoretically, political outcomes in these areas profoundly influence citizens' well-being and

[11] Democratc conduct (measured on 1 – 10 scale) refers to the integrity of prime ministers' conduct in reference to democratic institutions such as the rule of law, the media, Constitutional courts, etc., see survey questionnaire, appendix one

[12] Performance in EU integration (measured on 1 – 10 scale) refers to "any move(s)" prime minister makes to bring his/hers country closer or further away from Europe, see survey questionnaire, appendix one.

[13] Performance in economic policymaking (measured on 1-10 scale) refers to the relationship between prime ministers' economic measures (structural reforms, banking and budgeting, inflation, and unemployment) and citizens' economic prosperity, see survey questionnaire, appendix one.

[14] Performance in social policymaking (measured on 1- 10 scale) refers to the relationship between prime ministers' social measures (especially health and pension reform) and citizens' social welfare, see survey questionnaire, appendix one.

because of several political resources that make them powerful in practice, prime ministers can significantly influence outcomes in these areas. Both social scientists and international institutions consider these dimensions important. East Europeans were in favor of democracy, the EU integration and market economy, because transformations in these would ensure Western lifestyles, while welfare state would ensure social equality East Europeans were accustomed to during communism (Bozóki 2008). Prime ministers' democratic conduct is intrinsic to leaders in democracies, while performance in EU integration is intrinsic to only European leaders. Performance in economic and social areas is not intrinsic to only democratic leaders, because authoritarian leaders must also produce economic and social outcomes; however, prime ministers' performance in these areas is likely to most influence citizens' economic and social welfare. All elements of democratic governance are given equal weight in contributing to the theoretical concept. However, as I explain in chapter four, it is possible that some dimensions should have been given subordinate status. Good performance in the EU integration may be conditioned on prime ministers' democratic conduct, while good performance in social area may be conditioned on good economic record.

The intention here is not to be exhaustive, but to capture multiple (most) important aspects of democratic governance in Eastern Europe. The list of issues that would account for good democratic governance is endless and there are obviously many other policymaking areas in which prime ministers' performance could be assessed (e.g. environmental protection, transport and communication, culture and agriculture). However, selected areas in which democratic governance is assessed in this study provide the basis for drawing meaningful comparisons. Discovering universally applicable criteria[15] for assessing performance of leaders is not easy, and because parsimony was preferred, it was important to choose theoretically discrete dimensions. Nevertheless, the model developed here takes account of the most important issues found in leadership environments of CEE prime ministers that are comparatively simple and closely correspond to leadership realities. Because leaders' performance is variable and because leaders are usually better in some, but worse in other areas,

[15] This would also require taking in the account concrete requirements and constraints of prime ministers' internal and external environments, but would not allow cross-country comparisons and would be more suitable for small N research (Blondel 1987: 192).

it is also important to develop categories that will properly capture variable status of prime ministers' performance as is discussed in the next section.

### 1.2.4 Categorization of prime ministers' programmatic performance

In the previous section, index of democratic governance set as criteria for assessing prime ministers' performance was outlined. However, leaders' performance (when measured in multiple dimensions) is usually variable and developing categories are helpful in better accounting for a prime minister's better performance in some, but worse in other areas. Leadership categories identified in the literature so far are predominantly dichotomous. Scholars distinguish between "good"/"bad", "effective"/"ineffective", "ethical"/"unethical" (Helms 2012b, Nye 2008, Kellerman 2004), "successful"/"unsuccessful" (Pakulski and Korosenyi 2011), "transformational"/"transactional" (Burns 1978), "strong"/"weak" (King 1994) leaders. Different leadership qualities for placing leaders in dichotomous categories are used by researchers ranging from instrumental ability to influence people and effect outcomes, organizational capacity to set agenda, motivation, strategy, vision, entrepreneurial innovativeness, adaptation and creativity (Masciulli, 2009: 7-10).

In line with Blondel's suggestion that leadership's dichotomization oversimplifies reality, in addition to assessing prime ministers' performance in several dimensions, outlined in the previous section, I develop three categories of prime ministers; "outstanding", "average" and "likely populists" based on scope-impact[16] vision of performance, which contributes to subtler appreciation of prime ministers' political impact (1987: 29). The *scope* of prime ministers' influence is reflected in two democratic governance's dimensions; democratic conduct and effective policymaking. *Impact* prime ministers leave in democratic governance can be "positive", "average" or "negative, which is reflected in their higher, mid-point or lower scores on ten-point scale. "Outstanding" prime ministers leave positive, while likely populist negative

[16] This study cannot account for *the extent of change* (number of reforms implemented in each dimension of democratic governance) prime ministers bring about. Some outstanding prime ministers may introduce larger number of economic reforms than others, which does not spoil or improve their "outstanding" status, except that prime ministers with larger number of reforms should receive better scores. Nevertheless, outstanding prime ministers' status should reflect major positive reforms, while likely populist status should reflect major negative reforms. Average prime ministers are likely to only modify policies they inherit to a limited extent (1978: 94).

impact in democratic governance. Average prime ministers leave an average, neither positive, nor negative impact. Finally, it is possible that some prime ministers have mixed records of impact in democratic governance (e.g. prime minister's conduct is generally democratic, but they are only moderately effective).

### 1.2.5 Prime ministers' electoral performance

As indicated in section 1.2.2, electoral performance is the final political benchmark suitable for assessing prime ministers' performance. Because types of prime ministers' performance are different, examining more than one type of performance is required to account for the direction (symmetrical or asymmetrical) of the relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance. Theories of economic voting reviewed in this section are useful in explaining symmetry or the asymmetry between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance. Economic voting is founded in a simple, straightforward, symmetrical assumption that voters award leaders for good economic performance and sanction them for poor economic records. Retrospective voting, Fiorina (1981) argues, simplifies electoral process for voters who find it easier to evaluate government's past performance instead of investing effort in learning about candidates' prospective performance based on their policy proposals.

However, findings of economic voting literature are mixed, some studies demonstrating moderate to strong relationship between incumbents' performance and re-election (Colomer 2012), while others finding only a weak relationship (Anderson 2007, Bengtsson 2004, McDonald and Budge 2005, Lewis-Beck 1988, Cheibub and Przeworski 1999, Van der Brug, Van Der Eijk, and Franklin 2007). Paldam looked at a large number of high income Western democracies over almost 300 elections and used macroeconomic indicators to conclude that economic results are insignificant, or explain very little (1991: 25). Other studies analyzed elections in Western countries and found that unemployment and inflation significantly lower the vote (and seat) share of the incumbents (Lewis–Beck and Mitchell 1990, Bengtsson 2004, Chappell and Veiga 2000).

Mixed findings of economic voting literature emphasize the asymmetrical tendency between incumbents' good performance and re-election prospects. Attempting to clarify

empirical ambiguity of economic voting researchers found contextual variables are more important in explaining economic voting in different settings (Anderson 2007, Powell and Whitten 1993, Lewis-Beck and Mitchell 1993). Powell and Whitten (1993) forward the "clarity of responsibility" thesis arguing that variables such as the type of government (majoritarian vs. coalition), nature of the committee system, or strength of the opposition either clarify or blur to voters who is responsible for economic outcomes. Lewis–Beck (1988) finds number of parties in the ruling coalition explains country variation in economic voting in Western democracies. Coalitions with higher number of parties make it less clear to voters, which party is to blame and voters are less likely to sanction leaders for bad performance (Anderson 1995, Anderson 2000, Bengston 2004, Palmer and Whitten 2003). High number of contradictory findings in economic voting literature may relate to different periods, countries and macroeconomic indicators researchers use to understand economic voting (Fiorina 1981, Anderson 2007, Bengtsson 2004, Duch and Stevenson 2008, Lewis–Beck and Stegmaier 2007, Nadeau et al. 2002, Samuels and Hellwig 2010). However, contradictory findings also emphasize the importance of contextual explanations as to why economy's influence on vote varies systematically (Anderson 2007: 276, Nadeau et al. 2002).

The operation of reward–punishment thesis is very often asymmetrical and contingent on either individual voters or political and institutional context in which voting occurs (Anderson, 2007). As we saw in previous sections, in Latin America populist leaders can successfully mobilize large electoral support despite poor performance (Mainwaring and Scully 2010: 125). Electoral context is an important variable explaining asymmetry of reward-punishment thesis. Bengtsson finds strong effect of economic voting in elections in which voters do not frequently switch between parties they support and in which electoral turnout is stable or increasing (2004: 761). The availability of electoral alternatives can largely determine if voters punish incumbents for bad performance (Anderson 2000). Media presentations of government's performance during electoral campaigns may influence voters' perceptions and eventually their vote choice (Sanders and Gavin 2004, Anderson et al. 2004). Parties and party systems can also account for asymmetry of reward-punishment thesis. Marinova (2011) finds that high party instability weakens voters' ability to sanction leaders. If incumbent and opposition parties undergo changes in party names, leaders or other organizational discontinuities between elections, voters' are less

likely to sanction leaders for bad performance, because party changes blur to voters who is to blame for bad performance. Highly fragmented party systems do not allow distinguishing by voters what an alternative future government would be. Regardless of economic reasons, voters may cast their vote based on party loyalty, class, religion, minority or ethnic status and other considerations that contradict logic of retrospective voting (Lewis–Beck, 1988). All these reasons emphasize the conditionality of reward-punishment thesis on cross-national institutional contexts that can better account for asymmetry between incumbents' performance and electoral prospects (Anderson, 2007: 272).

In CEE, the reward-punishment thesis is mostly tested in Visegrád countries based on district-level or regional data. Researchers generally confirm that unemployment lowers prospects for economic voting (Pacek 1994, Doyle and Fidrmuc 2003). Fidrmuc (2000) finds post-communist voters are likely to support parties that are expected to deliver favorable policies, rather than to sanction parties for bad performance. If voters benefited from the reform (entrepreneurs and educated) they support right wing pro–reform parties, while if they become worse off (unemployed, pensioners, blue collar and agricultural workers) they tend to support left wing parties. Contrary to this, Roberts (2009) finds electoral accountability is the strongest link of popular control and the quality of democracy in Eastern Europe. East Europeans generally sanction leaders for bad performance, but are less capable to distinguish between offered usually unclear electoral programs which constraint their ability to select leaders with good prospects for future performance.

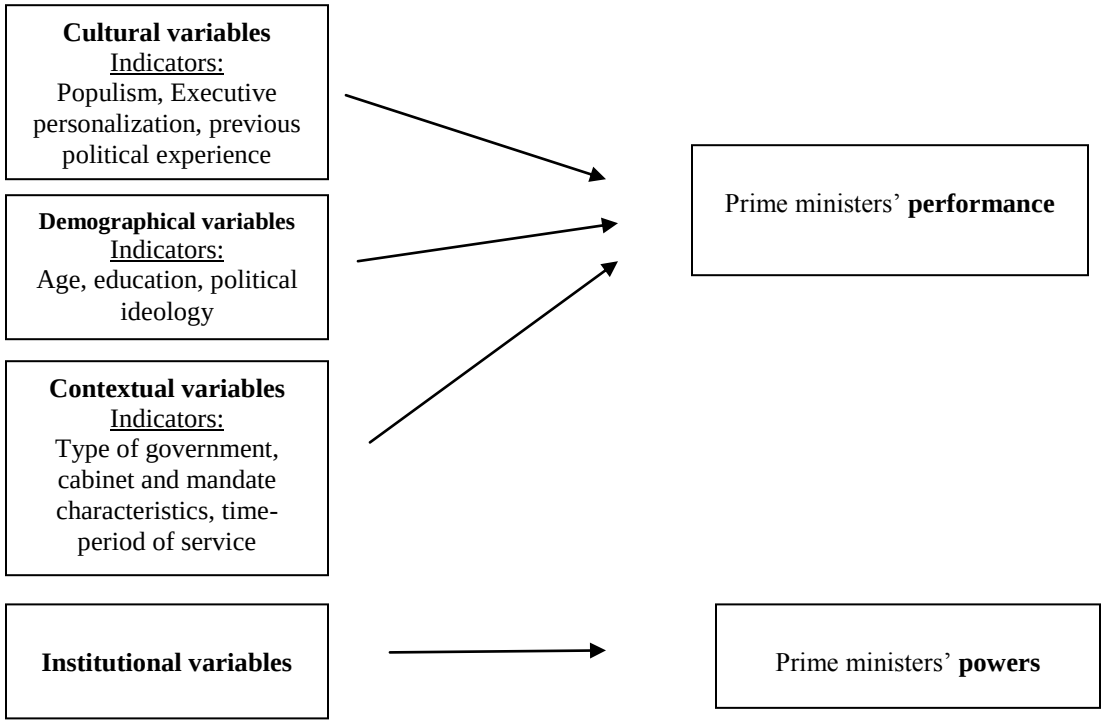
Voters generally weigh economic performance most at elections, but economic issues are only one of the many factors voters consider when making electoral decisions. Consequently, researches extend the reward-punishment thesis to other issues such as corruption, social policymaking and EU-level policies (Armingeon and Giger 2008, Giger 2010, Tavits 2007, de Vries et al. 2011). Armingeon and Giger (2008) find governments cutting social welfare in 18 OECD countries from 1980 until 2003 had equal prospects for re-election compared to governments that did not cut social welfare. Electoral punishment was however more likely, if the media or the opposition emphasized social issues during electoral campaign and less likely if social cuts were implemented gradually. The operation of the reward-punishment thesis in

relation to corruption (Tavits 2007) and EU related issues (de Vries et al. 2011) emphasize the importance of institutional context in issue voting. Issue voting is generally more pronounced in contexts where those responsible for government's performance are more easily spotted. In chapter six, the reward-punishment thesis between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance is discussed in detail. In the next section, discussion of variables that account for variation in prime ministers' programmatic performance takes place.

### *1.3 Explaining Prime ministers' programmatic performance*

In this section, I review the literature on political culture and leadership where variables likely to explain variation in prime ministers' programmatic performance are identified. The effect of three types of variables; cultural, demographical and contextual on prime ministers' programmatic (democratic governance) performance are tested in chapter five. Figure 1.3 is a snapshot of a model offered by this study to understand prime ministers' programmatic performance.

**Figure 1.3 Model for explaining prime ministers' programmatic performance**



As I argue, further in this section, cultural explanations, defined generally as "prime ministers' mindset" are the most relevant in explaining variation in prime ministers' programmatic performance compared to demographical and contextual variables. Institutional explanations are more relevant for determining prime ministers' powers than explaining their programmatic performance.

### 1.3.1 Cultural explanations

Previous literature found a relationship between culture, democracy and policy outcomes. Almond and Verba (1963) argued democracy is more likely if supported by civic political culture. Huntington (1993) pointed to the importance of values, attitudes and beliefs for democracy and democratization. Castles (1993) emphasized the importance of culture for policy outcomes in 18 Western democracies and Roller (2005) confirmed that cultural differences influence politicians, citizens, policies and political institutions and generally matter for government effectiveness. Hogstrom (2013) found that cultural and institutional variables are more relevant than socioeconomic, historical and physical variables in explaining the quality of democracy. Kemp for example emphasizes the importance of Australian leaders' egalitarian and democratic "political credos" that transcend party differences and are responsible for the relative coherence and continuity of Australian governments (2008: 205-210).

Some authors emphasize the importance of consensual or disunited elites for the outcome of political change (Higley et al. 1998). Recent studies pointed to the relevance of political elites in determining the nature of political regimes. In authoritarian regimes, elites design system according to their conceptions of power preservation, while in democracies, elites exert power according to democratic rules and power networks are adapted to democratic structure. In consolidated democracies, elite circulation produces united elites with strong cooperative relationships, while fragmented elites, divided in different groups that mistrust each other and do not share the same values, characterize non-consolidated democracies. Consequently, non-consolidated democracies are characterized by low elite-institutional quality and a mismatch between formal institutional framework and informal elite conduct (Gallina 2010). Informal power structures practiced by elites undermine democratic structure, the quality of democracy and obstruct social, economic and political development (Gallina 2011).

In CEE, elites appear formally democratic, but in reality dominate formal institutions and the entire political system. Informality[17] is a large part of elites' mentality producing political systems that are best defined as "democracies without democrats". Political elites with non-democratic background and socialization co-exist with formal democratic framework (Pehe 2009, Gallina 2008). Lengyel and Ilonszki (2010) speak about "simulated democracy" in Hungary where democratic institutions are in place, but frequently countered by norm-breaching behavior of elites and leaders. In CEE, no country has fully adapted to democratic political culture and informal power networks periodically outweigh democratic structures. Political culture includes some democracy-compatible elements (e.g. openness to the media), and some depersonalized structures not connected to money and power exist, however the power remains highly personalized.

Informality in CEE is mainly negative and includes practices targeted at creating or capturing institutions to generate economic or political gains (Grzymala-Busse 2010, Gallina 2014). Negative political culture is primarily a result of path-dependency of norms and values, which are socially based and continue independently of institutional or elite changes (Ekman and Linde 2005). Formal abolishing of communist regime and replacement of political institutions did not mean automatic change of citizens and elites' expectations regarding state goals and duties (Higley and Lengyel 2000). Instead, authoritarian style of governing and acceptance of state dominance over society with low levels of individual initiative is paralleled by unrealistic economic expectations as well as the general pessimism and suspiciousness of politics (Gallina 2011: 82). In CEE, old beliefs and the legacy of communist political culture continues to influence present developments. Communist legacies are manifested in personalization of power, populism, and hierarchical decision-making, culture of conflict, corruption and nationalism (Rupnik 2007, Gallina 2010). Consequently, political elites with untransformed communist mindsets not supportive of democratic values co-exist with democratic structure. Reproduction of similar mindset elite is re-enforced by strong patron-client relationships that continue to draw

[17] "Informality" refers to behavioral codes, values and traditions that cannot be described by formal democratic regulations. Informality research focuses on political actors that generate informality, on areas exposed to or taken over by informality (e.g. justice and energy sector) and on informal structures (corruption and clientelism) that weaken formal legal and political institutions (Meyer et al. 2008, Lauth 2000).

boundaries of decision-making leaving little opportunity for democratic outsiders to enter the elite circle and break the old elites' mindset (Korkut 2005). Cultural attitudes are not easy to quantify and establishing a direct link between manifestations of behavior and underlying attitudes is methodologically challenging. However, public and documented appearance of political elites and leaders allows initial steps in establishing cultural mapping of the elite and leaders (Gallina 2010). Previous literature found that populism, personalization and corruption[18] are manifestations of elite political culture and I use these indicators as proxies of prime ministers' mindsets that are likely to largely account for their performance (Gallina 2008).

#### 1.3.1.1 Populism

Populism is one of the important elements of political elite culture. In Slovakia, for example national populism directed against the Hungarian minority was an important instrument used by Fico and Mečiar for nationalist policymaking (Gallina 2010). In Poland and the Czech Republic, the elite occasionally resorted to populism to preserve national identity against EU supremacy. The relationship between populism and democracy has only recently attracted attention of researchers. Because populism is a relatively contested concept[19], researchers invested more time in trying to clarify its meaning, identify its types and uncover reasons for its development in single countries and cross-regionally (Europe and Latin America) (Meijers 2010, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, Mudde 2011, Deegan-Krause 2007, Skolkay 2000). Some studies made an effort to measure populism in parties (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011, Deegan-Kraus and Haughton 2009, Balcere 2011), leaders (Hawkins 2009) or in media debates (Rooduijn 2012).

[18] This study does not include corruption, which is however, an important aspect of elites' political culture that undermines good governance, democracy, lowers trust in institutions and attacks foundations of democratic regimes such as the rule of law, free and fair electoral competition, representativeness and responsiveness of government. It refers to self-serving officials who strip public assets for personal benefits and do not invest them in funding the needs of citizens.

[19] Populism is frequently defined in the literature as a political strategy certain rulers use to sustain themselves politically (Weyland 2001) or as a thin ideology (Canovan 1999, Mudde 2004, Hawkins 2010, Moffitt and Tormey 2013, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, Taggart 2000, Bozóki 2012) combined with other "isms" (e.g. liberalism, socialism and nationalism). Populism is not quite as conscious and programmatic, as other ideologies, but is rather an empty vessel easily filled with different ideological content (Hawkins 2012). At its core, populism distinguishes between the "good people" and the "bad elite", which is conspiring and corrupt using power in its own interest instead of the interest of the public (Mudde 2004: 543). Populism is one of discourses typical for democratic politics next to pluralism, which sees good in opponents and treats problems as circumstances instead of conspiracy, and elitism that sees the elite superior to the people (Mudde 2004, Plattner 2010, Hawkins 2009).

Scholars are generally ambivalent about the effects populism has on democracy (Canovan 1999, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013, Levitsky and Loxton 2013). Levitsky and Loxton (2013) argue that populism most forcefully leads to competitive authoritarianism. Once in power, populists undermine civil liberties, eliminate checks and balances, and consequently acquire advantage in the elections that are otherwise fair and regularly held. However, while populism undermines contestation, by viewing the opposition as an enemy that must be constantly monitored, intense populist discourse can mobilize voters and consequently increase political participation (Hawkins 2012). This is especially true, as Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) argue when populists in the opposition become fierce champions of open and fair electoral competition. However, once in power populists tend to shut off electoral avenues to opponents, who may also start using contentious politics, thus creating vicious circle of undemocratic practices. Mesežnikov et al. (2008) find that populism in Eastern Europe undermines representative democracy, the rule of law, challenges political participation of minorities and criminalizes political opponents. Similarly, Smilov and Krastev (2008) argue that populism is in favor of elections, but opposed to party-based democracy manifested in exclusionary sentiments towards opponents, certain policies (e.g. welfare, the EU) or certain groups (e.g. minorities). Rupnik (2007) emphasizes the danger populism poses for the quality of democracy in CEE, but also points to the EU structures as a protective belt against populist appeals.

Navia and Walker (2008) found a negative relationship between democratic governance and populist leadership in Latin America. In their definition, populist presidents tend to reduce the number of veto players in the system, which consequently weakness institutions of democracy and results in policies not conducive to sustained development or reduction of poverty and inequality. These authors emphasize the importance of leadership that either contributes or weakens democratic structure. Populist presidents concentrate power in their hands and weak parliaments and fragmented parties, are not able to build coalitions to check presidents' powers and to produce effective democratic governance. The authors suggest strengthening of democratic institutions may counter populist presidents.

In CEE, populism can have milder or more dangerous consequences. Voters may start perceiving parties as corrupt and alienated from the people, which may lead to political apathy,

but in some instances populism can threaten the fundamental principles of liberal democracy (e.g. Orbán in Hungary or Kaczynski's in Poland) (Smilov and Krastev 2008: 9). Populist prime ministers are likely to have charisma and the ability to mobilize frustrated voters using nationalist slogans and camouflage the real problem-solution (Gallina 2011: 85). Unlike in Latin America, institutions in CEE are not weak or insufficiently designed. However, subtle informal practices by elite are more critical for weakening the institutional framework. Shortcomings of the institutions are a result of poor commitment of their embedded actors, so changes in personnel may be more important than strengthening the institutions to counter power-concentrating tendencies by leaders (Gallina 2010).

#### 1.3.1.2 Executive personalization

Executive personalization is another manifestation of prime ministers' negative political culture (undemocratic elite mindset). Personalization removes the collective aspect of decision-making and moves it closer to political power and responsibility of individual leaders (Foley 2008). Personalization thesis appears in the literature under different labels; "presidentialization of politics" (Mughan 1993, Poguntke and Webb 2005), "institutional presidentialization" (Maddens and Fiers 2004) and "presidential parliamentarism" (Hazan 1996) emphasizing a presidential outlook of parliamentary democracies because of an increased importance of leaders that is not followed by concomitant institutional changes towards presidentialism.

In a narrower sense, personalization can be "electoral", "party" and "executive" depending on the area of personalization a researcher is interested in. Electoral personalization entails three inter-related aspects looking at whether parties put emphasis on party leaders, whether the media focuses more on leaders than on parties and whether leaders appeal to voters more than party programs. Some studies are interested (only) in the effect of leaders on vote choice (McAllistar 2007, Aarts et al. 2011, Curtice and Holmberg 2005, Bittner, 2011, Gunther and Montero 2001, Lobo 2008, Blais et al. 2003, Mayerhoeffer and Esmark 2011) while others focus on leaders' coverage in the media (Kriesi 2012, Kaase 1994, Rahat and Sheafer 2007). Party personalization refers to an increased power of party leaders in relation to party activists and local party organizations, manifested in direct elections for party leadership and extended influence of party leaders in formulating party programs. This allows leaders to dominate

elections and governments they lead, which simplifies electoral process for voters who base their vote on electoral or government standing of individual leaders rather than party platforms (Pakulski and Korosenyi 2011, Gallina 2008, McAllister 2003: 259, Blondel et al. 2010, Webb, Poguntke and Kolodny 2012, Webb 2002). Electoral and party personalizations are less relevant in this study, because the interest here is primarily on executive personalization during prime ministers' terms.

*Executive* personalization[20] refers to a strong influence over decision-making and agenda setting by individual leaders because of which the power becomes hierarchical and concentrated, instead of being collective and dispersed (Tucker 1995). Personalization of decision-making can entail subtle activities by a leader who can create a personal network based on clientelism and kinship determining career advancement. Consequently, politics becomes based on informal codes that outweigh democratic correctives and exclude the "political other" (Bozóki and Simon 2006, Gallina 2010). In post–communist realm, personalization usually means authoritarian and paternalistic leadership coupled with hierarchical organization, and bureaucratic politics. A personalized leader purports to represent country's national interests, means for coming to terms with the communist past and a model of policymaking. Leaders of this sort have been a strong feature in CEE, because of its political culture characterized by communist legacy, lack of confidence in institutions and prominence given to political personalities (Gallina 2008: 57, Rose and Mishler 1994).

### 1.3.2 Leader-centered explanations

Leader-centered explanations emphasize the importance of personal attributes in leaders' performance. Generally, three types of variables are identified in leader-centered literature; personality, psychological and demographical variables. Studies engaged in personality analysis emphasize the importance of different personality components or leadership styles for leadership performance (Barber 1977, Laswell 2009, Simonton 1987, Herman 1980, Greenstein 2003, Bass 2009, Lilienfeld et al. 2012, Watts et al. 2013, Heffernan 2005, Theakston 2010). Rejai and Philips (1983) uncover personality characteristics required for the emergence of revolutionary

[20] Rare studies testing executive personalization have mixed results. Kolltveit (2012) finds no support for personalization in Norwegian cabinets, while some personalization is observed in Denmark and Sweden (Aylott 2005, Back et al. 2011, Sundstrom 2009, Pedersen and Knudsen 2005).

leadership. Barber (1977) proposes four types of leaders based on president's character and satisfaction with the job. In a more recent study, Rotberg (2012) emphasizes the importance of characteristics of transformational leaders (e.g. vision, the ability to mobilize followers, integrity and courage) for development of political cultures and institutions in young and postcolonial societies.

Establishing the relationship between personality characteristics and leaders' performance is methodologically challenging, because even if establishing that leaders make a difference were easy, it is still difficult to uncover the extent to which this difference is due to leaders' personality and not to contextual conditions. Consequently, personality studies are criticized for reducing the importance of structure to the product of agency and not integrating the two variables. Personality traits are not easily measured and their examination is rarely systematical, most often an object of descriptive biographies[21] or informative media evaluations. Personality studies mostly focus on individual cases, providing little opportunity for inferences about leadership in general. Literature does not agree about which exact components make up the "personality" (Greenstein 1968), although some studies have extracted personality traits (intelligence, energy, achievement-oriented, self-confidence and sociability) that are likeliest for successful performance (Stogdill and Bass 1981). Personal characteristics identified in "great leaders" for example are usually not set against all other possible qualities a leader might possess and we cannot learn if these characteristics (always) lead to good performance. Personality approach is in addition criticized for disregarding contextual factors and cannot explain if particular (or other) personality components are suited (only) for some, but not other situations (Dowding 2008, Grint 2000, Blondel 1987, Fiedler 1967). "Skill in context" explanations are thus more suitable to account for the interaction between leaders' skills that are constrained or enabled by political and institutional contexts (Bennister 2012, Hargrove and Owens 2003).



[21] Biographies can teach us about different leaders and their characteristics, but cannot offer great advance in knowledge about leadership, because it is not clear whether any of leaders' qualities were particularly instrumental in their' achievements. Biographies also tend to focus on "exceptional" rather than ordinary leaders. They are rarely written unless it is believed the leader has molded the polity in a distinctive manner, which reinforces the penchant for dichotomies, instead of a range in the impact of different leaders (Blondel 1987: 123).

Psychoanalysis of leaders focuses on "deeper" aspects of leaders' personalities and is interested in explaining leaders' behavior, motivations and decision-making by looking at the relationship between leaders' personalities, and events that occurred during their adolescence or childhoods (Landtsheer and Feldman 2000, Feldman and Valenty 2002, Feldman 2005, Geronik 2012, Renhson 2012). These studies are successful in explaining why a particular leader acted in a certain way, but are limited because they cannot explain why a given element of personality contributed to the (in)effectiveness of the leader. Psychoanalysis also tends to focus on "unbalanced" leaders, which can suggest that "mental illness" and abnormality are the only important factors worth examination. However, psychoanalytical research has proven very useful in the area of foreign policy. A psychiatrist, Jerrold Post, at CIA's request, built a psychological makeup of leaders such as Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, Kim Jon II and Fidel Castro (Post 2004). The main attractiveness of psychoanalysis in foreign relations is that knowing the psycho-profile of adversaries allows for efficiency in dealing with them in international arena.

Demographical analysis of leaders is interested in how leaders' background relates to their performance. Demographical variables include leaders' social origin, education, occupation and ideology and were originally used by empirical sociologists interested in recruitment of political leaders. There is a lack of systemic analysis of the effect of demographic variables on leadership effectiveness. Few studies that examined the relationship however found little support for believing that age or occupational background matter for leaders' effectiveness (Rejai and Philips 1983, Theakston and Gill 2005, Azzi and Hillmer 2013). Nevertheless, leaders' education, occupation, religion, ethnicity or even geographical origins are likely to influence performance and these variables deserve closer attention by researchers (Blondel 1987: 120).

There is currently no systematic knowledge about potential inter-correlations between the three types of leader-centered variables and it is best that researchers examine them separately. Presently, we cannot understand which part of leadership is a result of demographical, personality or psychological factors. It is likely that energy for example decreases with age and we can speculate that older leaders are less energetic or that better educated leaders are also more intelligent. The real genesis of personal attributes however, remains unclear and the exploration

of early experiences and leaders' backgrounds could be important antecedents of personality. Because this study is not primarily interested in the origin of personal attributes of leaders, using demographic variables to test hypothesis in chapter five made more sense. Collection of data on demographic variables is more clear-cut than would be the case with personality attributes of leaders. Even if it were easy to collect data on personal attributes of leaders, examination of these and leaders' performance would be more suitable for small N studies, rather than statistical analysis used in this study.

### 1.3.3 Contextual explanations

Contextual explanations emphasize the importance of situational and temporal effects on leadership. Leadership context may entail various known and unforeseen events such as economic crises, wars, natural disasters or scandals (Simonton 1991, Kenny and Rice 1988, Hunter et. al 2007, Yammarino and Dansereau 2009, Masciulli et al. 2009, Haughton 2005, Walter and Strangio 2007: 64-85, Hartley and Benington 2011, Helms 2012a, Blondel 1987, Korosenyi 2013). Contextual variables also relate to prime ministers' immediate environments including parliamentary support, cabinet characteristics, mandate characteristics and temporal circumstances.

Contextual studies sometimes address only the importance of the (temporal) context in which leaders operate (Skowronek 2011), while other studies emphasize the importance of the interaction (interplay) between leaders' contexts, institutional and personal factors, especially in democracies where leadership is dispersed (Hargrove and Owens 2003, Kane and Patapan 2010). Institutional factors, some scholars argue, only impose structural constraints or opportunities on leaders who exploit them or not, which is in turn determined by their personal characteristics and/or circumstances (Bennister 2012, Poguntke and Webb 2005). After evaluating Blair's leadership, Heffernan (2003) concludes that prime ministers' ability to act is always dependent upon environmental context entailing institutional, political, and socio-economic realities.

Contextual factors may play a role both in perceptions of prime ministers' performance, but also in explaining their leadership. Leaders face different situational circumstances during their terms and distinction between high-opportunity (achieving much under favorable

circumstances) and low-opportunity (achieving less under unfavorable circumstances) leaders would provide balanced comparative assessments (Lammers and Genovese 2000). For example, Wallace and Suedfeld (1988) assume that situational difficulty would influence evaluation of leaders' performance and indeed find the association between Canadian prime ministers' performance and situational difficulty. This study does not account for "situational difficulty" that is potentially included in perceptions of prime ministers' performance and limitations in reference to this are discussed in chapter two, but is primarily interested in the effect of contextual variables on prime ministers' performance that are handled in statistical analysis in chapter five.

### 1.3.4 Institution-centered explanations

Institution-centered studies emphasize the importance of institutions and institutional change in explaining performance of different political personalities occupying the same political office (Elgie 1995, Rose 2007, Helms 2005). As elaborated in theories of institutionalism, institutions constrain leaders who have little opportunities to change or modify them (Peters 1999). Differences in national political institutions (political parties, presidentialism or parliamentarism, electoral laws, Constitutional courts) are more relevant in explaining leadership than leaders' personal attributes (Rose 2007: 9).

Institutional explanations are more relevant for explaining leaders' powers rather than their performance. Institutions will primarily determine "how much a leader can do", rather than determine "how well done is what a leader has done". Constitutional provisions will primarily impose constraints and opportunities on leaders' actions with likelihood of reducing leaders' powers depending on the regime type. For example, presidents in presidential systems are less constrained than prime ministers in parliamentary systems. Presidents are directly elected for fixed terms, while prime ministers are easily dismissed by the parliament at any point during their mandates. Parliamentary systems with proportional electoral laws tend to produce coalition governments, while those with majoritarian laws produce single party cabinets. Some authors emphasize the importance of the media in democratic politics that constraint leadership (Helms 2012c). Few parliamentary governments (except for fully consensual systems like Switzerland) are nowadays true collective bodies and prime ministers are usually above other ministers and

can directly influence decision-making (Blondel 1987: 166, Foley 2000, Heffernan 2003). As discussed in section 1.1.2, prime ministers have different political resources allowing them to control veto players, which makes them more powerful in practice. These prerogatives however make prime ministers more powerful in achieving their goals, but do not tell us much about their performance. Consequently, institutional differences are less relevant in this study for explaining prime ministers' performance, except that they are relevant for estimating prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making, which is discussed in chapter three.

In this chapter, I reviewed three important literatures that chronologically answer main research questions asked in this study. Literatures on cabinet decision-making and prime ministers' powers are helpful for understanding prime ministers real ability to influence decision-making. This is an important preceding step to assessing prime ministers' performance, because it ensures that prime ministers were able (in large part) to influence policy outcomes used here as criteria for assessing performance. These literatures are used in chapter three where prime ministers' powers are empirically established. Literatures on prime ministers' performance and economic voting are helpful for establishing criteria suitable for assessing prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance and the relationship between different types of performance. These literatures are used in chapter four where an empirical mapping of prime ministers' programmatic performance is presented and chapter six that is interested in empirical relationship between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance. Finally, literatures on political culture of elites and political leadership identified a pool of variables helpful in explaining variation in prime ministers' performance. These literatures are used in chapter five that is interested in the effect of three types of variables (cultural, demographical and contextual) on prime ministers' programmatic performance. In the next chapter, I discuss the logic behind prime ministerial terms as study's unit of observation, expert surveys as the main data collection method and expert rankings as criteria for establishing prime ministers' programmatic performance.

# CHAPTER 2: PRIME MINISTERIAL TERMS, EXPERT SURVEYS AND EXPERT RANKINGS

In this chapter, I discuss case selection and the logic of using prime ministerial term as the study's unit of analysis. I first outline general characteristics of institutional settings that are suitable for selecting and evaluating prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. I then report expert survey response rate, discuss survey questionnaire designed to estimate prime ministers' programmatic performance and data quality, as well as address advantages of expert surveys over case studies and media analysis for developing expert rankings of performance. I also outline data resources of variables used to support arguments in chapter three and to test hypotheses in chapter five and six by statistical analysis; ANOVA, bivariate, multiple and logit regression. Finally, I point to some study's limitations that are generally inherent to any study interested in leadership performance.

## *2.1. The importance of institutional setting for assessing prime ministers' performance*

This study evaluates performance of prime ministers in democratic governance in four Visegrád countries, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia; two former Yugoslav republics, Croatia and Slovenia; and three Baltic States, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia from the mid-1990s until the present[22]. Because this study argues "mindset matters" for leaders' performance, it was justifiable to select leaders from settings with short democratic experience. In settings where the elite have long-term experience with democracy mismatch between elites' conduct and democratic structure is less likely. The same holds for authoritarian settings where leaders' "authoritarian mindset" is likely to match authoritarian institutional structure. Hence, it would make little sense to assess performance in democratic governance of presidents in Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan. Elites in new democracies, especially in new post communist democracies were socialized in environments where leadership was accustomed to a specific set of rules and values that are likely to continue once transmitted in democratic structure. Consequently, "elites' mindset" and democracy's formal structure are likely to mismatch in new democracies. CEE prime ministers are a justifiable population of leaders for assessing performance in democratic governance, because they were socialized under communism and their mindset under democracy

[22] Last prime ministerial term evaluated in this study ended in June 2013

is likely to feature some of the carried-over values from the past, observable as a mismatch between their conduct and requirements of democratic structure, measured by experts' scores.

At the regime level, this study understands democracy in its minimalist version where a country (at minimum) assures that the incumbents acquire power through regular elections (Przeworski 1999). This is important for decisions about which prime ministerial terms are suitable for the analysis. Accordingly, selection of Mečiar's term is justifiable; otherwise, one may point to Slovak's authoritarianism from 1994 until 1998 (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Nine countries prime ministerial terms were selected from share many similar characteristics, which allow controlling for a pool of factors. All nine countries democratized in early 1990s and their democracies are similar in age. Elites in all nine countries have about twenty years of democratic experience, which is sufficient timeline that allows the observation of elite-institutional relationships. Elites in all nine countries were socialized under communism and feature similar "past mindsets". In addition, all nine countries went through the EU accession process to gain EU membership in 2004 (except Croatia that joined in 2013), which required similar activities by CEE elites to fulfill the requirements of that process.

All nine countries are either parliamentary democracies or semi-presidential regimes with weak presidents where prime ministers head the executive and are influential in decision-making. Selecting leaders who are at the apex of political power based on power distribution in a particular regime is important, because different institutional arrangements provide leaders with distinct constraints and opportunities (Helms 2005 and 2012a, Rose 2007, Rockman 2003, Elgie 2011). It would make little sense to assess the performance of a French prime minister, because in France that is semi-presidential, the president dominates policymaking and has control over prime ministerial and cabinet appointments. It would also make no sense to evaluate performance of the British constitutional monarch, who has little to no power to influence decision-making, although the British Queen has few reserve powers and government officially takes place in monarch's name. Assessing leadership performance would also make little sense in fully consensual political systems like Switzerland where it would be impossible empirically

to pin point one-person that can significantly influence decision-making.[23] It would also make little sense to evaluate performance of prime ministers in parliamentary democracies with weak prime ministers like in Finland[24], Iceland, Italy[25], Japan[26], Israel[27], the Netherlands and Norway[28] (King 1994, O'Malley 2005). Assessing prime ministers' performance is justifiable in institutional settings that produce strong prime ministers like Westminster democracies (the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand), or continental European democracies (Germany, Ireland, Malta and Spain). In CEE, we do not have sufficient knowledge about prime ministers' powers. Some studies found CEE prime ministers were weak especially in early transition compared to presidents (Baylis 1996 and 2007). However, it is likely that CEE prime ministers become stronger as politically relevant factors such as for example party systems stabilized. Chapter three is devoted to estimating prime ministers' powers and will demonstrate that individual prime ministers selected in this study are generally strong and capable to influence decision-making.

Out of nine countries from which prime ministerial terms are selected: three are parliamentary (Hungary, Latvia, and Estonia) and six are premier-presidential (Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Czech Republic). There is generally no practical difference in prime ministers' powers between these two institutionally different regime types. The only formal distinction between these regimes are direct presidential elections in premier-

[23] In Switzerland, the executive power is shared between seven members of Federal Council, who serve as presidents on a yearly rotating basis. Even when a councilor takes her/his presidential turn, and becomes according to Swiss order of precedence, the highest ranking official in federation, he or she does not have greater powers (except in urgent matters) than counselors that are in charge for federal departments. In addition, Swiss direct democracy allows citizens a direct participation in decision-making, which blurs the responsibility of one single leader for the outcomes of that decision-making.

[24] In Finland, internationalization of politics, growth of public sector, convergence of party ideologies, and personalized political publicity are observed to give rise to increase in prime ministerial powers (Paloheimo 2003)

[25] In Italy, Berlusconi was an exceptionally strong prime minister because of a combination of specific political-party resources (Berlusconi was both coalition and party leader), while weakness of other Italian prime ministers is explained by possession of one, but lack of the other political resource (Vercesi 2013, O'Malley and Cavatorta 2004)

[26] In Japan, several factors point to an increase in prime ministerial power (e.g., decline in party factionalism and increased public visibility of prime ministers) (Masuyama and Nyblade 2004) and administrative reforms within prime ministers' office that improve cabinet co-ordination (Takaysu 2005)

[27] In Israel, prime ministerial powers did not increase once direct prime ministerial elections were introduced in 1996 and the institution was abandoned in 2001 (O'Malley 2007)

[28] In Norway, no strong support for increased prime ministers' powers were found; however, strengthening of the prime ministers' office has increased the ability of prime ministers to coordinate cabinet decision-making (Kolltveit 2012)

presidential countries and indirect presidential elections in parliamentary countries, both types of elections producing generally ceremonial presidents with representative duties in international relations, but little power to influence decision- making (Lijphart 1984: 68–74, Lijphart 1992, Elgie 1999, Elgie et al. 2011, Sedelius 2006). In premier-presidential democracies president's influence in decision-making may increase if the president has veto powers (e.g., Poland, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic), however, this power is only relative because it is easily countered by required parliamentary majority (Köker 2013). In both parliamentary and premier-presidential regimes, the prime minister derives his/hers authority from a popularly elected parliament and must continuously sustain its confidence to remain in power (O' Malley 2005: 65). As an individual, the prime minister is usually the leader of political party or coalition of parties that received most votes in the elections (Shugart 2005: 325). In both regime types, government automatically falls if a prime minister resigns, retires, or dies. In Hungary, Poland and Germany, government's dismissal by the parliament is contingent on simultaneous appointment of a new prime minister, which is labeled in the literature "constructive vote of confidence" (Körösényi 1999, Schiemann 2004, Zubek 2001, Helms 1996). Consequently, prime ministers' responsibility for decision-making is in practice superior to that of individual ministers because prime ministers' resignation means the resignation of the cabinet in its entirety.

### 2.1.1 Case Selection: Prime ministerial terms

In the nine countries studied here, 103 governments (not including caretakers)[29] were in office from early 1990s until April 2014. In these 103 governments (prime ministerial terms), 81 individuals served as prime ministers[30]. Assessing 33[31] prime ministerial terms out of 103 observed empirically, (about 26%) is hitherto the largest comparative study of prime ministers' performance. Cross-country studies of leadership are rare, which is primarily related to the cumbersome process of data collection and low response rate common for expert surveys. Consequently, leadership studies are predominately within country oriented and focused on few

[29] Caretakers are interim governments that do not have the authority to influence policymaking, but are in charge of maintaining the regular operation of government until new government is elected or appointed (Müller -Rommel et al. 2004)

[30] See appendix two for the total number of prime ministerial terms and individual prime ministers (1990- April 2014)

[31] The number of prime ministerial terms applicable to analysis in this study is in reality (N=63). However, consecutive terms are collapsed and coded as one term so that the total number of prime ministerial terms in this study is 33, see table 2.1

leaders and/or their leadership skills (Azzi and Hillmer 2013, Theakston and Gill 2006). Strangio and colleagues (2013) have only recently published an edited volume that comparatively evaluates performance of a larger number of prime ministers in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the UK. Large or medium N leadership studies are especially valuable because they offer possibilities for building general theories of leadership. Case studies are important for their in-depth knowledge about single cases, but are not suitable for research that is interested in patterns of prime ministerial-institutional relationships or prime ministers' performance in many countries.

Prime ministerial term is defined in the literature as the same individual in office during the same legislative mandate, regardless of party or ministerial changes (Budge and Keman 1990). According to this definition, I selected prime ministerial terms where the same prime minister was in office during the same legislative term. If prime ministers' terms were broken by elections, but the same prime minister continued after the elections, I collapsed these consecutive terms to reflect prime ministers' performance as one term. If prime ministers served non-consecutive terms, (e.g. Laar in Estonia was prime minister from 1992 until 1994 and from 1999 until 2002), to avoid experts' confusion I specifically indicated in the survey, which prime ministerial term is an object of assessment (e.g. Laar 1999-2002). If prime ministers were both presidents and prime ministers, (e.g. Klaus was prime minister from 1993 until 1997 and president from 2003 until 2013), I indicated in the survey, which political post is an object of assessment.

Prime ministerial terms are selected non-randomly and start sometime after 1992 when most CEE countries held first multiparty elections. Ideally, prime ministers' terms should last three years or longer to allow sufficient time for developing and implementing policies (Müller-Rommel, Baylis 2007, Lijphart 1999, Warwick 1994), but several prime ministers in office for less than three years were also included in the analysis to increase the number of cases. Out of 33 prime ministers, 19 were in office for three years or more, 14 were in office between two and three years and five were in office for minimum two years. There is no statistically significant correlation between prime ministers' term durations and performance, which indicates that prime ministers' shorter terms do not necessarily mean better placement on expert rankings. These

prime ministers might have had less time to develop coherent policies, but shorter terms do not necessarily mean performance failures. This somewhat justifies selection of prime ministerial terms shorter than three years. The number of terms in each country was kept purposefully low to increase chances for high return rates. This study evaluates three prime ministerial terms in Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, four in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, and Lithuania, and five in the Czech Republic. Table 2.1 is an overview of prime ministerial terms and term durations analyzed in this study.

**Table 2.1 Prime ministerial terms and term durations**

| **Country** | **Prime minister** | **Mandate** | **Duration (Years, Months)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | Ivica Račan | 27 Jan 2000 - 23 Dec 2003 | 2.11 |
| Croatia | Ivo Sanader | 23 Dec 2003 - 6 Jul 2009 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 5.6 |
| Croatia | Jadranka Kosor | 6 Jul 2009 - 23 Dec 2011 | 2.6 |
| | | | |
| Czech Republic | Václav Klaus | 01 Jan 1993 – 17 Dec 1997 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 5 |
| Czech Republic | Miloš Zeman | 17 Jul 1998 – 12 Jul 2002 | 4 |
| Czech Republic | VladimírŠpidla | 12 Jul 2002 – 19 Jul 2004 | 2 |
| Czech Republic | Mirek Topolánek | 16 Aug 2006 – 08 May 2009 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 2.9 |
| Czech Republic | Petr Nečas | 28 Jun 2010 – 17 Jun 2013 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 3 |
| | | | |
| Estonia | Tiit Vähi | 17 Apr 1995 – 17 Mar 1997 (3 terms collapsed in 1) | 1.11 |
| Estonia | Mart Laar | 25 Mar 1999 – 28 Jan 2002 | 2.10 |
| Estonia | Juhan Parts | 10 Apr 2003 – 12 Apr 2005 | 2 |
| Estonia | Andrus Ansip | 05 Apr 2005 – 04 Apr 2011 (3 terms collapsed in 1) | 4 |
| | | | |
| Hungary | Gyula Horn | 15 Jul 1994 – 08 Jul 1998 | 4 |
| Hungary | Viktor Orbán | 08 Jul 1998 – 27 May 2002 | 3.11 |
| Hungary | Péter Medgyessy | 27 May 2002 – 29 Sept 2004 | 2.4 |
| Hungary | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 29 Sep 2004 – 14 Apr 2009 (3 terms collapsed in 1) | 4.7 |
| | | | |
| Latvia | Andris Šķēle | 21 Dec 1995 - 7 Aug 1997 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 1.7 |
| Latvia | Andris Bērziņš | 05 May 2000 – 07 Nov 2002 | 2.6 |
| Latvia | Aigars Kalvītis | 02 Dec 2004 – 20 Dec 2007 (3 terms collapsed in 1) | 3.1 |
| Latvia | Valdis Dombrovskis | 12 Mar 2009 – 25 Oct 2011 (4 terms collapsed in 1) | 2.7 |
| | | | |
| Lithuania | Adolfas Šleževičius | 10 Mar 1993 – 15 Feb 1996 | 2.11 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lithuania | GediminasVagnorius | 27 Nov 1996 – 04 May 1999 | 2.5 |
| Lithuania | Algirdas Brazauskas | 03 Jul 2001 – 01 Jun 2006 (3 terms collapsed in 1) | 4.11 |
| Lithuania | Andrius Kubilius | 28 Nov 2008 – 14 Oct 2012 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 3.11 |
| | | | |
| Poland | Jerzy Buzek | 31 Oct 1997 – 19 Oct 2001 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 3.11 |
| Poland | Leszek Miller | 19 Oct 2001 – 02 May 2004 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 2.6 |
| Poland | Donald Tusk | 16 Nov 2007 – 18 Nov 2011 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 4 |
| | | | |
| Slovakia | Vladimír Mečiar | 13 Dec 1994 – 29 Oct 1998 | 3.11 |
| Slovakia | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 30 Oct 1998 – 04 Jul 2006 (3 terms collapsed in 1) | 7.8 |
| Slovakia | Robert Fico | 04 Jul 2006 – 08 Jul 2010 | 4 |
| | | | |
| Slovenia | Janez Drnovšek | 14 May 1992 – 11 Nov 2002 (6 terms collapsed in 1) | 10.6 |
| Slovenia | Janez Janša | 09 Nov 2004 – 21 Nov 2008 | 4 |
| Slovenia | Borut Pahor | 11 Nov 2008 – 10 Feb 2012 (2 terms collapsed in 1) | 3.3 |

**Source:** Own calculation based on *ParlGov database* (Döring and Manow 2012). If the remaining number of days in the last month of tenure was 15 or more, an extra month was added to the total number of months. If the remaining number of days in the last month of tenure was less than 15 days, one month was deducted from the total number of months.

Four prime ministerial terms would fit the present analysis, but were not included; Jozef Antall (1990 – 1993), Mart Laar (1992 – 1994), Mart Siimann (1997 – 1999), and Gediminas Kirkilas (2006 – 2008), because preference was given to longer-lasting terms. In sum, this study evaluates performance of about 89% prime ministers in nine CEE countries that served for two years or longer since early 1990s until June 2013.

### *2.2 Expert surveys and expert rankings*

Expert surveys were previously used to establish rankings of performance of presidents and prime ministers in old democracies (Schlesinger 1948, Schlesinger Jr. 1997, Sheppard 1998, Granatstein and Hillmer 1999, Theakston and Gill 2006, Azzi and Hillmer 2013, Strangio et al. 2013). Expert rankings are especially useful in prime ministerial studies where political biography is the primary mode of investigation (Blondel 1987). In CEE, cumulative knowledge about prime ministers is small and largely qualitative. Some studies explained prime ministerial weakness earlier in transition (Baylis 2007); others looked at prime ministers' ability to influence

decision-making in larger institutional context (Haughton 2005, Blondel et al. 2007) and some studies were concerned with a negative political culture among Visegrád elites (Gallina 2008, Lengyel and Ilonszki 2012). Beyond informative media content, there is no systematic knowledge about how post-communist prime ministers handled political tasks. Expert rankings based on larger datasets are extremely valuable because they provide sufficient data to test hypothesis in statistical analysis and can advance knowledge about patterns of elite conduct and performance in newly democratized settings.

Expert surveys have clear advantages over case studies or media analysis. Case studies usually focus on one isolated leadership case or compare few leaders across few countries. Media coverage of prime ministers' performance may be available for only some prime ministers and only in some performance areas (e.g. economy or environment), which reduces the opportunity for comparative assessments. Language limitations related to media analysis would allow a researcher to study only few, but certainly not 33 prime ministers in nine countries where nine different languages are spoken. Experts who provide estimates about prime ministers' performance not only have the knowledge about their countries' politics, but also an experience of living under different prime ministers. Consequently, their assessments have a higher chance of being accurate than media reports written by journalists, especially if these are "outsiders" to countries' politics or otherwise provide biased opinions.

Measuring prime ministers' performance through expert assessments has advantages over country level data available by financial institutes like World Bank or Eurostat. If I looked at macroeconomic indicators provided by these institutes, I would not be able to empirically establish that yearly inflation, economic growth or unemployment rates in any way relate to prime ministers' measures. Macroeconomic indicators can tell us a great deal about the state of the economy at any point in time, however very little about the relationship between measures of individual prime ministers and citizens' well-being. In addition, financial institutes primarily offer data on economic indicators, and the concept of democratic governance forwarded in this study goes beyond only economic effectiveness and relates also to prime ministers' conduct, social and the EU policymaking.

Expert surveys are an efficient data collection tool where a large data mass can be acquired in a short time and in efficient manner via internet-based surveys. If a researcher cannot acquire expertise for the same phenomenon across large number of cases, it is justifiable to resort to experts who are independent of research and knowledgeable about the subject of interest (O'Malley 2005: 82). Expert surveys provide a quantitative measure for concepts of interest and experts' superior knowledge ensures a reasonably accurate quantitative reflection of the "true" score. Experts invited to respond to the survey are residents of nine countries and were selected based on research profiles indicated on departmental web sites of their affiliated universities or research institutes. Experts are most often either faculty members or doctoral students in political science. Confidentiality of experts' personal identity was explicitly guaranteed in email invitation because of the topic's sensitivity, but also as a strategy to increase the return rate. Confidentiality of experts' Institutional affiliation was not explicitly guaranteed and they were notified that their institutional affiliation might be used for expression of data quality. In total, experts from 39 universities or research institutes in nine CEE countries (full list indicated in appendix three) participated in the survey.

### *2.3.The survey questionnaire*

The survey was internet-based administered in "survey monkey" software. Email invitation included a short description of the research and guidelines how to respond to the survey. The questionnaire allowed skipping some questions, which increases the possibility of missing data, but also a higher response rate. The survey was sent in three waves that are referred to throughout the text as ES I (first wave), ES II (second wave) and ES III (third wave).

ES I included nine questions, while ES II and ES III each included six same questions in English (ES II) and in native languages of nine countries (ES III). ES I was sent in early 2012 in English and was completed in June 2012. ES I (see survey questionnaire in appendix one) included questions about prime ministers' powers and the inter-executive relationship. After ES I was complete, data analysis made me confident that proceeding to ES II is theoretically meaningful. I learned that CEE prime ministers are sufficiently powerful to influence decision-making and consequently, that outcomes of this decision-making are suitable criteria for evaluating prime ministers' performance in ES II and III. Table 2.2 presents ES I data on the

response rate, the number of sent surveys and reminders, and the responses versus non-responses.

### 2.2 First expert survey wave (ES I)

| Country | Response rate (%) | Sent | Reminders | Responses | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 11 | 36 | 3 | 4 | 32 |
| Czech Republic | 70 | 60 | 7 | 42 | 18 |
| Estonia | 19 | 43 | 3 | 8 | 35 |
| Hungary | 86 | 50 | 4 | 43 | 7 |
| Latvia | 20 | 30 | 3 | 6 | 24 |
| Lithuania | 42 | 43 | 3 | 18 | 25 |
| Poland | 23 | 70 | 3 | 16 | 54 |
| Slovakia | 62 | 50 | 5 | 31 | 19 |
| Slovenia | 29 | 24 | 7 | 12 | 12 |
| **Total** | **40 (avg.)** | **406** | **38** | **180** | **226** |

**Source:** ES I (January 2012 – June 2012), see survey questionnaire in appendix one

ES II was sent in late 2012 in English and was completed in June 2013. ES II (see survey questionnaire in appendix one) included questions about prime ministers' performance in four dimensions of democratic governance: democratic conduct, the EU integration, economic and social policymaking. ES II also included questions about prime ministers' populist characteristics and executive personalization of individual prime ministers. Table 2.3 presents ES II data on the response rate, the number of sent surveys and reminders, and the number of responses versus non-responses.

**Table 2.3 Second expert survey wave (ES II)**

| Country | Response rate (%) | Sent | Reminders | Responses | No response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 40 | 25 | 6 | 10 | 15 |
| Czech Republic | 21 | 48 | 7 | 10 | 38 |
| Estonia | 20 | 30 | 7 | 6 | 24 |
| Hungary | 31 | 45 | 7 | 14 | 31 |
| Latvia | 36 | 25 | 7 | 9 | 16 |
| Lithuania | 30 | 33 | 7 | 10 | 23 |
| Poland | 31 | 55 | 7 | 17 | 38 |
| Slovakia | 45 | 40 | 6 | 18 | 22 |
| Slovenia | 31 | 16 | 7 | 5 | 11 |
| **Total** | **32 (avg.)** | **317** | **61** | **99** | **218** |

**Source**: ES II (December 2012 – June 2013), see survey questionnaire in appendix one

ES III was sent in fall 2013 in the native languages of the nine CEE countries and was completed in late 2013. The reason of sending ES III was to ensure data quality by test-retest check (sending the exact same questionnaire to a different set of experts). ES III included the same questions as ES II, but did not include the question about prime ministers' populism. In addition, significantly higher response rate in ES III would indicate that the language barrier in ES II that was sent in English played at least some role. Table 2.4 presents ES III data on the response rate, the number of sent surveys and reminders, and the number of responses versus non-response.

**Table 2.4 Third expert survey wave (ES III)**

| Country | Response rate (%) | Sent | Reminders | Responded | No response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 45 | 20 | 3 | 9 | 11 |
| Czech Republic | 23 | 35 | 3 | 8 | 25 |
| Estonia | 28 | 25 | 3 | 7 | 18 |
| Hungary | 10 | 30 | 3 | 3 | 27 |
| Latvia | 20 | 20 | 3 | 4 | 16 |
| Lithuania | 5 | 20 | 3 | 10 | 10 |
| Poland | 15 | 40 | 3 | 6 | 34 |
| Slovakia | 20 | 30 | 3 | 6 | 24 |
| Slovenia | 17 | 12 | 3 | 2 | 10 |
| **Total** | **20 (avg.)** | **232** | **27** | **55** | **175** |

**Source**: ES III (June 2013 – December 2013), see survey questionnaire in appendix one

Table 2.5 presents total average response rate, the total number of sent surveys and reminders and the total number of responses versus non-responses between three survey waves.

**Table 2.5 Total response rate, number of surveys and reminders and responses versus non-response (ES I, II and III)**

| | Response rate (%) | Sent | Reminders | Responded | No response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total ES I** | 40 | 406 | 38 | 180 | 226 |
| **Total ES II** | 32 | 317 | 61 | 99 | 218 |
| **Total ES III** | 20 | 232 | 27 | 55 | 175 |
| **Total ES (I, II, III)** | 31 (avg.) | 955 | 42 | 334 | 619 |

The survey was sent to almost 1000 experts who were reminded 42 times to respond to the survey with about one-third of experts responding to and about two-thirds of experts not responding to the survey across three survey waves. The response rate decreased for about 10%

in each new survey wave. The total average response rate across three survey waves is 31%[32], which is a successful accomplishment compared to other studies using expert surveys that usually report the response rate between 10% and 40%.[33] Sending the survey in native languages did not (as I originally expected) inflate the response rate, meaning that insufficient expertise rather than language barrier is most important in explaining response rate percentages. In fact, the response rate was lowest in ES III (only 20%) compared to the highest response rate in ES I (40%) and 32% in ES II. In Slovenia, Latvia, and Hungary, ES III did not result in a satisfactory response rate (less than five experts responded to the survey) and estimates of prime ministers' performance in these countries are based on (only) ES II scores, as indicated in appendices one, two, three, four, five and six.

### *2.4 Quality of expert data*

Expert surveys were primarily used for estimating prime ministers' performance in democratic governance on a ten-point scale. Experts were asked to think about how prime ministers' conduct and effectiveness in policymaking contributed to citizens' prosperity. The questionnaire was not specific about the (exact) measures prime ministers had to be engaged in to contribute to citizens' well-being. In example, in estimating Fico's democratic conduct, Slovak experts could have thought about his relationship to the media, while in estimating Sanader's democratic conducts, Croatian experts could have primarily thought about his involvement in corruption. In estimating Ansip's effectiveness, Estonian experts may have thought about his unemployment measures, while in estimating Janša's effectiveness, Slovenian experts may have considered his measures in the banking sector. Consequently, expert rankings do not make us knowledgeable about the (exact) areas of democratic conduct and effectiveness that contributed to citizens' well-being, but provide general estimation of prime ministers' performance in democratic governance.



[32] When judging expert data, one has to bear in mind that response rates in percentages may be less relevant than information and knowledge experts provide. Substantive difference between those who responded to and those who did is more important, because if these differences are small then the difference between lower and higher response rate is less relevant (Biglasier and Staats 2009).

[33] For example, one study of Czech elites reports a response rate of 15% (Hellová 2010).

Launching ES III and test-re-test check between ES II and ES III ensured data reliability. The average score difference[34] between ES II and III was 0.8 out of a scale range of ten. The differences between ES II and III average scores were 1.1 in prime ministers' performance in economic policy, 0.9 in executive personalization, 0.8 in prime ministers' performance in social policy and 0.6 in prime ministers' democratic conduct and prime ministers' performance in EU integration. The score differences of individual prime ministers' between ES II and ES III did not (usually) exceed two points (out of a scale range of ten) across the four separate dimensions of democratic governance and in executive personalization, which indicates good data reliability and a very small "noise" in the data on the side of experts.

In addition to the test–retest check described above, I also calculated interclass correlation coefficient to estimate inter-rater reliability (IRR). IRR tells us how consistent different raters (experts) are relative to one another (on average) in measuring the same concept. Because prime ministers are selected non-randomly (are fixed), the assumption is that the error is only possible on the side of experts. Table 2.6 demonstrates within country ICC coefficients.

**Table 2.6 Interclass correlation coefficient (ICC)**

| Country | ICC | 95% Confidence Interval | Significance* | Cronbach's Alpha*** | NE** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 0.8 | 0.66 - 0.93 | .00 | 0.96 | 10 |
| Czech Republic | 0.9 | 0.75 - 0.93 | .00 | 0.97 | 13 |
| Estonia | 0.7 | 0.34 - 0.89 | .00 | 0.93 | 6 |
| Hungary | 0.9 | 0.77 - 0.94 | .00 | 0.98 | 14 |
| Latvia | 0.6 | 0.28 - 0.80 | .00 | 0.94 | 9 |
| Lithuania | 0.9 | 0.74 - 0.94 | .00 | 0.97 | 10 |
| Poland | 0.9 | 0.71 - 0.99 | .00 | 0.97 | 27 |
| Slovakia | 0.9 | 0.92 - 0.98 | .00 | 0.99 | 20 |
| Slovenia | 0.8 | 0.59 - 0.92 | .00 | 0.93 | 5 |

**Source**: Calculation performed in SPPS based on within country ES II expert responses across four dimensions of democratic governance

*significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) **Number of raters (experts)

*** Cronbach's alpha estimates internal consistency of concept's separate dimensions. Alpha of 0.9 indicates that separate dimensions are a good measure of an underlying latent construct (prime ministers' performance in democratic governance) (Cronbach 1951).

Inter-rater consistency was established within country, because it was important to ensure that Slovenian experts were consistent in estimating Slovenian prime ministers or that Hungarian

[34] Average score difference between ES II and III scores is calculated based on responses in Croatia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia and Poland, but not in Hungary, Latvia and Slovenia where ES III resulted in a very low response rate.

experts were consistent in estimating Hungarian prime ministers, rather than to ensure that Slovenian and Hungarian experts were consistent in estimating prime ministers in these two different countries. ICC is considered optimal if the coefficient is 0.8 (or at least higher than 0.7), while coefficients above 0.9 indicate a high degree of agreement among raters (McGraw and Wong 1996). As indicated in table 2.6, ICC coefficients in most countries are either 0.9 or 0.8, which indicates high degree of consistency among experts and ensures data reliability. Table 2.7 demonstrates the correlation matrix of separate democratic governance's dimensions indicating positive and strong correlations between democratic governance's dimensions.

**Table 2.7 Correlation matrix of separate democratic governance's dimensions**

| Dimensions | Pearson coefficient | N |
|---|---|---|
| Democratic conduct * EU performance | 0.76* | 33 |
| Democratic conduct * Economic performance | 0.61* | 33 |
| Democratic conduct * Social performance | 0.65* | 33 |
| EU performance * Economic performance | 0.61* | 33 |
| EU performance* Social performance | 0.57* | 33 |
| Economic performance*Social performance | 0.64* | 33 |
| Democratic conduct * Effectiveness | 0.77* | 33 |

*Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To ensure comparability of data one also has to establish that experts in different countries interpret the scale in the same way. Fico in Slovakia might score well higher in economic performance than Slovak's Mečiar. However, do Fico's higher scores than Orbán's or Sanader's indicate his better economic performance across countries? If experts use scales' end-points as theoretical extremes rather than points to plot range of examples within countries, estimates are comparable across countries, which should be also indicated by a good deal of variation within and between countries. However, even if some experts did not understand the scale in the proper way, data validity would not be greatly threatened, because more than one expert per country is used to estimate performance and within and across country scores reflect convergence of perceptions of many different experts (O'Malley 2005).

### *2.5 Other data resources*

Expert survey is the main data collection method used in this study to measure the dependent variable (prime ministers' performance in democratic governance). However, many other data from various sources were used to support arguments or test hypothesis through the text. Table 2.8 is an overview of all variables used across chapters and data sources used to measure them.

**Table 2.8 Matrix of variables and data resources**

| Chapter | Variables | Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Two | Prime ministerial terms | Prime ministers' curriculum vitas taken from official governmental websites,<br>Literature review |
| Three | Prime ministers' formal powers | Constitutional review, *Parline database on national parliaments*, http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp |
| Three | Parliamentary power index | M. Steven Fish and Matthew Kroenig, *The Handbook of National Legislatures: A Global Survey*, 2009 |
| Three | Inter-executive conflict<br>Prime ministers' practical powers<br>Power of individual prime ministers | Expert survey, literature review |
| Four | Democratic governance | Expert survey,<br>Media analysis, see list of press articles in appendix nine<br>Bertlesmann Stiftung Index, http://www.bti-project.org/ |
| Five | Populist characteristics | Expert survey |
| Five | Populist rhetoric | Holistic text analysis of prime ministers' speeches (Hawkins and Kocijan, 2013) |
| Five | Executive personalization | Expert survey |
| Five | Political experience<br>Age at assuming office<br>Education | Prime ministers' curriculum vitas taken from official governmental websites |
| Five | Political ideology | Edwards et al. 2012 |
| Five | Cabinet type | Armigeon et al. "Comparative Political Data Set III 1990 – 2010"<br>Blondel et al. *Governing Together*. 2007<br>Döring and Manow, *ParlGov*, 2012 |
| Five | Number of parties<br>Political party of prime ministers and individual ministers in finance, foreign, economy and social ministries | Müller–Rommel et al. 2004<br>Armingeon and Careja 2007<br>Döring and Manow, *ParlGov*, 2012<br>Governments' public archives |
| Five | Term duration | Prime ministers' curriculum vitas available at official governmental websites<br>Müller-Rommel's calculation (2005: 10) |
| Five | Mandates' characteristics | Media analysis, see list of press articles in appendix eleven |
| Five | Timeline of service | Prime ministers' curriculum vitas taken from official governmental websites, literature review |
| Six | Electoral performance | IFES Election Guide<br>European Election Database<br>Inter-parliamentary union |



## 2.6 *Limitations to assessing prime ministers' performance*

This section addresses study's main limitations that are inherent to any study assessing leadership performance. Primarily, every framework developed to assess leadership is open to criticisms, because there is no agreement about the criteria that clearly indicate leadership

success. We do not know if leaders' long terms, integrity of conduct, policy impact or popularity are appropriate indicators of leaders' performance. Even if there was an agreement that leaders' policy influence is (the most) appropriate indicator, we can further speculate about the areas in which the impact would indicate a success. Is it sufficient if we evaluate performance of leaders in foreign and economic policy, or should we also look at measures in agriculture, education, minority rights and protection of the environment?

In democracies, decision-making is dispersed and it is very difficult to establish empirically if, and the extent to which an individual leader (alone) contributed to particular policy outcome (Strangio et al. 2013, Baylis 2007:84)? This empirical uncertainty requires each research attempt at assessing leadership performance to engage in a preceding research step that accounts for leaders' individual contributions to policy outcomes. I overcome this challenge in chapter three, by empirically establishing real prime ministers' powers to influence decision-making. This, however, is a raw estimate and we can still wonder about how much each individual prime minister (alone) contributed to each particular item that is established here as a criteria in which performance is evaluated. Empirically, it is very difficult to establish the relationship between each small prime ministers' contribution and particular policy outcome. Nevertheless, this study did establish relatively high degree of certainty that CEE prime ministers had sufficient powers to (generally) influence policymaking.

Leadership performance is usually area-variant meaning that leaders are never equally successful in performance in different areas (Rose 2000). Consequently, each leadership study would need to take account of at least two performance areas as benchmarks for assessment. This study overcomes this challenge by using four equally weighted[35] separate areas of democratic governance as criteria for prime ministers' performance. However, the overall prime ministers' score in democratic governance blurs performance in separate areas, which requires weighing different areas of performance against one another. This challenge is overcome in chapter four by categorization of prime ministers in three groups; "outstanding", "average" and "likely

[35] As I explain in chapter four, some dimensions might be subordinate and it is likely that social policymaking is contingent on economic performance, while performance in EU integration may be contingent on prime ministers' democratic conduct.

populists" according to the scope-impact vision of performance that allows distinguishing between prime ministers' positive, average or negative political impact in different areas of performance. Variability of leaders' performance would also need to take into account the nature of the problems that must be solved, opposed to merely looking at changes that occurred in the society between the moment a leader took office and the moment he/she left (Blondel 1987).

Leaders' performance is also time-variant and leaders' are usually perceived to be more successful at the beginning of their terms than closer to term's end. This is what Max Weber labeled as an inevitable "decline of charisma" where strong support closer to elections inevitably wanes as leaders move away from the beginning of their terms because they are less able to respond to all expectations as their term progresses. I could have overcome this challenge by introducing a "double measure" of performance by asking experts to evaluate performance of each prime minister at the start and at the end of their terms, however, I worried this would decrease the response rate. Consequently, experts' rankings reflect an average estimate of prime ministers' performance without making a distinction between (potential) better performances at different term junctures.

The ability to control for numerous temporal and structural factors is an inherent challenge to any leadership study. Different leaders are in office at different times that are defined by different requirements and circumstances (Crockett 2002, Skowronek 2011). This variability entails making a distinction between "low opportunity" and "high opportunity" leaders (Lammers and Genovese 2000), which would require empirical assessments of the environment in which prime ministers' term unfolds. Additional problems related to comparative assessment of leaders relate to differences in institutional structure that provide different constraints and opportunities (Haughton 2005). Electoral system can be an important variable that shapes the overall conditions of leadership. Proportional electoral laws for example are more prone to coalitions composed of many parties that constrain prime ministers' ability to act. To control for institutional differences, I purposefully selected prime ministerial terms from institutionally similar settings characterized as parliamentary or premier-presidential democracies with weak presidents and proportional electoral laws.

Use of expert surveys is related to few methodological challenges. Expert surveys indirectly measure concepts through the observation of others, which has an inherent potential of random and non-random error between experts' estimations and prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. Experts' estimates about prime ministers' performance can simply be a product of prevailing values and culture and experts' rankings may simply include politically calculated responses (Helms 2012a: 9). Experts in different countries may have different standards about what is "very good" or "very bad" performance and lower grades may simply reflect experts' increased expectations (Garzia 2011, McAllister 2007, Helms 2008). Experts' (possibly) distinct values infused in the estimates of performance are more difficult to overcome, unless another study is carried out to show which exact prime ministers' measures (e.g. the relationship to the media) were assessed as "very good" in one and "average" in another setting. Largely, I overcome experts' subjectivity by launching ES III that allowed comparing prime ministers' scores between two survey waves. The results of the test-retest proved that ES II and III resulted in closely resembling expert rankings. Prime ministers' scores between two survey waves were similar never exceeding more than three points out of a scale range of 10 in any dimension of democratic governance. If the score difference was larger than three points between two survey waves, prime ministers categorized based on ES II as "outstanding", "average" and "likely populists" would change categories and this did not happen.

Small score difference between ES II and III indicates some "noise" in expert data likely related to new information experts acquired about prime ministers in between survey waves that biased their estimates. For example, Estonian Ansip is significantly upgraded in ES III in all democratic governance's dimensions. This may relate to his improved popularity for overseeing economic reforms that stabilized Estonia's credit ratings and improved economic growth after the immediate economic downturn at the onset of the global economic crisis. The revelation of his Reform party's scandal and corruption involvement in summer 2013 did not significantly influence experts' assessments, which indicates they focused on his individual accomplishments and not on factors unrelated to his performance. Dzurinda was perceived as more powerful in ES III compared to ES II, which may relate to the revelation of a series of corruption scandals during 2012 that occurred during his prime ministerial term.

Experts' estimates may be further biased because of their personal characteristics; party affiliation, personal experiences or social status (Azzi and Hillmer 2013: 19). If experts' and prime ministers' party positioning is same, the experts may award these prime ministers with better grades than prime ministers' of different parties. If experts or their family members experienced large wage cuts related to austerity measures by some prime ministers, they are likely to downgrade them when evaluating economic and/or social performance. The "subjectivity" element potential in expert assessments can be overcome by comparing experts' to prime ministers' characteristics.[36] However, I failed to ask experts about their personal characteristics, worrying this would decrease the response rate. Instead, I compared media evaluations about prime ministers' performance in democratic governance's dimensions to experts' estimates. In general, experts' assessments were in line with media reports about prime ministers' performance indicating a good consistency between two different measures, which is labeled in the literature as "convergent (discriminat) validity" (Adcock and Collier 2001). In addition to media reports, in chapter four experts' estimates are compared to Bertlesmann Stiftung Index (BTI) in all democratic governance's dimensions except the EU integration. The BTI is bi-annual, country-level measure of democracy, market economy and management. To make experts' assessments comparable to BTI, in chapter four, prime ministers' performance in democratic governance is presented also on a country level.

In this chapter, I discussed case selection and the logic of using prime ministerial term as the study's unit of analysis. I outlined general characteristics of institutional settings that are suitable for selecting and evaluating prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. I reported expert survey response rate, discussed survey questionnaire designed to measure prime ministers' performance and data quality, as well as addressed advantages of expert surveys over case studies and media analysis for developing expert rankings. I pointed to several study's limitations inherent to any leadership study. In the next chapter, discussion is focused on the extent to which prime ministers' are in position to influence decision-making.



[36] Researches assessing performance of Canadian and British prime ministers related experts' characteristics (age, gender, place of residence, party preference and education) to experts' assessments (Azzi and Hilmer 2013, Theakston and Gill 2006). In Britain, party preference, age or scholarly discipline played significant role in experts' ratings (Theakston and Gill, 2006), while in Canadian rankings, these variables had only a marginal impact (Azzi and Hillmer 2013).

# CHAPTER 3: PRIME MINISTERS' POWERS IN REAL POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Among limitations related to studying leadership addressed in the previous chapter, I emphasized the difficulty of empirically establishing the level of prime ministers' involvement in policymaking and his/her contributions to policy outcomes. Establishing (a degree) of prime ministers' direct contribution to policy outcomes is important, otherwise the study cannot justify "tying" policy outcomes to prime ministers' performance, because it is not clear which actors contributed to and bear responsibility for which policy outcomes. Constitutional provisions do not make CEE prime ministers strong in terms of influencing decision-making directly; however, they have several political resources that can increase their powers in practice.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how *contextual, political and personal resources* can transform institutionally weak prime ministers into actors that can directly influence policy outcomes. The chapter first looks at prime ministers' Constitutional powers and then at prime ministers' position in the parliament - prime minister - president triangle. The chapter then develops a country level index of prime ministerial power and before concluding estimates decision-making power of each individual prime minister.

### *3. 1 Prime ministers' Constitutional powers*

Constitutions provide general guidelines about actors or institutions that are entitled to participate in cabinet formation or termination and about the accountability relationships among different actors. Constitutional review of prime ministers' position in the executive-legislative arena indicates their weak powers compared to the powers of parliaments. Cabinets emerge from negotiations among the parties in the parliament and especially among party leaders. A prime ministerial appointment occurs after a president's nomination (or recommendation) of a leader of the party that received the most votes in the election to form the government and upon parliamentary vote of confidence. In Croatia, the president nominates a prime ministerial candidate to form the government and propose its members (ministers). A prime minister is appointed by the president (and seconded by the speaker of the parliament) once the parliament expresses confidence in a prime minister and the government's program (Article 109 of the Constitution). In the Czech Republic, the president appoints the prime minister (upon a

recommendation of the speaker of the parliament) (Article 77 of the Constitution) and appoints and dismisses (on the recommendation of the prime minister) cabinet members.

In Estonia, the president appoints the prime minister and ministers (upon the prime minister's recommendation) upon the parliamentary confidence in the government's program. In Hungary, the president appoints and dismisses the prime minister and ministers (recommended by prime minister) upon parliamentary approval (Article 33 of the Constitution). In Latvia, the president nominates a prime ministerial candidate who is appointed upon parliamentary confidence in the government's program and membership (Article 59 of the Constitution). In Lithuania, the president appoints a prime ministerial candidate who proposes cabinet composition upon the approval by the president and parliamentary vote of confidence (Article 84.4 of the Constitution). In Poland, the president nominates and appoints a prime minister who proposes ministers who must seek parliamentary approval for government's program (Article 154 of the Constitution). In Slovakia, the president appoints and dismisses the prime minister and ministers (upon recommendation of the Prime Minister) (Article 102 of the Constitution). In Slovenia, the president (or parliamentary groups) nominates the prime ministerial candidate who can propose, appoint and dismiss ministers upon parliamentary approval (Article 112 of the Constitution).

Prime ministers are dismissible by parliaments and if they lose support of parliamentary majority, the whole cabinet resigns. If the parliament loses confidence in an individual minister, another minister can be appointed in his/her place without the resignation of the entire cabinet, which emphasizes the greater accountability of prime ministers' position within the cabinet. In Hungary, Poland and Slovenia constructive vote of confidence requires concomitant naming of a new prime minister in the event of prime ministers' removal. In practice, however, the right to dismiss prime ministers may only be a residual power that is exercised in extreme circumstances, which prime ministers can easily counter by organizing the parliament to their advantage (Blondel 1987:158).

Constitutional provisions are also very general about prime ministers' duties related to cabinet decision-making. The Croatian Constitution states that the prime minister and cabinet members

are jointly responsible for cabinet decisions (Article 114 of the Constitution). No further rules direct prime ministers' duties within the cabinet. The Czech Constitution states that a prime minister "organizes the work of the cabinet, presides over its meetings and acts in its name" (Article 77 of the Constitution), while the cabinet is collectively accountable to the parliament. The Estonian Constitution states that the prime minister "represents the government and directs its activities and that the cabinet is collectively responsible to the parliament". Similar provisions direct activities of Hungarian prime ministers, who "preside over sessions of the government and ensure the implementation of government decrees and resolutions" (Article 37 of the Constitution). The Lithuanian Constitution states that the prime minister "represents and directs government's activities (Article 91 of the Constitution) and that the government is jointly responsible to the parliament for its activities (Article 96 of the Constitution). Lithuanian ministers are directly subordinate to the prime minister, but accountable for activities of their ministries to the parliament and the president. Latvian and Slovak Constitutions do not give detailed provisions about prime ministers duties. The Slovenian Constitution states that the prime minister "ensures the unity of the political and administrative direction of the government and coordinates its work" (Article 110 of the Constitution).

By only looking at Constitutional provisions about prime ministers' powers one may conclude that they are institutionally weak actors compared to parliaments they continuously rely on for its survival. Because cabinets are collective bodies where decision-making follows the logic of dependency and not dominance of some actors, one may additionally conclude that prime ministers do not have greater powers than other ministers in influencing cabinet decisions. However, to properly gauge prime ministers' powers in real political contexts, in the next section, I weigh prime ministers' position in relation to the parliament and the presidents and demonstrate how different political resources can place them in a strong position to influence decision-making in practice.

3.2. ***Executive-legislative and the inter-executive relationship***

Constitutional review about prime ministers' powers alone does not significantly improve knowledge about prime ministers' position in the executive-legislative (prime minister vs. parliament) and inter-executive arena (prime minister vs. president) in different political contexts. However, if we can estimate prime ministers' position in relation to the parliament and the president, we can better understand their relative powers to influence decision-making separately from other institutional actors. Based on Constitutional review, in relation to parliaments, prime ministers are always in a weaker position because they must continuously sustain its support to remain in power. In table 3.1 strength of CEE parliaments is indicated by index of parliamentary powers (PPI) defined as the *legislature's sway over the executive*[37] and *legislature's institutional autonomy*[38] (Fish and Kroenig 2009).

**Table 3.1 Strength of CEE parliaments**

| Country | PPI* |
|---|---|
| Croatia | 0.78 |
| Czech R | 0.81 |
| Estonia | 0.75 |
| Hungary | 0.75 |
| Latvia | 0.78 |
| Lithuania | 0.78 |
| Poland | 0.75 |
| Slovenia | 0.75 |
| Slovakia | 0.72 |

**Source**: M. Steven Fish and Matthew Kroenig, The Handbook of National Legislatures: A Global Survey (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

* The PPI provides a snapshot of the state of legislative power in the world as of 2007. It is calculated so that the powers of each national legislature are summed up and divided by 32 (a total number of powers that were measured). For example, a country with a national legislature that possesses 16 (out of) 32 parliamentary powers has a PPI of 0.5. PPI ranges from 0 (very weak) to 1 (very strong).

Based on PPI index CEE parliaments appear strong, all approximating one, which identifies parliaments as "very strong". However, PPI is a static measure and cannot fully account for dynamic executive-legislative relationship. Cabinet literature suggests the best indicator to

[37] Includes following indicators: parliament's ability to impeach the president or replace the prime minister, compatibility of executive and parliamentary positions, parliament's role in appointing prime ministers and individual ministers, parliament's ability to conduct independent hearings of members of the chief executive.

[38] Includes following indicators: parliament's involvement in elections of the president, parliament's ability to express no confidence vote in government, parliament's immunity in case of dissolution of the executive, security of parliament's decisions against executive vetoes, supremacy of parliament's decisions and the ability of parliament to initiate bills.

measure the relative power of the executive and legislative branches of government is cabinets' or prime ministers' durability. Based on this indicator, prime ministers with longer terms are considered stronger compared to prime ministers with short terms. The argument is that short lasting governments are unlikely to engage in effective decision-making (Warwick 1994).

The literature is not in agreement about the cut-off point that distinguishes short and long terms. However, if three years at minimum are taken as criteria of accomplishing legislative term, and as indicated in chapter five, section 5.3.3, in this study, 19 prime ministers were long and 14 were short lasting. However, Lijphart's (2012) findings challenge this claim, emphasizing majoritarian democracies that are characterized with dominant and stable executive are not more effective policy makers than consensus governments characterized by shorter lived, coalition cabinets. PPI index also fails to take into account executive actors who can skillfully exploit contextual possibilities thus *de facto* shifting the locus of power from the parliament to the executive. For example, Klaus tolerated Zeman's minority cabinet (1998-2002) and bills would pass by the support of remaining parliamentarians (supportive of Zeman) after parliamentarians who opposed the bill (supporters of Klaus then in opposition) left the parliament. This suggests that political personalities or elites' agreements may be more important in reality, even during minority governments that are considered to significantly reduce prime ministers' powers in relation to the parliament and to be more prone to ineffectiveness (Blondel and Müller -Rommel 2001).

In a parliamentary democracy, presidents are ceremonial and representative figureheads and are within the executive institutionally weaker than prime ministers. In early transition, post-communist presidents, despite weak formal powers were however stronger than prime ministers. Prime ministerial weakness related to short term duration, poorly developed party systems, recruitment patterns producing largely inexperienced politicians, policy constraints imposed by foreign factors, insufficiently developed structure allowing for frequent inter-executive clashes and ineffective prime ministers' offices (Baylis 1996 and 2007, Blondel et al. 2007, Protsyk 2006, Sedelius 2006, Körösényi 1999, Zubek 2001, Goetz and Wollmann 2001, Haughton 2005). Presidents' strength on the other hand was attributed to their direct mandates but also higher popularity, when presidents, like Havel or Walesa, were better known than prime ministers

(Baylis 2007: 89-90). Gradually, however, stable executive leadership emerged in post–communist countries (Blondel et al. 2007: 178, Zielonka and Pravda 2001) and as data in table 3.2 and 3.3 suggest, the executive power is concentrated in prime ministers who are stronger than presidents.

**Table 3.2 Power concentration in prime ministers**

| Country | Power concentrated (%) | Number of Respondents | Power not concentrated (%) | Number of Respondents | Total Number of Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 100 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Czech R | 93 | 38 | 7 | 3 | 41 |
| Estonia | 100 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Hungary | 98 | 41 | 2 | 1 | 42 |
| Latvia | 40 | 2 | 60 | 3 | 5 |
| Lithuania | 50 | 9 | 50 | 9 | 18 |
| Poland | 88 | 14 | 13 | 2 | 16 |
| Slovenia | 75 | 9 | 25 | 3 | 12 |
| Slovakia | 83 | 25 | 17 | 5 | 30 |

**Source**: ES I, see survey questionnaire, appendix one: "Is political power in your country concentrated in the executive (Prime minister and his/her cabinet)?" Response options: "yes"/"no".

In all countries, experts strongly agree that the executive power is concentrated in prime ministers. In Lithuania, experts are split in their agreement about the power concentrating in the prime minister, which may relate to Lithuania's semi-presidentialism where presidents are given few powers to influence decision-making (e.g. power to veto legislation) and do (on occasion) challenge prime ministers over power distribution in the executive. In Latvia, experts generally do not agree that the power is concentrated in prime ministers. This is an interesting, however an unsurprising finding, given the emergence of oligarchs in post-transition Latvia who retain significant powers to influence decision-making. Based on a confidential correspondence with one Latvian expert, prime ministers' powers can be properly understood only in relation to the interests of oligarchs[39]. If the prime minister is himself an oligarch, (e.g. Šķēle), or uses his powers in the interest of oligarchs (e.g. Kalvītis), executive powers can be considered to concentrate in the prime minister who has strong powers to influence decision-making. At other times, prime ministers who do not belong to oligarchical elite (e.g. Bērziņš), are likely to have

[39] Based on the opinion of Latvian expert, oligarchical business interest groups in Latvia emerged because of the poorly developed anti-corruption institutional framework and poor commitments of the elites to implement anti-corruption laws. This is in clear contrast to politics in Estonia and less so in Lithuania, which were anti-corruption oriented from the early transition. After 2000, several pieces of anti-corruption legislation in Latvia were implemented and restrictions on corruption become tighter, nevertheless corruption levels in Latvia remain high.

little decision-making power. Within the executive, prime ministers are institutionally stronger decision-making figures than presidents who are largely ceremonial, which is supported by data in table 3.3.

**Table: 3.3 Power concentration within the executive**

| Country | Prime minister stronger than president (%) |
|---|---|
| Croatia | 100 |
| Czech R | 100 |
| Estonia | 100 |
| Hungary | 100 |
| Latvia | 100 |
| Lithuania | 72 |
| Poland | 100 |
| Slovenia | 100 |
| Slovakia | 100 |

**Source**: ES I, see survey questionnaire, appendix one: "In the executive, who is stronger political figure, institutionally and in practice (prime minister or president)?"

As indicated in table 3.3, experts in all countries, except in Lithuania anonymously agree that prime ministers and not presidents have strong powers to influence decision-making, which is generally in line with the logic of parliamentarism where prime ministers head the executive (Blondel et al. 2007). Semi-presidentialism, as I explained above, accounts for lower percentage of Lithuanian experts (72%) who agree that prime ministers are stronger than presidents, which is also related to higher incidence of inter-executive conflicts in Lithuania. Expert data support the thesis about gradual shift of the executive power in favor of prime ministers compared to early transition. This gradual shift is related either to institutional change where presidents' powers were intentionally reduced like in Croatia and Poland, or to elite replacements where elites become more accustomed to consensual politics and were less willing to act outside of their domains.

The inter-executive conflict however remains at least a hypothetical possibility that can cause policy ineffectiveness and prime ministers' lower achievements (Sedelius 2006). Conflicts between presidents and prime ministers most often relate to Constitutional distribution of powers on countersignature, appointments, dismissals, presidents' competencies in defense or foreign

policy matters or use of veto[40] that can endanger prime ministers' policy reforms (Protsyk 2006: 8, Sedelius 2005: 67). In practice, although presidents do not have formal powers to dismiss prime ministers, they may publicly criticize their work, which can have a profoundly negative effect on cabinet's credibility and perceptions about prime ministers' overall achievements. To ensure empirically that the inter-executive conflicts are few, meaning that presidents generally do not exercise the ability to influence policy-making, I asked experts to evaluate the nature of relationship between presidents, and prime ministers, which is indicated by data in table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Types of intra-executive relationships**

| Country | Mostly Conflictual (%) | NR* | Sometimes conflictual, but mostly cooperative (%) | NR | Sometimes cooperative, but mostly conflictual (%) | NR | Mostly consensual (%) | NR | Total NR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 0 | 0 | 25 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 3 | 4 |
| Czech R | 2 | 1 | 66 | 27 | 24 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 41 |
| Estonia | 0 | 0 | 50 | 4 | 13 | 1 | 38 | 3 | 8 |
| Hungary | 0 | 0 | 61 | 26 | 12 | 5 | 28 | 12 | 43 |
| Latvia | 0 | 0 | 50 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 3 | 6 |
| Lithuania | 0 | 0 | 83 | 15 | 6 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 18 |
| Poland | 0 | 0 | 44 | 7 | 25 | 4 | 31 | 5 | 16 |
| Slovenia | 0 | 0 | 92 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 12 |
| Slovakia | 3 | 1 | 55 | 17 | 32 | 10 | 10 | 3 | 31 |

**Source**: ES I, see survey questionnaire, appendix one: "Overall, how would you evaluate the relationship between Prime ministers and Presidents in your country?" Response options: "mostly conflictual", "sometimes conflictual, but mostly cooperative", "sometimes cooperative, but mostly conflictual" and "mostly consensual",
*NR – number of respondents

As indicated in table 3.4, experts generally agree that the inter-executive relationship across CEE countries is cooperative and on occasion conflictual. Some scholars suggest that inter-executive conflict, especially in semi-presidential democracies is more likely in early transition, because of lower levels of institutionalization providing actors with more opportunities to influence formation of political procedures and rules, thereby provoking conflict and competition. Gradually however, institutionalization process normalizes predictability and the likelihood for

[40] President's power to veto legislation is relative because some parliamentary majority can always overrule presidential veto. Directly elected presidents are more likely to use veto power when parliamentary elections are close, they are early in their terms and their party is different from the one holding parliamentary majority. Presidents directly elected in Lithuania used veto 175 and in Poland 76 times from 1990 until 2010. Indirectly elected presidents in the Czech Republic used veto 75, in Estonia 59, in Hungary 39, in Latvia 35 and in Slovakia 36 times in the same period (Köker 2013), which indicates that likelihood of presidential veto is always contingent on the constellation of political forces in government and parliament (Tavits 2009: 35).

conflict decreases (Sedelius 2006: 131, Protsyk 2006). A type of government, as explained below, may play a role in inter-executive conflict. Prime ministers in minority cabinets are likely to be less powerful and more vulnerable to presidents' interventions who may exploit the cabinet's lack of strong parliamentary support to have a greater say in executive matters, which can lead to cabinet instability[41] and, consequently, ineffectiveness.

In Poland[42], Lithuania and recently in the Czech Republic, presidents attempted with varying degrees of success to play a significant role in policymaking. The Polish president quite frequently used veto power when Buzek was prime minister. He vetoed laws initiated by the cabinet across a large number of policy areas, especially during 2000, although he did not openly challenge Buzek's government. The inter-executive tensions did not diminish when Miller become prime minister in 2001. His fragile coalition disagreed on a number of social and economic issues and continued as a minority once he removed a party that did not support the cabinet's bill on highway funding. Sluggish economic growth, high unemployment, falling popularity and ongoing corruption allegations prompted Kwasniewski to search a broader political support for Miller's government and to request (though not openly) his resignation. Miller however, still strongly supported in the parliament, used the opportunity to regain the political initiative and outlined a plan for further liberalization of the economy, which gained him a vote of confidence (Sedelius 2006: 140-1, Nations in Transit 2004).

In Lithuania, the inter-executive conflict between president Adamkus and Prime Minister Vagnorius was constant. Adamkus, unlike president Brazauskas, was more ambitious and wanted to have a say in a series of policy matters, continuously commenting on government's performance related to (in his opinion) flawed privatization and problematic economic reforms. He could not openly ask the parliament to remove Vagnorius, because the latter still enjoyed parliamentary support. However, Adamkus used his better standing in opinion polls, compared to unpopular Vagnorius related to the sluggish economy during Russian economic crisis in 1998, which eventually led to Vagnorius's resignation in 1999. The relationship between Adamkus and

[41] Cabinet stability may relate to many factors including monocratic cabinet model, parliamentary support and strong influence of ruling party (Šarkutė 2010)

[42] In Poland, presidential powers decreased after 1997 and subsequent presidents become less willing to interfere in prime ministerial domains, while prime ministers become freer in appointing ministers and allocating ministerial portfolios (Zubek 2001)

subsequent Prime ministers (Paskas, Kubilius in his first term and Brazauskas) can be described as harmonious, indicating that the inter-executive conflict is, in large part, related to political animosity between different personalities rather than institutional power provisions given to executive actors (Sedelius 2006:149).

Instead of simply looking at institutional provisions and likelihood of inter-executive conflict, further research would benefit from investigating in more depth particular domains in which the conflict occurs. This type of research would provide grounds for judging the relationship between the particular domains of conflict, consequent lesser prime ministers' autonomy to act and his/her overall achievements. For example, the inter-executive tensions between Prime Minister Račan and President Mesić over appointments of chief intelligent officials may have had little impact on Račan's economic and/or social performance. Similarly, Buzek's disagreements with president Kwasniewski over appointments and dismissals of foreign ambassadors may not have played a big role in Buzek's social performance. In contrast, a clash between Prime Minister Vagnorius and president Adamkus over economic issues could have hampered Vagnorius's economic achievements (Sedelius 2006: 168). Similarly, Miller's conflict with Kwasniewski over Miller's disputed role in a bribe scandal may have contributed to worse perceptions of his overall performance.

This section was interested in position of prime ministers in relation to the parliament and the presidents in real political contexts. According to expert data, the executive power in CEE concentrates in prime ministers who are largely able to influence policymaking. The incidence of inter-executive conflicts is occasional, however the relationship between prime ministers and presidents is generally cooperative, supporting prime ministers' ability to act independently. The relative strength of presidents earlier in transition is less relevant in this study; because prime ministers selected from that period are few and many were in fact strong personalities (e.g. Klaus, Horn, Šķēle, Mečiar and Drnovšek). The particular domain of inter-executive conflict is more relevant than the sheer number of conflicts per country, because particular conflict's domain can provide more information about the relationship between the nature of the conflict and prime ministers' decreased powers. General estimation of prime ministers' position in relation to the parliament and the president is not alone sufficient to gauge empirically prime

ministers' powers in real political contexts. This is why the next section looks at specific political prerogatives prime ministers in each country can use to increase their powers in practice.

### *3.3 Political resources and prime ministers' powers*

In the previous section, the analysis focused on the relationship between prime ministers and other institutional actors. In this section, the discussion is more interested in prime ministers' position and powers prime ministers have within the cabinet. As emphasized in the previous section, Constitutional provisions cannot explain much variation in prime ministerial power across countries. Constitutions are generally vague about prime ministers' position in relation to cabinet actors. They usually state that prime ministers are cabinet heads and responsible for its overall co-ordination. The logic of cabinet collectivity requires that cabinet decisions are decisions of all ministers who are for them jointly responsible. However, few parliamentary cabinets in reality operate under the collectivity rule and prime ministers are usually above other ministers able to influence a wide range of policy fields (Blondel 1987: 166). Prime ministers are frequently in a position to shape outcomes and are able to affect structures, processes, and personnel. They can influence policymaking by exerting control over the organization and institutional processes and by choosing the people relevant for decision-making. Institutions constrain actors, but real political contexts determine the extent to which institutional framework is interpreted, translated, stretched and even formally changed by political actors (Sedelius 2006: 53). This is why the analysis of political contexts is equally important to the analysis of institutional framework.

Several political prerogatives can increase prime ministers' formally weak constitutional entitlements to influence decision-making, which requires the analysis of contextual factors. These prerogatives may relate to powers about organizing a cabinet and allocating portfolios or using the cabinet's administrative resources. Prime ministers are in a position to organize a cabinet by issuing directives to ministers, setting the cabinet's agenda, chairing cabinet meetings, or establishing cabinet committees. Political resources allow prime ministers control over veto players who can be placed in positions where their policy preferences are close to prime ministers' preferences, or in positions where their preferences different from prime ministers' are less salient. O'Malley (2005) suggests that *prime ministers – seemingly without any power to*

*make policy unilaterally – achieve policy changes and influence decision-making, through setting the alternatives for veto players*[43].

Prerogatives that allow setting the "alternatives for others" generally include the ability to control parliamentary and cabinet agenda, the right to call elections, appoint and dismiss ministers (O'Malley, 2005). The ability to control parliamentary agenda involves the right to call confidence motions and is related to dissolution of the parliament. Confidence motions allow prime ministers to force policy preferences by threat of parliament's dissolution, if the policy is not accepted, which may lead to early elections and incur costs to opposition parties if their electoral prospects are bad or worse than the prospects of prime minister's party (Ibid: 282). The ability to call elections is consequently a strong warning to other parties who consider rejecting prime ministers' preferred policies, especially if his/her party has good electoral chances.

Cabinet agenda setting is another powerful tool that increases prime ministers' powers allowing them to choose the most favorable forum for decision-making and propose solutions to cabinet disputes closest to their preferred policies. The ability to appoint and dismiss ministers allows prime ministers to structure cabinet personnel based on support for prime ministers' preferred policies by other cabinet actors. Prime ministers' party leadership should also be taken into account, especially if they are electorally popular, which allows them to unite parties behind policies that must be sold to and supported by the electorate. Prime ministers who are considered electoral assets for their parties have the ability to control the career of other party members by putting on party lists candidates who have more discretion over policy and are likely to unite behind prime ministers (O'Malley 2005: 256-261, Katz 2001). These prime ministers are likely to be granted policy concessions and benefits in order to keep their party services, which allows them use of prerogatives without fearing removal from office. In contrast, prime ministers considered as electoral liability for their parties are likely to be removed from party leadership and/or prime ministerial posts. Recent resignation in March 2014 of Estonian Ansip, whose popularity eroded after a relatively successful and long term and his replacement by a much

[43] A veto player is a political actor whose agreement is necessary for policy change, or whose objection would prevent policy change from happening.

younger colleague perceived to have better electoral chances in upcoming elections, is an example to support this claim.

In table 3.5, following political resources identified in the previous literature as contextual factors that increase prime ministers' powers: (a) selection of ministers, (b) calling the elections, (c) dismissing ministers, (d) setting cabinet agenda and (f) controlling agenda of the parliament are used to develop an index of prime ministerial power (IPP) based on expert estimates. Each power dimension equally contributes to IPP, however I acknowledge that some dimensions may be contingent on other dimensions. However, for the sake of parsimonious solution, and because I could not empirically establish which dimensions weigh more, primarily because there is no prior knowledge about powers of CEE prime ministers, and I could not carry out a separate research that is not the primary object of this study, I considered that all dimensions of power equally contribute to IPP.

The idea was to arrive at a crude measure of prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making and not contribute to understanding about how separate dimensions of powers relate to each other. Even if some dimensions of power in reality weigh more, the overall IPP measure is not greatly threatened, because it is an aggregate of separate dimensions whose averages do not significantly differ from within and across country IPP's. It is possible that power to dismiss ministers is more important than power to appoint them, given that dismissal powers can always be a corrective to remove ministers who stop supporting prime ministers' preferred policies. It is also not clear if the power to call elections or to dismiss ministers is more important in practice. Power to call elections may be the most important power prime ministers' can use to achieve their goals. However, dismissal powers may also be potent compared to calling elections, because prime ministers' and other parties may rather agree to dismissal of one individual than to face electoral solutions that present uncertain outcomes for all.

**Table 3.5 Index of prime ministers' power**

| Country | Select Ministers | Call Elections | Dismiss Ministers | Set cabinet | Control parliament 's agenda | IPP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 3.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.9 |
| Czech R | 2.2 | 1.2 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.0 |
| Estonia | 2.3 | 2.9 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 1.9 | 2.2 |
| Hungary | 2.9 | 1.7 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| Latvia | 2.2 | 1.0 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 1.8 |
| Lithuania | 2.0 | 1.2 | 1.9 | 2.4 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Poland | 2.8 | 1.9 | 2.8 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 2.4 |
| Slovenia | 2.6 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.1 |
| Slovakia | 2.1 | 1.4 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.1 |
| **Total avg.** | **2.5** | **2.5** | **2.3** | **2.4** | **2.2** | **2.2** |

**Source:** ES I, see survey questionnaire, appendix one: "In general, how much freedom does Prime minister in your country have to: a) select ministers, b) call elections, c) dismiss ministers, d) set cabinet agenda and e) set the agenda of the parliament?" Response choices: "lots of power (freedom)", "some power (freedom)" and "little power (freedom)"were indicated in expert surveys as percentages. Each dimension equally (20 %) contributes to country level IPP. Numerical value was added to each response choice; "little freedom" = 1, "some freedom" = 2 and "lots of freedom" = 3 to allow ranking of countries on a three-point scale where 1 indicates weak, 2 moderate and 3 strong index of prime ministerial power.

As data suggest, CEE prime ministers are generally *moderately powerful* to influence decision-making. In Croatia, Hungary and Poland prime ministers have strong powers to influence decision-making, while in all other countries prime ministers have moderate ability to achieve their goals. In Latvia and Lithuania prime ministers appear least powerful to influence policy outcomes; however, their IPP's approximate two, which indicates a moderate prime ministers' ability to achieve their preferred policies. In separate dimensions of power there is some cross-country variation but generally prime ministers have moderate to strong ability to decide on cabinet's personnel, elections, cabinet's and parliamentary agenda. Cross-country estimates of prime ministers' powers teach us that Latvian prime ministers are weakest in their ability to influence decision-making compared to other CEE prime ministers. However, these estimates do not tell us if some Latvian prime ministers were strong despite the general prime ministerial weakness, or if some Croatian prime ministers were weak despite general prime ministerial strength. This is why it is important, as discussed in the next section to estimate the ability of individual prime ministers to influence decision-making.



### *3.4 Powers of individual prime ministers*

Previous literature established that strong prime ministers are decisive, while weak prime ministers indecisive and ineffective decision-makers (Blondel et al 2007:190). King (1994) was the first who placed West European prime ministers in strong, medium and weak categories

based on decision-making powers. This categorization is used to assess powers of individual prime ministers, as expert data in table 3.6 indicate.

**Table 3.6 Power of individual prime ministers**

| Prime minister | Strong (%) | NR** | Weak (%) | NR | Medium(%) | NR | Total NR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gyula Horn | 72 | 10 | 7 | 1 | 21 | 3 | 14 |
| Viktor Orbán | 100 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 0 | 0 | 71 | 10 | 29 | 4 | 14 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 43 | 6 | 21 | 3 | 36 | 5 | 14 |
| Ivica Račan | 10 | 1 | 50 | 5 | 40 | 4 | 10 |
| Ivo Sanader | 100 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 10 | 1 | 40 | 4 | 50 | 5 | 10 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 100 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Janez Janša | 100 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Borut Pahor | 20 | 1 | 60 | 3 | 20 | 1 | 5 |
| Andris Šķēle | 100 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 11 | 1 | 56 | 5 | 33 | 3 | 9 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 78 | 7 | 11 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 9 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 63 | 5 | 24 | 2 | 13 | 1 | 8 |
| Tiit Vähi | 80 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 1 | 5 |
| Mart Laar | 60 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 2 | 5 |
| Juhan Parts | 20 | 1 | 60 | 3 | 20 | 1 | 5 |
| Andrus Ansip | 80 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 1 | 5 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 30 | 3 | 50 | 5 | 20 | 2 | 10 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 89 | 8 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 90 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 70 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 3 | 10 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 0 | 0 | 71 | 17 | 29 | 7 | 24 |
| Leszek Miller | 81 | 20 | 15 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 24 |
| Donald Tusk | 88 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 16 |
| Václav Klaus | 100 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Miloš Zeman | 92 | 12 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 0 | 0 | 77 | 10 | 23 | 3 | 13 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 23 | 3 | 15 | 2 | 61 | 8 | 13 |
| Petr Nečas * | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 100 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 68 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 26 | 5 | 19 |
| Robert Fico | 90 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 19 |

**Source**: ES I, see survey questionnaire, appendix one: "Please assess the strength of each prime minister to directly influence decision making". Response options; "strong", "weak", "medium" (King's categorization, 1994).
*Not included in ES I, because mandate was still unfolding
**NR= Number of respondents

According to expert data, out of 32 CEE prime ministers, 23 are perceived strong, two (Kosor and Topolánek) as medium and seven (Špidla, Buzek, Parts, Bērziņš, Pahor, Račan and Medgyessy) as weak for their powers to influence decision-making. These data are comparable

to findings of previous literature about prime ministers' styles[44] based on ministers' perceptions. About 70% of ministers[45] perceived prime ministers as strong, 10% perceived them as weak and 16% could not determine if they were strong or weak. About 64% of ministers reported no change in prime ministers' styles and about 34% of ministers who reported change indicated that prime ministers become more influential. Moreover, ministers who perceived prime ministers as strong reported better overall satisfaction (effectiveness) with cabinet decision making (Blondel et al. 2007: 182, Šarkutė 2010).

There was however, some difference in ministers' perceptions about prime ministers' styles and effectiveness in decision-making. Šleževičius was perceived strong, but a relatively ineffective decision-maker; which is likely related to contextual factors surrounding his leadership that included a deep economic crisis, collapse of the banking system and several privatization scandals (Blondel et al. 2007: 182). Dzurinda on the other hand was perceived weak, but effective in decision-making, which is likely related to his leadership of a surplus coalition that had little in common except a goal to remove Mečiar and put Slovakia back on the EU road (Fish 1999, Haughton 2002, Baylis 2007).

Findings of previous literature indicate a difference between prime ministers' powers and political impacts. It is not straightforward that prime ministers' weakness (always) means bad policy outcomes, or that prime ministers' strength (always) relates to successful performance. The outcome of decision-making by weak prime ministers can frequently be positive, while outcomes by strong prime ministers are not necessarily always effective. I found that prime ministers' performance in democratic governance (*political impact*) and prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making (*executive personalization*)[46] correlate negatively ($r$ = -.54, $p$ < .01). This means that prime ministers' who are perceived as weaker in reference to their ability to influence decision-making were in fact more effective. This is contrary to what the literature would expect. However, weak prime ministers are likely to be less influential in contributing to

[44] Leadership style is not a direct measure of prime ministers' influence on decision making, but can be taken as a reference point that indicates prime ministers' position within the cabinet

[45] Research applies to interviews with 300 ministers since early transition until 2003 in CEE countries also included in this study, but Croatia, plus Bulgaria and Romania (Blondel et al. 2007)

[46] Executive personalization is a continuous variable measuring prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making based on experts' estimates and is in detail discussed in chapter five.

particular policy outcomes compared to strong prime ministers. Although the negative relationship between prime ministers' performance and strength is an important finding, the higher incidence of strong prime ministers in this study justifies tying policy outcomes in particular areas to prime ministers' performance, because strong prime ministers have greater ability to influence policy outcomes.

Previous literature suggested prime ministers' strength or weakness relates to institutional framework or term duration. In reference to term durations, short lasting prime ministers are less able to engage in effective decision-making (Blondel et al. 2007: 189, Warwick 1994). Data analysis in this study cannot support this claim. I did not find statistically significant relationship between prime ministers' term durations and their performance in democratic governance. This indicates that prime ministers' longer terms do not necessarily lead to effective performance and that short terms do not automatically mean ineffectiveness.

It was also suggested in the literature that weak prime ministers are more likely in premier-presidential democracies where presidents retain some powers to influence decision-making and where the chances of inter-executive conflicts are higher (e.g. Lithuania, Poland) (Blondel et al 2007, Protsyk 2006). Expert data do not support this clam, and weak prime ministers are found in both parliamentary and premier-presidential systems. It was also suggested that strong prime ministers are likely in settings where prime ministers are institutionally dominant like, for example, in Hungary (Ágh 2001). Expert survey data partially support this claim, and strong prime ministers do occur in institutionally strong settings. However, institutional setting alone cannot explain frequent incidence of weak Prime ministers (e.g. Medgyessy) in institutionally strong settings and the incidence of strong Prime ministers (e.g. Kalvītis) in institutionally weak settings. This indicates that other factors possibly related to prime ministers' personalities matter for explaining the relationship between prime ministers' powers and the institutional structure.

Cabinet decision-making models developed by Elgie (1997) are useful in explaining how prime ministers in collective cabinets can shift decision-making power closer (or further away) from the center (prime minister). For example, in his second prime ministerial term (1999-2002),

Laar reduced ministerial autonomy and shifted cabinet decision making to the centre of government (Blondel and Müller-Rommel 2001: 28). In Latvia, Šķēle continuously made reshuffles to create a cohesive team centered in an "oligarcical" inner cabinet (2001: 32). In Lithuania, the prime minister is a dominant figure, the cabinet discussions collegial, the ministers not autonomous, and the prime minister's office plays a significant role in cabinet decision-making (Šarkute 2010). In Poland, the role of the prime minister has not been dominant until 1997 when constitutional changes reduced president's powers and shifted decision making closer to prime minister and the cabinet.

In Hungary, institutional structure creates opportunities for strong Prime ministers (Schiemann 2004: 139), and prime ministerial weakness primarily relates to prime ministers' personal attributes (e.g. Medgyessy's weak leadership skills). Strong political personalities like Klaus and Zeman easily countered collectivity and ministerial autonomy of Czech cabinets. Later when both were presidents, they attempted with varying degree of success to influence cabinet decision-making by approving ministerial and prime ministerial appointments of their loyal associates.[47] Strong Mečiar could easily overcome collective and party cabinets in Slovakia where ministerial appointments most often relate to agreements among coalition parties. His large say in cabinet appointments and dismissals was a result of strong party backing and support of his preferred policies by coalition partners (Haughton 2002: 1323). In Slovenia, Drnovšek and Janša used their strong leadership styles and countered Slovenian decentralized decision-making where ministers have large autonomy (Blondel and Müller-Rommel 2001: 105). Pahor's weakness related more to his weak leadership than institutional structure. In Croatia, cabinet decision-making is decentralized, but strong personalities like Sanader and Kosor[48]



[47] After Nečas resigned in summer 2013, Zeman nominated a technocrat Jiří Rusnok as prime minister who was in reality supporter of his *Zemanovci* party, created in 2009 as a counter weight to Social democrats. Rusnok, however did not receive a vote of confidence in the parliament, and Nečas's ODS domineering coalition argued it still had the majority to stay in power. The stalemate was solved when several ODS members defected, prompting dissolution of the parliament and early elections in October 2013. Rusnok remained prime minister until early 2014 when Sobotka replaced him after the electoral victory of Social Democrats.

[48] Kosor was however weaker than Sanader largely because of the waning popularity of HDZ, especially after revelation of Sanader's corruption scandals and her ambiguous relationship to these scandals when she was his deputy. Additionally, within her party, different factions started power struggles with a goal of removing her from party, which proved successful in 2013, after which she had to continue as an independent.

shifted decision-making power closer to the center and weak Račan[49] was less successful in doing so. Discussion of cabinet models suggests that neither institutional structure nor term duration fully explain variation in prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making in real political contexts. What appears to matter more are individual personalities and political resources prime ministers' can skillfully use to shift the balance of power in their favor and thus more directly influence political outcomes.

### *3.5 Conclusion*

The primary task of this chapter was to demonstrate prime ministers' ability to exploit contextual, institutional and personal prerogatives that shift the balance of power closer to the center allowing prime ministers' to directly influence decision-making. It was important to empirically establish this relationship, because in the next chapter, policy outcomes are used as criteria for performance and one has to be certain that prime ministers' (and not other actors) contributed to policy outcomes in which performance is evaluated. The chapter first looked at generally vague Constitutional provisions about prime ministers' powers. At most, Constitutions determine accountability relationships between the executive and the parliament. Because prime ministers' must keep support of the parliament throughout their terms, their role is largely subordinate to that of the parliament. More specifically, the chapter examined prime ministers' positions in relation to the parliaments and the presidents. While CEE parliaments are generally strong, prime ministers can use various resources to organize the parliament in their favor. As suggested by expert data, the inter-executive relationship is mostly cooperative, but prime ministers and presidents occasionally clash over the executive domains. As I suggested, further research should explore in more detail the nature of these domains, instead of insisting on the research of sheer numbers of conflicts.

In addition to being a part of wider institutional framework, CEE prime ministers are also heads of collective cabinets where decision-making is based on dependency and not dominance among cabinet actors. However, as suggested by previous literature and discussed in the second part of this chapter, prime ministers can use political prerogatives like appointing and dismissing

[49] Račan led six party electoral coalition that ended a decade of Tudjman's rule, but because it clashed on various issues Račan's role was frequently subordinated to solving coalition disputes

ministers, calling elections, influencing parliamentary and cabinet agenda to achieve their preferred policies. Based on an index of prime ministerial power, CEE prime ministers are generally moderately powerful to influence policy outcomes. This cross-country estimate of prime ministers' powers is supported by expert data on individual prime ministers' powers. Out of 32 prime ministers, experts perceive (N=23) prime ministers as strong, two as medium and seven as weak in their ability to influence decision-making. Institutional structure and term duration, as previous literature suggested, do not fully explain the incidence of strong prime ministers in institutionally weak settings and the incidence of weak prime ministers in institutionally strong settings. Cabinet decision-making models were used to demonstrate how prime ministers' personal attributes matter in explaining the relationships between formal prime ministerial weakness and their ability to influence policy outcomes by shifting decision-making power closer to the center.

In sum, prime ministers are largely perceived by experts as strong, which ensures that policy achievements set as criteria for prime ministers' performance in the next chapter are attributable to prime ministers and not so much to other actors. Out of 32 prime ministers, experts perceive as weak only seven prime ministers and this study acknowledges that their achievements assessed in the following chapter may not be attributable to them alone and that other actors possibly contributed to policy outcomes. In line with different types of prime ministers' performance, discussed in detail in chapter one, arguments and findings of this chapter generally relate to procedural aspects of prime ministers' performance. In the next chapter, prime ministers' programmatic performance defined as performance in democratic governance is evaluated by expert survey data. As generally suggested by expert data in this chapter, prime ministers' powers and effectiveness should not be conflated, because weak prime ministers sometimes produce effective polices, while strong prime ministers do not always produce good policy outcomes, which partially justifies keeping seven (weak) prime ministers in the analysis. Nevertheless, the relationship between prime ministers' procedural and programmatic performance appears asymmetrical and not symmetrical as suggested in previous literature.

# CHAPTER 4: PRIME MINISTERS' PROGRAMMATIC PERFORMANCE

In the previous chapter, I estimated prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making in real political contexts. As demonstrated by expert data, CEE prime ministers are moderately powerful to influence policy outcomes, in spite of constitutionally weak provisions and dispersed decision-making characterized by collectivity of cabinets and reliance on parliamentary support. Establishing the relationship between prime ministers' ability to influence decision-making independently from other actors empirically was an important step in research. It was important to justify that policy outcomes, used as criteria for prime ministers' programmatic performance in this chapter are prime ministers' and not other actors' contributions to policymaking. Expert data presented in this chapter can be considered valid if it is established that policy outcomes in which prime ministers' performance is assessed are their own responsibility, because they were in the position to influence them.

Prime ministers' programmatic performance, labeled as *performance in democratic governance* entails integrity of conduct in reference to formal institutions of democracy and effective policymaking in the EU integration, economic and social sphere, which is considered to improve citizens' prosperity. To measure performance in democratic governance, experts in nine countries (see chapter two) were invited to estimate prime ministers' achievements in separate democratic governance' dimensions; prime ministers' democratic conduct and performance in the EU integration, economic and social policymaking. In the first part of this chapter, expert data are presented in each separate dimension of democratic governance. Then, expert data are presented as an index of effectiveness (an aggregate of performance in EU integration, economic and social policymaking) and finally as an index of democratic governance (an aggregate of democratic conduct and effectiveness). In each section where separate dimensions of democratic governance are discussed, prime ministers are grouped in three categories; "very good", "average" and "very bad" based on their scores on ten-point scale. This categorization is important because it allows discussion of prime ministers' variable performance in separate dimensions of democratic governance. To emphasize quality of expert data, prime ministers' performance in each dimension (except in the EU integration) is compared to Bertelsmann Stiftung index (BTI), because of which expert data in each dimension are also presented on country level.

In the second part of this chapter, prime ministers' democratic conduct is compared to prime ministers' effectiveness to account for better understanding of likely better performance in one and worse in another dimension. As addressed in chapter two, one of the methodological challenges inherent in assessing leadership performance, is accounting for (many) areas of performance in which leaders' (usually) do not achieve equal results. Democratic prime minister is easily less successful in effectiveness and an effective prime minister may not be equally determined to support democratic framework. Based on their variable performance in reference to democratic conduct and effectiveness, Prime ministers are grouped in three categories; "outstanding", "average" and "likely populists". Categorization of prime ministers' performance based on *scope* (democratic conduct / effectiveness) and *impact* ("good", "average", and "bad") vision of performance allows better understanding of different levels of prime ministers' performance in different areas.

### 4.1 Prime ministers' democratic conduct

Previous literature suggested CEE elites feature a "negative political culture" that is characterized by lack of consensual politics, unwillingness to compromise, authoritarian excesses, personality conflicts, insensitivity to popular discontent (elitism) and frequent charges of corruption (Lengyel and Ilonszki 2012, Gallina 2008). In principle, a gap exists between the institutional structure that is consensual and the elite system that is confrontational. Elites nominally accept democratic institutions, but engage in an undemocratic behavior that is not consensual in practice. Path dependency of values and attitudes largely explains this trend. Values and norms embraced in communism that was paternalistic, non-transparent, hierarchical and egotistic carry over and are practiced under (new) democratic structures that require conduct diametrically opposed to experiences during communism (Gallina 2007).

To test the "negative culture" hypothesis, experts were asked to assess prime ministers' democratic conduct during their terms. Unlike case studies that would allow comparing only few prime ministers, quantitative expert assessments allow comparison of prime ministers' democratic integrity not only within a single, but across many countries. Assessing prime ministers' performance in one or few isolated cases of "good" or "bad" leadership would not

teach us much beyond the achievements of these few leaders. Consequently, a sample of 33 prime ministerial terms in nine CEE countries and dataset on their democratic conduct is larger than any other hitherto used sample to gauge elite-institutional relationship and findings of this section are valuable contribution to elite behavior and political leadership literature.

*Democratic conduct* is defined as prime ministers' integrity in reference to institutions of democracy (e.g. freedoms of press and the media, independence of the judiciary or respect for the rule of law) and is assessed by experts' estimates on ten-point scale. Democratic Prime minister is likely to make decisions that do not (at least not significantly) distort the usual working of democratic institutions, while the undemocratic prime minister is likely to engage in decision making that distorts otherwise regular working of checks and balances. For example, an "undemocratic" Prime minister may introduce media laws that curtail freedom of the press or introduce electoral laws that favor the incumbent or parties of a certain size. In between these two extremes are prime ministers that neither significantly improve, nor severely undermine regular operation of democratic framework. Table 4.1 presents expert data on democratic conduct of individual prime ministers and groups them in three categories[50] ("democratic", "undemocratic" and "neither democratic nor undemocratic") based on their scores on ten-point scale, which allows discussion of prime ministers with different levels of respect for democratic institutions.



[50] Categorization is borrowed and adapted from Blondel (1987), see chapter one

**Table 4.1 Categories of prime ministers' democratic conduct**

| Democratic (7.0 – 9.0) | Mean | "Neither Nor" (5.0 – 7.0) | Mean | Undemocratic (2.6 – 5.0) | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jerzy Buzek | 8.7 | Juhan Parts | 6.7 | Viktor Orbán | 3.9 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 8.2 | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.6 | Ivo Sanader | 3.9 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.7 | Andrus Ansip | 6.6 | Andris Šķēle | 3.4 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 7.6 | Tiit Vähi | 6.5 | Janez Janša | 3.4 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.5 | Donald Tusk | 6.5 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.2 |
| Ivica Račan | 7.5 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.4 | Vladimír Mečiar | 2.6 |
| Leszek Miller | 7.3 | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.4 | | |
| Borut Pahor | 7.2 | Mart Laar | 6.2 | | |
| Gyula Horn | 7.1 | Jadranka Kosor | 6.1 | | |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.0 | Robert Fico | 5.8 | | |
| | | Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.8 | | |
| | | Mirek Topolánek | 5.8 | | |
| | | Petr Nečas* | 5.6 | | |
| | | Adolfas Šleževičius | 5.6 | | |
| | | Miloš Zeman | 5.5 | | |
| | | Andris Bērziņš | 5.2 | | |
| | | Václav Klaus | 5.2 | | |
| **Total 10** | **7.6** | **17** | **6.0** | **6** | **3.4** |

**Source**: ES II and III: "Please assess democratic conduct of each prime minister on 1 – 10 scale where 1 is "fully undemocratic" and 10 "fully democratic". When making your assessment think about how prime ministers' conduct related to democratic institutions such as the rule of law, media freedoms, (un)favorable electoral laws, etc.
Prime ministers are placed in each category based on following score range; 1 - 5 indicating undemocratic conduct; 5 - 7 indicating neither democratic, nor undemocratic conduct and 7 - 9 indicating democratic conduct
In case of score difference between ES II and ES III (see appendix four) better score was used for placement in the proper category
* Nečas was included in ES III after his mandate ended in June 2013

Expert data only partially support the "negative political culture" thesis. Most prime ministers are either democratic (N=10) or moderately democratic (N=17), while only six prime ministers, out of 33 point to a gap between democratic structure and elite conduct. In reference to previous findings on mutual elite relationships among Visegrád elites (Gallina 2008), this study generally comes to similar conclusions. In Poland, elites are generally consensual and Polish prime ministers are generally the most democratic. Slovak and Czech elites feature occasional nationalist and euro-skeptic tendencies, which is also observable in expert data among Slovak and Czech prime ministers. Hungarian elites are fully polarized; view each other as enemies rather than political opponents, especially after 2000, which is partially visible in expert data where Hungarian prime ministers appear as moderately democratic. Reasons why this study's findings related to democratic conduct of prime ministerial elite partially support previous findings are addressed below.

Unlike this study, previous literature focused primarily on mutual elite relationships and not on the relationship between elite conduct and democratic institutions. Gallina (2008) takes in the account the relationship between elites' conduct and democratic institutions (e.g. judiciary, the media), but her research stays at the level of mutual party elite relationships. Mutual elite relationships are an important aspect of decision-making likely related to effectiveness; however, confrontational elite relationships may not automatically erode formal democratic framework. For example, polarized relationships among Hungarian elites may not automatically curtail freedoms of press, the rule of law, etc. The nature of mutual elite relationships does give a taste of elite behavior in particular country, but cannot fully account for the relationship between elites' or leaders' conduct and democratic institutions.

In this study, a large sample of prime ministerial elite (33 prime ministerial mandates) in nine countries is used to assess prime ministers' democratic conduct. Unlike other studies, it does not only select prime ministers where leadership pathologies are apparent (e.g. Orbán, Mečiar). According to Blondel (1987), leadership generalizations are only possible after (potentially) "good" leaders are assessed next to (potentially) "bad" leaders. Prior to analyzing experts' rankings about prime ministers' performance, except heuristic guess, we have no prior knowledge about levels of performance by different prime ministers. Previous studies focused more on (only) examples of "bad" leadership. As her cases, Gallina (2007 and 2008) uses Kaczynski's in Poland, Mečiar and Fico in Slovakia, Orbán and Gyurcsány in Hungary. Unsurprisingly, based on all apparent examples of pathological leadership, she concludes that "negative political culture" predominates among Visegrád elite. Lengyel and Ilonszki (2012) examine relationships of Hungarian elite, especially since Orbán's 2010 victory when elites become predatory and entrenched in power, using manipulation, deception, populism, racist and anti–EU rhetoric. They conclude, Hungary has become a "simulated democracy" based on polarized elite relationships, but this finding may not apply to elite-institutional constellation in pre-Orbán Hungary, or in other Visegrád countries.

Leadership pathologies previously observed in other studies are also present in expert assessments. All six undemocratic Prime ministers (Orbán, Janša, Šķēle, Kalvītis, Mečiar, Sanader) feature elements of "negative political culture" such as populist rhetoric, involvement

in corruption scandals, or autocratic style of governing. However, *prime ministers' mindset* manifested as nationalist and/or populist rhetoric may not automatically mean decision-making that attacks formal institutions of democracy. As indicated in table 4.1, some prime ministers known for their populism (e.g. Fico, Klaus), are assessed by experts as "neither democratic, nor undemocratic", which indicates populism and anti-democracy may not be conflated. It is possible that a populist leader is more likely to undermine democratic structure compared to a pluralist leader. However, the relationship between populism and democracy must sustain empirical test, before any conclusions are possible about the relationship, which is discussed in detail in chapter five.

To demonstrate quality of expert data, in table 4.2, prime ministers' democratic conduct is compared to Bertelsmann Stiftung's index (BTI) on stability of democratic institutions. BTI[51] is an aggregate index of three dimensions; democracy, market economy and management that evaluates the state of political and economic transformation in 130 countries from 2003 until 2012. Its democracy indicator is composed of five dimensions; stateness, the rule of law, political participation, stability of democratic institutions (SDI) and political and social integration (representativeness). SDI assesses a degree to which democratic institutions are capable of performing their functions and are adequately accepted**.** Expert data on prime ministers' democratic conduct are similar to SDI in that both measures evaluate a degree to which democratic institutions are functioning and whether they were violated or improved in a given period. In table 4.2, country level data on prime ministers' democratic conduct are compared to country level data on SDI.



[51] BTI uses a comprehensive system of expert evaluations that are crosschecked for their validity at many levels, including national and regional levels.

**Table 4.2 Prime ministers' democratic conduct (country level) and stability of democratic institutions (SDI)**

| Country | Democratic conduct Expert survey (mean all PM) | SDI** / Mean |
|---|---|---|
| Poland | 7.5 | 9.3*** |
| Estonia | 6.5 | 10.0 |
| Lithuania | 6.4 | 9.7 |
| Hungary | 6.3 | 9.3 |
| Slovenia | 6.3 | 9.7 |
| Czech Republic | 6.0 | 9.7 |
| Croatia | 5.8 | 8.9 |
| Latvia | 4.8 | 9.1 |
| Slovakia | 4.3 | 9.5 |
| **Total** | **6.0** | **9.5** |

**Source:** ES II and III and stability of democratic institutions (SDI) by BTI

*Prime ministers' "democratic conduct - country scores are aggregates of all prime ministers' scores in each country In case of score difference in prime ministers' democratic conduct between ES II and III, better score is used and reflected in a country score

**SDI is measured on a 1 - 10 point scale where 9 and 10 indicate political decisions that are prepared, made and implemented in a legitimate process by appropriate authorities effectively and efficiently (BTI codebook 2012).

***SDI individual country score is an average of all bi annual scores available by BTI from 2003 until 2012

Based on SDI measure, indicated in table 4.2 all nine countries (except Croatia that scores slightly below nine), are "almost perfect" democracies where political decisions are prepared in a legitimate process by appropriate institutions efficiently and effectively. Estonia, scoring maximum ten in every year of SDI's measurement is considered a "perfect democracy". Cross-country score variation is less apparent in SDI than in expert data. Hungary scores 9.5 (out of a scale range of ten) on BTI effective for 2012, which does not properly account for dynamism in actor-institutional relationship especially during Orbán's second tenure when the system of checks and balances largely eroded[52]. Once SDI is compared to expert data, CEE countries appear "more democratic" than its prime ministerial elite that is only "very" democratic in Poland and in Estonia. In other countries, prime ministerial elite is only moderately democratic, while in Latvia and Croatia prime ministers are generally undemocratic. Interpretation of expert data however must keep in mind that one undemocratic prime minister can greatly spoil the overall country score (e.g., Janša in Slovenia or Mečiar in Slovakia downgrade country level scores in prime ministers' democratic conduct).



[52] The more realistic measurement of Hungary's democracy was made in BTI's 2014 edition, where Hungary is identified as "defective democracy" with a score of 7.95 out of a scale range of ten.

Expert data on prime ministers' democratic conduct are in line with corruption levels in CEE. Slovakia, Latvia and Croatia where prime ministers are comparatively less democratic also have higher levels of corruption, compared to lower levels of corruption in Slovenia and Estonia where prime ministers are comparatively more democratic (Kocijan *forthcoming*). State corruption levels and corruption of individual politicians are not the same; however do hint at the mindset of the elite in a given country.

(Un)democratic conduct, as is discussed in chapter five is primarily related to prime ministers' political mindsets that can manifest in aspects of democratic or undemocratic political culture such as lack of consensualism, sentiments of mutual mistrust, nationalist and populist rhetoric and executive personalization. Further research would benefit from looking in more depth at the mechanism behind prime ministers' behavior and democratic institutions. We should learn more about the exact area(s) (e.g. corruption, rule of law, media, judiciary) that are attacked by prime ministers, in which countries and why. Uncovering exact mechanisms that operate behind prime minister-institutional relationship would broaden our knowledge about the quality of elite-institution relationship, which is important for genuine functioning of contemporary democracies. In line with the concept of democratic governance, the next section presents expert data on prime ministers' effectiveness in three areas: the EU integration, economic and social policymaking.

### *4.2. Prime ministers' effectiveness*

Based on the concept of performance in democratic governance, in addition to being democratic, prime ministers must also deliver outcomes that contribute to citizens' prosperity in several policymaking areas; the EU integration, economic and social policy. Obviously many other policymaking areas would improve the lives of citizens such as environment related issues, agricultural, transport or communication policies. Nevertheless, for the sake of parsimony and the importance of the EU, economic and social matters that generally influence every European citizen in any member state; the EU, economic and social policymaking are taken as indicators to gauge prime ministers' effectiveness.

This approach is supported by theories of democratization and democratic governance. East Europeans wanted democracy; because they thought democracy leads to the comfortable life they saw in Western countries, and for this, a transition to market economy was necessary. This desire for a better and more open living would be accomplished by joining the EU where new countries would have the possibility to reap economic benefits of EU membership. Policy making in the social area would ensure social equality and social protection East Europeans were accustomed to during communist times (Bozóki 2008). All three areas of effective governance are given an equal weight in contributing to prime ministers' effectiveness. However, it is likely that social policymaking is contingent on economic policymaking. Good performance in social policymaking is likely to follow from good performance in the economic area, which may mean a subordinate position of social to economic performance. However, for parsimonious solution, both were given an equal weight in theoretically contributing to the concept of prime ministers' performance in democratic governance.

### 4.2.1 Prime ministers' performance in EU integration

After communism collapsed, Europeanization was high on the agenda of CEE elites (Kopecký 2004) mainly as a project of political, social and economic modernization (Bozóki 2008: 13, Henderson 2001). Some authors understand European integration as a process (Wiener and Diez 2009, Zimmermann and Dür 2012, Pierson 1996), while for others Europeanization is a result – the outcome defined as a political system to which a process of integration is directed (Marks, Hooghe and Blank 1996). In the present study, Europeanization (European integration) is defined as a process whereby European nation states are willing to transfer their sovereign powers in a collective enterprise (Gilbert 2013). In this understanding, every "European move" by prime ministers that brings their countries closer to that collective enterprise is considered ("good") EU performance, while every move by prime ministers that distances their countries from the collective EU project is considered as an unsuccessful ("bad") EU performance. By adopting a process-oriented view of European integration, performance in EU integration of every prime minister is possible, regardless of the time when prime ministerial mandates (pre or post EU accession) unfolded. Table 4.3 presents expert data on prime ministers' performance in EU integration and groups prime ministers in three categories ("good", "bad" and "average") based

on their scores on ten-point scale, which allows discussion of prime ministers with different levels of performance in EU integration.

**Table 4.3 Categories of prime ministers' performance in EU integration**

| **Good Performance (7.0 – 9.0)** | **Mean** | **Average Performance (5.0 – 7.0)** | **Mean** | **Bad Performance (2.6 – 5.0)** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Janez Drnovšek | 9.0 | Ivica Račan | 6.9 | Václav Klaus | 4.9 |
| Leszek Miller | 8.3 | Tiit Vähi | 6.8 | Aigars Kalvītis | 4.6 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 8.2 | Jerzy Buzek | 6.6 | Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.4 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 8.1 | Miloš Zeman | 6.4 | Andris Šķēle | 4.3 |
| Mart Laar | 8.0 | Borut Pahor | 6.2 | Vladimír Mečiar | 2.6 |
| Gyula Horn | 7.8 | Robert Fico | 6.2 | | |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.8 | Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.9 | | |
| Donald Tusk | 7.8 | Mirek Topolánek | 5.9 | | |
| Andrus Ansip | 7.7 | Janez Janša | 5.4 | | |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 7.6 | Petr Nečas* | 5.3 | | |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.4 | Andris Bērziņš | 5.1 | | |
| Ivo Sanader | 7.1 | Viktor Orbán | 5.1 | | |
| Juhan Parts | 7.1 | | | | |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 7.0 | | | | |
| Péter Medgyessy | 7.0 | | | | |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 7.0 | | | | |
| **Total 16** | **7.7** | **12** | **6.0** | **5** | **4.2** |

**Source:** ES II and III: "Please assess performance of each Prime minister on 1-10 scale where 1 is "very bad" and 10 "very good" performance in EU integration. When making your assessment, think about "any move or moves" by each prime minister that brought your country closer to or further away from Europe.
Prime ministers are placed in each category based on following score range; 1 - 5 indicating poor performance, 5 - 7 indicating average performance and 7- 9 indicating good performance in EU integration
In case of ES II and ES III score difference (see appendix five) better score was used for placement in the proper category
*Nečas was included in ES III after mandate termination in June 2013

Expert data suggest that EU integration was not only high on prime ministers' agenda, but also an area where they achieved most success compared to other dimensions of democratic governance. A majority of prime ministers (N=16) performed well in EU integration, while twelve prime ministers performed moderately well and only five prime ministers either from Latvia or Lithuania (except Mečiar and Klaus) performed badly in EU integration. Mečiar, while not openly against the EU integration engaged in authoritarian behavior that moved Slovakia away from EU accession. Klaus known for his Euro-skepticism that was voiced more during his presidential than his prime ministerial term is a borderline case with a score of 4.9 that is between bad and average category.

Poor performance in EU integration by several Baltic prime ministers must be interpreted in relation to larger political and historical context of EU accession, specific to Baltic countries. Because of their geographical proximity to Russia, Baltic-EU relations unavoidably transform EU-Russian relations. On the one hand, Baltic States were eager to join the EU, to divert their national security away from Russia, but also cultural reasons of belonging to the West. On the other hand, Baltic States have a large Russian minority that had to be accommodated based on EU accession requirements, which was not welcomed at home. In addition, regardless of their EU aspirations, Russia remains the main trading partner and source of energy security for Baltic countries (Rupnik, Pettai and Zielonka 2003). In this sense, performance of Baltic prime ministers in EU integration may be conditioned on specificity of geopolitical, cultural and economic aspects of Baltic-EU-Russian relations. However, good performance in EU integration by many other Baltic prime ministers (especially in Estonia) is an indicator that prime ministers' EU commitments bear more relevance than complexity of foreign relations. Table 4.4 presents country level data on prime ministers' performance in EU integration to allow cross-country comparisons.

**Table 4.4 Prime ministers' performance in EU integration (country level)**

| **Country** | **Prime ministers' EU integration performance*<br>Expert Survey (Mean all PM)** |
|---|---|
| Poland | 7.6 |
| Croatia | 7.4 |
| Estonia | 7.2 |
| Slovenia | 6.9 |
| Hungary | 6.7 |
| Lithuania | 6.5 |
| Czech Republic | 6.0 |
| Latvia | 5.4 |
| Slovakia | 5.2 |
| **Total** | **6.5** |

**Source**: ES II and III – prime ministers' performance in EU integration

*Prime ministers' EU integration performance - country scores are aggregates of all prime ministers' scores in each country

In case of score difference in prime ministers' EU integration performance between ES II and III, better score is used and reflected in a country score



Prime ministers' performance in EU integration is generally moderate with an average score of 6.5 that is comparatively a better score than average scores in other dimensions of democratic governance. Similar to country variations in prime ministers' democratic conduct, Poland and Estonia are the best performers in EU integration. Latvia and Slovakia are average performers

with mid-point scores, but their worse EU integration performance compared to other countries is apparent, which is (in Slovakia) largely related to Mečiar's poor democratic commitments. Otherwise, Dzurinda is credited for Slovakia's EU accession along other applicants in 2004, while under Fico's leadership Slovakia joined the Euro zone in 2009. Croatia's good performance in EU integration is unsurprising given its comparatively lengthier accession process (all eight countries in this study joined EU in 2004, while Croatia joined in 2013), which required a constant engagement of all of its prime ministers, who were (especially since 2000) generally pro-European politicians.

Previous literature suggested CEE political elites have turned to "negative Europeanization", especially in post-accession period when they started opposing further political integration (Gallina 2007, Rupnik 2007, Ágh 2008), using EU-related issues to evoke nationalist, radical and populist feelings to attract voters or divert the blame for policy failures to the EU agenda. This line of argumentation is rather limited because it is based on examples of Euro-skepticism in only few leaders among Czech (Klaus) and Polish (Kaczynski twins) elite (Gallina 2007, Gallina 2008: 113 – 120, 143 – 147, 167 – 172, 190 – 195). Expert data do not support the "negative Europeanization" thesis and suggest CEE prime ministerial elite is largely not only pro-European, but also engaged in activities that bring their countries closer to EU project. Except on rare occasions, Euro-skeptic voices are raised, but only as "soft" strategic instrument of national power play, objecting to only a limited number of policy areas, or expressing temporal concerns about the national interests that are at odds with the EU trajectory, rather than completely rejecting the EU project (Hartleb 2012).

Based on the study of elite attitudes towards EU integration in two waves, Cotta and Russo (2013) find that national elites continue to provide a solid backing to a European integration process, with variation more pronounced in the type and direction of the further integration process, rather than in integration itself. In a wide pool of national elites, no elite group wants "more Europe"; rather different elite groups want more of different aspects of Europe. In a similar vein, no group is against "more Europe", but different elite groups are opposed to different aspects of European expansion. On a practical side, however anti-EU feelings in CEE do appear occasionally relevant in politics, a good example of which is when

Slovak elite refused to support a financial package for financially failing Greece during Radičová's government in 2011.

Relatively better performance of prime ministers in EU integration compared to other dimensions of democratic governance indicates that CEE prime ministers not only saw EU membership as beneficial, but also accommodated their activities towards the common EU project. Some prime ministers were more pro-European than democratic (e.g. Sanader, Janša), which points to ambiguity of the relationship between prime ministers' democratic conduct and being pro-EU[53]. It is possible that democratic prime ministers are generally pro-European, because acceptance of democratic norms at national level may mean greater tendency of prime ministers to accept consensual conduct required by membership in supra national institutions. However, EU membership may also gradually improve prime ministers' democratic conduct at national level and generally make CEE political cultures more consensual. Further research would benefit from testing the direction of the relationship between elites' democratic conduct and the level of elites' EU support to uncover if supra national structures have any capabilities in making national political cultures more democratic and consensual. More attention should be also paid to reasons related to EU general powerlessness amidst occasional undemocratic outbursts by national elites (Rupnik 2007: 22 – 5). In addition to insisting on questions whether elites are pro or anti European, we should learn more about why the EU remains a weak transmitter of consensual values and democratic political culture among national elites. In line with the concept of effective governance, the next section discusses prime ministers' economic performance.

### 4.2.2 Prime ministers' performance in economic policymaking

Prime ministers' measures in economic area targeted at reducing unemployment and inflation rate or inducing economic growth contribute to citizens' economic well-being. In this section, performance relates to *economic measures by prime ministers and the relationship between these measures and citizens' economic well-being*. It is less relevant which economic measures prime ministers applied to achieve economic goals, rather the effect these measures had on citizens'

[53] The correlation between two dimensions however is positive and strong ($r = .76$, $p < .01$), see chapter two, table, 2.7.

economic well-being is more important. From this perspective, prime ministers are not "credited" or "blamed" for every problematic aspect of the economy during their tenures, but only for the effect of economic reforms they initiated during their terms. If a prime minister attempts to tackle the unemployment rate, but implements measures that do not bring unemployment down, this would indicate unsuccessful economic performance. Prime ministers could also take credit or blame for omitted economic measures (measures that were desired, but never took place) and these are also important. However, policy omissions are difficult to judge, because there is no empirical way for assessing how an omitted measure would relate to citizens' economic well-being. This is why prime ministers' economic performance reflects only economic measures that were implemented.

Assessing economic conditions in any country in a given period is a comprehensive task that must take account of many macroeconomic indicators. However, looking only at macroeconomic indicators provided by financial institutions would not allow determining if fluctuations in yearly inflation or unemployment rates anyhow relate to economic measures by prime ministers. Clearly, leaders are not the only responsible actors for general health of the economy. However, prime ministers' part of economic responsibility relates to the effect their economic measures had on citizens' welfare. This is why expert estimates and not macroeconomic indicators measured by financial institutes are better methodology for measuring prime ministers' economic performance. Experts have superior knowledge about their countries' politics, but also personal experience of economic conditions as residents of countries where prime ministerial terms unfolded that puts them in a position to provide an intermediate estimation of prime ministers' economic performance. Table 4.5 presents expert data on prime ministers' economic performance and groups prime ministers in three categories ("good", "bad" and "average") based on their scores on ten-point scale, which allows discussion of prime ministers with different levels of economic performance.

**Table 4.5 Categories of prime ministers' performance in economic policymaking**

| Good Performance (7.0 – 8.2) | Mean | Average Performance (5.0 – 7.0) | Mean | Bad Performance (2.9 – 5.0) | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andrius Kubilius | 8.2 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.5 | Petr Nečas* | 4.9 |
| Andrus Ansip | 7.9 | Juhan Parts | 6.5 | Péter Medgyessy | 4.4 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 7.9 | Mart Laar | 6.3 | Janez Janša | 4.4 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 7.6 | Gyula Horn | 6.1 | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 4.2 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.2 | Gediminas Vagnorius | 6.0 | Borut Pahor | 4.2 |
| Ivica Račan | 7.0 | Robert Fico | 5.8 | Andris Bērziņš | 4.0 |
| Tiit Vähi | 7.0 | Leszek Miller | 5.8 | Adolfas Šleževičius | 3.9 |
| | | Jerzy Buzek | 5.7 | Václav Klaus | 3.6 |
| | | Vladimír Špidla | 5.3 | Jadranka Kosor | 3.4 |
| | | Donald Tusk | 5.3 | Ivo Sanader | 3.3 |
| | | Mirek Topolánek | 5.3 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.0 |
| | | Miloš Zeman | 5.1 | Vladimír Mečiar | 2.9 |
| | | Viktor Orbán | 5.0 | | |
| | | Andris Šķēle | 5.0 | | |
| **Total 7** | **7.5** | **15** | **5.7** | **12** | **3.9** |

**Source:** ES II and III: "Please assess performance of each Prime minister on 1-10 scale where 1 is "very bad" and 10 "very good" performance in economic policymaking area. When making your judgment think about prime ministers' economic measures such as structural reforms, banking and budgeting, inflation, unemployment or taxation and the relationship of these measures to citizens' economic well-being

Prime ministers are placed in each category based on following score range; 1 - 5 indicating poor, 5 - 7 indicating average and 7- 9 indicating good performance in economic policymaking.

In case of ES II and ES III score difference (see appendix six) better score was used for placement in the proper category

*Nečas was included in ES III after mandate termination in June 2013

As indicated by expert data, only seven prime ministers performed well in economic policymaking. Baltic Prime ministers (Kubilius, Dombrovskis, Ansip) are especially credited for measures that diverted Baltic economies from bankruptcy and on a path to growth during 2008 financial crisis. Earlier in transition, Račan, Drnovšek and Dzurinda implemented reforms that opened economies of their countries to foreign investments, which re–started economic growth. Relatively successful economic performance by Baltic prime ministers (except in Latvia) may relate to the neoliberal type of capitalism adopted in Baltic countries (Bohle and Greskovits, 2013)[54] that limits participation of interest groups in decision-making, which allows prime ministers freer implementation of economic reforms.



[54] The authors identify three models of capitalism in CEE; (a) neoliberal - formed in Baltic states entailing radical market reforms with severe limitation of citizens' and organized social groups' influence in policymaking, (b) embedded capitalism - formed in Visegrad countries and Croatia entailing permanent search for compromises between market transformation and social cohesion and (c) neocorporatist - formed in Slovenia entailing radical marketization with generous efforts to compensate transformation's losers with various corporatist groups and the state searching for compromise solutions.

Bad economic performance by twelve prime ministers is related to a lack of commitment for reforms manifested in populist rhetoric (Janša, Sanader, Mečiar, Kalvītis, Klaus,Mečiar) that is used to blur responsibility for economic failures, and/or corruption scandals (Nečas, Janša, Sanader, Kalvītis, Šleževičius). Other prime ministers that performed poorly failed to implement proper structural reforms and adopted measures that did not lead to economic improvements (Kosor[55], Medgyessy[56], Gyurcsány, Pahor Bērziņš). Interestingly, prime ministers that did not perform well in the economy have a higher tendency to resign that is frequently also related to scandals or corruption charges (Pahor, Gyurcsány, Medgyessy, Nečas, Sanader, Kalvītis, Šleževičius, and Klaus). Moderately successful Prime ministers (N=15) achieved some positive economic results, which were countered by several negative economic achievements. It is likely that these prime ministers resorted to painful structural reforms (e.g. higher taxes) that did not have an immediate positive short-term effect, but were otherwise necessary for long-term economic health (Pierson 2004, Baylis 2007). An example for this is widely unpopular austerity package introduced by Horn, which was necessary to avoid imminent bankruptcy in Hungary in mid 1990s.

Table 4.6 compares expert data on prime ministers' economic performance to economic performance (EP) by BTI. EP is one of the dimensions of market economy[57] measured as the output strength by following macroeconomic indicators; GDP growth, inflation, employment, tax revenue, trade balance, debt and investment (BTI codebook 2012).



[55] Kosor introduced new taxes as a response to the ongoing economic crisis, but failed to introduce structural reforms

[56] Medgyessy decreased the central value of the floating forint's exchange rate responding to Hungarian exporters' interests, which was perceived by investors as a flawed piece of economic policy that prompted sale of forints and Hungarian government bonds and led to considerable interest rate hikes by Hungarian national bank

[57] Market economy is composed of following dimensions; economic performance, level of socio economic development, organization of market competition, currency and price stability, private property, welfare regime and sustainability (BTI codebook, 2012).

**Table 4.6 Prime ministers' performance in economic policy (country level) and economic performance (EP) by BTI**

| Country | Prime ministers' performance in economic policymaking* Expert Survey (Mean all PM) | EP** / Mean |
|---|---|---|
| Estonia | 7.0 | 9.4*** |
| Lithuania | 6.2 | 9.0 |
| Poland | 5.6 | 8.2 |
| Slovakia | 5.5 | 8.8 |
| Slovenia | 5.4 | 8.0 |
| Hungary | 4.9 | 8.0 |
| Czech Republic | 4.7 | 8.6 |
| Latvia | 4.8 | 7.8 |
| Croatia | 4.5 | 7.2 |
| **Total** | **5.4** | **8.3** |

**Source**: ES II and III – prime ministers' performance in economic policymaking and BTI's economic performance (EP) indicator

*Prime ministers' performance in economic policymaking - country scores are aggregates of all prime ministers' scores in each country

In case of score difference in economic performance between ES II and III, better scores are used and reflected in country scores

**EP is measured on a 1 - 10 scale where 7 and 8 indicate good economic performance with moderately positive macroeconomic data including low GDP growth rates, moderate unemployment rates, relative price stability, lightly unbalanced budget, tendency toward debt and manageable account position, and 9 and 10 indicate a very good performance with relatively high GDP growth rates, high employment levels, price stability, balanced budget, reasonable debt and a sustainable current account position (BTI codebook 2012)

***EP country score is an average of all bi annual scores available by BTI from 2003 until 2012

In reference to economic performance, both expert data and EP indicate moderate economic achievements. Estonia and Lithuania are the only two countries that appear "very good" on BTI measure, but moderately successful on expert measure, while Croatia and Latvia perform poor in the economy on expert measure, but have moderately positive macroeconomic indicators. All other countries are moderately successful on both measures, except the Czech Republic and Hungary that perform poorly on expert measure. The neoliberal model adopted in Estonia and Lithuania may contribute to better performance by Baltic prime ministers. However, in Latvia, the neoliberal capitalist model has no similar effect, and the worst economic performance by Latvian (and Croatian) prime ministers is likely related to high corruption rates and prime ministers' mindset that is generally not committed to reforms but prone to using public office for personal interests. Compared to moderate macroeconomic indicators, Czech prime ministers are assessed by experts as poor performers in the economy, which is likely related to a large number of financial scandals that are frequent among Czech Prime ministers (Kocijan *forthcoming*)

Democratization literature suggested that democracy is more likely to survive in economically developed settings (Lipset 1959, Przeworski and Limongi 1997, Przeworski 2000), which decreases prospects for introduction of market economy in settings not supported by democratic structure. Even if it is successful, market transformation is likely to incur transitional costs (e.g. inflation, unemployment, allocative inefficiencies) that may not be tolerated politically (Przeworski 1991). This paradox of "transition simultaneity" where state, democratic institution building and market transformation (contingent mutually) are performed all at once, means that CEE prime ministers had decreased prospects to achieve good economic results. However, a majority of CEE prime ministers (N=22) performed either well or moderately well in economic policymaking. This indicates that CEE prime ministers generally succeeded in overcoming complexity of "simultaneous" transitions and relatively quickly consolidated both democratic and economic structure. This is largely related to prime ministers' general commitment to economic reforms. Prime ministers' poor economic performance is largely related to their mindsets not prone to structural reforms but to financial scandals and corruption. In line with the concept of effective governance, in the next section, prime ministers' performance in social policymaking is discussed.

### 4.2.3 Prime ministers' performance in social policymaking

In every society, various risks such as childhood, old age, disability, illness or provision for basic needs and shelter require intervention of governments to modify market forces and redistribute resources among the population. On the one hand, social policymaking is a *deliberate intervention* by the state to redistribute resources among citizens to achieve welfare objectives, while on the other; it is a whole *range of institutions* that together determine the welfare of citizens including a range of family and community networks (Baldock et al. 2011, Hill 2006). In this section, performance relates to *prime ministers' interventions in social sphere (especially pension and health reforms) and the relationship between these measures and citizens' social welfare*. Table 4.7 presents expert data on prime ministers' performance in social area and groups them in three categories ("good", "bad" and "average") based on their scores on ten-point scale, which allows discussion of prime ministers with different levels of performance in social sphere.

**Table 4.7 Categories of prime ministers' performance in social policymaking**

| Good Performance (7.0 – 7.2) | Mean | Average Performance (5.0 – 7.0) | Mean | Bad Performance (3.0 – 5.0) | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.2 | Janez Drnovšek | 6.8 | Petr Nečas* | 4.3 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.1 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.4 | Donald Tusk | 4.2 |
| | | Tiit Vähi | 6.3 | Andris Bērziņš | 4.1 |
| | | Ivica Račan | 6.2 | Aigars Kalvītis | 4.1 |
| | | Borut Pahor | 6.2 | Ivo Sanader | 4.0 |
| | | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.1 | Andris Šķēle | 3.9 |
| | | Péter Medgyessy | 6.0 | Mirek Topolánek | 3.8 |
| | | Gediminas Vagnorius | 6.0 | Vladimír Mečiar | 3.8 |
| | | Robert Fico | 5.9 | Václav Klaus | 3.0 |
| | | Gyula Horn | 5.7 | | |
| | | Andrus Ansip | 5.6 | | |
| | | Jerzy Buzek | 5.6 | | |
| | | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 5.4 | | |
| | | Janez Janša | 5.2 | | |
| | | Juhan Parts | 5.1 | | |
| | | Leszek Miller | 5.0 | | |
| | | Mart Laar | 4.8 | | |
| | | Miloš Zeman | 4.8 | | |
| | | Viktor Orbán | 4.8 | | |
| | | Valdis Dombrovskis | 4.6 | | |
| | | Jadranka Kosor | 4.4 | | |
| | | Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.4 | | |
| **Total 2** | **7.2** | **22** | **5.5** | **9** | **3.9** |

**Source:** ES II and III: "Please assess performance of each Prime minister on 1-10 scale where 1 is "very bad" and 10 "very good" performance in social policymaking area. When making your judgment think about prime ministers' measures (especially pension and health reforms) and the relationship of these measures to citizens' social well-being

Prime ministers are placed in each category based on following score range; 1 - 5 indicating very poor; 5 - 7 indicating average and 7 - 9 indicating very good performance in social policymaking

In case of ES II and ES III score difference (see appendix seven) better score was used for placement in the proper category

*Nečas was included in ES III after mandate termination in June 2013

Social policymaking is an area where prime ministers' achieved least success. Only two prime ministers performed well, while a majority (N=22) achieved moderate success and nine prime ministers performed poorly in the social area. Given the complexity of transactional costs encountered by post-communist reformers such as high levels of unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and income inequality this comparatively lower performance in the social area is unsurprising (Offe 1993). In addition, experts' worse perceptions about prime ministers' achievements in social area may be attributed to "state-entitlement" mentality common in Eastern Europe, where people are accustomed to a range of state provisions such as employment guarantee, free education, health care, pensions and family allowances. Performance in social

policymaking may be also conditioned[58] on a good state of the economy where high growth rates are permissive for an expansion of social spending. If the economy grows slowly, fiscal constraints limit the ability to sustain welfare entitlements and services. As suggested by expert data prime ministers performing poorly in the economy also performed poorly in social affairs (Nečas, Bērziņš, Klaus, Sanader, Kalvītis, Mečiar). However, prime ministers performing well in the economy achieved only a moderate success in social policymaking. The relationship between performance in social and economic area deserves further examination, because it is not clear if contingency between dimensions or other factors matter, or if prime ministers' general lack of commitment to reforms explains levels of prime ministers' performance in the social area.

Table 4.8 compares expert data to BTI's welfare regime (WR) indicator. WR measures viable arrangements that compensate for social risks such as poverty, unemployment, old age and disability. It is a static measure that outlines presence or absence of social safety nets for social risks in a given country and assesses risk at poverty in relation to nation-wide social protection framework, but does not assess the impact of particular social policies on particular social risk groups.



[58] Correlation between two dimensions is strong and positive ($r$ = .64, $p$ <.01), (see chapter 2, table 2.7)

**Table 4.8 Prime ministers' performance in social sphere (country level) and welfare regime (WR) by BTI**

| Country | Prime ministers' performance in social policymaking* Expert Survey (mean all PM) | WR** / Mean |
|---|---|---|
| Slovenia | 6.1 | 9.6*** |
| Lithuania | 6.0 | 8.0 |
| Estonia | 5.5 | 8.5 |
| Hungary | 5.5 | 9.0 |
| Slovakia | 5.3 | 8.8 |
| Poland | 5.3 | 8.1 |
| Croatia | 4.9 | 8.5 |
| Czech Republic | 4.9 | 9.4 |
| Latvia | 4.2 | 7.4 |
| **Total** | **5.3** | **8.6** |

**Source**: ES II and III – prime ministers' performance in social policymaking and BTI's welfare regime (WR) indicator

*Prime ministers' performance in social policymaking - country scores are aggregates of all prime ministers' scores in each country

In case of score difference in social performance between ES II and III, better scores are used and reflected in country scores

**WR is measured on a 1 - 10 point scale where 7 and 8 indicate social safety nets that are well developed, but do not cover all risks for all social strata and a significant part of the population remains at risk of poverty, while 9 and 10 indicate social safety nets that are comprehensive and compensate for social risks, especially nationwide health care exists and a well-focused prevention of poverty is in place (BTI codebook 2012)

***WR country score is an average of all bi annual scores available by BTI from 2003 until 2012

As suggested by data in table 4.8, all nine countries have moderately developed safety nets that in most countries do not cover for all social risks, but provide general social security of citizens'. Relatively developed safety nets match moderate prime ministers' success in social area that is however generally worse than in any other dimensions of democratic governance. Some cross-country variation between two measures is also present. As indicated by WR in table 4.8, Slovenia, Czech Republic, and Hungary have nation-wide health care and a well-focused prevention of poverty that is matched to only moderately successful prime ministers' interventions in Slovenia and Hungary and poor achievements of Czech prime ministers in social sphere. In other countries, social safety nets are developed, but do not cover all risks for all social groups and a significant part of the population remains at risk of poverty. Moderately developed safety nets match moderate prime ministers' in all countries, except in Latvia where prime ministers perform poorly in social area. Prime ministers' moderate performance in economic and social area with almost equal overall scores may indicate contingency between the two measures, which should be explored by future research in more depth. In the next section, prime ministers' performance is presented as an aggregate of all three dimensions of effective governance.

### 4.2.4 Prime ministers' performance in effective governance

As outlined in chapter one, prime ministers' effectiveness is one of the democratic governance's dimension composed of three separate areas of policymaking; the EU integration, economic and social policymaking. In addition to respecting institutions of democracy, prime ministers must also deliver effective policies that improve citizens' welfare. In preceding sections, prime ministers' performance was presented in each separate dimension of effectiveness. In this section prime ministers' effectiveness is presented as an average index of performance in EU integration, economic and social policy making. Prime ministers are grouped in three categories; "effective", "average" and "ineffective", as indicated in table 4.9 based on their effectiveness measured in each dimension on a ten-point scale, which allows discussion of prime ministers with different levels of effectiveness.

**Table 4.9 Categories of Prime ministers in effective governance**

| **Effective (7.0 – 7.9)** | **Mean** | **Average (5.0 –7.0)** | **Mean** | **Ineffective (3.1 – 5.0)** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.9 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.8 | Petr Nečas* | 4.8 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 7.8 | Vladimír Špidla | 6.7 | Ivo Sanader | 4.8 |
| Andrus Ansip | 7.1 | Ivica Račan | 6.7 | Andris Bērziņš | 4.4 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 7.0 | Tiit Vähi | 6.7 | Andris Šķēle | 4.4 |
| | | Gyula Horn | 6.5 | Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.2 |
| | | Mart Laar | 6.4 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.9 |
| | | Valdis Dombrovskis | 6.4 | Václav Klaus | 3.8 |
| | | Leszek Miller | 6.4 | Vladimír Mečiar | 3.1 |
| | | Juhan Parts | 6.2 | | |
| | | Robert Fico | 6.0 | | |
| | | Gediminas Vagnorius | 6.0 | | |
| | | Jerzy Buzek | 6.0 | | |
| | | Péter Medgyessy | 5.8 | | |
| | | Donald Tusk | 5.8 | | |
| | | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 5.5 | | |
| | | Borut Pahor | 5.5 | | |
| | | Miloš Zeman | 5.4 | | |
| | | Jadranka Kosor | 5.3 | | |
| | | Mirek Topolánek | 5.0 | | |
| | | Janez Janša | 5.0 | | |
| | | Viktor Orbán | 5.0 | | |
| **Total 4** | **7.5** | **21** | **5.8** | **8** | **4.0** |

**Source:** ES II and III – index of effectiveness (an aggregate of average scores in EU integration, economic and social performance), see appendix eight
Prime ministers are placed in each category based on following score range; 1 - 5 indicating ineffectiveness; 5 - 7 indicating neither effectiveness, nor ineffectiveness and 7 - 9 indicating effectiveness
*Nečas was included in ES III after mandate termination in June 2013

Compared to prime ministers' democratic conduct, outlined in table 4.1, prime ministers are only slightly less successful in effectiveness as data in table 4.9 suggest. Ten prime ministers were democratic and only four were effective. A total of (N=17) prime ministers were neither democratic nor undemocratic and (N=21) were neither effective nor ineffective. Only six prime ministers were undemocratic, but eight were ineffective. Score variation in each category of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness is small. An average score of democratic prime ministers is 7.6, while an average score of effective prime ministers is 7.5. An average score of moderately democratic prime ministers is 6.0, while an average score of moderately effective prime ministers is 5.8. Interestingly, an average score of ineffective prime ministers is 4.0, while an average score of undemocratic prime ministers is 3.4.

Average scores in different categories of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness indicate relatively equal levels of performance in both dimensions. It appears however, that ineffective prime ministers achieve better results in policymaking, while their undemocratic conduct appears more dangerous for institutions of democracy, according to average scores in each dimension. Democratic prime ministers however do not appear capable to achieve the same success in effectiveness. Large number of neither democratic nor effective prime ministers indicates general presence of average politicians in CEE. Slightly lower overall score of 5.7 in prime ministers' effectiveness compared to an overall average score of 6.0 in prime ministers' democratic conduct (see table 4.11) may point to some complexity related to economic and social restructuring compared to respecting democratic institutions. However, prime ministers' mindsets generally conducive to structural reforms appear to matter for their effectiveness. In the next section, prime ministers' performance is presented as an index of democratic governance, which is an aggregate of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness.



### *4.3 Prime ministers' performance in democratic governance*

As outlined in chapter one, performance in democratic governance is an index composed of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness. Prime ministers must both respect democratic institutions and deliver effective policy outcomes to improve citizens' well-being. In sections 4.1 and 4.2, prime ministers' performance was outlined in prime ministers' democratic

conduct in section 4.1 and effectiveness in section 4.2. In this section, prime ministers' performance is presented as an index of democratic governance as an aggregate of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness. Prime ministers are grouped in three categories; "good", "average" and "poor", as table 4.10 indicates, based on their performance in democratic governance measured on ten-point scale range to allow discussion of prime ministers with different levels of performance in democratic governance.

**Table 4.10 Categories of prime ministers in democratic governance (aggregated)**

| **Good performance (7.0 – 8)** | **Mean** | **Average performance (5.0 – 7.0)** | **Mean** | **Poor performance (2.9 – 5.0)** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Janez Drnovšek | 8.0 | Andrus Ansip | 6.9 | Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.9 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.8 | Leszek Miller | 6.9 | Andris Bērziņš | 4.8 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 7.7 | Gyula Horn | 6.8 | Václav Klaus | 4.5 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.1 | Péter Medgyessy | 6.7 | Viktor Orbán | 4.5 |
| Ivica Račan | 7.1 | Valdis Dombrovskis | 6.7 | Ivo Sanader | 4.4 |
| | | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.7 | Janez Janša | 4.2 |
| | | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.6 | Andris Šķēle | 3.9 |
| | | Tiit Vähi | 6.6 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.6 |
| | | Juhan Parts | 6.5 | Vladimír Mečiar | 2.9 |
| | | Borut Pahor | 6.4 | | |
| | | Mart Laar | 6.3 | | |
| | | Donald Tusk | 6.2 | | |
| | | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.1 | | |
| | | Robert Fico | 5.9 | | |
| | | Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.9 | | |
| | | Jadranka Kosor | 5.7 | | |
| | | Miloš Zeman | 5.5 | | |
| | | Mirek Topolánek | 5.4 | | |
| | | Petr Nečas* | 5.2 | | |
| **Total 5** | **7.5** | **19** | **6.3** | **9** | **4.2** |

**Source:** ES II and III – index of democratic governance, see appendix eight
Prime ministers are placed in each category based on following score range; 1 - 5 indicating poor, 5 - 7 indicating neither poor nor good and 7 - 9 indicating good performance in democratic governance
*Nečas was included in ES III after mandate termination in June 2013

As suggested by expert data, CEE prime ministers are generally moderately successful in democratic governance with an overall average score of 5.9 (see table 4.11). A majority of prime ministers (N=19) is average, nine are poor and five perform well in democratic governance. Prime ministers are largely average politicians moderately committed to democracy and effective policymaking. Findings of this part cannot support the thesis about negative political culture among CEE prime ministerial elite. Not everything is perfect, of course, but really, only few cases of pathological prime ministerial leadership seem to endanger democratic framework that

is not committed to effective governance. In line with this, negative political culture thesis is only corroborated in few out of 33 prime ministers in nine countries in office from mid 1990 until June 2013 who develop parallel informal structures to an existing democratic framework. In table 4.11, performance in democratic governance is presented on a country level for discussion of cross-country variation of prime ministers' programmatic performance.

**4.11 Index of democratic governance (country rank)**

| Country | Democratic conduct* | Effectiveness** | Democratic governance*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 5.8 | 5.6 | 5.7 |
| Czech R | 5.9 | 5.1 | 5.5 |
| Estonia | 6.5 | 6.6 | 6.6 |
| Hungary | 6.3 | 5.7 | 6.0 |
| Latvia | 4.7 | 4.8 | 4.8 |
| Lithuania | 6.4 | 6.2 | 6.3 |
| Poland | 7.5 | 6.1 | 6.8 |
| Slovenia | 6.3 | 6.1 | 6.2 |
| Slovakia | 4.9 | 5.4 | 5.2 |
| **Total** | **6.0** | **5.7** | **5.9** |

Source: ES II and III – in case of ES II and III score difference better scores were used to calculate average scores
*Index of prime ministers' democratic conduct, see appendix four for individual prime ministers' scores
**Index of prime ministers' effectiveness – an average of prime ministers' performance in each country in EU integration, economic and social policymaking, see appendix eight for individual prime ministers' scores
***Index of prime ministers' performance in democratic governance – an average score of prime ministers' performance in each country in prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness, see appendix eight for individual prime ministers' scores

An average score of 5.9 in democratic governance by all nine countries, indicated in table 4.11 suggest moderate levels of prime ministers' performance in democratic governance with small variation across countries. Poland and Estonia are most successful in democratic governance, which likely relates to their low corruption rates and consensual prime ministerial elite that supports democratic framework and improves citizens' welfare by effective governance. Latvia performs poorly in democratic governance, which likely relates to its high corruption rates and prime ministerial elite whose mindset is generally not supportive of democracy and effective policymaking. All other countries register moderate support for democracy and effectiveness. This is *neither great news, nor very bad news*. In fact, n*ews is satisfactory, better than expected*. CEE countries are on a right path of post-transition politics, but some improvements in democratic governance are still desirable. The next section weighs prime ministers' relative success in prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness that provides better understanding of prime ministers variable performance in different dimensions of democratic governance.

### *4.4 Categorization of Prime Ministers*

In the previous section, expert data on prime ministers' performance were presented in separate dimensions of democratic governance; prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness. However, for accurate understating of prime ministers' variable performance, their relative performance in democratic conduct and effectiveness must be weighed against one another. Each prime minister is likely to be better in one (e.g. democratic conduct), but less so in another (e.g. effectiveness) dimension of democratic governance. Prime ministers are grouped in three categories ("outstanding", "average" and "likely populists") based on *scope* (prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness) and *impact* ("good", "average" and "bad") of their performance. In this section, expert data are compared to media evaluations of prime ministers' performance (see references for media evaluations in appendix nine).

#### 4.4.1 "Outstanding" Prime Ministers

Based on scope-impact vision of performance, "outstanding" prime ministers were most successful in democratic governance. These prime ministers were both democratic and effective, or performed well in at least one and moderately in another dimension of democratic governance. Table 4.12 presents variable performance of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness. As table 4.12 suggests, prime ministers' performance in both categories generally indicates better performance in only one and moderate performance in another dimension of democratic governance. However, for the sake of parsimonious categorization and because good performance in at least one category is an indicator of success, prime ministers successful in both or in only one but moderate in another dimension are categorized as "outstanding".

**Table 4.12 "Outstanding" Prime Ministers**

| **Democratic conduct*** | **Mean** | **Effectiveness**** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| **Democratic** | | **Effective** | |
| Janez Drnovšek | 8.2 | Andrius Kubilius | 7.9 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.7 | Janez Drnovšek | 7.8 |
| **Total 2** | | **2** | |
| | | | |
| **Democratic** | **Mean** | **Moderately effective** | Mean |
| Jerzy Buzek | 8.7 | Jerzy Buzek | 6.6 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 7.6 | Péter Medgyessy | 5.8 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.5 | Vladimír Špidla | 6.7 |
| Ivica Račan | 7.5 | Ivica Račan | 6.7 |
| Leszek Miller | 7.3 | Leszek Miller | 6.4 |
| Borut Pahor | 7.2 | Borut Pahor | 5.5 |
| Gyula Horn | 7.1 | Gyula Horn | 6.5 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.0 | Valdis Dombrovskis | 6.4 |
| **Total 8** | | **8** | |
| | | | |
| **Moderately democratic** | **Mean** | **Effective** | **Mean** |
| Andurs Ansip | 6.6 | Andrus Ansip | 7.1 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.4 | Miklus Dzurinda | 7.0 |
| **Total 2** | | **2** | |
| **Total 12** | **7.4** | **12** | **6.7** |

**Source:** ES II and III, see appendix eight for individual scores of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness

*Categorization of prime ministers' democratic conduct, see table 4.1

** Categorization of prime ministers' effectiveness, see table 4.9

Only two Prime ministers (Drnovšek and Kubilius) stand out with good performance in both democratic conduct and effectiveness. Drnovšek, almost equally successful in democratic conduct and effective governance is largely credited for Slovenia's political and economic reconstruction. Kubilius came to power in 2008 just as the global financial crisis was ending an extended Lithuania's boom fueled by cheap Scandinavian credit. Kubilius introduced a drastic austerity program and saved the country from bankruptcy by taming the budget deficit and improving GDP that reached 5.8% in 2012 (*BBC News*, 2012). These two prime ministers held prime ministerial posts in significantly different political and historical contexts, Drnovšek in a post-transition period of political and economic transformation and Kubilius during financial crisis. However, distinct leadership contexts did not significantly influence their performance, which challenges arguments about leadership context-dependency (Skowronek 1993) and emphasizes the importance of individual skills that if used wisely can overcome contextual complexity and achieve leadership success. Moreover, prime ministers' commitments to

democratic conduct and effective governance matter even more than good skills and challenging contexts.

The same holds for two prime ministers who are effective, but perceived by experts as moderately democratic. Slovak's economic growth under Dzurinda was among the fastest in the region, induced by several economic measures that made Slovakia a magnet for foreign investment (especially its car industry). However, the improved economic situation did not reduce unemployment and prompted some scholars to dub Dzurinda's economic success as "jobless growth" (Fidrmuc et al. 2013, Ručinskỳ et al. 2009). Dzurinda is also credited for skillful management of pro-democracy electoral coalition that ousted Mečiar from power in 1998 (Haughton 2005: 135 – 139, Baylis 2007). Example of his effectiveness challenges cabinet decision-making literature that considers ineffective cabinets with high number of ideologically different parties not capable of delivering positive outcomes, which again emphasizes the importance of leadership's mindset committed to reforms. Ansip, after introducing tough austerity measures was able to revive economic growth that reached 9.6% in 2011, which secured Estonia's euro zone membership in 2011 (*BBC News* 2014). Dzurinda's perception of moderate democratic conduct may be related to revelation of the "Gorilla affair"[59] in 2011 (before ES II and III launch) that implied high-level corruption among Slovak's political and economic elite during Dzurinda's government. Ansip's moderate democratic conduct may relate to revelation of his Reformist party's involvement in a financing scandal in late 2012 (before ES II launch) and internal leadership voting fraud in summer 2013 (before ES III launch). Estonian experts accustomed to corruption-free culture may consider even an indirect relationship to corruption by particular prime minister sufficient for lower grades in reference to prime ministers' democratic integrity.

Eight prime ministers are perceived democratic but moderately effective. Polish Buzek was a "consensus builder and a mediator" who began EU accession talks, introduced territorial

[59] "Gorilla" is a code name given for scandal leaked to the internet in late 2011 implying high-level corruption among Slovak political and economic elite. A leaked document features purported transcripts from bugged conversations linking the financial group Penta with politicians in the years 2005–2006 (during the right-wing government of Mikuláš Dzurinda). In principle, the whole saga revolves around the wiretap transcripts and the talk about how many millions a particular politician or party is to get for the privatization of enterprises, especially in energy and transport. Revelation of scandal resulted in a wave of nation-wide "Gorilla protests" and largely contributed to Fico's 2012 overwhelming victory.

decentralization of Poland and implemented reform in pension, health and education area, was generally committed to fostering economic growth and supported privatization of state-owned industries (Blejer and Škreb 2002). Medgyessy's social reform, extending welfare benefits (as promised in the elections), was perceived as an irresponsible drain on the budget and decrease of forint's floating exchange rate to respond to interests of exporters as a flawed piece of economic policy that resulted in sale of forints and interest rate hikes. Račan led six party electoral coalition that in 2000 ended authoritarian rule in Croatia required for start of the EU accession talks and inflow of foreign capital. Špidla achieved mild economic growth by introducing reforms to reduce budget, which were perceived however as only cosmetic consisting of tax increases rather than expense cuts and growth inducing.

Miller was generally committed to institutional and legal adjustments required for Poland's EU accession. His leadership unfolded in a difficult economic context including high unemployment rate and level of public debt. Business friendly measures and tax reforms improved economic growth, but the unemployment did not decline and the health care reform he introduced proved unsuccessful. Interestingly, Buzek was not perceived less democratic in spite of his involvement in the "Rywingate"[60] corruption scandal revealed in 2002, which forced his resignation in 2004. Unable to offer economic solutions, Pahor was forced to resign in 2012 amidst economic crisis. Late Horn is credited for avoiding an imminent Hungarian bankruptcy in early transition that resulted in mild economic recovery, but a series of unpopular austerity measures significantly limited social benefits (Cook and Orenstein 1999: 95). Dombrovskis was able to divert Latvia's economy that lost about 25% of its GDP amidst economic crisis and was on a brink of bankruptcy to one of the fastest growing economy in the EU that joined euro zone in 2014 (Åslund and Dombrovskis 2011).

Perceptions of prime ministers as democratic but moderately effective may relate to post-transition contextual complexity including economic restructuring, financial crisis or unfavorable constellation within coalitions. In cases of moderate performance in effectiveness, contextual factors should be taken as an intervening variable for explaining moderate level of prime ministers' performance. These prime ministers regardless of democratic conduct and

[60] Rywingate was Polish scandal revealed in 2002 including bribe offer by an influential "group in power", allegedly including then Prime Minister Miller in exchange for passage of laws allowing print media houses bigger financial influence and takeover of several TV broadcasters.

commitment to reforms may have encountered contextual challenges that were not easy to overcome. Moderate democratic conduct by otherwise effective prime ministers may also relate to contextual factors usually related to revelation of scandals they are directly or indirectly involved in. The next section discusses prime ministers that are moderately successful in both dimensions of democratic governance.

### 4.4.2 "Average" Prime Ministers

As suggested in table 4.13, "average" prime ministers are moderately democratic and moderately effective. They somewhat respect democratic institutions and moderately improve citizens' welfare. However, leadership of average prime ministers is likely to unfold in challenging contexts that partially accounts for their moderate performance. Unlike for outstanding prime ministers and likely populists, the interaction between contexts, political skills and political mindset is most likely to account for moderate performance by average prime ministers.

**Table 4.13 "Average" Prime Ministers**

| **Democratic conduct*** | **Mean** | **Effectiveness**** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| **Moderately democratic** | | **Moderately effective** | |
| Juhan Parts | 6.7 | Juhan Parts | 6.2 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.6 | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 5.5 |
| Donald Tusk | 6.5 | Donald Tusk | 5.8 |
| Tiit Vähi | 6.5 | Tiit Vähi | 6.7 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.4 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.8 |
| Mart Laar | 6.2 | Mart Laar | 6.4 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 6.1 | Jadranka Kosor | 5.3 |
| Robert Fico | 5.8 | Robert Fico | 6.0 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.8 | Gediminas Vagnorius | 6.0 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 5.8 | Mirek Topolánek | 5.0 |
| Miloš Zeman | 5.5 | Miloš Zeman | 5.4 |
| **Total 11** | **6.2** | **11** | **5.9** |

**Source:** ES II and III, see appendix eight for individual prime ministers' scores in democratic conduct and effectiveness

*Categorization of prime ministers' democratic conduct, see table 4.1

** Categorization of prime ministers' effectiveness, see table 4.9

Except Ansip, all Estonian Prime ministers (Parts, Laar and Vähi) are perceived moderately democratic and moderately effective. Moderate performance of these prime ministers may relate to higher expectations by Estonian experts who are accustomed to corruption-free political culture characteristic for Nordic countries. Parts is perceived as "clean politician" active in anti-corruption agency prior to his prime ministerial appointment (*Helsinki Times* 2003), yet his score

is only moderately democratic. Laar's moderate democratic conduct may relate to a "target shooting" scandal in 2001 when he used a picture of his opponent as a shooting target during military practice just as he started his first prime ministerial term. This prompted confidence vote in the parliament he survived and remained prime minister (*Central Europe review* 2001). Vähi 's moderate democratic conduct may relate to "Tallinn apartment" scandal when he was accused of obtaining luxury flats in the Estonian capital for his family and close associates, which prompted his resignation in 1997 (*Associated Press news archive* 1997).

Gyurcsány's reputation was severely damaged in 2006 when radio broadcasted a speech in which he admitted lying to the public about the state of the economy just to win elections a few months earlier. This revelation sparked a series of protests and riots, but did not lead to Gyurcsány's immediate resignation. He remained in office until May 2009 and resigned over mounting criticism about handling Hungary's economic crash (*The Telegraph* 2009). Tusk implemented a strong pro-business and pro-EU strategy that diverted Polish economy from economic downturn to growth. European football championship in 2012 worked in Tusk's favor prompting significant improvements in Polish infrastructure. He faced some criticisms over internet censorship and laws banning internet gambling as well as over monitoring internet connections and money transfers, which could relate to his moderate democratic conduct. Social measures leaving some social groups at risk of poverty may explain his moderate effectiveness (*The Warsaw voice* 2014).

Kosor's harsh stand on corruption that resulted in a series of arrests and corruption trials of high-ranking politicians did not contribute to experts' perception of her as democratic. Her relationship to corruption when she was Sanader's deputy remains unclear. Increased taxes unsupported by structural reforms were not sufficient for handling large-scale unemployment and decreasing production amidst economic crisis. However, she made a break-through in EU accession process that was blocked by Slovenia before her tenure. Fico's moderate democratic conduct relates to his controversial relationship with the media and coalition partnership with the nationalist party that openly challenges rights of the Hungarian minority. He is lightly more effective than democratic, which is related to several economic and social reforms that benefited certain groups (*Slovak Spectator* 2008) and Slovakia's euro zone membership in 2009. Zeman and Topolánek are controversial Czech figures with dubious relationship to organized crime

(Zeman) and to sex-power scandals (Topolánek). In Lithuania, Vagnorius's moderate performance may relate to constant inter-executive conflict with president Adamkus that overshadowed government's work and impeded implementation of economic reforms (de Raadt 2009, Jeffries 2004). Brazauskas's involvement in several scandals during his tenure and poor economic and social reforms, in spite of some economic recovery in the aftermath of the Russian 1998-1999 crisis may relate to perception of his performance as moderate.

Average prime ministers characterized by moderate levels of performance neither greatly improve, nor severely erode democratic framework or effective governance. Perceptions of their moderate performance may relate to their mindsets not committed to democracy and reforms, but also to complexity of context surrounding their leadership such as inter-executive conflicts, weak parliamentary majorities or many ideologically diverse cabinet parties. For average prime ministers it may be more difficult than for the other two categories of prime ministers to pin-point the exact level of improvements or problematic areas of leadership, because these prime ministers are likely to maintain the leadership situation they inherit rather than introduce significant political changes. Consequently, prime ministers' moderate performance is most difficult to explain because it likely entails interaction between political mindset, context and personal skills. The next section discusses prime ministers who perform poorly in both or in one but moderately in another dimension of democratic governance.

### 4.4.3. Likely Populists

Likely populists are prime ministers whose performance in democratic governance is least desirable, because it generally erodes citizens' prosperity. As table 4.14 suggests, political impact of likely populists is negative either in both, or in one, but moderately positive in another dimension of democratic governance. Likely populists' conduct is generally undemocratic and these prime ministers deliver policy outcomes that do not contribute to citizens' welfare. Likely populists usually manifest aspects of negative political culture that may include populist rhetoric, executive personalization or corruption. Some likely populists manifest all aspects of negative political culture, while others may for example engage in populist rhetoric, but not in corruption

or executive personalization. Other likely populists may be related to corruption[61], but may not resort to populism or dominant role in agenda setting (e.g. Nečas). In chapter five discussion of prime ministers' populism and executive personalization demonstrates levels and aspects of negative political culture that characterizes likely populists.

**Table 4.14 "Likely populists"**

| **Democratic conduct*** | **Mean** | **Effectiveness**** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| **Moderately democratic** | | **Ineffective** | |
| Petr Nečas* | 5.6 | Petr Nečas* | 4.8 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 5.6 | Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.2 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 5.2 | Andris Bērziņš | 4.4 |
| Václav Klaus | 5.2 | Václav Klaus | 3.8 |
| **Total 4** | | **4** | |
| | | | |
| **Undemocratic** | | **Moderately effective** | |
| Viktor Orbán | 3.9 | Viktor Orbán | 5.0 |
| Janez Janša | 3.4 | Janez Janša | 5.0 |
| **Total 2** | | **2** | |
| | | | |
| **Undemocratic** | | **Ineffective** | |
| Ivo Sanader | 3.9 | Ivo Sanader | 4.8 |
| Andris Šķēle | 3.4 | Andris Šķēle | 4.4 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 3.2 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.9 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 2.6 | Vladimír Mečiar | 3.1 |
| **Total 4** | | **4** | |
| | | | |
| **Total 10** | 4.2 | **10** | 4.3 |

**Source:** ES II and III, see appendix eight for individual scores on prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness

*Categorization of prime ministers' democratic conduct is based on table 4.1

** Categorization of prime ministers' effectiveness is based on table 4.9

A sex-power scandal revealed in summer 2013 forced Nečas to resign on accusations that one of his closest collaborators and alleged mistress ordered illegal spying on several people by military intelligence and bribed MPs to give up their parliamentary seats in exchange for posts in state owned companies. When he started his term in 2010, he mistakenly thought Czech economy would not be affected by an economic crash in the US. However, this bad economic assessment led to a record-breaking deficit of 5.5 % of GDP and prompted Nečas to introduce chaotic cuts on expenditures that would avoid a Greek scenario including tax increases, price rises that resulted in sales drop and increased inflation rates. His social policymaking, characterized by a

[61] This study does not evaluate levels of prime ministers' corruption, which should be an important task of further research.

very low expenditure for social risks could not provide for adequate social protection (*V4/Revue* 2013). Upon taking office in 1993, Šleževičius did not deliver on initial promises of large wage hikes to state workers, but stabilized the exchange rate and moderately decreased the inflation rate, which contributed to large capital inflows (Knobl 1994). He resigned in 1996 amidst a vote of no confidence and criminal charges accusing him of receiving large interest rates on his personal deposits and withdrawal of his assets shortly before a bank's collapse (Holmes 2006). As prime minister, Klaus resigned in 1997 after irregular party financing scandal and was criticized during his term, for voucher privatization of state-owned companies that was a cornerstone policy for speedy transition from command to free-market economy but was later blamed for economic difficulties (Richter 2008).

Orbán's undemocratic behavior relates to his ambiguous relationship with political opponents and attempts at concentrating power in prime minister's office, thus undermining the role of the parliament. His moderate effectiveness may relate to some economic and social improvements that included decrease of inflation rates and public debt (Bell 2003). Shortly before 2008 elections in Slovenia, Finnish television revealed Janša's involvement in a bribe scandal with a Finish defense company, which earned him a two-year prison term in subsequent trial. He used diplomatic channels and pressured the Finnish government to intervene in its media that published the story, which drew large criticism from media freedom organizations. His ineffectiveness relates to over-borrowing from foreign banks, which resulted in loan deposit ratio of banks sliding out of control and inability to reach sustainable growth in Slovenia (*BBC news* 2013).

Sanader was among the most popular politicians before his involvement in large-scale corruption revealed in 2009 shortly after his unexpected resignation that included favorable deals to foreign companies in state-owned firms. Generally, he was not able to handle stalled economic growth and blocked EU negotiation process amidst economic crisis and was later tried and convicted on corruption charges to a ten-year prison term (*BBC news* 2012). Šķēle and Kalvītis in Latvia both resigned over corruption scandals; Šķēle in 1997 and Kalvītis in 2007. Šķēle was slow in prosecuting corrupt officials under a new anti-corruption law (Holmes 2006: 58), while Kalvītis stepped down amidst anti-corruption protests prompted by his sack of a head of anti-corruption agency (*BBC news* 2007). Mečiar adopted an autocratic style of governing

characterized by misuse of state media for propaganda, corruption and shady privatization of state owned companies. Western criticisms did not however erode his domestic popularity and his party won a majority of votes in the 1998 and 2002 elections (Fridner 1996).

Some aspect of negative political culture characterizes all likely populists. They generally do not support democratic framework and deliver ineffective policies that do not improve citizens' welfare, but engage in corruptive activities and frequently use public office for personal gain. Contextual factors and personal attributes appear less relevant in explaining likely populists' bad performance, because all led relatively stable coalitions composed of few parties solidly backed in the parliament. Their terms that unfolded in different political and historical contexts either in early transformation or during financial crisis appear less relevant for bad performance than their undemocratic mindsets not committed to reforms and prone to using public office for personal benefit. One feature common to likely populists is resignation amidst revelation of their involvement in scandals and corruption, which indicates general ability of democratic mechanisms to sanction anti-democratic practices, but a delayed effect of these sanctions, is apparent in that they occur way after significant amount of public funds is stripped for personal gain.

### *4.5 Conclusion*

This chapter presented expert survey data on prime ministers' programmatic performance labeled as performance in democratic governance. Democratic governance entails prime ministers' respect for democratic institutions and effective outcomes in EU integration, economic and social policymaking that improve citizens' prosperity. Findings of this chapter indicate *neither great, nor very bad news*. In most part, *news is satisfactory*. Out of 33 prime ministers, five perform well, 19 perform neither well nor poorly and only nine perform poorly in democratic governance. This suggests most prime ministers are average politicians with moderate levels of performance and only few perform either well or poorly in democratic governance. CEE prime ministers generally support democratic institutions and deliver effective policies that improve citizens' welfare. Findings of this chapter partially support "negative political culture" thesis but in only nine prime ministers out of 33 assessed in nine countries in period from mid 1990 until June 2013.

Overall score in democratic governance by all prime ministers is 5.9 out of a scale range of ten indicating higher than average performance. There is some cross-country variation in levels of prime ministers' performance. Polish and Estonian prime ministers are best in democratic governance, which may relate to generally lower corruption rates in Poland and Estonia. Latvian prime ministers perform worst in democratic governance, which may relate to generally higher corruption rates in Latvia. Variation of performance across dimensions of democratic governance is small but apparent. Prime ministers perform best in EU integration and democratic conduct, but comparatively worse in economic and social policymaking. CEE prime ministers are generally pro-European politicians committed to democracy valuing EU membership and engaging in activities that bring their countries closer to EU project. Slightly better democratic conduct than effectiveness may relate to complexity of post-transition economic and social restructuring. However, moderate effectiveness by most prime ministers indicates their general commitment to reforms, ability to overcome "simultaneity paradox" and relative success in consolidating economic and social structures.

To allow discussion of prime ministers' variable performance in separate dimensions of democratic governance, in the second part of this chapter, prime ministers' were grouped in three categories; "outstanding", "average" and "likely populists". Categorization is based on scope (democratic conduct / effectiveness) and impact ("good", "average", and "bad") dimension to account for prime ministers' likely variable performance different dimensions of democratic governance. There is almost an equal number of outstanding (N=12), average (N=11) and likely populists (N=10) among 33 prime ministers. "Outstanding" prime ministers are most desirable because successful performance in both or in at least one dimension of democratic governance most contributes to citizens' prosperity. Good performance in democratic governance largely relates to their democratic conduct and commitment to reforms, while contextual factors appear less relevant.



Average prime ministers, characterized by moderate levels of performance neither greatly improve, nor severely erode democratic framework or effective governance. Perceptions of their moderate performance may relate to occasional undemocratic outbursts or lack of commitment to reforms but also contextual complexity of service and their personal attributes. The exact level

of improvements or problematic areas by average prime ministers is more difficult to pinpoint because they are likeliest than the other two groups to maintain leadership situation they inherit rather than introduce significant transformations. Likely populists are the least desirable group of prime ministers, because of their negative impact in both or at least one dimension of democratic governance. They generally do not support democratic framework and deliver ineffective policies that do not improve citizens' welfare. Some aspect of negative political culture is a usual characteristic of likely populists who also frequently resign after revelations of their involvement in scandals and corruption. Contextual factors and personal attributes appear less relevant for their poor performance. They all lead coalitions composed of few parties with solid parliamentary backing. Rather, undemocratic mindset not committed to reforms but to using public office for personal benefit is what explains their prime ministerial failure. Democratic mechanisms eventually sanction likely populists for their anti-democratic activities, however, these sanctions are often overdue and political and economic damage they leave behind is often irreparable.

As suggested in chapter one, cultural variables are largely ignored in understanding leadership performance. However, elites' culture, especially in new democracies may be the most important factor accounting for variation in prime ministers' performance. In the next chapter, a range of hypothesis is tested using variables identified in the literature on political leadership and political culture. As the analysis will demonstrate, cultural variables largely account for prime ministers' better or worse programmatic performance compared to contextual and demographic variables.

# CHAPTER 5: EXPLAINING PRIME MINISTERS' PROGRAMMATIC PERFORMANCE

In the preceding chapter, expert rankings of prime ministers' programmatic performance were presented to provide an empirical map of performance in democratic governance and its separate dimensions. Performance in democratic governance was defined as prime ministers' respect for democratic institutions and effective governance in the EU integration, economic and social policy-making. Expert data suggest CEE prime ministers are generally average politicians moderately respectful of democracy and moderately effective in improving citizens' welfare. Some cross-country and cross-dimension variation in performance in democratic governance was apparent. Prime ministers in countries with lower corruption rates were generally more successful in democratic governance compared to prime ministers in countries with higher corruption rates. Prime ministers were most successful in EU integration and respect for democratic institutions but less successful in economic and social policymaking. Negative political culture thesis suggested by previous literature was partially confirmed in only nine out of 33 assessed prime ministerial terms.

The main task of this chapter is to test hypothesis using three groups of variables; cultural, contextual and demographical to demonstrate the importance of cultural variables in understanding prime ministers' programmatic performance. As suggested in chapter one, cultural variables are largely ignored in explaining leadership performance. However, as argued in this thesis, prime ministers' mindset committed to democracy and effective governance is crucial for success in transitional settings. As suggested in this chapter, prime ministers' negative political mindset is likely to manifest as populism, executive personalization or previous political experience. Based on path-dependency old norms and values are difficult to change and are likely to continue beyond immediate institutional transformations. CEE prime ministers were largely socialized during communism that was characterized by strong hierarchy and patron-client relationships that likely transmit and continue in new democratic settings. The chapter is divided in three parts, each testing hypothesis by statistical analysis (ANOVA, correlation, bivariate and multivariate regression) using cultural, demographical and contextual variables as independent and index of performance in democratic governance, indicated in appendix eight as dependent variable.

### *5.1 Cultural explanations of prime ministers' programmatic performance*

Previous literature pointed to a gap between formal democratic structures and the CEE political elite informal mentalities (Pehe 2009). An apparent democratic deficit is visible in the coexistence of democratically structured institutions and the political elite's political culture marked by intolerance, polarization, populism, corruption and confrontation. The consequences of "democracies without democrats" can be widespread, especially in transitional contexts and Valerie Bunce has expressed them in the following way: "democracy therefore is flawed, and these deficiencies, while unlikely to be fatal to democracy, will necessarily define the boundaries and the consequences of political competition for many years to come" (Bunce 2008: 52). Consequently, feckless pluralism erodes the mechanism of responsiveness and accountability on the part of decision makers (Gallina 2008).

A lack of democrats in CEE is common and reasons for this are similar. Institutional aspects include weakness of political parties and civil society, while actor-based factors include issues such as widespread citizens' distrust of politics, elites' nationalism, populism, (self)-isolation and (systemic) corruption. Consequently, formal democratic structures are taken over by informal power networks (Gallina 2011). Democratization studies do not fully acknowledge the importance of elite political culture. However, different forms of governance realized in CEE political systems must relate to *mentalities of the very political actors*. Elite behavior different from requirements of democratic framework indicates that actors have not adapted to democratic structures, and if this is omitted from transitional knowledge, one might erroneously conclude that CEE transitions have been a success story with good future prospects. Consequently, it is important to uncover which political actors generate informality (e.g. prime ministers, MPs, judges, state officials), and which areas of political system have been exposed to or taken over by informality (e.g. the judiciary, the media, corruption). It is also important to understand manifestations of negative political culture to understand how informal structures weaken and control formal institutions of democracy.

CEE democracies are characterized by non-democratic elite conduct guided by informal patterns that is not controlled by firm democratic institutions. Informality is used as a political instrument that erodes democratic structure and on a behavioral level supports populism,

corruption, clientelism and executive personalization. Informal structures change and are more adaptable to demands of the concrete situation and cater elites' interests thus undermining formal democratic instruments. In principle, in liberal democracies, political elites respect formal democratic rules and do not override democratic provisions and power is constrained by the rule of law-based institutions. In authoritarian regimes, elites set up their own informal arrangements that follow a top-down scheme in which knowledge and personal relations are used as power instruments to control formal institutions. In between these two extremes are regimes set up as formal democracies with free media and other independent structures where informal power networks coexist with democratic institutions and favor non-democratic behavioral patterns (Gallina 2011).

Previous literature suggested CEE elites have internalized a "negative political culture" including unethical behavior and an egoistic struggle for political power that contradicts principles of liberal democracy (Gallina 2007). Negative political culture can be manifested as confrontational behavior, hierarchical thinking, and struggle for political and economic power, populism, nationalism and personalized politics. Elites instrumentalize populist and polarizing power strategies without much concern for the consequent undermine of democratic institutions. In line with path-dependent theories, political culture takes more time to develop than institution take to build. Historical legacies such as socialist past and even pre-War political traditions have left their mark on contemporary political elite behavior. Values and norms are socially based and may continue independently of elite or institutional changes (Ekman and Linde 2005: 354-74). According to path-dependency, values, beliefs and institutions from the old regime continue to influence present developments. At a general level, strong hierarchies characterized socialist policy-making and the omnipotence of the communist party primarily concentrated on the party's needs, not on the needs of the public. The "carry-over" from the past is the general acceptance of the state over society, authoritarian governing and little experience with democratic policy-making (Lane 2002). Rejection of everything the communist regime stood for was only rhetorical, because attachment to some institutions and ideas developed during communism persisted and the rejection of the old system did not automatically mean immediate installment of a political culture supportive of democracy. In CEE, elites use subtle techniques to shape institutions according to their needs. An undemocratic mentality dominates most of the

institutional structure and patron-client relations – rather than institutions – draw the boundaries of policy-making at the governmental level (Korkut 2005: 149). The result is the reproduction of a similar thinking political elite and culture, with little opportunity for "intellectual outsiders" to provoke a behavioral change.

Based on the arguments of previous literature, political culture and elites' mindset may explain some of the variance in prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. Cultural aspects are not widely acknowledged in democratization literature. Some authors suggested the extent to which elites are united or confrontational determines political developments and the outcomes of political change (Higley et al. 1998). In CEE however, elite frequently formed with divided political actors, characterized by polarization and non-cooperation, confrontation, populism and corruption (Gallina 2007: 81). Prime ministers' mindsets manifested as populism, personalization of politics and previous political experience are largely important for performance in democratic governance, because prime ministers' mindsets will determine the level of respect for democratic institutions and commitment to reforms that contribute to effective governance. In the following section, levels of prime ministers' populism measured by expert surveys and holistic grading technique of prime ministers' speeches, executive personalization and their previous political experience are considered as indicators of negative political culture responsible for prime ministers' variable programmatic performance.

### 5.1.1 Populism

As I suggested in chapter four, populism may not automatically mean anti-democracy. Populist politicians exist in both old and new democracies (and even in authoritarian regimes), but not all of them necessarily violate democratic structure. For example, the late Jörg Haider, a leader of *Austrian Freedom Party* (FPO) used openly radical rhetoric against mainstream Austrian politics, pointing to banking and financial crimes and was opposed to immigration. Haider was however never in a state level political position (except his governorship of Carinthia province) that would allow observation of his relationship to democratic structure at national level. Nevertheless, shortly after his death, the consequences of his financial policies become apparent, with Carinthia having the larger highest per-capita debt in Austria in 2009 related to the Bavarian-Carinthian Hypo-Alpe Adria bank's financial difficulties and subsequent nationalization

(*Tagesanzeiger*, 2009). The same holds for Jean-Marie Le Pen, a long-term leader of the French *National Front*, known for his populist rhetoric and radicalism towards immigrants and political conservatives. Like Haider, however, Le Pen was never in a high political post, except being an MP, and it is unknown how his populism would unfold in relation to national democratic institutions, if he came in a position of power where he would have an opportunity to influence formal institutions of democracy. Conclusions about the relationship between populism and democracy are only possible after it is empirically tested.

Populism is an instrument suitable for pointing to institutional weaknesses and political adversaries, but without fundamental solutions or an alternative value system. Populist measures usually rely on leaders' charisma and their ability to camouflage the real problem-solution. Consequently, populism is an instrument of simple value codes that often prove successful in mobilization of frustrated voters and citizens. Earlier literature has found that a higher degree of leaders' populism is bad for democratic competition, civil liberties, freedom of the press or horizontal accountability (Hawkins 2012, Navia and Walker 2010, Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013, Levitsky and Loxton 2013). For example, Levitsky and Loxton (2013) find that populism is a major catalyst for the emergence of competitive authoritarianism in Latin America. Personalistic leaders mobilize voters with an anti-establishment appeal, but lacking experience with representative institutions, once in office they attack institutions of horizontal accountability. Where successful, weak democracies are almost invariable and slide into competitive authoritarianism almost assured (e.g. Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela 1990-2010). Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013) compare distinct forms of populism in Latin America and Europe and find that populism has corrective powers in mobilizing underrepresented groups (e.g. poor), but threaten democracy once populist leaders assume office, which usually results in a distorting mechanism of checks and balances as witnessed by many empirical examples.

In this section, populism is taken as a proxy of informal (negative) political culture and elite mentality defined as empty mobilizing rhetoric, without clear visions and plans for social and economic reforms. It is an aspect of political culture that looks for an object to blame for policy failures, whether inside (e.g. Hungary or Slovakia) or outside of the country (e.g. Poland or Czech Republic), but without assuming responsibility for policy failures (Gallina 2008). A

populist leader typically presents himself as a defender of national dignity against foreign pressures and exploitation, as a "common man" who understands the people, unlike corrupt elites that are incapable or unfit to govern (Skolkay 2000). Populist leaders often possess and utilize personal charisma that makes them suited to defend mass interests in the eyes of their followers. Frequently, populist leadership is related to economic shortcomings, because populist rhetoric is often linked to irresponsible fiscal policies, such as excessive borrowing and indebtedness, in order to sustain public support (Weyland 2001). Populist leaders are likely to have an autocratic bent, involving abuses of power and disrespect for the rule of law, the opposition and freedom of expression. Finally, populist leaders are likely to treat their parties as personal fiefdoms (Conniff et al. 1999: 4-21).

If shortcomings of elite political culture explain elite-institutional gap, performance of prime ministers in democratic governance is likely related to manifestation of populism. It is expected that pop*ulism is negatively related to performance in democratic governance and Prime ministers with a higher degree of populism are likely to have worse records in democratic governance (H).* Prime ministers' populism is measured as populist *characteristics* assessed by experts and populist *rhetoric* assessed by grading of speeches. Table 5.1 presents a rank of prime ministers according to their populist characteristics including the rhetoric of nationalism, presence of personal charisma and treatment of their political parties (ibid).

**Table 5.1 Prime ministers' populist characteristics**

| Prime minister | Populist Score* |
|---|---|
| Vladimír Mečiar | 0.84 |
| Ivo Sanader | 0.60 |
| Viktor Orbán | 0.60 |
| Janez Janša | 0.60 |
| Robert Fico | 0.59 |
| Václav Klaus | 0.54 |
| Andrus Ansip | 0.52 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 0.50 |
| Miloš Zeman | 0.44 |
| Andris Šķēle | 0.40 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 0.40 |
| Borut Pahor | 0.40 |
| Donald Tusk | 0.37 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 0.37 |
| Leszek Miller | 0.36 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 0.34 |
| Mart Laar | 0.32 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 0.30 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 0.30 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 0.30 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 0.30 |
| Gyula Horn | 0.30 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 0.30 |
| Juhan Parts | 0.30 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 0.25 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 0.24 |
| Ivica Račan | 0.23 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 0.20 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 0.20 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 0.20 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 0.20 |
| Tiit Vähi | 0.19 |
| Petr Nečas** | N/A |

**Source**: ES II: "Please assess which of the following characteristics best describe populism in each prime minister; *(a) defender of national identity, (b) personal charisma, (c) economic failures, (d) disrespect for the rule of law and (e) treatment of their parties as personal fiefdoms*". Experts could choose as many populist characteristics as they deemed appropriate to gauge populism in each prime minister.

*Each populist characteristic was reported in percentages. I assigned equal weight of 20% to each of five populist characteristics to calculate numerical score of each prime minister that ranges from 0 (no populism) to 1 (strong populism)

** ES III that added Nečas to the analysis did not include the question about populist characteristics

The high presence of populism in some prime ministers (Mečiar, Sanader, Orbán, Janša, Fico and Klaus) demonstrates quality of expert data, because these are frequently referred to as populist in qualitative studies (Skolkay 2000, Rizman 2006, Rupnik, 2007, Gallina 2008, Lengyel and Ilonszki 2012). However, unlike in qualitative research on populism, expert data and speech coding presented below are able to gauge a degree of populism in every prime minister on a numerical scale and are suitable for statistical analysis. In table 5.2, data on populist

characteristics are compared to data on populist rhetoric to demonstrate the quality of both methods measuring populism.

**Table 5.2 Prime ministers' populist characteristics and populist rhetoric**

| Prime minister | Speech coding* | Prime minister | Expert survey**** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vladimír Mečiar | 1.70(**) | Vladimír Mečiar | 0.84 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 1.00 | Ivo Sanader | 0.60 |
| Václav Klaus | 0.80*** | Viktor Orbán | 0.60 |
| Janez Janša | 0.80 | Janez Janša | 0.60 |
| Robert Fico | 0.75 | Robert Fico | 0.59 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 0.50 | Václav Klaus | 0.54 |
| Ivo Sanader | 0.40 | Andrus Ansip | 0.52 |
| Viktor Orbán | 0.40 | Aigars Kalvītis | 0.50 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 0.31 | Miloš Zeman | 0.44 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 0.20 | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 0.40 |
| Andrus Ansip | 0.13 | Borut Pahor | 0.40 |
| Donald Tusk | 0.00 | Donald Tusk | 0.37 |
| Miloš Zeman | 0.00 | Mirek Topolánek | 0.37 |
| Ivica Račan | 0.00 | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 0.34 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 0.00 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 0.30 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 0.00 | Andrius Kubilius | 0.24 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 0.00 | Ivica Račan | 0.23 |
| Borut Pahor | 0.00 | Valdis Dombrovskis | 0.20 |

**Source:** ES II and holistic text analysis of prime minister's speeches (Hawkins and Kocijan 2013). Holistic grading technique (White 1985) asks coders to read the text in its entirety and then assign a grade based on their overall impression to determine how much of an idea is present.

*Degree of populism is measured on a three point scale; 0 indicating no populism, 1 indicating some populism (populist speech mixed with pluralist rhetoric) and 2 indicating strong populism.

**Individual populist score reflects an average of all scores across four types of speeches; a *campaign* speech, a *ribboncutting* speech, an *international* speech and a *famous* speech.

***Score reflects Klaus's presidential term (2003-2013)

****Comparison between populist scores in expert surveys and speech coding are presented for (N=18) prime ministers, because these 18 prime ministers were included in both expert survey and speech coding project. Expert survey and speech coding data correlate strongly and positively ($r = .9$, $p < .01$). Expert and speech coding ranks are closely resembling and top populists are placed among the first ten prime ministers on both ranks. Some variation in rank placements is a result of different scales used to measure populist characteristics and populist rhetoric. In expert surveys, even only a light presence of one populist characteristic is reflected in score above zero, while speech-coding method assigns zero to a speech that traces some populist discourse that would be better captured by an interval scale (e.g. 0.1, 0.2, and 0.3), which explains no populism in many prime ministers on speech coding rank.

In table 4.14 of chapter four, "likely populists" were presented based on their poor records of performance in democratic governance. However, it was noted that levels of their populism must be measured prior to conclusions about real manifestation of their populism. As table 5.1 and 5.2 demonstrate, out of ten likely populists presented in table 4.14 (Meciar, Janša, Kalvītis, Bērziņš, Orbán, Sanader, Nečas, Šleževičius, Klaus, Šķēle), seven (Meciar, Janša, Kalvītis, Orbán, Sanader, Klaus, Šķēle) are ranked among the top populists on both ranks. This suggests that prime ministers with poor records in democratic governance indeed manifest populism.

However, other factors explain poor performance of the remaining three Prime ministers (Nečas, Šleževičius, Bērziņš) without manifestations of populism. These factors relate to other aspects of negative political culture including political scandals (Nečas) or corruption (Šleževičius). Table 5.3 presents a correlation matrix between prime ministers' populist characteristics and separate dimensions of democratic governance and executive personalization.

**Table 5.3 Correlation matrix: prime ministers' populism and performance in democratic governance**

| Democratic governance | Pearson's coefficient | N (Expert Survey)*** | Pearson's coefficient | N (speech coding) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Democratic conduct ^ Populism | -.72 | 32 | -.83* | 18 |
| EU performance ^ Populism | -. 54* | 32 | .-75* | 18 |
| Ec. Performance ^ Populism | -.46* | 32 | -.51** | 18 |
| Social performance ^ Populism | -.46* | 32 | -.52** | 18 |
| Dem. Gov. ^ Populism | -.70* | 32 | -.75* | 18 |
| Exc. Personalization ^ Populism | .74* | 32 | n.s. | 18 |

*$p$ < .01, significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) **$p$ <.03, significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
*** Nečas was not included in the analysis, because question on populist characteristics was not included in ES III

As indicated in table 5.3 prime ministers' populism is negatively and strongly related to democratic governance and its separate dimensions. Prime ministers' with higher degree of populist rhetoric and populist characteristics perform worse in democratic governance and its separate dimensions. Once bivariate OLS regression is performed, as indicated in table 5.4, populism appears a good predictor for prime ministers' performance in democratic governance.

**Table 5.4 Bivariate OLS* regression: prime ministers' populism and performance in democratic governance**

| | | | | | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | | 95% Confidence level interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ | Std. Err. | F | Sig. | B | Std. Err. | Beta | t | Sig. | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| .483 | .465 | .921 | 27.9 | .00 | (constant) 8.018 | .433 | | 18.503 | .000 | 7.133 | 8.903 |
| | | | | | ex.surv -5.683 | 1.074 | -.695 | -5.290 | .000 | -7.877 | -3.489 |
| .53 | .53 | .92 | 20.26 | .00 | (constant) 6.46 | .285 | | 22.69 | .000 | 5.861 | 7.068 |
| | | | | | sp.cod -2.141 | .476 | -.747 | -4.501 | .000 | -3.149 | -1.132 |

*OLS regression was performed separately for populist characteristics (see table 5.1) as independent and performance in democratic governance as dependent variable (see appendix eight) and for populist rhetoric (see table 5.2) and performance in democratic governance as dependent variable (see appendix eight).

Output of the regression analysis suggests prime ministers' populism explains almost about 50% of variance in performance in democratic governance. This appears an important finding supporting the "mindset matters" thesis, because populism as one of the manifestations of negative political culture seems responsible for worse performance in democratic governance that is not supportive of democracy and of reforms that would improve citizens' prosperity. The hypothesis that is for the first time tested between populism and democracy in CEE, generally supports findings of previous literature that suggested populism is not only dangerous for democracy at a structural level (Hawkins 2012). It adds to that literature by suggesting that populism is also not supportive of democratic structure at a behavioral level of prime ministerial elite. All populist Prime ministers (Orbán, Mečiar, Janša, Kalvītis, Šķēle, Sanader, Orbán) are placed on the bottom of performance rank in contrast to prime ministers who are not characterized by populism and engage in pluralist rhetoric who more often occupy mid-point or top rank's placements. Further research would benefit from looking into the relationship between populism and democratic structures in both old and new democracies. This would be useful for two reasons. First, we would learn if length of democracy has anything to do with the incidence of populists. Second, we would learn about mechanisms that are able to counter populism dangerous for democratic structure in old and new democracies. Populism is not the only manifestation of negative political culture and the next section discusses prime ministers' executive personalization.

### 5.1.2 Executive personalization

Prime ministers' executive personalization is another manifest of informality that is used in this section as a proxy for negative political culture. Executive personalization is defined as an ability of leaders to dominate agenda setting because of their high assertiveness to influence different areas of politics compared to political parties (Webb and Poguntke 2005, Curtice and Holmber 2005, Pakulski and Körösényi 2011, Helms 2005, Kaase 1994, Gallina 2008, Tucker 1995, Samuels and Shugart 2010). To measure prime ministers' executive personalization, experts were asked to assess *situations where prime ministers dominate agenda setting in a political system even if they do not formally dispose of strong political powers* (Gallina 2008). *High levels of personalization* indicate that decision-making power concentrates around prime ministers, while *low levels of personalization* indicate that decision making is not only a prerogative of a leader

but also other actors who influence policy-making. If executive personalization is a proper manifestation of negative political culture, prime ministers who dominate agenda-setting are likely to outweigh consensual politics and switch the policy-making in their personal (or their parties') favor. Consequently, *the higher level of prime ministers' executive personalization is likely to relate negatively to performance in democratic governance (H).* Table 5.5 demonstrates country level executive personalization, while prime ministers' individual levels of personalization are presented in appendix ten.

**Table 5.5 Executive personalization**

| Country | Executive personalization |
|---|---|
| Poland | 5.4* |
| Estonia | 4.8 |
| Slovenia | 4.8 |
| Lithuania | 4.6 |
| Croatia | 4.4 |
| Latvia | 3.9 |
| Czech R | 3.8 |
| Hungary | 3.8 |
| Slovakia | 2.7 |
| **Total** | **4.2** |

**Source:** ES II and III: "Assess the level of "personalization" of politics during the mandate of each Prime minister on a 1 - 10 scale where 1 is "low personalization" and 10 is "high personalization". Personalization is defined as a situation in which political leaders dominate agenda setting in a political system even if they do not formally dispose of strong political power.

*Country score is an average of all prime ministers' scores and in case of difference between ES II and III better score indicating lower personalization is used for calculating country score

As suggested by expert data, CEE prime ministers feature high levels of dominance over the agenda setting. The overall average score of executive personalization is 4.2 out of a scale range of ten indicating strong powers of leaders to determine the agenda. Levels of personalization vary across-countries. Only in Poland and less so in Estonia and Slovenia, prime ministers are comparatively less personalized, however still strongly dominate agenda setting. This is in line with previous findings suggesting Polish elites are generally characterized by higher degree of consensualism (Gallina 2008). In addition, Poland, Estonia and Slovenia record a low corruption rate, which may indicate lower propensity of their politicians to dominate agenda setting for achieving personal or parties' benefit. In all other countries, as expert data suggest, prime ministers' level of personalization is high and prime ministers in these countries are likely to use agenda setting for personal or parties' interest. Once I performed bivariate OLS regression, as

indicated in table 5.6, personalization appears a statistically significant predictor of prime minister's programmatic performance.

**Table 5.6 Bivariate OLS regression: executive personalization and performance in democratic governance**

| | | | | | Unstandardized coefficients | | Std Coeff. | | | 95% Confidence level interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ | Std. Err. | F | Sig. | B | Std. Err. | Beta | t | Sig. | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| .296 | .273 | 1.062 | 13.01 | .001 | (constant) 8.466 | .742 | | 11.407 | .000 | 6.952 | 9.980 |
| | | | | | (personalization -.475 | .132 | -.544 | -3.608 | .001 | -.744 | -.207 |

*OLS regression was performed using prime ministers' scores in executive personalization, see appendix ten as independent variable and performance in democratic governance as dependent variable, see appendix eight

Output of the regression analysis suggests prime ministers' executive personalization explains almost about 30% of variance in performance in democratic governance. This appears an important finding supporting the "mindset matters" thesis, because executive personalization as one of the manifestations of negative political culture seems responsible for worse performance in democratic governance that is not supportive of democracy and of reforms that would improve citizens' prosperity. Executive personalization is likely a carryover from the communist regime that made elites accustomed to hierarchical thinking and top-down mentality. As suggested in the next section, previous political experience, especially during communism is also likely to relate to prime ministers' political mindset. Different political experience prior to prime ministerial posts, especially during communism may mean different type of socialization and accustomedness to different norms and values that may manifest differently once prime ministers are in a position of power, which is likely related to levels of their performance in democratic governance.

### 5.1.3 Previous political experience

Previous literature suggested that upon taking office, CEE prime ministers generally lacked experience in democratic politics. Many prime ministers were members of the communist party or one of its satellites prior to the fall of communism and to that extent engaged in the communist version of bureaucratic politics while only few were party officials or dissidents (Baylis 2007: 91). Upon becoming prime ministers, the great majority were newcomers, in

comparison with Western prime ministers, who have typically been career politicians with many years of party experience before becoming prime ministers. In the twenty years since the fall of communism, many CEE prime ministers have become career politicians and accustomed to democratic politics, but this experience has been relatively short. In some CEE countries, prime ministerial turnover has been so frequent that the public does not know many prime ministers when they assume office, and thus they do not bring much political capital with them. Political experience is an important asset that determines the ability to navigate the shoals of coalition politics, willingness to compromise, authoritarian excess, personality conflicts, insensitivity to popular discontent (elitism) and corruption tendencies. Western leaders are not immune to these deficiencies, but are more likely to afflict those with the practice of negotiation and persuasion (Baylis 2007: 91-92). If there is no established political culture of bargaining and compromise, conflict and failure appear more likely.

In this section, I look at previous ministerial and parliamentary prime ministers' experience and the type of experience during communism. Different political experience prior to prime ministerial post, especially during communism may mean different type of socialization and accustomedness to different norms and values that may manifest differently once prime ministers are in a position of power, which is likely related to levels of their performance in democratic governance. Prime ministers' previous political (ministerial and parliamentary) experience is likely to make a difference in performance in democratic governance. *Prime ministers with previous political experience as MPs or ministers are likely to perform better in democratic governance (H)*. The data used on prime ministers' previous political experience were collected from their publicly available biographies. I collected data on several different types of previous political experience; parliamentary, ministerial, mayoral, presidential, prime ministerial and deputy prime ministerial. Prior to assuming prime ministerial post, the two Prime ministers (Bērziņš and Ansip) were mayors, three were presidents (Drnovšek, Brazauskas and Dzurinda), five were Prime ministers (Klaus, Vähi , Laar, Mečiar and Kubilius) and five were deputy Prime ministers (Kosor, Špidla, Nečas, Medgyessy andŠpidla). Because of insufficient variation in political experience across different types, I tested the above hypothesis by using only previous ministerial and parliamentary experience as independent variable.

Most prime ministers had either parliamentary (N=21) or ministerial (N=16) experience prior to assuming office as prime ministers. I used one-way ANOVA to test if previous parliamentary or ministerial experience[62] mattered for prime ministers' performance. The analysis did not confirm the hypothesis suggesting prime ministers' previous *parliamentary or ministerial experience is irrelevant* for performance in democratic governance. Both prime ministers with and those without prior ministerial or parliamentary experience performed with a mean average score of 5.7 out of a scale range of ten. Moreover, prime ministers without prior ministerial experience performed slightly better with a mean average score of 6.1 out of a scale range of ten compared to performance with 5.7 mean average score by prime ministers with prior ministerial experience. Literature testing the same hypothesis for Canadian and British prime ministers found that prior ministerial experience is an insignificant factor determining prime ministers' performance (Azzi and Hillmer 2013: 20, Theakston and Gill 2006: 17). The results of this section suggest practical political experience (ministerial or parliamentary) does not improve prospects for prime ministers' better performance in democratic governance. However, the type of prime ministers' experience during communism may prove important, because different type of experience during communism may mean different type of socialization and consequently production of a different political mindset that is conducive to or unsupportive of democratic governance.

### 5.1.4 Type of political experience during communism

Many CEE prime ministers were active in communist party, which is a specific type of political experience characteristic to post-communist elite. Different type of experience during communism may mean different type of socialization and consequently production of a different political mindset that is conducive to or unsupportive of democratic governance. Prime ministers can be grouped in three categories based on the type of political experience during communism; (a) reformists, (b) dissidents, and (c) non- active. Reformists were active in communist party, but at the time of political transformation joined its liberal wing and assumed a leadership role in reformed-communist newly established socialist parties (e.g. Račan, Fico, Drnovšek,

[62] Parliamentary and ministerial experience are categorical independent variables coded as dichotomy; "ministerial experience" or "no ministerial experience", and "parliamentary experience" or "no parliamentary experience" and performance in democratic governance is continuous dependent variable, see appendix eight.

Brazauskas). Dissidents were active during communism, especially at times of occasional outbursts of attempted liberalization; however, their opposition to communism was most pronounced shortly before communism collapsed in 1989. These prime ministers although sometimes initially active in communist party were explicitly against the regime and were frequently deprived employment or other rights for their anti–communist activism (e.g. Zeman)[63]. Dissidents most often assumed party leadership of conservative parties in post-communism (e.g. Orbán). Finally, non-activists pursued non-political careers during communism and were neither active in communist party, nor explicitly vocal against the communist regime. In table 5.7, prime ministers are grouped based on the type of political activism during communism as reformists, dissidents and non-active.

**Table 5.7 Type of political experience during communism**

| **Reformists** | **Dissidents** | **Non-active** |
|---|---|---|
| Ivica Račan | Václav Klaus | Jadranka Kosor |
| Gyula Horn | Miloš Zeman | Ivo Sanader |
| Péter Medgyessy | Mirek Topolánek | Vladimír Špidla |
| Janez Drnovšek | Viktor Orbán | Peter Nečas |
| Borut Pahor | Janez Janša | Mart Laar |
| Robert Fico | Vladimír Mečiar* | Juhan Parts |
| Leszek Miller | Mikuláš Dzurinda | Ference Gyurcsány |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | Jerzy Buzek | Andris Bērziņš |
| Andrus Ansip | Donald Tusk | Andris Šķēle |
| | Andrius Kubilius | Valdis Dombrovskis |
| | | Adolfas Šleževičius |
| | | Tiit Vähi |
| | | Aigars Kalvītis |
| | | Gediminas Vagnorius |
| **Total 9** | **10** | **14** |

**Source**: Prime ministers' biographical data publicly available on governmental web sites

Most prime ministers (N=14) were non-active during communism, ten were dissidents and nine were reformists. Large number of non-active prime ministers confirms elite circulation theory in relation to prime ministerial elite that suggests post-transition structural change in the top hierarchy unfolded so that new people were recruited for command positions (Szelenyi and Szelenyi 1995[64], Hankiss 1990, Staniszkis et al. 1991, Steen 1997, Crowther and Matonyte

[63] During the Czech spring in 1968, Zeman opposed the Warsaw pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and was expelled from the party in 1970 and was dismissed from his job.

[64]Szelenyi's conducted a large survey research at the beginning of 1990, which included examination of a large pool of various elites (political, cultural and economic) in Visegrad countries, Bulgaria and Russia. Their conclusions are based on the type of capital (political, economic or cultural) a particular type of elite uses (or is able to use) and the

2007). Current knowledge about the relationship between communist activism and post-transitional political leadership is insufficient. At most, actor-based transitional literature looks at factors that are beneficial or endanger prospects for democracy. Some authors consider that the type of actors (reformists, moderates, radicals) who drive transitions determines the type of democracy that emerges. It is suggested that if reform communist or moderate opposition and not radicals are main drivers of transition, democracy is more likely (McFaul 2002, Munck and Skalnik Leff 1997, Wolchik and Curry 2010). It remains unknown, however if different type of actors' pre-transition activism anyhow relates to their post-transition leadership performance. All that we at present know is which type of activism during communism best fits each prime minister according to their biographical data.

Elite theories do not hypothesize beyond the relationship between pre-transition elite constellation and the type of regime that emerges (Burton et al. 1992, Higely and Pakulski 1998). It is argued that the existence or absence of an elite consensus about democratic rules and norms determines stable or an unstable regime. In post–communist Europe, a stable democracy has emerged in Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic, given the relative uniformity of elite consensus at the time of transitions (Higley and Pakulski 1998). What happens to the original elite consensus once democracy is in place is less certain, however some scholars already found grounds to challenge the original elite consensus thesis pointing to CEE post-communist elite frequently divided on many aspects that were important for initial elite consensus (Gallina 2007 and 2008, Ilonzski and Lengyel 2010).

Based on previous actor-centered democratization literature, I expect *that the type of prime ministers' performance during communism matters for performance in democratic governance (H).* Because non-active prime ministers had no political experience during communism compared to reformists and dissidents this could be responsible for their worse performance. However, reformists are likely to perform better than dissidents and non-active prime ministers, because their experience is longer and of a consensual type practiced already

extent of their reproduction (maintenance of communist elite in post-transition) or circulation (replacement of communist elite in post-transition).

when they dissented to communist party's liberal wing prior to transition. However, the ANOVA analysis did not find a statistically significant difference in performance between the three groups of prime ministers based on their experience during communism. Reformists, however, do perform comparatively better than the other two groups with a mean average score of 6.7 out of a scale range of ten. Mean average score of non-active prime ministers is 5.6 out of a scale range of ten while that of dissidents is 5.5.

In this section, three proxies of prime ministers' political culture were used to test the effect of prime ministers' mindset on performance in democratic governance. Prime ministers' populism appeared statistically significant predictor of prime ministers' performance. Prime ministers characterized by populism and engaged in populist rhetoric are more likely to violate democratic structure and deliver ineffective governance that does not improve citizens' welfare. The same holds for "personalized" prime ministers' who dominate agenda setting and are more likely to perform worse in democratic governance. Previous ministerial or parliamentary political experience or the type of experience during communism appeared irrelevant for prime ministers' performance. The results of this section emphasize the importance of cultural variables in explaining prime ministers' programmatic performance. Norms and values prime ministers' were accustomed to in communism appear relevant once they occupy high political posts in post-transition from communism. Their political mindset manifested as populism or executive personalization largely account for their commitment to democracy and effective governance that improves or erodes citizens' welfare. In the next section, I test the effect of prime ministers' personal variables on prime ministers' programmatic performance.

### *5.2 Leader-centered explanations of prime ministers' programmatic performance*

The personal attributes of leaders and their effect on what they achieve has mostly been an interest of political biographies (Barber 1977, Greenstein 1968, Bass 2009). Some psychological studies emphasized the influence of deeper elements of personality or events that occurred in childhood to account for leaders' performance (Post 2004, Geronik 2012). This type of research rarely provides means of assessing precisely the origin of leaders' personal influence, or seldom identifies the components of the personality to explain how these connect to each other and to leaders' performance. Moreover, psychoanalytical studies often concentrate on (only)

"unbalanced" leaders and emphasize abnormality as an element of leaders' mental health that is likely to influence their performance (Blondel 1987).

One methodological complexity in leader-centered research is the present impossibility to distinguish the part of leaders' effectiveness attributable to (only) psychological factors and the part attributable to (only) demographic variables, since the correlations between the two are uncertain and rarely tested (Ibid: 134). In addition to psychological studies, political science and sociology have been primarily interested in the recruitment of political elites. In this research stream, the leaders' backgrounds were analyzed cross-nationally to assess the role of factors such as social origin, education, occupation and ideology in the selection of leaders. This group of variables is observable more easily and its influence on leaders' performance is in turn more certain. In this section, I test the effect of several demographical variables; prime ministers' age upon assuming the prime ministerial post, education, and political ideology on their performance in democratic governance. Based on previous findings, socio-demographic variables are likely not to make a great difference in prime ministers' programmatic performance (Blondel 1987, Rejai and Philips 1983).

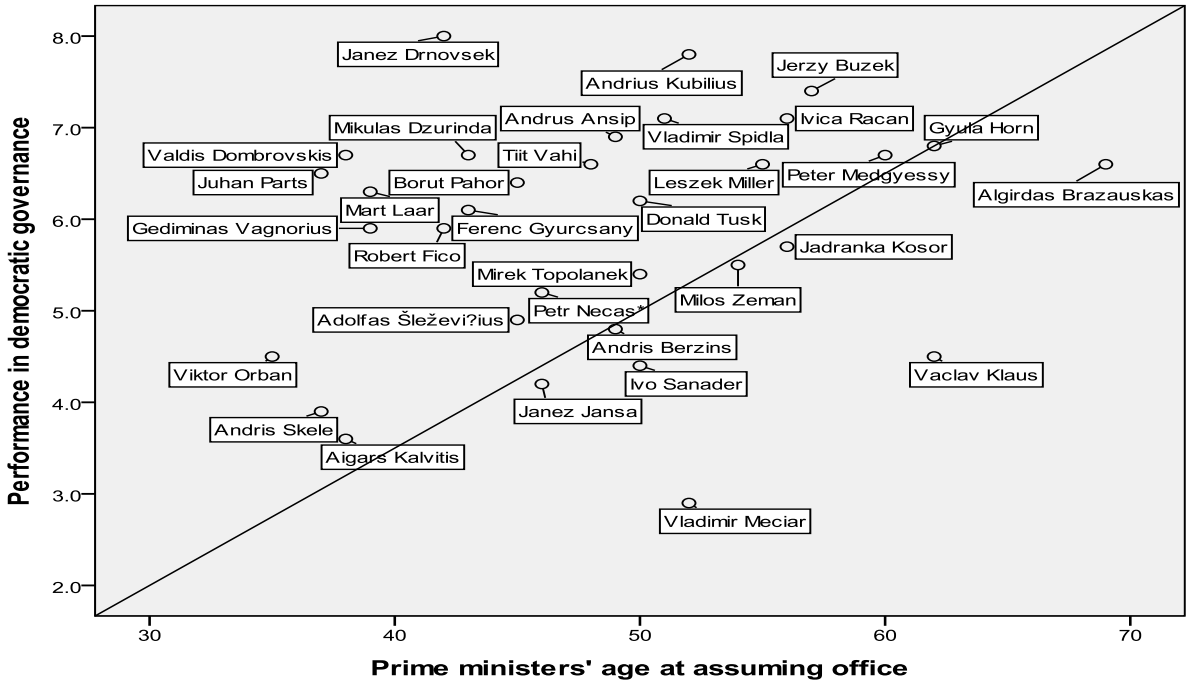
### *5.2.1 Prime ministers' age at assuming office*

The age of a prime minister at the time of assuming office can have a bearing on his/her performance, because older prime ministers are likely to have more political and inter-personal skills required for the job. Previous literature on Western leaders did not find a relationship between prime ministers' ages upon assuming office and their placement in performance rankings. For example, three British prime ministers; Attlee, Churchill and Macmillan, ranked on top of the MORI/University of Leeds expert ranking were in their sixties when they first become prime ministers, as were the two ranked at the bottom, Bonar Law and Chamberlain. The two youngest prime ministers, Blair (ranked sixth) and Major (ranked fifteenth) were in their forties when they first become prime ministers (Theakston and Gill 2006: 15). In an expert ranking of Canadian prime ministers conducted in 2011, age also made no difference in prime ministers' rankings. The top five prime ministers in a Canadian survey were 47 to 66 years old when they took office, however the three that were on the bottom were 70 years or older. In this sense,

Canadian prime ministers younger than 70, at first becoming prime ministers, had a slightly better chance to occupy higher rankings (Azzi and Hillmer 2013, Murray and Blessing 1994).

In line with previous findings related to Western leaders, *age is not likely to be an important factor influencing prime ministers' performance* in democratic governance. The generational structure of politicians in the East and West (Europe) is different however, and Western politicians are comparatively older when they assume political office, which means they bring more political capital to the job, because many have been career politicians long before their high level political appointments. By contrast, CEE politicians are relatively young when they become prime ministers, with 48 as the average age of prime ministers at the time of assuming prime ministerial posts. The majority of the 33 prime ministers (N=22) were below 50 when they took prime ministerial posts, only eight were between 50 and 60 and four were 60 or older. Figure 5.1 presents a correlation chart between prime ministers' age at assuming office and performance in democratic governance.

**Figure 5.1 Prime Ministers' age at assuming office and performance in democratic governance**




**Source**: correlation analysis, independent variable; prime ministers' age at assuming office, data are based on prime ministers' biographical information available on governmental web sites, dependent variable; prime ministers' performance in democratic governance, see appendix eight

In line with the hypothesized relationship between prime ministers' age at assuming office and performance in democratic governance, age of CEE prime ministers' does not appear relevant for prime ministers' performance. Four of the five top-ranked prime ministers were above 50 (Kubilius, Buzek, Račan, Špidla) when they became prime ministers, but one of them, Drnovšek was 42 when he become prime minister. Three of the five bottom-ranked prime ministers were below 50 at assuming office (Kalvitis, Janša, Šķēle), but two (Sanader and Mečiar) were slightly above 50. In this sense, prime ministers above 50 had a slightly better chance for better performance, which is also indicated by mean average of 6.2 out of a scale range of ten by prime ministers' older than 50 and mean average of 5.6 out of a scale range of ten by prime ministers' younger than 50 at assuming prime ministerial post.

### *5.2.2 **Prime Ministers' education***

CEE prime ministers are generally educated elite, with all 33 prime ministers having (at least) a university degree. This generally wide education of CEE prime ministers can be explained by

state sponsored and free (non-fee paying) education for all practiced during communism when most prime ministers either started their education or had already graduated from universities. There is some variation in the type of degree among CEE prime ministers. The majority of prime ministers (N=16) had a degree in an atypical field (indicated in table 5.8 as "other"), twelve were economists, while only six were lawyers. In table 5.8, prime ministers are grouped based on their educational field as economists, lawyers or with a degree in another field.

**Table 5.8 Prime Ministers' education**

| **Economists** | **Lawyers** | **Other** |
|---|---|---|
| Václav Klaus | Ivica Račan | Ivo Sanader (Comparative Literature) |
| Miloš Zeman | Juhan Parts | Mirek Topolánek (Mechanical Engineering) |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | Viktor Orbán | Gediminas Vagnorious (Civil Engineering) |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | Robert Fico | Adolfas Šleževičius (Mechanical Engineering) |
| Vladimír Špidla | RobertMečiar | Tiit Vähi (Engineering) |
| Gyula Horn | Jadranka Kosor | Jerzy Buzek (Chemical Engineer) |
| Péter Medgyessy | | Andrus Ansip (Chemistry) |
| Andris Šķēle | | Janez Janša (Military degree) |
| Aigars Kalvītis | | Mikulas Dzurinda (Transport/communication degree) |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | | Andris Bērziņš (Historian) |
| Janez Drnovšek | | Donald Tusk (Historian) |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | | Mart Laar (Historian) |
| | | Andrius Kubilius (Physics) |
| | | Petr Nečas (Physics) |
| | | Leszek Miller (Political Science) |
| | | Borut Pahor (Political science) |
| **Total 12** | **6** | **16** |

**Source**: Data on prime ministers' age are based on their biographical information collected from governmental web sites

Based on findings of previous literature[65], *prime ministers' education is not expected to play a big role in performance in democratic governance (H).* ANOVA analysis confirmed the hypothesis and did not find a statistically significant difference in performance between economists, lawyers and prime ministers' with degrees in other fields. The top ten ranked prime ministers are economists or have a degree in other field (except Račan who is a lawyer), while the ten bottom-ranked prime ministers are also either economists or have a degree in another field (except Mečiar and Orbán who are lawyers). In fact, lawyers perform slightly worse with a mean average score of 5.4 out of a scale range of ten compared to economists and prime

[65]Theakston and Gill group British prime ministers based on the type of university's funding (public/private) and the university they attended (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Eton). In Eastern Europe such classification would make little sense, because all universities were state funded and non-fee paying when 33 prime ministers attended universities, which is why I categorized them based on the field of their education (2006).

ministers with a degree in another field who perform equally well with a mean average score of 6.0 out of a scale range of ten.

### 5.2.3 **Prime Ministers' ideology**

The prime ministers' political orientation may play a role in their overall performance; because different ideologies are likely connected with different policy directions prime ministers pursue (Müller-Rommel et al. 2004). For example, left-wing prime ministers are likely to pursue policies targeted at more public spending on social welfare, while right wing prime ministers are more likely to pursue policies that cut on social welfare and are more business friendly. Some studies applicable to Western Europe found that leftist governments have systematically achieved higher growth rates, larger central government budgets, more income equalization, invested greater efforts to reduce unemployment and have put greater emphasis on education, public health and social welfare (Lijphart 2012: 79). Tufte goes even further to suggest that the most important and single determinant of variation in macroeconomic performance from one industrialized democracy to another is the location on the left-right spectrum of the governing party (1980: 104). In Lithuania, Šarkutė (2010) finds that left-oriented cabinets are more stable when the influence of the ruling party is strong in decision-making process.

The left-right distinction among leaders and governments on socioeconomic issues (in both West and East Europe) has generally declined in the past few decades and contemporary left-wing prime ministers sometimes pursue rightist policies or vice versa. However, these differences did not completely wane and may still play a role when the overall macroeconomic performance of governments or prime ministers is evaluated. These different policy strategies by left and right oriented governments can also influence voting behavior. Fidrmuc (2000) finds that CEE voters reward parties based on their experience with economic reforms. If they benefit from the reform (e.g. private entrepreneurs and the educated middle class), they vote for right–wing parties, and if they lose out due to the reform (e.g. social risk groups such as the unemployed, pensioners, social welfare recipients), they vote for left-leaning parties.

In CEE, the right-left political orientation may be deceptive because political notions of the left and the right do not yet have the same meaning as in Western democracies. Many people

who describe themselves as "rightist" oppose, for example, the termination of state subsidies for energy and rents. In addition, the nature of the transformation process is such that so-called leftist parties often have to pursue policies, such as privatization, that in the West are associated with the political right. Finally, many policies pursued by CEE prime ministers are based on EU requirements and directives, which may blur the clear-cut division between left and right, oriented prime ministers (Pehe 2002).

Because of relatively unclear left-right distinction in contemporary democracies, *prime ministers' ideology is not expected to make a difference in prime ministers' performance in democratic governance (H)*. However, given the CEE context where people are more likely to have bad experience with reforms, *left-oriented prime ministers may have light advantage in performing better than right-oriented prime ministers, who are likely to pursue policies favorable to only limited segments of society (H1).* The data on prime ministers' party positioning were collected from the following database: "Measuring Party Positions in Europe: The Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File, 1999-2010" (Bakker et al. 2012). This database positions parties (based on experts' assessments) on a three-point ideological scale where 0 indicates extreme left, 5 indicates party positioning in the centre and 10 indicates extreme right. The two different left oriented parties on that scale may have different degrees of "leftness", so that one party is more leftist and closer to extreme left than the other that is closer to the centre. In this study, however, a degree of prime ministers' parties' "leftness" or "rightness" is less relevant and prime ministers' left-right orientation was coded as a dichotomy; "left" or "right" regardless of prime minister's party distance from extreme or central points on the Chapel Hill scale.

Out of 33 prime ministers twelve are left-oriented and a total of (N=21) are right-oriented. The higher number of right-oriented prime ministers may relate to a slight disdain for left wing parties among CEE voters that remind them (still) too much of the communist past[66]. In line with the hypothesized relationship, ANOVA analysis did not find a statistically significant difference in performance between left-oriented and right-oriented prime ministers. However, left-oriented prime ministers did perform slightly better with a mean average score of 6.3 out of a

[66]CEE socialist parties generally originated in reform wing of former communist parties (Ishiyama 1995, Bozóki and Ishiyama 2002)

scale range of ten compared to right-oriented prime ministers performing with a mean average of 5.6 out of scale range of ten. Further research would benefit from analyzing the effect of a degree of prime ministers' "leftness" or "rightness" and the type of exact policies pursued by differently oriented prime ministers and their performance in democratic governance.

In this section, I tested the effect of prime ministers' demographic variables on performance in democratic governance. As suggested by previous literature neither prime ministers' age at assuming office, educational degree or political orientation have any relevance for performance of prime ministers in democratic governance. Analysis of this section support previous findings that prime ministers' demographical characteristics do not matter for better or worse performance. Although there was no statistically significant difference in performance between left and right oriented prime ministers, left-oriented prime ministers performed lightly better than right-oriented prime ministers. If more cases are added to the analysis, the effect may appear significant and in line with this, further research would benefit from looking at how specific policies pursued by differently oriented prime ministers influence performance. In the next section, the effect of contextual variables in prime ministers' closer and more distant environments are tested on their performance in democratic governance.

### *5.3 Contextual explanations of programmatic performance*

Contextual explanations of leadership emphasize the importance of the concrete *situation* each leader faces. Political leadership literature suggests different contexts matter and some contexts are more conducive to successful leadership performance than are others. Some scholars even suggest one has to discriminate among different leadership qualities, because different contexts require different leadership attributes (Fiedler 1967). In some circumstances, but not in others, leaders may have to be task-oriented in order to be effective. The qualities such as energy, intelligence, motivation, remain important variables, but they may not play the same role in all situations and in some cases, they may be mutually exclusive (Blondel 1987:135).

As explained in chapter one, personality studies are generally not in agreement about which leaders' characteristics are elements of leaders' personality. Consequently, measuring leaders' personality traits is a methodological challenge and testing the interaction between

leadership context and personal characteristics is omitted in this study. In this section, I test the effect of contextual variables on prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. As suggested by previous literature, contextual factors in prime ministers' immediate (the type of government, the number of cabinet parties, term durations, the nature of terms and circumstances leaving office) and more distant (the political circumstance of period in office) environments likely matter for prime ministers' performance in democratic governance.

### 5.3.1 The type of government

Coalition is a common form of government in parliamentary democracy. Since the fall of communism almost 80% of cabinets that formed in CEE until 2003 were coalitions (Blondel and Muller–Rommel 2005). Because coalitions are most often composed of many ideologically different parties, it is likely that this type of government is prone to ineffective decision-making. Consequently, worse performance of prime ministers' heading coalitions is likely to relate to this type of government. Coalitions also have an inherent tendency of instability, because any coalition partner can leave and thus break the coalition at any moment, which can be another factor of ineffective decision-making. In contrast to Western literature (Muller et al. 1993), literature on CEE cabinets did not find that cabinet type is important for prime ministers' effective decision-making (Blondel et. Al 2007).

Coalition governments can be distinguished in two ways; the *size of parliamentary support* (minority / majority) and *the number of cabinet parties* (single, multi-party, surplus, minimum winning)[67]. Based on these two dimensions, each cabinet except minimum winning and surplus coalitions, which have support of the parliamentary majority by default, is supported in the parliament either by *majority* or is a *minority* cabinet that does not have support by the majority in the parliament. For example, we may see single party minority cabinets when only one party participates in the cabinet and is not supported by the majority in the parliament. In contrast to, single party majority cabinets have only one party that participates in the cabinet and

[67] S*ingle party* is a cabinet with only one participating party*; multi party* is a cabinet with two or more parties participating in the cabinet, *minimum winning* is a cabinet with all participating parties in the cabinet required for support of parliamentary majority and *surplus (oversized)* is a cabinet with more parties participating in the cabinet than is required for support of the parliamentary majority (Woldendorp et al 1998)

is also supported by the parliamentary majority. In table 5.9 prime ministers are grouped in four categories based on their leadership of different types of cabinets; as leaders of minimum winning or surplus coalition and as leaders of single or multi-party cabinets.

**Table 5.9 The type of government**

| Leader of minimum winning coalition | Leader of surplus cabinet | Leader of single party (minority) | Leader of multi party (minority) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jadranka Kosor | Ivica Račan | Miloš Zeman | Andrus Ansip (3) |
| Ivo Sanader | Gyula Horn | Jerzy Buzek (2) | Aigars Kalvītis (1) |
| Václav Klaus (1) | Aigars Kalvītis (2) | Ferenc Gyurcsány (3) | Valdis Dombrovskis (2, 4) |
| Vladimír Špidla | Valdis Dombrovskis (1) | | Václav Klaus (2) |
| Petr Nečas (1, 2) | Janez Drnovšek (2) | | Janez Drnovšek (1, 4) |
| Tiit Vähi | Mikuláš Dzurinda (1) | | Borut Pahor (2) |
| Mart Laar | Gediminas Vagnorius | | Mikuláš Dzurinda (3) |
| Juhan Parts | Algirdas Brazauskas (1, 2) | | Leszek Miller (2) |
| Andrus Ansip (1, 2) | Mirek Topolánek | | Algirdas Brazauskas (3) |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány (1, 2) | Viktor Orbán | | |
| Péter Medgyessy | Andris Šķēle (1, 2) | | |
| Valdis Dombrovskis (3) | Andris Bērziņš | | |
| Mikuls Dzurinda (2) | Leszek Miller (1) | | |
| Janez Drnovšek (3, 5) | | | |
| Vladimír Mečiar | | | |
| Robert Fico | | | |
| Janez Janša | | | |
| Borut Pahor (1) | | | |
| Jerzy Buzek (1) | | | |
| Donald Tusk | | | |
| Leszek Miller (2) | | | |
| Algirdas Brazauskas (1) | | | |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | | | |
| Andrius Kubilius (1, 2) | | | |
| **Total 29** | **15** | **3** | **11** |

**Source**: Comparative Political Data Set III 1990 – 2010, Armingeon et al. (2012). *Governing Together*, Blondel et al. (2007). *ParlGov* (Döring and Manow (2012)

*Cabinet was single party majority

Note: Coalition type has sometimes changed during the mandate of an individual prime minister. Number in brackets, next to some prime ministers indicates (chronologically) a different cabinet type during the mandate of same prime minister. For example, Ansip (1, 2) means that cabinet type during Ansip's first and second term was minimum winning coalition, while during his third term cabinet type was multi party minority indicated as Ansip (3).

Out of 62 prime ministerial terms [68], during the tenure of 33 prime ministers, the predominant cabinet type is minimum winning coalition (N=29), several cabinets are surplus coalitions (N=15), eleven are multi party and three are single party cabinets. Out of these 62 cabinets, 44 cabinets enjoyed parliamentary support, while 14 were minority cabinets. Previous literature

[68] See chapter two, table 2.1 for the total number of prime ministerial terms. Prime ministerial consecutive terms were collapsed and coded as one term.

suggested single party cabinets are more stable and more effective decision-makers, than multiparty and surplus cabinets, because a unified ideological outlook minimizes the likelihood of inter-cabinet conflicts over policies. Cabinets supported by the majority in the parliament compared to minority cabinets are likely to be more efficient, because it is easier for these to secure legislative support for their policies. However, Blondel et al (2007) did not find a large difference between minority and majority as well as between surplus and minimum winning coalitions in satisfaction with cabinet decision-making and effectiveness.

Based on previous findings, *cabinet type is expected to make a difference in prime ministers' performance in democratic governance*. (H). Prime ministers heading *single party and minimum winning coalitions are likely to perform better than prime ministers heading surplus or multi party governments (H1),* because fewer number of ideologically distinct parties in single or minimum winning coalitions may make decision-making less conflictual. *Prime ministers heading cabinets supported by the parliamentary majority are likely to perform better than prime ministers heading minority cabinets (H3),* because cabinet's parliamentary support will mean better chance of prime ministers' heading them to forward their preferred policies.

Once one-way ANOVA was performed, cabinet type did not appear statistically significant for prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. Prime ministers leading multi party cabinets performed best with a mean average score of 6.7 out of scale range of ten. Prime ministers leading minimum wining and single party cabinets performed equally well with a mean average score of 5.9 out of a scale range of ten and prime ministers in surplus cabinets performed worse with a mean average score of 5.7 out of a scale range of ten. One-way ANOVA did also not find statistically significant difference between prime ministers' heading majority and minority cabinets. In fact, prime ministers in minority cabinets performed slightly better with a mean average score of 6.3 out of a scale range of ten, while prime ministers in majority cabinets performed with a mean average score of 5.7 out of a scale range of ten.

These findings suggest that type of cabinet or its support by parliamentary majority has no relevance for prime ministers' performance. It is irrelevant if cabinet composition reflects ideologically similar or different positions or if the cabinet is a minority or a majority. These

items may relate to effectiveness of cabinet decision-making as suggested by previous literature, but only in its procedural aspect. Prime ministers in cabinets with fewer parties or less ideologically diverse parties may forward their agenda more easily. This however, is not reflected in the policy outcomes that go beyond simple procedural effectiveness of cabinet decision-making, and extend to prime ministers' democratic conduct and effective governance that improve citizens' prosperity. Accordingly, prime ministers in single party cabinets (e.g. Zeman, Gyurcsány) may be effective in procedural type of performance, but not equally successful in improving citizens' life. Similarly, prime ministers in multi party or surplus coalitions (e.g. Dzurinda, Račan, Dombrovskis) are likely to be less effective in procedural decision-making, but may be more successful in improving citizens' welfare by respecting democratic institutions and effective governance.

### 5.3.2 The number of cabinet parties

Political parties are an important aspect of cabinet activity and eventually cabinet effectiveness (Blondel and Cotta, 2000, Muller et al. 2004). The number of cabinet parties relates to previous discussion of cabinet types. However, discussion of cabinet types does not allow distinguishing between cabinets with more parties. If we speak for example of surplus coalition, we still do not know how many parties are participating in that coalition, except that there are more parties in that coalition than required for sustaining parliamentary support. In single party governments, conflicts are less likely, because ministers usually share a common political ideology and broadly agree on the goals prime ministers pursue. In coalition governments, conflicts are more likely, especially if parties are ideologically distant (Blondel et al. 2007). Previous Western literature suggested the higher number of cabinet parties is related to ineffective and conflictual decision-making (Muller et al. 2004). In line with this, *prime ministers leading cabinets with a larger number of parties are likely to perform worse in democratic governance, in contrast to prime ministers who lead cabinets with fewer parties (H).* In table 5.10 prime ministers are grouped in three categories; as leaders of cabinets with one-two, two-three and as leaders over four cabinet parties.

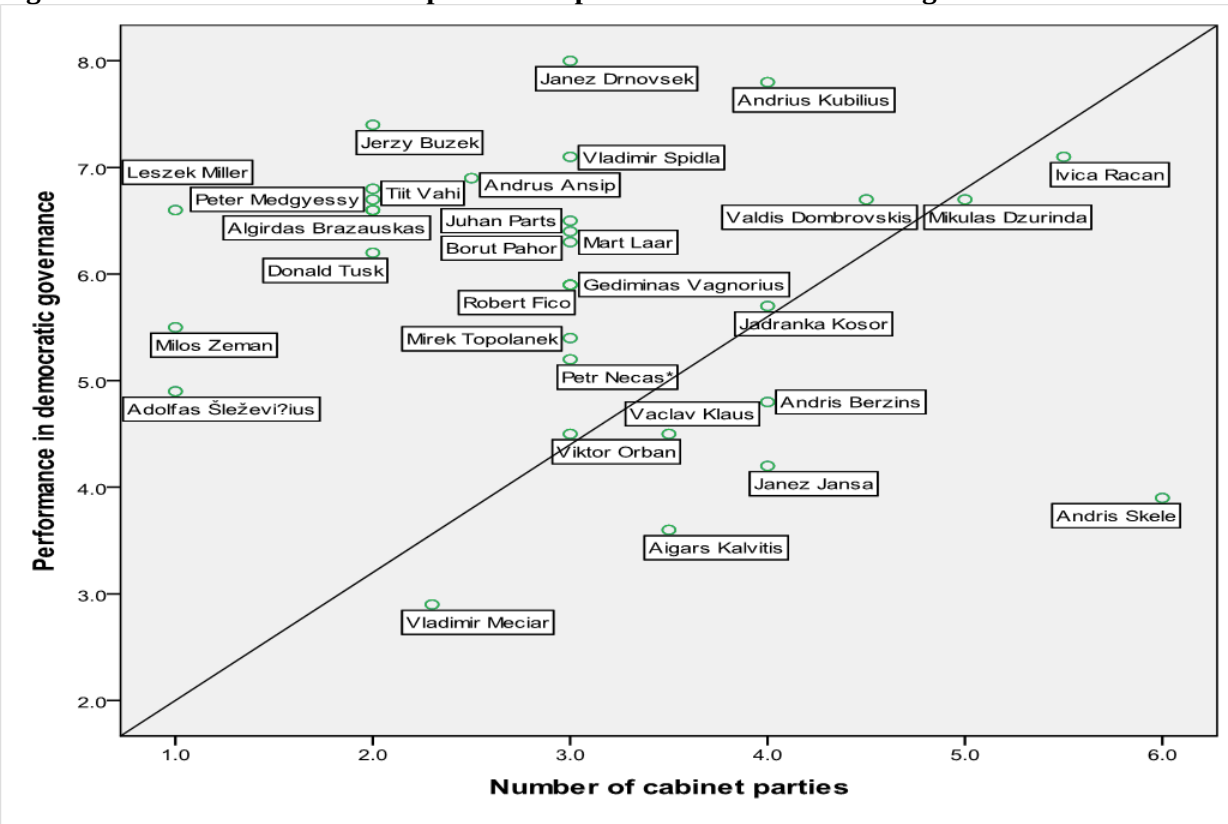
**Table 5.10 The number of cabinet parties**

| Leader of cabinet with One-two parties | Leader of cabinet with Two–three parties | Leader of cabinet with over three parties |
|---|---|---|
| Gyula Horn | Václav Klaus | Andris Šķēle |
| Péter Medgyessy | Robert Fico | Ivica Račan |
| Jerzy Buzek | Leszek Miller | Mikuláš Dzurinda |
| Miloš Zeman | Vladimir Špidla | Valdis Dombrovskis |
| Tiit Vähi | Borut Pahor | Andrius Kubilius |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | Mart Laar | Jadranka Kosor |
| Donald Tusk | Algirdas Brazauskas | Andris Bērziņš |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | Vladimir Mečiar | Janez Janša |
| | Juhan Parts | Jane Drnovšek |
| | Petr Nečas | Gediminas Vagnorius |
| | Mirek Topolánek | Aigars Kalvītis |
| | Viktor Orbán | |
| | Ivo Sanader | |
| | Andrus Ansip | |
| **Total 8** | **14** | **11** |

**Source:** Müller–Rommel et al. (2004), Armingeon and Careja (2012), Döring, and Manow *Parl Gov* (2012).

As data in table 5.10 suggest, most prime ministers lead cabinets with two-three parties (N=14), eleven prime ministers lead cabinets over three parties and eight lead cabinets with one-two parties. One-way ANOVA did not find statistically significant difference between prime ministers leading cabinets with one, two or cabinets with over three parties. Prime ministers who lead cabinets with one or two parties did perform slightly better with a mean average score of 6.3 out of a scale range of ten. Prime ministers in cabinets with over three parties performed with a mean average score of 5.9 and prime ministers in cabinets with two or three parties with a mean average score of 5.7. Linear regression showed the number of cabinet parties is a poor predictor of prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. Figure 5.2 presents a correlation chart indicating no relationship between the number of cabinet parties and prime ministers' performance.

**Figure 5.2 The number of cabinet parties and performance in democratic governance**




**Source**: correlation analysis, independent variable; number of cabinet parties, see table 5.10, dependent variable; prime ministers' performance in democratic governance, see appendix eight

Results of this section support previous literature that suggests power concentrated in the hands of the majority may promote decisive leadership and hence coherent policies and fast decision-making. However, fast decisions by cabinets with fewer parties may not necessarily mean wise decisions (Lijphart 2012: 259). A sheer number of parties does not play a role in prime ministers' performance. More importantly, the ideology of parties participating in the cabinet may play a more significant role. For example, if there are many ideologically diverse parties in cabinet, decision-making may be tense and consequently inefficient, because prime ministers in these cabinets are more constrained (Strøm 1994). Following this, the party ideology of individual ministers who head finance[69], foreign, economy and social ministries may make a difference in prime ministers' performance in effective governance (Norton 1998, Anderweg and Bakema 1994). It is likely that *prime ministers performed better in policy areas where a departmental*

[69] Ministers of finance are "more" important because they are in charge of an overall income and the expenditure of the government and exercise control over the actions of other ministers. In CEE, Blondel et al (2007) found that ministers as more prominent perceive ministers of finance, while only in Estonia; foreign minister was perceived more important than other ministers.

*minister was from the same party, in contrast to prime ministers who are likely to perform worse in policy areas where departmental ministers were from different parties (H).* Data to test this hypothesis were difficult to collect especially for past cabinets. Where data was available[70] in governments' public archives, the party of the prime minister and the head of the finance, foreign, economic and social ministries were the same. When I matched these data to prime ministers' performance in separate dimensions of democratic governance, it was apparent that prime ministers generally *do not perform better in areas where departmental ministers are from the same party*. Data of this section support the argument that shared party ideology by prime ministers and departmental ministers may be important for procedural aspect of decision-making, but not for prime ministers' policy outcomes that improve citizens' welfare.

### 5.3.3 Term duration

The prime minister's duration in office is often cited in the literature as an indicator of success and effectiveness accurately reflecting political support and the ability of prime ministers to achieve substantive goals (Baylis 2007, Müller –Rommel. 2005). A brief term means insufficient time to formulate and carry out agendas and may indicate low popularity or unfavorable media attention (Baylis 2007: 84). A prime minister in office for a long time is likely to be dominant vis-à-vis the parliament, while a short-lived prime minister is likely to be weak, because of insufficient time to develop sound and coherent policies, which likely also extends to regime's stability[71] (Lijphart 2012: 129, Warwick 1994). In contrast, longer-lasting cabinets have better opportunities to develop internal cohesion, are more effective and less conflict-ridden in the decision-making process (Müller-Rommel et al. 2004, Frognier 1993). Moreover, prime ministers' longer terms increase their political experience, which may in turn contribute to effectiveness in cabinet decision-making (Müller et al. 1993). Previous literature found positive

[70] Party of prime minister and minister of finance was same in 15 cases out of 19 for which data was available. Prime ministers' party was same as ministers' of foreign affairs in 15 out of 22 cases for which data was available. Prime ministers' party was same as ministers' of economic affairs in 12 cases out of 16 for which data was available. Prime ministers' party was same as ministers' of social affairs in 13 out of 21 cases for which data was available.

[71] Lijphart finds that majoritarian democracies with stable cabinets do not outperform (on a number of macroeconomic and democratic quality indicators) consensus democracies where shorter-lived and ineffective cabinets are more prevalent. In addition, he finds that consensus democracies are likely to deliver "kinder and gentler policies" in terms of welfare provisions, environmental protection, etc (2012: 275-300).

correlations between prime ministers' term duration and performance in office. Long-serving British, Canadian and New Zealander prime ministers were placed higher on experts' ranks than short serving prime ministers (Theakton and Gill 2006, Azzi and Hillmer 2013, Sheppard 1998). In this respect, the prime ministers' duration can provide some indication of the political impact of the head of national policy-making.

The literature does not agree on the exact number of years a prime minister should stay in office to become effective. Some authors suggest that three years in office is a minimum for a prime minister to become an effective decision-maker (Müller –Rommel 2005: 8), while others suggest five years in office is required for a prime minister to have an impact. Based on these arguments, *prime ministers' duration is likely to make a difference in prime ministers' performance in democratic governance (H). Longer-lasting prime ministers are likely to outperform shorter-lasting Prime ministers (H1).* In table 5.11 prime ministers are grouped in three categories based on their term durations; prime ministers in office for two-three, three-four and in office for more than four years.

**Table 5.11 Term duration (in years, months)**

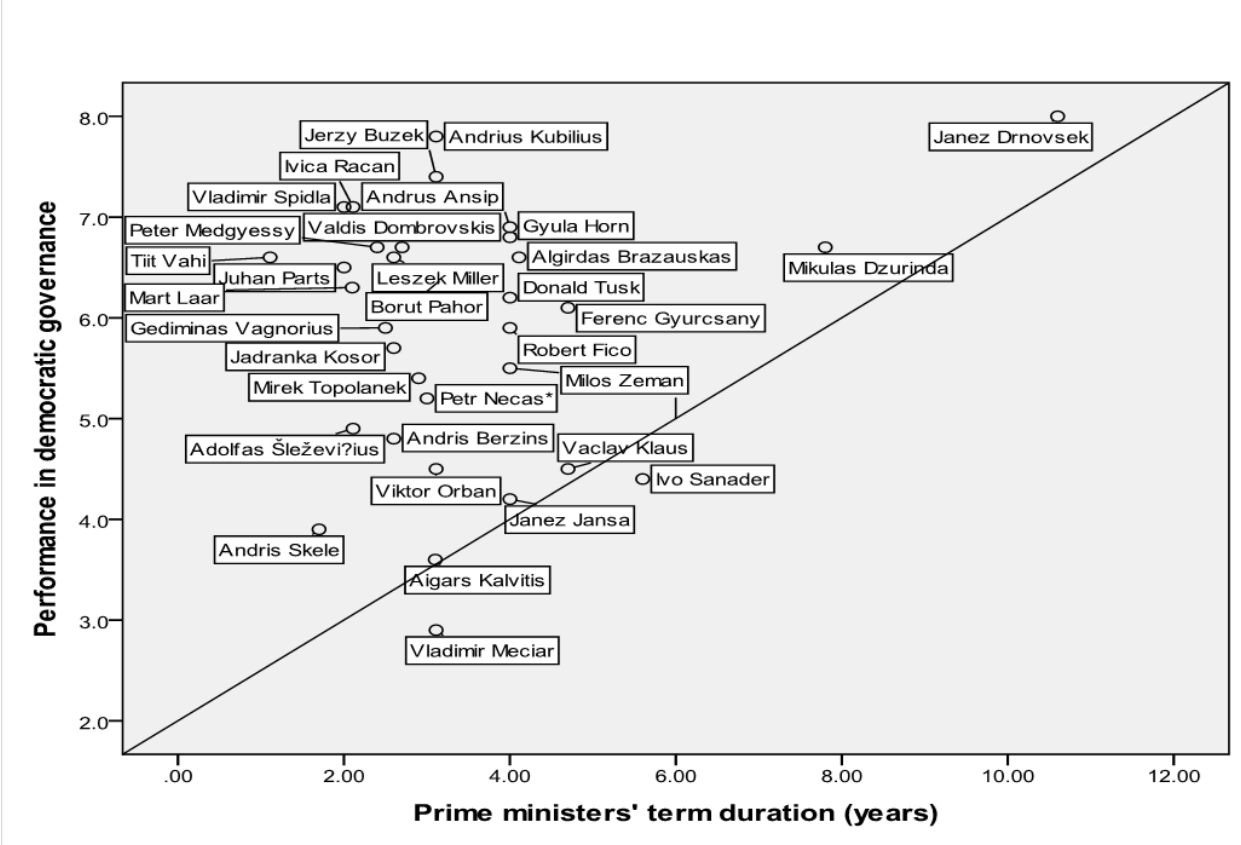
| **In office Two – Three years** | **Duration (yrs/mo)** | **In office Three – Four years** | **Duration (yrs/mo)** | **In office over four years** | **Duration (yrs/mo)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ivica Račan | 2.11 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 4.11 | Janez Drnovšek | 10.6 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 2.11 | Miloš Zeman | 4.0 | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 7.8 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 2.9 | Andrus Ansip | 4.0 | Ivo Sanader | 5.6 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 2.7 | Gyula Horn | 4.0 | Václav Klaus | 4.7 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 2.6 | Janez Janša | 4.0 | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 4.7 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 2.6 | Robert Fico | 4.0 | | |
| Leszek Miller | 2.6 | Donald Tusk | 4.0 | | |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 2.5 | Borut Pahor | 3.3 | | |
| Mart Laar | 2.1 | Viktor Orbán | 3.11 | | |
| Vladimír Špidla | 2.0 | Vladimír Mečiar | 3.11 | | |
| Juhan Parts | 2.0 | Jerzy Buzek | 3.11 | | |
| Tiit Vähi | 1.11 | Andrius Kubilius | 3.11 | | |
| Andris Šķēle | 1.8 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.1 | | |
| | | Petr Nečas | 3.0 | | |
| **Total 14** | **2.2** | **14** | **3.6** | **5** | **6.7** |

**Source**: See chapter 2, table 2.1, Müller -Rommel (2005: 10)

As suggested by data in table 5.11, most prime ministers (N=19) were in office for three years or more, while (N=14) were in office for less than three years. Average term duration of all prime

ministers in office since mid 1990s until June 2013 is 3.5 years, which is relatively successful accomplishment in the context of proportional electoral laws favoring coalitions that are generally shorter than single party cabinets that usually form under majoritarian electoral laws. One-way ANOVA did not find statistically significant difference between prime ministers in office for three, four or more than four years. In fact, prime ministers in office for three years or less performed with a mean average score of 6.0 out of a scale range of ten. Prime ministers in office for more than four years performed with a mean average score of 5.9 out of a scale range of ten, while prime ministers in office for four years or less performed with a score of 5.7. Linear regression showed prime ministers' term duration is a poor predictor of performance in democratic governance. Figure 5.3 presents a correlation chart indicating no relationship between prime ministers' term duration and performance in democratic governance.

**Figure 5.3 Term duration and performance in democratic governance**




**Source**: correlation analysis, independent variable; prime ministers' term duration, see table 5.11, dependent variable; prime ministers' performance in democratic governance, see appendix eight

The analysis of this section suggests that prime ministers' longer tenures are poor predictors of prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. The top five ranked prime ministers except Drnovšek with his tenure of over ten years were in office for four years (Kubilius, Buzek, Ansip, and Horn). However, Račan was in office for less than three and Špidla for two years. The bottom five ranked prime ministers except Šķēle with his short term of 1.8 years were in office between three and five years (Meciar, Kalvītis, Janša, Orbán, Sanader), which are relatively long tenures in coalition governments. Incidentally, bottom ranked prime ministers with relatively long tenures all manifest some aspects of negative political culture discussed in section 5.1.

Findings of this section suggest that long-term prime ministers are likely to be more effective in procedural aspect of decision-making. However, long-terms do not mean much if

prime ministers' mindsets are not supportive of democratic governance that improves citizens' welfare. In Western democracies, prime ministers' longer terms related to better performance are primarily a result of the consensual political culture that is widely embraced by elites and is supportive of a democratic framework and effective governance. In newly established democracies, longer tenures by prime ministers if unsupported by prime ministers' democratic mindsets matter little for good policy outcomes.

### 5.3.4 The nature of terms and circumstances of leaving office

The nature of prime ministers' mandates and the circumstances in which they leave office may influence expert assessments of performance in democratic governance. Prime ministers who are leaders of parties winning large electoral majorities may be perceived to perform better than prime ministers who derive their mandates from political appointments and not from electoral victories. For example, in Britain and the US, the size of election victory mattered and leaders who won larger mandates were more likely to occupy higher places on expert rankings (Theakston and Gill 2006, Kenny and Rice 1998). The Canadian expert rankings did not find support for the same finding for Canadian Prime ministers (Azzi and Hillmer 2013). In addition, the circumstances in which a prime minister leaves office may play a role in expert assessments of prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. For example, prime ministers who *lost elections or resigned are likely to be assessed by experts as worse performers, than prime ministers who were re-elected and confirmed for another mandate (H).*

In CEE, the majority of prime ministers started their terms after their parties had won elections (N=23), while only ten Prime ministers (Bērziņš, Kalvītis, Kosor, Ansip,Špidla, Gyurcsány, Topolánek, Dombrovskis, Šleževičius and Brazauskas) started their period in office as appointees. Related to the manner in which a prime minister's period in office is terminated, prime ministers can be grouped in three categories; prime ministers who resigned, lost elections and prime ministers re-elected during incumbency (Von Beyme 1985, Woldendorp et al. 2000), as indicated in table 5.12.

**Table 5.12 Circumstances of leaving office**

| Resigned | Reason For Resignation** | Lost Elections | Re–elected during terms |
|---|---|---|---|
| Václav Klaus | Party corruption scandal | Ivica Račan | Andrus Ansip |
| Ivo Sanader | Corruption scandal | Jadranka Kosor | Valdis Dombrovskis |
| Vladimír Špidla | Poor results in EU elec. | Viktor Orbán | Donald Tusk |
| Mirek Topolánek | Financial crisis | Janez Janša | Vladimír Mečiar*** |
| Petr Nečas | Sex/Power scandal | M.Dzurinda* | Gyula Horn |
| Tiit Vähi | Party pressure/scandal | Jerzy Buzek | Robert Fico*** |
| Mart Laar | Coalition dispute | A. Kubilius | |
| Juhan Parts | Vote of no confidence | Andris Bērziņš | |
| Péter Medgyessy | Coalition dispute | | |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | Financial crisis | | |
| Andris Šķēle | Coalition collapse | | |
| Janez Drnovšek | To run for presidency | | |
| Borut Pahor | Vote of no conf./crisis | | |
| Leszek Miller | Rywingate scandal | | |
| A. Šleževičius | Corruption scandal | | |
| G. Vagnorius | Dispute with the president | | |
| A. Brazauskas | Dispute with the president | | |
| Miloš Zeman | New party leader | | |
| Aigars Kalvītis* | Scandal | | |
| **Total 19** | | **8** | **6** |

**Source:** See list of press articles used for coding circumstances of leaving office in appendix eleven

*Prime ministers were re–elected during incumbency, but eventually either resigned (Kalvītis) or lost elections (Dzurinda), which was taken as an indicator of mandate termination

** Scandals = 7, Financial crisis = 3, Dispute with the president = 2, Coalition dispute = 3, other = 4, vote of no confidence = 2

***Prime ministers were not confirmed for the next term although their parties won majority of votes in elections, because they were not able to find a coalition partner. In this study, re-election is defined as prime ministers' party receiving most votes in elections (see chapter six), which is why Fico and Mečiar are categorized as "re-elected"

A total of (N=19) CEE prime ministers resigned from prime ministerial posts for various reasons (e.g. political scandals, coalition disputes, disagreements with presidents or other reasons) as indicated in table 5.12. Eight prime ministers lost elections and only six prime ministers were confirmed for a new mandate after electoral victories of their parties. ANOVA analysis did not find a statistically significant difference in performance among three groups of prime ministers based on the circumstances of leaving office, indicating that resignations or losing elections did not influence experts' assessments of prime ministers' likely worse performance. In fact, prime ministers who lost elections performed slightly better with a mean average score of 6.1 out of a scale range of ten, compared to prime ministers re-elected during incumbency who performed with a mean average score of 5.9 and prime ministers who resigned during incumbency performing with a mean average score of 5.8. Findings of this section indicate that prime ministers' circumstances of leaving office do not influence experts' perceptions of prime

ministers' performance. This could relate to a small variation in the reasons for mandate terminations. CEE prime ministers primarily resign from their posts rather than stand for re-election. Future research might benefit from looking at the relationship between exact reason for mandate termination and prime ministers' performance. It is obviously not same if prime ministers are prompted to resign because of their involvement in corruption and scandals or if they resign for non-political reasons.

### 5.3.5 T**he political circumstances of period in office**

The political circumstances of a prime minister's time in office can also have an impact on performance, potentially constraining his or her freedom or, alternatively, providing opportunities for action (Helms 2005, Haughton 2002). External circumstances outside the immediate institutional framework in which the prime ministers operate such as for example major international events, natural disasters or global crises can also influence prime ministers' performance.

Because of the intricacies of CEE transitions, prime ministers may be grouped in three categories (as indicated in table 5.13) based on three distinct phases subsequent to transition; prime ministers in office during transformation (1995–2000), prime ministers in office during consolidation (2000–2007) and prime ministers in office during 2008 financial crisis (2008–ongoing as of spring 2014). This categorization is inspired by the "three phases – three elite types" hypothesis by Wasilewski (2001) who distinguished between three phases of social and political change in CEE; transition[72], transformation[73] and consolidation[74], each of which require a different type of elites and leadership skills to be successfully accomplished. Because consolidation is a period of stability and the smooth operation of the democratic process, it is

[72]Transition is a period between two regimes during which new rules are established. Since most prime ministers in this study do not fit this category, because time-period of their service occurs after transitional period, I did not include this time-period as a category of prime ministers' service.

[73]Transformation is a period of crafting democracy and market economy and fits time period of service of prime ministers in office between 1993 and 2000.

[74]Consolidation is a period of stability and smooth operation of democratic processes when all CEE countries should have withstood "two turn over test" that indicates a consolidated democracy (Wasilewski 2001: 134, Stepan and Linz 1996, Huntington 1991).

likely that *prime ministers in office during transformation, and crisis perform worse in democratic governance than prime ministers in office during consolidation (H).*

**Table 5.13 The political circumstances of period in office**

| **Prime ministers in Office during transformation** | **Prime ministers in office during consolidation** | **Prime ministers in office during crisis** |
|---|---|---|
| Janez Drnovšek | Ivica Račan | Andrius Kubilius |
| Gyula Horn | Péter Medgyessy | Valdis Dombrovskis |
| Jerzy Buzek | Vladimír Špidla | Borut Pahor |
| Tiit Vähi | Algirdas Brazauskas | Ferenc Gyurcsány |
| Mart Laar | Leszek Miller | Donald Tusk |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | Mikuláš Dzurinda | Robert Fico |
| Miloš Zeman | Juhan Parts | Jadranka Kosor |
| Václav Klaus | Andris Bērziņš | Peter Nečas |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | Viktor Orbán | Mirek Topolánek |
| Andris Šķēle | Ivo Sanader | Andrus Ansip |
| Vladimír Mečiar | Aigars Kalvītis | |
| | Janez Janša | |
| **Total 11** | **12** | **10** |

**Source**: Own categorization based on time-period of service (see table 2.1, chapter 2)

Prime ministers are almost equally split in three categories based on the political circumstances of the period in service; eleven prime ministers were in office during transformation, twelve were in office during consolidation and ten during 2008 financial crisis. ANOVA analysis did not find a statistically significant difference in performance between the three categories of prime ministers based on political circumstances of their service. In fact, crisis-era prime ministers performed slightly better with a mean average score of 6.2 out of a scale range of ten, than prime ministers in office during transformation and consolidation who performed equally with a mean score of 5.7. Among the five bottom-ranking prime ministers, three (Sanader, Janša, Kalvītis) were in office during consolidation and two (Meciar and Šķēle) served during transformation. Among the top five ranked prime ministers, two (Drnovšek and Buzek) served during transformation, Kubilius served during crisis and two (Racan and Špidla) were in office during consolidation.

The analysis in this section indicates that prime ministers' terms surrounded by difficult political circumstances such as financial crisis or post-transitional transformation is irrelevant for performance in democratic governance. This is an important finding especially because previous literature emphasized "situational difficulty" as an important factor in explaining prime

ministers' performance. Rather, as data in this section suggest, prime ministers' are not captives of difficult circumstances of their service, but able to interact with their environment and achieve success even in complex situations.

Further research would benefit from exploring in more detail the "skill in context" thesis (Hargrove and Owens 2003). More specifically, it would be interesting to find out why some prime ministers were able to achieve success in some circumstances but not in others, especially because it is not uncommon that CEE prime ministers serve non-consecutive terms (e.g. Laar, Orbán, Godmanis, Vagnorius, Kubilius, Pawlak, Mečiar, Fico, Janša). For example, in Latvia, Godmanis was successful prime minister during his first term (1990-1993) when Latvian economy transformed to market-oriented, but could not repeat this success during his second term (2007-2009) that unfolded in the context of economic crisis and resigned amidst anti-government protests in 2009. Future case studies would best handle this type of research where particular prime ministers' skills would be matched to specific institutional structures, and changing political and historical contexts to allow discrimination of skills conducive to some, but not to other contexts. However, data in this section suggest that difficult political circumstances cannot be an excuse for prime ministers' bad performance. Rather, circumstances that are easy to overcome, if not supported by prime ministers' mindsets conducive to democratic governance do not mean much for good performance that improves citizens' welfare. Generally, findings of this section indicate that factors surrounding prime ministers' period of service are irrelevant for perceptions of their performance in democratic governance. In the next section, as the multiple regression analysis demonstrates, cultural variables outperform demographical and contextual variables in their effect on performance in democratic governance.



### *5.4 "Mindset Matters"*

As the multiple regression output in table 5.14 indicates, performance in democratic governance is predicted by prime ministers' populism and term duration holding other personal and contextual variables constant. Executive personalization was not entered in the model because it is correlated with populism ($r$ =. 73, $p$ < .01, see table 5.3) and is thus a redundant variable in the model, because prime ministers' personalization can be predicted by prime ministers' populism. The cabinet type variable was also not included in the model, because it contains similar

information as the number of cabinet parties' variable. As the multiple regression output demonstrates, almost 80% of the variance in prime ministers' performance is explained by prime ministers' populism and term duration (although term duration does not appear as statistically significant as prime ministers' populism). Based on an unstandardized regression coefficient, an increase of one in prime ministers' populism leads to a decrease of seven units in democratic governance. Because populism is measured on a scale from zero to one, the difference in mean of performance in democratic governance between prime ministers who score zero on populism and those who score one, is seven out of a scale range of ten.

The main limitation of the model presented in table 5.14 is too many predictors for a relatively small number of cases (33 prime ministerial terms). It is at present impossible to overcome this shortcoming unless the number of cases is increased. However, this would require additional time to collect more data on the dependent variable. Alternatively, the number of predictors would have to be reduced, but presently it is difficult to justify which variables should leave the model because collinearity statistics do not point to further problems. Nevertheless, regardless of the number of predictors entered in the model, the overall results of the study do not change, because populism always appears statistically significant.

In sum, populists do not respect democratic institutions and deliver ineffective outcomes that do not improve citizens' welfare. Democratic mindsets are largely responsible for prime ministers' contributions to citizens' welfare under democratic structure. Neither prime ministers' demographic characteristics, nor complex situations that surround their mandates are as important as their commitments to democracy and effective policies. This appears especially relevant in recent democracies where the prime ministerial elite socialized during communism transmits some of the old values cherished in the old system into the new settings where these manifest as various aspects of negative political culture such as populism, executive personalization and corruption. Although this study has not paid attention to prime ministers' corruption, future research in this area is a necessity.

**Table 5.14 Multiple regression output**

| | SS | df | MS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | 38.99 | 14 | 2.78 | N=32 |
| Residual | 10.26 | 17 | .604 | F (19,12)=4.61<br>Prob >F=0.002<br>$R^2$=0.79 |
| Total | 49.259 | 31 | | Adjusted $R^2$=0.62<br>St. Err.=0.77 |

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | St. Err | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| (Constant) | 8.588 | 1.091 | | 7.874 | .000 | 6.287 | 10.889 |
| **Populism** | -7.119 | 1.282 | -.870 | -5.553 | **.000** | -9.824 | -4.414 |
| Num. parties | -.133 | .132 | -.143 | -1.008 | .328 | -.413 | .146 |
| Term duration | .219 | .098 | .317 | 2.225 | .040 | .011 | .427 |
| Exp. as MP | -.183 | .370 | -.072 | -.495 | .627 | -.965 | .598 |
| Exp. as minister | .156 | .384 | .063 | .406 | .690 | -.654 | 966 |
| Party ideology | -.009 | .487 | -.003 | -.018 | .986 | -1.036 | 1.019 |
| Dissident** | -265 | .282 | -.258 | -1.243 | .231 | -.861 | .331 |
| Non active** | -.217 | .175 | .019 | -.622 | .545 | -.586 | .152 |
| Lawyer*** | .776 | .522 | .244 | 1.486 | .156 | -.326 | 1.879 |
| Other field*** | .211 | .140 | .250 | 1.507 | .150 | -.084 | .506 |
| Resigned**** | -.525 | .447 | -.208 | -1.175 | .256 | -1.467 | .418 |
| Lost elections**** | -.295 | .364 | -.197 | -.812 | .428 | -1.063 | .472 |
| Transformation***** | .126 | .415 | .048 | .303 | .765 | -.749 | 1.000 |
| Crisis***** | .092 | .156 | .100 | .588 | .564 | -.237 | .420 |

*dependent variable: prime ministers' performance in democratic governance, see appendix eight, in case of ES II and III score difference better score was used in regression analysis
**reference category is reformist
***reference category is economist
****reference category is re-elected
*****reference category is prime minister in office during consolidation phase

### *5.5 Conclusion*

Previous literature suggested CEE elites are fragmented and composed of different groups that do not share democratic values, which undermines elite-institutional relations. Elites pursue personal or party goals at the expense of democratic structure and effective policy-making, which is manifested as negative political culture observed as populism, the personalization of politics, communist/anti-communist cleavage, political polarization and corruption (Gallina 2008). In this chapter, I tested the effect of cultural, individual and contextual variables identified in the literature on political leadership and political culture on prime ministers' performance. Previous literature on political leadership largely focused on individual, institutional and contextual variables, but ignored cultural aspects in explaining leadership performance. However, I argue that cultural variables may be the most important in explaining prime ministers' performance. Especially in new democracies prime ministers' *mindsets matter* for performance in democratic governance. CEE prime ministers were socialized during communism that was characterized by norms and values different from norms that are required in a democracy. Communist political culture valued top-down hierarchy, non-transparency and patron-client relationships. This undemocratic political culture carried over into post-transitional establishments and manifested as populism, polarization, corruption, and personalized politics. This is in line with path-dependent theories that state norms and codes are difficult to change and continue influencing politics in newly established settings.

The analysis in this chapter clearly demonstrates "mindset matters" and cultural variables outperform personal and contextual variables in reference to prime ministers' performance. In the first section of this chapter, the effect of three proxies of prime ministers' mindsets was tested on performance in democratic governance. Prime ministers' populism appeared a statistically significant predictor of prime ministers' performance in bivariate and multiple regressions. This finding is supported by two original and different data sets on prime ministers' populism from expert surveys and grading of prime ministers' speeches. Prime ministers characterized by populism and engaged in populist rhetoric are more likely to violate democratic structure and deliver ineffective policies. The same holds for "personalized" prime ministers' who dominate agenda setting and more likely erode citizens' welfare by ineffective policies. The effect of "personalized" mandates loses its predictive power in multiple regression, primarily because of

multicollinearity between populism and executive personalization. Previous ministerial or parliamentary political experience or the type of experience during communism appeared irrelevant for prime ministers' performance. This suggests that prime ministers' political culture and mindsets explain their performance in democratic governance.

In the second section of this chapter, I tested the effect of prime ministers' demographic variables on performance in democratic governance. Findings in this section suggest neither prime ministers' age at assuming office, educational degree or political orientation have any relevance for prime ministers' programmatic performance. Although there was no statistically significant difference in performance between left and right oriented prime ministers, left-oriented prime ministers performed lightly better than right-oriented prime ministers. If more cases are added to the analysis, the effect may appear significant and in line with this, further research would benefit from looking at how specific policies pursued by differently oriented prime ministers influence perceptions of their performance.

In the last section of this chapter, I tested the effect of contextual variables on prime ministers' programmatic performance. Previous literature suggested variables in prime ministers' immediate environments such as cabinet type, number of cabinet parties, term duration, the nature of terms and circumstances leaving office, as well as political circumstances of period in office matter for leadership effectiveness. However, data in this section suggest factors surrounding prime ministers' immediate and more distant environments appear irrelevant for perceptions of their programmatic performance. Difficult political circumstances cannot excuse prime ministers' for poor performance. Rather, circumstances that are easy to overcome, if not supported by prime ministers' mindsets conducive to democratic governance cannot contribute to delivering outcomes that improve citizens' welfare.

Because it appears that mindset matters, further research would benefit from looking at different past cultural experiences of leaders in new democracies. This type of research might find that mindsets socialized in different types of regimes preceding democracy have different effect on leadership performance in democratized settings. Communism as a regime before democracy is apparently not supportive of democratic governance. Norms and values that are

characteristic of communism carry over in politicians' mindsets and manifest as a negative political culture in democratized settings. Because this study did not look into prime ministers' corruption as one of the manifests of negative political culture, further research should test the relationship between leaders' corruption and perceptions of their performance. In the next and the last chapter of this thesis, I examine the relationship between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance. As suggested in chapter one, there are three different types of prime ministers' performance and I argued at least two must be weighed against each other to properly understand prime ministers' performance.

# CHAPTER 6: DO EASTERN EUROPEANS REWARD PRIME MINISTERS FOR BETTER PROGRAMMATIC PERFORMANCE?

Previous literature on leadership performance emphasized the importance of personal, institutional and contextual variables, but largely ignored cultural variables. However, political culture may be one of the most important factors responsible for leadership performance. Especially in newly democratized settings leaders' mindsets matter for their commitment to democracy and effective governance that improves citizens' prosperity. In the previous chapter, a range of hypotheses was tested to determine the effect of cultural, personal and contextual variables on prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. As the analysis in the previous chapter demonstrated cultural variables outperform personal and contextual variables. This indicates that norms and values leaders were accustomed to during regimes prior to democracy, carry over from the past and (negatively) influence present developments. Prime ministers' political culture is not easily measured. However, manifests of negative political culture may be observed as populism, executive personalization, corruption or polarization. Prime ministers characterized by populism and dominance over agenda setting appear dangerous for democratic governance. They attack democratic institutions and deliver bad policy outcomes that do not improve citizens' prospects.

As argued in chapter one, there are three types of prime ministers' performance; procedural, programmatic and electoral. These three different types of performance are identified by public policy literature that is interested in successes of public policies (Bovens 2001, Marsh and McConnell 2010). Procedural performance is not an immediate interest of this thesis, however was partially addressed in chapter three in presentation of prime ministers' powers. In procedural view, prime ministers are successful if decision-making respected all required rules and regulations of decision-making process. In chapter four, I assessed prime ministers' programmatic performance based on experts' assessments. Prime ministers' programmatic performance related to integrity of their conduct and policy outcomes in the EU integration, economic and social policymaking, because good performance in these dimensions improves citizens' welfare. Simply, programmatically successful prime ministers deliver effective policy outcomes without sever violations of democratic structure.

As suggested in chapter one, one would expect symmetrical relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance. However, it is not clear empirically if prime ministers' good performance in democratic governance is rewarded at electoral moment. Political (electoral) performance is the final benchmark of prime ministers' programmatic performance mirrored in election results. If citizens are satisfied with performance of incumbents they reelect them, otherwise they cast the ballot for the opposition.

The main task of this chapter is to uncover whether the relationship between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance is symmetrical or asymmetrical. A symmetrical relationship would demonstrate that that prime ministers performing better in democratic governance are re-elected by voters. An asymmetrical relationship would indicate that prime ministers, performing well in democratic governance, are removed from office regardless of good programmatic performance. The chapter first discusses how prime ministers' electoral performance is measured and how a link between prime ministers' terms and elections was established. Further, I present results of the logit regression analysis and discuss reasons for frequently observed asymmetry between programmatic and electoral performance.

### *6.1 Prime Ministers' electoral performance*

In parliamentary democracies, the prime minister remains in office as long as he/she sustains parliamentary support. If parliamentary support is lost, usually expressed as a vote of no confidence (unless government continues as a minority), the prime minister is obliged to resign and a new prime minister is appointed. Appointment of the new prime minister is based either on the election results (if elections are held), or existing parliamentary arithmetic (if no elections are held). Unlike presidential systems, where presidents are elected directly, parliamentary regimes must elect their prime ministers from the party, which wins the highest number of votes in the elections, and is therefore entitled to form a coalition. Direct elections for prime minister are unusual - Israel is the only country that experimented with direct prime ministerial elections in 1996, but abandoned the institution in 2001 - while few other countries (Japan, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK) have only contemplated the introduction of this institution.

Because the prime minister's authority emanates from leadership of the party most successful in the elections, as a proxy to denote electoral performance of prime ministers, I use vote percentages received by the prime ministers' party in parliamentary elections held after the end of the prime ministers' tenure. The dependent variable - *electoral performance of prime minister* - is binary and coded one if the prime minister's party received the highest percentage of votes and zero if the prime minister's party did not win the majority of votes, but ended in any other place subsequent to the first. As I explain below, it is possible that the prime minister's party receives the most votes in the elections, but that prime minister is not appointed for another term. Reasons for this can be many; however, the most common is prime minister's inability to find a suitable coalition partner and, consequently, cannot form a governing coalition. It is also possible that the prime minister's party does not receive the highest number of votes in the elections, but that the prime minister is confirmed for next mandate. As discussed in more detail below, these two instances: (a) the prime ministers' party *wins most votes* → prime minister is *not appointed* for another term and (b) the prime ministers' party *does not win most votes* → prime minister is *appointed* for next term are coded zero and defined as electoral failure. I consulted following data sources for prime minister's party vote percentages in parliamentary elections; European Election Database (EED), IFES Election Guide, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I crosschecked data resources to account for data validity and used different sources based on the availability of election results for a particular country or a particular electoral year.

Prime ministers' electoral success (prime minister's party receives most votes in the elections) or electoral failure (prime minister's party does not receive most votes in the elections) is primarily based on parliamentary elections following the end of the prime ministers' terms. However, electoral performance of four Prime ministers (Sanader, Kalvītis, Drnovšek and Dombrovskis)[75] was evaluated based on parliamentary elections held during their terms. These prime ministers served consecutive terms collapsed to denote one term (see chapter 2, table 2.1)

[75] The primary reason for this was to increase, already small number of cases in this chapter. Sanader's electoral performance was evaluated based on 2007 elections, Kalvītis's electoral performance based on 2006 elections, Drnovšek's electoral performance based on 2000 elections and Dombrovskis's electoral performance based on 2010 elections, see appendix twelve. In Latvia, elections were held again in September 2011 when Dombrovskis's *Unity* finished third with 19% of votes, about 12% less than in 2010 elections. Dombrovskis continued as prime minister, because he was able to form a coalition from parties that supported him as prime minister. These two electoral incidences, one victory based on vote percentages in 2010 and successful coalition formation in 2011 are suitable indicators of his electoral success.

and would be excluded from the analysis if evaluation was based on elections held after the end of their terms. Many times parliamentary elections occur well after prime ministers' terms end and new individuals serve as prime ministers. If parliamentary elections were held both during and after the prime ministers' terms, I evaluated their electoral performance based on the post-term elections[76].

Many CEE prime ministers resigned[77] prior to accomplishing their parliamentary terms and elections held following these resignations reflected electoral performance of newly appointed prime ministers. This is unless early elections were held immediately after resignations and were suitable to reflect electoral performance of prime ministers who resigned. As a cut of point to distinguish between elections that reflect electoral performance of prime ministers who resigned and new ones appointed, I took one year and a half. It takes about this amount of time for the decision-making of new prime minister to start taking effect. For example, Sanader resigned in Croatia in July 2009 and was replaced by Kosor. Parliamentary elections were held in December 2011 (more than two years since Sanader's resignation) and electoral defeat of incumbent HDZ in 2011 elections reflected Kosor's and not Sanader's electoral performance. Sanader was included in the analysis of this chapter, because his electoral performance was assessed based on the elections during his term. However if there were no such elections, over two years that elapsed since his resignation and parliamentary elections would indicate a missing link for evaluating his electoral performance. Reasons for including or excluding prime ministers from the analysis of this chapter, based on the one-year and half criteria between resignations and closest parliamentary elections are discussed below.

In the Czech Republic, following his resignation in March 2009, Topolánek was replaced by Fisher's caretaker administration in May 2009. Parliamentary elections were held in May 2010 about one year after Topolánek's resignation. Because caretaker governments usually do not engage in policymaking 2010 elections were suitable to assess Topolánek's electoral performance. In Latvia, Šķēle served as an independent prime minister until July 1997 when he

[76] I evaluated electoral performance of Gyurcsány based on 2010 elections, of Klaus based on 1998 elections, of Drnovšek based on 2000 elections and of Dzurinda based on 2006 elections, see appendix twelve

[77] Out of 33 prime ministers 18 resigned and 15 accomplished their full parliamentary terms. In Croatia, Slovakia, and less so in Poland, Latvia and Hungary prime ministers usually accomplished their parliamentary mandates, while in Czech Republic, Estonia and Lithuania prime ministerial terms usually ended as resignations.

resigned and the next parliamentary elections were held in October 1998. Prior to these elections, Šķēle founded a new *People's party* (TP) which received most votes in the elections. Šķēle was not appointed as new prime minister, because of the intricacies of coalition politics and bargaining, however the electoral victory of his newly founded party is an indicator of his electoral success.

In Lithuania, only nine months elapsed between Šleževičius's resignation in February and parliamentary elections in November 1996, which are taken as an indicator of his electoral performance. The time elapsed between Vagnorius's resignation in May 1999 and a parliamentary election in October 2000 was only a little less than one year and a half. In between his resignation and 2000 elections, two caretaker administrations were in office for five months. Because caretaker prime ministers do not engage in policymaking, 2000 elections were suitable indicator of Vagnorius's electoral performance. In Slovenia, Drnovšek's prime ministerial term (May 1992-November 2002) was shortly broken in May 2000 when he resigned and passed the post to Bajuk. Bajuk was in office for seven months until the 2000 elections when Drnovšek returned as prime minister. Because Drnovšek's twelve-year mandate was broken for only a little more than six months, 2000 elections were taken as an indicator of his electoral performance.

In the Czech Republic, after Špidla resigned in July 2004 the two other prime ministers were in office until 2006 parliamentary elections. Because more than two years elapsed between Špidla's resignation and the 2006 elections, he was not included in the analysis of this chapter. In Hungary, Medgyessy resigned in August 2004 and was replaced by Gyurcsány in September 2004. Because by the time of the 2006 elections, Gyurcsány was already in office for more than one year and a half, a victory of Hungarian socialists in 2006 elections is an indicator of Gyurcsány's rather than Medgyessy's electoral performance, who was consequently not included in the analysis of this chapter.

In Estonia, Vähi resigned in March 1997 and was replaced by Siimann who served until March 1999 parliamentary elections. Because nearly two years elapsed since Vähi 's resignation and 1999 elections, Vähi was not included in the analysis of this chapter. Nearly two years elapsed since Parts resigned in April 2005 and was replaced by Ansip in 2007 parliamentary elections. Elections held in 2007 are more suitable to evaluate Ansip's rather than Parts's electoral performance, as a result of which Parts was also not included in the analysis of this

chapter. In Lithuania, Brazauskas resigned in June 2006 and the elections were held in October 2008. Because over two years passed after his resignation and 2008 elections and the two different prime ministers were in office in the meanwhile, Brazauskas's electoral performance could not be assessed and he was not included in the analysis of this chapter.

As previously mentioned, two unusual scenarios resulting from coalition politics rather than electoral results are possible. Prime minister's party may receive most votes in the elections, but a leader of the winning party does not necessarily become the new prime minister. Similarly, Prime minister's party may not receive most votes in the elections, but the leader of that party becomes new prime minister. These unusual electoral scenarios are related to post-election coalition formation and party bargaining, rather than voters' evaluations of prime ministers' past performance. Prime minister's party receiving most votes in the elections is an indicator of prime ministers' electoral success, because retrospective voting is based on voters' past evaluations of leaders' performance rather than their negotiation skills to form coalitions. Prime ministerial appointment of a party leader whose party did not win most votes in the elections is an indicator of electoral failure, because for retrospective voting, it is less relevant how skilful prime ministers are in forming coalitions than how they performed in office.

In Slovakia's 1998 parliamentary elections, Mečiar's *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia* (HZDS) won majority of votes in a close tie with Dzurinda's *Slovak Democratic coalition and Christian Union* (SKDU). However, Mečiar was unable to form a coalition and Dzurinda became the new Prime minister. Similarly, in 2010 elections, although Fico's *Smer* overwhelmingly won, he was unsuccessful in finding coalition partners and did not become a prime minister. Both electoral scenarios are indicators of prime ministers' success, because electoral victory of prime minister's party is more important than post-election coalition politics. In contrast, in 2002 parliamentary elections, Dzurinda's SKDU finished after Mečiar's HZDS, however, Dzurinda continued as prime minister, because Mečiar was again unsuccessful in finding coalition partners. Because electoral victory of prime ministers' party is more important than post-electoral politics, Dzurinda's appointment is an indicator of electoral failure. In Hungary's 1998 parliamentary elections, Horn's Socialists finished first, ahead of Orbán's *Fidesz,* however Orbán become the new prime minister after forming a coalition with *Hungarian*

*Democratic Forum* (MDF) and *Smallholders' Party* (FKgP). According to retrospective voting, victory of Socialists is an indicator of Horn's electoral success.

### *6.2. The Relationship between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance*

Out of a total of (N=33) prime ministers analyzed in this thesis, only (N=28) were included in the analysis of this chapter for reasons discussed in the previous section. In table 6.1, a total number of electorally successful and electorally unsuccessful prime ministers in each country is presented based on their parties' electoral performances.

**Table 6.1 Prime ministers' electoral performance**

| Country | Electoral Success | Electoral Failure | Excluded | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Czech Republic | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Estonia | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Hungary | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Latvia | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Lithuania | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Poland | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Slovakia | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Slovenia | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| **Total** | **11** | **17** | **5** | **28** |

**Source**: Electoral data see appendix twelve

Out of 28 prime ministers included in the analysis of this chapter, eleven were electorally successful, because their parties won most votes in the elections, while 17 were not electorally successfully, because their parties did not win most votes in the elections. As data in table 6.1 suggest, frequency of electorally successful prime ministers in Latvia and Slovakia is higher than in other countries. In all countries except Lithuania and Estonia[78], prime ministers' parties were only once electorally successful in the period since mid 1990s until June 2013. Only in Lithuania, prime ministers are always electorally unsuccessful.

Based on the assumptions of retrospective voting literature reviewed in chapter one, *prime ministers with better scores in economic performance are more likely to be electorally successful (H1)*. The clarity of responsibility thesis states that when responsibility for performance is clear to voters they are more likely to award leaders for good performance and

[78] In Estonia, no conclusions are possible because two prime ministers were not included in the analysis of this chapter and out of the other two that were included one was electorally successful and the other was not.

punish them for not performing as expected. Lewis–Beck (1988) using individual level data in Western democracies discovered that the "coalitional complexity", namely the number of parties in ruling coalition explains a country's variation in economic voting. In other words, it is more difficult for voters to determine which party is responsible for policy outcomes when several parties govern (Anderson 1995). Based on previous findings, one would expect that *prime ministers with better scores in economic performance, leading cabinets with fewer parties have better electoral chances for success* (H2). As suggested by retrospective voting, economic performance is not the only criteria voters consider for evaluating leaders' past performances. This could mean that *prime ministers performing better in the EU integration and social area have better chances for electoral success* (H3).

To test H1 and H3, I used stepwise logistic regression for binary outcome variable – electoral performance – coded as one if prime minister's party received most votes in the elections and zero if prime minister's party did not receive most votes in the elections and three dimensions of prime ministers' effectiveness[79] as independent variables. I also performed separate logistic regressions using as independent variables each dimension of prime ministers' effectiveness and as dependent variable an index of democratic governance. However, no predictor, either in stepwise or separate models, appeared statistically significant and models themselves were not statistically significant. This indicates that prime ministers' programmatic success does not automatically mean electoral success. In contrast to symmetrical assumption of economic voting literature, voters do not *always* reward prime ministers for good economic performance, nor *always* punish them for bad performance. In addition, voters do not reward prime ministers for successful EU integration or performance in social policymaking. Findings are generally in line with previous literature. Given that previous findings are mixed in reference to both economic and other voting issues, at present we do not have sufficient knowledge to confirm the straightforward operation of reward-punishment thesis. What is possibly more important as discussed below in more detail are contextual factors that often time highjack the pure symmetry of economic voting.

[79] Economic performance was entered first into logistic regression, as the likeliest predictor of electoral success, based on suggestions by economic voting literature that good economic performance is likeliest to lead to better electoral prospects, followed by performance in the EU integration and social policymaking.

To test the "coalitional clarity" hypothesis (H2) I used logistic regression with an interaction effect between the number of parties and economic performance as an independent variable and prime ministers' electoral performance as the binary dependent variable. I also performed separate logistic regression to test the likelihood of better electoral prospects of prime ministers with fewer parties in the cabinet. Both the number of parties and the interaction effect, nor the model alone was statistically significant. This indicates that fewer numbers of cabinet parties do not increase prime ministers' electoral chances, nor that prime ministers with good economic records and fewer cabinet parties have better chances at elections. It is possible that it is clearer to voters who are to blame if the number of cabinet parties is small. However, small number of parties alone, as also demonstrated in the previous chapter in reference to programmatic performance does not contribute to prime ministers' better electoral prospects. Table 6.2 is a matrix of prime ministers' economic and electoral performance as well as prime ministers' electoral and performance in democratic governance. According to the economic voting literature, voters primarily base their decisions on leaders' economic performance. However, table 6.2 demonstrates both the relationship between economic and electoral as well as between electoral and performance in democratic governance to examine if there are any major discrepancies between prime ministers' programmatic, economic and electoral performance.

**Table 6.2 The relationship between programmatic and electoral performance**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Democratic Governance*** (aggregate) | | |
| **Electoral Success** | Successful | Average | Unsuccessful |
| | Valdis Dombrovskis (LAT)<br>Janez Drnovšek (SL) | Miloš Zeman (CZ)<br>Andrus Ansip (ET)<br>Donald Tusk (PL)<br>Robert Fico (SK)<br>Gyula Horn (HU) | Ivo Sanader (CR)<br>Andris Šķēle (LAT)<br>Aigars Kalvītis (LAT)<br>Vladimír Mečiar (SK) |
| | Total: 2 | Total: 5 | Total: 4 |
| | **Economic Performance**** | | |
| | Successful | Average | Unsuccessful |
| | Valdis Dombrovskis (LAT)<br>Janez Drnovšek (SL)<br>Andrus Ansip (ET) | Gyula Horn (HU)<br>Robert Fico (SK)<br>Donald Tusk (PL)<br>Miloš Zeman (CZ)<br>Andris Šķēle (LAT) | Ivo Sanader (CR)<br>Aigars Kalvītis (LAT)<br>Vladimír Mečiar (SK) |
| | Total: 3 | Total: 5 | Total: 3 |
| | | | |
| | **Democratic Governance (aggregate)** | | |
| **Electoral Failure** | Successful | Average | Unsuccessful |
| | Ivica Račan (CR)<br>Andrius Kubilius (LT)<br>Jerzy Buzek (PL) | Borut Pahor (SL)<br>Jadranka Kosor (CR)<br>Mirek Topolánek (CZ)<br>Mart Laar (ET)<br>Gediminas Vagnorius (LT)<br>Leszek Miller (PL)<br>Mikuláš Dzurinda (SK)<br>Petr Nečas (CZ)<br>Ferenc Gyurcsány (HU) | Václav Klaus (CZ)<br>Adolfas Šleževičius (LIT)<br>Janez Janša (SL)<br>Victor Orbán (HU)<br>Andris Bērziņš (LAT) |
| | Total: 3 | Total: 9 | Total: 5 |
| | Economic Performance | | |
| | Successful | Average | Unsuccessful |
| | Andrius Kubilius (LIT)<br>Ivica Račan (CR)<br>Mikuláš Dzurinda (SK) | Gediminas Vagnorius (LIT)<br>Jerzy Buzek (PL)<br>Mart Laar (ET)<br>Leszek Miller (PL)<br>Viktor Orbán (HU)<br>Mirek Topolánek (CZ) | Janez Janša (SL)<br>Borut Pahor (SL)<br>Andris Bērziņš (LAT)<br>Adolfas Šleževičius (LT)<br>Václav Klaus (CZ)<br>Jadranka Kosor (CR)<br>Ferenc Gyurcsány (HU)<br>Petr Nečas (CZ) |
| | Total: 3 | Total: 6 | Total: 8 |

**Source**: ES II and III and electoral data, see appendices five, six, seven, eight and twelve
*See categorization of prime ministers' democratic governance in chapter four, table 4.10
** See categorization of prime ministers' economic performance in chapter four, table 4.5

As indicated in table 6.2 the reward-punishment thesis is not symmetrical and retrospective voting theory can explain only a handful of cases. Retrospective voting theory explains electoral success of two prime ministers successful in democratic governance and three prime ministers successful in economic performance. Similarly, the theory explains electoral failure of five prime ministers unsuccessful in democratic governance and eight prime ministers unsuccessful in economic performance. However, the theory is not able to cover many cases, which points to an asymmetrical relationship between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance. The theory does not explain four prime ministers unsuccessful in democratic governance and three prime ministers unsuccessful in economic performance who were successful at elections. Similarly, it does not explain three prime ministers successful in democratic governance and in economic performance who failed at elections.

Asymmetry in economic voting is primarily explained in the literature by contextual differences across elections that moderate the strength of retrospective voting (Anderson 2007). This line of thinking can explain strong economic voting in some countries and in some periods and a lack of such effects in many other countries and/or elections (Paldam 1991). Contextual factors can range from specific cross-national institutional differences to immediate electoral contexts where party constellations and political elite clarify or obscure which political actors are responsible for economic performance. One must also not forget that voters sometimes select parties on a pure class, religious and ideological considerations, which contradicts the logic of retrospective voting (Lewis-Beck 1988).

Party systems with large number of effective electoral parties make it less clear to voters what an alternative future government would be. This may "interrupt" straightforward retrospective voting logic where voters would form expectations about the future performance of prime ministers based on past record of governance and competence. Political elites also have strong incentives to distance themselves from a poor governance record or claim credit for policy and economic success. They can use various tools such as changing party names, bringing unpopular leaders down, or restructuring party organizations (e.g. party splits) to manipulate the availability and clarity of electoral information (Marinova 2011). While party system fragmentation and instability may have been important factors blurring retrospective voting earlier in transition, they become less relevant because of gradual stabilization in most Eastern

European countries (Sitter 2002, Enyedi 2006). In Eastern Europe, there are other explicit and more implicit reasons that explain the relative weakness of the effect of retrospective voting. Namely, the availability of electoral alternatives in combination with voters' perceptions are most likely to influence retrospective voting (Evans and Andreson 2006, Anderson 2000, Bengtsson 2004). Voters may form improper perceptions about prime ministers' past record in office (e.g. voters form their perceptions based on media's representations about prime ministers' performance), or may be uncertain about governing competences of opposition leaders. Alternatively, voters may properly evaluate prime ministers' past performance, but because of a lack of electoral alternatives, they may not (intentionally) sanction the incumbent for poor performance. Several examples discussed below demonstrate the importance of contextual factors in explaining asymmetrical relationship between prime ministers' programmatic performances and voters' evaluations.

Lack of electoral alternatives and (proper) voters' perceptions may explain an ease with which Polish Tusk won 2007 and 2011 elections. The situation may change in upcoming elections scheduled in 2015, but voters' determination of removing populist Kaczynski's *Law and Justice* largely explain Tusk' victory in 2007 elections and his satisfactory performance by 2011 elections earned him re-election that same year. Lithuanian Kubilius is the second top ranked prime minister in democratic governance (see appendix twelve), yet lost October 2012 elections. Media praised him for austerity measures that consolidated public finances and even increased growth rates that reached the highest levels in the EU in 2011 (a year before the elections). Some experts argue that Kubilius's electoral failure is primarily a result of his lacking social sensitivity to economically weaker rural part of Lithuania. His government was successful in mobilizing rich, well educated, and younger urban electorate, but failed to resolve problems of high emigration and social issues of the poor, uneducated and unemployed constituents (Aslund 2012). He was not able to sell his harsh short-term structural adjustment policies required for long-term economic benefits to the voters and strong socialist opposition challenged his incumbency. His party finished second in 2012 elections with 15% of the vote, compared to 20% of the vote won in previous elections.

In neighboring Latvia and Estonia, the situation was quite different. Both Dombrovskis, in Latvia, and Ansip, in Estonia, rank high on programmatic performance, which is matched to

their electoral successes. What may explain symmetry between their electoral and programmatic performance is a combination of good performance, voters' recognition of that performance and a lack of a viable alternative to challenge their incumbency. In Latvia and Estonia, former communist parties did not reform into powerful socialist opposition as they did in Lithuania. However, Dombrovskis's *Unity* dropped to the third place with 19% of the vote in 2011 elections compared to 31% of the vote won in 2010 elections held only one year into his incumbency. This suggests that the electorate, who in 2011 elections supported the socialist opposition and pro-Russian party, did not fully welcome Dombrovskis's structural adjustments that otherwise saved Latvia from imminent bankruptcy and earned it euro zone membership in 2014. His negotiation skills earned him prime ministerial appointment after 2011 elections when a centre-right coalition formed under his leadership despite the victory of socialists. His recent resignation in October 2013 is related to a non-political event for which he took political responsibility when one of Riga's supermarket roofs collapsed and killed 54 people. His unstable parliamentary support amidst his service during financial crisis and the tragic Riga supermarket event were good political excuses for his resignation to allow his successor a party leadership in the wake of upcoming elections due in late 2014 (*BBC News* 2013).

Similar reasons explain Ansip's recent resignation in March 2014 after his nine-year long term. He is credited for successful crisis navigation in Estonia that earned it euro zone membership in 2011 and is assessed positively by experts for his performance in democratic governance. His *Reform party* was re-elected twice during his incumbency, in 2007 and 2011 elections despite harsh austerity measures he implemented causing an immediate contraction of the economy. However, initial growth rates become stagnant and his party was embroiled in a party financing scandal as of 2013, which prompted his resignation to open the way for a successor to lead the party in the elections due in 2015. These two empirical examples are clear conformation that parties remove prime ministers as soon as they become electoral liability, in contrast to when they are parties' electoral assets, which makes them powerful to achieve their goals.

Recent early elections held in the Czech Republic in October 2013 point to the importance of political scandals that are largely ignored by economic voting research, but matter for electoral results. Nečas's involvement in sex-power scandal prompted his resignation from

prime ministerial post and leadership of *Civic Democratic Party* in June 2013. In 2013 elections, his conservative party dropped to the fifth place with only 7% of the votes won compared to 20 % of the votes won in previous elections. Experts otherwise assess him as an average politician, but the power of the scandal he was connected to heavily influenced electoral results and blurred the pure effect of retrospective voting. Scandals usually destroy careers of individual politicians, but also have severe consequences for their parties' electoral prospects and general political trends in a given country.

In Croatia, Sanader's corruption charges shattered political right to the grounds and the process of its recovery with a new highly unpopular party leader is slow and uncertain. Some civic conservative organizations skillfully filled a political vacuum characterized by verbal war between highly unpopular incumbent socialists and the political right in the opposition that struggles to reinvent itself and to offer meaningful policy alternatives. The cumulative result of this was a referendum held in late 2013, a rather unprecedented event in Croatia, especially that one civic organization alone was able to organize and initiate the referendum by collecting the required number of signatures. Both left and right parties kept distance from the referendum campaign, which was primarily led, and organized by the conservative civic organization and LGBT association as an opponent to the referendum's question. Although the media was clearly in favor of the incumbent socialists' stand shared with the vision of LGBT organizations that Constitutional provision about a marriage as a community between a male and a female violates human rights of same sex people, the event opened the door for future referendums on topics of any kind. While referendums are otherwise valuable instruments of political participation and direct democracy, in settings where there is little experience with such forms of democratic participation, referendums can be used as a source of populist rhetoric, as the above example shows that violates minority rights and in practice undermines, instead that it improves the quality of democracy.

In Slovakia, "Gorilla affair"[80] is largely responsible for Fico's overwhelming victory in 2012 when Dzurinda's conservatives dropped to the fifth place with only 6% of the vote

[80] "Gorilla" is a code name given for scandal leaked to the internet in late 2011 implying high-level corruption among Slovak political and economic elite. A leaked document features purported transcripts from bugged

compared to 15% of the vote won in 2010 elections and 18% of the vote won in 2006 elections. Mečiar's authoritarian style has not influenced his electoral performance and in two elections in a row, held in 1998 and 2002 his HZDS outperformed other parties. Yet, experts assess him as the worse prime minister who systematically violated democratic structure and did not deliver effective policy outcomes. Incidentally, revelations shortly before 2008 elections in Slovenia that Janša was involved in a bribe scandal relating to setting up a contract to Finnish military company did not severely jeopardize his Slovenian Democratic Party's (SDS) 2008 electoral result. SDS finished second in 2008 elections with 29% of the vote compared to 30% of the vote won in previous elections and 26% of the vote won in 2011 elections. In fact, Janša become prime minister again in early 2012 when several right wing parties supported his appointment in spite of president's reluctance to appoint an individual accused on corruption charges. His response to the financial crisis was a blunt populist rhetoric of attacking the media, former communists and austerity measures but without offering positive solutions or responsibility for policy failures. His resignation was prompted by protests that started in late 2012 and continued in 2013 after several high ranked politicians including Janša, the leader of the opposition, and the mayor of the second largest Slovenian city were accused of corruption.

Gyurcsány's "lie speech" in 2006 and his reluctance of immediate resignation may still weigh heavily on Hungarian socialists, who are held responsible by voters for all pre-2010 policy failures and whose prospects to recuperate and present as a viable electoral alternative, as the results of recent Hungarian elections in April 2014 demonstrate remain bleak. One Hungarian expert described a crushing defeat of Hungarian Socialists as "inability of the left to reinvent itself, a failure to present a clear identity, program and its leaders, and a lack of substantive political messages except an expressed desire to run Viktor Orbán out of office" (Bozóki 2014). Orbán's party won 2014 elections with 45% of the votes, which was 8% fewer than in 2010 elections; however, a disproportional electoral law introduced by Orbán allows him to continue governing with two-thirds parliamentary majority. His charisma and populist rhetoric calling for "national unity", "fatherland" and "family" are slogans he uses to mobilize voters and to avoid blame for economic stagnation during the past four years of his term. This type of rhetoric is an

conversations linking the financial group Penta with politicians in the years 2005–2006 (during the right-wing government of Mikuláš Dzurinda). The wiretap transcripts include the talk about how many millions a particular politician or a party is getting for the privatization of state enterprises, especially in energy and transport.

apparent manifest of negative political culture that once in the government systematically attacks and violates democratic structure and does not provide effective governance to improve citizens' welfare.

The above examples clearly demonstrate that the reward-punishment thesis is not straightforward. While sometimes, prime ministers' programmatic success is rewarded by re-election, at other times contextual factors account for asymmetry between prime ministers who are removed from office in spite of good performance and prime ministers who are kept in office despite poor governance records. Contextual factors such as availability of electoral alternatives, formation of voters' perceptions and political scandals must be included in economic voting models to explain frequent asymmetry between programmatic and electoral performance.

### *6.3 Conclusion*

As outlined in chapter one, there are three different types of prime ministers' performance; procedural, programmatic and electoral. Procedural aspect of prime ministers' performance was not an immediate interest of this thesis and was briefly addressed in chapter three next to discussion of prime ministers' powers. Prime ministers' programmatic performance defined in this thesis as performance in democratic governance that improves citizens' welfare in the EU integration, economic and social policymaking was an interest of chapter four. Electoral performance is the final criteria for evaluating prime ministers' success. However, it is not clear empirically that the relationship between different types of performance is symmetrical.

In this chapter, I examined the relationship between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance, which should be symmetrical based on the retrospective voting literature. Voters are likely to punish prime ministers performing poorly in democratic governance, while re-elect prime ministers who performed well. Prime ministers' electoral performance is a binary variable measured as one if prime ministers' party received most votes in the elections and zero if prime ministers' party finished in terms of vote percentages after the first party. Retrospective voting literature most often tested the effect of economic performance on electoral chances of incumbents. However, some scholars started testing the effect of other voting issues such as the EU related policies, social performance and corruption on electoral prospects. Accordingly, it is likely that prime ministers who performed better in social policymaking and the EU integration

had better electoral chances compared to prime ministers who performed poorly in these policymaking areas.

Logit regression models however were not statistically significant and no separate predictor alone was statistically significant. This indicates that prime ministers' better economic, social and the EU integration performance does not increase prime ministers' chances for re-election. As data in chapter four demonstrate, nearly all prime ministers supported the EU integration, which did not help them at elections and some were even blamed for following the EU directives (Baylis 2007). A finding that prime ministers' better social performance did not increase their electoral chances is in line with findings of Western literature that governments cutting on social welfare do not have worse electoral prospects (Giger 2010; Armingeon and Giger 2008).

In Western Europe, the reward-punishment thesis may be more apparent compared to Eastern Europe where voters only sometimes vote retrospectively (Fidrmuc 2000). Previous studies found that through 2006 only four Eastern European prime ministers in ten CEE countries returned for a new term following elections but with a 20% drop in a vote share for incumbent parties (Williams 2003). In Visegrád countries, prime ministers' were invariably weakened by bad performance, while good performance did not necessarily help them (Baylis 2007). Findings of this chapter add to economic voting literature, emphasizing the asymmetry between CEE prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance.

Findings of this chapter can be summarized as *neither have good news always lead to prime ministers' electoral success, nor did bad news immediately meant electoral failure.* The asymmetry between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance suggests the importance of contextual factors. These contextual factors are usually case specific but include availability of electoral alternatives, voters' perceptions and political scandals. Future research would benefit from addressing these in small N studies that would look at contextual similarities and differences surrounding elections in one or more countries. Political scandals are often times an omitted variable in retrospective research; however, as empirical examples of this chapter noted, they can be important in explaining asymmetry between prime ministers' performance

and electoral results (Kocijan *forthcoming*). In more detail, future research should also address the role of the media in formation of voters' perceptions about prime ministers' performance to understand Eastern European tendency of voting for an "evil known to them" rather than for an "unknown" and potentially "lesser" evil.

In summation, many factors weaken the clear-cut operation of electoral accountability and consequently, erode the quality of democracy. As such, elections remain the primary instrument voters will continue to use for sanctioning bad performances or reward good ones. However, contextual factors are an important aspect of economic voting that can clarify why "rascals" who perform poorly remain in office and why are prime ministers who perform well many times removed from office.

# CONCLUSION

Previous literature addressed the importance of democratic political culture for the overall prospects of democracy in a given country. It was argued that a robust civil society is a precondition for the internalization of democratic values by people, while the individual's ability to respect democratic values and traditions is as much a precondition for a thriving liberal democracy as is the existence of proper institutions. Based on this argument, one would also expect that prime ministers who are members of the top decision-making elite must behave by accepting norms supportive of democracy. In recently democratized settings, however, elite democratic culture, while high in demand, is in short supply. It is argued that a relatively quick and successful introduction of democratic institutions and market economy in CEE coexists with undemocratic elites. Elites are highly confrontational and unwilling to compromise or tolerate the opinion of the other, thus creating a sharply polarized environment with little culture of dialogue.

In this thesis, I demonstrate that CEE prime ministers are generally average politicians with moderate levels of respect for democratic institutions and effective governance. Aspects of a negative political culture are observed; however, only in a few of the 33 prime ministers studied. Labeled as *mindset matters*, the thesis suggests that the prime ministers' mindset committed to democratic values and effective governance accounts for citizens' well-being. The thesis is the first empirical evidence tested on a larger set of leaders that demonstrates how a negative political culture imperils prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. The consequences of this imperilment are subtle erosions of democracy and citizens' prosperity.

To answer the main question relating to determinants of prime ministers' programmatic performance, the thesis elaborated on the assessment of prime ministers' performance, prime ministers' powers to influence decision-making and the interplay between different types of performance. To explain why some prime ministers perform better than others, I first had to develop a model for estimating prime ministers' performance. Setting policy outcomes as the criteria for assessing prime ministers' performance required estimating their overall ability to influence decision-making. Because prime ministers' performance can be different in type, it was important that the two different types of prime ministers' performance be set against one another.

In chapter one, I reviewed four important pieces of literature that chronologically answer the main research questions asked in this study. Literature on cabinet decision-making and prime ministers' powers were helpful in estimating the prime ministers' real ability to influence decision-making. This is an antecedent to assessing the prime ministers' performance in democratic governance, because it increases certainty that prime ministers were (in large part) able to influence policy outcomes.

Literature on democratic governance was used to develop the concept of the prime ministers' performance. Democratic governance is a relatively new label introduced in the literature that emphasizes the instrumental capacity of democracy to deliver positive outcomes on top of its intrinsic value. The founding argument of this literature is democratic regimes' capacity to deliver effective policies that improve citizens' prosperity. If a regime is democratic, but a large number of citizens remain poor or at risk of poverty, then this regime is intrinsically democratic but lacks the instrumental ability to improve lives of its citizens. Accordingly, democracy and governance are separate and distinct phenomena, not muddled together conceptually, but regimes reflecting both dimensions are necessary to achieve many aspects of prosperity. Elected leaders must respect democratic institutions and deliver policies that are prosperous for citizens. Consequently, prime ministers' performance in democratic governance is defined as the ability to deliver effective outcomes in EU integration, economic and social policy making by the concomitant respect of democratic institutions. Literature on political leadership and political culture identified a pool of variables used for testing the effect of cultural, personal and contextual variables on prime ministers' programmatic performance.

Literature on assessing the success of public policies proposes three different types of policy performance. I adopt these three types of policy performance and use them to establish the relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance. Prime ministers' procedural performance was not an immediate interest of this thesis, but was briefly addressed in a discussion of prime ministers' powers. Prime ministers' programmatic performance is defined as performance in democratic governance. Economic voting literature was also used to develop a hypothesis relating to the effect of prime ministers' programmatic performance on their electoral prospects and to explain the symmetry or asymmetry between the different types of performance.

In chapter two, I outlined case selection and the logic of using the prime ministerial term as the study's unit of analysis. I addressed the general characteristics of institutional settings appropriate for selecting prime ministers and evaluating their performance in democratic governance. I argued that the most suitable environments to select leaders for performance assessments are recently democratized settings with short democratic experience. Empirically natural regions suitable for this type of research are Latin America, Eastern Europe and post-Arab spring democracies. In recent democracies, the elite culture likely features norms and values that carry over from past regimes characterized by norms not supportive of democratic structure. The selection of leaders should also keep in mind that they must have significant powers to influence decision-making, especially if policy outcomes are set as criteria for assessment. The best way to account for prime ministers' powers is to establish empirically the prime ministers' ability to influence policy outcomes in each individual case.

This thesis is the first empirical attempt to assess the performance of a large number of CEE prime ministers. It contributes to hitherto small and mainly qualitative literature on cabinet decision-making and prime ministers' powers. The thesis extends the knowledge so far accumulated about procedural aspects of prime ministers' performance and switches the research focus and the dependent variable from process-oriented to performance-oriented questions. For empirically assessing prime ministers' performance in democratic governance, expert surveys were used as the main data collection method because of their advantages over case studies and media analysis. Experts have both superior knowledge about their countries' politics and the personal experience of living under different prime ministerial terms. Case studies cannot generalize beyond immediate cases and conclusions about political leadership are according to Blondel (1987), only possible when a large number of "good" and "bad" leaders are assessed next to each other. Media analyses, on the other hand, are suitable for evaluating leadership performance, but only as a secondary source of data. The reported overall response rate of 30% is satisfactory given that one of the main weaknesses of expert surveys is the low response rate. Nevertheless, expert surveys can be challenged on several grounds. Accordingly, I pointed out several limitations of the study, which are inherent to any study interested in leadership performance, and explained how they were overcome throughout the thesis' chapters.

In chapter three, I demonstrated the prime ministers' ability to exploit contextual, institutional and personal prerogatives in shifting the balance of power closer to the center, thereby allowing them a direct influence on decision-making. This is an important research step that clarifies the prime ministers' contributions to policy outcomes in the context of dispersed decision-making characteristic to collective cabinets in parliamentary democracies. As demonstrated in this chapter, Constitutional provisions do not give substantial powers to prime ministers who appear weaker than the parliaments and the presidents. However, according to veto player theory and theories of prime ministers' powers, prime ministers can use several political prerogatives that give them an advantage over other policy-making actors in terms of influencing decision-making. As cabinet heads, prime ministers can organize cabinet personnel and control the cabinet and the agenda of the parliament, which allows them control over important veto players and consequently a more direct influence in decision-making.

In reference to presidents, expert data demonstrates the inter-executive conflict in CEE is mostly cooperative and only sometimes conflictual, which indicates that the presidents largely stay within Constitutional boundaries and do not significantly interfere with prime ministers. In general, expert data shows that CEE prime ministers have a moderate to strong ability to influence decision-making. This cross-country estimate of prime ministers' powers is supported by the powers of individual prime ministers. Out of 32 prime ministers, experts perceive (N=23) prime ministers as strong, two as medium and seven as weak based on their ability to influence decision-making. Contrary to expectations, institutional structure and term duration cannot fully explain the incidence of strong prime ministers in institutionally weak settings and the incidence of weak prime ministers in institutionally strong settings. Expert data suggest that prime ministers' powers and effectiveness are not to be conflated because weak prime ministers sometimes produce effective policies, while strong prime ministers do not necessarily deliver good policy outcomes. The relationship between prime ministers' procedural and programmatic performance appears asymmetrical rather than symmetrical as previous literature suggested.

In chapter four, I presented an empirical mapping of prime ministers' programmatic performance. As expert data suggests, CEE prime ministers are generally average politicians moderately successful in democratic governance. Only a few perform either well or poorly.

They generally support democratic institutions and deliver effective policies that improve citizens' welfare. The findings of this chapter partially support a "negative political culture" thesis, but only in nine prime ministers out of 33 assessed in nine countries from mid 1990 until June 2013. These findings are *neither great nor very bad news*. The findings are *satisfactory, possibly better than expected.* Cross-country variation in democratic governance is in line with corruption levels. Polish and Estonian prime ministers are best in democratic governance, which relates to lower corruption rates in these countries and may indicate a generally lower tolerance for corruption by its elites. Latvian prime ministers are worst in democratic governance, which may relate to generally higher corruption rates in Latvia and a higher tolerance of corruption by its elites. Variation of performance across democratic governance's dimensions is small but apparent. Prime ministers are best in EU integration and respect for democratic institutions, but comparatively worse in economic and social policymaking. They are generally pro-European politicians valuing EU membership and their activities are in line with the joint EU project. The fact that these politicians are slightly better in democratic conduct than they are effective may relate to the complexity of post-transition economic and social restructuring. However, moderate effectiveness by most prime ministers indicates their general commitment to reforms, an ability to overcome "simultaneity paradox" and relative success in consolidating economic and social structures.

To allow discussion of prime ministers' variable performance in separate dimensions of democratic governance, prime ministers were categorized in three groups based on scope–impact vision of performance: "outstanding", "average" and "likely populists". "Outstanding" prime ministers are most desirable because their impact on democratic governance is generally positive, thus mostly contributing to citizens' prosperity. They are respectful of democratic institutions and committed to reforms, while contextual factors appeared less relevant in explaining their performance. Average prime ministers neither greatly improve nor severely erode the democratic framework or effective governance. Perceptions of their moderate performance may relate to occasional undemocratic outbursts or a lack of commitment for reforms but also to the generally higher contextual complexity in which their leadership occurs. The exact level of improvements or problematic areas by average prime ministers may be more difficult to pinpoint because they are more likely than the other two groups to maintain the

leadership situation they inherit rather than to introduce significant transformations. Likely populists are the least desirable because their impact on society is generally negative. These prime ministers are characterized by a negative political culture that determines their poor records in democratic governance, while contextual factors and personal attributes appeared less relevant for their poor performance.

In chapter five, the analysis demonstrated that cultural variables outperform demographic and contextual variables in reference to prime ministers' programmatic performance. In addition to demonstrating the levels of populism in individual prime ministers, this chapter provided empirical evidence that prime ministers' populism determines programmatic performance. Previous leadership performance research emphasized the importance of leaders' personal, institutional and contextual variables, while ignored the importance of cultural variables. However, this thesis argued that *mindset matters*, especially for leadership performance in newly democratized settings. CEE prime ministers were socialized during communism, which valued hierarchical thinking, non-transparency and patron-client relationships. These values, while clearly not supportive of democratic structure, manifested as populism, personalization and corruption in post- transitional establishments.

Populism as an aspect of negative political culture appeared to be a statistically significant predictor of prime ministers' performance in multiple regression, while personalization of politics was statistically significant in a bivariate relationship. This finding suggests that prime ministers' populism and dominance over agenda setting explain variance in prime ministers' performance in democratic governance. Populists violate democratic structure and deliver ineffective governance that erodes citizens' welfare. Prime ministers' previous political experience as ministers or MPs and the type of their engagement during communism as reformists, dissidents or non-activists did not matter for performance in democratic governance. This suggests the prime ministers' mindsets committed to democracy and positive reforms are responsible for improving citizens' welfare. Prime ministers' demographic characteristics, including the age at assuming office, education and political ideology, did not appear relevant for the prime ministers' performance. Contextual variables in the prime ministers' immediate environments, such as cabinet type, number of cabinet parties, term duration, the nature of the

terms and the circumstances leaving office, as well as the political circumstances of the period in office surrounding leadership, did not appear important for prime ministers' performance. This finding suggests that difficult political circumstances cannot excuse prime ministers' poor performance. Rather, circumstances that are easy to overcome, if not supported by prime ministers' mindsets supportive of democratic governance, do not mean much for citizens' prosperity.

In chapter six, prime ministers' programmatic performance was weighed against their electoral performance. Retrospective voting literature expected a symmetrical relationship between different types of prime ministers' performance. However, the findings of this chapter indicate that prime ministers' better programmatic performance does not increase their electoral chances. In fact, prime ministers that are more successful in the economy, social policymaking and EU integration are not more likely re-elected by voters than prime ministers' performing poorly in these areas. In brief, *neither has good news always led to prime ministers' electoral success, nor did bad news immediately mean electoral failure.* This finding suggests that contextual factors must be taken into account when explaining the asymmetrical relationship between prime ministers' programmatic and electoral performance. These factors are usually case specific and include the availability of electoral alternatives, voters' perceptions and political scandals. As I pointed out, political scandals are an omitted variable in retrospective voting research; however, as empirical examples noted, they can be important in explaining the asymmetry between prime ministers' programmatic performance and electoral results.

This dissertation makes the following contributions. It contributes to the literature on prime ministers' powers and cabinet decision-making, providing the first empirical evidence about the individual powers of CEE prime ministers, which challenges previous arguments about prime ministerial weaknesses. These previous findings mostly relate to early transition, so it is possible that the findings of this thesis are an updated version of previous results reflecting several external changes including the internationalization of politics, the growth of the state, the rise of mass communication and the decline of party government that may have increased prime ministers' powers. The thesis further contributes to the literature on political culture and leadership performance. Leadership performance models are usually open to criticism; however,

this thesis has proposed a general model that is easily adaptable to assessing leadership in both new and old democracies. Although the present thesis assesses the largest number of leaders in one region, the model would improve if more leaders were added from the same or from different regions. The literature on political leadership has hitherto only speculated about the role of political culture in leadership performance. Previous literature suggested that CEE elites' culture is predominately negative and not supportive of democracy. This thesis provides the first empirical evidence that a negative political culture thesis does not hold across a large number of CEE prime ministers who are generally committed to democracy and structural reforms. However, the thesis also provides evidence that mindset matters and determines prime ministers' political impact, especially in recently democratized settings. Ideas are the key to political action and to understanding the meaning leaders give to the circumstances in which they find themselves and their efforts to reconstruct these circumstances. Consequently, models that omit cultural variables may reach erroneous conclusions about the determinants of leadership performance. Further research would need to confirm if findings of this thesis hold across recently democratized settings, and even old democracies, or whether the findings are context-specific and a result of the peculiarity of the Eastern European context. It also would be interesting to examine how previous regime types and different past cultural experiences interplay with leadership performance under democracy. This would confirm if communism before democracy is the only regime type transmitting a negative political culture, or if the type of previous authoritarian regime does not matter for the subsequent performance of leaders under democracy.

This thesis contributes to the literature on populism and is the first empirical evidence tested on a larger set of leaders with the finding that populism is not supportive of democracy and effective governance. Research on populism is presently mostly qualitative; rarely have scholars tested its effect on democracy through statistical analysis. This thesis is an original demonstration that populist rhetoric is not only an empty tool to mobilize voters, but an important element that determines prime ministers' performance once in office. Future research would benefit from looking at the effect of the regime type on populism. For example, it would be interesting to see if there is a different ability to check populist tendencies across parliamentary and presidential regimes. This study did not address prime ministers' levels of

corruption, which is an aspect of negative political culture likely determining performance in democratic governance. Research in this direction would be especially interesting. Such research would allow for discrimination between different parts of negative political culture, e.g. populism, corruption and personalization, to see how these aspects interplay with prime ministers' performance.

This thesis also contributes to economic voting literature, which hitherto never tested the effect of prime ministers' programmatic performance on their chances of re-election. This thesis especially points to the importance of contextual factors, such as political scandals, which were previously omitted in determining the asymmetry of economic voting and explaining why "rascals" who perform poorly remain in office, while successful prime ministers are so frequently removed from office. From the methodological perspective, statistical analyses in leadership performance research are rare, primarily because of the small samples researchers have to work with. In this respect, the present research is an improvement compared to previous qualitative studies, but it is still limited for a relatively small number of cases handled in the statistical analysis. However, qualitative configurational analysis (QCA) has great potential in future leadership research because it is frequently emphasized that the interplay between leaders' personal, institutional and contextual factors determines their performance.

On a practical level, the findings of this thesis suggest that improvements on the top are important for sustaining democratic governance and turning vote-seeking into policy-seeking politicians. Democracy promoters and international donors for long argued funds and expertise must be given to the development of civil society and grass roots, or overseeing the fairness of the elections. However, CEE democracies generally hold free and fair elections and institutions are sufficiently designed but suffer from the poor commitment of their embedded actors. This suggests that personal changes at the top may break the circle of a negative political culture. In some part, the circle will be broken naturally by the replacement of old with new elites of a more democratic mindset, but the turnover of several more generations will be nevertheless required.

A more ambitious solution lies within political parties. Their traditional role is declining and the democratic paradigm is changing due to the external influences of globalization and the

growing influence of the media, while membership in supranational institutions is no guarantee for democratic success. Political parties would need to reinvent their role and open up more radically to voters, allowing public debate on leadership selection. Parties would need to act as gatekeepers for the entry into politics of low-quality candidates. A few decades ago Blondel noted, "If one reduces politics to its bare bones, to what is most visible to citizens, it is the national political leaders that remain once everything else has been erased" (Blondel 1987: 1). In contemporary democracies, party leaders are most visible to citizens and the negative impression they leave on voters too frequently turns into disillusionment with democracy as a political system. After repeatedly disappointing performances, voters may stop discriminating between good and bad leaders, perceiving them all as "political crooks".

Political leadership indirectly influences the quality of democracy having the ability to boost or dampen political participation. Decreased turnouts may point to a general political apathy that lowers the willingness of the public to defend democracy against attempts to subvert it, thus eliminating a key check on politicians or groups with authoritarian ambitions. Once politicians establish reputations for good performance, however, the entry into politics of low-quality politicians becomes more difficult. The improved performance of leaders reinforces voters' belief that democracy can deliver accountability and, consequently, better public perceptions of democracy indicate that leaders' mindsets do matter.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

**PRIME MINISTERS' PERFORMANCE IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

**PRIME MINISTERS' POWERS (ES I – January 2012 – June 2012)**

1. Is political power in your country concentrated in the executive (Prime minister and his/her cabinet); "YES", "NO"?

2. In your country, who is more important political figure when it comes to executive leadership (institutionally and in practice); "PRIME MINISTER" OR "PRESIDENT"?

3. Overall, how would you evaluate the relationship between Prime ministers and Presidents in your country ("MOSTLY CONFLICTUAL", "AT TIMES CONFLICTUAL, BUT MOSTLY COOPERATIVE", "AT TIMES COOPERATIVE, BUT MOSTLY CONFLICTUAL", "MOSTLY CONSENSUAL"?

4. In general, how much freedom ("VERY LITTLE", "SOME", "LOTS") does Prime minister in your country have to select ministers (institutionally and in practice)?
5. Once the individual members of cabinet are decided, how much practical freedom ("VERY LITTLE", "SOME", "LOTS") does Prime minister in your country have to remove individual ministers?

6. In general, how much political freedom ("VERY LITTLE", "SOME", "LOTS") does Prime minister in your country have to call elections when he/she wants? *Calling elections* relates to confidence motions prime ministers can use when their parties have good electoral prospects to control the behavior of parliamentary and coalition parties.

7. In your country, how much power ("VERY LITTLE", "SOME", "LOTS") does Prime minister have to control cabinet agenda and force decision on these policies (policy output of government)? *Cabinet agenda setting* broadly refers to prime ministers' ability to choose the most favorable forum for decision-making and propose solutions for cabinet disputes.

8. In your country, how much control ("VERY LITTLE", "SOME", "LOTS") does prime minister have over the agenda of the parliament? *Parliamentary agenda setting* relates to prime ministers' ability to propose policies for deliberation, veto bills and call confidence motions at the final stages of policy deliberation.

9. How would you rate each Prime minister based on their role and dominance in the decision making process; "STRONG", "WEAK" or "NEITHER"?

**DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE (ES II – December 2012 – June 2013)**

10. Please assess democratic conduct of each prime minister during their terms on 1 – 10 scale where 1 is "fully undemocratic" and 10 "fully democratic". *Democratic conduct* refers to integrity of conduct by prime ministers in relation to institution of democracy. When making your assessment think about any prime ministers' (un)democratic activity and how they influenced democratic institutions such as the rule of law, media freedoms, (un)favorable electoral laws.

**EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE (ES II – December 2012 – June 2013)**

11. Please assess performance of each Prime minister during their terms on 1-10 scale where 1 is "very bad" and 10 is "very good" performance in the area of EU integration. When making your assessment, think about "any move or moves" by each prime minister that brought your country closer to (or further away from) Europe.
12. Assess performance of each Prime minister during their mandates on 1 – 10 scale where 1 is "BAD performance" and 10 is "GOOD performance" in the area of economic policy. When making your assessment, think about any economic measure by each prime ministers (e.g. banking, budgeting, unemployment, inflation) and the relationship between this measure and citizens' economic prosperity.
13. Assess performance of each Prime minister on 1 – 10 scale where 1 is "BAD performance" and 10 is "GOOD performance" in the area of social policy. When making your assessment, think about any social measure by each prime minister (especially pension and health reforms) and the relationship between this measure and citizens' social welfare.

**PERSONALIZATION OF POLITICS (ES II – December 2012 – June 2013)**

14. Assess the level of "personalization" of politics during the mandate of each Prime minister on a 1 - 10 scale where 10 is "HIGH personalization" and 1 is "LOW personalization". *Personalization* is defined as a situation in which political leaders dominate agenda setting in a political system even if they do not formally dispose of strong political power.

**PRIME MINISTERS' POPULIST CHARACTERISTICS (ES II – December 2012 – June 2013)**

15. Choose which characteristics of populism; ("Defender of national identity", "Personal charisma", "Economic failures", "Disrespect for the rule of law", "Treat their parties as personal fiefdoms") best describe each Prime minister. Select as many as you think applicable.

## Appendix 2: Prime ministers and prime ministerial terms in CEE and Baltic States (1990 – April 2014)

**Croatia**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Hrvoje Šarinić | 12 Aug 1992 - 03 Apr 1993 |
| Nikica Valentić | 03 Apr 1993 - 07 Nov 1995 |
| Zlatko Mateša | 07 Nov 1995 - 27 Jan 2000 |
| Ivica Račan | 27 Jan 2000 - 23 Dec 2003 |
| Ivo Sanader | 23 Dec 2003 - 06 Jul 2009 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 06 Jul 2009 - 23 Dec 2011 |
| Zoran Milanović | 23 Dec 2011 - incumbent |
| 7 | 7 |

**Czech Republic**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Václav Klaus | 01 Jan 1993 - 17 Dec 1997 |
| Josef Tošovský (caretaker) | 17 Dec 1997 - 17 Jul 1998 |
| Miloš Zeman | 07 Jul 1998 -12 Jul 2002 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 12 Jul 2002 - 19 Jul 2004 |
| Stanislav Gross | 19 Jul 2004 - 25 Apr 2005 |
| Jiří Paroubek | 25 Apr 2005 - 16 Aug 2006 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 16 Aug 2006 - 08 May 2009 |
| Jan Fischer | 08 May 2009 -28 Jun 2010 |
| Petr Nečas | 28 Jun 2010 – 17 Jun 2013 |
| Jiří Rusnok | 10 Jul 2013 – 29 Jan 2014 |
| Bohuslav Sobotka | 29 January 2014 - Incumbent |
| 10 (not including caretakers) | 11 |

**Estonia**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Edgar Savisaar (caretaker) | 20 Aug 1991 – 29 Jan 1992 |
| Tiit Vähi (caretaker) | 29 Jan 1992 - 21 Oct 1992 |
| Mart Laar | 21 Oct 1992 – 08 Nov 1994 |
| Andres Tarand | 08 Nov 1994 - 17 Apr 1995 |
| Tiit Vähi | 17 Apr 1995 - 06 - Nov 1995 |
| Tiit Vähi | 06 Nov 1995 - 17 Mar 1997 |
| Mart Siimann | 17 Mar 1997 - 25 Mar 1999 |
| Mart Laar | 25 Mar 1999 – 28 Jan 2002 |
| Siim Kallas | 28 Jan 2002 – 10 Apr 2003 |
| Juhan Parts | 10 Apr 2003 – 12 Apr 2005 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Andrus Ansip | 12 Apr 2005 - 05 Apr 2007 |
| Andrus Ansip | 05 Apr 2007 - 04 Apr 2011 |
| Andrus Ansip | 06 Apr 2011 – 04 March 2014 |
| Taavi Rõivas | 26 Mar 2014 - incumbent |
| 8 (not including caretakers) | 14 |

**Hungary**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| József Antall | 23 May 1990 – 12 Dec 1993 |
| Péter Boross (caretaker) | 12 Dec 1993 - 21 Dec 1993 |
| Péter Boross (caretaker) | 21 Dec 1993 - 15 Jul 1994 |
| Gyula Horn | 15 Jul 1994 – 8 Jul 1998 |
| Viktor Orbán | 08 Jul 1998 - 27 May 2002 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 27 May 2002 – 29 Sep 2004 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 29 Sep 2004 – 14 Apr 2009 |
| Gordon Bajnai | 14 Apr 2009 – 29 May 2010 |
| Viktor Orbán | 29 May 2010 - 06 Apr 2014 |
| Viktor Orbán | 06 April 2014 - incumbent |
| 6 (not including caretakers) | 10 |

**Latvia**

| Prime minsiter | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Ivars Godmanis | 07 May 1990 - 03 Aug 1993 |
| Valdis Birkavs | 03 Aug 1993 - 15 Sep 1994 |
| Māris Gailis | 15 Sep 1994 – 21 Dec 1995 |
| Andris Šķēle | 21 Dec 1995 - 13 Feb 1997 |
| Andris Šķēle | 13 Feb 1997 - 07 Aug 1997 |
| Guntars Krasts | 07 Aug 1997 – 26 Nov 1998 |
| Vilis Krištopans | 26 Nov 1998 – 15 Jul 1999 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 05 May 2000 - 07 Nov 2002 |
| Einars Repše | 07 Nov 2002 – 09 Mar 2004 |
| Indulis Emsis | 09 Mar 2004 – 02 Dec 2004 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 02 Dec 2004 – 07 Nov 2006 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 07 Nov 2006 – 20 Dec 2007 |
| Ivars Godmanis | 20 Dec 2007 – 12 Mar 2009 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 12 Mar 2009 - 03 Nov 2010 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 03 Nov 2010- 25 Oct 2011 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 25 Oct 2011 - 22 Jan 2014 |
| Laimdota Straujuma | 22 Jan 2014 - incumbent |
| 12 | 18 |

**Lithuania**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Kazimira Danutė Prunskienė | 11 Mar 1990 – 10 Jan 1991 |
| Albertas Šimėnas | 10 Jan 1991 – 13 Jan 1991 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 13 Jan 1991 - 21 Jul 1992 |
| Aleksandras Abišala | 21 Jul 1992 – 02 Dec 1992 |
| Bronislovas Lubys | 02 Dec 1992 - 10 Mar 1993 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 10 Mar 1993 - 15 Feb 1996 |
| Laurynas Mindaugas Stankevičius | 15 Feb 1996 – 27 Nov 1996 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 27 Nov 1996 - 04 May 1999 |
| Irena Degutienė (caretaker) | 27 Oct 1999 – 03 Nov 1999 |
| Rolandas Paksas | 26 Feb 2003 – 6 Apr 2004 |
| Irena Degutienė (caretaker) | 27 Oct 1999 – 3 Nov 1999 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 3 Nov 1999 – 26 Oct 2000 |
| Rolandas Paksas | 26 Oct 2000 – 20 Jun 2001 |
| Eugenijus Gentvilas (caretaker) | 20 Jun 2001 - 03 Jul 2001 |
| Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas | 3 Jul 2001 – 31 May 2006 |
| Zigmantas Balčytis (caretaker) | 01 Jun 2006 – 04 Jul 2006 |
| Gediminas Kirkilas | 04 Jul 2006 – 09 Dec 2008 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 09 Dec 2008 – 13 Dec 2012 |
| Algirdas Butkevičius | 13 Dec 2012 - incumbent |
| 12 (not including caretakers) | 19 |

**Poland**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Tadeusz Mazowiecki | 24 Aug 1989 – 12 Jan 1991 |
| Jan Bielecki | 12 Jan 1991 – 5 Dec 1991 |
| Jan Olszewski | 23 Dec 1991 – 05 Jun 1992 |
| Waldemar Pawlak | 05 Jun 1992 – 10 Jul 1992 |
| Hanna Suchocka | 11 Jul 1992 – 25 Oct 1993 |
| Waldemar Pawlak | 26 Oct 1993 – 06 Mar 1995 |
| Józef Oleksy | 07 Mar 1995 – 7 Feb 1996 |
| Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz | 07 Feb 1996 – 31 Oct 1997 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 14 Jul 2009 – 17 Jan 2012 |
| Leszek Miller | 19 Oct 2001 – 02 May 2004 |
| Marek Belka | 02 May 2004 – 31 Oct 2005 |
| Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz | 31 Oct 2005 – 14 Jul 2006 |
| Jarosław Kaczyński | 14 Jul 2006 – 16 Nov 2007 |
| Donald Tusk | 16 Nov 2007 - 18 Nov 2011 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Donald Tusk | 18 Nov 2011 - incumbent |
| 13 | 15 |

**Slovakia**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Vladimír Mečiar | 24 Jun 1992 – 16 Mar 1994 |
| Jozef Moravčík | 15 Mar 1994 - 13 Dec 1994 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 13 Dec 1994 – 30 Oct 1998 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 30 Octr 1998 - 15 Oct 2002 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 16 Oct 2002 - 04 Jul 2006 |
| Robert Fico | 04 Jul 2006 - 08 Jul 2010 |
| Iveta Radičová | 08 Jul 2010 – 04 Apr 2012 |
| Robert Fico | 04 Apr 2012 - incumbent |
| Total 6 | 8 |

**Slovenia**

| Prime minister | Term duration |
|---|---|
| Alojz Peterle | 16 May 1990 - 14 May 1992 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 14 May 1992 - 03 May 2000 |
| Andrej Bajuk | 03 May 2000 - 04 Augt 2000 |
| Andrej Bajuk | 04 Aug 2000 - 17 Nov 2000 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 17 Nov 2000 - 11 Dec 2002 |
| Anton Rop | 11 Dec 2002 – 09 Nov 2004 |
| Janez Janša | 09 Nov 2004 – 21 Nov 2008 |
| Borut Pahor | 21 Nov 2008 – 10 Feb 2012 |
| Janez Janša | 10 Febr 2012 – 20 Mar 2013 |
| Alenka Bratušek | 20 Mar 2013 - incumbent |
| Total 7 | 10 |

## Appendix 3: Experts' institutional affiliation

| | |
|---|---|
| Poland | University of Warsaw, Institute of Political Science |
| | Maria Curie – Sklodowska University, Faculty of Political Science |
| | John Paul Catholic University of Lublin, Institute of Political Science |
| | University of Łódź, Faculty of International and Political Studies |
| | Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism |
| | University of Zielona Gora, Institute of Political Science |
| | Polish academy of sciences, Institute of Political Science |
| | University of Wroclow, Institute of Political Science, |
| | Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Faculty of International and Political Studies, Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations |
| | University of Silesia in Katowice, Faculty of Social Sciences<br>Institute of Political Science and Journalism |
| Latvia | University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences<br>Latvian Institute of International affairs<br>Vidzeme University College, Faculty of Social Sciences |
| Lithuania | Mykolas Romeris University<br>Vytautas Magnus University<br>Vilnius University, Institute of international relations and political science |
| Estonia | Tallin University<br>University of Tartu<br>Talinn University of Technology<br>Praxis, Centre For Policy Studies |
| Croatia | Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb<br>Economic institute, Zagreb |
| Slovenia | Faculty of Social Science, Ljubljana<br>School of Advanced Social Studies, Nova Gorica |
| Slovakia | Matej Bel University, Banska Bistrica<br>Comenius University in Bratislava<br>Economic University, Bratislava<br>St. Cyril and Methodius University, Trnava |
| Czech Republic | Mendel University of Brno<br>Palacký University<br>University of West Bohemia<br>Masaryk university<br>Charles University Prague |
| Hungary | Corvinus University<br>HAS, Institute of political science<br>HAS, Institute for world economics |

## Appendix 4: Prime ministers' democratic conduct

| Prime minister | ES II (mean) | ES III (mean) | Score Difference (ES II and ES III) | StDev* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Janez Drnovšek | 8.2 | N/A | N/A | 1.64 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.7 | 6.4 | -1.3 | 1.25 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 7.6 | N/A | N/A | 1.50 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.5 | 7.1 | -0.4 | 1.98 |
| Ivica Račan | 7.5 | 6.6 | -0.9 | 1.26 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 7.3 | 8.7 | +1.4 | 1.84 |
| Borut Pahor | 7.2 | N/A | N/A | 1.64 |
| Gyula Horn | 7.1 | N/A | N/A | 1.26 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.0 | N/A | N/A | 1.65 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.6 | N/A | N/A | 2.20 |
| Donald Tusk | 6.4 | 6.5 | +0.1 | 2.40 |
| Leszek Miller | 6.3 | 7.3 | +1.0 | 1.89 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.1 | 6.4 | +0.3 | 1.59 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 6.0 | 6.1 | +0.1 | 1.56 |
| Mart Laar | 6.0 | 6.2 | +0.2 | 1.78 |
| Robert Fico | 5.8 | 5.5 | -0.3 | 1.60 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.8 | 4.6 | -1.2 | 1.39 |
| Tiit Vähi | 5.7 | 6.5 | +0.8 | 1.21 |
| Petr Nečas** | N/A | 5.6 | N/A | 2.80 |
| Juhan Parts | 5.5 | 6.7 | +1.2 | 2.66 |
| Miloš Zeman | 5.4 | 5.0 | -0.4 | 1.66 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 5.2 | N/A | N/A | 2.10 |
| Václav Klaus | 5.1 | 4.5 | -0.6 | 1.46 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 4.8 | 5.8 | +1.0 | 1.62 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.7 | 5.6 | +0.9 | 1.41 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.4 | 6.2 | -0.2 | 1.95 |
| Andrus Ansip | 4.2 | 6.6 | +2.4 | 1.67 |
| Viktor Orbán | 3.9 | N/A | N/A | 2.40 |
| Ivo Sanader | 3.9 | 3.9 | 0.0 | 1.37 |
| Andris Šķēle | 3.4 | N/A | N/A | 1.66 |
| Janez Janša | 3.4 | N/A | N/A | 0.54 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 3.2 | N/A | N/A | 2.33 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 2.6 | 2.5 | -0.1 | 0.94 |

*StDev calculated based on ES II scores

** Included in ES III after mandate termination in summer 2013

## Appendix 5: Prime ministers' performance in EU integration

| Prime minister | ES II (mean) | ES III (mean) | Score Difference (ES II and ES III) | StDev* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Janez Drnovšek | 9.0 | N/A | N/A | 1.00 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 8.2 | 7.9 | -0.3 | 1.98 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 8.1 | 7.6 | -0.5 | 1.72 |
| Mart Laar | 8.0 | 7.9 | -0.1 | 1.78 |
| Gyula Horn | 7.8 | N/A | N/A | 1.57 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 7.6 | 6.4 | -1.2 | 1.57 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.4 | N/A | N/A | 1.74 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.3 | 7.8 | +0.5 | 1.65 |
| Leszek Miller | 7.3 | 8.3 | +1.0 | 1.42 |
| Andrus Ansip | 7.2 | 7.7 | +0.5 | 0.98 |
| Ivo Sanader | 7.1 | 6.4 | -0.7 | 2.84 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 7.0 | 7.0 | 0.0 | 2.17 |
| Donald Tusk | 7.0 | 7.8 | +0.8 | 1.71 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 6.9 | N/A | N/A | 1.94 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.9 | N/A | N/A | 2.08 |
| Ivica Račan | 6.9 | 6.3 | -0.6 | 2.37 |
| Tiit Vähi | 6.8 | 5.7 | -1.1 | 1.47 |
| Juhan Parts | 6.7 | 7.1 | +0.4 | 0.81 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 6.6 | 6.5 | -0.1 | 1.93 |
| Borut Pahor | 6.2 | N/A | N/A | 2.58 |
| Robert Fico | 6.0 | 6.2 | +0.2 | 1.80 |
| Miloš Zeman | 6.0 | 6.4 | +0.4 | 2.12 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.9 | 4.3 | -1.6 | 1.79 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 5.5 | 5.9 | -0.4 | 1.19 |
| Petr Nečas** | N/A | 5.3 | N/A | 2.40 |
| Janez Janša | 5.4 | N/A | N/A | 2.19 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 5.1 | N/A | N/A | 2.84 |
| Viktor Orbán | 5.1 | N/A | N/A | 2.99 |
| Václav Klaus | 4.9 | 3.1 | -1.8 | 2.43 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 4.6 | N/A | N/A | 2.78 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.4 | 3.9 | -0.5 | 1.34 |
| Andris Šķēle | 4.3 | N/A | N/A | 2.34 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 2.6 | 1.2 | -1.4 | 0.88 |

*StDev calculated based on ES II scores

** Included in ES III after mandate termination in summer 2013

## Appendix 6: Performance in economic policymaking - Individual prime ministers' scores

| Prime minister | ES II (mean) | ES III (mean) | Score Difference (ES II and ES III) | StDev* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Andrius Kubilius | 8.2 | 7.3 | -0.9 | 0.63 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 7.9 | 5.3 | -2.6 | 1.38 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 7.6 | N/A | N/A | 1.51 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.2 | N/A | N/A | 2.22 |
| Ivica Račan | 7.0 | 4.2 | -2.8 | 1.49 |
| Tiit Vähi | 6.7 | 7.0 | +0.3 | 0.81 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.5 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 2.06 |
| Gyula Horn | 6.1 | N/A | N/A | 2.09 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 6.0 | 4.0 | -2.0 | 1.94 |
| Robert Fico | 5.8 | 4.0 | -1.8 | 1.71 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 5.6 | 5.7 | +0.1 | 2.20 |
| Mart Laar | 5.5 | 6.3 | +0.8 | 1.76 |
| Leszek Miller | 5.3 | 5.8 | +0.5 | 1.99 |
| Donald Tusk | 5.3 | 4.2 | -1.1 | 2.02 |
| Miloš Zeman | 5.0 | 4.6 | -0.4 | 1.93 |
| Andris Šķēle | 5.0 | N/A | N/A | 2.39 |
| Viktor Orbán | 5.0 | N/A | N/A | 2.35 |
| Juhan Parts | 5.0 | 6.5 | +1.5 | 0.89 |
| Petr Nečas*** | N/A | 4.9 | N/A | 2.40 |
| Andrus Ansip | 4.7 | 7.9 | +3.2 | 1.63 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 4.6 | 5.3 | +0.7 | 1.66 |
| Janez Janša | 4.4 | N/A | N/A | 0.89 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 4.4 | N/A | N/A | 1.82 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 4.2 | N/A | N/A | 1.96 |
| Borut Pahor | 4.2 | N/A | N/A | 0.83 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 4.2 | 5.3 | +1.1 | 1.62 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 4.0 | N/A | N/A | 1.80 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 3.8 | 3.9 | +0.1 | 1.61 |
| Václav Klaus | 3.6 | 3.4 | -0.2 | 1.80 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 3.4 | 3.1 | -0.3 | 1.83 |
| Ivo Sanader | 3.3 | 2.8 | -0.5 | 2.11 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 3.0 | N/A | N/A | 1.87 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 2.9 | 2.0 | -0.9 | 1.63 |

*StDev calculated based on ES II scores

** Included in ES III after mandate termination in summer 2013

## Appendix 7: Performance in social policymaking - Individual prime ministers' score

| Prime minister | ES II (mean) | ES III (mean) | Score Difference (ES II and ES III) | StDev* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.2 | 6.3 | -0.9 | 1.55 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 6.8 | N/A | N/A | 1.64 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.4 | 6.4 | 0.0 | 0.84 |
| Tiit Vähi | 6.3 | 6.1 | -0.2 | 1.03 |
| Ivica Račan | 6.2 | 4.3 | -1.9 | 2.25 |
| Borut Pahor | 6.2 | N/A | N/A | 2.17 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.1 | 4.3 | -1.8 | 2.13 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 6.0 | 4.5 | -1.5 | 1.76 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 6.0 | N/A | N/A | 2.29 |
| Robert Fico | 5.9 | 5.0 | -0.9 | 1.91 |
| Gyula Horn | 5.7 | N/A | N/A | 1.77 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 5.6 | 4.8 | -0.8 | 2.42 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 5.4 | 7.1 | +1.7 | 2.59 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 5.4 | N/A | N/A | 2.13 |
| Janez Janša | 5.2 | N/A | N/A | 1.48 |
| Leszek Miller | 5.1 | 6.0 | +0.9 | 1.98 |
| Mart Laar | 4.8 | 4.7 | -0.1 | 2.78 |
| Viktor Orbán | 4.8 | N/A | N/A | 2.39 |
| Miloš Zeman | 4.8 | 5.0 | +0.2 | 2.31 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 4.6 | N/A | N/A | 2.00 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 4.4 | 4.2 | -0.2 | 1.64 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.4 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 1.83 |
| Petr Nečas*** | N/A | 4.3 | N/A | 2.10 |
| Juhan Parts | 4.2 | 5.1 | +0.9 | 1.60 |
| Andrus Ansip | 4.2 | 5.6 | +1.4 | 2.13 |
| Donald Tusk | 4.2 | 3.2 | -1.0 | 1.81 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 4.1 | N/A | N/A | 2.14 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 4.1 | N/A | N/A | 1.83 |
| Ivo Sanader | 4.0 | 3.7 | -0.3 | 1.88 |
| Andris Šķēle | 3.9 | N/A | N/A | 1.90 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 3.8 | 5.0 | +1.2 | 2.07 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 3.8 | 3.0 | -0.8 | 1.81 |
| Václav Klaus | 2.9 | 3.0 | 0.0 | 1.44 |

*StDev calculated based on ES II scores

** Included in ES III after mandate termination in summer 2013

## Appendix 8: Expert ranking in prime ministers' democratic conduct, effectiveness and democratic governance

| Prime minister | Dem. conduct* | Prime minister | Effectiveness** | Prime minister | Dem. Gov.*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| Jerzy Buzek | 8.7 | Andrius Kubilius | 7.9 | Janez Drnovšek | 8.0 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 8.2 | Janez Drnovšek | 7.8 | Andrius Kubilius | 7.8 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 7.7 | Andrus Ansip | 7.1 | Jerzy Buzek | 7.7 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 7.6 | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 7.0 | Vladimír Špidla | 7.1 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 7.5 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.8 | Ivica Račan | 7.1 |
| Ivica Račan | 7.5 | Vladimír Špidla | 6.7 | Andrus Ansip | 6.9 |
| Leszek Miller | 7.3 | Ivica Račan | 6.7 | Leszek Miller | 6.9 |
| Borut Pahor | 7.2 | Tiit Vähi | 6.7 | Gyula Horn | 6.8 |
| Gyula Horn | 7.1 | Leszek Miller | 6.7 | Péter Medgyessy | 6.7 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 7.0 | Jerzy Buzek | 6.6 | Valdis Dombrovskis | 6.7 |
| Juhan Parts | 6.7 | Gyula Horn | 6.5 | Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.7 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.6 | Mart Laar | 6.4 | Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.6 |
| Andrus Ansip | 6.6 | Valdis Dombrovskis | 6.4 | Tiit Vähi | 6.6 |
| Donald Tusk | 6.5 | Juhan Parts | 6.2 | Juhan Parts | 6.5 |
| Tiit Vähi | 6.5 | Robert Fico | 6.0 | Borut Pahor | 6.4 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.4 | Gediminas Vagnorius | 6.0 | Mart Laar | 6.3 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 6.4 | Péter Medgyessy | 5.8 | Donald Tusk | 6.2 |
| Mart Laar | 6.2 | Donald Tusk | 5.8 | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.1 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 6.1 | Ferenc Gyurcsány | 5.5 | Robert Fico | 5.9 |
| Robert Fico | 5.8 | Borut Pahor | 5.5 | Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.9 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.8 | Miloš Zeman | 5.4 | Jadranka Kosor | 5.7 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 5.8 | Jadranka Kosor | 5.3 | Miloš Zeman | 5.5 |
| Petr Nečas* | 5.6 | Mirek Topolánek | 5.0 | Mirek Topolánek | 5.4 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 5.6 | Janez Janša | 5.0 | Petr Nečas*** | 5.2 |
| Miloš Zeman | 5.5 | Viktor Orbán | 5.0 | Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.9 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 5.2 | Ivo Sanader | 4.8 | Andris Bērziņš | 4.8 |
| Václav Klaus | 5.2 | Petr Nečas**** | 4.8 | Václav Klaus | 4.5 |
| Viktor Orbán | 3.9 | Andris Bērziņš | 4.4 | Viktor Orbán | 4.5 |
| Ivo Sanader | 3.9 | Andris Šķēle | 4.4 | Ivo Sanader | 4.4 |
| Andris Šķēle | 3.4 | Adolfas Šleževičius | 4.2 | Janez Janša | 4.2 |
| Janez Janša | 3.4 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.9 | Andris Šķēle | 3.9 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 3.2 | Václav Klaus | 3.8 | Aigars Kalvītis | 3.6 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 2.6 | Vladimír Mečiar | 3.1 | Vladimír Mečiar | 2.9 |
| **Total average** | **6.0** | **Total average** | **5.7** | **Total average** | **5.9** |

ES II and III – in case of ES II and III score difference in separate dimensions better score was used to calculate index of democratic conduct, effectiveness and democratic governance

*Index of democratic conduct – average score of prime ministers' democratic conduct

**Index of effectiveness – an aggregate index of prime ministers' performance in EU integration, economic and social policymaking

***Index of democratic governance – an aggregate index of prime ministers' democratic conduct and effectiveness

****Included in ES III after mandate termination in summer 2013

## Appendix 9 (to section 4.4) Press articles used to evaluate prime ministers' programmatic performance

"Lithuania election: Voters' dump austerity government", *BBC News*, October 15 2012, accessed on March 05 2014, ,http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19940043. (Andrius Kubilius)

"Mikuláš Dzurinda", *Bloomberg Business Week Magazine*, June 06 2004, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2004-06-06/mikulas-dzurinda (Mikuláš Dzurinda)

"Estonia PM Ansip resigns-Europe's longest-serving PM" *BBC News*, March 04 2014, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26430899 (Andrus Ansip)

"Juhan Parts: from political watchdog to Estonia's PM", *Helsingin Sanomat*, April 15 2004, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www2.hs.fi/english/archive/news.asp?id=20030415IE3 (Juhan Parts)

Marmei, K. "Target shooting scandal", *Central Europe Review*, February 09 2001, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.ce-review.org/01/7/estonianews7.html (Mart Laar)

"Estonian Prime Minister resigns over scandal-again", *Associated Press*, February 25 1997, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1997/Estonian-prime-minister-resigns-amid-scandal-again/id-68e44e7ff38b4c68f6115d71ca0e4e68 (Tiit Vähi )

"Hungary's prime ministers Ferenc Gyurcsány resigns", *The Telegraph*, March 21 2009, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/5028910/Hungarys-prime-minister-Ferenc-Gyurcsány-resigns.html (Ferenc Gyurcsány)

"Big promises", *The Warsaw voice*, January 30 2014, accessed on March 2014, http://www.warsawvoice.pl/WVpage/pages/articlePrint.php/27054/article (Donald Tusk)

"The end of an era of Algirdas Brazauskas", Alfa Lithuania, July 30 2010, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10395361/the-end-of-the-era-of-algirdas-brazauskas#.UxeL34VH4vM (Algirdas Brazauskas)

Ungerman, J. "The legacy of Petr Nečas: Erosion of public confidence in politics", V4/Revue, September 12 2013, accessed on March 05 2014, http://Visegrád revue.eu/?p=1788 (Petr Nečas)

Knobl, Camard, et al., "Lithuania" IMF Economic Review No. 6, August 1994. (Adolfas Slzevicisus)

Richter, J. "Václav Klaus: the experienced and predictable", February 07 2008, accessed on March 2014, http://www.radio.cz/en/section/election-special/vaclav-klaus-the-experienced-and-predictable (Václav Klaus)

"Ex-Slovenian PM Janez Janša convicted of corruption", *BBC News*, June 05 2013, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22781752 (Janez Janša)

"Croatia jails ex-PM Ivo Sanader for taking bribes", *BBC News*, November 20 2012, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20407006 (Ivo Sanader)

Fridner, P. "Slovakia: Why is Vladmir Mečiar still so popular?", *Interpress service*, May 21 1996, accessed on March 05 2014, http://www.ipsnews.net/1996/05/slovakia-why-is-vladimir-meciar-still-so-popular/ (Vladimír Mečiar)

"Scandal-hit Latvian cabinet quits", December 05 2007, accessed on March 05 2014, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7128740.stm , Aigars Kalvītis

## Appendix 10: Prime ministers' executive personalization

| Prime minister | ES II (mean) | ES III (mean) | Score Difference (ES II and ES III) | StDev* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Viktor Orbán | 8.4 | N/A | N/A | 1.00 |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 7.7 | 8.8 | +1.1 | 1.71 |
| Andris Šķēle | 7.3 | N/A | N/A | 3.27 |
| Václav Klaus | 7.2 | 7.7 | +0.5 | 1.73 |
| Janez Janša | 7.0 | N/A | N/A | 2.82 |
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 6.9 | N/A | N/A | 1.95 |
| Robert Fico | 6.9 | 7.3 | +0.4 | 2.35 |
| Andrus Ansip | 6.7 | 4.1 | -2.6 | 1.63 |
| Miloš Zeman | 6.5 | 7.2 | +0.7 | 1.85 |
| Leszek Miller | 6.4 | 5.3 | -1.1 | 1.73 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 6.4 | N/A | N/A | 2.54 |
| Ivo Sanader | 6.2 | 6.9 | +0.7 | 4.07 |
| Donald Tusk | 6.1 | 6.0 | -0.1 | 2.97 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 6.0 | 5.4 | -0.6 | 3.04 |
| Janez Drnovšek | 6.0 | N/A | N/A | 1.58 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 5.6 | 5.2 | -0.4 | 2.75 |
| Gyula Horn | 5.5 | N/A | N/A | 2.10 |
| Mirek Topolánek | 5.4 | 6.0 | +0.6 | 1.60 |
| Borut Pahor | 5.4 | N/A | N/A | 1.51 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 5.3 | N/A | N/A | 2.23 |
| Mart Laar | 5.3 | 5.0 | -0.3 | 2.25 |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 5.1 | 5.0 | -0.1 | 1.36 |
| Gediminas Vagnorius | 5.1 | 5.3 | +0.2 | 2.52 |
| Andrius Kubilius | 4.9 | 5.4 | +0.5 | 1.96 |
| Tiit Vähi | 4.8 | 5.2 | +0.4 | 1.32 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 4.3 | N/A | N/A | 2.34 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 4.2 | N/A | N/A | 2.65 |
| Ivica Račan | 3.8 | 4.4 | +0.6 | 1.75 |
| Juhan Parts | 3.8 | 3.3 | -0.5 | 1.94 |
| Jerzy Buzek | 3.7 | 1.8 | -1.9 | 2.19 |
| Vladimír Špidla | 2.8 | 3.4 | +0.6 | 1.78 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 2.2 | 5.8 | -3.6 | 2.22 |
| Petr Nečas** | N/A | 4.1 | N/A | 2.20 |

*StDev calculated based on ES II scores

** Included in ES III after mandate termination in summer 2013

## Appendix 11 (to table 5.9): Press articles used for coding circumstances of leaving office

"Czech Premier Resigns Amid Finance Scandal" *Los Angeles Times*, November 30 1997, accessed on March 02, 2014, **http://articles.latimes.com/1997/nov/30/news/mn-59170** (Václav Klaus)

"Croatia's PM Sanader resigns, quits politics" *Reuters*, July 01 2009, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://in.reuters.com/article/2009/07/01/idINIndia-40733720090701** (Ivo Sanader)

"Czech premier resigns from office" *BBC News*, July 01 2004, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3856037.stm** (Vladimír Špidla)

"Czech PM Topolánek officially resigns" *Reuters*, March 26 2009, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/03/26/us-czech-politics-resignation-idUSTRE52P42N20090326** (Mirek Topolánek)

"Czech PM Petr Nečas resigns over aide scandal" *BBC News*, June 17 2013, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22930710** (Petr Nečas)

"Estonian Prime minister resigns amid scandal-again" *Associated press news archive*, February 25, 1997, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1997/Estonian-prime-minister-resigns-amid-scandal-again/id-68e44e7ff38b4c68f6115d71ca0e4e68** (Tiit Vähi )

"Laar resigns, ruling block in tatters" *The Baltic Times*, January 10 2002, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/5863/#.UxCggoVH4vM** (Mart Laar)

"Estonia's prime minister to step down" *EU Observer*, March 22 2005, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://euobserver.com/political/18718** (Juhan Parts)

"Hungarian Prime minister resigns" *BBC News*, August 19 2004, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3581064.stm** (Péter Medgyessy)

"Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány resigns" *The Telegraph*, March 21 2009, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/5028910/Hungarys-prime-minister-Ferenc-Gyurcsány-resigns.html** (Ferenc Gyurcsány)

Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/332126/Latvia-in-1997** (Andris Šķēle)

"A predictable victory of Prime Minister Janez Drnovšek in the general elections in Slovenia" *The European Elections Monitor*, December 01 2002, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/eem/0094-a-predictable-victory-of-prime-minister-janez-drnovsek-in-the-general-elections-in-slovenia** (Janez Drnovšek)

"Slovenia Confidence vote: Borut Pahor's Government falls" *World News*, September 20 2011, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/20/slovenia-borut-pahor-confidence-vote_n_972111.html#comments** (Borut Pahor)

"Polish Prime minister to resign" *BBC News*, March 26 2004, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/20/slovenia-borut-pahor-confidence-vote_n_972111.html#comments** (Leszek Miller)

"Bank Scandal forces PM of Lithuania to resign" *The Independent*, February 09 1996, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/bank-scandal-forces-pm-of-lithuania-to-resign-1318036.html** (Adolfas Šleževičius)

"Prime minister resigns to settle leadership feud" *Chicago Tribune*, May 02 1999, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1999-05-02/news/9905020266_1_pro-western-reform-resignation** (Gediminas Vagnorius

"Brazauskas resigns amid governmental collapse" *The Baltic Times*, June 01 2006, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/15583/#.UxCo7YVH4vM** (Algirdas Brazauskas)

"Scandal-hit Latvian cabinet quits" *BBC News*, December 05 2007, accessed on March 02 2014, **http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7128740.stm** (Aigars Kaltivis)

"Czech Election victory for new generation" *East European perspectives*, Jiri Pehe's personal website August 21 2002, accessed on March 02 2014, http://www.pehe.cz/clanky/2002/2002-08-21-rferl.htm (Miloš Zeman)

"Slovakia will face arbitration for health insurance profit ban". *Slovak Spektator*, July 17 2008, accessed on March 07 2014, http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/32427/10/slovakia_will_face_arbitration_for_health_insurance_profit_ban.html (Robert Fico)

## Appendix 12: Prime ministers' electoral performance

| Prime minister | Term in office | Political party | Date of elections following the end of prime minister's term | Rank of Prime minister's party in elections (in %) | Electoral Performance* of PM party |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CROATIA** | | | | | |
| Ivica Račan | 27 Jan 2000-23 Dec 2003 | Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP) | 23 November 2003 | 2nd (22.61%) | 0 |
| Ivo Sanader | 23 Dec 2003- 6 Jul 2009 | Croatian Democratic Union (CDU) | 25 November 2007 | 1st (36.6%) | 1 |
| Jadranka Kosor | 6 Jul 2009-23 Dec 2011 | Croatian Democratic Union (CDU) | 04 December 2011 | 2nd (23.8%) | 0 |
| **CZECH REP** | | | | | |
| Václav Klaus | 01 Jan 1993–17 Dec 1997 | Civic Democratic party (ODS) | 19 and 20 June 1998 | 2nd (27.74)% | 0 |
| Miloš Zeman | 17 Jul 1998–12 Jul 2002 | Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) | 14 and 15 June 2002 | 1st (30%) | 1 |
| VladimírŠpidla | 12 Jul 2002–19 Jul 2004 | Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) | 02 and 03 June 2006 | | Excluded |
| Mirek Topolánek | 16 Aug 2006–08 May 2009 | Civic Democratic party (ODS) | 28 and 29 May 2010 | 2nd (20.2%) | 0 |
| Petr Nečas | 28 June 2010–17 June 2013 | Civic Democratic party (ODS) | 25 and 26 October 2013 | 5th (7.7%) | 0 |
| **ESTONIA** | | | | | |
| Tiit Vähi | 17 Apr 1995–17 Mar 1997 | Estonian Coalition party | 07 March 1999 | | Excluded |
| Mart Laar | 25 Mar 1999–28 Jan 2002 | Pro Patria Union | 2 March 2003 | 5th (7.3%) | 0 |
| Juhan Parts | 10 Apr 2003–12 Apr 2005 | Res Publica | 04 March 2007 | | Excluded |
| Andrus Ansip | 05 Apr 2007–04 Apr 2011 | Estonian Reform party | 6 March 2011 | 1st (28.56%) | 1 |
| **HUNGARY** | | | | | |
| Gyula Horn | 15 Jul 1994–08 Jul 1998 | Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP) | 10 and 24 May 1998 | 1st (32%) | 1 |
| Viktor Orbán | 08 Jul 1998–27 May 2002 | Fidesz - MDF | 07 and 21 April 2002 | 2nd 41.7% | 0 |
| Péter Medgyessy | 27 May 2002–29 Sept 2004 | Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP) | 09 April 2006 | | Excluded |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ferenc Gyurcsány | 29 Sep 2004–14 Apr 2009 | Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP) | 11 and 25 April 2010 | 2nd 19% | 0 |
| **LATVIA** | | | | | |
| Andris Šķēle (LAT) | 21 Dec 1995-07 Aug 1997 | People's party (TP) | 03 October 1998 | 1st (21 %) | 1 |
| Andris Bērziņš | 05 May 2000–07 Nov 2002 | Latvia's way | 05 October 2002 | Disappeared from the political scene | 0 |
| Aigars Kalvītis | 02 Dec 2004–20 Dec 2007 | People's party (TP) | 07 October 2006 | 1st (19.53%) | 1 |
| Valdis Dombrovskis | 12 Mar 2009–25 Oct 2011 | Unity coalition | 02 October 2010 | 1st (32%) | 1 |
| **LITHUANIA** | | | | | |
| Adolfas Šleževičius | 10 Mar 1993–15 Feb 1996 | Democratic Labor party | 20 October 1996 / 10 November 1996 | 4th (9.5%) | 0 |
| GediminasVagnorius | 27 Nov 1996–04 May 1999 | Homeland Union | 8 October 2000 | 4th (8.62%) | 0 |
| Algirdas Brazauskas | 03 Jul 2001–01 Jun 2006 | Social Democratic party | 12 and 26 October 2008 | | Excluded |
| Andrius Kubilius | 28 Nov 2008–14 Oct 2012 | Homeland Union – Christian Democrats | 14 and 28 October 2012 | 3rd (15.08%) | 0 |
| **POLAND** | | | | | |
| Jerzy Buzek | 31 Oct 1997–19 Oct 2001 | Civic platform | 23 September 2001 | 2nd (12.68%) | 0 |
| Leszek Miller | 19 Oct 2001–02 May 2004 | Left Democratic Alliance (SLD) | 25 September 2005 | 4th (11.31%) | 0 |
| Donald Tusk | 16 Nov 2007–18 Nov 2011 | Civic Platform | 09 October 2011 | 1st (39.2%) | 1 |
| **SLOVAKIA** | | | | | |
| Vladimír Mečiar | 13 Dec 1994–29 Oct 1998 | Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) | 25 and 26 September 1998 | 1st (27%) | 1 |
| Mikuláš Dzurinda | 30 Oct 1998–04 Jul 2006 | Slovak Democratic Coalition and Christian Union (SKDU) | 17 June 2006 | 2nd (18.36%) in 2006 | 0 |
| Robert Fico | 04 Jul 2006– 08 Jul 2010 | Smer | 12 June 2010 | 1st (34.80%) | 1 |
| **SLOVENIA** | | | | | |
| Janez Drnovšek | 14 May 1992–11 Nov 2002 | Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) | 15 October 2000 | 1st (36.23%) | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Janez Janša | 09 Nov 2004–21 Nov 2008 | Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) | 21 September 2008 | 2nd (29.26%) | 0 |
| Borut Pahor | 11 Nov 2008–10 Feb 2012 | Social Democrats (SD) | 04 December 2011 | 3rd (10.52%) | 0 |

**Source**: IFES *Election Guide*, Inter-*Parliamentary Union*,) and European Election Database

*Electoral performance is binary, coded 1 to indicate electoral success if prime minister's party received most votes in the elections and 0 to indicate electoral failure if prime minister's party did not receive most votes in the elections.