ARTICLE

Cabinet Reshuffles and Prime-Ministerial Performance in Central and Eastern Europe

Florian Grotz[1]* (iD), Corinna Kroeber[2] (iD) and Marko Kukec[1] (iD)

[1]Department of Political Science, Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany and
[2]Department of Political Science and Communication Science, University of Greifswald, Greifswald, Germany
*Corresponding author. Email: grotz@hsu-hh.de

Abstract

Prime ministers (PMs) significantly contribute to making parliamentary democracy work, but cabinet reshuffles can undermine the PM's ability to perform successfully. New ministers may have less policy expertise, intensify intra-cabinet struggles and hamper the control of government bureaucracy. This article explores the relationship between cabinet reshuffles and prime-ministerial performance in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Building on a data set covering 131 cabinets in 11 CEE countries between 1990 and 2018, we find that frequent cabinet reshuffles decrease prime-ministerial performance. In particular, the reshuffling of ministers belonging to other coalition parties than the PM's unfolds a strong negative effect on prime-ministerial performance, while reshuffles in core portfolios and turnover of ministers from the PM party have less negative consequences. These results have important implications for understanding executive politics and government stability in the dynamic environments of CEE democracies and beyond.

Prime ministers (PMs) play a key role in making parliamentary democracy work. In a principal–agent perspective, which conceives parliamentary democracy as a two-directional chain of delegation and accountability, the PM as chief executive 'connects the elected representatives of the people and the administrators of the state' (Strøm 2000: 270). More concretely, the PM is the agent to whom the parliamentary majority delegates the running of state affairs, which includes a variety of different tasks such as shaping government policy, managing crises and securing national interests abroad (Strangio et al. 2013; 't Hart and Schelfhout 2016). To carry out these tasks, the PM relies on cabinet ministers as her agents for developing policies and directing the bureaucracy in the government departments. Ministers also provide advice and support for the PM in her relations with other

political actors, such as coalition parties and parliament. Hence, the performance of PMs crucially depends on whether the ministers fulfil their responsibilities in an effective and accountable manner.

Against this background, cabinet reshuffles – defined as personnel changes in the ministerial composition of a government – may significantly affect prime-ministerial performance. Since new ministers need considerable time to guide and control the civil servants effectively in their departments (Rose 1971: 407), ministerial turnover tends to undermine the stability and functional capacity of the cabinet that a PM needs to fulfil her tasks properly.[1] Of course, PMs may also change incompetent or self-interested ministers in order to regain political control over their government and thus improve their performance. Such reshuffles are well known from Westminster democracies where PMs occasionally use their extraordinary political power to fire and hire cabinet members during the legislative period (Indriðason and Kam 2008). However, the effects of ministerial turnover on prime-ministerial performance have not been systematically explored so far.

Our article investigates how cabinet reshuffles influence the performance of PMs in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). It contributes to the extant literature in several respects. First, we argue that ministerial turnover has an overall negative effect on whether the PM succeeds in accomplishing her various office tasks and confirm this assumption by analysing a novel data set of 131 cabinets in 11 CEE democracies between 1990 and 2018. This finding hence adds to the small set of research engaging with the consequences of reshuffles, notably on government popularity (Dewan and Dowding 2005; Miwa 2018) or policy outcomes (Huber 1998), and goes beyond the bulk of relevant studies that deal with the determinants of cabinet reshuffles (Berlinski et al. 2010; Fischer et al. 2012; Hansen et al. 2013).

Second, we offer a nuanced perspective on how cabinet reshuffles affect the success of the PM in office in multiparty governments. According to our findings, changes in ministers who belong to the PM's coalition partners appear to induce the highest cost for her performance, while changes in ministers from her party or those in charge of core portfolios are less consequential. These results add to our understanding of the intra-cabinet determinants of prime-ministerial performance and enrich the extant literature that focused on the effects of PMs' careers (Grotz et al. 2021) as well as their relationships with their principals – that is, the parliamentary majority and their own parties (Samuels and Shugart 2010; Strangio et al. 2013).

Third, our article sheds new light on the differentiated impact of government stability in the post-communist democracies of CEE where cabinets have been relatively short-lived compared to Western democracies (Grotz and Weber 2012; Somer-Topcu and Williams 2008). While previous research found that prime-ministerial performance does not strongly correlate with cabinet duration in the CEE context (Grotz et al. 2021), our analysis shows that it is significantly affected by the frequency of ministerial turnover. Hence, the findings contribute to the debate on which forms of government instability are more detrimental for the functioning of political executives (Huber 1998; Huber and Martinez-Gallardo 2008).

The impact of cabinet reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance

In light of the outstanding position of chief executives in parliamentary democracies, PMs have to fulfil a wide range of tasks (Strangio et al. 2013; 't Hart and Schelfhout 2016). The characterization of parliamentary democracy as a chain of delegation and accountability between voters, legislature, executive and state administration (Strøm 2000) indicates that prime-ministerial tasks fall into two broad dimensions (Grotz et al. 2021: 4–5). First, the PM is responsible for running the state affairs, which includes managing the cabinet, shaping government policies, managing exogenous crises and securing the national interests at the international level. Second, as agent of the parliamentary majority and her own party, the PM has to secure the support of these two principals. We build our theoretical argument on this concept of prime-ministerial performance, as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the position of the PM vis-à-vis other actors, as well as offering a differentiated catalogue of tasks that a PM ought to accomplish.

Previous research highlights the role of political experience as well as the party constellation in government as determinants of a PM's success in fulfilling these manifold tasks. For instance, Florian Grotz et al. (2021) find that PMs who were party leaders before coming to office perform considerably better than their counterparts without such experience. Moreover, conflicts among key party elites or disunity of the parliamentary party group were found to destabilize the PM's political position (Baylis 2007). Minority cabinets and multiparty governments further increase the complexity and uncertainty of the PMs' political environment, which might also affect their performance (Bergman et al. 2015).

Beyond these factors, the PM relies on the cabinet ministers as heads of government departments, and by that her immediate political agents, to accomplish her tasks. Therefore, frequent movements of ministers within the cabinet as well as their departures from the cabinet may undermine prime-ministerial performance. Ministers have, or are expected to acquire, substantive expertise and political skills to lead their portfolios (Dewan and Hortala-Vallve 2011; Indriðason and Kam 2008). The value of ministerial expertise for the PM is not restricted to the development of policy along her own agenda, but also extends to other tasks delegated to the chief executive, such as crisis management and foreign affairs. Concerning the former, the PM can at best provide an interpretation of the crisis event and strategic direction for the response, but the ministers are responsible for the operational level of crisis management. Similarly, the head of government is often engaged in relations with other countries or international organizations, but depends on the foreign minister and her office for relevant information and advice. Finally, ministers also support the PM in parliament and at meetings of her own party.

Cabinet reshuffles diminish these ministerial contributions to prime-ministerial performance. Most obviously, ministers who remain in office for short time periods cannot develop the substantial policy expertise on which the PM depends (Bright et al. 2015; Hansen et al. 2013). Short incumbency by ministers hinders their control of civil servants within the department, who might often have policy preferences that diverge from those of the minister and the PM (Huber 1998: 578). Ministerial reshuffles may also contribute to tensions between the PM, her own party and the coalition partners, as the original line-up of cabinet often results

from painstaking negotiations during government formation (Bovens et al. 2015; Fischer et al. 2012).

Despite the benefits of ministerial continuity, PMs in parliamentary democracies are usually confronted by cabinet reshuffles that are beyond their control. Ministers might leave the cabinet voluntarily for non-political reasons, such as health problems, retirement or an interest in more attractive career options outside politics (Bovens et al. 2015). Or there are political reasons for ministerial resignations such as disagreements with government policy or scandals that involve the minister herself or her close associates (Dewan and Dowding 2005). Aside from the PM, cabinet ministers have several other principals who might exert pressure on them (Bucur 2017). Ad hoc parliamentary majorities composed of coalition partners and opposition might react to policy disagreement and scandals by triggering a parliamentary motion of no-confidence against a minister that forces her to step down. In semi-presidential systems where state presidents have considerable powers over ministerial appointment and dismissal, ministers might fall victim to an intra-executive conflict between PM and president (Bucur 2017; Sedelius and Mashtaler 2013).

In some cases, the PM might not only be a passive bystander in cabinet reshuffles, but assume a more active role in firing and hiring ministers. Nevertheless, the evidence for such active reshuffling predominantly originates from Westminster parliamentary democracies, which are characterized by single-party governments headed by party-leader PMs. Within such ideal-type parliamentary chain of delegation and accountability, the PM might be freer to deliberately reshuffle the cabinet to address serious ministerial drift (Dewan and Dowding 2005; Indriðason and Kam 2008). Such a move could help the PM to realign government departments with her agenda and ensure the accountability of individual ministers, which enhances prime-ministerial performance. However, in multiparty governments, the PM frequently meets resistance from her own party, coalition partners or parties supporting a minority government, which may threaten to bring down the whole cabinet (Berlinski et al. 2010: 561). For these reasons, cabinet reshuffles initiated by the PM are quite rare events in most parliamentary democracies. Furthermore, active cabinet reshuffles remain rather costly for the PM even when the minister is eventually removed from the cabinet. For instance, the PM may not be successful in finding a suitable replacement within or outside the cabinet (Dewan and Myatt 2010). Moreover, frequent firing of ministers by the PM might send a signal to the remaining ministers that the PM would not protect them in the event of public scrutiny, which might hamper their policy activism (Dewan and Myatt 2007). Hence, since active reshuffling by PMs also bears considerable costs, we expect cabinet reshuffles to have an overall negative effect on prime-ministerial performance.

Hypothesis 1: *The higher the number of cabinet reshuffles, the less successfully will PMs perform.*

Furthermore, the negative effect of cabinet reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance may be particularly pronounced in specific constellations, which can be derived from two models of cabinet governance. The 'ministerial government

model' assumes that ministers have a wide scope of influence over their departments, which ensures credibility and accountability in policymaking (Laver and Shepsle 1990). Consequently, prime-ministerial performance primarily depends on the relation between the PM and the ministers heading the most powerful departments.

Following the ministerial government model, we argue that ministerial reshuffles in some portfolios, such as finance, foreign relations, defence and internal affairs, are more consequential for prime-ministerial performance than others. The outstanding role of these core portfolios derives from their control over large resources, responsibility for the key functions of the state, as well as coordination or even veto rights over policy initiatives from other portfolios (Druckman and Warwick 2005). Running such a portfolio requires political expertise and acumen, which are lost once the minister departs from the cabinet. As new ministers require time to familiarize themselves with these complex portfolios, policymaking and bureaucratic control might be less effective following reshuffles. Additionally, core portfolios carry more political weight within and outside the cabinet, so they are usually headed by more important politicians. The departure of these heavyweights from cabinet might trigger instability in the relations between the PM and her supporting parties in parliament (Bright et al. 2015; Hansen et al. 2013). Taken together, we expect reshuffles in core portfolios to undermine prime-ministerial performance to a greater extent as compared to reshuffles in other portfolios.

Hypothesis 2: *Reshuffles of ministers in core portfolios affect prime-ministerial performance more negatively than reshuffles of ministers in other portfolios.*

The 'coalition compromise model', in turn, proposes that government policy is developed collectively between coalition partners with the help of *ex ante* (coalition agreement) and *ex post* (monitoring and control) instruments (Muller et al. 2019; Strøm et al. 2010). According to this model, prime-ministerial performance is crucially affected by the relationship of the PM and the ministers of her party on the one hand and the ministers of the other coalition parties on the other hand. Following a cabinet reshuffle, it is much easier for the PM to impose her political agenda when new ministers come from her own party and should hence share the same basic policy goals (Saalfeld 2000: 357). In cases of reshuffles in portfolios controlled by other coalition parties, the PM has much less leverage over the newly appointed ministers. Hence, the adversarial effect of cabinet reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance will likely be diminished when ministers from the PM's party are reshuffled.

Hypothesis 3: *Reshuffles of ministers from other coalition parties affect prime-ministerial performance more negatively than reshuffles of ministers from the PM's party.*

Research design

We test these propositions on data for 131 cabinets in 11 new democracies in CEE between 1990 and 2018.[2] We identify new cabinets if the PM changes, new elections take place or the party composition of the government changes (King et al. 1990: 856). Interim and caretaking governments are not included in the data, since PMs have limited options to perform in these cases and are thus not comparable

with full governments. Moreover, we excluded cabinets that lasted less than six months to ensure that PMs had sufficient time to show their performance in office, as well as to ensure that experts were able to gather sufficient information to assess the performance of PMs.[3]

Dependent variable

To operationalize prime-ministerial performance, we make use of an index introduced by Grotz et al. (2021). The measure captures a PM's success in office defined as the ability to manage the cabinet and direct domestic affairs as well as to ensure the permanent support of the parliamentary majority and the PM's party. Overall, 11 aspects of prime-ministerial performance grouped in six subdimensions form the measure:

(1) Settling cabinet conflicts (prevailing in PM–minister conflicts, mediating inter-ministerial conflicts)
(2) Shaping government policies (enacting preferred policies for societal concerns, averting non-preferred policies)
(3) Managing exogenous crises (strategizing crisis response, responding to crises in appropriate time)
(4) Securing national interests abroad (securing national interests toward other countries, securing national interests towards the European Union)
(5) Maintaining support of own party (maintaining support of party elites, maintaining support of party base)
(6) Maintaining support of parliamentary majority (maintaining support for government policy).

Each aspect was operationalized by a survey item and about 20 experts per country assessed the performance of the PM in a given cabinet along these aspects. The exact wording of all items is described in Table A1 in the Online Appendix. Next to the headings of the subdimensions in the table, we also report the correlations between individual indicators that make up a specific subdimension of prime-ministerial performance. The substantial but imperfect positive correlations reveal that the individual indicators validly capture a particular subdimension. The responses to subdimensions are weighted equally to create an additive index of prime-ministerial performance. A more detailed inspection of the internal consistency of the index is available from the authors in Florian Grotz et al. (2021: appendix D). Theoretically, the index ranges between 0 and 4. Empirically, we observe average ratings for prime-ministerial performance in a cabinet between 1.07 (Gyurcsany III in Hungary) and 3.45 (Nastase I in Romania, Orban II in Hungary).[4] The mean evaluation of all PMs is 2.48 and the standard deviation 0.53.[5]

Independent variables

Four different variables capture the number of reshuffles: the overall frequency of reshuffles, frequency of reshuffles in core portfolios, frequency of reshuffles of PM party ministers and frequency of reshuffles of coalition partner ministers. All

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Main Independent Variables

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Overall frequency of reshuffles	131	1.523	1.201	0	8.333
Frequency of reshuffles in core portfolios	131	0.519	0.502	0	2.553
Frequency of reshuffles of PM party ministers	131	0.608	0.823	0	4.975
Frequency of reshuffles of coalition partner ministers	131	0.459	0.597	0	3.788

variables build on a full list of cabinet members, including the names of all ministers, portfolio(s), party belonging and the time each person remained in a given position.[6] To operationalize the *overall reshuffles*, we counted the number of appointees who took over a portfolio from another person. This is a conservative estimate of reshuffles, since it excludes ministers without portfolio and those cases in which a new portfolio was first assigned to a person when the cabinet was already in office. To identify the *reshuffles in core portfolios*, we follow the same strategy but count only reassignments in the areas of defence, interior, foreign affairs, finance and economy. While the salience of portfolios certainly varies over time and between countries, these five portfolios appear to be of the highest relative importance (Krook and O'Brien 2012).[7] The variable *reshuffles of PM party ministers* contains the number of reassignments of ministers who belong to the party of the PM, while the *reshuffles of coalition partners' ministers* captures the number of reassignments of ministers who neither belong to the party of the PM nor are independent. To make the number of reshuffles comparable over cabinets with different durations (186 to 1,491 days), we standardized the count of reassignments per 200 days.[8]

Table 1 provides summary statistics for all independent variables. The overall frequency of reshuffles per 200 days ranges between 0 and 8.333. A total of 10 cabinets did not witness any reshuffles.[9] At the other extreme, the Ponta I cabinet reshuffled 8.333 per 200 days, which equals 9 replacements over its 216 days in office. On average, 1.695 positions were reshuffled within 200 days. For the nuanced counts of reshuffles, the average value and maxima are lower. Reshuffles of ministers who belong to the coalition partner occur least frequently, with an average of 0.459 replacements per 200 days, compared to 0.608 replacements of PM party ministers and 0.519 reshuffles in core portfolios. As Figure 1 clarifies, the distributions for all variables counting the frequency of reassignments are strongly skewed to the right, with only a few observations with very high counts. In particular for ministers not belonging to the PM's party and in charge of core portfolios, larger numbers of reassignments are extremely rare.

Control variables

All models include a series of control variables at the cabinet and country level that might impact both cabinet reshuffles and prime-ministerial performance. Moreover, we introduce country- and decade-fixed effects to capture differences in the relationship between reshuffles and prime-ministerial performance that
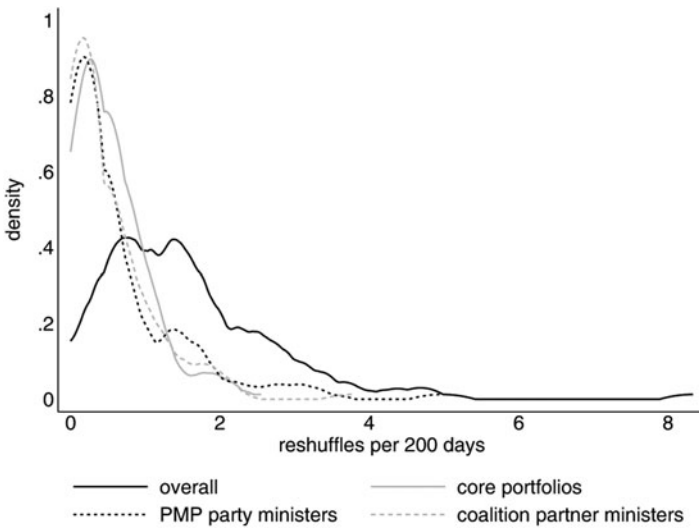
Figure 1. Kernel Density of the Frequency of the Four Variables for Reshuffling (Overall, Core Portfolios, PM Party Ministers, Coalition Partner Ministers)
Notes: Based on average data at cabinet level, bandwidth = 0.2.

occur due to country-specific factors or temporal dynamics. Additionally, we introduce further control variables as a robustness check.[10]

Overall reshuffles at same day

Multiple reshuffles at a single point in time might indicate that the PM is able to make a clean break after continuous struggles within cabinet. In such a scenario, we observe a comparably high number of reshuffles, but the liberating effect for the PM might actually enhance her performance in office. These rather rare but influential events might lead to an incorrect (depressed) estimation of the average linear effect of cabinet reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance. We therefore control for the timing of reshuffles by including a variable that counts the overall reassignments that occurred on the same day and identified the maximum value per cabinet. We observe that up to seven replacements took place the same day, but the average is considerably lower with 2.160 simultaneous events.

Single-party cabinets

Cabinet reshuffles are considerably more likely to occur in single-party than in coalition cabinets (Berlinski et al. 2010: 561; Huber and Martinez-Gallardo 2008; Kam and Indriðason 2005: 336). At the same time, it might be easier for PMs to perform successfully in single-party cabinets than coalitions, since governing with multiple parties entails higher transaction costs and higher complexity, as PMs are required to negotiate continuously with other coalition partners (Grotz and Weber 2012; King et al. 1990: 858). To take this factor into account, we introduce a control variable that takes the value '0' for coalition cabinets and '1' for single-party cabinets (based on Döring and Manow 2019).

PM appointment and dismissal powers

The PM's institutional powers to appoint and dismiss individual ministers are a key instrument for proactive cabinet reshuffles. However, the degree to which the PM can make such decisions without consulting the head of state or parliament varies across countries (Andeweg 2000: 381–382). At the same time, these powers also shape the PM's ability to perform successfully in office, since the institutional empowerment of multiple actors creates a more complex and uncertain environment (Elgie 2012; Goplerud and Schleiter 2016). We therefore include an additive index for prime-ministerial powers to reshuffle ministers based on Bairett (2015). The index is a summary of two measures: the power of the PM to appoint ministers (ranging between 0, where the head of state appoints cabinet without assembly confirmation, to 4, where the head of government appoints cabinet without assembly confirmation) and the power of the PM to dismiss ministers (ranging between 0, where the cabinet or ministers can be removed by the head of state only, and 4, where the assembly may not remove ministers). Hence, the index ranges from 0 to 8, with 0 indicating extremely limited powers, while 8 stands for unrestrained powers.

Number of ministers in a cabinet

Larger numbers of reshuffles are more likely to occur in cabinets with many ministers (Kam and Indriðason 2005: 343). At the same time, we expect that performing successfully, in particular managing cabinet conflicts, is considerably easier in small cabinets in which responsibilities are less likely to overlap. All models therefore control for the absolute number of ministerial posts per cabinet, approximated as the number of the first portfolios listed for a minister in a cabinet, excluding ministers without portfolio.

Empirical analysis

To study the effects of the frequency (of different types) of reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance, we first explore the bivariate relationship between these variables. Figure 2 displays scatter plots and fits for prime-ministerial performance and the four cabinet reshuffle variables. In all figures, the linear and quadratic fits differ considerably for large numbers of replacements, suggesting that the effects of these variables on prime-ministerial performance change as the number of reshuffles increases.

The top-left figure in Figure 2 displays the relationship between the overall number of reshuffles and prime-ministerial performance. The linear fit shows no clear relationship between the two variables ($r = -0.11$, $p = 0.23$), but the quadratic fit suggests a U-shaped relationship. PMs whose cabinets experience around three reshuffles perform less successfully than those who experience no reshuffles, but PMs leading cabinets with more than 5 reshuffles per 200 days perform considerably more successfully than those with fewer reshuffles. Such extremely high numbers of replacements are rare in the CEE context and occur only in Romania. One of these large turnovers took place in Adrian Nastase's second cabinet in connection with the country's accession to the European Union (Euroactiv 2004). In March 2004, the PM dismissed the minister for justice after EU officials severely
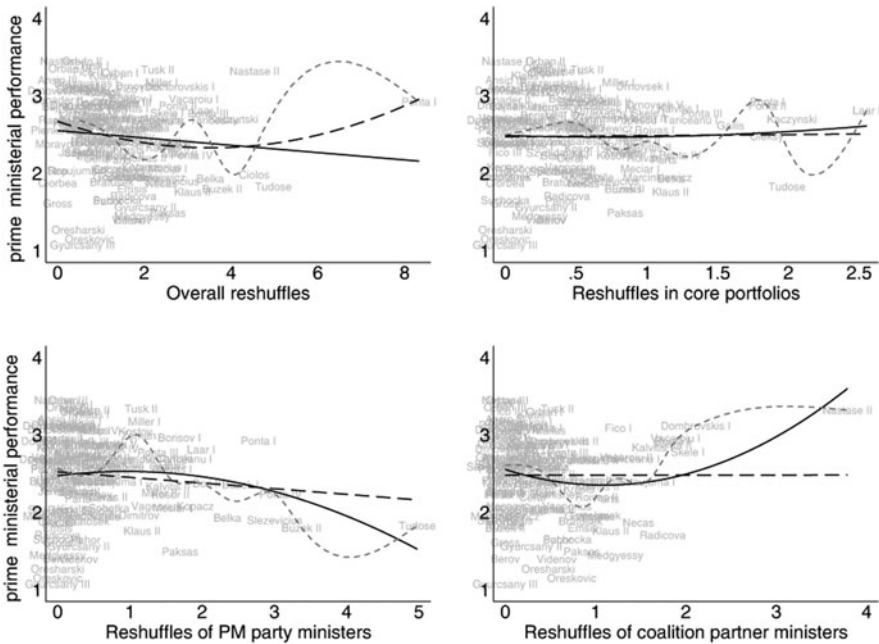
Figure 2. Scatter Plot and Fit of Prime-Ministerial Performance and the (a) Reshuffles, (b) Reshuffles in Core Portfolios, (c) Reshuffles of PM Party Ministers and (d) Reshuffles of Coalition Partner Ministers
Notes: Based on cabinet-level data. Solid black line shows linear fit. Dashed black line shows quadratic fit. Dashed grey line shows median spline.

criticized the lack of independence in the Romanian judiciary, and also reshuffled several other cabinet members to prove his ability to implement the radical reforms required to speed up the accession process. The largest reshuffle happened in Victor Ponta's first cabinet in summer 2013 when the fierce power struggle between the PM and President Traian Basescu culminated in a recall referendum against the president (Stan 2013). As the minister of the interior had to admit critical mistakes in the referendum vote count and stepped down on 6 August, Ponta took the initiative and changed six other ministers on the very same day to show that he still held the reins of power. These PMs were able to carry out a reshuffle on their own terms and increase their performance as a result, which reflects many such scenarios in Westminster democracies (Dewan and Dowding 2005). However, in the context of CEE, such cases of clean breaks by PMs are rather exceptional.

The top-right figure shows the bivariate relationship between reshuffles in core portfolios and prime-ministerial performance. The linear relationship between the two variables is close to zero ($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.88$) and the quadratic fit does not suggest a strong effect of replacements in core portfolios on prime-ministerial performance. The descriptive evidence hence leads us to reject Hypothesis 2.

The figures at the bottom illustrate the effects of replacement of ministers belonging to the PM's and the coalition partners' parties. The lower-left figure shows how replacements of ministers belonging to the PM party affect

performance. The linear fit indicates no relationship between the two variables
($r = -0.11$, $p = 0.20$), while the quadratic fit indicates that, as the number of
reshuffles of PM party ministers increases, PMs perform less successfully.
However, this pattern is driven by two idiosyncratic cases in which the PM's
position was further weakened by frequent ministerial turnover from his own
party. The first is a minority cabinet in Poland formed by the Election Action
Solidarity (AWS) that served under PM Jerzy Buzek from June 2000 until the
general elections in September 2001. Since the AWS was a heterogeneous alliance
of ideologically different organizations with Solidarity chairman Marian
Krzaklewski as its leader, Buzek did not proactively reshuffle his cabinet but was
rather faced with numerous ministerial replacements that were triggered by the
AWS parliamentary faction or by ministers joining new parties in the run-up to
the elections and leaving the cabinet (Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2002).
The other case is a cabinet in Romania led by Mihai Tudose who was installed
as PM in June 2017 by the powerful chairman of the Social Democratic Party
(PSD) Liviu Dragnea, who was not allowed to become head of government himself
due to a suspended prison sentence (Stan and Zaharia 2018). As several PSD min-
isterial positions were filled by loyal friends to Dragnea, Tudose replaced them in
order to emancipate himself from Dragnea's predominance. However, this cabinet
reshuffle did not strengthen the PM's position but rather increased tensions
between him and the PSD leader, which eventually resulted in Dragnea replacing
Tudose in early January 2018.

The lower-right figure, which displays the effect of reshuffles of ministers
belonging to coalition partners' parties on prime-ministerial performance, shows
just the opposite pattern. There is no linear relationship between PM's success in
office and this type of reshuffling ($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.99$), but the quadratic fit suggests
a U-shaped relationship. Increasing numbers of reshuffles coincide with decreasing
prime-ministerial performance, until a turning point at around 1.5 reshuffles per
200 days, at which point the direction of the relationship turns from negative to
positive. Again, frequent reassignments are extremely rare and only observed in
the second Nastase cabinet mentioned above. The quadratic bivariate evidence
hence lends support for Hypothesis 3, with the exception that some outliers
might occur.

To test whether the observed patterns change when considering potential con-
founders, we estimated multiple linear regression models. We include square
terms for all reassignment variables following the bivariate finding that the re-
lationship between reshuffles and performance is likely to be non-linear. Moreover,
we calculate cluster-robust standard errors in which individual expert ratings
($N = 2{,}572$) are nested in cabinets ($N = 131$), as recommended for estimated depend-
ent variables by Jeffrey Lewis and Drew Linzer (2005). This allows us to capture the
uncertainty about the exact performance of PMs inherent to the expert data.

Table 2 displays results for two regression models. The first model includes the
overall number of reshuffles as well as reshuffles in core portfolios, while the second
one includes the variables capturing reshuffles of ministers belonging to the PM's
or coalition partners' parties. We do not introduce all explanatory variables into a
single model, since the latter perfectly predict the former.

Table 2 Linear Regression of Different Types of Reshuffles on Prime-Ministerial Performance

	Model 1 b/(SE)		Model 2 b/(SE)	
Explanatory variables				
Overall reshuffles	−0.323*	(0.128)		
Overall reshuffles (sq)	0.036**	(0.011)		
Reshuffles in core portfolios	0.214	(0.205)		
Reshuffles in core portfolios (sq)	−0.040	(0.084)		
Reshuffles of PM party ministers			0.057	(0.120)
Reshuffles of PM party ministers (sq)			−0.060*	(0.028)
Reshuffles of coalition partner ministers			−0.616***	(0.171)
Reshuffles of coalition partner ministers (sq)			0.220***	(0.054)
Control variables				
Overall reshuffles at same day	0.068	(0.042)	0.053	(0.038)
Single-party cabinet	−0.019	(0.193)	−0.194	(0.193)
PM appointment & dismissal power	0.145	(0.111)	0.088	(0.096)
Number of ministers in cabinet	−0.012	(0.021)	−0.009	(0.019)
Constant	1.899**	(0.672)	2.083***	(0.608)
Observations	2,509		2,509	
R^2	0.069		0.106	
Adjusted R^2	0.062		0.099	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. A confidence level of $p < 0.10$ does not occur. Standard errors are clustered at the cabinet level. Country- and period-fixed effects are omitted from presentation for reasons of simplification.

Starting with the general effect of reshuffles, Model 1 supports the observation based on Figure 2 that reshuffles decrease prime-ministerial performance. Compared to the bivariate analysis, the multivariate models demonstrate a more pronounced negative linear effect of cabinet reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance. The stepwise inclusion of control variables into multivariate model indicates that controlling for the number of reshuffles at the same day particularly clarifies this effect. However, for the few cases in which large numbers of reshuffles occur, this effect turns positive. Figure 3 reveals how the linear and quadratic effects play out together by showing the predicted probability and marginal effects plots. Cabinets without any reshuffles perform considerably better than those with a few reassignments. If the number of overall reshuffles in a cabinet increases from 0 to 1.2 per 200 days (which equals one standard deviation), prime-ministerial performance decreases about 0.33 points (which equals about two-thirds of a standard deviation). However, with every additional reshuffle, the disadvantage for prime-ministerial performance emerging from ministerial reassignments shrinks, and reaches 0 by about 4.5 replacements. For the four cases that lie above this threshold, the model predicts increases in performance if the number of reshuffles increases
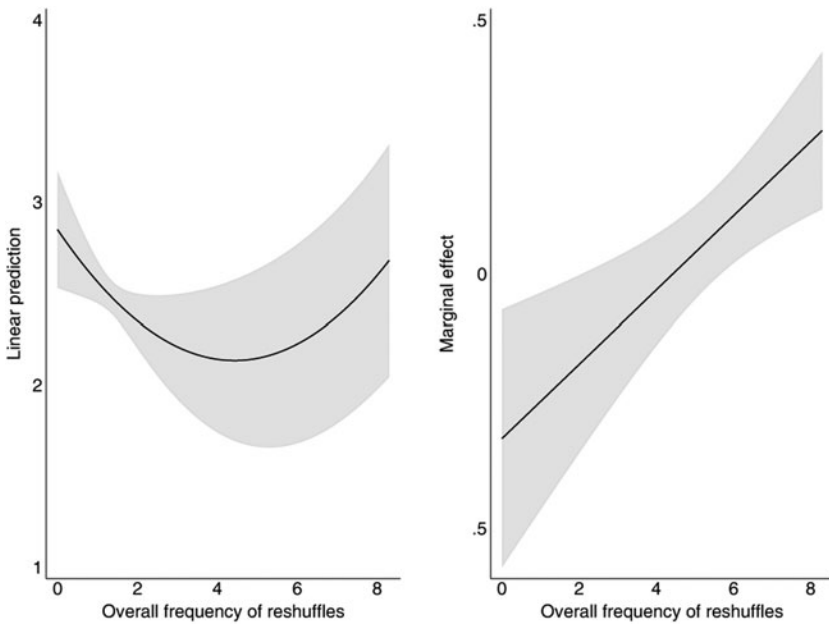
Figure 3. Linear Prediction and Marginal Effects Plot of Overall Reshuffles of Ministers (Based on Model 1)
Notes: Grey shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals.

even further. The large confidence intervals show that this effect for large values of replacements is subject to high levels of uncertainty. However, for the large majority of cases the model lends support for Hypothesis 1, which proposes that higher levels of ministerial turnover lead to lower levels of prime-ministerial performance.

Models 1 and 2 also underpin the descriptive finding that there is no clear link between reshuffles in core portfolios and prime-ministerial performance. While the coefficient of the linear effect is slightly positive, it remains weak and does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. This finding leads us to reject Hypothesis 2, which suggested that the more core portfolios are reshuffled, the less successfully will a PM perform.

Turning to reshuffles of PM party and coalition partner ministers, the regression model shows distinct effects depending on the type of reassignments. Increases in the number of reshuffles of ministers belonging to the PM's party appear to have no clear effect on prime-ministerial performance. Increases in the number of reshuffles of ministers belonging to the coalition partner, by contrast, have a strong negative linear and a weak positive quadratic effect on prime-ministerial performance. Figure 4 clarifies how the combination of the linear and quadratic effects impacts prime-ministerial performance, by zooming into cases with zero to 1.8 reshuffles, which is the large majority of all cases. Within this range, increasing numbers of reassignments of ministers belonging to the PM's party do not significantly change how successfully PMs perform in office. Indeed, a higher fluctuation of ministers belonging to the coalition partners decreases prime-ministerial performance significantly. If, for instance, the number of reshuffles of coalition partner ministers
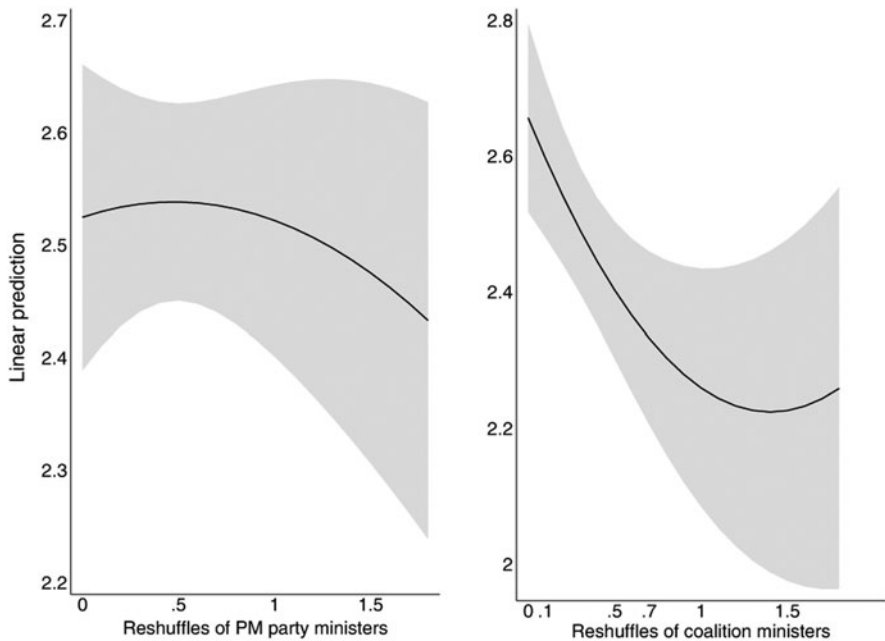
Figure 4. Linear Prediction of Reshuffles of PM Party and Coalition Partner Ministers (Based on Model 2)
Notes: Grey shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. Marginal effects plots of PM party and coalition partner ministers on prime-ministerial performance are displayed in Figure A1 in the Online Appendix. Linear predictions and marginal effect plot over the whole range of observed values for reshuffles are displayed in Figure A2 and A3 in the Online Appendix.

per 200 days increases from zero to 0.82 (one standard deviation), the predicted value for prime-ministerial performance increases 0.36 points (two-thirds of a standard deviation). Even though the weak negative effect we expected to find for reshuffles of PM party ministers did not occur, this pattern lends support to Hypothesis 3. Overall, these insights clarify that the negative effect of overall reshuffles observed above is mostly driven by reshuffles of coalition partner ministers.

Turning to the explanatory power of the models, the adjusted R-squared values range between 0.08 and 0.10, indicating that, beyond reshuffles, a broad variety of factors driving prime-ministerial performance deserve further attention in future research.

These findings are robust to a series of modifications of the models. To begin with, causality might be inverse, with low prime-ministerial performance motivating PMs to reshuffle a lot to strengthen their position in cabinet when they are under political pressure. If this were the case, the number of reshuffles actively enforced by PMs should be strongly linked to prime-ministerial performance, while reshuffles that the PM has to accept more passively (e.g. occurring for minister's personal reasons such as health issues) should have no clear link to prime-ministerial performance. To capture this dynamic, we coded a variable that identifies active and passive reshuffles and introduced it as an additional variable into our model.[11] Overall, passive reshuffles appear to occur much more frequently in CEE than active reshuffles (62.89% compared to 37.11%). On average,

a cabinet experiences 0.95 passive reshuffles per 200 days, but only 0.56 active ones, meaning that reshuffles that PMs cannot enforce are twice as frequent as those enforced by the PM. The results of the additional models indicate that there is no clear relationship between prime-ministerial performance and the frequency with which active reshuffles occur – while the effects of overall reshuffles and of coalition partner ministers remain stable if this variable is introduced into the models (see Test 1.1 Table A2 and 2.1 in Table A3 in the Online Appendix). This insight leads us to conclude that reshuffles affect prime-ministerial performance, not the other way around.

Moreover, we introduced a series of control variables to capture further dynamics at the cabinet level. In these tests, we first take into account that portfolios might move from one party to another during a reshuffle, thereby changing the power balance within cabinet and possibly shaping the chances of PMs to perform successfully in office. We introduce a confounder that counts the number of reshuffles that involve changes in party composition and in which the portfolio moves from a coalition partner to the PM's party (see Test 1.2 Table A2 and 2.2 in Table A3).[12] Second, we investigate whether the reshuffle of independent ministers confounds the effects of the reshuffles of ministers belonging to the PM's party and coalition partners (see 2.3 in Table A3).[13] Third, we add a dummy variable to the models that takes the value '1' if not a single replacement occurs and '0' for all other cases (see Test 1.3 Table A2 and 2.4 in Table A3). Possibly, the absence of any reshuffles might be a unique scenario that boosts prime-ministerial performance and leverages predicted values for low values of replacements as well. Fourth, we include a continuous variable counting the number of coalition parties instead of a dummy variable for single-party cabinets (see Test 1.4 Table A2 and 2.5 in Table A3). This modification allows us to identify the changes that occur if the number of coalition partners increases. In a fifth test, a binary variable identifies majority cabinets as opposed to minority cabinets to uncover whether the more reliable parliamentary support of majority cabinets impacts the observed patterns (see Test 1.5 Table A2 and 2.6 in Table A3), while a sixth test identifies such dynamics for surplus coalitions compared to non-surplus coalitions (see Test 1.6 Table A2 and 2.7 in Table A3). Seventh, we add a binary variable for post-electoral cabinets as opposed to replacement cabinets to the models (Grotz and Weber 2017), to see whether the effect of reshuffles might be driven by different dynamics in these settings (see Test 1.7 Table A2 and 2.8 in Table A3). Eighth, the ideological range between the cabinet parties allows us to test for omitted variable bias induced by the potential for political conflict emerging between coalition partners (Jäckle 2013: 36). For that purpose, we make use of data from Holger Döring and Philip Manow (2019) (see Test 1.8 Table A2 and Test 2.9 Table A3). For the model studying the differential effects of reshuffles of ministers belonging to the PM's party compared to the coalition partners, we also interact the ideological range with the effect of reshuffles of coalition partner ministers to see whether the performance of PMs presiding over cabinets that span a broader ideological spectrum reacts more sensitively to reshuffles of ministers belonging to the coalition partners (see Test 2.10 in Table A3). Last, an additional test includes a control variable that captures whether a PM was party leader while serving as head of government. Party leadership is a key resource for successful performance in office (Grotz et al. 2021), but also impacts the

PM's ability to reassign ministers, in particular those belonging to her own party (see Test 1.9 Table A2 and 2.11 in Table A3).

We also tested for a potential bias emerging through missing country-level factors. For that purpose, we introduce a control variable that identifies the appointment and dismissal powers of the state president (based on data from Bairett 2015) (see Test 1.10 Table A4 and 2.12 in Table A5). The variable is created by summing up the scores for presidential powers in cabinet formation (ranging from 0, where the head of state cannot appoint the cabinet, to 4, where the head of state appoints the cabinet without need for assembly confirmation) and cabinet dismissal (ranging from 0, where ministers may be removed only by the assembly, to 4, where the head of state is unrestrained in dismissing ministers). Similar to the index of prime-ministerial powers, it ranges between 0 and 8, where 8 indicates unlimited powers of the state president in cabinet formation. Possibly, the veto power executed by the president might capture the limitations of PMs' powers more accurately than their own rights (Bucur 2017; Fischer et al. 2012). Additionally, we checked whether it makes a difference to our results if we consider whether parliament holds the power to dismiss individual ministers, using data from Florian Grotz and Ferdinand Müller-Rommel (2011) (see Test 1.11 Table A4 and 2.13 in Table A5). Moreover, we added three variables that capture the economic context the year before the cabinet came into power – a key factor determining the ability of PMs to perform successfully (Brändström 2015; Hansen et al. 2013): GDP change (based on the Comparative Political Dataset), unemployment rate (based on the International Labour Organization database) and inflation rate (based on the World Bank) (see Test 1.12–1.14 Table A4 and 2.14–2.16 in Table A5).

In a last set of robustness tests, we introduce some modifications to the sample to see whether the effects are driven by specific cases. To begin with, we include two cabinets in which both the PMs and all ministers had no party membership (Berov in Bulgaria and Ciolos in Romania). The introduction of the single-party cabinet control variable causes their exclusion, but omitting this variable from the analysis and including these two cases does not modify the results (see Test 1.15 Table A4 and 2.17 in Table A5). Moreover, we exclude cabinets in which PMs were selected by certain government parties without being formal members of those parties (Oresharski in Bulgaria; Orešković in Croatia; Bajnai and Medgyessy in Hungary; Skele I in Latvia; and Ciolos, Isarescu, Vacaroiu I and II in Romania).[14] In these cases, the relationship between PMs and party-affiliated ministers might follow different logics (see Test 1.16 Table A4 and 2.18 in Table A5).

Tables A2 to A5 in the Online Appendix present the results for all robustness checks. The strengths of the key coefficients and their level of statistical significance do not show any substantial changes compared to the models presented in the main text.

As a final step in our analysis, we look for support for the causal mechanisms we proposed as link between the reassignment of ministers belonging to the PM or the coalition partners' parties and prime-ministerial performance. Earlier in this article, we argued that reshuffles of ministers from other coalition parties undermine the PM's ability to perform successfully in office, because the PM has little influence over who is selected for these positions. The consequence is that conflict within the cabinet becomes more frequent and the PMs' ability to shape government policies as well as to maintain the support of the parliamentary majority might
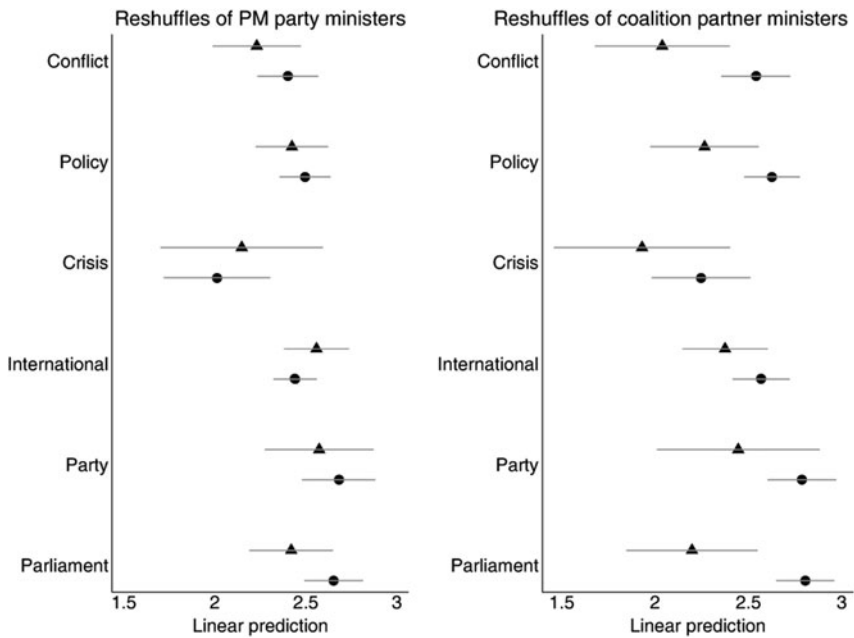
Figure 5. Linear Prediction of Reshuffles of PM Party Ministers (0/1.8) and Coalition Partner Ministers (0/1.8) on Subdimensions of Prime-Ministerial Performance

Notes: The circle indicates zero reshuffles in 200 days, the triangle indicates 1.8 reshuffles per 200 days. Models are presented in Table A3 in the Online Appendix. All models include the control variables presented in Table 2, standard errors are clustered at the cabinet level and country- and period-fixed effects.

diminish. To underpin the plausibility of this causal mechanism, we estimated models predicting the success of PMs on the six subdimensions that together form the index of prime-ministerial performance. We follow the same modelling strategy as outlined for the main models. The six models are presented in Online Appendix Table A6. Figure 5 visualizes these effects by displaying the predicted value for the respective subdimensions of prime-ministerial performance for cases with zero compared to 1.8 reshuffles per 200 days.

Regarding reshuffles of ministers belonging to the PM's party, the linear prediction for the subdimensions of prime-ministerial performance does not differ substantially if not a single or 1.8 ministers were replaced per 200 days. This finding is consistent with the null-effect of this type of reshuffle on overall performance. By contrast, reassignments of ministers belonging to the coalition partners impact multiple subdimensions. To begin with, the PM's ability to settle cabinet conflicts – that is, conflicts between individual ministers or between the PM and ministers – is lower if larger numbers of coalition partner ministers are reshuffled. Additionally, the PM's ability to shape government policies by enacting her preferred policies for major societal concerns and by averting non-preferred policies decreases considerably. Moreover, an increase in the number of reshuffles of coalition partner ministers leads to a significant change in the PM's ability to maintain support of the parliamentary majority. With a difference of about 0.60 points, this gap is substantial and statistically significantly different from zero.

By contrast, we observe no comparable effect of reshuffling of coalition partner ministers on the PM's ability to maintain support of her own party; performance on this subdimension decreases by 0.34 points if 1.8 compared to no reshuffles occur, but the effect does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Given that reshuffles of coalition party ministers only have indirect consequences for the PM's party, this finding is logically consistent with the causal mechanism we propose. Lastly, reshuffles in core portfolios do not have an effect on the PM's ability to manage crisis and perform at the international level that reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. In these two subdimensions of prime-ministerial performance, PMs fulfil their tasks more independently, with less dependence on the expertise of the ministers and the parties involved in the government. The absence of an empirical link between reshuffles of ministers belonging to coalition partners on the one hand and the PM's success in managing crises and protecting national interests abroad on the other hand is therefore again consistent with the causal mechanism proposed above. Overall and at large, these patterns support our theoretical proposition that the link between the reassignment of ministers belonging to coalition partners and prime-ministerial performance works through increasing levels of conflict between PMs and coalition partner ministers.[15]

Conclusion

In parliamentary democracies, government ministers are in charge of directing their departments in accordance with the will of the PM, who runs the state affairs. Ministerial turnover may thus affect the operation of parliamentary governments in general and the performance of PMs in particular. While many studies have explored when and why ministers are reshuffled, the consequences of such reshuffles have received surprisingly little attention. Therefore, this article has investigated the effects of cabinet reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance in the post-communist democracies of CEE, which have been characterized by a relatively high degree of political dynamics and government instability. In this region, frequent ministerial turnover has a negative impact on PMs to fulfil their office tasks successfully. This effect is driven by the turnover of ministers belonging to other coalition parties, which reduces prime-ministerial performance. These results hold independently of whether a ministerial turnover was actively enforced by the PM or happened outside her influence. Therefore, cabinet reshuffles in CEE cannot be regarded as last-ditch moves of PMs to demonstrate their leadership and thus be indicative of their weak performance but rather seem to have a distinct, detrimental effect on the fulfilment of prime-ministerial tasks.

Overall, our findings imply that the partisan dimension of cabinet reshuffles is decisive for prime-ministerial performance in post-communist democracies. This insight corresponds to other recent research, which showed that cabinet decision-making in most CEE countries follows the 'coalition compromise model' in which legislation in each policy domain requires the consent of all government parties (Bergman et al. 2019: 555–558). Our analysis suggests that prime-ministerial performance suffers from the turnover of ministers from other coalition parties because they are in charge of implementing the joint government policies in their domains but are hardly under the PM's political control.

Against this background, the impact of ministerial reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance could be further explored in various ways. To begin with, our expert-based measurement of different functional dimensions of prime-ministerial performance might be complemented by public opinion surveys on prime-ministerial approval that are carried out on a regular basis in the individual CEE countries. These quantitative approaches could be followed by process-tracing studies that seek to uncover the precise sequence of events following a cabinet reshuffle.

One might also look into the interaction between reshuffles and other factors to see if their influence on prime-ministerial performance is more or less pronounced under certain conditions. For instance, the power relation within the coalition – that is, whether one party is clearly larger than the others – might shape the effect of turnover of coalition partner ministers. Likewise, the economic situation might moderate the relationship between prime-ministerial performance and reshuffles in core portfolios, as the budgets of ministers in these portfolios might increase, making it harder to replace them.

Moreover, it remains open whether our results are only confined to post-communist countries or are of a more general nature. To answer this question one could explore the effects of cabinet reshuffles on prime-ministerial performance in other contexts. Relevant cases include Westminster democracies such as the UK where not only is the overall number of ministerial changes relatively high, but active reshuffles are particularly frequent (Thompson 2020). Finally, future studies could expand the scope of our article by investigating the influence of ministerial turnover on government performance in different policy domains (Alexiadou 2015). In this regard, special attention may be paid to the career attributes of ministers that shape their office stability (Morgan-Collins and Meyer-Sahling 2021) but could also impact their policy influence. This aspect seems to be particularly relevant for CEE democracies where a relatively high number of technocrats and political outsiders have been recruited into cabinet (Semenova 2018, 2020). Exploring to what extent the policy performance of individual ministers matches the performance of the respective PMs might contribute considerably to a more comprehensive and differentiated picture of how political executives work both in CEE and in other world regions.

Notes

1 We use the terms 'ministerial turnover' and 'cabinet reshuffles' interchangeably.
2 Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The starting years vary between the countries depending on the timing of democratization and state independence.

3 All materials necessary for replication were published on Harvard Dataverse (https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/KBWADW).

4 The concept of prime-ministerial performance employed in this article focuses on the functioning of parliamentary democracy, i.e. the connection between voters, parliaments and the executives (Grotz et al. 2021; Strøm 2000). This does not preclude that a well-performing PM like Victor Orbán supported by a single-party majority violates fundamental rule-of-law standards and thus affects the overall level of liberal democracy.

5 Calculated based on average over experts per cabinet.

6 We retrieved this list from www.kolumbus.fi/taglarsson and excluded all heads of government and deputy heads of government without portfolio. For those cases in which reshuffles occur, we cross-checked the names, portfolios and time in office with the EJPR Political Data Yearbook: https://ejpr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/20478852?tabActivePane=undefined.

7 Krook and O'Brien (2012) did not identify economy as a core portfolio. However, given the context under which the CEE countries operate, we are convinced that this policy area fulfils the criterion of extremely high relative importance.

8 For this, we multiply the number of reassignments with 200/cabinet duration.

9 Ansip III, Bajnai, Drnovsek VI, Gross, Moravcik, Oresharski, Plenkovic I, Rop and Sanader II.

10 We do not control for cabinet duration, since this variable is strongly endogenous with prime-ministerial performance, i.e. our dependent variable.

11 To code a reshuffle as either actively enforced by a PM or happening outside of the PM's influence (passive role of PM), we consulted media reports surrounding the event of the reshuffle. We code reshuffles as cases of active PM involvement if (1) the PM changes several ministers within a larger reshuffle, (2) the PM changes a minister due to scandal or poor performance, against the will of the minister (by a formal request or by initiating a no-confidence vote in a minister), (3) a minister is reshuffled within a cabinet or (4) a minister takes up a position outside of cabinet that is controlled by the PM (ambassador, central bank governor, EU commissioner etc.).

12 Changes in the party responsibilities are infrequent and occur only in 13.11% of all reshuffles, and in only one-third of these cases does the office move from another party to the PM party.

13 Reshuffles of independent ministers occur on average 0.45 times in 200 days, which equals the frequency of reshuffles of own party ministers.

14 We obtained the list of PMs who were not formal party members from www.kolumbus.fi/taglarsson, and cross-checked it with EJPR Political Data Yearbook: https://ejpr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/20478852?tabActivePane=undefined.

15 For these additional models, we also calculate a robustness test taking the occurrence of active and passive reshuffles into account (see Table A7 in the Online Appendix). In parallel to the results of the models for overall performance, we find no link between active reshuffles and prime-ministerial performance and hence no indication for inverse causality. Moreover, we test whether dismissal powers of parliament induce omitted variable bias, but find no indication (see Table A8).

References

Alexiadou D (2015) Ideologues, Partisans, and Loyalists: Cabinet Ministers and Social Welfare Reform in Parliamentary Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies* **48**(8), 1051–1086. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015574880.

Andeweg R (2000) Ministers as Double Agents? The Delegation Process between Cabinet and Ministers. *European Journal of Political Research* **37**, 377–395. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.00518.

Bairett RL (2015) Executive Power and Media Freedom in Central and Eastern Europe. *Comparative Political Studies* **48**(10), 1260–1292. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015576744.

Baylis TA (2007) Embattled Executives: Prime Ministerial Weakness in East Central Europe. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* **40**(1), 81–106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2006.12.007.

Bergman T, Ersson S and Hellström J (2015) Government Formation and Breakdown in Western and Central Eastern Europe. *Comparative European Politics* **13**(3), 345–375. https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2013.27.

Bergman T, Ilonszki G and Müller WC (2019) The Coalition Life-Cycle in Central Eastern Europe. In Bergman T, Ilonszki G and Müller WC (eds), *Coalition Governance in Central Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 522–576.

Berlinski S, Dewan T and Dowding K (2010) The Impact of Individual and Collective Performance on Ministerial Tenure. *Journal of Politics* **72**(2), 559–571. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609990843.

Bovens M, Brandsma GJ and Thesingh D (2015) Political Death and Survival in the Netherlands: Explaining Resignations of Individual Cabinet Members 1946–2010. *Acta Politica* **50**(2), 127–150. https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2015.1.

Brändström A (2015) Crisis Accountability: Ministerial Resignations in Sweden. *Scandinavian Political Studies* **38**(3), 301–320. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12045.

Bright J, Döring H and Little C (2015) Ministerial Importance and Survival in Government: Tough at the Top? *West European Politics* **38**(3), 441–464. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.993166.

Bucur C (2017) Cabinet Ministers under Competing Pressures: Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Political Parties in Semi-Presidential Systems. *Comparative European Politics* **15**(2), 180–203. https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2015.1.

Dewan T and Dowding K (2005) The Corrective Effect of Ministerial Resignations on Government Popularity. *American Journal of Political Science* **49**(1), 46–56. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2005.00109.x.

Dewan T and Hortala-Vallve R (2011) The Three As of Government Formation: Appointment, Allocation, and Assignment. *American Journal of Political Science* **55**(3), 610–627. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00519.x.

Dewan T and Myatt DP (2007) Scandal, Protection, and Recovery in the Cabinet. *American Political Science Review* **101**(1), 63–77. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055407070025.

Dewan T and Myatt DP (2010) The Declining Talent Pool of Government. *American Journal of Political Science* **54**(2), 267–286. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00430.x.

Döring H and Manow P (2019) Parliaments and Governments Database (ParlGov): Information on Parties, Elections and Cabinets in Modern Democracies. https://www.parlgov.org.

Druckman JN and Warwick PV (2005) The Missing Piece: Measuring Portfolio Salience in Western European Parliamentary Democracies. *European Journal of Political Research* **44**(1), 17–42. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2005.00217.x.

Elgie R (2012) Political Leadership in Old and New Democracies. In Helms L (ed.), *Comparative Political Leadership*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 272–291.

Euroactiv (2004) Romania's Nastase reshuffles cabinet to breathe new life into talks with EU. 9 March. www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/romania-s-nastase-reshuffles-cabinet-to-breathe-new-life-into-talks-with-eu.

Fischer J, Dowding K and Dumont P (2012) The Duration and Durability of Cabinet Ministers. *International Political Science Review* **33**(5), 505–519. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512112462971.

Goplerud M and Schleiter P (2016) An Index of Assembly Dissolution Powers. *Comparative Political Studies* **49**(4), 427–456. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015612393.

Grotz F and Müller-Rommel F (eds) (2011) *Regierungssysteme in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Die neuen EU-Staaten im Vergleich*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Grotz F and Weber T (2012) Party Systems and Government Stability in Central and Eastern Europe. *World Politics* **64**(4), 699–740. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887112000196.

Grotz F and Weber T (2017) Prime Ministerial Tenure in Central and Eastern Europe: The Role of Party Leadership and Cabinet Experience. In Harfst P, Kubbe I and Poguntke T (eds), *Parties, Governments and Elites: The Comparative Study of Democracy*. Wiesbaden: Springer, pp. 225–244.

Grotz F et al. (2021) How Political Careers Affect Prime Ministerial Performance: Evidence from Central and Eastern Europe. *Comparative Political Studies* **54**(11), 1907–1938. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414021997174.

Hansen ME et al. (2013) Portfolio Saliency and Ministerial Turnover: Dynamics in Scandinavian Postwar Cabinets. *Scandinavian Political Studies* **36**(3), 227–248. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12004.

Huber JD (1998) How Does Cabinet Instability Affect Political Performance? Portfolio Volatility and Health Care Cost Containment in Parliamentary Democracies. *American Political Science Review* **92**(3), 577–591. https://doi.org/10.2307/2585482.

Huber JD and Martinez-Gallardo C (2008) Replacing Cabinet Ministers: Patterns of Ministerial Stability in Parliamentary Democracies. *American Political Science Review* **102**(2), 169–180. https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305540808012X.

Indriðason IH and Kam CJ (2008) Cabinet Reshuffles and Ministerial Drift. *British Journal of Political Science* **38**(4), 621–656. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000318.

Jäckle S (2013) Ministerial Turnover in the German Länder (1991–2010). *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* **7**(1), 27–48. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-013-0144-y.

Jasiewicz K and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz A (2002) Poland. *European Journal of Political Research* **41**(3–4), 1057–1067. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.t01-1-00063.

Kam C and Indriðason I (2005) The Timing of Cabinet Reshuffles in Five Westminster Parliamentary Systems. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* **30**(3), 327–363. https://doi.org/10.3162/036298005X201581.

King G et al. (1990) A Unified Model of Cabinet Dissolution in Parliamentary Democracies. *American Journal of Political Science* **34**(3), 846–871. https://doi.org/10.2307/2111401.

Krook ML and O'Brien DZ (2012) All the President's Men? The Appointment of Female Cabinet Ministers Worldwide. *Journal of Politics* **74**(3), 840–855. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381612000382.

Laver M and Shepsle KA (1990) Coalitions and Cabinet Government. *American Political Science Review* **84**(3), 873–890. https://doi.org/10.2307/1962770.

Lewis JB and Linzer DA (2005) Estimating Regression Models in Which the Dependent Variable Is Based on Estimates. *Political Analysis* **13**(4), 345–364. https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpi026.

Miwa H (2018) Can Reshuffles Improve Government Popularity? Evidence from a 'Pooling the Polls' Analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly* **82**(2), 322–342. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfy015.

Morgan-Collins M and Meyer-Sahling JH (2021) Stepping out of the Shadow of the Past: How Career Attributes Shape Ministerial Stability in Post-Communist Democracies. *East European Politics* **37**(2), 311–331. https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2020.1781096.

Muller WC, Bergman T and Ilonszki G (2019) Extending the Coalition Life-Cycle Approach to Central Eastern Europe – An Introduction. In Bergman T, Ilonszki G and Müller WC (eds), *Coalition Governance in Central Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–59.

Rose R (1971) The Making of Cabinet Ministers. *British Journal of Political Science* **1**(4), 393–414. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400009212.

Saalfeld T (2000) Members of Parliament and Governments in Western Europe: Agency Relations and Problems of Oversight. *European Journal of Political Research* **37**, 353–376. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.00517.

Samuels DJ and Shugart MS (2010) *Presidents, Parties, and Prime Ministers: How the Separation of Powers Affects Party Organization and Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sedelius T and Mashtaler O (2013) Two Decades of Semi-Presidentialism: Issues of Intra-Executive Conflict in Central and Eastern Europe 1991–2011. *East European Politics* **29**(2), 109–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2012.748662.

Semenova E (2018) Recruitment and Careers of Ministers in Central Eastern Europe and Baltic Countries. In Costa Pinto A (ed.), *Technocratic Ministers and Political Leadership in European Democracies*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 173–202.

Semenova E (2020) Expert Ministers in New Democracies: Delegation, Communist Legacies, or Technocratic Populism? *Politics and Governance* **8**(4), 590–602. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v8i4.3397.

Somer-Topcu Z and Williams LK (2008) Survival of the Fittest? Cabinet Duration in Postcommunist Europe. *Comparative Politics* **40**(3), 313–329. https://doi.org/10.5129/001041508X12911362383075.

Stan L (2013) Romania. *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* **52**, 196–207. https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.12028.

Stan L and Zaharia R (2018) Romania: Political Development and Data for 2017. *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook* **57**, 244–254. https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.12197.

Strangio P, 't Hart P and Walter J (eds) (2013) *Understanding Prime Ministerial Performance: Comparative Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Strøm K (2000) Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies. *European Journal of Political Research* **37**(3), 261–289. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:100706480332.

Strøm K, Müller WC and Smith DM (2010) Parliamentary Control of Coalition Governments. *Annual Review of Political Science* **13**, 517–535. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.071105.104340.

't Hart P and Schelfhout D (2016) Assessing Prime Ministerial Performance in a Multiparty Democracy: The Dutch Case. *Acta Politica* **51**(2), 153–172. https://doi.org/10.1057/ap.2015.2.

Thompson L (2020) Ministerial Turnover and Why Reshuffles Matter for Parliament. *Political Quarterly* **91**(2), 457–460. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12832.