

**CONCEPTS, ASSUMPTIONS & HYPOTHESES ABOUT DEMOCRATIZATION:
REFLECTIONS ON 'STRETCHING' FROM SOUTH TO EAST**

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The end of the Soviet Empire and the regime transitions in the East inevitably raised the question of whether pre-existing scholarship on transitions from authoritarian rule and the consolidation of new democracies, derived largely from the cases of Southern Europe and South America, could be applied to these new experiences. This ‘stretching’ initially occasioned a great deal of polemics, especially on the part of North American specialists working on Central & Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.¹ The vehemence of these reactions was surprising to us. It was likely fueled by intense attacks against both area-based knowledge and comparative case study methodologies in the discipline, as well as by the especially acute isolation of “totalitarian” or communist studies prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The subsequent evolution of the discussion – now much less polemic – has produced a counter-literature by scholars from inside and outside these countries which finds more utility than dis-utility in comparing the processes and outcomes in the East using concepts, assumptions and hypotheses derived from the earlier Southern experiences, although consensus still has not been reached.

This has led to some important changes. Instead of comparing post-communist regime changes only with each other, as was initially advocated, some scholars have tried to make creative (if often critical) use of theories derived from earlier transitions and consolidations, and some have even engaged in risky “cross-regional” comparisons as a way of discovering what is similar and is different. There is little question that post-communist studies have become irrevocably linked to questions of regime change in general and democratization in particular. In this respect, studies of Eastern Europe and the republics of the Former Soviet Union² have had to confront

scholarship on these issues about and from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and data on these experiences have increasingly been included in cross-regional studies.³ At the same time, theorists who are not specialists in the East find that they must also take post-communist regimes into account when developing their arguments and approaches. Despite this convergence, there are still important areas of divergence. In the debates over whether democratization theories travel and whether regions are still the only (or most fruitful) universe for comparison, it is important to note that the initial reception, interpretation and (often) rejection of theories derived from the South by specialists on the East was often based on a distorted understanding of the concepts, assumptions and hypotheses contained in what has come to be called ‘transitology’ and ‘consolidology’ (t&c).⁴ This paper is aimed at addressing some of these mis-understandings (at least in respect to our own work) as part of the effort to clarify the utility of what we shall call (for short) the t&c paradigm. Our goal here is to identify some areas of agreement but (more importantly for the purposes of this conference) to emphasize some significant areas of disagreement through a reading of the most recent literature on “Eastern Exceptionalism.”⁵ This is not an attempt to summarize all (or even most) of that prodigious literature, nor is it an attempt to address all of the arguments in the transitions/consolidation paradigm. Instead, we focus on what we view as some of the best critical applications of the transitions/consolidation approach to post-communist regime changes, especially the essay by McFaul on “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship.” Because much of what we consider to be the distortion or mis-use of concepts seems to hinge on issues of measurement, we attach a recent paper by Schmitter and Schneider that uses quantitative data to measure and analyze cross-regionally three concepts central

to the t&c approach: the liberalization of autocracy, the mode of transition and the consolidation of democracy.⁶

Eastern European Exceptionalism? Is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty?

The fundamental hypothesis underlying the Eastern critics, at least initially, was the notion that transitions from ‘totalitarianism’ would be much more difficult than transitions from mere ‘authoritarianism.’ Indeed, some scholars contended that the consolidation of ‘modern, liberal, representative democracy’ was a virtual impossibility given the ‘Marxist-Leninist’ political culture, the post-communist institutional legacy, and/or the multiple and simultaneous, “revolutionary,” transformations these countries were facing. In this respect, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the former Soviet Union (FSU) were considered to be exceptional, and their regime changes and outcomes were also expected to be exceptional.

Our initial reaction was sceptical with regard to this presumption. We put forth the notion that what was going on in CEE and the FSU seemed analogous to what we had already observed in Southern Europe and Latin America, and we suggested some concepts, assumptions and hypotheses that might be usefully applied.⁷ What we did not anticipate was how many of these post-communist polities subsequently would fulfil the ‘transitional conditions’ we stipulated and, thereby, enter into a genuine process of regime change. However, from our external point of observation, we were not so surprised when the CEE countries proved to be extraordinarily successful in their transitions and consolidations – and that even holds for a few of the republics of the FSU. These countries accomplished regime change even faster than their

Southern predecessors in Europe and Latin America did. Their present day polities are well within the range of regimes to be found in post-war Western Europe or contemporary Latin America. And, we think it highly likely that this will persist into the foreseeable future.

In making this claim, we want to be clear about what this range is and how important are the differences between cases of post-communism. In the East as well as in most other regions, there are democracies, partial democracies or “hybrid regimes,” and autocracies. For Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, we cannot imagine a future other than as a “modern, liberal, representative democracy.” Whatever one thinks about the quality of what has been achieved (and more about that later), these countries have, by all indicators, consolidated their respective regimes; the probability of their regression to autocracy or even to some hybrid regime is not much higher than it is for well-established Western democracies. Knowledgeable observers may still question the future trajectories of Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Serbia-Montenegro, and the Ukraine. Nonetheless, we are convinced that many of these countries (though probably not all) are likely to settle within the same range of variation as other post-war European regimes – especially, once they succeed in defining the boundaries of their national state and population. To argue that the range of variation at the point of departure or arrival is greater in the East than in the South, whether measured in terms of linguistic or cultural differences, extent of political stability, levels of development, or even degrees of stateness is not at all evident to us.⁸

Moreover, we have not been able to find any consistent evidence in political behaviour or in opinion surveys that proves that these Easterners are markedly different from either Southerners or Westerners – once they have secured the same rights and consolidated roughly the same institutions.⁹ True, there are significant differences between countries in every region, but not necessarily between the regions as such. **In short, communism may have been different from other forms of autocratic rule, but post-communism may not be as different as some thought.**¹⁰

This optimistic conclusion obviously does not hold for the republics of the former Soviet Union further to the East. Whether scholars choose to examine them from the perspective of distinctive types of transition and their underlying social arrangements, or to borrow from the developing world and seek explanations in the interplay between patterns of primary commodity dependence, especially oil, natural gas and cotton, and political forces,¹¹ something very different is happening to the polities on the edge of the Caucasus and in Central Asia. These cases of post-communism over time may provide the clearest argument against the utility of previous models of transition – at least, as long as they are defined in terms of a possible transition *to* democracy rather than (as was originally the case) as transitions *from* authoritarian rule.

Even here, however, the two main gambits that have been used to describe the lack of democratization in the East (or, at least, the superficiality of the formal democratic procedures that have been introduced) have already appeared in scholarship on Latin America that tried to grapple with the application of the t&c paradigm in “structurally unfavorable” circumstances. The first claims that countries like Azerbaijan and the “Stans” are only ‘façade’ or ‘electoralist’ democracies, (to the extent they may even be said to reach that level!) behind which actors – elites and

masses – continue to believe in and practice autocracy. The second argues that these and other post-communist regimes are ‘defective’ (but, nevertheless, real) democracies whose irresolvable conflicts and ineffective policies will lead to such widespread defection that they will eventually collapse into autocracies. The merits of these arguments can be discussed on a case-by-case basis, but what should be noted is that these same debates have occurred in other regions where transitions from authoritarian rule have not always produced democracies. Indeed, the concepts of “hybrid regime” and “electoralism” were developed in response to conditions in Central America and elsewhere.¹² Specialists on the Andean region, which includes the conflict-ridden cases of Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador, constantly debate whether these once “successful” transitions are descending (or have already descended) into new forms of authoritarian rule.¹³

From our point of view, what is surprising (and what we believe Eastern specialists should be asking themselves) is not why so *many*, but why so *few* post-communist polities have remained autocratic. From this perspective, the claim that some (or even many) of these countries have failed to democratize does not constitute a refutation of the utility of t&c. Rather, it points to the need for clarifying definitions and measurements of democracy so that we can be certain we are using the same concepts and metrics to identify similar events and processes. Scholars of democratization are currently addressing this critical challenge with more theoretically elaborate and empirically detailed measures of regime change, but it is not easy given the multidimensional nature of the concept and the ideologically laden assumptions built into any measurement device.¹⁴ Until this challenge is met, it will remain difficult to assess when we are witnessing a change *of* regime, i.e. a possible shift from some form of autocracy to some type of democracy, and when we are being

confronted with a change *within* regime, i.e. from one type of autocracy to another – whether this is occurring in a post-totalitarian or post-authoritarian setting.

The Uses and Misuses of ‘Transitology’ and ‘Consolidology’ When Transposed from the South to the East

Some assumptions and arguments of the t&c approach have been already built into the study of post-communism; indeed, they seem to form part of its received wisdom. Regime change has been accepted as a distinct area for scholarship, an acceptance that is more widespread than the concepts of consolidation or even quality of democracy. Whether these regime changes are called transitions and explicitly linked to the paradigm initially put forth by Rustow and O’Donnell and Schmitter, or whether they are called transformations in order to indicate that they are somehow different, regime change is now largely understood as a separate (though not isolated) moment in the political trajectories of these countries. Regardless of the specific terminology used, we are struck by how often detailed and excellent case studies from CEE & FSU describe the demise of communist systems and the construction of “something else” in terms that are theoretically and conceptually consistent with the initial studies of regime change in Southern Europe and South America.¹⁵

This means that, even in the East and (once again, regardless of terminology) transitions have to be understood as a period of unknown duration characterized by extraordinary uncertainty, where actions are under-determined and choices under-specified. Studies of different cases frequently stress the high degree of unpredictability faced by actors, their lack of adequate information, their inability accurately to calculate interests, and the sheer confusion of the moment as well as the accidental resolution of it. We repeatedly see that short-term political calculations

cannot be deduced *ex ante* or even be imputed *ex post* from the structural positions of actors during these “interesting times.” Therefore, transitions *from* autocracy (but much less subsequent transitions *to* democracy) are periods of “abnormal politics,” and they require specific conceptualization and distinctive assumptions. Because events are unexpected, actors non-standard, identities shifting, institutions not functioning, support impossible to calculate, choices hurriedly made and risks unavoidable or “uninsurable,” the normal tools of social science are not very helpful, which explains why transitions do not lend themselves well to formal modelling. Nothing that we have read about post-communism contradicts these assumptions.

Transition at all? Transition from Autocracy? Or Transition to Democracy?

Let us now move to areas where we find more disagreement. First, we wish to clear up an initial but very important misuse of the t&c approach. Nothing in the literature subsequently branded as ‘transitology’ implied that all countries that change their leaders, liberalize some of their policies, even adopt new constitutions and conduct elections with more than one party have engaged in a change of regime. No one who studied the history of Southern Europe or Latin America (from whence the original concepts and hypotheses were drawn) could have made that assumption. These two regions have been especially rich in “revolutions” against autocracy that merely produced a new or modified form of autocracy. Latin American militaries have created new constitutions, sponsored plebiscites, established political parties, and designed new parliaments. Pinochet’s regime introduced radical liberal economic reforms into Chile, yet it remained the same type of autocratic regime. Central American authoritarians may have conducted more elections than any others in the world; yet, no knowledgeable observer would have labelled them a manifestation of regime change (although some U.S. government officials occasionally tried to do so!).

Indeed, concepts like “electoralism” were developed precisely to understand and capture the changing manner in which autocrats continued to exercise power, often through the introduction of pseudo-democratic procedures.

Furthermore, (and this is key), there was never any claim that regime transition meant democratic transition. To the contrary, the literature on modes of transition was quite specific that, even once it had begun, regime transition could lead in many different directions—from a move towards consolidating democracy to a shift towards some new form of authoritarian rule with several potential “hybrid” outcomes in between.¹⁶ This is why the paradigm began with a discussion of transitions *from* authoritarian rule. The fact, therefore, that in the USSR (but, interestingly, nowhere in CEE) the political events at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s led to the emergence in some of its former republics of new forms of autocracy is unfortunate from a normative point of view, but hardly surprising from an empirical one. There is absolutely nothing peculiarly “post-communist” or “exceptional” about this. Even scholars who reject the transitions paradigm would still be well advised to examine comparatively the political history of Latin America (and, more recently, the Middle East & North Africa – not to mention, Sub-Saharan Africa), where there are vastly more examples of transitions from authoritarian rule that do not result in democracy. To criticize ‘transitology’ for not explaining this outcome has about the same logical status as criticising it for not explaining why these countries did not decide to join the United States! The answer to explaining the outcome is simple: it was simply never tried.

Only if and when certain “transitional” conditions were present did it become meaningful to classify a given case as entering a regime change (potentially) towards a democratic outcome. This is an especially important point because, as we shall see

below, the presence or absence of these conditions largely determines the assessment of the utility of the paradigm derived from Southern Europe and South America, and this has certainly not been well understood. These transitional conditions are not structural, that is, there are *no single set of structures that are necessary or explain transitions from authoritarian rule*. Nonetheless, there *are* structural conditions that help to explain the achievement of enduring and “high quality” democracies. Moreover, certain “structural” conditions have been specified that seem to “rule out” the probability of successful democratization, at least until they are altered or eliminated. The Rustow condition of “no nation, no democracy,” has been recognized by most democratization theorists right from the start; and, the Moore condition of “dominant landed elites, no democracy” was also reaffirmed.¹⁷

Regime change in the initial transitions literature was defined as a process of liberalization sufficient to trigger the resurrection or formation of organisations within civil society and, in this context, the convocation of ‘founding elections.’ What is crucial, then, is (1) liberalization; (2) the formation or resurrection of civil society; and, *in this context*, (3) the convocation of fair elections of uncertain outcome. Any effort to conceptualize regime transition in another way, for example, solely through the holding of elections, or any attempt to code and measure it only on the basis of electoral outcomes (and, thereby, to ignore the multiplicity of other, liberal and democratic, changes) is, at best, committing “the fallacy of electoralism.” In our view, this error plagues studies of democracy in every region and not just in the East -- probably because elections are so easy to observe, quantify and codify. But this was not the claim of the earliest transition studies, and the practice is both normatively and empirically questionable.

When these “transitional conditions” are well understood, the utility (or disutility) of the approach becomes much easier to assess. For example, liberalization brought about by the well-known division between hardliners and softliners in the regime is either present or absent.¹⁸ The extent to which this is the result of real, potential or even imagined popular protest and, subsequently, creates the opportunity for the resurrection or creation of organizations in civil society is also either identifiable or not. According to our (inexpert) observations, in Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine, the prime movers in the crucial early stage of the transition came from groups *within* the former Communist party, and they used the organisational structures of that party in their attempt to control the pace and direction of subsequent regime change.¹⁹ In this respect, these were classic cases of liberalization from above. That this internal split within the dominant party subsequently produced a widespread popular mobilization is hardly surprising.²⁰ And the fact that liberalizers did not always attain the outcome they preferred and were not infrequently forced to relinquish power is another feature that they have in common with imposed transitions elsewhere.

On Modes of Transition:

Another conceptual assumption of the transitions approach is the notion that there are multiple paths following the demise of authoritarian rule, that only some of these paths lead to democracy and that there are multiple paths to democracy. A corollary proposition argues that the prior type of non-democratic regime influences the choice of these paths, a point we shall address later.²¹ Thus, contrary to what was posited by modernization theory, democratic transitions do not occur through a single

evolutionary process, but rather through multiple (and not always continuous or unilinear) paths.

We defined these paths by two factors: the strategies of elites and masses, on the one hand; and, the relative power of incumbents and challengers, on the other hand. This conceptualization of “modes of transition” and their hypothetical impact led to four categories: (1) ‘pacted, (2) ‘imposed, (3) ‘revolutionary,’ and (4) ‘reformist,’ which were first developed from the Latin American experience by Karl,²² and then extended to Southern and Eastern Europe by Karl and Schmitter.²³ This means that there is more than one equilibria that can be reached to bring about democracy, and the logic of democratization cannot be reduced to a “cooperative” game in which the balance between supporters and opponents is relatively equal – a description which does not apply to all modes. The initial conceptualization of these different routes always envisioned a path in which “winners could impose democratization” – whether from above or below, and whether they were foreign or domestic. Brazil where the process took some 16 years and remained continuously under the control of the military and their civilian allies was often cited as a “model” of this imposed mode of transition.

In our view, Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union exhibit the full range of variation in the modes of transitions posited by this approach – except for violent revolutionary insurrection and overthrow from below (which is not found very often anywhere and seldom leads to a democratic transition). For a moment, Romania seemed to offer a unique case of this, but closer inspection (and hindsight) has revealed that, while there no doubt was some violence and spontaneous popular mobilisation, the actual conduct of the transition and its outcome never escaped the control of forces from within the *ancien régime*. In this respect, it cannot

be classified, at least in our thinking, as a revolution from below resulting in a democratic transition.

Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have been the sites for modes of transition to democracy driven from below by reformists not in (or at odds with) the previous ruling elite, for example, Armenia, the then Czech Republic, Croatia, Georgia, the German Democratic Republic, and Latvia (?). Transitions characterized by pacting can be found, including Poland (which has both reformist and pacted features), Hungary and Bulgaria (both with elements of imposition), Mongolia (?), and Moldova (?). Finally, imposition seems to characterize such cases as Albania (?), Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania (?), Macedonia (?), Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia and the Ukraine.

So great has been the range of variation that we are surprised that it has not led to more questioning of the widespread assumption that all post-communist transitions left from the same point of departure. How could it be possible that these allegedly so similar countries (and allegedly so much more similar than their Southern precursors) managed to find so many different ways of extricating themselves from communism and then trying to consolidate liberal democracy? Is this not *prima facie* evidence that their socio-economic and cultural structures and, especially, their political configurations were diverse in the late 1980s and early 1990s – at least, far more diverse than was previously considered? A better specification of sub-types of communist autocracy would be useful here. To the extent that it could capture regional variation, this might help to explain different outcomes *within* the region. But to the extent that they are both similar to and different from authoritarian rule elsewhere, this could also test the generic hypothesis different forms of autocracy are likely to produce different modes of transition.

The answer to the question of similarity/difference in modes of transition and their impact obviously depends upon how they are classified. According to the system we proposed, there is nothing “peculiar” about post-communist transitions – at least in terms of their classification. They have been “pacted,” “reformed from below by relatively peaceful, but mobilized (and threatening) challengers,” and “imposed from above by some sub-set of incumbent elites.” The mode of transition that has appeared frequently, at least in many Latin American and Asian countries, has been elite-led and generally imposed from above. This mode has a remarkable propensity for producing unintended consequences once liberalization has resurrected *ex post* or generated *ex novo* an insurgent civil society and once elections of uncertain outcome become a genuine possibility, *viz* Chile, Paraguay, Portugal and Mexico. Whether this is the case in the East is debatable, and McFaul argues that transitions “imposed from below” were the most frequent (and successful) in CEE and FSU.²⁴

But the system of classification of many ‘Eastern Exceptionalists’ is quite different than the one we proposed, which means that their findings cannot be utilized to ‘test’ our hypotheses. Every analyst is entitled to stake a claim for the greater validity of his or her own scheme – and then try to prove that it is a better predictor of differences in outcome. What he or she is not entitled to do is to claim conceptual equivalence. For example, McFaul’s system for classifying cases is quite different from ours. Whatever its merits, it does not measure what we meant by a mode of transition. McFaul’s is a typology of results stemming from the first elections (whether or not they were ‘founding’), and from this he reads backwards to an estimation of the power relations at the time that regime change (or non-change) was initiated. But we were trying to understand the sequence of choices, actions, and relations of power or force surrounding liberalization and (potentially) the initiation of

regime change. It is out of this context of uncertainty that actors have to agree upon or have imposed upon them the rules under which “founding” elections will be held – if they are held at all. In short, it is the mode of transition that determines the conduct of elections, not *vice versa*.

Moreover, given our insistence on multiple uncertainties in this context, there is absolutely no reason to expect that the choices made will produce intended outcomes. Time and time again, actors (especially incumbents) overestimated their bases of popular support, underestimated their opponents’ capacity for mobilization, and ‘rationally’ imposed rules or accepted compromises that ended up disadvantaging them.²⁵ This was especially true in the electoral arena, which makes ‘reading backwards’ from elections a very tricky proposition. In many cases, actors could not have known the results of future elections; they could have badly misperceived their actual electoral strength; or relations of power could have changed during the electoral process itself. This has certainly been the experience in other regions.²⁶ Thus, while it is very convincing that the winner of the first elections proves a significant factor predicting subsequent economic and political reform, as Vachudova and Fish have argued convincingly,²⁷ this cannot be used *ex post* as a valid indicator of initial power relations.

McFaul not only introduces a quite different intervening variable, but he also advances a quite different substantive hypothesis, namely, that in the East ‘reformist’ transitions from below have not only been the most frequent, but also the most successful – not the ‘pacted’ or ‘imposed’ ones that played such an important role in South America and Southern Europe. This represents a return to the earlier ‘orthodox’ theory of democratization that was largely inferred from the historical experiences of Great Britain, the Lowlands, and Scandinavia, which claims that

democracy comes about and subsequently evolves because discrete groups excluded from the political process mobilize independently and demand to be included in it. If this is correct (and our own count is different, as mentioned above),²⁸ this would be an important dis-confirmation of the new ‘orthodoxy’ based on the transitions approach, and it might well be valid for world regions other than CEE and FSU, for example, in Asia and Africa.²⁹ But it would also challenge some dearly held precepts about the form of rule prior to regime change – given the usual presumptions of Sovietologists about “totalitarian” polities and societies and what this implies about the autonomy and capacity for self-organization of groups. McFaul’s discussion centers on actors, not structures, like the new ‘orthodoxy’ of transitology, but it postulates that a quite different logic of “uncooperative,” as opposed to ‘cooperative’ behavior is better at producing democracy.

If, however, one reverts to our original classification of modes of transition, the correlation that McFaul claims to have found disappears completely. Armenia, Croatia, Czech/Slovakia, Georgia and Latvia have not been markedly more successful in economic reform³⁰ or democratization³¹ than Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Moldova and Mongolia.³² Where there does seem to be a systematic and significant difference between South and East concerns the difference between these two types and the “imposed” ones. In the South, there have been several instances in which elites from the *ancien régime* have proved relatively successful in leading their respective countries towards democracy. In Latin America, Brazil and Mexico come immediately to mind, while in Asia, Taiwan and Thailand are apposite examples. Granted, regime change took a bit longer, was more incremental, and produced less in the way of substantive policy change, but there is not much doubt about the institutional outcome. In the East, however, Albania (?), Azerbaijan (?), Belarus,

Estonia, Lithuania, Macedonia (?), Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia and the Ukraine have had a more uneven (and even negative) democratic record, although it should be noted that none of these has (yet) reverted to anything close to the previous form of autocracy (except perhaps Serbia), and all but one (Azerbaijan) seem to be making some (but not necessarily consistent) progress toward the consolidation of democracy.

Valerie Bunce has advanced an argument closely related to that of McFaul, but more complex in its structure.³³ According to her, democratization in the East is enhanced not only by a clear initial electoral victory of non-communists, but also by the early and rapid introduction of liberal economic reforms, i.e. convertibility of currency, stabilization of prices, privatization of property and liberalization of trade, especially, with Western countries. Once again, the emphasis is on a mode of transition ‘from below,’ but this is combined with economic, not strictly political factors. The thrust of t&c is quite different. Where mass pressures from below were either not present, insufficiently strong, or simply likely to provoke an overwhelming reaction from entrenched elites, t&c stressed the positive value of including political forces from the *ancien régime* within the emerging *nouveau régime*, and the desirability of proceeding slowly and sequentially in the introduction of liberal economic policies – even postponing them until the institutions of political competition and cooperation have been consolidated. Ideally, such policies would not even have to be introduced at all since this would already have been accomplished by the previous autocracy, *vide* Spain, Chile and (to a lesser extent) Mexico.

Once again, measurement may be at issue here. In the article from which we have taken this argument, Bunce does not undertake a systematic measurement of the rapidity and thoroughness of (presumably, simultaneous) political and economic reforms and offers no explicit criteria for judging the success of democratization.

Poland and, then, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia³⁴ are cited as confirming examples where rapid (and presumably less compromised) reforms led to a democratic outcome; Russia is dismissed as a counter-example since its shock therapy was “more shock than therapy;” and the negative cases of “slow or compromised transition” are alleged to have been Ukraine and Bulgaria. We do not have the time (or the expertise) to generate the relevant table (and, we confess, that we are not entirely sure what criteria Bunce had in mind), but a quick glance at the “economic reform scores” as of 1995 taken from Fish (1998) does show some potential anomalies. Just to give one example, the Czech Republic ranks highest (8.2), considerably above its former “partner,” Slovakia (7.3) in the accomplishment of economic reform and their “initial election scores” are identical (5) – and yet on a variety of indicators (to be discussed in the Schmitter-Schneider paper), the former has not been markedly more successful in consolidating democracy. Another example is Albania that ranks higher in economic reform than either Slovenia, Mongolia, Macedonia, Bulgaria or Moldova and yet does not seem to be way ahead of them politically.

In sum, the argument that regime change in CEE and FSU was most frequently characterized by reformism pushed from below is certainly provocative, but it remains to be proven empirically and this demands better measures.

But let’s accept for the moment that this argument is correct and that CEE and FSU differ from, say, Latin America in this respect. Does this actually constitute a refutation of the t&c approach, at least in our own work, or does it point to an important (and theoretically interesting) regional variation? In Latin America, we argued that transitions from above, including both pacted and imposed ones, proved to

be the most common form of transition to democracy – at least until the end of the twentieth century. But this was intended to be a regionally specific claim, and it was specified as such.³⁵ During the Cold War mass-based political change was ruled out by the hegemonic presence of the U.S, which strengthened both local elites and armed forces and blocked every effort of reformist change from below to prevent this outcome. This in large part accounted for the explanation for the frequency of elite-led transitions (including the less frequent pacted ones),³⁶ and it is not yet clear that the end of the Cold War will change this pattern.³⁷ In this respect, because the prevalence of elite-dominated pacted and imposed modes of transition was heavily influenced by the particularities of U.S.-Latin American relations, “stretching” this finding to other regions as a way of “disproving” the t&c approach was always a dubious proposition.³⁸ What this finding does affirm, however, is the continued importance of regional variation, not as a demonstration of the impossibility of generalization but as an illustration of how the same types of phenomenon can produce distinctive political patterns under different regional (or other) conditions.

On Pacts and Pacting:

Mis-use of the concept of pacting seems to be especially pervasive in discussions of regime change in the East. There is some notion that transition theorists who use this concept (or, at least, Karl and Schmitter) have claimed that ‘pacts’ were the only path to the successful consolidation of democracy. This was never the case. The first study of comparative transitions did argue that pacts proved to be extremely useful, especially in Venezuela and Spain, in permitting a transition to move forward while simultaneously blocking the relapse into authoritarian rule, and it posited that pacts could be useful in other cases as well. But Karl warned that pacts carried the danger of producing a “frozen,” elitist, and highly oligarchic set of

arrangements that threatened the long-term prospects of democracy (an observation subsequently born out in the collapse of Venezuela's party system and its plunge into perpetual crisis).³⁹ And O'Donnell and Schmitter specifically stated that such arrangements are neither necessary nor sufficient for a successful transition.⁴⁰

Instead, pacts were viewed as only one means of "boundary maintenance," that is, placing highly controversial issues outside the field of play during an especially critical moment. The same effect could be gained by neo-corporatist, consociational, federal or other power-sharing/agenda-limiting devices for removing substantive issues from the core policy process in order to lower the level of uncertainty and, hence, threat perception.

Not only did we base our approach on the multiplicity of paths to democracy, but we also stressed the great difficulty – and, hence, infrequency – in reaching such pacts during the highly uncertain conditions of transitions, precisely because it was so unlikely that incumbents and challengers would find themselves in the sort of power equilibrium where no actors could impose their preferred 'solution' upon others. It is notable that this equilibrium can be produced not just by stalemate but also by mutual desire to avoid a worst-case scenario. Thus, pacting in the Southern European and Latin America cases tended to occur where the memory of the horrors of past state terror or civil war was very much on the minds of actors across the political spectrum; tempering the extent to which they would insist on first preferences and, thereby, making them more amenable to compromised solutions.

An argument worth serious investigation, in our view, is that such power equilibria (and, hence, pacts) are more likely when the supporters and opponents of the *ancien régime* are economically interdependent, that is, class actors, rather than nationalist or identity-based actors. At this point, the evidence seems to be mixed, but

if this is the case, it could explain why pacting might be especially unlikely in some post-communist cases, but *nota bene* not for ‘totalitarian’ reasons. The same point would be likely to hold true in much of Africa and some parts of Latin America.⁴¹

For reasons that are mysterious to us, many specialists in post-communism seem to believe that (1) the transitions approach is only about pacting; (2) pacts are impossible to reach in the aftermath of Soviet-type autocracy; and *ergo*, (3) the transition paths in their part of the world must be completely different from those in Southern Europe, Latin America or elsewhere. While we are not experts in post-communism, our admittedly superficial observation of these cases has convinced us that this syllogism is wrong – from beginning to end. Transitions are not just about pacts, and they do not need pacts to be successful. Furthermore, some post-communist countries have negotiated pacts, and these pacts did have a significant impact on both the course and outcome of regime change. Hungary is the most unequivocal case; Poland is an ambiguous mixture of non-violent mobilization from below (‘transition by reform’) and pacting; Bulgaria engaged in a lengthy (if tumultuous) practice of ‘round-tabling,’ and this seems to have influenced the configuration of its basic democratic institutions. There are even rumors that pacting among consenting adults occurred in Mongolia and Moldova early in their respective transitions. Where such pacts occur, these cases cannot simply be categorized as “uncooperative” on the grounds that specific items included in the pacts were subsequently rejected by mass publics or ignored by the contracting parties. The importance of a pact lies in reaching the necessary agreement, at the appropriate political moment, and (usually) publicizing this fact during the process of transition; it does not reside in the details of its implementation. In the ‘classic’ cases of *pactismo* – Venezuela, Spain, Uruguay and, eventually, Chile – some important dispositions of

their pacts were never implemented; nevertheless, there is no doubt that the pacts themselves were of major significance.⁴²

The contention that pacts cannot or do not apply to post-communist transitions seems to depend on the application of the totalitarian model, that is, the notion that these countries had no autonomous non-state actors, no civil society, few salient economic cleavages and pacified or suppressed ethnic conflicts. If this were the case, then, it is plausible to argue that there could not have been meaningful or viable challengers and hence, there are no possible partners with whom to pact. But our impression is that, in most cases, the totalitarian model no longer applied, and in some countries it may never have been applicable *in strictu sensu*. Thus, while it is certainly rare that opposition groups were as well organized and articulate as Solidarnosc, there did and do exist leaders of ‘latent groups’ within these societies that can be found and that can plausibly speak for and deliver the compliance of strategic sectors of the population. Even in one of the most repressive communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, the collapsing incumbents managed to find someone to round-table with in the closing moments! When bargains were struck, whether they took the form of explicit pact-making, and how well these agreements were kept in particular cases is certainly a legitimate subject of debate, but there is very strong evidence that pacting did occur and that it played an important role in at least some Eastern transitions.

Does the Mode of Transition Matter?

The most devastating critique of transitology that emerges from post-communist regime changes is that of **equifinality**. Contrary to all initial expectations, many more of the CEE and FSU polities have successfully negotiated or manipulated their way to democracy, and they seem to have done so irrespective of their mode of transition!

Except for the cases of imposition, it does not seem to make as much difference as elsewhere whether the transition was hammered out between incumbent soft-liners and moderate challengers, or thrust upon the *ancien régime* by the mobilization of mass publics. Thus, the proposition that modes of transition matter for the subsequent process of democratization, shared by many of us,⁴³ has been cast in doubt, at least with regard to the sheer survival of democracy.

But this same critique had already emerged in the South. One of the most enduring findings of democratization studies is that, regardless of the mode of transition, democracies seem to last (or not last), largely for other reasons than those for which they were founded.⁴⁴ This is an important finding, yet judging equifinality in terms of durability is simply too narrow an agenda because there are multiple equilibria that can sustain “minimal” or “unconsolidated” democracies. Even if the mode of transition does not matter for the survival of such democracies, there is still evidence to buttress the claim that it has had an important impact on the choice of particular institutions and, through this mechanism, on the type of democracy that emerges. Thus, if the dependent variable is conceived differently, the mode of transition may matter a great deal.⁴⁵ Moreover, it is equally plausible to suggest that the mode of transition will affect the quality of democracy and, thus it is premature to conclude that it “washes out” when dealing with the problem of regime change writ large.⁴⁶

Beyond Transition: The Quality of Democracy in the East

Most scholars of neo-democracies – including those in the East – tend to agree with Rustow’s proposition that the causes of a transition to democracy are likely to be

different from those that explain its subsequent fate. But consensus over theoretical constructs stops here. For this reason, it is more difficult to assess the South-to-East utility of the concept of the consolidation (and not just the durability, stability or survival) of democracy, as well as the subsequent attention that has been focused on the “quality of democracy.” Take the notion of consolidation, which provided some transition theorists with an important framework for thinking about post-transitional situations.⁴⁷ It has been used in such different ways and to such different ends that it has lost (if ever it had) much of its conceptual clarity. Indeed, at least one of the original authors of *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* prefers to jettison the concept altogether!⁴⁸

Others have reduced or transformed consolidation to the simpler and easier to measure notion of stability or durability, with the organizing question being: Why have some democracies been more stable (or lasted longer) than others? There is some consensus that the factors explaining consolidation are different from those illuminating transition, but the answers posed are still predictably varied and often controversial: excessively pluralist societies lead to instability;⁴⁹ the strength of civil society or political parties is what really matters;⁵⁰ neoliberalism and especially the sequencing of reforms has a positive (or negative) effect on democratic durability;⁵¹ democracy does not last if inequality is too little or too great;⁵² state decay or collapse reduces the prospects for democracy,⁵³ etc. Only the notion that the level of economic development is generally an important determinant of the persistence of democracy (though not the process of transition) is widely accepted.⁵⁴ When the quality of democracy is added to the equation as part of the program of assessing new democracies, its application is even more difficult since it is still in the initial processes of conceptual definition and measurement.

Unlike specialists in other “democratizing” regions, scholars of the East have not actively probed these questions, presumably because they are convinced that such a discussion would be premature. First, these countries have to have a consolidated democracy and only then can one make any judgements about the conditions that led to it and its quality. From our outside (and perhaps overly optimistic perspective), many post-communist countries already have achieved this status, and, therefore, it is time to pay attention to the quality of what has been produced. Depressing as it may seem, regime change is over in most of the East for the foreseeable future. There will be no “second transition” and whatever institutional or behavioral changes will occur will be “infra-democratic,” i.e. from one type of democracy to another. Like Latin America and Asia (but not Africa or the Middle East), democratization has proven to be much easier than initially imagined, but much less consequential than its protagonists hoped and much less threatening than its antagonists feared. And this may why analysts so dislike the concept of consolidation and, therefore, hesitate before taking the issue of the quality of democracy seriously. For many – actors and analysts -- democracy was a huge conquest, and it is supposed to matter hugely. As the reality of what democracy is and, especially, what it is not and it cannot do sets in, there is resistance (and not just in the East!) to admitting that what has been produced and is unlikely to go away actually deserves such a prestigious label.

Precisely, because this is such a common phenomenon across regions, we see no reason for using different standards to evaluate Southern and Eastern outcomes. All neo-democracies should be judged according to the same criteria – and these criteria should be “realistically attainable,” i.e. not derived from such idealistic norms that well-established democracies have yet to attain them or took several centuries even to approximate them. In other words, citizens having equal rights may not have

equal resources or access to power and constitutional provisions may not be evenly enforced everywhere in the national territory or all across the national social structure. Economic rewards and standards of living may not narrow in their distribution and converge toward a national mean. Personal, family and clan connections may not be absent from the distribution of political goods. Not all citizens may bother to vote – not to mention, to participate in associations, movements or parties. Not all voters may like the choices put before them at election time. Not all citizens may trust their government or their politicians; not all candidates may have access to the same material resources. Not all winners may be equally accountable to those who elected them; not all office-holders may treat the demands of citizens in a similar fashion and they may not only pursue public purposes when they make and implement policies. Not all governments may acquire and sustain the support of a majority of the population.

In each of the above cases, the quality of democracy would certainly be better if the statements were not true, but any “realistic” assessment would have to concede that these less-than-admirable features are present in virtually all “real-existing modern, liberal, representative democracies.” So, as we move in the East as well as the South toward evaluating what has been wrought by recent regime changes, we must keep in mind that what we should be searching for are “trends toward” rather than “goals accomplished.”

And, on the way to researching this, we are very likely to discover what the Spaniards quickly baptized as *desencanto* (disenchantment). It exists in virtually all neo-democracies, regardless of region or point of departure. Their newly liberated citizens are not necessarily going to be enthusiastic about what they collectively have produced (or have had collectively thrust upon them, as the case may be). The search

for a supportive “civic political culture” similar to that which (used to) exist in the United States and Great Britain is likely to prove fruitless. Analysts of mass public opinion during regime change are much more likely to find evidence of a “cynical political culture” – and this is not necessarily a mortal threat to democracy.

Populations are more educated, informed, sensitive to performance elsewhere – and they demand more from their political institutions. Politicians are more professional and further removed in life experience from their voters/followers than in the past; issues are more complicated and subject to more obscure trade-offs and compromised outcomes. Countries are more interdependent and national leaders less and less capable of delivering alone what their citizens want. There is nothing exceptional, therefore, about the fact that mass publics in the East do not seem to admire their leaders, think that corruption is burgeoning under democracy or even express nostalgia for the *ancien régime*. These attitudes are just as present in the South (or, better said, overlap with the distributions found there), and they are no more threatening in terms of a reversion to autocracy there than in the post-communist countries. From a “consolidological” point of view, what counts is not disenchanted and cynical public opinion but whether politicians and citizens are willing to compete and cooperate with each other freely and predictably according to a mutually acceptable set of rules. Once these are consolidated within the key “partial regimes” that make up a “modern, liberal, representative democracy,” eventually, a supportive political culture (perhaps, less “civic” than in the Anglo-American past) may emerge – and, if it does, the quality of democracy will improve.

Conclusion: A Different Wave?

The most obvious implication of “Eastern Exceptionalism” is that, for these cases, regime changes and efforts at democratization should be assigned to a different wave.⁵⁵ In so doing, the analyst is claiming that whatever concepts, assumptions and hypotheses might have used to describe and explain the previous wave they would no longer be valid – or they would only be valid if re-defined. The whole purpose of distinguishing such waves is to “historicize” them, i.e. to identify the peculiar constellation of factors that brings them about during that particular moment in time and, then, to explain the pattern of diffusion that extends the reach of the wave and propels it forward. Democratization may not be culturally unique, but it is not a universal process that always occurs under the same domestic and foreign conditions. For at least two of the previous waves, the common ‘detonator’ was large-scale and protracted international warfare. Presumably, the Eastern Exceptionalists are arguing that the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire played an equivalent role – and this was sufficient to mark it off from the previous (post-1974) wave when there was no such common detonator – internal or external.

The core to “undular distinction” in the work of McFaul and others rests on the claim that post-communist transitions were “revolutionary,” while those in the south of Europe and in Latin America are said to have been merely “evolutionary.” We find it difficult to accept this generic label for the transformations that occurred in CEE and FSU and, therefore, find the contrast with regime changes in SE and LA conceptually and empirically misleading. Despite the enormity of change in the East, there is much more “before-and-after” continuity than is warranted by the revolutionary label. Not only were violence, utopian ideals, widespread mobilization and damage to property quite rare, but many, if not most, of the protagonists of the *ancien régime communiste* remained in the country and were able to protect many, if

not most, of their material and political assets. Try to imagine the possibility of a “pro-British Party” coming peacefully to power, say, ten years after the American Revolution, or monarchists consensually taking over power in 1800 in France, or the followers of Batista winning an election in Cuba in 1979! This would be utterly impossible in the aftermath of a “real” revolution since these actors were either dead, deprived of their assets, completely disgraced or in exile by that time. Not so in CEE and FSU where the alleged “uncooperative losers” were able to use their (non-appropriated) assets (personal and organizational) to return to power shortly thereafter in several, indeed, many of these cases. If revolutions did occur in the East, they are either revolutions “from above” or “from within,” more than “from below.”

This fits a pattern. O’Donnell and Schmitter suggested that one of the (*inconfessable*) rules of transitions in SE and LA was to leave “the property rights of the bourgeoisie inviolable.”⁵⁶ We would say that, with a few exceptions, in post-communist countries the rule has been that “claims to property rights by the *Nomenklatura* were (almost) inviolable.” If this was the case (and if it took a great deal of surreptitiously cooperative behavior between incumbents and challengers to bring this about), then the gap between waves becomes much less evident. Also, the obvious fact that, in both the South and the East, the counter-movement back to autocracy has been much less powerful than anticipated becomes much easier to explain. In most respects, autocrats did not lose as much as they feared, either in the political and economic realm, and this explains why they had much less incentive to try to bring about the *statu quo ante* or anything like it.⁵⁷

In sum, what we are witnessing in the East, while clearly distinctive in some important respects, may not be all that different. True, we have witnessed the collapse of an empire and of a type of prior autocracy and economic system not been

found elsewhere (*pace* Cuba). But where violence and abuse had been especially high, neo-democracies grapple (or fail to grapple) with ending the impunity of abusers and dealing with the past – just like in other regions. Where corruption was especially widespread, the rule of law is bound to be a major issue – just like in other regions. Where minorities were especially oppressed and advance new claims during the transition, their rights, loyalties and obligations provide much of the substance of political controversy – just like in other regions. Where state formation and bureaucratization has preceded democratisation and is not changed by it, new regimes are likely to be more stable – just like in other regions. Where civil societies were non-existent, weak or fragmented, they have to be strengthened *pari passu* with the institutions of authority – just like in other regions. This is not to say there are no differences between the East and other regions in which democratisation has recently occurred. Instead, we persist in arguing that the similarities are compelling enough to derive concepts, assumptions and hypotheses, test them and, if possible, confirm or falsify them using all the relevant experiences of every region of the world.

* * * ENDNOTES * * *

¹ One particularly extreme reaction was from George Schopfli, an Eastern European academic working in the West. See CITE. For a debate on this issue, see "The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists: How Far East Should They Attempt to Go?" (with Philippe Schmitter), *Slavic Review* 53, no. 1, (Spring 1994), and "From an Iron Curtain of Coercion to a Paper Curtain of Concepts: Grounding Transitologists or Confining Students of Postcommunism?" (with Philippe Schmitter), *Slavic Review* 54, no.4 (Winter 1995), as well as Valerie Bunce, "Comparative Democratization: Big and Bounded Generalizations, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 33, No 6-7 (August-September, 2000), 703—34. ADD CITE FOR BUNCE RESPONSE.

² See, for example, Klaus von Beyme, *Transitions to Democracy in Eastern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Claus Offe, *The Eastern European and East German Experience* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1997); and Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State* (New York: Cambridge University press, 1999).

³ See Larry Diamond Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds), *Democracy in Developing Countries* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1986); Stephen Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton University Press, 1995); and Juan J Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, Md. The Johns Hopkins University Press), 1996.

⁴ These labels have even become part of the controversy, and they are often criticized. The irony is that the former was invented by scholars from the CEE, and it subsequently gave rise to the latter. There is no easy 'neutral' terminology for approaches based on the paradigm inspired by the transitions literature, as will become clear from our efforts to refer to it below.

⁵ See especially the essay by Michael McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship," paper prepared for the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, Aug.30-Sept.2.

⁶ Schmitter and Schneider, forthcoming.

⁷ See work cited in footnote one as well as Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe Schmitter, "Modes of Transition in Southern and Eastern Europe, Southern and Central America," *International Social Science Journal*, 128 (May 1991).

⁸ In Guatemala, which is only one country of Latin America, for example, there are somewhere between 20-26 recognized indigenous languages, the boundaries of the state are contested, levels of economic development are the polar opposite of, say, Uruguay, and the inequalities between rich and poor are among the highest in the world.

⁹ Hans-Dieter et al.

¹⁰ This raises the possibility that some forms of communist rule may have resembled some forms of authoritarian rule more than was initially suspected, a question that requires further research. Thus, studies of comparative forms of authoritarian rule/autocracy might do well to highlight possible similarities as well as differences.

¹¹ For an interesting mix of these approaches, see the work of Pauline Jones Luong. Also see Terry Lynn Karl "OPEC Lessons for Caspian Leaders," in Robert Ebel and Rajan Menon (eds.), *Energy, Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Baltimore: Rowen and Littlefield, 2000) for an example of how leading sector analysis can be applied to this region. Work on cotton and plantation economies, largely developed in African and Latin American scholarship, is also useful here. For the development of this approach and its application to the diverse development trajectories of Eastern and Central Europe and the Caspian, see the a new project of the Central European University aimed at testing these sectoral and commodity-based theories as partial explanations for different development trajectories in post-communist countries..

¹² Larry Diamond has extended the concepts to other regions. See cite. For the definition of these concepts, see Terry Lynn Karl, "The Hybrid Regimes of Central America," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 3 (July 1995). "Electoralism: Why Elections are not Democracy," in Richard Rose (ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Elections*. Congressional Quarterly Books, 2000, and "Imposing Consent: Electoralism Versus Democratization in El Salvador" in Paul Drake and Eduardo Silva (eds.), *Elections in Latin America*. University of California, San Diego, 1986: 9-36

¹³ Cites

¹⁴ This is an extremely important point. McFaul, for example, claims that only eight of twenty-eight post-communist countries have entered the ranks of liberal democracy, yet if one consults his table (pp. 16-17), their number has jumped to 12. Depending on how these countries are classified and measured, a different (and not so dismal) track record is possible, bringing the number of democracies up to at least half. In addition, the measurements themselves, as we know, contain certain biases. The frequently used Freedom House scores, for example, tend to favor transitional countries that quickly and thoroughly promote economic (not strictly political) freedoms. (CITE)

¹⁵ See, for example, Marjorie Castles and CITES

¹⁶ Cite Karl and Schmitter modes

¹⁷ In other words, agricultural elites that dominate the social structure and depend on labor-repressive practices have a strongly negative effect on the installation of a democratic regime. Thus, for example, even transition to a hybrid democracy in Central America has only been made possible by shifting the center of capital accumulation away from export agriculture based on labor repression. In addition to our own work cited above, see Nicolas Guilhot and Philippe Schmitter, "De la transition a la consolidation. Une lecture retrospective des "democratization studies," " *Revue Francaise de Science Politique*, Vol. 50, No.4-5, (Aout-Octobre 2000), 615-632 and James Mahoney, "Knowledge Accumulation in Comparative Historical Analysis: The Case of Democracy and Authoritarianism," paper prepared for "Comparative-historical analysis," Harvard University, 2000.

¹⁸ We are a bit puzzled by McFaul's empirical assertion that "the central cause of political liberalization in the post-communist world was not elite division." (p.8). Gorbachev is dismissed as an "outside agent" on the grounds that he was a "consensus candidate." This does not accord with our (admittedly inexperienced) observation of most of the cases in CEE and FSU, but we invite comment from those are more familiar with events there during the mid- to late-1980s.

¹⁹ This was also true for some countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, but this did not produce a transition to democracy, as noted above.

²⁰ The nationalism characterizing these popular surges, however, is a marked difference from those in Southern Europe and South America.

²¹ See especially Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post communist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins press, 1994); Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and Gerardo L. Munck and Carol Skalnik Leff, "Modes of Transition and Democratization: South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (April 1997), 343-362.

²² Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (October 1990), 1-21.

²³ Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe Schmitter, "Modes of Transition in Latin America, and Southern and Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal*, Vol 128 (May 1991), 269-284; and Munck and Leff, cited above.

²⁴ By Schmitter's count, transitions (and non-transitions) "imposed from above" were the modal form in CEE and FSU. This is an empirical question that can only be determined by agreement on the indicators and a subsequent effort at scoring the relevant events. He will invite specialists to correct these scores via e-mail in a forthcoming work.

²⁵ Marjorie Castle's dissertation on Poland is an excellent illustration of this point.

²⁶ Such miscalculations are famous in Latin America, where militaries have often held plebiscites or elections that they felt certain to win and subsequently lost. The best known case is General Pinochet, whose certainty he would win a plebiscite to extend his own power led him to call for a vote, which he then lost. This event initiated the transition to democracy in Chile.

²⁷ Vachudova and Fish

²⁸ We suspect that imposed transitions from above were the modal form, but we may be coding particular cases incorrectly. For that reason, we especially invite specialists to comment on our classifications.

²⁹ "Pacting" has been used with some success in Africa and, offhand, we cannot think of a single case of a "reformist" transition there. "Imposition" applies rather well to the mode in Taiwan and Thailand and the obvious cases of "reformist" transitions in Asia – the Philippines, South Korea and Indonesia – have produced a mixed set of results.

³⁰ Fish, 35

³¹ McFaul, 16-17

³² We have left the DDR out for obvious reasons.

³³ CITE TO ARTICLE IN DOBRY

³⁴ Schmitter is a bit puzzled by this assessment of Slovenia. Having visited the country a few times, one of its most obvious features is the continuous role played in its economy by the previous *Nomenklatura* and the very slow pace of its economic liberalization. They are overtly proud of the “orderly” conversion from state to private managerialism. According to Fish’s data, Slovenia has accomplished less reform in this domain than Albania, Croatia and Russia!

³⁵ See Karl cited in note 22.

³⁶ In Latin America, the hope was that the end of the Cold War would permit the emergence of bottom-up types of regime change and permit more room for reformism since the links, real or supposed, between mass movements and communism was now a moot question. In the present environment, this may not be the case. Policy-makers, alarmed by what appears to be a move to the left, have tried to tie Brazil’s “Lula,” Venezuela’s Chavez, Argentina’s Luis Zamora, and Ecuador’s Lucio Gutierrez to the extension of a new “axis of evil,” which originated with Cuba. See “Axis of Evil” Feared in Latin America,” *Financial Times*, October 23, 2002, 5.

³⁷ The recent abortive coup d’etat in Venezuela against just such a populist reformist (and democratically elected) government was enthusiastically welcomed by the United States – in direct contravention to its (alleged) commitment to democracy – and suggests that the role of the regional hegemon may not have changed. See Terry Lynn Karl. “Accident or Intent? Reneging on Democratic Promotion in Venezuela,” *British Journal of Latin American Studies*, forthcoming.

³⁸ For example, Greece was a quite successful “reformist” case in Southern Europe, and South Korea has not done so badly with it in Asia.

³⁹ Terry Lynn Karl, “Petroleum and Political Pacts: The Transition to Democracy in Venezuela,” in O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead.

⁴⁰

⁴¹ This is the argument of Badreline Arfi, “Democratization and Communal Politics,” *Democratization*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1998), 42-63 and others, but some aggregate data does not show this to be the case. GET CITE

⁴² Marjorie Castle has captured this feature imaginatively by describing the lengthy experience of the Polish Round Table as a “successful failure.” Kathleen Collins has called our attention to the possibility that pacts may even exist among elites **not** to democratize, which we had not anticipated. But this would be a case of changing from one regime su-type to another, not from one regime type to another.

⁴³ In addition to our own work cited above and that of Munch and Leff and Linz and Stepan previously cited, see, for example, Samuel Valenzuela, “Democratic Consolidation in Post-Transitional Settings: Notions, Process, and Facilitating Conditions,” in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O’Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela (eds.) *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992);

⁴⁴ Przeworski 1995.

⁴⁵ Case studies provide some of the best illustrations. See, for example, Timothy Sisk on South Africa, Cite.

⁴⁶ Quote from Przeworski

⁴⁷ See especially Schmitter 1995 and Schedler 1998.

⁴⁸ O’Donnell 1996

⁴⁹ DiPalma

⁵⁰ Mainwaring and Scully 1995

⁵¹ Haggard and Kaufman 1992; Przeworski 1991

⁵² O’Donnell

⁵³ Linz and Stepan

⁵⁴ Except in oil-exporting countries! Lipset 1959, Przeworski et al. 2000

⁵⁵ Without quibbling excessively over numbers, we think McFaul is mistaken to label his discovery, “the Fourth Wave,” since that position has already been occupied. McFaul seems to accept passively Samuel Huntington’s claim that the post-1974 democratizations constituted “the Third Wave.” As Schmitter has argued elsewhere, this is double error. CITE. Conceptually, because to have any utility as a metaphor, a wave has to be compressed in time and interactive in effect – flowing and then ebbing with some continuous causal probability. Huntington’s so-called First Wave extended either from 1776 to 1926 or 1829 to 1926 – an absurdly long period! It is utterly impossible to imagine that all the democratizations (and counter-democratizations) during these 100 to 150 years could have affected or

learned from each other. It would be analytically much more accurate to admit that many countries during these years democratized “by themselves.” Empirically, because one can identify much more plausible periods during which many regime changes did indeed take place in close temporal proximity and manifestly influenced each other: (1) the Springtime of Freedom from 1848 to 1852; (2) the years immediately preceding and succeeding World War One; and (3) the years after World War Two – extending into the decolonizations of the 1960s. This makes the post-1974 wave the Fourth and McFaul is entitled to label his the Fifth – if he can argue compellingly for distinguishing it from its predecessor!

⁵⁶ Exact page reference

⁵⁷ This observation suggest another, even more subversive, hypothesis. The core of the Eastern exceptionalist argument, as we have noted above, was the alleged greater difficulty of regime change in post-communist settings and much of the plausibility of that assertion rested on the notion of “simultaneity.” In a triple or quadruple transition/transformation, it seemed self-evident that it would be more difficult to reach a stable outcome, least of all, a democratic one. But what if simultaneity was an advantage not a disadvantage? What if the concurrent transformations to a capitalist economy, a democratic polity and a new international status generated a wider range of potential rewards and made it easier to trade them off across conflicting groups – incumbents, as well as challengers?

Of all analysts, Karl Marx may have been the first to suggest this. In his 18th Brumaire, he observes that the French bourgeoisie chose to give up its right to rule (as a class) for its right to make money (as individuals) when it supported Napoléon III. Could this be what the civilian and security *Nomenklatura* did in the post-communist context? Precisely due to the Trilemma, new opportunities opened up for incumbents with managerial skills and international contacts and, therefore, they were much more willing to give up their claim to political domination – at least, temporarily – in order to make money and acquire status. This strategy was only a viable option **provided** that those who initially came to occupy positions of authority via electoral success would not prosecute those who had previously occupied these positions via bureaucratic selection for crimes they had committed while in office and would not contest their claims to “transformed” property and international positions.

The difference between the South and the East is that in the former an explicitly negotiated pact was necessary in order to provide mutual assurance – perhaps, because there was less “simultaneously” available for trade-offs or, perhaps, because of the more prominent role played by the military. In CEE and part of the FSU, the cooperative outcome seems to have been attained by more informal means, i.e. through implicit understandings whereby “retrospective justice” would not be applied and claims to state property would not be denied or carefully scrutinized. It is very striking in comparison to transitions in the South that no single post-communist polity (with the obvious exception of the DDR) engaged in extensive prosecution of prior human rights offenders or even held a “Truth Commission.” None, that we know of, banned previous high officials from holding office again. Virtually everywhere, prominent members of the ex-*Nomenklatura* have acquired significant assets and live unmolested in the country that they formerly ruled with an iron fist.

Our hunch is that none of this could have come about without some form of ‘implicit’ or ‘tacit’ pacting. Moreover, the former Communists were not only well-protected as individuals, but they were also capable as a “reformed” collectivity of making an astonishingly rapid return to power. In very many of these countries, they subsequently became the democratically elected government! Only in the Central American cases was such an analogous outcome possible.

[The Czech Republic comes closest to being an exception, and it was one of the very few cases where the *ancien régime* was deposed by an extensive popular mobilization from below and where the incumbent Communists resisted liberalization prior to their demise. The new democratic rulers did try, we gather, to “de-fenestrate” high officials in the *Nomenklatura* and even tried to lay the basis for a novel form of property rights via vouchers that seems to have been intended to marginalize their economic role. Neither effort seems to have been a success, but it is the only CEE country in which the former PC, however re-baptized, does not play a significant political role.]