

## Article Summaries for the Project on Democratic Transitions

Following article summaries are a part of PDT archives reflecting the work of PDT associates between the years of 2005 and 2011. These summaries have been further revised and edited by Alexandra Wiktorek Sarlo and Shelli Gimelstein

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**Daniel Brinks and Michael Coppedge\*, “Diffusion Is No Illusion:  
Neighbor Emulation in the Third Wave of Democracy,”**

*Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4, May 2006, pg. 463-489

**Key words:**

Democracy scores  
Central and Eastern Europe  
U.S., Russian, European Union influence  
Democratic diffusion

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Best Measures**

This study uses Freedom House scores to define levels of democracy. The authors contend that despite some criticisms about the index, FH data are used to measure democracy in many respected studies. Furthermore, FH scores and Polity IV are the only global annual democracy indicators available and, therefore, the only ones suited for a study on democratic diffusion.

**External Factors**

This essay makes clear that political system change is not merely a domestic endeavor. States are highly susceptible to the political regime preferences of networks in which they exist including those of their neighbors, of superpowers (i.e. Soviet Union or the United States) and of the global political system. These effects are the strongest within a network where a large difference exists between the average levels of democracy and the potential adopter’s level.

CEE success stories

Countries tend to emulate their neighboring countries’ average level of democracy.

EU, Russia, U.S.

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In cases where countries lie within another country's sphere of influence, these countries will tend to move towards the superpower's level of democracy or non-democracy.

## ***B. Summary***

This article develops and tests a specific model of the role of diffusion as a determinant of the magnitude and direction of regime change, using a database that covers the world from 1972 to 1996. The authors find that countries tend to change their regimes to match the average degree of democracy or non-democracy found among their contiguous neighbors. Countries within the U.S. sphere of influence tended to become more democratic in the period examined despite their neighbor's tendencies. In general, countries also tend to follow the direction in which the majority of other countries in the world are moving.

**A Definition of Diffusion.** The concept of diffusion explored in this paper keeps with Everett Rogers' (1995) definition of diffusion i.e. that it is "a process by which [1] an *innovation* is [2] communicated through certain *channels* [3] over *time* among the members of [4] a *social system*" (468). Innovation in this paper is correspondent to the adoption of a more or less democratic style of government as measured by FH. The broad time period covered in this analysis allows for an examination of the changes in levels of democracy in a target country. The authors recognize three types of social systems in which states can partake.

**What This Study Adds to the Literature.** This study builds on past studies but adds a few innovative twists to the literature. First, the diffusion variable used takes into consideration levels of democracy in both sending and receiving countries and predicts a stronger effect when the difference in levels is greater. Second, B+C model a partial adjustment process which suggests that waves arise where there are greatest gaps between democratic and nondemocratic countries, sending ripples in all directions through their previously similar neighbors. Third, this study uses a two-step model to test separately the likelihood that a given country will adopt a new form of government and whether, if it does change, that government will be more democratic or less so and by how much. This corrects for selection bias that would otherwise grant too much influence to regional diffusion in cases where the possibility of regime change was imminent<sup>1</sup>. Fourth, the authors have introduced more controls for domestic, regional, and global influences (described below) than any

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<sup>1</sup> The first step of this model calculated the likelihood that a country will be 'selected' for change measured as a function of: (1) number of years since last transition because the less time has elapsed from the last transition, the less likely another change becomes; (2) the average amount of instability in the preceding year because instability in neighboring countries actually acts as a signal to the regime that it should clamp down on change; (3) the difference between the democracy score of a country within the U.S.'s sphere of influence and the U.S.'s because the greater the difference the higher the likelihood there will be regime change. The second step of the model uses the results from the first step to estimate the impact of the independent variables on the direction and extent of change, *given the probability of change*. (470; appendix)

previous study. This provides assurance that the diffusion variable has been isolated from the effect of geographically or temporally clustered third variables.

**The Variables.** Previous diffusion studies failed to incorporate global, regional (superpower) and global effects into one model. Combining this trio into one model allowed the authors to test for the influence of different social systems on democratization. The first is this study's main point of focus and is known as 'neighbor emulation' or "a tendency for neighboring countries to converge towards a shared level of democracy or non-democracy" (464). In order to do this, the authors create a diffusion variable that measures the theoretically expected impact of regimes in neighboring countries on a target country. Second, superpower influence variables are constructed to measure the expected impact of the United States and the Soviet Union on countries within their respective spheres of influence. Apart from these two factors, a measure of global trends is also constructed. The authors modeled the impact of worldwide trends toward or away from democracy with a variable that represents the average of all changes in the world (except for the target country's) for the current year. The authors then tested for the destabilizing impact of the absolute value of change in all the countries in the network during the previous year.

**The Model.** Although democratic diffusion could take many forms, this study models and tests only one—neighbor emulation. This provides the authors with an easy place to start their analysis, limiting the impact to contiguous neighbors. The core assumption of this kind of model is therefore that countries are rewarded when regimes are similar to those of their neighbors. The nature of the reward is less important than that the key actors *believe* that such rewards exist. These key actors can come in many forms. For example, domestic actors in one country can urge their governments to demand better human rights protections, using their neighbors as good examples. Conversely, neighboring countries could pressure governments to crack down on opposition groups if there is a shared view that some kinds of opponents are dangerous and could have a domino effect (i.e. Islamists, Communists, etc.).

**Conclusion.** This study has challenged the notion that critical variables determining a political system are strictly domestic by providing strong support for a pattern of diffusion in which countries tend to become more like their immediate geographic neighbors over time. These findings also intimate that countries within the U.S. sphere of influence during the third wave improved their democratic performance relative to their peers and that global trends have a strong impact on regime change. These results are highly robust, persisting even when controlling for the major specification, measurement, selection, and serial and spatial autocorrelation problems that could masquerade as diffusion. Thus, democratic diffusion is no illusion.

The authors assert that it is possible to model democratic diffusion in different ways. In the future, researchers may want to test other politically defined networks such as those

demarcated by international organizations, trading partners, or religious networks. B+C also admit that while their model assumes that all countries matter equally another theory could be posited in which larger, more populous or richer countries exert greater influence over other countries' political systems.

### *C. Comments*

While the model itself seems to have made many improvements from previous diffusion models (e.g. controlling for 'selection bias') some of the assumptions made in attempting to control lagging variables are dubious. First, I am unconvinced of the accuracy of measuring the probability of change in a country as a function of the 3 variables detailed in footnote 1. The authors themselves note in the appendix that they can only hypothesize what variables are related to regime stability and have in effect left this question open, since it is not the main focus of the article. Second, I am hesitant about the applicability of an analysis covering the bipolar years from 1972-1996 on the unipolar world of today. In short, I think this analysis is questionable given that some of the authors make unfounded assumptions that are crucial to the study's plausibility.

*Originally Summarized by Yomaira Tamayo, July 10, 2006*

**Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, “Bringing Down Dictators: American Democracy Promotion and Electoral Revolutions in Post-communist Eurasia,” Mitchell Orenstein and Stephen Bloom, eds.,  
*Transnational and National Politics in Post-communist Europe, 2006***

**Key Words:**

Democratic transition  
Civil society  
Electoral monitoring  
U.S. involvement in electoral revolutions

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Definition of Democracy**

Bunce and Wolchik work within the framework of their other literature, but emphasize the role of elections as one necessary component of democracy.

**Civil Society/Mass Movements/Role of the Media**

According to B+W several factors significantly contribute to the outcome of electoral revolutions including: a well-developed civil society and other effective local organizations; use of media and polling; large and vigorous youth movements and generally, mass public participation of all sorts.

**Leadership**

An over-confident authoritarian leader who may take severe missteps can greatly help with the democratization process.

**External Factors**

US

The most favorable conditions for American democracy promoters to make sizeable political differences are assumed to be hybrid regimes that present significant opportunities for democratic diffusion across the region. There is clear evidence that there has been considerable US involvement in all successful cases both in long-term civil society development and short-term electoral reform. While the US has *can* play a positive role to promote democratization, its ability to engender such change is contingent upon the degree,

organization, and ability of local opposition forces, and upon the extent to which the US works in conjunction with local efforts. The best kind of involvement the US can pursue is the promotion of electoral revolutions.

### ***B. Summary***

**The Introduction** questions the intentions, capabilities, and incentives of US democratization efforts abroad. They use the case of Iraq as a warning, while also suggesting that US democracy promotion abroad should only be conducted in conjunction with local efforts, as interventions can “exacerbate local inequalities,” “generate dependency relations,” and “distort domestic politics and policy-making.” (3).

**Electoral Revolutions as an Alternative.** Generally, US promotion efforts differ from the Iraq intervention, and tend to follow four models: use of force to end disorder, intervention through international organizations, democracy building after major wars, or investment in long-term factors (e.g. rule of law, civil society, and free and fair elections). However, in recent electoral revolutions in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine, elections were combined with mass protests to move these countries in more democratic directions, especially by removing authoritarian leaders. The US provided support in all of these cases, but as compared to Iraq, this is a situation of democratic rather than military regime change, and “long-term external assistance versus short-term military interventions” (3). Therefore, it is suggested that the US can play a most effective role in promoting democratic change through electoral transformation.

**American Democracy Promotion.** This has become more of an interest as democracy has become a more global value. American democracy promotion is driven by “desirable benefits, such as more rapid and more equitable economic growth, a higher quality of human life, and a less aggressive foreign policy; the proliferation of domestic and international nongovernmental organizations... and the rise of new international norms” that encourage democratization as a means of ending internal wars and human rights violations (5). Furthermore, the end of the Cold War was an incentive for the US to focus on geopolitical interests and building democratic politics, and 09/11 further developed the American commitment to democracy promotion based on the belief that democratization is key to “undermining political environments that foster terrorism” (5).

**Democracy Promotion and Regional Specialization.** The US has not devoted equal attention to democracy promotion in all parts of the non-Western world, but instead to two regions: Latin America and most significantly, post-communist Eurasia. From the American perspective, the post-communist region is pivotal because: it has the potential to negatively influence Western Europe and the US (energy, pipelines, etc.); eastward expansion of EU and NATO has made this region critical; the location of the region is

strategic for the war on terror; and Russia remains a nuclear power with significant impact on many of the regional countries (7).

The region also offers important opportunities for American influence and democracy promotion because of democratic diffusion and the abundance of hybrid regimes that share similar characteristics. The US is quite popular in the region, especially with political elites, but also because it is seen as having far better constraint on Russia than the EU, and the US is “perceived as an ally that can balance against EU domination” (8).

**The Development of the Electoral Model.** Recent developments and changes in the electoral model include the growing role of election monitoring, new techniques to ensure fair elections, and the recognition by activists and scholars of the crucial role the public must play in elections. B+W claim that while elections do not guarantee democracy, they are a necessary condition and key indicator of democracy. Elections can backfire for authoritarians when they “feel compelled to hold elections in order to legitimate themselves” (9), and it is in these cases especially that public participation matters. In such instances, they provide an opportunity for oppositions to overcome collective action problems and produce change.

**Early Experiments.** Early elections in the Philippines in 1986 and in Chile in 1988 were originally held as “rigged rituals.” However, local opponents of these dictatorships were able to use earlier experiences to mobilize public support, get out the vote, monitor the quality of the elections, and educate voters. Despite all this, the transformations were neither immediate, nor without problems, and proved that the public must be willing to take the elections seriously and organize a coordinated response. Nevertheless, there was the palpable sense that they had turned the corner toward democracy. In Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine in 2004 incumbents attempted to falsify election results.

**Core Components.** The electoral model seems simple but “rests in practice on optimism, hard work, and considerable planning” (10). Elections are one stage in a much longer series of developments, and B+W identify some medium- and long-term factors that affect this process.

- Medium-term elements – exploiting media openings (used in the Georgian case), building ties among the opposition, using local elections to challenge the opposition, developing public opinion polling, and convincing the public that the current regime is in fact vulnerable and the opposition can win the election.
- Long-term elements – development of civil society that is in part aided by international efforts, and rounds of popular protest.

Instances when these elements played an important and effective role and increased voter turnout rate:

- Serbia – younger people organized popular movements such as Otpor prior to the elections, which helped get out the vote.
- Slovakia – young people marched across Slovakia to get their message out to voters in a time when Meciar was intensely manipulating the media.

Common to all elections across the post-communist region were a series of targeted actions including: increased voter registration and mobilization, more transparent activity, increased distribution of campaign materials, extensive use of parallel vote tabulation and exit polls, and preparation for public protests in the event that the regime lost, but refused to vacate office. Opposition groups also formed important and positive links to the security services.

**Success and Failure.** This electoral model, and opposition victory, has not been the norm. But under certain conditions, electoral revolutions can succeed in bringing the democratic opposition to power. There are some important observations that are crucial in understanding election outcomes: some locations are optimally configured for change (like Hungary and Poland with more developed oppositions and less oppressive regimes), there is not an unchanging formula for electoral revolutions to succeed, and the “accumulation of highly visible indicators that the power of the leader has shifted in important ways, with the leader appearing to lose allies, to be more nervous about his control, or to become more careless and more extreme in his exercise of power” (14). Generally, the more successful cases exhibited pronounced increases in US engagement. Finally, in the successful cases there is a large, well-organized opposition with a clear leader and a fairly consistent and accurate implementation of the electoral model. Five factors characterize successful electoral revolutions: the presence of a developed civil society, the open discussion of leaders’ financial scandals, visibly vulnerable leadership, high levels of U.S. involvement, and the details of electoral dynamics (unified opposition, popular single opposition leader, and implementation of the electoral model).

**How Important is the United States?** US contributions can play a significant role in election outcomes. For instance, in Serbia from 1996-1997 the US was a bystander, whereas by 2000 the US was determined to defeat Milosevic and so took on a much more active role. Primary players in all these processes include USAID, the National Endowment for Democracy, Freedom House, the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and the International Foundation for Electoral Support (IFES) (16). However, the electoral model is not a purely American invention, and so each success can not be attributed solely to the efforts of the US. Additionally, the electoral model plays out differently in different cases depending on local conditions and actors.

Generally, B+W argue that “the American role in these events is best characterized as one of facilitating and assisting electoral change, rather than the more powerful claim, implying a unilateral process, that the U.S. created, forced, dominated and/or controlled what

happened” (17). They argue that most critics or analysts of electoral revolutions and the American role tend to belittle the role of citizens, despite the fact that they are the ones actually planning, voting, and protesting.

**Conclusions.** “Electoral outcomes...are in fact extremely important, because they seem to predict not just the quality, but also the sustainability of democracy in the post-communist region” (18). “The electoral model, therefore, is a collaborative project, supported by the United States and other international actors, but shaped by local activists and regional mentors” (18).

### ***C. Comments***

The emphasis this article places on the role of electoral revolutions is similar to the arguments made by several other authors. However, authors such as Carothers make this same recommendation, but he is slightly more dubious about the willingness of foreign countries to trust U.S. motives. An important takeaway from this article is that if the U.S. and other international actors support electoral revolutions in the post-communist region, they must be prepared to react to fraud or incumbent challenges at any point in the process.

***Originally Summarized by Emily Stromquist, July 2006***

**Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, “Favorable Conditions and Playing Favorites: The Wave of Electoral Revolutions in Postcommunist Europe and Eurasia,” *Journal of Democracy*, 2006**

**Key words:**

Post-communist democratization  
Electoral revolution  
Civil society  
Central and Eastern Europe, Balkans and post-Soviet states  
U.S. and EU democracy promotion

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Political Institutions**

Electoral System

The conscious deployment of an electoral model of democratization has led to success in the second wave of democratization in the post-communist region; but a long experience with elections in general, especially fraudulent elections, has been useful in democratization efforts.

This essay addresses electoral revolutions using the Howard and Roessler definition of elections that accommodates the possibility of turnover.

**Civil Society**

Prior experience with communist dictatorships was harmful to the development of civil society.

**Mass Movements**

Mass protest is useful in electoral revolutions and a critical effect of diffusion dynamics in the post-communist region has been a pattern of declining violence by elites when dealing with popular protests.

**Clean Break vs. Gradualism**

Democratization follows after liberal opposition wins elections. However, if power is shared or divided, democratization and economic reform are much more difficult to achieve. Breakage with the past is far more effective than bridging.

## **Prior Democratic Experience/Culture**

Countries that already have some democratic features in place tend to improve on their democratic credentials over time and in turn, these democratization efforts seem to diffuse within the region. The presence of a communist past working in conjunction with postcommunist politics and economics is generally detrimental for democratization and harmful for the formation of an effective civil society.

## **External Factors**

### EU/US

Electoral revolutions were greatly influenced by the international democracy promotion community, especially the United States. It is difficult to disentangle international and domestic influences, which work together to promote diffusion dynamics.

### ***B. Summary***

In the general overview of the essay, Bunce and Wolchik identify a second wave of democratization from 1996-2005 that has occurred in east-central Europe, the Balkans, and the Soviet successor states. They establish a direct correlation between the success of these democratization efforts and a pivotal election in which the illiberal political forces are decisively defeated by liberal opposition as a result of “deployment of the electoral model of democratization,” mass participation, “a major turnover in governments,” and diffusion effects (1).

**Familiar and Unusual Features of the Electoral Wave.** These electoral revolutions are consistent with global patterns (i.e. as seen in countries such as the Phillipines, Chile, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Peru, and Mexico) and the macro patterns of democratization that generally characterize the Third Wave. These global patterns include the presence of unified opposition, efforts to increase voter registration and turnout, increased campaigning, international and domestic election monitoring, and more extensive use of the media and public opinion polls. They further discuss the concept of diffusion of successful democratization efforts across the postcommunist region.

Despite global trends in democratization, Bunce and Wolchik recognize several distinct trends in the second wave of democratization in postcommunist Europe and Eurasia: FH scores identify that “*the* primary source of improvement in democratic performance has been...electoral revolutions,” both in terms of the frequency and the rate of success. In the postcommunist region 35% of elections resulted in more liberal forces coming into power versus 22% in Sub-Saharan Africa. B+W attribute this difference to the postcommunist region being “well-situated to encourage democratization through electoral revolutions” and to the American and European democracy assistance communities that favor this region for

its political assets, resulting in this “interaction between favorable conditions and playing favorites” (3).

**Favorable Conditions.** The legacy of a communist experience has proven to halt democratization efforts. B+W name several distinctive assets that make the democratization process different in the postcommunist region:

- **No “tradition of a politicized military.”** This implies that, unlike in other transitional regions, political outcomes in the postcommunist region are more directly influenced by electoral outcomes – when liberal opposition wins, democratization results; when power is shared or divided, democratization suffers. Ultimately, breakage with the past, not bridging, is the most effective strategy.
- **The communist education legacy.** Levels of education are consistently high throughout the postcommunist region. Education is particularly important because it “facilitates citizen access to information; provides support for the development of a rich civil society;” and fosters support for political rights and civil liberties. Not only does this educational legacy allow for more educated voters, but also “it is far easier in such contexts for international democracy promoters to identify local collaborators” (4). Still, the benefits of an education legacy can only be maximized when the effects of democratization efforts can diffuse to other countries, and citizens in these neighboring countries share a common economic and political past.
- **Long experience with elections, especially fraudulent ones.** Fraudulent elections have socialized publics into linking regime legitimacy with elections, and into using elections to assess the “quality of regime performance” and to demand certain changes (4).
- **The “regional” nature of the communist region.** This has forged a “regional environment that was unusually prone to the cross-national transmission of party weakness and strength, the quality of economic performance, and popular compliance and public protests” (5).

Bunce and Wolchik identify three “defining aspects” of regional support for diffusion dynamics:

- 1) A pattern of declining violence among elites when dealing with popular protests, which in turn has enabled mass publics to exploit the opportunity for peaceful protest.
- 2) “Growth over the communist period of both cross-national diffusion of ideas and techniques and the establishment of cross-national contacts among dissident groups” (e.g., “links between the Prague Spring and

Ukrainian politics, Solidarity and the politics of the Balkan states, and, more generally, the role of Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Yugoslav dissidents as disseminators throughout the region of various models of political resistance”) (5).

- 3) The recognition by people seeking to change the existing orders that there were lessons to be learned from the events in other communist regimes. This is currently the fear of Putin and his allies in Belarus, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan in response to the “electoral virus.”

**Playing Favorites.** Electoral revolutions across the postcommunist region have been influenced significantly by the efforts of the international democracy promotion community, particularly USAID democracy promotion. A recent study of American democracy promotion (Finkel, Perez-Linan, Seligson, and Azpuru) has drawn numerous conclusions about the consequences of US assistance in 121 countries from 1990-2003: aid has increased significantly with time; American assistance has boosted democratic performance (esp. in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa); and assistance in the areas of elections and political processes has had a lasting influence on future democratic performance (6-7).

Additionally, this study has further identified the postcommunist region as a “clear priority for USAID with respect to democracy assistance in general” (7), as *every* qualified state has received American assistance and for longer average periods of time (1.8 times more democracy assistance than Latin America/Caribbean and 2.5 times as much as Sub-Saharan Africa). The postcommunist region is the clear favorite “once we combine east-central Europe, the Balkans, and the Soviet successor states into a single category” (7). Additionally, the EU provides financial support, including some democratic assistance, to new members, those that are close to signing accession agreements, and a large number of other states that do not fit into either of these categories. According to a recent study, a quarter of the expenditures of European political foundations have been devoted to the postcommunist region (8).

**The Postcommunist Region as a Priority?** There are a number of reasons to conclude that this region is the most receptive to democracy promotion efforts: it has greater “absorptive capacity,” as many of the states already “have one foot in the democratic door;” it has provided local allies for democratization (in the form of both parties and civil society development); it has exhibited short-term trends in support of democratization; and it contains “neighbor states that are both democratic and like them” (8). Additionally, democracy promotion was by far more effective than the exportation of democracy (like the US in Iraq), and forming partnerships with local groups supporting democracy was more effective than “force-feeding democracy to societies lacking organized and committed allies and featuring highly resistant local cultures” (9).

Democracy promoters assumed the postcommunist region would be receptive to reform because they recognized potential, in particular for the implementation of the electoral model, for the following reasons:

- Regional assets – high levels of education, experience with elections, regional networks, history of peaceful protests, and potential for diffusion effects.
- The popularity of especially the United States in this region. Although the war in Iraq has decreased popular support of the US and US leadership in the postcommunist region, attitudes toward the US are still more positive in this region than in others (Bunce uses her example of the road from the airport in Tbilisi named after George W. Bush).

**Lessons Learned?** There are certain favorable conditions for democracy promotion in the postcommunist region, especially for the US, which has made helpful contributions to civil society, opposition groups, the media, and others working toward the promotion of fair elections. It is important to note, however, that many postcommunist states already had in place “many of the prerequisites for successful mobilization” toward democratization (10).

B+W argue that it is misguided to suppose that success of electoral revolutions is simply a function of the priorities of U.S. democracy promoters. Rather, these trends must be considered more broadly – international democratization efforts would fail without domestic receptiveness and cooperation; domestic support, in turn, requires regimes that “allow pockets of political autonomy,” have committed and experienced activists, and possess the ability to mobilize citizen support. These factors all affect the speed and degree to which this region may be democratized. Additionally, in countries such as Georgia and Ukraine, which lack “a well-organized and unified liberal opposition and with weak civil societies,” the process of democratization has been far more complicated. B+W conclude by suggesting that in other regions lacking less developed and supportive institutions and populations, the process could be even more unpredictable and complicated.

### *C. Comments*

Bunce and Wolchik address an interesting aspect of US democracy promotion as a balance of power both in relation to Russia’s omnipresence in the region, and to the EU. Additional consideration and study of the ways in which the US could use this roll to its advantage in democracy promotion efforts would be very useful.

As in other works, Bunce and Wolchik place necessary emphasis on the fact that the US and other international actors play a role that is secondary to the role of domestic factors such as civil society, any opposition groups, and the media.

*Originally Summarized by Emily Stromquist, July 2006*

**Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, “International Diffusion and  
Postcommunist Electoral Revolution,”  
Forthcoming in *Nationalities Papers*, 2006**

**Key words:**

Democratic diffusion  
Electoral revolutions  
Central and Eastern Europe  
U.S., Russian, and EU influence

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Applicability**

The “prime candidates” for electoral revolutions are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Russia (13).

**Political Institutions**

Bunce argues that a competitive authoritarian regime with defections from the ruling elite and a regular election cycle facilitates the electoral revolution.

**Civil Society**

Bunce claims that a strong, hardworking civil society is key for a successful electoral revolution. Local opposition and its ability to consolidate and organize diverse groups is the deciding factor in the success or failure of such movements.

**Mass Movements**

Mass protests are an important element of the electoral model that has been successful across several countries in the postcommunist region.

**Economic and Sociological Factors**

Bunce points out that corruption in the old regime is a strong rallying call for the opposition and is one of the reasons it may decide to undertake the electoral model.

**Clean Break vs. Gradualism**

Bunce believes that competitive authoritarianism, defections from the ruling elite, and the use of already established procedures like elections better serve democratic diffusion, suggesting that the process of democratic diffusion is not an entirely clean break.

## **Sequencing**

Bunce stresses the importance of prior planning, a consolidated opposition, and a strong network between the innovators and receivers of the electoral model for electoral revolutions to work successfully. As the electoral model diffuses, it becomes less and less successful.

## **Prior Democratic Experience/Culture**

Bunce argues that actual similarities between postcommunist countries and their prior experiences are not as important as perceived similarities. Innovators and receivers of the electoral model are more likely to exchange information when they perceive similarities between their contexts. Longstanding traditions of public protests, a highly educated populace, vibrant parliaments, and a rapidly developing civil society all help to make electoral revolutions more plausible and successful.

## **External Factors**

### EU

Electoral revolutions have fostered more closeness and inclusion with the EU, which is attractive to many populations. EU has tended to play a more cautious role in supporting electoral revolutions so as not to spoil relations with Russia.

### CEE success stories

The early successes of electoral revolutions in countries like Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, and Slovakia have spurred opposition groups in other postcommunist states to make similar attempts.

### US

US plays an important role in supporting oppositions and civil society both financially and politically, and encourages the networking between innovators and receivers. The US is less ambiguous than the EU about supporting political freedoms and the electoral process. The US has also hampered democratic diffusion due to its support of the status quo in countries that are partners in the War on Terror.

### Russia

Russia has hampered democratic diffusion by supporting the status quo financially and politically.

## ***B. Summary***

### **Definition of Diffusion:**

“Diffusion can be defined as a process wherein new ideas, institutions, policies, models or repertoires of behavior spread geographically from a core site to other sites, whether within a given state... or across states,” “Diffusion requires knowledge of a new development in one state by actors outside the state and a commitment by these individuals and groups, because of their values and/or interests, to emulate that development in their own locality... outsiders make a conscious decision to copy what happens in another state” (3).

### **Observations and Context:**

While the use of elections to overthrow illiberal authoritarian incumbents or their successors in the postcommunist region has shared some global Third Wave patterns, the frequency, rate of success, and speed of the region’s electoral revolutions is unique and surprising.

Following the disintegration and wave of democratization that occurred in the region from 1988-1992, the newly formed states moved in radically different directions, without common political systems, economic systems, or enemies.

Starting in 1996, despite great differences in their political and economic systems, electoral revolutions have diffused across the postcommunist region.

### **Main Hypothesis about why Diffusion is Successful:**

- Demonstration effects: The powerful example and resonance of successful electoral revolutions was complemented by the assumption of local receivers that issues are generally the same across the region “and that the strategies used elsewhere in the region are helpful” and readily applicable (15).
- Real and perceived similarities of hybrid regimes: “the belief that their [graduates] experiences are necessarily instructive for other countries that have gone through communism and democratic detours after communism... and the belief as well that the spread of democracy through the region will help guarantee their democratic experiment.” (12).
- Local forces and international networks: “The existence of large and creative networks of local, regional and American democracy promoters who were committed to spreading their ideas and strategies”(15).
- External actors: US promotion of fair and free elections, long-term support of civil society organizations, “assistance in electoral mechanics, and quick critiques of unfair elections,” and the “withdrawal of support from illiberal incumbents” (14).

- Historical legacies: “A long tradition in this region that the fruits of local struggle should be shared with others in the region” (12).

### **Means and Causes of Diffusion:**

“Ideas, models and the like can spread across boundaries, simply because they provide precedents that are unusually appealing to actors in other states and that influence their thinking, goals and behavior” (4).

#### **Factors:**

- Constituencies in another state that “stand to gain from similar changes”
- “Precedent itself suggests far less resistance to change than many had assumed”
- “Domestic conditions are perceived... to be similar in the ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ states”

“Diffusion dynamics can also occur through more purposive and planned actions that are the result of collaborations between local and international actors.”

#### **Factors:**

- Networks between actors in other states and innovators
- Innovators or rooted cosmopolitans take on the responsibility for peddling their ideas or pet models outside their state

### **Diffusion Trends:**

Early innovators don’t have prior precedent, but have “structural conditions that supported their behavior,” as well as mini-innovations from other contexts that contribute to the final package.

As the package spreads, “the cross-national impact of precedent increases,” but there is “weaker local structural support for change.” This makes it easier for “emulators to underestimate the requirements of the change in question... and easier for locals actors committed to the status quo to be forewarned and forearmed.”

The Electoral Model is extremely amenable to diffusion because “it is a compact package of detailed and inter-related tasks, such as forging cooperation among opposition groups, registering voters and getting out the vote, pressuring government for reforms in electoral commissions, using the media...to counter the biases of the official media, running campaigns that provide voters with the information and hope they need to take the election

seriously and vote their consciences, monitoring elections, and preparing protests in the event that illiberal leaders lose, but refuse to vacate their offices.” (10)

### **Factors of Diffusion in Postcommunist Region:**

- Lessons learned from the Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Slovakian experiences in the mid-to-late 90s. These cases created the electoral model that would be exported to other postcommunist countries that “had regular elections; authoritarian leaders in power; and fragmented oppositions” (7).
- Success of applying this formula in Croatia and Serbia in 2000, in Georgia in 2003, in Ukraine in 2004, in Kyrgyzstan, though to a lesser extent, in 2005.
- Collaboration between graduates of earlier attempts with those making similar attempts in other postcommunist countries
- Assistance from Western organizations in establishing those contacts

### **Grievances, Trends, and Opportunities Facilitating Successful Diffusion:**

- Grievances: corruption, carelessness, and violence of old regime
- Trends: defections of members from ruling circles; protests and successes of opposition in local elections; consolidation of diverse groups, and in particular youth groups; “declining international constraint on violations of state sovereignty” (8); Growing consensus around international democracy promotion through encouragement of civil society; precedent and careful emulation of past experiences; hard work of local activists.
- Opportunities: contexts with competitive authoritarianism expose the “contradiction between the claim of legitimation” and the reality of rigged elections” (11); the presence of such elections provides well-defined moments for preparation and action, an immediate measure of success and failure; diffusion of electoral model is in the interest of the opposition because elections are a model of political change; electoral revolutions have fostered popular measures bringing more closeness with the EU; well educated populations that are conducive to sophisticated electoral campaigns; rapidly developing civil society; vibrant parliaments; and longstanding tradition of public protests.

### **Similarities or Perceived Similarities of Postcommunist States that Encouraged Diffusion:**

Communist past, with history of political protests centered around state disintegration and corruption; “similar obstacles to transition and a similar political and economic agenda;” “recent statehood or recently regained sovereignty;” “heterogeneous populations which

often provide a pretext for struggles for political power that accentuate cultural differences” (13); “hybrid forms of democracy that include regular elections, limited opportunities for political competition and some civil liberties and political rights... fragmented liberal oppositions and corrupt authoritarian incumbents;” “generally poor economic performance...or a growing inequality in the face of relatively good economic performance.”

**Factors Hampering Diffusion:**

- Claims that electoral revolutions are Western conspiracies
- Russian financial and political support of the status quo
- Wealth from natural resources makes states less vulnerable to outside and inner pressures.
- The geopolitical importance of some countries in the War on Terror, which makes local stability more important than democratic transition for US interests.

***C. Comments***

Bunce gives a good account of the local dynamics of the region and the important role that domestic forces play in promoting and spreading the electoral model, which is a central aspect of PDT’s Working Hypotheses. She also puts into question the probability of future electoral revolutions, since incumbents can now easily recognize the electoral model and respond accordingly. These reactionary trends are noticeable in countries such as Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

***Originally Summarized by Artyom Matusov, July 13, 2006***

**Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: the Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999**

**Key words:**

Institutional framework of socialism

Party-state systems

Public homogenization

Soviet federalism

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Political Institutions**

The party-state system of socialism that allocates power, money, and status prevents the development of political and civil society, thus limiting the potential for democratization.

National federalism allows for secessionist claims at times of crisis or weakness in the socialist regime.

Bunce argues that institutional determinism exists among socialist regimes, meaning these regimes are fated to collapse eventually.

***B. Summary***

*Bunce's central claim is that the forces that drove the collapse of socialism and the dismemberment of the Soviet, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak states were the "interaction between the institutional design of socialist regimes and states, on the one hand, and the considerable expansion of opportunities for change in the 1980s" on the other (xi).*

- **The historical-institutional approach:** At the heart of Bunce's analysis is her historical-institutional approach. Here, socialist institutions, embedded in their historical context, work to promote and shape its very collapse
- **Some puzzles:** why did *all* of the socialist regimes in the region fall? (3); why did the process begin in Eastern Europe in general and Poland and Hungary in particular? (5); why was the end of socialism largely peaceful in character? What is

the relationship between changes in organization of political power and changes in the spatial boundaries of power?

- “The approach taken in this book, then, is to explain regime and state collapse by engaging in a series of comparisons that allow us to trace the interaction between two factors. One is the institutional design of socialism and its longer term consequences for the regime, bloc, and the state. The other is shorter-term effects of major political and economic changes throughout the 1980s. Why socialism and the state collapsed...was in effect because both of these factors pushed in the same direction” (19).
- Common to all socialist systems in the region was the fusion between politics and economics with all elements controlled by the Party. Moreover, there was a fusion between the Party and the state (22). Thus, “the party-state was the sum total of a complex array of dyadic linkages between appointed positions that extended from the very bottom of the system...to its apex” (23). Socialism in this form destroyed, and prevented the development of, political and civil society. “Thus the party-state, and no other set of institutions, held sole responsibility for the allocation of power, money, and status” (24).
- While the institutional framework of socialism appeared to guarantee its ability to reproduce itself, it in fact “functioned to deregulate the party’s monopoly and to undermine economic growth. This set the stage for crisis and reform – and, ultimately, for the collapse of all these regimes” (26).
- Because of the tightly interwoven chains of dependencies created by the institutional design of the system, crisis and instability at the top caused a “chain reaction” throughout the system.
- Moreover, since a large majority of the public shares a uniform set of experiences, when crisis or discontent emerges it tends to be widespread. Further, because of the seeming omnipotence of the party (often referred to as “the power” (30)), it becomes apparent who the responsible agents are. As a result, homogenization generates “strikingly uniform interests” and also a “common definition of the enemy” (28-9). Also, a key problem for politicians in dictatorial systems is that they are “deprived of mechanisms that allow leaders in pluralist settings to keep publics divided and to diffuse power” (30).

- A function of a pluralized party and a homogenized public was to increase demands on the economic surplus and undermine growth (35). The only response capable of saving the system was reform, but therein the seeds of destruction would be sewn.
- Attempts to save socialism in the 1970s “tended in most cases to make a bad situation worse,” as they produced actual economic decline in Poland and Yugoslavia. Real reform was required.
- **Federalism and the Soviet bloc:** “Soviet largess in money, power, and primary products...was matched by Eastern European deficits in all three areas.” Moreover, just as the citizen was locked into a dependency under socialism, so too the Eastern European states were tied to the Soviet core (40). Because of this relationship, changes in the Soviet Union were transmitted throughout the bloc and even magnified as developments traveled westward (41). Further, “the transmission belt that tied Eastern European publics to their parties and their parties in turn to the Soviet Union was quite capable of operating in the opposite direction as well” (42). Thus “the structure of the Soviet bloc, then, did not just fuse politics and economics; it also fused fates” (43).
- **Three federal states:** the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. They were each dictatorships, each had their own economic and political institutions (including their own communist parties) and their federalism was national as well as spatial (46-7). It was hoped that through the parties, the centre would be in control; however, a familiar more contradictory picture emerged: “federal institutions – their mandates to the contrary – *redistributed* political power and economic resources from the centre to the regions” (47-8). Moreover, the development of nation-states and concomitant national identities created a further source of tension between the centre and the regions.
- **Yugoslav exceptionalism:** in Yugoslavia, political power was substantially decentralized. Moreover, it pursued a policy of nonalignment. It was, therefore, “by regional socialist standards...unusually decentralized, unusually liberalized and unusually situated with respect to East-West economic and political-military rivalries” (53). However, Bunce argues that these differences were really in timing, not in kind.

- **The growing elasticity of socialist politics during the 1980s:** during this time all three of the key ingredients of regime change were present: leadership succession (following the deaths of Brezhnev, Tito and Hozha); great reforms; and significant shifts in the international system that reordered domestic politics (57). The process of succession provided a window for reform in a context in which a vast range of possibilities for reform were on the table. Bunce identifies détente, and in particular the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, as key processes through which “new ideas, new allies, and new resources” were introduced into the socialist system, which served to reduce the party’s control. Moreover, the political and economic liberalizing reforms instigated by Gorbachev further weakened the system (63-5).
- **Regime collapse in Eastern Europe:** Gorbachev’s statement that these states were “free to choose” emboldened reformers, producing protests in Poland in 1988, quickly followed by those in Hungary. This, Bunce argues, was not altogether surprising given these countries’ “political complexion of their ruling Communist parties, their long-liberalized politics, their economic crises, and finally, Gorbachev’s reform package” (67). More surprising was that East Germany, then Czechoslovakia, then Bulgaria, then Romania followed suit. Moreover, their peaceful nature was a shock. The latter, however, is explained by their membership in the Soviet bloc, which meant their military was centrally controlled with Gorbachev unwilling to deploy troops (70).
- **Yugoslavia:** collapse was not sudden. Also, it involved competition between six relatively autonomous units. Society was sharply divided and the economic situation was dire. Moreover, since it defined itself against the Soviet ‘other,’ people were receptive to Gorbachev’s message and emboldened by developments elsewhere (71-5).
- **Leaving the state:** why did these states collapse? Bunce dismisses the possible causes of national diversity and historical diversity as failing to “account for some of the key details surrounding the dissolution of these states” (84). Bunce’s argument is that the institutional structure of federalism “redistributed political power and economic resources from the core to the periphery” (100). This process weakened all three arenas of socialism: the regime, the bloc and the national-federal states. Successors “rushed to fill the void” created by this weakening.
- **Why did two states dismember peacefully (Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia) and one violently (Yugoslavia)?** Bunce eschews arguments based on culture,

leadership, nationalism and federalism in favor of three factors, all institutional in nature: “the degree of decentralization of the federation; the political power versus institutional resources of the dominant republic; and the relationship between the military and the party-state” (103).

Nationalism, for example, is often invoked to explain the violence in the case of Yugoslavia. However, it can be used in a variety of ways both positive and negative.

This suggests that as an explanation it does not, in and of itself, possess sufficient explanatory power. This is not to say that it was irrelevant, but rather to argue that it was only part of a more complex reality.

Bunce focuses on the institutional contrast between the federal nature of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia and the confederal structure of Yugoslavia. The latter’s structure meant that the center lacked power and resources with the provinces and had “the means and resources to follow distinct political and economic trajectories”.

Also, bargaining was interrepublican and therefore unusually conflictual (112). As important was the fact that Serbia was the dominant power in the system. Unlike Russia and the Czech lands, Serbia’s “second order preferences were conducive to war in the event of state dismemberment, whereas the second-order preferences entertained by the Russian and Czech leadership, again in the event of state dismemberment, were not” (117). The latter two could settle for less. Also central was the fact that Serbia had close ties to the Yugoslav national military and there also existed territorially based militias. This was in marked contrast to the militaries in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. In sum, it was the unique nature of the Yugoslav institutions that made the end of the state violent (125).

- **Summing up**

- “All of the states in the eastern half of Europe were strongly affected, if not destabilized by succession struggles” (131).
- The opportunities created by succession led to inter-elite struggles over economic and political liberalization. These took place in already fragmented environments and produced “an interrelated collapse of the regime, the Soviet bloc, and the federal states” (132).
- The process was at once abrupt and in the making, it spoke to the power of socialist institutions, and it was remarkably similar in its dynamics. Also the state in each of these institutional contexts was “*nationalist* to the core” (132).
- “All the regimes that ended peacefully were full scale members of the Soviet bloc and all those that ended violently were either on the fringes of the bloc or outside” (134).

- “the problem in Yugoslavia was interrepublican conflict, Serbian expansionism, and military engagement” (135). Whereas in the USSR and Czechoslovakia the “structure of the Warsaw Treaty Organization meant the military was excluded from regime and state dissolution” (136).
- What is important about national-federalism is the marriage of the two which makes for secessionist claims especially during times of crisis or weakness at the centre (140).
- Given that the preferences of leaders were themselves the result of the institutional logic of the system Bunce argues that there was a large degree of institutional determinism – “these systems were fated to end” (142).
- But agency matters...a bit: “institutions, while important, particularly in building nations and states and structuring the game of bargaining, must be joined with political leaders if we are to understand nationalism” (148).

### *C. Comments*

Bunce’s work provides insight into how the structure of certain regimes in the Soviet era led to their eventual demise. While there was clearly a role for the agency of key individuals, as Bunce argues, their preferences and actions were shaped to a large extent by the institutional context in which they were embedded. This book raises the question of whether the federal or confederal arrangements of certain states affect their chances of transition and the success of this process. For example, within Bunce’s framework, Kurdistan’s relative autonomy may have an important effect on the consolidation of the Iraqi state. Other factors that must be taken into consideration with Bunce’s analysis include Western intervention in institutional design – and what path dependencies may have been created inadvertently or purposefully as a result – as well as the implications of her findings for secession struggles in other states, such as Egypt.

*Originally Summarized by Tim Weaver, June 2006*

**Valerie Bunce, “The Place of Place in Transitions to Democracy,”  
In Michel Dobry, ed., *Democratic and Capitalist Transitions in Eastern  
Europe: Lessons for the Social Sciences*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic  
Publishers, 2000**

**Key words:**

Authoritarian regimes  
Role of socialist history  
Democratization  
Economic reform

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Clean Break vs. Gradualism**

The extent of a country’s break with the past determines, at least in part, the type of regime that will emerge. A rapid, clean break is the best scenario.

Also of central importance is the extent to which the socialist past competes with the envisioned future of a country. When an authoritarian past was more oppressive, the pressure for revolutionary change was greater. This was especially the case in the east, which explains why political and economic reform was more plausible there than in the south.

**Sequencing**

According to Bunce, the most successful formula for democratic success and economic reform in the post-communist world is a victory by the opposition, followed by a victory of the ex-communists.

***B. Summary***

Bunce focuses on two issues: “the role of the authoritarian past in shaping developments during the movement from dictatorship to democracy [and]...the relationship between democratization and economic reform” (73). Her analysis draws important distinctions between the transitions of the south and the east.

Bunce notes that the importance of the socialist past was overlooked during the early to mid-1990s. “Over time, however, the socialist past began to make a comeback” (74). The centrality of the past to the post-authoritarian experience is illustrated by the differences in outcomes displayed by those countries which broke from the past to varying extents. The

extent of the break from the past determined, at least in part, the type of regime that emerged.

Not only does the socialist past hamper the democratic and capitalist project, “it also serves in certain ways as an *investment* in democracy” (75). For example, the extent of pre-transition civil society and democratic control of the military affected democratic success. The revolution of transition also creates an extremely disorderly environment. Here, socialist institutional legacies helped to “organize politics and economics in highly disorganized times.”

The inclusion of the right in the south contrasts with the exclusion of the left in the east. This difference can be explained by considering the costs of including authoritarians in democratic politics which were far lower in the south than in the east. This is because the “differences between the authoritarian past and the democratic future were significantly smaller in the former than in the latter” (78).

Of central importance was the extent to which the socialist past was antithetical to the desired future. Therefore, in the east, where the authoritarian past was “more penetrative” than in the south, the pressure for revolutionary change was greater. This helps to explain why fundamental reform in politics *and* economics was more possible in the east. There, the loathed regime was associated with both an economic and political system.

The simultaneity problem – of democratic *and* economic reform - was less prevalent in the east than the south. This was because of the political capital in the hands of politicians and the willingness of the people to go along with painful economic adjustment. Of great importance was the reform of the left. Their acceptance of democracy as the only game in town meant that they could form a loyal opposition and be elected without undermining democratic consolidation: “A viable and democratic left is the best guard against a vigorous extreme right” (83). In fact, Bunce argues that “the optimal sequencing for democratization and economic reform in the post-communist world is the victory of the opposition, followed by a victory of the ex-communists” (83).

Finally Bunce argues that the sharper and more rapid the break from the past, the better. This is because it will prevent the organization of counter-revolutionaries, ensure the ex-communists become forward-looking, and hasten the arrival of economic prosperity after the inevitable recession.

The past is important because it shapes the context in which transitions take place. This in turn affects the speed, extent and viability of those transitions.

### ***C. Comments***

Bunce shares a common objective with the PDT's working hypotheses in identifying the characteristics of a post-communist nation's transition period that serve as critical indicators of its democratic success. However, Bunce ignores the hard cases within Eastern Europe, such as Romania, which could pose a challenge to her thesis. Also, she does not recognize the extent to which transitions were pacted in the east, in places such as Hungary, which somewhat limits the applicability of her conclusions. Ultimately, the most significant value of her study lies in her analysis of the sequence in which post-communist governments come to power, since this can help PDT explain why some countries in the region have lagged behind others in implementing democratic and economic reforms.

*Originally Summarized by Tim Weaver, June 2006; Hypotheses Section by Emily Stromquist, July 2006*

**Valerie Bunce, “The Political Economy of Postsocialism,”**

***Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 1999, pg. 756-793**

**Key words:**

Socialist institutions  
Post-communist transition  
Revolution vs. gradual reform  
Central and Eastern Europe

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Definition of Democracy**

Bunce endorses Przeworski’s definition of democracy: “that system of governance that combines freedom, uncertain results, and certain procedures” (see below). This definition is more demanding than those of Roeder, Anderson, Lipset and Zakaria.

**Best Measures**

Bunce implicitly endorses the Freedom House rankings by using their data in the article. Clear leaders and laggards are identified, which tend to be consistent with most accounts. However, Bunce also focuses on states that fall in the middle ground. These, for Bunce, are the most precarious, and are overlooked by some scholars.

**Political Institutions**

For Bunce, more proximate institutions such as constitutions have limited causal influence on the likelihood of success. However, as her book makes clear and is implied by her article, the institutional framework of the socialist past, both within specific states and between these and Moscow, created a logic of its own and structured the extent and nature of elite and popular protest. Thus, the effectiveness of institutional engineering will be limited by the historical context.

Executive Powers

Bunce argues that parliamentary rather than presidential systems are the most auspicious for democratic consolidation.

## **Clean Break vs. Gradualism**

Bunce argues that the socialist past strongly shapes post-communist trajectories. Political legacies are thus of central importance in understanding the transition process. Bunce's view is that the nature of specific transitions was important. Rather than focusing on whether it was pacted or not, she is concerned with the extent to which it represented a clean break with the past. "Revolution" is thus more favorable than gradualism in predicting a successful democratic outcome.

The logic of reform, for Bunce, appears to be different in the East than in the South. The former requires a clean break with the past, whereas a 'bridging' is more appropriate for the latter.

## **Leadership**

For Bunce, the extent of elite consensus and mobilization is key, and moments such as the outcome of the first competitive elections are extremely important in determining pathways, although these events in turn reflect earlier historical processes. Bunce's analysis is oriented towards elites; the importance of individuals is thus downplayed.

## **External Factors**

Bunce does not focus on Western international influences. Issues such as the lure of the EU and NATO and notions of 'a return to Europe' are not discussed. (In Bunce's book, however, the "external" influence of Moscow on CEE states is stressed as being fundamentally important to the postsocialist future.)

## ***B. Summary***

Bunce's stated purpose in writing the article is "*to explore in systematic fashion the variegated landscape of postsocialism*" (761).

## **Diversity**

When considering the similarities in the pasts and the institutional environments of the postsocialist countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union one might be tempted to expect similarity throughout the region. Bunce, however, argues that despite similarities which did and do exist, ten years after the fall of the Soviet Union, "the dominant pattern has been one of variation" (759). A good example is the "intra-regional contrast in postsocialist economic and political pathways" (759).

**Three substantially different post-socialist pathways** emerge from the Bunce analysis:

1. Rapid development of mutually supportive capitalism and democracy, resulting in political stability and solid economic growth (after an initial and sharp downturn). This pathway is the exception in the postsocialist region as a whole, but the norm for the 27 post-communist countries covered in Bunce's analysis;
2. Continuation of authoritarian politics and semi-socialist economics, resulting in relatively stable politics and reasonable economics performance (fairly exceptional);
3. States "poised between democracy and dictatorship and between socialist and capitalist economies"; these are the regional norm and are characterized by political instability and poor economic performance (761).

Bunce asserts that what best accounts for the particular path taken is "the socialist past and whether or not that past produced a rough consensus about the (desired nature of the) political and economic successor regimes to state socialism" (761).

### **Economic reform and economic performance**

The picture is one of diversity both in terms of the severity of the downturn and performance. [Interestingly, Bunce uses a measure of the percentage of the labor force in agriculture]. Three other factors that speak to the importance of the socialist past also emerge: the percentage of the labor force in agriculture is very small, income distribution (even by 1999) was still "unusually equal," and there is the problem of "states that fail to provide a stable and predictable business climate" (766). Further, Bunce stresses the familiar sub-regional divide between CEE (plus the Baltics) and the former Soviet Union, in which the former were more likely to introduce successful economic reforms and the latter experiencing a more dramatic and sustained recession (767).

### **Explaining economic policies and economic outcomes**

Bunce agrees with Fish that "the most robust explanation" for variation in economic reform and performance "is the outcome of the first competitive election" (769). Less clear, however, is whether shock therapy or gradualism was more effective given the mixed results associated with both approaches. Bunce argues that the evidence suggests that the socialist past is more critical than proximate policy in determining outcomes (772).

### **Categorizing Political Diversity**

Bunce endorses Przeworski's definition of democracy: "that system of governance that combines freedom, uncertain results, and certain procedures" (773). "Freedom" includes civil liberties and political rights, "uncertain results" refers to their being a regular possibility of one party being replaced by another which offers an ideological choice, "certain procedures" includes the consistent application of the rule of law and a legal and

administrative order. This elaboration allows one to distinguish among dictatorships, incomplete democracies and full-scale/consolidated democracies:

- **Stable** – most ten of our CEE countries are stable, i.e. “where both the regime and the state are consolidated and where government is reasonably effective” [all ten would now qualify]. Also included, although tentatively, are Belarus, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.
- **Less stable** – “regimes are not fully consolidated (often combining democratic and authoritarian elements), where state boundaries are in some dispute, or where governments lack the political (including constitutional) support, the ideological consensus, and the legal-administrative capacity to govern effectively” (774). This was then the norm, although a number of countries by now will have moved out of this group, namely Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Croatia. The rest are: Macedonia, rump Yugoslavia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Azerbaijan.
- **Unstable:** Albania, Bosnia, Armenia, Georgia and Tajikistan.

[Comment: Nine of our ten focus countries were thus included as ‘democratized’ in this 1999 article. Slovakia, the exception, has since ousted its authoritarian Prime Minister, Vladimir Meciar and quickly joined the group of front-runners. Nevertheless, the picture of democratization across the wider region remains very uneven, with full democracies being in the minority.]

### **The procedural side of democracy**

Procedural certainty is much harder to measure. This is because: the political institutions are new and fundamentally different from the past; the socialist past bequeathed a good deal of inefficiency and atomization; and, most regimes have adopted presidential systems which, in Bunce’s view, undermine efforts to consolidate democracy. Once again a marked difference is observed between the CEE and the CIS (see 776-779).

### **Explaining political patterns**

Bunce argues that these patterns cannot be explained by considering relative wealth, degrees of homogeneity, state age or imperial tutelage. Rather, it is levels of economic reform that correlate most strongly with democratization (780). While there are reasons for one to expect democratization and economic reform to go hand in hand (all democracies have had capitalist economies and “democracy and capitalism are based on precisely the same principles”), there are also other arguments that highlight the tension between the two: dictatorships have often been capitalist; leaders may be disinclined to introduce painful reforms lest they promote popular protests; “in the postsocialist context, vested interests in capitalism are...minimal, and public support of capitalism is more qualified than public

support of democracy” (781); finally, the historical record of transitions elsewhere have shown “serious tensions between democratization and economic reform” (782).

Bunce argues that an explanation of the contrasting political-economic trajectories in postsocialism rests on a combination of explanations. The first, that economic reform is the best predictor of democratization, is joined by a second – that the best predictor of economic reform is the outcome of the first competitive election. Where the founding elections represented a decisive victory of opposition forces, the result was an ideological and then policy “bundling” of two projects: democratization and economic reform [this was the case for our ten countries minus Slovakia and Romania]. At the other end of the spectrum are states in which the opposition was weak and the ex-communists won a decisive victory. In between are those countries in which the first competitive election produced no clear win, which reflected a lack of consensus among opposition forces.

The result of the first competitive election in turn was influenced not by proximate forces, but by a more distal set of causes: “the patterns and content of political protests during the socialist period” (785).

### **Major conclusions:**

#### **Diversity in perspective**

“The postsocialist region is far more varied in its politics and economics than it was ten years ago” (786). Moreover, diversity is patterned by the balance of power between the liberal opposition and the communists and the outcomes of the first competitive elections that this produced. The most successful postsocialist pathways (stable politics and growing economies) are those involving either a sharp break, or significant continuity with the past. The least stable are the hybrids.

#### **Three scenarios:**

1. Liberal opposition’s decisive victory led to mutually supporting and mutually sustaining economic reform and democratization (e.g. Poland, Slovenia, and Czech Republic).
2. Communists were strong and opposition weak, leading to communists’ decisive victory in elections, which produced authoritarian politics, political stability and relatively strong economic performance (Belarus and Uzbekistan).
3. Neither opposition forces nor communists able to register a decisive victory. This led to political conflict and the decoupling of economic and political reform, with usually the former privileged over the latter (Croatia and Slovakia) or dilution of both (Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria).

### *C. Comments*

Bunce's work has several implications for the conditions that facilitate a successful democratic transition, such as the need for a clean break with the past leaders and policies (although not to be equated with economic breakdown.) She argues that when authoritarians are not threatened and when democratization and economic reform are compromised, "the result has been a vicious circle: political turmoil, an economic downturn that has been both sizable and prolonged," followed by more of the same (789). PDT's Working Hypotheses share Bunce's emphasis on the importance of historical factors, which "produced different electoral outcomes, which in turn produced contrasting postsocialist pathways" (790). While democratization is a useful lens through which to analyze postsocialism, Bunce argues that it is more useful to view the status of change in terms of revolution. This enables one to "capture the radical agenda of postsocialism; and it reminds us that political conflict in this region takes spatial and ideological, inter-regime and intra-regime, forms" (791-2).

*Originally Summarized by Tim Weaver, June 2006*

**Thomas Carothers, “The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, Iss. 2, 2006, pg. 55**

**Key words:**

Semi-authoritarian regimes

American democratic promotion

“Color revolutions” in former Soviet Union

Foreign backlash and U.S. credibility

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Leadership**

Countries with semi-authoritarian leaders can be very difficult cases for democracy promotion because the leaders allow enough political freedoms to gain some credit and legitimacy as reformers.

**External Factors**

(counter-argument) High profile leaders and elected officials in numerous CEE countries believe Western democracy assistance is illegitimate political meddling and have begun punishing NGOs and groups that accept Western funding.

The “color revolutions” and the belief that various international democracy assistance programs have provoked recent upheavals across CEE have led to increased levels of backlash by governments in these countries.

US

(supportive) To remain credible democracy promoters abroad, the U.S. needs to reassess its attitude and role in these efforts by realizing that democracy promotion is not a singularly American effort, and that the goal is to encourage compliance with democratic norms among countries with a history of violating these norms.

(counter-argument) Some autocratic governments now argue that the U.S. foreign policy goal of democracy promotion is really just American interventionism. Additionally, the Bush administration has tarnished its reputation by violating democratic and human rights norms both domestically and abroad, thus weakening the legitimacy of democracy-promotion efforts.

Russia

Revolutions throughout the former Soviet Union, particularly the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, have rattled the Kremlin, which worries about losing influence among neighboring states and being accused of making severe foreign policy errors abroad.

## ***B. Summary***

In January, 2006 Putin introduced a new law requiring all local and foreign NGOs operating in the country to inform the government in advance about any project they intend to pursue. This law is further indication of the backsliding toward authoritarianism in Russia. Additionally, many governments globally are beginning to condemn democracy-building programs in their countries, denouncing them as “illegitimate political meddling.” The color revolutions provided further suspicion that U.S. groups especially were generating these upheavals. Some autocratic governments argue this is interventionism, not democracy promotion.

**Just Saying No.** Putin’s government has denounced external democracy aid and criticized local NGOs for accepting this outside aid. Elsewhere in the world, other leaders are taking similar action: Uzbek President Islam Karimov is shutting down Western democracy programs in Uzbekistan; Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko has forbidden most external political aid and suppressed his challengers and civil society; the Tajik government has required that foreign embassies and organizations make officials aware of their intentions to work with NGOs, local political parties, or the media before any contact is made. Many governments outside the former Soviet Union in China, across Africa, and in South America have adopted similar policies.

**Seeing Orange.** Semi-authoritarian states can be difficult cases. Their leaders “allow enough political freedoms [regular elections, several opposition parties, a handful of civic groups, a few independent newspapers] to gain themselves some credit and legitimacy as reformers...but these regimes also maintain a strong enough hold on the levers of power to ensure that no serious threats to their rule emerge.”

A strategy that involves promoting independent election monitoring and effective use of civic and student groups, and providing training and equipment was used first in Slovakia against Vladimir Meciar and Croatia with Franjo Tudjman, then more effectively in Serbia against Slobodan Milosevic. Similar strategies have since been applied to Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine, where it has been referred to as “illegitimate political meddling.” According to Carothers this accusation is not wholly unjustified because while “most external democracy activists may indeed be primarily interested in achieving free and fair elections, they also frequently hope that their efforts will increase the likelihood that autocrats will lose office.”

Putin has used his opposition to Western democracy aid to portray himself as a defender of Russian national security. The Kremlin worries not only about challenges to its domestic influence, but also about regional challenges, such as the Orange Revolution, which it feared

would weaken its influence over neighboring states. By challenging the intentions of Western, especially U.S., democracy promotion, Putin attempted to avert domestic attention from his “glaring policy failures: namely, his support for the losing side in the Ukrainian elections.”

Foreign aid can strengthen existing civic groups and opposition parties, but it cannot create them when they do not exist. Western NGOs have a tendency to take credit for political events in which they played only a minimal role.

**A (Dim) Light Unto the Nations.** American “democracy promotion” has become synonymous with “regime change” in many foreign countries and is now frequently associated with U.S. military intervention and occupation. Additionally, the torture of prisoners and detainees in U.S. facilities abroad has scarred the American reputation as a symbol of democracy and human rights.

**Pushing Back, Carefully.** Carothers makes several recommendations for how the United States should respond to this dilemma including:

1. Monitor efforts by foreign governments to block democracy and to develop a coherent way to react to such activity and reverse it when possible.
2. Stress and believe two things: democracy promotion is not a singularly American effort; and the point of democracy promotion is to help governments with a history of violating democratic norms to comply with these norms, not to assert control over any foreign government.

*Return to the Light.* Bush can help return credibility to U.S. democracy promotion efforts by showing that democracy promotion is in fact his objective, and not simply an excuse for military intervention. However, little progress has been made. In the autumn of 2005 the Bush administration emphasized its desire for free and fair elections in Egypt, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan. In each case, the autocratic leader “played the classic game of friendly tyrants facing a bit of U.S. pro-democratic pique: they made some modest improvements early on in the electoral process; then, in the crucial stage of the elections, they cracked down hard on opposition groups, tampered with votes, and took other measures to ensure they would win lopsided victories.”

Carothers concludes by emphasizing the need for the Bush administration to resolve its violation of human rights and mistreatment of political prisoners and detainees, and tell the truth about secret prisons, unlawful abductions, and domestic eavesdropping.

### ***C. Comments***

In terms of the PDT, the Carothers article most directly addresses our concern with backsliding. Additionally, Carothers' criticisms of U.S. democracy promotion groups and the Bush administration help to pinpoint some of the most glaring errors in democracy promotion efforts overseas.

***Originally Summarized by Emily Stromquist, July 2006***

**Kempe, Iris, *New Eastern Policy [Eine Neue Ostpolitik]***

**Munich: Center for Applied Policy Research, May 2006.**

**Note:** Text originally in German.

**Key words:**

EU Neighbourhood Policy

Ukraine

Moldova

Belarus

Russia

“New Eastern Policy”

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

Proximity to Western Europe or to successful CEE neighbors:

Supportive:

Recent “color revolutions” have encouraged some political movement in semi-authoritarian countries, such as Belarus and Moldova, and served as models for further democratization of the region (7).

**External Players and Influences:**

Supportive: The EU plays an important role in encouraging democratization in the neighboring countries; however, its new Neighbourhood Policy (NP) fails to fulfill the expectations raised during the recent “color revolutions.” In order to be successful, the EU should reevaluate its NP and provide the option of association for countries where the EU membership is not conceivable in a near future. (4-5)

Other:

Democracy-promotion should be one of the important components of the “New Eastern Policy.” However, each country should be dealt with in a different way. In addition to the government, a big spectrum of civil society groups and political opposition should be taken into account and supported (14).

## **B. Summary**

Iris Kempe examines current political situation in the former Soviet republics, such as *Ukraine*, *Moldova*, *Belarus*, and *Russia* and attempts to *assess the effectiveness of a new EU Neighbourhood Policy*. At the end, she provides an alternative to the NP, the “New Eastern Policy,” which, according to Kempe, should be based on democratic orientation of the neighboring states, and offer new approach toward international role of Russia, and establish efficient Europe-wide integration.

Kempe first establishes that the EU finds itself in an “integration crisis” and the Kremlin’s strategy to integrate the post office-Soviet region through [economic] dependence and personnel networks is “by far failing.” The biggest flaw of the Neighbourhood Policy is that it does not foresee any institutional links between the EU and its immediate neighbors. So Kempe calls for an alternative, a so-called “New Eastern Policy” that would establish a genuine integration between Russia and the West. Finally, she argues that aside from an association with the EU, there was and still is no alternative available for the former Soviet republics.

With regard to *Ukraine*, Kempe states that Brussels has not met Kiev’s expectations raised during Orange Revolution as the EU has not yet showed its readiness to offer Ukraine a full membership. She also points out to the fact that the economic and political reforms (i.e. re-privatization of Ukrtelecom, Ukroprom, Ukreximbank) have been slow and, mostly, unsuccessful. Additionally, according to “a clear view” of the EU, Ukraine should continue its difficult passage toward democratic transition by aligning with the West and gaining a complete independence from Russia (6). She later concludes that recent political developments in Ukraine illustrate prospects as well as limits of the EU Neighbourhood policy.

In *Moldova*, Kempe states that Varonin, who ran for the Communist Party, is relatively west-oriented politician as he has supported a “European choice” and/or an association with the EU and rejected closer ties with Russia. Thus, the EU action plan within the Neighbourhood Policy can be considered as a step forward in the EU-Moldova bilateral relations. The only outstanding problem though is unsolved Transdnistrian conflict.

In *Belarus*, which Kempe defines as an “authoritarian island in the heart of Europe,” the EU attempts to sanction the existing authoritarian government and support existing civil society movements. However, Belarusian political opposition is too weak to replace the Lukashenka’s regime. Interestingly enough, all opposition candidates orient themselves in one or another way toward the European values and hold recent color revolutions in the region as models. According to a wide-spread public opinion, the EU is viewed as an important organization in immediate neighbourhood; however, due to the rigid visa restrictions on entries to the EU, Belarus is expected to remain isolated. Thus, as long as the Belarusian isolation persists and bilateral relations between Belarus and the EU are halted, the prospects for the strong orientation to the

EU and greater opportunities for the population with respect to economic development will not be utilized (12).

With regard to **Russia**, Kempe criticizes Russian government for recent political reforms (i.e. federalism reform among others) and argues that *Kremlin is in conflict with the EU over the sphere of influence in the former Soviet Union's Republics*. However, the relations between Russia and the EU are coordinated in many strategic spheres, such as oil export, fight against terrorism, national and international security.

### **EU Neighbourhood Policy**

*(Note: for more detailed information on the Neighbourhood Policy itself, please see a summary of Grabbe, Heather, "How the EU Should Help its Neighbours," Policy Brief: Centre for European Reform, June 2004.)*

With respect of the Neighbourhood Policy, Kempe argues that one should take into the account that ***the Policy does not provide a mechanism of reconciling differences of values and geopolitical interests between Russia and the EU***. Thus, both sides should find a way for strategically solving problems that concern legacy of the Soviet Union and its republics.

Although Kempe is critical of the NP especially with respect to the EU-Russian relations, she states that ***it can be declared as a big step forward as it has recognized this issue as politically relevant***. However, the Neighbourhood Policy is received with some restraint in the countries covered by the policy. Ukraine and Moldova, for instance, whose aspirations to become EU members, are especially disappointed. After the Orange Revolution, Ukraine should be regarded in different way by the EU (14).

The biggest flaw of the Neighbourhood Policy is that ***it does not foresee any institutional links between the EU and its immediate neighbors*** and/or countries that stretch to North Africa.

According to Kempe, one "should critically ***reevaluate existing European strategy especially with respect of Belarus***. The sanctions against the regime are legitimate but, so far, have not achieved their objectives. The technical support of the EU should be made as un-bureaucratic as possible and be better coordinated between the donors to increase EU presence and its acquaintance abroad" (15).

The relations between Russia and the European Union are primarily based on an economically-defined community of interests between Moscow and individual European Union Member States. The strategic goal of the West should thus be to first accept Russia, integrate it, and, at the same time, emphasize the grounds for the cooperation.

“Through new forms of integration, the EU must change its general “No” to the entry into “Yes” to the association for the democracies from the post-Soviet region. ***The association can be directed toward functional understanding of the European integration and first contain no full membership promises.*** Thus, an arrangement of a Europe-wide transportation infrastructure or network is conceivable, for instance (15). In similar way, association of different extent in various spheres is conceivable as ***a partial membership in a particular sphere of European cooperation.*** The Schengen area or the Euro-zone proves that not all EU Member States must participate in all areas of integration and can serve as a model of different integration ways. (15).”

### ***C. Comments***

Although Kempe’s article is somewhat general with regard to the European Union’s Neighbourhood Policy and coverage of political developments in Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and Russia, it offers an alternative policy, namely the “New Eastern Policy.” The alternative policy aspires to integrate Russia without forcing it to become more undemocratic. Kempe claims that ***through socialization and economic integration, the EU can democratize Russia*** among other former Soviet republics. The main mechanism of such socialization, aside from a partial membership, could be an association in one or few spheres. This relates to PDT’s analysis of the diffusion of democratic norms in Central and Eastern Europe, although Kempe’s recommendations for engagement with Russia are somewhat dated in light of current relations between Russia and the EU, which have worsened in recent years.

***Originally Summarized by Christine Otsver, February 2007***

**Jeffrey Kopstein, “Postcommunist Democracy: Legacies and Outcomes,”**  
*Comparative Politics*, Vol. 35:2 (January 2003), 231-250.

**Note:** The books reviewed were: Elster, Offe and Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea* (1998), Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski and Toka, *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation* (1999), and Ekiert and Kubik, *Rebellious Civil Society: Popular Protest and Democratic Consolidation in Poland: 1989-1993* (1999).

**Key words:**

Post-communist transition successes  
Central and Eastern Europe  
Mass mobilization  
EU and NATO influence

**A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT**

**Parties and electoral systems**

Kitschelt et al. propose that highly structured party systems have low transaction costs, permit interparty cooperation and facilitate the adoption of public policies, while weak systems are characterized by clientelistic policies and strong, charismatic leaders. The authors agree that the “choice of closed list multimember proportional representation is likely to produce programmatic parties” but institutional equilibria develops over time (237).

Counter-argument: Ekiert and Kubik maintain the extent of party system development was not important to the public and had little effect.

**Mass mobilization**

Kitschelt proposes that bureaucratic authoritarian communism created a highly mobilized and ideological working class. The authors also maintain that the masses and politicians can recognize interests and act on them and don’t always need agency.

Ekiert and Kubik accentuate the importance of social movement and street demonstrations/protests in political history, specifically examining Poland. Protest can be a dialogical medium between the state and civil society when institutions are discredited and thus protest does not undermine democracy.

## **Civil Society**

Elster contends that postcommunist states had a low level of civic organization, which left an absence of authoritative agency. Kitschelt proposes that national-accommodative communism allowed a proto-civil society to form and patrimonial communism went around civil society to work through patronage networks.

## **Prior democratic and state experience**

Elster suggests there is *an inability to create agency and rule of law in states with a strong Leninist legacy*. Kitschelt identifies three subtypes of legacy based on state tradition: bureaucratic-authoritarian Communism, national-accommodative Communism, patrimonial Communism - eg. Czech Republic, Poland and Bulgaria respectively. This applies to the entire structure of society rather than the pre-transition elites of Linz and Stepan's argument.

Kopstein notes the importance of comparing the mixed legacies of Leninism and the international environment in examining the transition of Eastern Europe. Leninism left possibly positive legacy such as equality (once the nomenklatura are removed) as well as negative legacy such as Stalinist industrialization.

## **Political culture**

Inert legacies seem to be a large determinant, but the outcomes are not the product of a single cause according to Elster. Also, the cultural affinity of communism to the target society affects the outcome- "Communism had a cultural affinity with the pre-modern agrarian societies of Slovakia and Bulgaria but much less affinity with Hungary and very little with the Czech Republic," p. 243.

Kitschelt contends that *structure of politics divides into three groups: economic/distributive, social/culture, historical/regime* and each state divided over different issues depending on type of Communism and existing cleavages.

According to Ekiert and Kubik, the long tradition of discontent expressed through industrial conflict explains the low street protest-strike ratio and the rise in industrial action can be tied to dissatisfaction with parliamentarism, political elites and parties. Kopstein suggests that Leninist legacy may have created social preconditions necessary for democracy in some societies, but in other it may have been unnecessary leaving a more negative legacy (246).

## **Social Structure and educational levels**

Kopstein says that interwar inequalities were material and in social, class and political status, which suggests that part of the *Leninist legacy created equality in these areas which formed the basis for later democracy*.

## **EU/NATO**

Kopstein identifies that the presence of the international actors EU and NATO as an influence because of their *ability to affect interests, institutions and identities* of their prospective new member states. He predicts that stability and consolidation depend on the level of integration into the West.

### **B. Summary**

Jeffrey Kopstein reviewed three books and gave his own analysis and recommendations for future study into the effects of the Leninist legacy and the international context.

### **Rebuilding the State**

Elster et al. discusses the common Leninist legacy in postcommunist states and raises *the question of agency, or legal authority after the overthrow of the old regimes*. Their study spans 1989-1994 focusing on Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria. The book follows an institutional analysis contending that legacies and decisions are important, but *new institutions are the crucial determinant of consolidation*. Through this comparative analysis of constitution making, political parties, economic reform, social policies and ideological change, good information is presented, but it does not answer why some states chose “better” models than others. The theoretical response to the question of institutional origins is to look back at the extrication from socialism.

The four countries are ranked based on degree of consolidation, in descending order, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria. The authors argue that “Communism had a cultural affinity with the premodern agrarian societies of Slovakia and Bulgaria but much less affinity with Hungary and very little with the Czech Republic” (235).

The most significant variable identified is the *compatibility of the inherited world views, patterns of behavior and basic social and political concepts with the functional necessities* of a modern, partly industrial, partly already post-industrial society such that the *social and cultural capital and its potential for adjusting the legacies of the past of the requirements of the present matters the most* (235). Still, the reviewer noticed that a more succinct set of statements connecting causal variables to outcomes is needed.

### **Postcommunist Party Systems**

Kitschelt elaborates on *the causal-outcome linkages* in Eastern Europe specifically comparing *Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Bulgaria*. This includes work on party systems, democratic consolidation and liberal democratic institutions. Highly structured party systems typically have low transaction costs, permit interparty cooperation and facilitate the adoption of public policies, while weak systems tend to run through clientelistic policies and strong, charismatic leaders. The book *measures the extent of party structuration* through interviews and public opinion data and agrees that “closed list multimember proportional representation is likely to produce programmatic parties” but *institutional effects cannot explain variation in the short run*.

Kitschelt identifies *legacy as another determinant* and breaks it into three distinct subtypes. *Bureaucratic- authoritarian Communism* arose there was a rule-oriented bureaucracy and highly mobilized and ideological working class in precommunist time, such as in East Germany and Czech Republic. *National-accommodative Communism* comes from states where there was a precommunist middle class, which conflicted with Communism to produce a compromise of a proto-civil society in Hungary and Poland. *Patrimonial Communism* existed where Communists couldn't rule through existing bureaucracies or civil society and rule through clientelistic arrangements instead.

The differences in subtype are determined by *the level of interwar social and bureaucratic modernization with an emphasis on the timing and sequencing of bureaucratic development and mass entry into politics*. The authors also divide all states into these subtypes and give them all codes. However, there are data differences between coding and expectation- Bulgaria for example. The authors present a theory of continuity but leave openings for alternative findings.

### **Consolidation and Protest**

Ekiert and Kubik maintain that the *public in Eastern Europe doesn't really care about the extent of party system development because of the presence of social movements and protests as means to express discontent*. Their study focuses on *Poland from 1989-93* using survey research, postcommunist social indicators and methodology from newspaper accounts, which contrasts with data from another study on East Germany, Slovakia and Hungary. During this period, Poland had the most number of protests, most frequently directed against the state. Contrary to belief, the authors argue that “*discontent does not lead to protest; protest leads to discontent*” (243) which explains why Polish protests did not lead to large changes in economic reform.

*Three possible explanations are identified: historical-cultural, institutional, rational instrumental*. The historical reason says that the long tradition under Communism of political discontent expressed through industrial conflict explains the low protest-strike ratio and the positive correlation between level of industrial action and general dissatisfaction with

parliamentarism, political elites and parties. Under the two other reasons, protest came to serve as a medium of communication between the state and society, and was increasingly regularized.

### **Leninist Legacy and International Context**

Kopstein concludes that future studies should include examination of Leninist legacy and international context. He suggests that part of the Leninist legacy created a material and status equality that formed the basis for democracy, a necessary ingredient in pre-modern agrarian societies such as Hungary and Poland. Negative aspects of legacy are identified as Stalinist industrialization and unnecessary social revolutions in societies such as Czech Republic, which had already formed an industrial base.

The absence of a “compelling antidemocratic, anti-systemic great power” (246) separates the interwar period from today, but this alone is not sufficient for explaining how some countries have been able to sustain their democracies or overthrow dictators. *The most important factor is the presence of European actors such as the EU and NATO and their ability to affect interests, institutions and identities of their prospective new member states.* However, more research is needed on the extent to which states adopted such policies based on the influence and desire to join the mentioned organizations. Kopstein suggests *this model, combined with the absence of an alternative could explain the amount of political party development and performance, the participation of ‘elites’ in rebuilding state institutions and the reason that protest did not become detrimental even though economic conditions were poor.* For the future, consolidation and stability depend on the level of integration of these states into the West.

### **C. Comments**

This article compares and draws conclusions from three books, all of which emphasize historical legacy as an explanation for the recent transition from Communism. It is very useful for broad overview and further examination of individual books could add to research on civil society, mass mobilization and historical legacy. The Kitschelt hypothesis is based on “three subtypes of legacy based on state tradition: bureaucratic-authoritarian communism, national-accommodative communism, patrimonial communism – e.g. Czech Republic, Poland and Bulgaria respectively,” which can also be applied to social structure and perhaps political culture. Within a nation’s political culture, the type of communist legacy and the original degree of affinity between communism and each society seems to affect the success of post-communist transition and consolidation.

*Originally Summarized by Christina Watts, December 15, 2006*

**Michael McFaul, “Transitions from Postcommunism,”**

*Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2005

**Key words:**

Post-communist transitions  
Western democracy assistance  
Serbia  
Georgia  
Ukraine

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

(All hypotheses drawn from three specific examples of Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine)

**Civil Society**

A major factor contributing to the success of democratic breakthroughs is the ability of NGOs to provide accurate, independent tallies of actual votes soon after the polls close in order to detect instances of falsification.

**Mass Movements**

The opposition’s capacity to mobilize significant numbers of protestors to challenge falsified electoral results can greatly help the transition process.

Mass protest is also responsible for the decrease in the use of violent oppression by the incumbent’s regime toward the protestors.

**Economic Institutions**

Development of a middle class/bourgeoisie

(counter-argument) While Ukraine has a growing middle class and a recent history of notable growth, this cannot be said of Serbia or Georgia, which had been experiencing a period of economic trauma and hardship that helped undermine Milosevic and Shevardnadze; therefore, it cannot be said that a middle class is essential for success.

Economic liberalization

(counter-argument) McFaul argues that the state of the economy or the level of economic development is not essential to the success of democratic breakthroughs.

## **Prior Democratic Experience/Culture**

(counter-argument) In the second wave of democratization the incumbent regimes were either competitive autocracies or partial democracies that never suspended formal democratic procedures. This particular regime type allowed for pockets of pluralism and opposition, which was key to the success of the democratic breakthrough.

## **External Factors**

Western democracy assistance programs contributed to all three of the cases McFaul addresses. However, he argues that “foreign aid played no independent role in any of these breakthroughs, but contributed to the drama by increasing or decreasing the relative value of each of the seven factors” (16) he identifies as critical for success.

## ***B. Summary***

McFaul argues that quick and successful democratic breakthroughs are the exception, not the norm. Countries such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and eastern Czechoslovakia did not rapidly consolidate liberal democracies after the fall of communism. The further states are from Western Europe, the weaker the pro-democratic pull, accounting for the spread of semi-autocracies and partial democracies across the ex-Soviet states, and the belief that post-1990, further democratic gains would be unlikely.

Democracy gained momentum in 2000 with three specific cases – Serbia, Georgia, and the Ukraine. These cases are similar in four critical ways: a fraudulent national election was responsible for regime change; the democratic challengers deployed extra-constitutional means to defend the existing constitution; “each country...witnessed challengers and incumbents making competing and simultaneous claims to hold sovereign authority;” each of these examples ended in mass violence (6).

McFaul identifies seven major factors for success:

1. *A semi-autocratic regime.* In the second wave, every incumbent regime was some form of competitive autocracy or partial democracy, and the particular type of regime allowed for pockets of pluralism and opposition, which in turn proved to be critical for success.
  - Serbia – Milosevic never set up a full-blown dictatorship and although he tampered with election results, he never banned them. Local elections led to opposition control over local government and over regional media outlets, which was key to Milosevic’s overthrow in 2000.
  - Georgia – Shevardnadze tried to become more authoritarian with time, but “his achievements fell far short of his ambitions” (8). His efforts to monitor or curtail civil society and the media were relatively unsuccessful and, at times, backfired.

- Ukraine – Kuchma came to power through competitive 1994 elections and eventually tried to build a ““managed democracy,”” but he “never quite rallied all of Ukraine’s economic elites behind his rule, and the fall of 2004 found them still divided” (8).
2. *An unpopular incumbent.* The declining popularity of the incumbent leader was necessary for the success of a democratic breakthrough. The cause of unpopularity differed in each case.
    - Serbia – Milosevic had won a number of free and fair elections, but military defeats (ending with the 1999 NATO air campaign) combined with years of economic decline, greatly reduced his support.
    - Georgia – Shevardnadze was popular at first, but his support plummeted after he failed to improve Georgia’s economy and failed to win or resolve wars and territorial disputes (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Ajaria). This led to an increasingly corrupt regime.
    - Ukraine – Kuchma’s severe corruption made him very unpopular and the murder of the investigative reporter Georgi Gongadze exposed Kuchma’s illegitimacy.
  3. *A united opposition* is crucial for democratic breakthrough, although the degree of unification varies.
    - Serbia – opposition set aside their differences to form the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), which supported one presidential candidate, Vojislav Kostunica. Kostunica’s newness and moderate nationalism made him a popular candidate
    - Ukraine – it was difficult to create a unified opposition for many years because of the strong and legitimate Socialist Party. There was no “single, charismatic leader of the opposition who stood out as an obvious first,” until Kuchma dismissed Viktor Yushchenko as prime minister in 2001, thus creating such a leader.
    - Georgia – Saakashvili mobilized popular protest, delivered “fiery speeches” and led unarmed protestors into the parliament chamber to interrupt Shevardnadze’s speech, a bold, but tactically risky move.
  4. *Independent electoral-monitoring capabilities.* It is crucial for the success of a democratic breakthrough that NGOs provide an accurate, independent tally of the vote quickly after the polls close.
    - Serbia – the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID) conducted parallel vote tabulation in the 2000 elections. On election night, DOS officials announced the results of their own parallel vote tabulation, knowing their results would correspond with CeSID results. Thus, “CeSID...provided the legitimacy for the claim of falsification” (10). They had learned from the experience of opposition groups in Bulgaria (concrete example of diffusion effects).
    - Ukraine – Committee of Ukrainian Voters (CVU) played a central role in monitoring all rounds of the 2004 presidential vote. However, they also had to deal with Kuchma, “a far more sophisticated vote manipulator using novel tactics” (11). Ultimately, after the second round of presidential voting, two exit polls were released with different results.

- Georgia – opposition groups, buoyed by international funding, operated to conduct exit polling and a parallel count, the results of which “were remarkably similar and strikingly at odds with official tallies. Observation teams documented instances of vote fraud” (10).
5. *A modicum of independent media.* Another critical element for success is the “presence of independent media able to relay news about the falsified vote and to publicize mounting popular protests” (11).
    - Serbia – The ANEM, a network that houses a news agency, television station, and several daily and weekly papers, helped deliver news to Serbians from outside the Milosevic-controlled media sources.
    - Ukraine – major broadcasting channels were controlled by oligarchs loyal to Kuchma and Yanukovich. Ukrainians, slightly wealthier on average than Georgians or Serbians, responded with the use of Internet and text-messaging. The Orange Revolution, for example, was organized largely online.
    - Georgia – Rustavi-2 became the most watched television network in Georgia and broadcasted live from sites of protest, thus encouraging more Georgians to join the efforts, and encouraged erstwhile loyal networks to follow suit.
  6. *Mobilizing the masses.* The opposition’s capacity to mobilize and challenge falsified electoral results proved to be critical. Student groups worked together with opposition parties and NGOs to mobilize large demonstrations.
    - Serbia – the student group “Otpor, DOS, regional government heads, union leaders, and civil society organizers coordinated efforts that culminated in the million-strong 5 October 2000 march on Belgrade” (13). There were numerous police barricades, but not one really attempted to stop the protests.
    - Ukraine – the student group Pora and “Our Ukraine” activists joined together and organized a protest that for a number of days fed, clothed, and kept warm hundreds of thousands of protestors. Support from city hall eventually made this protest a huge success.
    - Georgia – protestors were less organized and smaller in number than in Serbia, but the student group Kmara took lead, and after street protests, “Saakashvili became the voice and face of the opposition” (13). Sheverdnadze realized the only means of suppression would be mass casualties, and deemed this unacceptable.
  7. *Splits among the “guys with the guns.”* Splits developed in all three cases among the military, police, and security forces, and it was determined that violent repression was a risky, and generally bad, option. Additionally, the sheer size of the crowds helped keep violence down, as smaller groups of protestors would have been a much easier target.
    - Serbia – Milosevic called on police to increase violent activity toward Otpor protestors. As the number of protests and protestors continued to increase, police and intelligence officials decided violent repression was not an option.
    - Ukraine – contacts between opposition leaders and the security *apparat* “helped to close the door to violent repression” (15).

- Georgia – key officials “either openly deserted Shevardnadze or made it clear that they would refuse to order units under their command to arrest, much less to shoot, peaceful protestors” (14-15). Shevardnadze has a positive reputation in the West and was “reluctant to mar that good name with the blood of civilians.” Moreover, opposition groups had been courting the security services prior to the 2003 election (14).

The last section of McFaul’s paper identifies the “Unessential Factors” in democratic breakthroughs. These include: the general state of the economy, wealth and the middle class, resolution of border disputes, “splits between hard-liners and soft-liners among the semi-authoritarian incumbents,” western democracy-aid (McFaul argues that it played a role, but not an independent one), the quality of oppositions’ ideologies, the role of the opposition leader, and democratic breakthroughs in and of themselves.

### *C. Comments*

McFaul’s seven major factors for successful transition are very useful for PDT’s purposes because he provides both a detailed explanation of how these factors function and the context in which they succeeded and played a pivotal role. Equally interesting are the factors he identifies as “Unessential Factors,” a list that includes several factors other authors have deemed fairly important. This suggests an opportunity for further study of whether these factors can play or have played a role in other scenarios that have unfolded differently than the examples of Georgia, Ukraine, and Serbia.

*Originally Summarized by Emily Stromquist, July 2006*

**Ghia Nodia\*, “Democratic Promotion,” From the Club of Madrid’s *Toward a Democratic Response: The Club of Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism*, 2005**

**Key words:**

Democracy assistance programs  
Terrorism  
Economic liberalization  
Anti-liberal backlash

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Applicability**

The agendas of democracy promotion should be custom tailored to different regions and specific countries. Unless they can exist in harmony with local democratic actors, democracy assistance programs run the risk of being branded as ‘foreign imposition.’

**Political Institutions**

Executive Powers

The combination of weak or failing states and democratic or semi-authoritarian rule has turned out to be a dangerous breeding ground for terrorist groups. This will become increasingly important as the focus of our project moves further east, where more countries fit this description.

Elections

While support for free and fair elections is important, the international community needs to pay closer attention to the aftermath. The quality of democratic processes—including transparent and accountable government—should be given greater priority.

**Economic and Sociological Factors**

Economic liberalization

The programs and policies of international financial and economic institutions should aim at strengthening the economic foundations of democracy. The objective must be to reduce the dependency of poor states on foreign economic aid. The WTO, for instance, should move more aggressively against agricultural subsidies in rich countries.

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\* Ghia Nodia is the coordinator for The Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development in Georgia.

## **External Factors**

Unless democratization is demonstrably fraught with risks of strengthening terrorist networks, the international community should take measures to assist the advancement of democracy because it can help assuage terrorist objections (i.e. inequality, the disempowerment of certain groups and the impossibility to express legitimate grievances).

Democracy assistance programs should focus on long-term support rather than quick results. Success depends on local resources (individuals, civil society, etc.) and building those resources takes time.

International institutions that promote democracy need greater accountability. Independent bodies should monitor and evaluate their activities.

## ***B. Summary***

March 8-11<sup>th</sup> 2005, The Club of Madrid held the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security in response to the Madrid bombings. In the months leading up to the summit, more than two hundred of the world's leading scholars and expert practitioners explored the issues of democracy and terrorism through a system of web-logs. Each working group issued a final paper of recommendations on which the contributions of The Madrid Summit Working Paper Series are based. This paper, a chapter from the third volume of the series, is devoted to determining the linkages between democracy and terrorism by identifying the major areas of contention and consensus, and suggesting a number of practical policy recommendations.

## **Areas of Discussion**

### *Liberal democracy as a target of terrorism?*

One interpretation of this question among the working group members was that radical Islamic terror is an expression of resentment against the values of liberal democracy. If this is true, then Nodia concludes "that they must be viewed as the latest version of anti-liberal reaction represented by Nazism, Communism," etc. (21). However, this vision of radical Islamist terrorism was strongly challenged within the working group. Some members of the group maintained that it was not liberal democracy per se, but specific policies of Western democracies, to which the terrorists objected. Despite this disagreement, there was universal concern that democracies could be tempted to respond to terrorist attacks by curtailing civil liberties and weakening their own standards of transparency and accountability. There was a consensus that defending oneself against terrorism entails not just the use of instruments of conventional security, but also the preservation of democratic institutions. Not doing so would mean that the terrorists' goals (real or hypothetical) would be fulfilled.

### *Democracy as the antidote to terrorism?*

Empirical evidence suggests that democracy cannot always be a reliable antidote against the proliferation of terrorists. Even consolidated democracies have had to deal with the problem of terror. Moreover, the task of democratizing may in fact turn out to be destabilizing for hybrid countries that are composed of weak or failing states, as they can turn out to be a dangerous breeding ground for terrorists to take political gains. Despite all of these claims, the working group did agree that at least where democratization is not demonstrably fraught with risks of strengthening terrorist networks, the international democratic community should step up its efforts to assist the advancement of democracy.

### *Democracy promotion and terrorist threats*

It is necessary to recognize that there are many instances in which democracy promotion can be counter-productive. First, democracy promotion has become synonymous with Western imperialism, meaning that open support for local democrats by Western powers can actually become a ‘kiss of death.’ Second, democracy implemented through military imposition as exemplified by the war in Iraq is not practical because democracy is about the freedom of choice and should emerge internally.

### *Solidarity and cooperation between democracies*

The American-led military campaign against terrorism—in particular the war in Iraq—has created a rift between the United States and its traditional democratic allies, as well as among other supporters of democracy around the world. There was a consensus that this rift needs to be overcome in order to form a strong front of democratic countries committed to fighting terrorism.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- The agendas of democracy promotion should be custom tailored to different regions and specific countries.
- Democracy assistance programs should focus on long-term support rather than quick results.
- Democracy assistance programs need to include components for enhancing the effectiveness of state institutions in weak states.
- Democracy promotion should provide support for opposition as an institution, as well as aim at enhancing the rights and representation of minorities. The exclusion of groups from political and public life only pushes them towards extreme methods.
- We must strengthen local actors who are in the position to rebut demagogues, who use the local values and history to discredit universal liberal and democratic principles.
- The international community needs to focus more attention on the *aftermath* of elections.

- The programs and policies of international financial and economic institutions should aim at strengthening the economic foundations of democracy.
- The emphasis on the Middle East in the context of fighting terrorism and promoting democracy must not overshadow the importance of other regions, such as Africa, Latin America and others.
- International institutions that promote democracy need greater accountability. Independent bodies should monitor and evaluate their activities.
- Democratic countries must bear in mind that their presence can, at times, create an even more hostile environment for democracy. They should take a step back when immediate involvement could turn out to be counterproductive.
- Regarding the issue of Islam and democracy, great caution and sensitivity is of utmost importance. A strong distinction should be made between Islam as a religion and Islam as a civilization. Moderate forms of Islam must be engaged rather than marginalized.

### *C. Comments*

While some of this document is not directly relevant to the PDT, it can serve as a rough model of what our set of policy recommendations should look like. The issue of weak semi-authoritarian states becoming destabilized by the process of democratization is one that may become increasingly important to the project as our attention moves eastward.

*Originally Summarized by Yomaira Tamayo, July 2006*

**Vitali Silitsky\*, “Is the Age of Post-Soviet Electoral Revolutions Over?”**  
*Democracy at Large, Vol. 1, No. 4, September 2005, pg. 1-6*

**Key words:**

Electoral revolution  
Authoritarian regimes in Moldova and Armenia  
Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan uprisings  
Democratization

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Applicability**

Electoral revolutions may potentially work in countries with ‘soft’ authoritarianism like Moldova or Armenia. For the rest of the region, the paradigm of electoral revolutions is largely a thing of the past.

**Political Institutions**

Executive power

Whether it is by electoral or traditional means, incumbents who hold a weak grip over the state, their party, economic resources, and/or coercive means are far more easily overthrown than those in systems in which authority is firmly concentrated in the hands of a single leader.

Parties

During the tumultuous time of regime change, the opposition must work together in order to mobilize enough people to create the kind of political ‘noise’ needed to turnover a government.

**Mass Movements**

The age of post-Soviet electoral revolutions is over. Democratic promoters will have to resort to either traditional style revolutions, or think up new and innovative ways to approach regime change.

**External Factors**

The greatest mistake democracy promoters can make is to view repressive leaders and frightened populations as possessing no desire for democratic change. Though future regime transformation

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\* Between 1999 and 2003, Dr. Vitali Silitsky was an associate professor of economics at the European Humanities University in Minsk, Belarus, a position he was forced to leave for criticizing the government.

may be some time away for some countries in the region, democracy promoters must prepare for the ideal moment by cultivating and nurturing responsible democratic actors.

### ***B. Summary***

Silitsky maintains that any talk about “democratic contagion” can now rest at a silent murmur. This very assertive article delineates the reasons for which the author claims the post-Soviet wave of revolutions is certainly over.

A democratic future for the remaining autocratic states in the region may now be even more implausible than before because the conditions that existed in successful countries no longer exist in the rest of the region. By and large, mass movements succeeded where:

1. The demand for political change was overwhelming;
2. The incumbent leaders had antagonized their societies through repression, mismanagement and corruption;
3. The opposition worked together;
4. Civil society had matured enough to mobilize both voters and peaceful protesters;
5. Incumbents did not possess total control over the institutions of the state. This allowed for a reasonably liberal political life to flourish both in parliament and between elections. In these cases, parliament and the courts were sufficiently independent to act according to law, not out of fear or loyalty;
6. Incumbents did not possess total control over financial means. In all the successful revolutionary episodes, oligarchic capitalism had emerged. This made it much easier to sustain the opposition at points when incumbents attempted to cut the opposition off from foreign assistance;
7. Incumbents were relatively complacent. When the colored revolutions began authoritarian leaders across the region discounted the threat to their own regimes. They had not yet digested the impact of Serbia on activists everywhere.

In contrast to the democratically friendly environment described above, the competitive authoritarian systems of the post-Soviet region have a firm grip on their parties, the state and coercive mechanisms. In these countries, political and civil society is weak and representative institutions are largely for show. Control over economic resources is much more concentrated, partly due to the abundance of raw materials in the area. To add to all of these disadvantages, incumbent’s complacency has been replaced with fear and anxiety. Today, the autocrats of the region are now very aware of the possibility that recent evolutionary fervor could create a domino effect heading straight for their front doors.

Although pessimistic about the prospects of any future electoral revolutions, Silitsky does not imply that *democratization* has come to a standstill. He suggests that while a strictly electoral scenario is unlikely to happen anywhere, except for one or two countries (Moldova, maybe Armenia) still characterized by ‘soft’ authoritarianism, opposition challengers may find success in carrying out more traditional revolutions. The Tulip Revolution is a great example of what can happen when democratic contagion and official preemption collide head on. While the government had certainly learned from the Ukrainian and Georgian experiences, the opposition, once denied any chance of succeeding through elections, went straight to the streets. Once it was clear who had won the contest of force, the opposition needed no electoral legitimacy.

There are several reasons why investment into this kind of regime turnover may not be the most ideal strategy for our purposes. First, it can lead to the absence of political legitimacy and a recognized leader. This can make a transition to democracy rather chaotic to organize. Second, this is not the kind of mass movement outsiders can overtly encourage or fund. It was fine to promote electoral revolutions because they were grounded in legitimate electoral exercises.

The most important lesson to be drawn from the Kyrgyzstani uprising is that there is no stopping citizens committed to changing their government. Incumbents may “successfully rebuff challenges for years, but in reality they are like underground miners—one mistake can mean their end” (6).

### ***C. Comments***

The author claims that electoral revolutions are a thing of the past, a rather controversial claim in light of the important role electoral revolutions have played in regime change. However, Silitsky’s analysis is instructive for activists and future revolutionary movements, which must be innovative in their methods and mindful of the fact that the political climate has seriously changed from the time of Milosevic’s turnover, and dictators have become just as innovative as activists in trying to repress the opposition.

***Originally Summarized by Yomaira Tamayo, July 2006***

# **Milada Anna Vachudova, “Democratization in Postcommunist Europe: Illiberal Regimes and the Leverage of the European Union,”**

Prepared for the conference “*Waves and Troughs of Post Communist Transitions: What Role for Domestic vs. External Variables?*” Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of Law, Stanford University, 2006

## **Key words:**

Democratization  
International influence on transitions  
EU enlargement and conditionality  
Domestic political actors

## ***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

### **Definition of Democracy**

Vachudova defines a liberal democracy as “a political system where state institutions and democratically-elected rulers respect juridical limits on their powers and political liberties,” uphold the rule of law and basic liberties (i.e. freedom of speech, assembly, religion and property), and “do not violate limits on their powers or the political liberties of citizens in order to suppress rival political parties or groups” (2).

### **Best Measures**

Vachudova endorses scores from Freedom House and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

### **Political Institutions**

#### Parties

Political parties are gradually motivated by EU leverage to move their agenda toward greater compatibility with EU membership requirements.

The EU has helped shape the agendas of opposition parties that won elections; although the progress of these parties sometimes slows down, it has never derailed, thanks to the EU pre-accession process.

### **Civil Society**

NGOs can play a special role by compensating for weak opposition parties through use of surveillance and criticism of the illiberal government. They eventually can increase and therefore, make cooperation among opposition parties more effective.

### **Clean Break vs. Gradualism**

After watershed elections (decisive loss of power by illiberal elites) there is “virtually no backsliding as successive governments make progress on political and economic reform” (10). Rates of progress may be fast or slow, but there have been no instances of reversal.

### **Sequencing**

Progress made during the EU’s pre-accession process is a strong indicator of future success in gaining membership and implementing sustainable reforms.

### **External Factors**

#### EU

The EU has undermined illiberal regimes, locked in progress toward democratization and economic liberalization, and offered geopolitical, socio-cultural, and most importantly, economic benefits that have significantly pushed postcommunist countries to seek EU membership.

### ***B. Summary***

In the past decade all credible candidate states for EU membership have made considerable progress toward democratization and a more transparent market economy. The EU has helped strengthen liberal opposition in an “iterated electoral game where sooner or later most political actors...saw the benefits of moving their own agenda toward compatibility with the state’s bid for EU membership” (2).

Vachudova states that “the EU’s leverage helps set the parameters and write the rules of that game” (2). There are four mechanisms she identifies, two operating before, and two after watershed elections that imply political change in illiberal democracies. These mechanisms include:

- Before watershed elections – prospect of European integration serves as a *focal point for cooperation* among various oppositional groups/parties; and incentives that EU offers create an *adapting* mechanism that forces leaders to push their political and economic agendas in the direction of the EU and other international organizations.
- After watershed elections – *conditionality* implies moving forward with the pre-accession process and receiving intermediate rewards; the pre-accession process serves as a *credible commitment to reform*.

The essay addresses six major cases of watershed elections – Romania (1996), Bulgaria (1997), Slovakia (1998), Croatia (2000), and Serbia-Montenegro (2000) – in countries that were dominated by illiberal rulers for a long period of time, but eventually made the change toward becoming a liberal democracy.

**Divergence and Convergence in the Postcommunist World.** Major indicators of progress and convergence after 1995 include free and fair elections, parties committed to democratic rules, and ethnic minorities that are generally better off. Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro have established liberal democracies that are now cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

The Western Balkan states of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Serbia-Montenegro are more challenging cases, as they are ‘slow-pace reformers,’ and only Croatia has exhibited rapid economic progress.

Generally, in the postcommunist region, data reveals that “greater political freedom, more economic liberalization, and better economic performance have all gone hand in hand” (4), that there is “relatively little tension between democratic and economic reforms that are requirements of EU membership,” and that “economic liberalization does not come at the cost of the well-being of the general population” (5).

**The Literature on International Actors and Democratization.** “The EU has played an important role in loosening the grip on the polity of elites that seek to perpetuate illiberal democracy” (5).

*EU Enlargement and Domestic Political Change.* EU leverage has worked against illiberal regimes, eventually ousting them and encouraging liberal democracy and economic liberalization. Costs of exclusion from the EU can be detrimental to rich and poor states alike.

EU leverage has been effective because of three aspects of the pre-accession process: asymmetric interdependence between the EU and candidate states, enforcement through monitoring and annual reports, and meritocracy.

“EU leaders made the prospect of EU membership the cornerstone of the EU’s foreign policy toward the Western Balkans in the EU-led Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe in 1999.” Through this system, countries such as Serbia-Montenegro have been able to “rehabilitate” their past dismal record of democratic standards and human rights and become credible future members of the EU (7).

**Regime Change in Illiberal Democracies.** Vachudova argues that with “limited political competition, rent-seeking elites could win and hold power by further suppressing rival groups, promising slow economic reform, and exploiting ethnic nationalism” (7). Other explanations for

variation in political outcomes include the role of domestic elites at the point of regime change, results of the first democratic elections, and types of political competition in the new polity.

Compliance with EU requirements is most likely when ruling elites believe a relationship with the EU would improve their popularity, and when the EU's conditions are compatible with their method of power procurement at home. "The interplay of domestic opposition actors and the EU's leverage...helped bring political change" (8).

*Focal Point of Cooperation.* "Ending exclusion from Europe and securing EU membership became a *focal point for cooperation* among very different opposition and political parties and civic groups. Slovakian opposition groups agreed to all EU requirements and agreed to end Serbia's exclusion from Europe.

*Adapting.* Political elites were motivated by political calculation and a desire to understand and promote "European" norms and values. The leverage of the EU and other international actors influenced civic groups and shaped the activity of opposition parties.

NGOs and civic groups have been very useful in mobilizing the population against undemocratic leaders.

Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Kubik have identified a "virtuous circle" that develops between local NGOs and their Western partners in compensating for weak opposition parties and building a strong civil society.

The EU has helped these countries realize that illiberal regimes were not leading them to prosperity or to greater ties with Europe.

**Staying the Course After Watershed Elections.** Illiberal regimes lost elections in Romania (1996), Bulgaria (1997), Slovakia (1998), Croatia (2000), and Serbia-Montenegro (2000) for two major reasons: "the peril of monopoly, and the toll of economic deterioration or crisis" (10). More open political competition and the high cost of being excluded from the EU and Europe has convinced most, even illiberal leaders, that the answer lies in adapting to the requirements for EU membership.

*Conditionality* – EU leverage has led postcommunist governments to address even some of the most difficult reforms – "creating an independent civil service, reforming the judiciary or accelerating bank privatization" (11).

The basic, pre-accession stages to the EU include: beginning screening, open negotiations after satisfying the Copenhagen Criteria, closing certain matters of negotiation, and completing negotiations.

For Western Balkan states, several more stages are needed at the start: a feasibility study called the Stabilization Association Agreement (SAA) that is followed by negotiation and signing of

the SAA. Progress toward EU negotiations and eventual membership varies significantly in the Western Balkans: Slovakia simply had to sit and wait for negotiations to begin; Bulgaria and Romania are more corrupt states with weak state capacity and have found it difficult to implement EU reforms; Croatia, despite economic reform, has difficulty cooperating with the ICTY and reforming institutions linked to the military and secret service; and Serbia-Montenegro, in addition to sharing Croatia's problems, has a weak economy and state capacity, as well as territorial disputes to address.

Once illiberal rulers engage in these negotiations and agree to the terms, conditionality then promotes progress no matter how far behind a country finds itself.

*Credible Commitment to Reform* – progress in the EU's pre-accession process represents a credible commitment to continued economic and political reforms and signals commitment to both EU membership and to economic actors gauging the viability of investing in that country.

The economic reforms required for EU membership bring numerous benefits including a “better business environment, higher regulatory quality, higher levels of domestic and foreign investment, and greater opportunities for trade” (12).

**Is the EU really needed?** Recent “democratic breakthroughs” in Ukraine and Georgia have used civic democratic movements to oust illiberal leaders. Whether or not extensive reforms can be sustained in these countries without the EU's pre-accession process and the reward of membership will ultimately test the role of the EU in helping these countries reform.

However, new Western-oriented leaders in the Ukraine have an extreme preference for EU membership. There are three positive scenarios for the Ukraine, Moldova, and perhaps Georgia: “the ENP [European Neighborhood Policy] will only be a stop-gap measure and the EU will recognize them as future candidates;” reform will be sustained by the prospect of full participation in the internal market, leading to limited compliance with EU rules; or reforms will be maintained without any EU involvement (13). Thus, there is a possibility that EU leverage is unnecessary for reforming illiberal regimes.

**Conclusion.** “EU's leverage cannot work alone but only in synergy with the efforts of domestic political elites” (14). If the EU can use its leverage to get Serbia and Montenegro to the point where Slovakia is today, there will be not doubt of the effectiveness of EU leverage.

### ***C. Comments***

While the focus on the role of the EU might be a little too specific for the purposes of the PDT, the incentive and leverage tactics that the EU has at its disposal might serve as a useful model for ways in which the US and other international actors might muscle their way into the region and

encourage positive steps toward democratization, while still maintaining a more distant, noninterventionist role.

*Originally Summarized by Emily Stromquist, July 2006*

**Lucan Way, “Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime  
Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave:  
The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine,” *World Politics*, Vol. 57,  
January 2005, pg. 231-261**

**Key words:**

Authoritarian regimes  
Fourth wave democratization  
Belarus  
Moldova  
Russia  
Ukraine

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Applicability**

Ukraine and Moldova are less likely to undergo autocratic consolidation and therefore, may be more likely to undergo democratic consolidation. Way raises the question about whether ethno-federalism is necessarily a hindrance towards democracy building, though he does note that if there are several anti-incumbent national identities competing against one another, incumbent consolidation is more difficult. Presumably, this is the case regardless of whether consolidation is autocratic or democratic.

**Political Institutions**

Political institutions do not matter as much as the incumbent’s ability to consolidate political power and the strength of anti-incumbent nationalism. This is demonstrated by the fact that in Russia, President Putin has been able to make the parliament almost entirely dependent on him, while in Moldova the parliament passed a constitutional amendment making the presidency a parliamentary appointment rather than being decided through popular elections.

Parties

Strong parties act not only to consolidate democracy, but also to consolidate autocracy. Parties can be the mechanism by which incumbents preserve elite unity, and by which they organize electoral fraud and control the media.

Ethno-Federalism

Anti-incumbent nationalism plays a key role in consolidating and strengthening the opposition and keeping it focused over a long period of time. If there is more than one identity around

which to organize, victorious opposition parties could face a new anti-incumbent nationalist backlash and may never succeed in consolidating their regime.

### **Mass Movements**

Mass protests that are spurred by anti-incumbent national identity can often have a large effect on weakly consolidated incumbents, as witnessed in Georgia where the number of protestors was only about 20,000-40,000 people. However, in the face of a strong state and weak anti-incumbent national identity, demonstrations have little effect, as witnessed in Belarus.

### **Civil Society**

Early political competitiveness in the four countries in question was not rooted in strong civil society, but rather in the weakness of incumbents to consolidate power. Way believes that the primary causes of mass mobilization like the kind observed in Ukraine has more to do with a strong anti-incumbent national identity than with the relative strength or weakness of civil society.

### **Economic Institutions**

Way suggests that autocratic incumbents can achieve “greater regime closure...by... reasserting (Russia) the de facto scope of state power of economic actors” (233).

#### Reliance on high-value raw materials

Autocratic incumbents can use rents gained from high-value raw materials to “pay salaries and/or co-opt potential sources of opposition through patronage” (235).

### **Leadership**

The ability of incumbents to develop know-how in constructing authoritarian regimes in the post-Soviet context is important for regime longevity. “The post-cold war environment created fundamentally new challenges for autocrats who had almost never faced open internal opposition and who were accustomed to the extensive assistance of external patrons. Leaders finding themselves in this next context had to learn how to use existing resources to compete in semi-competitive environments, to keep allies in line, and to coerce opposition without provoking international reaction” (236).

### **External Factors**

Way suggests that new autocratic incumbents have to act more carefully in oppressing opposition forces in order to avoid an international reaction. He also criticizes scholars for looking at everything through the lens of democracy building, and missing the fact that what may look like strengthened democracy is in fact a weakened autocracy that could grow stronger as

incumbents acquire know-how, build elite unity, consolidate state power and control media more effectively.

### ***B. Summary***

Way makes the argument that scholars have misconstrued some of the transitions that have occurred in the former Soviet Union as transitional democracies, whereas in fact they were or remain weak autocracies. Way's project is to examine the emerging conditions in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, and to understand why "all four countries were relatively open in the early 1990s despite the presence of key obstacles but became more closed over time... [and] why by the beginning of the twenty-first century... the countries emerge[d] with different levels of competitiveness" (231-32).

**Main Hypothesis.** "Competitive politics were rooted much less in robust civil societies, strong democratic institutions, or democratic leadership than in *the inability of incumbents to maintain power or concentrate political control* by preserving elite unity, controlling elections and media, and/or using force against opponents... such failure to consolidate political control has been an outgrowth of strong anti-incumbent national identity and/or incumbent weakness as defined by a lack of know-how, ineffective elite organization, and/or the weakness of key dimensions of state power" (232).

**Conclusion.** The differences between the four cases can be explained almost entirely by the degree to which incumbents were able to strengthen their capacity as described above and the level of anti-incumbent national identity that existed within each country. Thus, Ukraine, which is strongly divided between a Ukrainian and a Russian national identity, and Moldova, which is divided along Romanian, Russian, and Moldavian national identities has weaker and less consolidated autocratic/more open regimes than Belarus and Russia, where anti-incumbent nationalism is weak.

### ***C. Comments***

Way's broad analysis of the dynamic between incumbent and anti-incumbent forces provides some important insights, highlighting the prominence of state capacity and nationalism in relation to the possibility of regime change. These ideas are reflected in PDT's Working Hypotheses, particularly with regarding the extent to which these factors affect the success of a post-communist transition.

***Originally Summarized by Artyom Matusov, July 2006***

**Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, “Pigs, Wolves and the Evolution of Post-Soviet Competitive Authoritarianism, 1992-2005,”**

**Prepared for the conference “Waves and Troughs of Post Communist Transitions: What Role for Domestic vs. External Variables?” Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of Law, Stanford University, 2006**

**Key words:**

Democracy promotion  
Autocratic regimes  
Competitive authoritarianism  
Western linkage and leverage  
Civil society

***A. Main Hypotheses of Relevance to PDT***

**Political Institutions**

Executive Power

In authoritarian regimes where strong state or party capacity exists, incumbent power will remain relatively stable. Therefore, democracy promoters “need to pay much greater attention to the strength of autocratic regime structures and not just the power of democratic forces” (52).

Parties

Strong parties and strong states will help incumbents stay in power despite Western leverage. Weak parties and states will be vulnerable to Western leverage.

Ethno-federalism

Especially in divided states, the party, the state, and the incumbent will use shared ethnicity as a powerful means of cohesion.

**Mass Movements**

W+L argue that recent transitions away from autocratic regimes that have been attributed to mass protests are actually rooted in state and party weakness.

**Economic Institutions**

Reliance on high-value raw materials

When a large amount of resources are concentrated in the hands of the government, the government can either ‘starve the opposition,’ employ a large percentage of the population (thus making their careers and livelihoods dependant on the state), and pay for the loyalty of officials.

### **Prior Democratic Experience/Culture:**

“Where economic, social, political and information linkage to the West is strong, Western pressure is likely to create democracies even in relatively inhospitable areas.

### **External Factors**

#### EU

In cases where strong state or party capacities do not exist, incumbents will be vulnerable to Western leverage. Where Western leverage is not possible, the incumbents will remain in power despite their otherwise fragile legitimacy. Otherwise, leverage alone cannot bring about a democracy; it must be coupled with domestic factors. Leverage *has* been successful in forcing transitions from autocracy to competitive authoritarianism.

#### Proximity to the West

Creates high Western linkage and is a powerful predictor of democratic breakthrough.

#### Russia

Russian aid will undermine any existing Western leverage.

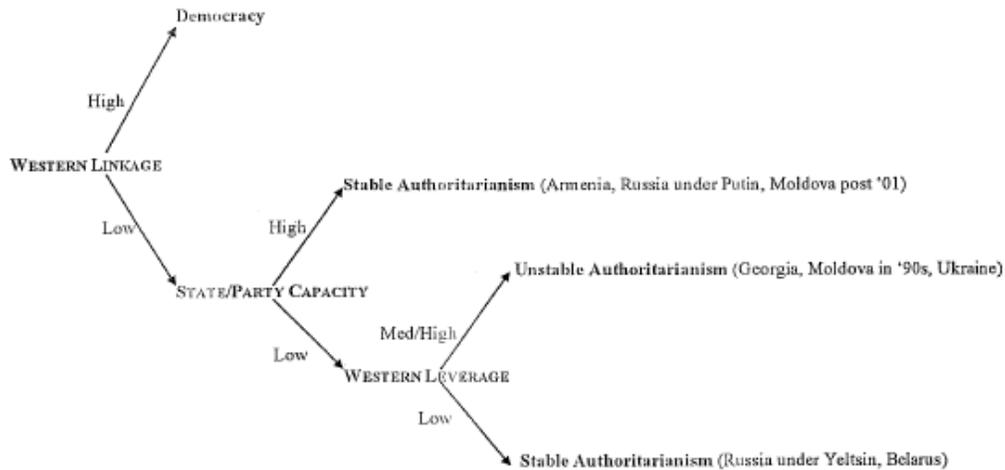
### ***B. Summary***

In understanding why some autocratic regimes have been more stable than others, this paper focuses on the strength of autocratic regime structures, rather than the role of opposition parties or other democratic forces. Specifically, W+L have pinpointed three key factors that shape trajectories of post-Soviet authoritarian regimes.

1. *Western Linkage.* High Western linkage cases should democratize, even in relatively inhospitable cases, due to overwhelming international pressure. Low linkage areas will fail to do so in the absence of a strong domestic push.
2. *Incumbent, State and Party Capacity.* Incumbent governments with low linkage and high incumbent capacity states should be able to remain in power even when confronted by mobilized populations. In cases with low Western linkage, but where strong states or parties do not exist, incumbents will be vulnerable to Western leverage. Where Western leverage is not possible, the incumbents will remain in power despite their otherwise fragile legitimacy.

3. *Western Leverage*. The fate of incumbents in low linkage, low incumbent capacity cases should depend on whether they face high or low Western leverage. Where countries are able to subsist outside of the economic world of the West, incumbents, both weak and strong, will have a better chance of remaining in control.

**FIGURE 1: COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME TRAJECTORIES**



## I. The International Dimension: Linkage and Leverage

Western Leverage: Governments' vulnerability to external democratizing pressure is rooted in three factors:

1. *Size and strength of the countries' states and economies.*
2. *Competing foreign policy objectives* Where foreign interests have countervailing economic or strategic motives, incumbents will cast themselves, and regime stability, as the best way of protecting nationalist interests.
3. *Existence of countervailing powers who provide alternative sources of economic, military, and/or diplomatic support.*

Leverage itself “was often effective in forcing transitions from full scale autocracy to competitive authoritarianism, but it was rarely sufficient to induce democratization.” (5) Leverage alone cannot bring democracy because it has been employed so inconsistently; it has,

in the past, focused only on elections, ignoring other dimensions such as civil liberties and because western leverage often eases up after the first elections.

Linkage to the West: Linkage—defined as “the density of ties (economic, political, diplomatic, social, and organizational) and cross-border flows (of capital, goods and services, people, and information)”—is “rooted in a variety of historical factors, including colonialism, military occupation, geopolitical alliances” and is enhanced by capitalist development (6). The most important source of linkage is geographic proximity. Linkage contributed to democracy by creating democratic constituencies, who support democracy for fear of losing the benefits of Western ties. It also usually translates into large-scale support for democracy.

All post-soviet countries have Medium-low linkage. Thus, western intervention has not fundamentally altered the balance of power between opposition and incumbents as it did in Serbia or Slovakia. In the absence of a real external pressure, democratization in the former Soviet Union hinges on the presence of a strong domestic push, as in the case of the Ukraine in 2004.

## **II: Domestic Sources of Stability: Autocratic State and Party Capacity**

Some autocratic regimes are extremely weak and collapse in the face of even minimal opposition (Shevardnadze in Georgia). In these cases, it was incumbent weakness rather than opposition strength that drove transitions. In contrast, regimes built on more solid foundations (backed by well financed states, strong coercive apparatuses, and/or cohesive ruling parties) survive serious challenges by the opposition.

**The State and Coercive Capacity.** “Authoritarian state institutions furnish governments with tools to monitor, co-opt, intimidate, and repress potential opponents, both in civil society and within the regime itself” (11). Incumbents do this by means of coercion that “enhances [their] capacity to monitor, intimidate, and when necessary, repress opponents” (11). States can employ either high intensity coercion (i.e. visible acts of violence) or low intensity coercion (i.e. more systematic efforts such as police surveillance, harassment and detention, grassroots intimidation campaigns, etc.). Low intensity coercion is often preemptive, destroying the seedlings of an opposition movement before it has time to organize. Coercive capacity can be measured along two dimensions: scope and cohesion. Scope “refers to the effective reach—across territory and into society—of the state’s coercive apparatus” (12). Variation in cohesion is rooted in a few key factors:

1. *Fiscal Health.* Unpaid state officials are less likely to take orders that demand repression or vote-stealing. Incumbents that rely heavily on material payoffs are often more vulnerable to insubordination during periods of crises in which their financial sources can be cut off. The highest levels of cohesion are found where material payments are complimented by another source of cohesion.

2. *Shared Ethnicity*. Particularly in divided societies, autocrats have enhanced loyalty within security agencies by packing them with ethnic allies.
3. *Shared Ideologies*.
4. *Shared Military Struggles* Such as war, revolution or liberation movements.

**State Power and Economic Control.** Incumbents' economic power is high when resources are concentrated in state hands and when governments enjoy substantial discretionary power in allocating resources. In these cases, control of economic resources can thwart opposition challenges by substituting for coercive mechanisms because they can routinely use the tax system, the financial system, licensing, and government jobs and contracts to punish opponents and reward allies. In this way, incumbents can literally starve the opposition, making it costly for elites to defect and leaving the opposition with no other conceivable financial base.

**The Role of the Party Organization.** "Strong ruling parties encourage continued cooperation over defection by providing institutional mechanisms to reward loyalists...and by lengthening actors' time horizons through the offer of future opportunities for career advancement" (15-16). Through the use of patronage, incumbents can control the electoral process. The obviation of defections creates a stronger, more appealing party organization. This stronger party is also organized to carry-out such illicit schemes as vote fraud. This more tight knit party is also better at controlling the legislature between elections. Lastly, strong parties facilitate executive succession that will ensure autocratic rule in the future.

Like state coercive capacity, party strength can be measured in terms of scope and cohesion. Here, scope refers to the size of a party's infrastructure. Cohesion refers to "incumbents' ability to secure the cooperation of partisan allies within the government, in the legislature, and at the local or regional level" (17). Its variation is rooted in the same factors of incumbent coercive cohesion listed above.

### **Linkage, Incumbent Capacity, Leverage and the Fate of Post-Soviet Competitive Authoritarianism**

Competitive authoritarian regimes "are civilian non-democratic regimes in which democratic institutions exist and permit meaningful competition for power, but in which the political playing field is so heavily tilted in favor of incumbents that the regime cannot be labeled democratic." (19)

Given the relatively similar linkage in these post-soviet cases, this section attempts to create a correlation between differences in autocratic stability and differences in state and party capacity. W+L suggest that weak states and parties in Georgia, Moldova in the 1990s and Ukraine facilitated otherwise weak opposition efforts to overthrow autocrats. Relatively strong states and/or parties in Armenia, Russia under Putin, Moldova in the 2000s and to some extent Belarus

under Lukashenka helped incumbents either defeat opposition challenges or face down powerful opposition mobilization (Armenia). Relatively weak incumbents in Belarus and Russia under Yeltsin were able to stay in power because of low Western leverage.

*The remainder of the article analyzes each of the above countries in detail and gives a short history of the development of the strength of their party and state capacity since the fall of the USSR.*

### ***C. Comments***

This article provides a great deal of support for PDT's Working Hypotheses by contending that the level of autocratic regime strength is a great indicator of what countries are ripe for change. From the authors' analysis we can generate a number of policy recommendations, such as the idea that external forces should try to funnel money into media and civil society where a weak state and/or parties exist.

***Originally Summarized by Yomaira Tamayo, July 2006***