

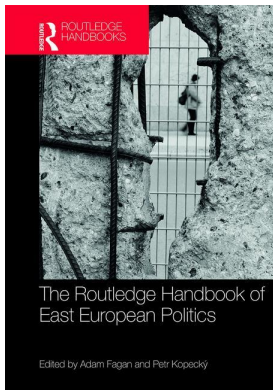
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### Elections and Electoral Participation

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## PART III

# Elections and political participation



## 11

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL  
PARTICIPATION*Sarah Birch*

The peoples of Central and Eastern Europe have participated in elections for over a hundred years; most of them have participated in truly democratic elections for no more than twenty-five years. Elections were first introduced in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires in the late nineteenth century. These elections employed weighted suffrages, however, and they were largely indirect. Following the First World War, elections of varying quality were held throughout Eastern Europe in the new and newly reconfigured states that emerged from this conflict and its aftermath, though open electoral competition was curtailed in much of the region as right-wing authoritarian governments assumed power.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, communist regimes modelled on the Soviet Union emerged in Central and South Eastern Europe. Elections were regularly held under communism, but they were either entirely uncompetitive, as in the Soviet Union, or they involved effectively non-partisan choice, as in Yugoslavia. Elections in communist Europe were all governed by absolute majority rules, and implemented in single-member or multi-member districts. Turnout was nowhere formally compulsory, but the citizenries of these states experienced varying degrees of pressure to turn out at the polls. With the exception of late-communist Poland (which experienced grassroots electoral boycotts), turnout during this period was high. Rather than being mechanisms through which citizens held their leaders to account, elections were mobilising devices through which the communist states indoctrinated, monitored, and manipulated their populations (Birch, 2013; Furtak, 1990; Pravda, 1978).

Only following the momentous events of 1989–1991 were free, fair, and credible elections attempted across the Eastern European region, and these attempts have been of varying quality (Herron, 2009; Way, 2005). Today Eastern Europe displays perhaps the greatest variation in electoral integrity of any region of the world, from Belarus, which holds some of the most problematic elections, to Estonia, which has some of the most democratic.

The first major shift in the post-communist move towards competitive elections involved the introduction of multi-party politics and the adoption of electoral systems suited to fostering political party development. The result of this process was in most cases the rapid abandonment of communist-era absolute majority systems in favour of proportional representation (PR) and mixed systems. The dynamics of so-called founding elections – the first elections held after the inauguration of a transition from communism – proved fertile ground for scholarly analysis (for example, Colomer, 1995; Ishiyama, 1996; Turner, 1993). Once their transitions from communism

Table 11.1 Electoral systems in Eastern Europe (most recent parliamentary elections)

<i>State</i>	<i>Year of most recent election</i>	<i>Size of chamber</i>	<i>Electoral system</i>	<i>Single-party threshold (first tier PR seats)*</i>	<i>Preferences in PR list voting?</i>	<i>Success requirement in single-member seats</i>
Albania	2013	140	PR	3%*	No	–
Belarus	2012	110	SMD	–	–	Absolute majority
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2014	42	PR	None	Yes	–
Bulgaria	2014	240	Mixed (87% PR)	4%	Yes	–
Croatia	2015	151	PR	5%	No	–
Czech Republic	2013	200	PR	5%*	Yes	–
Estonia	2015	101	PR	None**	Yes	–
Hungary	2014	199	Mixed (47% PR)	5%	No	Plurality
Kosovo	2014	120	PR	5%	Yes	–
Latvia	2014	100	PR	5%	Yes	–
Lithuania	2012	141	Mixed (50% PR)	5%*	Yes	Absolute majority
Macedonia	2014	123	PR	None	No	–
Moldova	2014	101	PR	6%*	No	–
Montenegro	2012	81	PR	3%	No	–
Poland	2015	460	PR	5%*	Yes	–
Romania	2012	412	Mixed (24%PR)	5%*	Yes	–
Russia	2011	450	PR	7%	No	–
Serbia	2014	250	PR	5%	No	–
Slovakia	2016	150	PR	5%	Yes	–
Slovenia	2014	90	PR	4%	Yes	–
Ukraine	2014	450	Mixed (50% PR)	5%	No	Plurality

\* Graduated threshold structure; higher levels for coalitions.

\*\* A 5 per cent threshold is imposed for seat distribution in the upper tier.

Sources: Aceproject at <http://aceproject.org>; Inter-parliamentary Union Parline database, [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org); OSCE (2012); Venice Commission (2015).

were complete, Eastern European states entered into a new phase of post-communist politics which varied considerably from country to country. Table 11.1 displays electoral system characteristics of the states in the region. As can be seen from this data, about three quarters have adopted proportional representation, with closed lists in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and open lists in most of the rest of the region. There are also a handful of mixed systems, and one single-member district system, in Belarus.

The post-communist period has thus been characterised by political divergence, which has had both substantive implications for political developments in the area, and methodological implications for scholars studying states in this region. On the one hand, emerging variations across Eastern Europe in political institutions and behaviours has afforded scholars the opportunity for fruitful comparative analysis; on the other hand, the growing political heterogeneity

within the region also means that those working in this area are continually confronted with definitional questions about the core characteristics that define the Eastern European political space. These intellectual dynamics pervade scholarship on post-communist elections.

### **Salient themes in the study of Eastern European elections**

An overarching question that perfuses the literature on elections in Eastern Europe is the extent to which empirical regularities established by canonical studies of elections in established democracies ‘travel’ eastwards. A wave of research comparing elections East and West sought to demonstrate that theories that derived from the voluminous study of democratic elections have indeed found considerable evidence to support them – with minor variations – in the emerging electoral practices of the post-communist states (e.g. van der Brug, Franklin and Toka, 2008; Evans, 2006; Evans and Whitefield, 1993; Pacek, 1994; Rose and Mishler, 1998; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer, 1998; Tavits, 2005, 2008; Tucker, 2001, 2006; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2009).

Other scholarship has instead emphasised the importance of the communist legacy and the mode of transition itself in conditioning electoral and political developments in the region (e.g. Bunce, 2003; Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009; Ekiert, 1991; Grzymała-Busse, 2002; Kitschelt, Mansfeldová, Markowski and Toka, 1999; Miller, White and Heywood, 1998; Pop-Eleches, 2007). Research of this sort has focused on the way in which communist-era attitudes and cleavages shaped post-communist voting patterns, as well as the learning process through which post-communist voters began to explore the possibilities inherent in representative politics.

Another source of potential insight for students of Eastern European elections is the democratisation literature that grew out of the study of transition from authoritarian rule in Southern Europe in the 1970s and Latin America in the 1980s. When Eastern Europe began to democratise in the late 1980s and 1990s, many scholars seized on the paradigms established in the existing literature on democratisation and sought to extend them to Eastern Europe (e.g. Linz and Stepan, 1996; Kubicek, 1994; Schmitter and Karl, 1994).

Others pointed to the limits of the democratisation literature in explaining post-communist transitions. A particularly influential statement of such critiques was in Bunce (1995), followed eight years later by Bunce (2003). Bunce argues that the post-communist Eastern European experience has been distinct from prior democratisation experiences, in that the most successful democratisations involved a decisive break with the communist past rather than a ‘pacting’ process that granted concessions to representatives of the former authoritarian regime. The challenge of combined economic and political transition, the precariousness of state boundaries, and widespread mass involvement in the democratisation process there are also factors that the previous democratisation literature has established as threats to successful democratic consolidation, but Bunce argues that the Eastern European experience does not support these arguments, as none of these factors obviously impeded democratisation in Eastern Europe (Bunce, 1995, 2003).

As Bunce and others have demonstrated, the post-communist electoral order has a number of features that distinguish it from electoral contexts following other transitions. These features can be summed up under several useful rubrics, including weak party identification and attendant party system fluidity, the appeal of populism, and the importance of electoral institutions in channelling political developments.

According to the standard literature on party identification (e.g. Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960; Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1948), attachment to parties is something that is established relatively early in life and reinforced over one’s life. Given that the majority of the parties competing in post-communist political fora were established well after the majority of

those eligible to vote had achieved the age of electoral majority, it is not surprising that party identification in this region should be weak. There is, however, an additional factor that also accounts for the particularly weak ties between political parties and voters in Eastern Europe: post-communist scepticism with parties in general, which can be traced back to the coercive and nondemocratic role played by the overbearing communist parties which dominated the political stage of these countries for so many decades. Even in Western Europe, anti-party sentiment has been riding relatively high in recent years (van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000; Norris, 2011); in Eastern Europe such sentiment is even higher (Pop-Eleches, 2010; Rose and Mishler, 1998). Linked to weak attachment to political parties is the relatively high propensity of Eastern European voters to opt for newly established parties. Party volatility in post-communist Europe has generally been high by Western European standards (see Enyedi and Deegan-Krause in this volume). Propensity to protest against incumbents has varied according to several factors, including economic conditions, reform trajectories, civil society organisation, and trust in government, which have all varied considerably across the region (Kopecký and Mudde, 2003; March, 2013; Beissinger and Sasse, 2014).

The attraction of right-wing populist parties in Eastern Europe is a phenomenon that has been identified by a number of scholars (e.g. Bustikova, 2014; Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009; Hockenos, 1993; Kopecký and Mudde, 2003; Mudde, 2005; Vachudova, 2008; also Mudde in this volume). Such parties include the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik); the Greater Romania Party, the Self-Defence Party, and the League of Polish Families in Poland. Eastern Europe is of course not the only part of the world where right-wing populism has gained in strength in recent years; anti-immigrant, anti-establishment parties have been found to be popular in many contexts where large sectors of the population have suffered the economic effects of globalisation (including European integration) and multiculturalism. In Eastern Europe, the ‘losers from globalisation’ are also in many cases the same people who have lost status and economic position in the protracted transition from communism to capitalism.

Another branch of Eastern European electoral studies has focused on the development of electoral systems and their consequences. The aforementioned move from majority to proportional-representation electoral systems which occurred relatively early in the post-transitional years launched a spate of scholarly works devoted to electoral reform. Studies of the determinants of electoral reform in the region have in some cases examined the early institutional settlements that took place during the transition from communism (Birch, Millard, Williams and Popescu, 2002; Elster, 1996; Elster, Offe and Preuss, 1998), whereas other studies have examined electoral system change over a longer period (Herron, 2009). The two and a half decades since the collapse of communism have witnessed a number of further revisions to electoral provisions, as the emerging democracies and semi-democracies in the region sought to fashion electoral institutions fit for their societies. The abandonment of pure absolute majority systems was nearly universal; only Belarus retains this electoral system. All the other states in Eastern Europe have adopted either list proportional representation – the most common electoral system type in Western Europe – or some type of mixed system combining proportional representation with single-member constituencies (see Table 11.1). A number of states – Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine – have switched between proportional representation and mixed systems, while others (e.g. the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Estonia) have altered features of systems they adopted relatively early in the post-transitional period (Bol, Pilet and Riera, 2015; Herron, 2009; Nikolenyi, 2011). There appears to be a tendency for states in this region (as elsewhere in Europe) to seek an electoral system ‘sweet spot’ that is largely proportional but with thresholds, limited constituency sizes, and other devices that limit party system fragmentation (Bol et al., 2015; cf. Nikolenyi, 2011; Renwick, 2011).

The results of the elections held under the new more proportional post-communist electoral systems have also been subject to scrutiny by electoral systems scholars in the aim of determining the effects of the various different systems adopted (e.g. Bielasiak, 2002; Birch, 2003; Bochsler, 2010; Herron, 2009; Ishiyama, 1996; Kostadinova, 2002; Moser, 1999; 2001; Shvetsova, 1999). This research has found that while proportional representation electoral systems – often accompanied by high thresholds – fostered party system institutionalisation, the plurality systems that remained in the early post-communist period and the plurality components of mixed electoral systems have tended to operate somewhat differently in the post-communist region from the way in which they typically operate in established democracies. In states such as Russia, Ukraine, and Macedonia, single-member districts were associated with party system fragmentation due to geographic heterogeneity in patterns of political support and lack of nationalised political parties. Several studies have found a strong interaction effect between electoral systems and party nationalisation (Birch, 2003; Bochsler, 2010; Herron, 2009; Moser, 1999, 2001).

Electoral participation is an additional major topic which has occupied many scholars of Eastern European politics. The region has relatively low level of electoral participation, at least compared to the levels generally achieved in Western Europe. The post-communist period was accompanied by declines in electoral participation across the post-communist region. Though voting had not been compulsory under communism, pressure on citizens to take part in communist civic rituals was great. Far from being enthusiastic about the prospect of taking an active part in the new multi-party electoral competitions held following communism's collapse, many of the region's people simply wanted to pursue their private interests and relax in the knowledge that the state would no longer pressure them to go to the polls.

There were, of course, variations in turnout declines across the region, and these have been subjected to analysis by a number of authors who have identified structural, economic, and institutional causes for differences in rates of post-communist electoral participation (Birch, 2003; Ceka, 2013; Kostadinova, 2003, 2009; Pacek, Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2009). Table 11.2 provides an overview of turnout across the region. As can be seen from the data in this table, the decline in rates of participation has been greatest in Romania and Kosovo, and least in Belarus and Montenegro.

The generally low turnouts across the region have been explained in terms of citizens frustrated with politics tending to withdraw from the electoral realm, exercising their right to 'exit' rather than voicing their discontent at the ballot box (though as noted above, vote choice prompted by frustration has also been manifest in the region). Vigorous political competition actually appears to stifle electoral participation in Eastern Europe, as the cut and thrust of electoral competition reduces trust and turns people away from political life (Ceka, 2013).

The final major topic of study in the sub-field of Eastern European electoral studies is the use of referendums in political life. Referendums first saw widespread use in Eastern Europe during the interwar period, when they were used as part of the state-formation process and to resolve territorial disputes (Brady and Kaplan, 1994). In recent years, referendums have been used across the region for a variety of purposes, including confirming sovereign statehood and ratifying European Union accession (Brady and Kalpan, 1994; Tverdova and Anderson, 2004). Other typical uses vary by sub-region.

The Soviet constitution of 1977 made provision for referendums, though this possibility was not acted on until the late Soviet period. The all-Union referendum on the future of the Soviet Union in March 1991 was the first significant opportunity for Soviet citizens to express their views in this type of electoral exercise. At the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union later that same year, independence referendums took place in nine of the fifteen Soviet republics. During the post-Soviet period, referendums have been employed in all of the Soviet successor states. In



Table 11.2 Turnout in Eastern Europe

<i>State</i>	<i>Last communist-era election</i>	<i>First multi-party election</i>	<i>Most recent parliamentary election</i>
Albania	~99%	98.9%	53.3%
Belarus	~99%	N/A	74.6%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	N/A	80%	54.1%
Bulgaria	99.9%	90.8%	51.0%
Croatia	~95%	84.5%	60.1%
Czech Republic	99.4%	96.8%	59.5%
Estonia	~99%	78.2%	64.2%
Hungary	93.9%	65.1%	61.7%
Kosovo	N/A	N/A	42.6%
Latvia	~99%	81.3%	58.9%
Lithuania	~99%	71.7%	52.9%
Macedonia	~90%	77.2%	63.0%
Moldova	~99%	83.4%	58.9%
Montenegro	N/A	75.8%	70.6%
Poland	78.9%	62.1%	50.9%
Romania	99.9%	86.2%	41.8%
Russia	~99%	77.0%	60.1%
Serbia	N/A	71.5%	53.1%
Slovakia	99.4%	95.4%	59.8%
Slovenia	~90%	83.5%	51.7%
Ukraine	~99%	84.7%	52.4%

Sources: Birch (2003); Election Guide database at [electionguide.org](http://electionguide.org); Inter-parliamentary Union Parline database at [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org); OSCE (2012).

states such as Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine they have served to extend the terms of presidents and to push through controversial constitutional reforms (Herron, 2009: chap. 7; Qvortrup, 2002: 90–91). The most controversial such event in recent times has undoubtedly been the referendum on the future of Crimea that Russian occupying forces held on Ukrainian territory in 2014. The Baltic republics and Moldova have employed referendums for more democratic purposes. According to Herron (2009), Lithuania was the most enthusiastic user of this tool, holding eight referendums during the 1992–2008 period.

Starting in 1990, Yugoslavia witnessed what Kaplan and Brady describe as a ‘parade of referendums’ on sovereignty (Brady and Kaplan, 1994: 207). Not all of these polls were official electoral procedures, and the territories on which they held overlapped, leading to confusing interpretations of their democratic authority. It is perhaps not surprising that this series of popular consultations failed to stop war from breaking out. Since the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995, the use of referendums has been more restrained, though this device has been employed by all states in the former Yugoslavia to decide constitutional, moral, and other issues.

Central European states have used referendums to decide a variety of policy issues, as well as changes to constitutions, electoral laws, and citizenship rights. It is also worth noting contexts in

which referendums have *not* been used, such as to adjudicate the break-up of Czechoslovakia in 1992, which was decided by elites alone even after much discussion of the possibility of a referendum (Brady and Kaplan, 1994). Low turnouts in some referendums have stymied this type of poll as a mechanism for making decisions, including a 1990 referendum in Hungary on the direct election of the president in which only 14 per cent voted. This poll was declared invalid due to its failure to pass the turnout threshold of 50 per cent.

The foregoing overview of the main branches in the field of post-communist electoral studies in Eastern Europe has demonstrated that there is considerably diversity in this area, both in terms of the objects of study which scholars have chosen, and also in terms of the theoretical perspectives they have adopted.

### **New and emerging themes**

The study of elections in Eastern Europe remains an important topic, given the centrality of elections to the workings of both democratic and authoritarian regimes. The considerable political variety now evident in the region means that Eastern Europe constitutes an excellent natural laboratory in which to study the impact of different factors on political trajectories. As noted earlier, the communist electoral systems displayed a marked degree of similarity; despite minor differences, they all employed the same type of electoral system and they all precluded genuine multi-party competition. Since then, electoral systems and electoral patterns have diverged widely in the twenty-odd states that make up this part of the world.

The role of elections in paths of democratic and authoritarian development remains an under-explored topic. In this context, elections can be seen both as an independent and a dependent variable. Scholars tend to view elections as motors of democracy (Lindberg, 2009), though a number of recent analyses have also noted that elections can serve the ends of authoritarianism (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Geddes, 2006; Lust-Okar, 2009), and this can certainly be seen to have been the case in Belarus where elections have been heavily staged and controlled events that have served to shore up the domestic legitimacy of president Alexander Lukashenko. Elections can also be seen as outcomes of political processes, however. Competing claims to legitimacy and challenges to those claims have led to numerous pre-term elections in the Eastern European region, as well as to referendums designed to resolve fundamental issues of state identity and the direction to be taken by state-building initiatives. Now that we have twenty-five years' worth of electoral data, which in most states includes at least six full electoral cycles, there is considerable scope for detailed longitudinal analyses that might tease out the role of electoral politics in the dynamics of post-communist political change.

Another area in which Eastern Europe lends itself to scholarly investigation is the emerging field of electoral integrity studies. The rapid recent emergence of electoral integrity as a scholarly sub-field suggests that analyses of electoral integrity will loom larger in Eastern European electoral studies in future years. Electoral integrity is a topic that has come to the fore in the past decade due largely to renewed interest by the international community in election observation and electoral assistance as tools of democratisation. The academic community is only just beginning to form a consensus on the fundamental drivers of electoral integrity and the factors associated with electoral malpractice. Eastern Europe provides an excellent context in which to explore issues related to electoral integrity, given the great variety of electoral practices across the region.

The studies that have been carried out in this area point to the role of electoral system design in facilitating abuse, and in particular to the higher degree of electoral malpractice under single-member district electoral systems in this region (Birch, 2007; Herron, 2009). Other studies have noted high levels of electoral abuse in special voting facilities such as those found in hospitals,

prisons, ships, and so forth (Herron, 2009). In addition to institutional factors, scholars have also pointed to the role of fraud as a signalling mechanism among elites keen to demonstrate their power to manipulate the population (Myagkov, Ordeshook and Shakin, 2009; Simpser, 2013).

The study of electoral malpractice in Eastern Europe received a boost from the series of ‘colour revolutions’ that ripped across the region in the early years of the twenty-first century. The ‘Bulldozer revolution’ in Serbia, the ‘Rose revolution’ in Georgia, and the ‘Orange revolution’ in Ukraine were all triggered by electoral fraud. The ensuing protests and the regime changes they brought about provided much opportunity for students of contentious politics and election specialists alike to examine the dynamics of mass mobilisation for electoral reform (Beissinger, 2007; Bunce and Wolchik, 2010; Kalandadze and Orenstein, 2009; Lane and White, 2010; O Beacháin and Polese, 2010; Tucker, 2007). In these cases, fraud served to heighten awareness of authoritarianism and ultimately to bring about moves towards greater democracy.

In other states, however, electoral malpractice has persisted for extended periods of time, helping ‘competitive authoritarian’ regimes in Belarus and Russia to control their populations. The Russian case has been subject to the most intensive scrutiny in the literature, as scholars have sought to delineate the various ways in which electoral abuse has been undertaken and its role in the structuring of power (e.g. Goodnow, Moser and Smith, 2014; Lukinova, Myagkov and Ordeshook, 2011; Myagkov, Ordeshook and Shakin, 2005, 2007; Smyth, Sobolev and Soboleva, 2013; White, 2014).

### Critical reflections on East European electoral studies

Criticisms of existing approaches to the study of elections in Eastern Europe include the aforementioned allegation that Western-derived theories are not necessarily relevant in the post-communist sphere. This is a debate that has largely taken place *within* the field of post-communist politics, and is thus not a criticism of the field itself, but it is an important argument to review. The universalist propensity of much contemporary comparative political analysis has in the sphere of post-communist studies encountered the rather different research trajectory of traditional area studies specialists. For comparativists, Eastern Europe is yet another piece of academic real estate that has become available for comparative analysis. While such comparativists acknowledge that the region many have its own specificities, they tend to see these as factors that can be controlled for in empirical studies or analysed as phenomena in their own right; they do not typically see these differences as impediments to the extension of Western-derived theoretical paradigms to the Eastern European terrain. As noted earlier, area studies specialists tend to question whether the theoretical apparatus of comparative political science is well-suited to the study of elections in Eastern Europe. Criticisms they make of such endeavours often point to the assumptions that subtend such intellectual projects, such as the common subjective understanding of elections across democratic states and emerging democracies, and voting that takes place on the basis of sincere preferences, rather than being guided by clientelistic ties and vote-buying or other considerations not directly linked to voters’ ‘genuine’ preferences for parties. It may also be problematic to assume that elections have the same meaning to citizens in the post-communist region as they have in the established democracies of the West (Pammett and DeBardeleben, 1996; Birch, 2011).

Another potentially problematic characteristic of much of the Eastern European electoral studies literature is the assumption of geographically defined ‘regions’ (Chen and Sil, 2007; King, 2000). ‘Eastern Europe’ itself is a concept that is potentially less relevant than it was twenty-five years ago, now that there has been such divergence in trajectories of post-communist political development. The neat East–West dichotomy is no longer necessarily applicable; elections in those states that have joined the European Union are in many respects more similar to elections

held in older EU member states than they are to elections held in, for example, Russia or Belarus (van der Brug et al., 2008; Birch, 2011).

Also potentially problematic is the tendency of scholars to group states together into sub-regional categories such as ‘Baltic republics’, former Soviet states’, and ‘former Yugoslav states’. Although it is clear from a number of important and valuable studies of path dependency in the region that the legacy of communist regime type and mode of transition loomed large in the political developments of the early post-communist years (Bunce, 2003; Grzymała-Busse, 2002; Kitschelt et al., 1999), these paths have by now been punctuated with many post-communist developments, and the relevance of such categories is no longer so clear. This is especially true now that new institutional legacies have formed, such as that of European Union accession and membership.

## Conclusion

The two and a half decades that have elapsed since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe may represent a small fraction of modern European history, but it is a period during which the Eastern part of the continent has undergone rapid and profound change. It is rare that so many states have experienced simultaneously such fundamental transformation of their electoral practices. For scholars of electoral politics, Eastern Europe thus offers a rich terrain of political development. The rapid development of electoral studies is testimony to the academic excitement generated by the advent of multi-party elections in this part of the world. Eastern Europe has offered comparativists a number of new states on which to test existing theories, and the concentration of political activity that attends elections in any state has afforded scholars researching Eastern Europe with a powerful lens through which to examine the politics of the states they study. Even with the fragmentation of Eastern Europe into a range of very different states, Eastern European elections promise to offer political scientists ample material for critical analysis well into the future.

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