Lustration and Transitional Justice

David, Roman

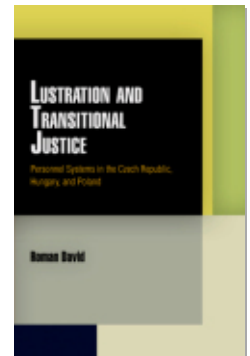Published by University of Pennsylvania Press

➡ For additional information about this book

https://muse.jhu.edu/book/12039

6

Political Effects: Trust in Government

[W]hile there exists equal justice to all and alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized; and when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit. Neither is poverty an obstacle, but a man may benefit his country whatever the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in our public life, and in our private business we are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbor if he does what he likes.

—Pericles' Funeral Oration[1]

This chapter examines the effects of personnel systems on trust in government. The first section considers the role of trust in government in democratization and hypothesizes the effects that dismissal, exposure, confession, and other variables may have on trust in government. In order to test these effects, we devised an original experimental vignette that manipulated the methods upon which personnel systems were based, namely, dismissal, exposure, and confession. The experimental vignette was embedded in nationwide representative surveys conducted in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in 2007. The experimental setting of the survey is described in the second section. The third section presents the results of the statistical analyses of our survey experiment. The final section discusses our research findings.

Personnel Systems and Trust in Government

The establishment of loyal, efficient, and trustworthy administration is critical for the operation of any democratic system. The objective attributes of the state apparatus as well as their subjective perceptions by citizens affect law enforcement, public safety, tax collection, public service delivery, and other government functions. A degree of trust in the political regime and its representatives fosters citizens' compliance and ethical reciprocity, thus helping sustain democracy.[2] As trust has been associated with democracy, autocratic regimes have been associated with widespread mistrust.[3] Autocracies are typically characterized by abuses of power, pervasive secrecy, lack of accountability, and other attributes, which are generally considered as impediments to trust.[4] In the context of regime transition, a number of scholars have warned that the culture of endemic distrust may spill over to shape the attitudes of citizens toward the new democratic state.[5] How to rebuild trust in government is thus an important issue confronting transitional societies.

Trust is one of the most hotly debated topics in the social sciences. Although scholars disagree about its origin and the degree of its relevance, they usually distinguish between trust in government and interpersonal trust.[6] The former describes a vertical relationship of trust in abstract institutions, while the latter is horizontal and captures relations among people. Here we are interested in trust in government, which according to Hetherington has been broadly defined as "a basic evaluative orientation toward the government founded on how well the government is operating according to people's normative expectations."[7] According to Ken Newton, political trust is "the belief that those in authority and with power will not deliberately or willingly do us harm, if they can avoid it, and will look after our interests, if this is possible."[8] The minimalistic nature of the second definition captures the problem of trust in transitional countries, in which citizens have experienced the abuse of power that was deliberately committed by previous regimes. At the same time, the conditionality allows a certain degree of mistrust that may be healthy for the operation of every society because, as Russell Hardin reminds us, complete trust is not always a good thing.[9]

There has been limited consensus in the literature about the political effects that personnel systems have on trust in government. Owing to the relative novelty of transitional justice and the paucity of empirical research in the field during its first decade, different theories, which often contradict each

other, have been developed. For each personnel system, one can find a large body of academic literature that theorizes its positive effects and another, equally plausible literature that theorizes its negative effects. Although scholars in principle agree on the need to assess the utility of personnel systems in terms of their prospects for achieving democracy, they often reach contradictory conclusions about the political effects of each system.

The theoretical perspective proposed in Chapter 2 enables us to review existing theorizations on personnel systems and theorize their impact more effectively. According to this perspective, personnel systems are instances of different purification rituals, which signify different methods of discontinuity with the past. Personnel systems seek to transform state administrations, and the perceptions that citizens had about them, from administrations that were instruments of oppression, discrimination, and abuse into administrations that would not act against their interests. Different systems adopt different means to symbolize the end of undemocratic rule. Dismissal suggests the purification by sacrifice and exclusion of the tainted official; exposure is alluded to a shaming ritual; and confession signifies a ritual of self-purification.

Hypothesis I. The Effects of Dismissal

An exclusive system provides for the discontinuation of the former state's structures by means of changes in personnel. Two analyses of Czechoslovak parliamentary debates showed that a clear break with the old system and its practices, security concerns, and the trustworthiness of the state apparatus were major considerations for members of Parliament in approving the exclusive lustration law.[10] Teitel noted that people associated with the former regime were perceived as corrupt, inefficient, and loyal to the previous regime.[11] They were originally appointed pursuant to the ideological criteria of the former regime, and their continued presence was considered a major threat to political-economic reforms by the new elite as indicated by Havel's anniversary-of-occupation speech.[12] Other scholars, however, have considered these dismissals as lacking the essential element of discontinuity because they signify the same methods of exclusion as those pursued by the previous regime. Schwarz has argued that exclusive lustrations were politically motivated methods that served the power interests of the new political elite similar to purges frequently used by the previous regime to eliminate its enemies.[13] Horne and Levi have contended that resorting to the old methods undermined the credibility of the new state apparatus.[14]

We argue that exclusive systems seek to establish trustworthy government by means of changes in personnel. Officials associated with the past regime are perceived as tainted, intractable, and incapable of personal change. Their continuing presence in the state apparatus undermines the trustworthiness of the new government. For these reasons, establishing trustworthy government requires their *dismissal* from any public position of trust. Their dismissals dramatize the regime change, draw a clear line between past and present, and enable the new government to distance itself from the old system and its practices. They signal that the new state is not an instrument of oppression but a trustworthy administration that will serve the interests of society. The effect of dismissal on trust in government is therefore hypothesized to be positive: the dismissal of tainted officials increases trust in government.

Hypothesis II. The Effects of Exposure

An inclusive system aims at establishing the trustworthiness of the state apparatus through pursuing its transparency and the exposure of persons associated with former regimes. According to Łoś, proponents of exposure believed that it should enable the public to view the conduct of tainted officials and minimize the risk of blackmail, which could prejudice national security.[15] In parallel with other truth processes, "naming perpetrators" is a form of truth revelation that, according to Hayner, manifests a change in political practices.[16] Exposure may not increase trust in government but it may, according to Kis, decrease mistrust in government.[17] In other words, scandals resulting from the policy of transparency may be less damaging for government than scandals resulting from its secretiveness and withholding information about the past of public officials.

Teitel, on the other hand, has argued that exposure perpetuates continuity with the past owing to its reliance on the materials collected under the old regime.[18] According to Havel and Michnik, these archives may not be reliable for the purpose of screening.[19] Whether or not exposures manifest continuity or discontinuity with the past is an empirical rather than a theoretical question. We formulate our hypothesis pursuant to the transformative perspective. We argue that by *exposing* the past of tainted officials to the public, the system aspires to establish trust in government. It demonstrates a change in practices that were previously secret. The effect of exposure on trust in government is therefore hypothesized to be positive.

Hypothesis III. The Effects of Confession

A reconciliatory method of transitional justice has been theorized to generate positive effects in most cases. According to Posner and Vermeule, such a system may lead to the rehabilitation of the wrongdoer.[20] *Confessions*, though given publicly, may, according to Tutu, Michnik and Havel, and other scholars, facilitate forgiveness.[21] According to Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley, ''The ritual nature of confession . . . serves to forge a moral community. . . . [It] dramatizes the message of collective guilt, but also indicates the means of atonement and reintegration. It is proof of the generosity, leniency, and forgiveness of the post-communist inquisition. Persuading individuals to confess is not an act of revenge. Rather, it serves to demystify the evil nature of the previous regime, and provides a way of saving the souls of sinners, enabling them to rejoin the community of saints. Even if there are only a few public confessions, the result is likely to be cathartic.''[22]

There are also negative effects of confessions. They may represent self-debasement, or contrition, penalties that may generate stigmatizing effects.[23] However, our theorization is closer to the first perspective. The confessions of wrongdoers not only demonstrate their loyalty to the new system, but they also delegitimize the past regime and provide discontinuity with the past on the macro level.[24] Unlike simple exposure, confession gives ''truth'' a normative meaning. It not only discloses what happened in the past, it also signals, in a powerful dramatic voice, that what happened was wrong. In confessing, the wrongdoer accepts the terms offered by the society, enhancing its legitimacy or at the very least decreasing the number of those who consider the new system illegitimate. The transformation of the state apparatus that goes hand in hand with the personal conversion of wrongdoers may be acceptable to both parts of the divided society. The effect of confession on trust in government is therefore hypothesized to be positive.

Hypothesis IV. The Effects of Position, Motives, and Agency

People associated with the human rights violations committed under previous regimes had different levels of involvement. Some may have given orders, while others may have followed them. Some may have been ideologically motivated, while others may have pursued their self-interest. Some may have volunteered to engage in repressive activities, while others may

have been forced to do so. Thus, decisions about who should be targeted by measures of transitional justice pose one of the major moral-political dilemmas after transition. These decisions require selecting those who are tainted by their involvements in the past, which inevitably means that others are exonerated.

The policy dilemma of transitional justice has been examined by Gibson and Gouws, who tested the assumptions of the South African amnesty process.[25] They found that an actor's role in the past (i.e., an apartheid security branch) and giving orders were significant predictors of blame attributions. On the other hand, consequences and motives were not found to be significant.[26] Similar to other methods of transitional justice, personnel systems assign blame for the past regime. They deal with tainted officials at various levels of the pyramid of the repressive apparatus; some officials may have been motivated ideologically or by their self-interest, and in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, many informers of the secret police claimed that they were forced to collaborate. For this reason, we have also tested the impact of the previous position of tainted officials (i.e., low or high), their motives (i.e., ideological or self-interest), and their agency (i.e., being forced to collaborate or acting as an independent social agent). We hypothesize that high position, self-interest, and independent agency of the tainted official each have a negative impact on trust in government.

Hypothesis V. The Effects of Historical Divisions

Trustworthiness, impartiality, political neutrality, and other basic attributes commonly required for state administration are desperately lacking in transitional countries not only because of the abuses in the past but also because each side of the historical conflict usually maintains its own view of these attributes. While one side may view them, and indeed experience them, as abuses of power, the opposite side may see them as part of a legitimate patriotic struggle against subversives, terrorists, guerrillas, and so forth and concede a few unfortunate aberrations of power at best.

Our research is conducted in divided societies in which a minority still sympathizes with the previous regime and the majority opposes it. For instance, the hypothesis that the dismissal of a tainted official from government increases trust in government may be valid only in the eyes of the majority. But the minority that is sympathetic with the previous regime may not appreciate that dismissal at all; instead, they may favor the continuation of his or her employment. If the survey was conducted in Iraq, one

could conclude that dismissals of Saddam's loyalists from the government increase its trustworthiness among the Iraqi public, although the finding would be attributed only to the majority Shiites; or we would not find any effect, although the process of de-Baathification affected the entire society. The results of our experiment may reflect responses that are attributable only to the majority; or a large minority may statistically cancel the effect of the majority. Consequently, we would have imprecise evidence in support of the hypothesis.

In order to capture the historical divisions today, we controlled for the degree of historical animosity resulting from the wrongdoing. We have defined historical animosity as a set of moral attitudes held by a respondent with respect to the wrongdoing. For instance, those respondents who do not see the wrongdoer as tainted because they belong to the same historical side may have different responses to his dismissal from those who see him as tainted. Should the wrongdoer be morally condemned? Should we deal with the wrongdoer at all? The question of whether a society should deal with injustices of the past has been raised in the context of the first dilemma of transitional justice. This dilemma has been outlined by Huntington and by Moran in the so-called "torturer's problem," which may be formulated as "prosecute and punish versus forgive and forget" (see Chapter 1). Since condemnation, punishment, forgiving, and forgetting represent the plurality of attitudes that capture the degree of disapproval and condemnation of the wrongdoer caused by his past, we construct a *historical animosity scale* that consists of (i) moral condemnation, (ii) punishment, (iii) not forgetting, and (iv) not forgiving.

The Survey Experiment with Dismissal, Exposure, and Confession

The need to determine whether the different lustration systems are inherently retrogressive or potentially beneficial to political transformation provided the impetus for the experimental design utilized in this research. Experiments in general have gained prominence in political science for their ability to eliminate alternative explanations and establish causal relations.[27] Experiments embedded in surveys have been used in attitudinal research and were successfully applied to test similar aspects of transitional justice, for instance, the assumptions of TRC in South Africa by Gibson

and Gouws.[28] According to Paul Sniderman and Douglas Grob, survey experiments are a revolutionary methodological tool that combines the internal validity of experiments with the external validity of cross-sectional surveys.[29]

The experiment pursued in our research manipulated the three methods upon which the personnel systems, or lustration systems, are based, namely dismissal, exposure, and confession. By using the three methods, we were able to overcome the lack of congruence in the precise meaning of lustrations, which is country specific and was a common problem in previous comparative research.[30] Each method was contrasted with the corresponding orthogonal version: dismissal from public office was contrasted with continuation in office, exposure of the past of a public official with no exposure, and confession of his or her past with denial. The manipulation of orthogonal versions was possible owing to the occasional difficulties of enforcing lustration systems, as discussed in the previous chapter. For instance, it allowed for an examination of the effects of the dismissal of tainted public officials in the Czech Republic despite the fact that some officials had succeeded in circumventing the system and had in this way avoided dismissal. Alternatively, it also provided a means of testing the effects of the dismissal of officials who had confessed their collaboration in Poland and should have been awarded a second chance. In Hungary, the original inclusive system has been inactive for a long time, which opened the possibility for various scenarios. Thus, the problems with implementation that lustration systems raised had practical advantages in this research.

Our research would normally require three experimental vignettes embedded in three surveys in each country, bringing the total number of surveys to nine. In order to reduce costs, the survey experiment was pursued through a 2 x 2 x 2 complete factorial design.[31] The factorial designs effectively tested the effects of various combinations of "dismissal," "exposure," and "confession" and their orthogonal versions at the same time. The surveyed population was divided into eight groups. Each group heard a story with a particular combination of dismissal and continuation, exposure and non-exposure, and confession and denial.

However, confession after exposure may not have the same effect as confession before exposure: confession after exposure may not be considered genuine. Likewise, exposure after confession may not be the same as exposure before confession: in the latter case, exposure may be considered

redundant. For these reasons, the sequencing of the two factors was also manipulated. In the first sequence, the vignette started either with "confession" or with "denial." In the second sequence, the vignette started either with "exposure" or "no exposure." This led to a 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design, which required sixteen versions of the questionnaire in total. Each respondent heard only one combination of the factors. Vignette 1 manipulated confession, exposure, and dismissal. Vignette 16 manipulated the absence of exposure, denial, and the continuation of employment.

The experimental vignette had two parts. The first part was situated in the prior socialist regime and described the wrongdoing of a particular person (see Appendix B). The second part of the vignette was situated in the present and offered various solutions to the problem of the wrongdoing. The respondents followed a story about Mr. Novák, which is one of the most common Czech surnames. The corresponding common surnames in Polish and Hungarian were originally Kowalski and Szabó, respectively. After consulting local researchers to ensure that these names do not have any other particular meaning and did not resemble the names of anyone involved in a high-profile lustration case, the surname Kowalski was replaced with Nowak in Poland, and the surname Szabó was replaced with Kovács in Hungary. Hereafter in this book, the anglicized surname Novak will be used. The choice of Novak's gender was motivated by the need to provide a vignette that is as realistic as possible and conforms to the typical profile of public figures who were involved in wrongdoing. The majority of revelations concerned male public figures in all three countries (see Chapter 5).

The first part of the vignette described Mr. Novak as an expert who had worked in an enterprise in the past. The reference to his "expertise" eliminated the possibility that he had been a *nomenklatura* cadre who had held his position without being properly qualified. This in itself could constitute a reason for dismissal. Then, a typical wrongdoing committed in the past was described. Since lustration laws always targeted members of the socialist-era secret police and their collaborators but did not always target the officials of the former communist parties, Mr. Novak was described as someone who had secretly reported on his colleagues in his former workplace.[32] This provided respondents with an opportunity to assess the methods of dealing with the *fact* of collaboration. Mere rumors, politically exploited allegations, and unconvincing evidence would influence respondents' assessment of the effect

of any lustration measure on trust in government as well as reconciliation. The method of determining collaboration is a matter for the law of evidence and is not a constitutive part of personnel systems.[33]

The vignette did not describe the motives of Mr. Novak and did not attach any particular consequences of them to the lives of his colleagues. Most lustration laws assessed neither the informers' motives nor the consequences of their actions, which could have become the subject of criminal investigation if they had given rise to gross human rights violations. Thus, the only consequence of Mr. Novak's actions was a breach of interpersonal trust. Our research has nevertheless determined the respondent's perception of Mr. Novak's past. After the first part of the vignette, respondents were asked questions about his position, motives, and agency, as well as their moral attitudes toward him. The answers to questions about moral attitudes provided a very useful tool for interpreting differences in perceptions among the three countries. These questions will be discussed in the next chapter.

The second part of the vignette announced that Mr. Novak had recently been employed at a government ministry. For the purpose of the experiment it was crucial that he had been affiliated with a ministry in order to test perceptions about the trustworthiness of the government. Moreover, it was necessary to mention that his employment had been recent because it would have been unrealistic to expect that anyone would continue his employment at that level due to the changes that have usually occurred in ministries after elections.

Each of the three experimental variables, or their absence, were operationalized in one sentence and summarized at the end of the vignette. The operationalization of "dismissal" and "confession" was quite straightforward (see Appendix B). However, the operationalization of "exposure" had to overcome the fact that respondents were already aware of Mr. Novak's past. Truth revelation in this situation would have been redundant. For this reason, "exposure" was conceptualized as a revelation that adds a new piece of information that may have a shaming effect on the wrongdoer. Since it was demonstrated that most informers chose or were assigned a "cover name," the additional information related to the publication of the informer's cover name. Alleged cover names such as Kato in the Czech Republic, D-209 in Hungary, and Bolek and Alek in Poland were often ridiculed in the press. Thus, the affirmative version stated that all the information about Mr. Novak's past, including his cover name, had been published. The negative version only stated that no information had been published. Thus,

instead of transparency versus non-transparency, we were only able to compare the effects of shaming information versus no information. This nevertheless still served our purpose because it allowed us to test whether the government is viewed less trustworthy if it releases information about its official or if it upholds information embargo.

These sixteen scenarios enabled us to test the effect of central values upon which these systems were based, not the effects of personnel systems per se. They allowed us to test the ideal typical categories of dismissal, exposure, and confession within the surreality of post-communist politics. Each scenario represented a real-life situation that could have happened at any time during these transitions. Indeed, many cases described in Chapter 5 reveal that the lustration process was often accompanied by a mixture of dismissal and continuation, exposure and non-exposure, and confession and denial. If we simulated lustration systems strictly as described in Chapter 3, we would be criticized for being unduly legalistic because these systems were often applied inconsistently. We believe that the advantages of our realistic vignette outweigh the advantages of a legalistic vignette.

Moreover, our approach allowed us to reach comparative conclusions. First, dismissal, exposure, and confession are individual-level categories, while the lustration systems were country-specific. We could not be strictly legalistic anyway because these countries implemented different systems. Comparison of the effects of the exclusive system in the Czech Republic and the reconciliatory system in Poland would be ineffective because any difference in results could be attributed to the system or to the country. Second, we want to test the effect of dismissal, exposure, and confession within three political cultures that gave birth to three different lustration systems. We want to be able to compare, for instance, the effect of confession within the culture of confession and within the culture of dismissals.

To ensure that the experimental manipulation was successful, manipulation checks were included in the questionnaire. The purpose of these checks was to confirm that respondents understood the experimental treatment. However, a check that was intended to test the success of manipulation indirectly by testing perceptions proved to be contentious during the pre-piloting of the questionnaire. Questions that referred to the experimental vignette implicitly were challenged because their answers were "already known" to the respondents. Respondents started to become suspicious about the study and felt deceived. Thus, taking into account ethical issues, painful historical experiences in the three countries, and the sensitivity of

the topic of secret collaboration, the manipulation check openly asked whether it was true or untrue that the person had confessed, was exposed, or had been dismissed. Respondents were given four response categories on the Likert scale. Incorrect answers to the manipulation check concerning dismissal were given by 17.1 percent respondents; concerning exposure, by 18.5 percent; and concerning confession, by 21.4 percent. Judging by standards set in research using the same methodology in similar contexts, the experimental manipulation was very successful.[34]

The fieldwork for the experimental part of the research was conducted in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in 2006–7. In its preparatory stage, twelve focus group sessions or interviews with ordinary members of major political parties and former political prisoners were conducted in each country to ensure that the topics of the past were still considered important and to understand how people described and interpreted them. They revealed that the topics remain quite divisive and that interpretations of the past vary within each of the three countries. The objective of the second stage was to prepare the questionnaire. Various drafts of the questionnaire were evaluated by fellow academics, students, and student assistants inside and outside the three countries. Sixteen interviews were conducted to prepare the first version of the questionnaire before double-blind reverse translations of the questionnaire were solicited. The questionnaire was translated into Czech, Hungarian, and Polish, and independent reverse translations were made from the three languages into English to reconcile differences in the questionnaire wording resulting from differences among the three languages. Thus, three bilingual speakers from each country participated in the translation. The questionnaire was piloted in all three countries in the spring of 2007 by means of sixty face-to-face interviews in total with twenty participants from each country. After analyzing the results of the pilot, a second round of reconciling differences among the three versions of the questionnaire was conducted.

Thanks to grant support from the United States Institute of Peace, the questionnaire was embedded in omnibus surveys conducted by three of the most internationally renowned survey agencies in the region: CVVM in the Czech Republic, Tárki in Hungary, and OBOP in Poland. These agencies used nationwide stratified random samples. CVVM completed 1,013 face-to-face interviews with persons older than fifteen years with a response rate of 48 percent; Tárki completed 1,033 face-to-face interviews with persons older than eighteen years with a response rate of 60 percent; and OBOP

completed 1,004 face-to-face interviews with persons older than fifteen years with a response rate of 26.2 percent. To ensure the comparative aspect of this research, we have excluded respondents younger than eighteen from our analyses. We ensured that each of the agencies understood the nature of survey experiments in general and the need for random assignment in particular. Furthermore, we double-checked that all vignette versions were manipulated correctly in the sixteen versions of the questionnaire in each of the languages. The surveys were simultaneously conducted in the three countries in May–June 2007.

Measurement of Trust in Government

Owing to the nature of experimental research, this project could not rely on existing operationalizations of trust in government. For instance, the first of four questions routinely used in most surveys, including the American National Election Studies and World Values Surveys, asks, "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington [Prague, Budapest, Warsaw] to do what is right?"[35] However, the question is too general to be applicable to the concrete, real-life situation simulated by the experimental vignette. Governments may have "hundreds of thousands employees" and one could readily "distrust all these people as a class" and therefore distrust the government because only a few of them may take one's interests seriously.[36] This research therefore investigates real-life scenarios simulated by the experimental vignette: it seeks to situate the problem of personnel systems into the context of political transition and limits the scope of government to a government ministry.[37]

    In order to measure the political effects of dismissal, exposure, and confession, a new scale that captures trust in government had to be developed. To ensure its theoretical relevance, the scale had to take into account the definition of trust that had previously served as a prerequisite for the above-quoted classic survey questions.[38] Trust in government had been defined as "a basic evaluative orientation toward the government founded on how well the government is operating according to people's normative expectations."[39] According to Donald Stokes, the original survey questions were developed to capture such evaluations: "The criteria of judgment implicit in these questions were partly ethical, that is, the honesty and other ethical qualities of public officials. . . . But the criteria extended to other qualities as well, including the ability and efficiency of government officials and the

correctness of their policy decisions."[40] Recent reviews of the topic of trust adopt similar characteristics of competence, integrity, and motivation and thus do not dramatically depart from the original intention,[41] although they build on a different definition of trust.[42]

In constructing a scale for trust in government, several measures that are representative of its conceptual definition and its characteristics were taken. Pursuant to the theoretical interests of conducting research on the role of personnel systems in transitional countries, a trust in government scale was developed to capture discontinuity in the practices of governance. Respondents were therefore asked questions about their trust in the government ministry in general and about three specific items: their belief that the ministry would act efficiently in implementing government programs; their belief that the ministry would operate in accordance with law; and their belief that the ministry would be loyal to democracy (see Appendix B).[43] These attributes capture the transformation of state administration, which had been characterized under the previous regime as untrustworthy, inefficient, corrupt, and undemocratic.

Each question had five response categories, one of which allowed for a neutral response: "neither agree, nor disagree."[44] The responses were coded from the most negative value, "strongly disagree" (0), to the most positive value, "strongly agree" (4). The scale was highly reliable.[45] Thus, a scale of four items was computed by adding the four items; the scale ranged from 0 to 16. The mean score of the scale was 7.15 (standard deviation, S.D. = 4.64) in the merged data set (see Table 6.1).

Measurement of Position, Motives, and Agency

Since trust in government may be affected by the past of the wrongdoer, especially by his position in the hierarchy of the state apparatus and his motives, this research also controlled for the *perception* of Mr. Novak's past. Manipulating too many items in experimental designs would run the risk that respondents would not be able to comprehend them. Our questionnaire therefore contained questions about the "position," "motives," and "agency" of Mr. Novak, which were included after the first part of the vignette. Since the position, motives, and agency were not clearly specified in the experimental vignette, we expected that most respondents would use a neutral category on the Likert scale. To prevent this from happening and to gain the critical information about the perceptions, our questionnaire did not offer respondents a neutral category and the Likert scale had only four items.

Thus, after respondents heard about the wrongdoing of Mr. Novak they were asked whether Mr. Novak in their view held a high or low position (coded from 0 to 3); was motivated by ideology or self-interest (coded from 0 to 3); and was forced by the system or acted independently (coded from 0 to 3). The mean position score was 1.76 (S.D. = 0.82); the mean motive score was 1.97 (S.D. = 0.82); and the mean agency score was 1.40 (S.D. = 0.80) in the merged data set (see Table 6.1).

Measurement of the Degree of Historical Divisions

Survey experiments have not always been able to fully satisfy theoretical interests without compromising their internal validity.[46] Internal validity means the ability to eliminate alternative explanations of the dependent variable.[47] Experimental designs without random assignment pose a threat to internal validity by their inability to eliminate selection bias. In such situations, measurements of dependent variables may not be attributed to the experimental treatment but to some preexisting condition. Instances such as experimental testing of political tolerance[48] and the legitimacy of state institutions[49] therefore normally require the incorporation of an "objection precondition,"[50] as both the concepts of "tolerance" and "legitimacy" are based on the acceptance of something "objectionable." It is of little theoretical relevance to study "tolerance of a friendly group" or "acceptance of a beneficial government policy." However, since different respondents have different objections, which predetermine their treatment, their assignment to the experimental treatment is not random. Thus, researchers often faced a dilemma: to satisfy theoretical interests by including the objection precondition at the expense of internal validity, or to satisfy the experimental requirements by forgoing the objection precondition at the expense of theoretical interests.

In order to satisfy the theoretical interests of conducting research in divided societies and at the same time to satisfy the requirement of random assignment, we determine the degree of a respondent's objection vis-à-vis the wrongdoer at the end of the first part of the vignette. The first part is non-experimental as it is common to all respondents. Thus, respondents hear the first part of the vignette, which is followed by the *historical animosity scale* that captures the respondent's objections to the wrongdoer. After this, the experimental part of the vignette continues. The historical animosity scale measured in the first step then serves as a control variable for the effects of experimental manipulations measured in the second step. In other

Table 6.1. Description of Major Scales

Scale	Range	Merged Data Set		Czech Republic		Hungary		Poland	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Trust in government	(0; 16)	7.15	(4.64)	7.68	(4.58)	7.17	(4.74)	6. 65	(4.52)
Position	(0; 3)	1.76	(0.82)	1.78	(0.83)	1.77	(0.85)	1.72	(0.76)
Motives	(0; 3)	1.97	(0.82)	1.97	(0.81)	1.97	(0.79)	2.04	(0.78)
Agency	(0; 3)	1.40	(0.80)	1.53	(0.81)	1.19	(0.83)	1.49	(0.76)
Historical animosity	(−8; 8)	1.12	(4.03)	2.72	(3.61)	0.26	(4.14)	0.49	(3.83)
Reconciliation	(0; 32)	11.14	(7.25)	11.41	(6.86)	11.50	(7.42)	10.41	(7.30)

Source: David, Lustration Systems, Trust in Government, and Reconciliation.

words, the historical animosity scale is a covariate that is exogenous to the random assignment. Although the notion of control may sound redundant in experimental research, even experiments may produce biased results in divided societies as long as historical divisions are a subject of inquiry.[51] This design enables all respondents to be randomly assigned to different experimental manipulations, and it gains crucial information about each respondent's objection to the wrongdoer.

Since "condemnation," "punishment," "forgiveness," and "forgetting" represent the plurality of attitudes that capture the degree of disapproval of the wrongdoer caused by his past, a historical animosity scale was constructed by adding moral condemnation, punishment, the negative of forgetting, and the negative of forgiving (see Appendix B). Each question had five response categories, allowing a neutral response. The responses were coded from the most negative (0) to the most positive (4) in order to effectively present our analysis concerning the memory of the past in Chapter 7. Thus, the scale ranged from −8 to 8. The scale had a high level of reliability, with Cronbach's alpha at 0.85 in the merged data set, 0.88 in the Czech Republic, 0.83 in Hungary, and 0.83 in Poland (see Table 6.1).

Results

The results of our analyses are presented in two steps: (1) analysis of the data set from all three countries merged together, including the descriptive statistics and the multivariate analyses, which provide us with evidence

Table 6.2. Mean Scores of Trust in Government Scale for Dismissal, Exposure, and Confession in the Merged Data Set

	Mean	*S.D.*	*N*
Dismissal	8.60***	*(4.41)*	1,203
Continuation	5.73	*(4.42)*	1,223
Exposure	7.30	*(4.66)*	1,202
No exposure	7.01	*(4.48)*	1,224
Confession	7.63***	*(4.58)*	1,216
Denial	6.68	*(4.49)*	1,210
Sequence 1	7.16	*(4.62)*	1,183
Sequence 2	7.15	*(4.66)*	1,243

Source: David, Lustration Systems, Trust in Government, and Reconciliation.
Note: The table presents the mean scores of trust in government for each experimental treatment and their absence in the merged data set and the results of Anova tests that determine whether the difference between the means of experimental treatments and their orthogonal version is significant (*** $p < .001$).

about the effect of dismissal, exposure, and confession on trust in government and enable us to control for the effects of historical animosities and the perception of the wrongdoer's position, motives, and agency; and (2) separate country analyses, also including the descriptive statistics and the multivariate analyses, which provide us with evidence of the effects of dismissal, exposure, and confession within three different political cultures in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland.

<div align="center">

The Overall Effects of Dismissal, Exposure,
and Confession on Trust in Government

</div>

A first look at the results indicates that none of the experimental variables decreased the perception of the government as being trustworthy. As expected, dismissal, exposure, and confession were all able to generate positive effects on trust in government in the merged data set.

Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1 summarize the mean scores of trust in government for each experimental treatment and their contrasts. The preliminary results indicate that dismissal produces the largest effect on trust in government, followed by confession, and then by exposure. The mean score of trust in government scale for dismissal of the tainted official is 8.60, while
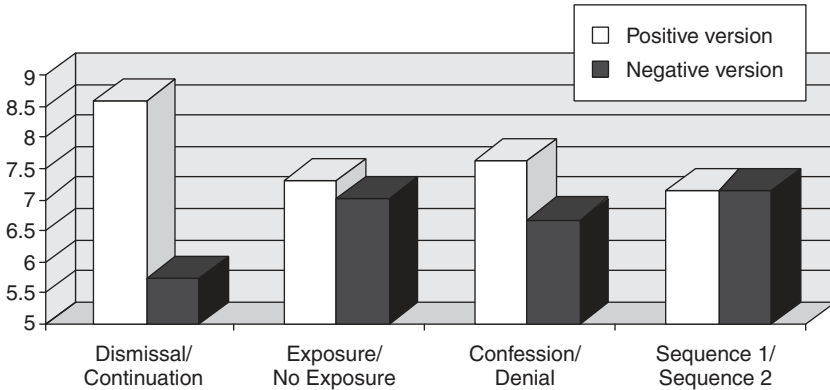
Figure 6.1. Mean scores of the trust in government scale for dismissal, exposure, and confession and their absence in the merged data set. The trust in government scale ranged from 0 to 16. Source: David, Lustration Systems, Trust in Government, and Reconciliation.

the mean score for his continuation is 5.73. Thus, the effect of dismissal on trust in government is 2.87 points. In comparison, the mean score of the trust in government for the confession of the tainted official is 7.63, while the mean for his denial is 6.68. The mean difference of 0.95 points makes the effect of confession on trust in government about three times smaller than that of dismissal. The mean for exposure of the tainted official is 7.30, while the mean for no exposure is 7.01. Consequently, the mean difference of 0.29 points suggests that exposure is about three times less efficient than confession and about nine times less efficient than dismissal. Our results also indicate that it is irrelevant whether the experimental vignette starts with exposure or with confession. There seems to be no difference in mean scores for the two vignette sequences. However, this description does not say anything about the significance of these effects, nor is it able to control for the effects of other variables. We therefore turn to our multivariate analyses of the merged data set.

Table 6.3 presents the results of three OLS linear regression models.[52] We have used the Czech Republic as a backdrop for our comparison in order to compare any country differences between the exclusive and non-exclusive

Table 6.3. Predictors of Trust in Government in the Merged Data Set

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Dismissal	2.87***	(.18)	3.07***	(.19)	3.13***	(.19)
Exposure	0.27	(.18)	0.20	(.19)	0.14	(.19)
Confession	0.93***	(.18)	0.79***	(.19)	0.76***	(.20)
Sequence	−0.03	(.18)	0.08	(.19)	0.09	(.19)
High position			−0.28*	(.12)	−0.15	(.12)
Motive (self-interest)			−0.71***	(.12)	−0.58***	(.12)
Agency			−0.25*	(.12)	−0.09	(.12)
Historical animosity					−0.19***	(.03)
Hungary	−0.48*	(.22)	−0.58*	(.24)	−0.97***	(.24)
Poland	−1.06***	(.21)	−1.11***	(.24)	−1.51**	(.26)
(Constant)	5.19	(.23)	7.29	(.43)	7.68	(.46)
R^2	.114		.143		.171	
Adj. R^2	.112		.139		.166	
N	2,426		1,989		1,910	

Source: David, Lustration Systems, Trust in Government, and Reconciliation.

Note: The table displays OLS linear regression models. The trust in government scale (range 0 to 16) was regressed on experimental variables (coded 0; 1) and control variables. Hungary and Poland are contrasted against the Czech Republic.

  * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

systems. We have therefore created dummy variables for Hungary and Poland. Model 1 regresses trust in government against our experimental and country variables. In line with our preliminary analysis, the effect of dismissal on trust in government is about 2.87 points, other things being equal, and the result is highly significant. Confession of tainted officials increases trust in government by 0.93 points, other things being equal. The effect of confession is about three times smaller but still highly significant. On the other hand, the effect of exposure fails to reach a statistically significant level ($p = .122$). The model also reveals some differences among the three countries. The Hungarians seem to trust their government significantly less than the Czechs, other things being equal. Similarly, the Poles seem to trust their government significantly less than the Czechs, other things being equal. Differences among the three countries may be the result of various factors, one of which may be a lustration system. Although these findings contribute to our understanding of trust in government, we shall deal with country-level differences later. Now we shall turn to our second model.

We have hypothesized that trust in government may be affected by the position of the wrongdoer in the previous regime, his motives, and his agency. Our second model has therefore controlled for these three variables. As we can see from model 2 in Table 6.3, the effect of each of our experimental variables has not changed much. The effect of dismissal remains highly significant. It even slightly increases, exceeding 3 points on the scale, other things being equal. The effect of confession drops slightly to 0.79 points, other things being equal, but remains highly significant ($p < .001$). In line with our expectations, the three control variables produce negative effects. A one-point increase in the perception that the wrongdoer held a high position in the previous regime decreases trust in government by 0.28 points ($p < .05$), other things being equal. A one-point increase in the perception that he was motivated by his self-interest decreases trust in government by 0.71 points ($p < .001$), other things being equal. A one-point increase in the perception that he was acting as a social agent at his own will decreased trust in government by 0.25 points ($p < .05$), other things being equal. These results suggest that retaining a tainted official who previously held a high position in the previous regime or was motivated by his own personal interests or was not forced into his wrongdoing would significantly decrease trust in the government.

However, we conducted research in divided societies where each side may retain its own view of government and its role in the human rights abuses of the past. The lack of reconciliation may therefore undermine trust in government. For this reason, model 3 controls for the degree of historical animosities. The results of this model are very similar. They suggest the following:

- We have found strong and consistent evidence that supports our first hypothesis about the positive effect of dismissal on trust in government. Other things being equal, dismissal remains a highly significant predictor of trust in government regardless of historical animosities.
- We have found no evidence to support our second hypothesis about the effect of exposure on trust in government.
- We have found strong and consistent evidence to support our third hypothesis about the positive effect of confession on trust in government. Thus, confession established itself as a plausible, although considerably less efficient, alternative to dismissal.

After controlling for historical animosities, the effects of a high position of the tainted official and his social agency on trust in government become insignificant. Both of them affect the moral judgments about the wrongdoer in the first place, and only through these judgments do they seem to affect trust in government. On the other hand, the perception of the official as motivated by his self-interest decreases trust in government by 0.58 points, other things being equal. Nonetheless, after controlling for animosities, even this perception dramatically decreases in comparison with model 2. Indeed, historical animosities are negatively correlated with trust in government: a one-point increase on the animosities scale decreases the trust in government scale by 0.19 points, other things being equal.[53]

There are no significant country differences between the Czech Republic and Hungary in model 3, other things being equal, although the Poles tend to trust their government significantly less than the Czechs, other things being equal. Country differences are the subject of our next analysis.

The Effects of Dismissal, Exposure, and Confession on Trust in Government in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland

The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland developed different lustration systems. This means that there were three different political cultures that gave rise to these systems. The question we are asking here is whether dismissal, exposure, and confession can promote trust in government within these different political contexts. Table 6.4 and Figure 6.2 summarize the mean scores of trust in government for the experimental treatments in each country.

The preliminary analyses indicate that dismissal produced the strongest effect on trust in government in all three countries. Among the three countries, dismissal generated the largest effect in the Czech Republic. The mean scores of trust in government were 9.62 for Czech respondents who heard the vignette versions containing dismissal and 5.79 for those who heard the continuance of employment of tainted officials. The difference of 3.83 points is highly significant ($p < .001$) and may have been stimulated by the persistent practice of the exclusive system in the Czech Republic: the Czechs may see dismissal as a natural solution to the presence of tainted officials in government. In Hungary, the mean scores of trust in government were 8.72 and 5.70 for those hearing dismissal and continuance, respectively. The difference of over 3 points was still fairly large and highly significant

Table 6.4. Mean Scores of Trust in Government Scale for Dismissal, Exposure, and Confession in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland

	Czech Republic		Hungary		Poland	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Dismissal	9.62***	(4.16)	8.72***	(4.31)	7.54***	(4.54)
Continuation	5.79	(4.17)	5.70	(4.66)	5.73	(4.32)
Exposure	8.01^	(4.68)	7.23	(4.93)	6.74	(4.43)
No exposure	7.37	(4.47)	7.10	(4.54)	6.57	(4.61)
Confession	8.29***	(4.59)	7.69***	(4.74)	6.94^	(4.52)
Denial	7.12	(4.50)	6.64	(4.71)	6.37	(4.52)
Sequence 1	7.76	(4.44)	7.18	(4.67)	6.53	(4.65)
Sequence 2	7.59	(4.72)	7.15	(4.82)	6.77	(4.39)

Source: David, Lustration Systems, Trust in Government, and Reconciliation.

Note: The table presents the mean scores of trust in government for each experimental treatment and their absence in each country and the results of Anova tests that determine whether the difference between the means of experimental treatments and their orthogonal version is significant within each country.
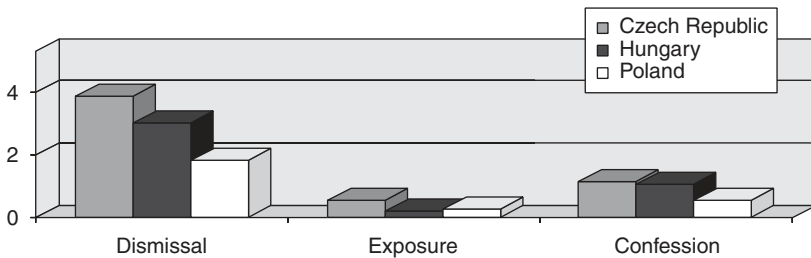
^ $p < .1$ ***$p < .001$

Figure 6.2. Mean differences in the trust in government scale between dismissal and continuation, exposure and no exposure, and confession and denial in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. The trust in government scale ranged from 0 to 16. Source: David, Lustration Systems, Trust in Government, and Reconciliation.

($p < .001$). It is a surprising result for a country that fostered a culture of consensus and that practiced an inclusive system in which dismissals almost never occurred. Dismissal had its smallest effect in Poland. The mean scores for trust in government were 7.54 and 5.73 among those who heard the

vignette versions containing dismissals and continuance of employment, respectively. These scores indicated that dismissal increases trust in government by 1.81 points but the result is still highly significant ($p < .001$). These preliminary results indicate that the Czechs found the continuation of the old personnel more problematic than the Hungarians and especially more than the Poles did. But overall dismissal is a means to establish trust in government in all countries.

Exposure seemed to generate a small positive effect on trust in government in all three countries. The mean score of trust in government was 8.01 among Czechs whose vignettes were based on the exposure of the identity of wrongdoers versus 7.37 among those whose vignettes were based on non-exposure. In Hungary, the mean scores of trust in government for these two sets of experimental vignettes were 7.23 and 7.10, respectively. In Poland, the mean scores of trust in government were 6.74 and 6.57, respectively. Thus, the effect of exposure was a 0.64-point increase in trust in government in the Czech Republic, a mere 0.13-point increase in Hungary, and a 0.17-point increase in Poland. It failed to reach an acceptable level of significance in Hungary and Poland; it was marginally insignificant in the Czech Republic ($p = .061$).

Confession seemed to affect trust in government more than exposure but less than dismissal. In the Czech Republic, the mean value of the trust in government scale for confession was 8.29, while the mean for denial was 7.12, creating a 1.17-point increase in the scale. The difference between the two means was highly significant ($p < .001$). The fact that a secular state such as the Czech Republic took the lead in accepting confession of a public official is certainly unexpected. The effect of confession on trust in government was slightly weaker in Hungary than in the Czech Republic. Hungarian respondents whose vignettes involved confession versus those whose vignettes involved denial scored 7.69 and 6.64 on average, respectively, meaning confession increased trust in government by 1.05 points. Given the country's experience with the reconciliatory system, the impact of confession on trust in government seems surprisingly small in Poland. Poles whose vignettes involved a confession scored on average 6.94 on the trust in government scale, while their counterparts, whose vignettes involved denial, scored an average of 6.37 in the same scale. Thus, confession of tainted officials increased the general public's trust in the government by a mere 0.57 points and the difference marginally fails to reach the acceptable level of significance in the country ($p = .078$).

Table 6.5   Predictors of Trust in Government in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland

	Czech Republic		Hungary		Poland	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Dismissal	3.97***	(.33)	3.13***	(.31)	2.19***	(.38)
Exposure	0.43	(.33)	−0.09	(.31)	0.13	(.38)
Confession	0.91**	(.33)	0.86**	(.31)	0.31	(.38)
Sequence	0.43	(.33)	0.11	(.31)	−0.29	(.38)
High position	−0.33	(.20)	0.03	(.18)	−0.16	(.24)
Motive (self-interest)	−0.53*	(.21)	−0.57	(.20)	−0.80**	(.24)
Agency	−0.20	(.21)	−0.09	(.19)	0.02	(.26)
Historical animosity	−0.12*	(.05)	0.29***	(.04)	−0.10*	(.05)
(Constant)	7.05	(.74)	6.47	(.70)	7.29	(.84)
R^2	0.233		0.200		0.088	
Adj. R^2	0.223		0.192		0.084	
N	593		760		557	

Source: David, Lustration Systems, Trust in Government, and Reconciliation.
Note: The table displays OLS linear regression models. The trust in government scale (range 0 to 16) was regressed on experimental variables (coded 0; 1) and control variables.
^ $p < .1$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

The preliminary analysis presented in this section has advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, its parsimony facilitates easy comprehension of the results for each experimental treatment in each country. On the other hand, it does not take into account the effects of other factors. The following analyses therefore rectify this deficiency by using a multivariate regression model that takes into account the effects of dismissal, exposure, and confession on trust in government after other factors are controlled for.

The results from the OLS linear regression analyses confirm that dismissal is a powerful predictor of trust in government in all three countries (see Table 6.5). In comparison to other experimental variables, dismissal is the strongest predictor of trust in government. Other things being equal, dismissal produces the strongest effects in the Czech Republic ($B = 3.97$, $p < .001$), followed by Hungary ($B = 3.13$, $p < .001$), and then Poland ($B = 2.19$, $p < .001$). The effect of exposure is insignificant in all three countries. This is particularly surprising with respect to Hungary, which pursued the inclusive system to deal with tainted officials. As in our preliminary analyses, confession is a significant predictor of trust in government in the

Czech Republic and Hungary. Other things being equal, confession results in a 0.91-point increase in the trust in government scale in the Czech Republic ($p < 0.01$) and in a 0.86-point increase in Hungary ($p < 0.01$). The effect of confession on trust in government is not significant in Poland. This difference is surprising given the fact that Poland is a Catholic country that practiced the reconciliatory system.

As in the merged data set, historical animosities absorb most of the effects attributed to the position of the tainted official in the previous regime and to his agency. The results concerning position and agency are insignificant in each of the studied countries. However, the view of the tainted official as motivated by self-interest produces negative effects in all three countries. Other things being equal, a one-point increase in the self-interest of the tainted official to commit wrongdoing decreases trust in government by 0.53 points in the Czech Republic ($p < .05$), by 0.57 points in Hungary ($p < .01$) and by 0.80 points in Poland ($p < .01$). Historical animosities have generated significant negative effects on trust in government in all three countries. Other things being equal, a one-point increase in the historical animosities scale generates a 0.12-point decrease in the trust in government scale in the Czech Republic ($p < .05$), a 0.29-point decrease in Hungary ($p < .001$), and a 0.10-point decrease in Poland ($p < .05$).

Thus, most of the results are consistent in all three countries. The only major inconsistency concerns the effect of confession on trust in government, which is significant in the Czech Republic and Hungary but insignificant in Poland. This suggests that the use of the reconciliatory system may be context dependent, although in a different way from expected. Perhaps the strong Catholic background of Polish society and the practice of the reconciliatory system may put an emphasis on higher requirements for accepting confession.

Discussion

The analyses presented in this chapter shed light on the propensity of different methods of personnel systems to impact trust in government and on the roles of other factors in this process. First of all, none of the methods of personnel systems has produced any negative effects on trust in government. The absence of negative results about the effects of dismissal, exposure, and confession across the three countries, as well as in the merged

data set, implies the potential use of lustration systems as methods of reju-venating trust in government after transition.

Dismissal

In accordance with our first hypothesis, dismissal is consistently the strong-est predictor of trust in government. Dismissal produced highly significant results in all of our models in the merged data set and in all three countries. This indicates that dismissal unequivocally conveys a message of discontin-uity with the past: the establishment of trust in a new government after a transition requires that it be purified by the removal of tainted officials.

The role of dismissal in establishing trust in government remains highly significant even after controlling for historical animosities. Naturally, com-mon sense suggests that governments without tainted officials would be more trustworthy in the eyes of the public than governments that include tainted officials. This may hold in established democracies, but it is far less obvious in divided societies where *wrongdoing* is a relative term interpreted differently by each side of the historical conflict. Initially, we had concerns that dismissal may satisfy those who had opposed the previous regime but dissatisfy those who had supported it. However, our findings dispel these concerns. Dismissal is an effective means of bolstering the public's trust in the new government before as well as after controlling for historical animosities.

Dismissals generated the most robust results in the Czech Republic, followed by Hungary and Poland. Owing to the implementation of the exclusive system, the Czechs may see dismissal as a natural solution to the presence of old personnel entrenched in the government. In light of this, the marked impact of dismissals in Hungary may be surprising given the rare occurrence of dismissals in a country that pursued the inclusive system. The results suggest that there was indeed a degree of dissatisfaction with the presence of secret informers in government in Hungary, as indicated in the previous chapter. Even in Poland, which remains deeply divided about its past, the effect of dismissals on trust in government was highly signifi-cant.

Exposure

We hypothesized that exposure would increase trust in government because it signifies discontinuity with the past and enhances transparency. We

found that exposure has positive effects on trust in government, although the effects failed to reach a statistically significant level in all models. Exposure of a tainted official by revealing shaming information about him does not resonate with the public in these three countries.

Confession

Confession can be credited with the most exciting findings. We hypothesized that confession would increase trust in government because it signaled a change of loyalty and the commitment of tainted officials to the new regime. First of all, our preliminary analyses found a highly significant effect of confession on trust in government in the merged data set (Tables 6.2 and 6.3). Thus, confession aspires to establish itself as a plausible alternative to dismissals. However, the effect of confession is only about one-third of the effect of dismissal.

Contrasting the effects of confession with those of exposure offers some meaningful insights. Both exposure and confession are forms of truth processes. However, the former is external to a tainted official, while the latter is a form of self-expression. Our research suggests that the effect of personal truth revelation is greater than the effect of disclosure of truth by the government. Although both exposure and confession give wrongdoers a second chance, citizens are willing to grant it only to wrongdoers who demonstrate a change of heart.

Confession does seem to be culturally dependent. The first set of findings from analyses of individual countries (Table 6.4) reveals that the largest effect of confession was in the Czech Republic, a secular state that implemented the exclusive system. The effect of confession is also highly significant in Hungary and marginally failed to reach an acceptable level of significance in Poland. This may be because of a particular sensitivity of Poles to confession: since the country is the most religious (Catholic) among the three countries and practices the reconciliatory system, Poles may be willing to accept confession only when they see it as genuine. Indeed, further analysis of the sample in Poland confirmed that confession is more effective when it is not obstructed by previous exposure.[54] Unlike in the Czech Republic and Hungary, not all confessions are accepted as confessions in Poland. In sum, confession may be employed in the macropolitical process in different countries, although countries that practice confession may demand higher standards in its implementation.

After controlling for historical animosities, the effect of confession becomes insignificant in Poland. This does not mean that confession is irrelevant or that confession is unable to reach both sides of divided societies. Instead, as we shall clearly see in the next chapter, the effect of confession is also indirect. Confession also affects reconciliation, which in turn affects trust in government. In contrast, the effects of dismissals and exposures affect trust in government directly.

The different dynamics of the effect of confession run contrary to our theorization in Chapter 2 about the top-down effects of personnel systems on reconciliation. We expected that all personnel systems would generate a spillover effect on reconciliation. While details of the eventual spillover effects of dismissal, exposure, and confession remain the subject of the following chapter, here we can see that the method of confession is different from that of exposures and dismissals. Confession by a tainted official also inspires a change at the micro level by decreasing the negative perception about the official. By confessing, the official purifies himself in the eyes of the public. In doing so, confession contributes to reconciliation, and through reconciliation may it eventually facilitate changes at the macro level and help establish trust in government.

Position, Motives, and Agency

Among our control variables, the perception of a tainted official of the previous regime as having a high position (in contrast to a low position), as being motivated by his own personal interest (in contrast to ideological motives), or as having acted on his own (in contrast to being forced to collaborate) decreased the trust in government (model 2, Table 6.3). The negative effect of the perception of the tainted official as having a high position in the previous regime on trust in government seems obvious but it is far from being self-evident in transitional societies. The public demands the prosecution of high officials whenever a small fry is caught but claims that injustices occurred among neighbors and colleagues whenever a high-profile case is resolved. The positive assessment of ideological motives may indicate a measure of tolerance toward wrongdoing of those who believed in communism. Alternatively, it may reflect disapproval of those who breached interpersonal trust to pursue their personal interests. In other words, the government is seen as more trustworthy with an official who was tainted by his wrongdoing in the pursuit of beliefs than personal gain.

Finally, it seems natural that the public judges government more strictly when it sees the tainted officials as social agents than when it sees them as victims. However, after controlling for historical animosities, the effect of position and social agency became insignificant, while the effect of motives was diluted. Although there are some country differences, these findings suggest social dynamics similar to that of confession. The position, motives, and agency seem to directly affect historical animosities, and then through them they affect trust in government.

Historical Animosities

Since we conducted research in divided societies, we have also controlled for the degree of historical animosities against the tainted official. Historical animosities—as indicated above—have been found to be a highly significant predictor of trust in government. However, we are unable to determine the causal direction, that is, whether animosities affect trust in government or trust in government affects animosities.

If any simple conclusions can be drawn from these analyses, they would indicate that the exclusive system is a means to establish trust in government; the reconciliatory system is a plausible, though less efficient, alternative to exclusions in order to achieve that goal; and there is no evidence of negative effects of lustration systems on trust in government.