

Post-Communist Europe: Concluding Comparative Reflections

GIVEN THE continuing tumultuousness of events in post-Communist Europe, especially in the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, many readers will no doubt believe that we should conclude this book with reflections on conflict and not on democracy. However, our conceptual approach is concerned with conflicts over power, the state, and citizenship and whether, out of these contestations, democratic practices can become the "only game in town." From this perspective all of the countries of post-Communist Europe can and should be at least briefly compared. To be sure, in some of the twenty-seven post-Communist countries (e.g., Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, or the Serbian-dominated rump Yugoslavia), a realistic evaluation must lead to the conclusion that the country is currently (1995) nondemocratic and that few weighty actors are even trying to put democracy, as we have defined it, on the agenda.¹ However, in some other countries in post-Communist Europe (e.g., the Czech Republic, Hungary, and possibly even Lithuania), democratic practices are near to becoming the only game in town. Thus, it is indeed relevant to discuss democracy in this conclusion, but we have to develop the critical categories, frames of reference, and evidence that will allow us to attempt comparisons within post-Communist Europe.

1. However, while it is true that rump Yugoslavia (Serbia, Montenegro, and the former province of Kosovo), as presently constituted, is nondemocratic, it is useful to recognize that there are more pressures for democracy in rump Yugoslavia than Western policy makers and public opinion normally recognize. Tibor Varady, the minister of justice in the Milan Panić government in the rump Yugoslavia, says that, when Prime Minister Panić challenged Milošević in the December 1992 presidential election, the West sent fewer than thirty election observers, and most arrived just days before the election. In contrast, in the plebiscite in Chile in 1988 that led to the defeat of Pinochet, the West sent thousands of observers, many of whom were involved months before the election. Why this difference? Commentary in the West in essence assumed that Serbia was univocally for Serbian expansionism and that "primordial nationalism" was so strong that Slobodan Milošević was unbeatable. But, even with the abstention of the Muslims of Kosovo (about 10 percent of the potential electorate), election day technical fraud by Slobodan Milošević of possibly 5–10 percent of the vote, and the lack of election observers and financial and technical support from the West, Panić still won 43 percent of the vote. Our point is that Milošević in December 1992 was not politically unbeatable. Some analysts, when confronted with the Chilean-Serbian comparison, shrug their shoulders and say, "So what, Milošević never would have respected the elections." This again misses the point. Power is always relational. If Milošević had actually lost and then annulled the election, he would have been domestically and internationally weakened in relation to democratic opponents and the myth of univocal support for aggressive nationalism would have been unmasked.

As our contribution to the development of such critical categories, frames of reference, and evidence, we want to develop three points. First, we will discuss what we see as the danger of "inverting the legitimacy pyramid" by activists and analysts who believe that the market will legitimate democracy. We will argue that the history of successful democratization indicates that the reverse normally occurs. Democracy legitimates the market (especially capitalism). Second, many activists and analysts also argue that not only is there the well-known simultaneity problem (which we accept), but also economic and political results must be achieved simultaneously or poor economic results will rapidly derail support for democratization (which we do not accept). We will give empirical data and a theoretical explanation to support our cautiously optimistic hypothesis concerning support for democracy as it relates to East Central Europe and our much less optimistic hypothesis for democratization in the non-Baltic countries of the former Soviet Union. Third, much of the popular press saw the return to power of former Communist political leaders and parties in such vanguard transitions to democracy as Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania as a "return to Communism" and as a major reversal of democracy. We will argue why such an analysis is faulty, both conceptually and politically.

ON THE DANGER OF AN INVERTED LEGITIMACY PYRAMID

In the conclusion to part 2 on southern Europe, we argued that the Spanish sequence of political reform, socioeconomic reform, and then economic reform was probably optimal for the consolidation of democracy in that country. Generally, we are of course reluctant to insist on any sequence because historically quite different sequences have in fact worked.

Most analysts of post-Communist Europe, especially policy advocates, implicitly rejected a Spanish-like sequence as unfeasible because of their perceived need for *simultaneous* economic and political change. Indeed, despite frequent obeisance to this simultaneity imperative, domestic and foreign activists and advisors often *privileged* economic change first. Solid research is just beginning on the question of sequence in post-Communist politics, but on theoretical (and now historical) grounds we believe that more consideration should have been given in the post-Communist cases to the cost of neglecting political reforms, especially state reconstruction. Why?

Theoretically, because, as we argued, the issue for modern democracies is not the creation of a *market*, but the creation of an *economic society*. Further, logic implies that a coherent regulatory environment and a rule of law is required to transform command economies into economic societies. If this is so, then a major priority must be to create democratic regulatory state power.² In this respect the two

2. In addition, it is debatable that the privatization of all or most of publicly owned property is necessary for the creation of a functioning market economy. Post-World War II Austria and Italy immediately

empirical extremes presented in this book are Spain and the USSR. Attention to electoral sequence and constitutional change contributed to effective power creation and state reconfiguration in Spain. Inattention to electoral sequence (by Gorbachev) and constitutional change (by Gorbachev and Yeltsin) contributed to power erosion and a decomposing state in the USSR and Russia.

Empirically, post hoc studies (as opposed to ex ante doctrinal advocacy) of privatization and structural economic change are just beginning to appear for the region. However, the best studies of the region are confirming a pattern about state power already documented in Latin America, that effective privatization (often mistakenly equated with "state shrinking") is best done by relatively strong states that are able to implement a coherent policy. The essence of a rich body of research on privatization and state restructuring shows that effective privatization entails less state *scope* but greater state *capacity*.³ In a context of a post-Communist, postcommand economy, a state with rapidly eroding capacity simply cannot manage a process of effective privatization.⁴

come to mind as countries that retained a large public sector but were more or less efficient democratic market economies.

3. Four important studies of this phenomenon are Albert Fishlow, "The Latin American State," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 4, no. 3 (1990): 61–74; Hector Schamis, "Re-forming the State: The Role of Privatization in Chile and Britain" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, Department of Political Science, 1994); Peter Evans, "The State as a Problem and Solution: Predation, Embedded Autonomy, and Structural Change," in Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, eds., *The Politics of Economic Adjustment: International Constraints, Distributive Conflicts, and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 139–81; and Joan M. Nelson, ed., *Intricate Links: Democratization and Market Reforms in Latin America and Eastern Europe* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), especially the article by Jacek Kochanowicz, "Reforming Weak States and Deficient Bureaucracies," 195–226. China in the first half of the 1990s allowed the emergence of a robust private sector in some areas while maintaining a strong command economy in other sectors and overall near totalitarian practices concerning politics, the media, and even family reproductive decisions.

4. We need more comparative studies of variation in state capacity vis-à-vis privatization and economic restructuring. Such variation could range from significant state reconstruction that increases state capacity and efficacy vis-à-vis privatization, to states that have had modest but unsatisfactory state reconstruction that has led to the creation of new postreform problems and the threat of a low-level equilibrium trap, to the extreme case of near state disintegration and virtually no state capacity for structuring change. East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union provide examples of all of these possible variations. The most popularly supported privatization in Central and Eastern Europe has been in the Czech Republic, which was also the case, despite some corruption, of the greatest transparency and where the freely elected government worked longest at such socioeconomic reforms as job retraining and state restructuring. In contrast, in a country like Romania, where the state has not been reconstructed, some nontransparent privatization has occurred, but there is a danger of a low-level equilibrium trap. In the Ukraine and parts of Russia, a new state had not been constructed, but the old state manifested strong disintegrative tendencies and low capacities in the 1992–93 period. See, for example, the empirically grounded comparative analysis of the Czech Republic and Romania by Olivier Blanchard, Simon Commander, and Fabrizio Coricelli, "Unemployment and Restructuring," World Bank, 1993, mimeo. Also see the chapter on Czechoslovakia in Roman Frydman, Andrzej Rapaczynski, and John Earle, eds., *The Privatization Process in Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1993), 40–94, and Roman Frydman, Andrzej Rapaczynski, and John Earle, eds., *The Privatization Process in Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic States* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1993). The case studies of Ukraine and Russia underscore the difficulties of orderly, effective, and non-mafia privatization if the state is in disarray. Also see Roman Frydman and Andrzej Rapaczynski, *Privatization in Eastern Europe: Is the State Withering Away?* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1994).

Note, the key is a strong state and not necessarily a democracy. A strong non-democratic state in Chile privatized reasonably effectively. However, in a post-Communist setting such as Russia, where the old Communist party-state has imploded or is no longer effective, privatization can proceed in an orderly way only after the state has been *reconstructed*. Once the totalitarian or post-totalitarian state, with its extensive command economy, has collapsed, given up, imploded, or disintegrated, state structures must be put in place. But many of the nondemocratic ways of restructuring the state are less available as alternatives than normally thought.

Some people argue (particularly in Russia) that a Pinochet is needed. But in Russia and many other countries of the former Soviet Union, a coherent state and a unified military organization of the sort that supported Pinochet no longer exist.⁵ An authoritarian or perhaps a semifascist party-state in Russia is also sometimes held up as a powerful alternative ruling model. However, a single party with ideological legitimacy and the resources to assume and implement non-democratic power would require the emergence and construction of a state-wide hegemonic semifascist movement, and this also seems unlikely. In our judgment, even an authoritarian or semifascist Russia would still be an example of what Ken Jowitt describes as a polity with a weak state and a weak society.⁶ The quiescence of Franco's post-civil war Spain is a less likely outcome of a Russian fascist government than is a series of Chechnyas and Afghanistans. Some people argue for a China-type solution, but the Chinese model, which could possibly have been a pre-perestroika alternative, is also no longer available as an alternative in Russia. Unlike in Russia, the Chinese nondemocratic regime and state never broke down. Indeed, the Chinese regime never initiated or even considered a process of democratization and underwent only a very selective and partial process of liberalization.

Our conclusion is that, for Russia, the cost of a weak democratic state is high, but at the same time many of the nondemocratic solutions either are not available or would probably entail a repressive but still weak state. In Steven Lukes' useful formulation, such a state might have power *over* but not power *to*. For example, a semifascist Russian state might have repressive power over more people but still lack the power to reconstruct a prosperous and peaceful Russia.⁷ Thus, in a context where the party-state has imploded and a command economy

5. In Alfred Stepan's frequent visits to Russia in 1991–95, the subject of a Pinochet or a Chinese alternative frequently came up as possible alternatives for Russia in conversations with Russian analysts and policy makers. But in fact, even before the disorderly behavior of the Russian military in Chechnya, only 3 percent of Russian respondents in an April 1994 poll "completely agreed" and only 7 percent "generally agreed" with the statement that "the army should rule" as an alternative political formula for Russia. See Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, "New Russian Barometer III: The Results," *Studies in Public Policy* 228 (1994), question 31b.

6. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), esp. 249–331.

7. For this important approach to power, see Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

is no longer feasible, the state must be reconstructed. Our argument is that, far from being an irrelevance, some degree of democratic legitimacy can be a way of helping in this state reconstruction.

This leads to our central argument about legitimacy and privatization. In their rush to move away from state-controlled economies, some free market enthusiasts have endorsed privatization as the most important component of the post-1989 process. Privatization, *however it is accomplished*, is often seen as creating the key structural prerequisite for market democracies and the economic foundation for new democracies. We disagree. Repeated surveys in democracies show that at the apex of a hierarchy of democratic legitimacy are the overall democratic processes (e.g., elections, multiple parties, and free speech). At a lower level in the legitimacy hierarchy are incumbents (e.g., parliamentarians). Political institutions related to democracy are normally more legitimate than such economic institutions as market economies—which are always more legitimate than capitalist economies, if they are so labeled in surveys. Furthermore, economic institutions (e.g., market economies) are always more legitimate than economic actors (e.g., capitalists).⁸ Thus, on theoretical grounds, the endeavor to legitimate the new post-1989 democracies by the efficacy of the new capitalists and thus by increasing by *whatever means* the number of new capitalists is to invert the legitimacy pyramid.

Such an inverted legitimacy pyramid is especially problematic in those countries, such as Russia, where privatization has been virtually unregulated, highly unequal, and often illegal.⁹ In such contexts, the former holders of political power—such as the “red bourgeoisie” in the state enterprises or state financial or trading institutions—have been in a privileged position to transform their former political power into new types of economic power by numerous forms of “spontaneous” privatizations or thefts. Comparative surveys repeatedly show that in most societies some legitimacy is given to earned or inherited private property and to entrepreneurship. However, the new Russian capitalists of the former red bourgeoisie cannot draw upon these principles of legitimation. Indeed, the origins of their new wealth are often condemned as an illegitimate appropriation of public property and may leave a legacy of distrust both of market economies (which will be seen as mafia economies) and of the democracies that tolerated or even created these mafia economies. Much more political, theoretical, and research attention should be given to evaluating the democratic consequences of attempting to build new democratic polities and economic societies on this inverted legitimacy pyramid. The essence of the empirical findings and historical studies of Western democracies has always been that political systems of democ-

8. For a detailed analysis and ample documentation of this phenomenon, see Juan J. Linz, “Legitimacy of Democracy and the Socioeconomic System,” in Mattei Dogan, ed., *Comparing Pluralist Democracies: Strains on Democracy* (Boulder Colo: Westview Press, 1988), 65–113.

9. See, for example, Stephen Handelman, “The Russian Mafia,” *Foreign Affairs* (March–April 1994): 83–96.

racy legitimate market economies, not the reverse. This is so because, as long as a democratic majority does not question private ownership of the means of production when it can do so legally, that property is protected.¹⁰

ON SIMULTANEITY OF RESULTS VERSUS THE COMPARATIVE POLITICS OF DEFERRED GRATIFICATION

The assumption that economic reform—the market and privatization—can legitimate the new democracies is also based on the dubious assumption that economic success and the creation of greater wealth can be achieved simultaneously with the installation and legitimation of democratic institutions. We believe that, for imploded command economies, democratic polities can and must be installed and legitimized by a variety of appeals *before* the possible benefits of a market economy actually materialize fully. Many analysts and political advisors dismiss the argument for prior state restructuring because of their assumption that because of people’s demands for material improvements, economic and political gains must not only be pursued, but *occur*, simultaneously. Some even argue that, though simultaneous economic and political reforms are necessary, such simultaneity is impossible.¹¹ We can call these two perspectives about the relationship between economics and democratization the *tightly coupled* hypothesis and the *loosely coupled* hypothesis.¹²

By loosely coupled we do not mean that there is no relationship between economic and political perceptions, but only that the relationship is not necessarily one to one. For at least a medium range time horizon, people can make independent and even opposite assessments about political and economic trends. We further believe that, if assessments about politics are positive, they can provide a valuable cushion against painful economic restructuring.¹³ What evidence do we have

10. See Linz, “Legitimacy of Democracy.”

11. The title of a widely disseminated article by Jon Elster captures this perspective, “The Necessity and Impossibility of Simultaneous Economic and Political Reform,” in Douglas Greenberg, Stanley N. Katz, Melanie Beth Oliviero, and Steven C. Wheatley, eds., *Constitutionalism and Democracy: Transitions in the Contemporary World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 267–74. In our own judgment, the reasons for the impossibility of simultaneity are not necessarily those advanced by Elster but may be the fact that the time necessary for successful economic change is inherently longer than the time needed to hold free elections and even draft a democratic constitution. An important survey-based critique of the Elster hypothesis and an argument for the empirical reality of respondents’ multiple time horizons and their “political economy of patience” are given by the Hungarian political scientist László Bruszt in “Why on Earth Would East Europeans Support Capitalism?” (paper presented at the XVth World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Berlin, August 21–24, 1994).

12. We presented a preliminary discussion of this relationship under “The Political Economy of Legitimacy and of Coercion” in chapter 5.

13. The voters might, because of negative economic performance, vote incumbents out of office, but the overall economic policies of their successors might well continue to be roughly the same. Poland in 1993–95 and Hungary in 1994–95 (especially after the reform acceleration of 1995) come to mind. Democratic alternation of governing coalitions might in fact give more time to the policies of economic change while at the

Table 21.1. GDP, Industrial Output, and Peak Inflation Rates in Post-Communist Countries: 1989–1995

Country	Measure	GDP % change							Industrial Output (1989=100)	Inflation Rate (at peak year during 1989–93)
		1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994 (estimated)	1995 (projected)		
Albania	GDP	9.8	-10.0	-27.1	-9.7	11.0	7.0	5.0	52	237 [92]
	Industrial production	5.0	-7.6	-36.9	-44.0	-10.0	na	na		
Armenia	GDP	14.2	-7.4	-11.0	-52.0	-15.0	0	na	na	10900 [93]
Azerbaijan	GDP	na	-11.7	-0.7	-22.6	-13.0	-15.0	-10.0	na	1174 [92]
Belarus	GDP	8.0	-3.0	-1.2	-9.6	-11.6	-26.0	-10	76	2775 [93]
	Industrial production	na	na	-6.8	-10.2	-6.0	na	na		
Bulgaria	GDP	0.5	-9.1	-11.7	-5.6	-4.2	2	4	na	339 [91]
	Industrial production	-1.4	-16.5	-27.3	-22.0	-10.0	4	na		
Croatia	GDP	-1.6	-8.6	-14.4	-9	-3.2	1	6	57	1150 [92]
	Industrial production	na	-11.3	-28.5	-15.0	-6.0	-3.0	6		
Czech Republic	GDP	na	-0.4	-14.2	-7.1	-0.3	3	6	57	52 [91]
	Industrial production	na	-3.5	-22.3	-10.6	-6.3	0	na		
Estonia	GDP	-1.1	-8.1	-11	-14.2	-3.2	5.0	6.0	54	965 [92]
Macedonia	GDP	na	-9.9	-12.1	-14.0	-14.1	-7.2	0	na	1691 [92]
	Industrial production	na	-10.6	-17.2	-16.1	-17.2	na	na		
Georgia	NMP	-4.8	-12.4	-20.8	-43.4	-40.0	-35.0	na	na	na
	Industrial production	-6.9	-29.9	-24.4	-43.4	-21.0	na	na		
Hungary	GDP	0.7	-3.5	-11.9	-4.3	-2.3	3.0	3.0	69	
	Industrial gross output	-1.0	-9.6	-18.2	-9.8	-4.0	9.0	6.0		
Kazakhstan	GDP	-0.4	-0.4	-13.0	-14.0	-12.0	-25.0	na	68	1925 [93]
Kyrgyzstan	GDP	3.8	3.2	-5.0	-25.0	-16.0	-10	1.5	53	1354 [93]
	Industrial production	na	na	0.0	-27.0	-25.0	na	na		
Latvia	GDP	6.8	2.9	-8.3	-33.8	-11.7	3	3	38	958 [91]
	Gross mfg output	na	na	0.4	-48.7	-32.6	na	na		
Lithuania	GDP	1.5	-5.0	-13.1	-37.7	-16.2	4	4	na	1175 [92]
	Industrial production	na	na	na	-50.9	-42.7	na	na		
Moldova	GDP	8.8	-1.5	-11.9	-25.0	-14.0	-20.0	0		837 [93]
Poland	GDP	0.2	-11.6	-7.6	1.5	3.8	4.5	5.0	69	640 [89]
	Industrial production	-1.4	-26.1	-11.9	3.9	5.6	na	na		
Romania	GDP	-5.8	-5.6	-12.9	-13.6	1.0	2.0	3.0	47	296 [93]
	Industrial output	-5.3	-23.7	-22.8	-21.9	1.3	2.0	na		
Russia	GDP	na	na	-13.0	-19.0	-12.0	-15.0	-7.0	60	2138 [92]
	Industrial production	na	-0.1	-8.0	-18.8	-16.0	-21.0	-12.0		

Table 21.1. (continued)

Country	Measure	GDP % change							Industrial Output (1989=100)	Inflation Rate (at peak year during 1989–93)
		1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994 (estimated)	1995 (projected)		
Slovakia	GDP	1.4	-0.4	-14.5	-7.0	-4.1	3.5	3.0	55	58 [91]
	Industrial production	-0.7	-3.6	-17.8	-14.0	-10.6	5.5	na		
Slovenia	GDP	-1.8	-4.7	-8.1	-5.4	1.0	5.0	6	46	247 [91]
	Industrial production	-0.1	-10.3	-11.3	-12.0	-2.6	6.6	5.1		
Tajikistan	NMP	-2.9	-1.6	-12.5	-33.7	-28	na	na	56	7344 [93]
	Industrial production	1.9	1.9	-7.4	-35.7	na	na	na		
Turkmenistan	GDP	na	2.0	-4.7	-5.3	-7.6	-10.0	-5.0	90	1875 [93]
Ukraine	GDP	4.1	-3.4	-12	-17.0	-14.0	-23.0	-5.0	79	10155 [93]
	Industrial production	2.8	-0.1	-4.8	-6.5	-8.0	-30.0	na		
Uzbekistan	GDP	3.7	1.6	-0.5	-11.1	-2.4	-2.6	2.0	94	927 [93]
	Industrial output	3.6	1.8	1.8	-12.3	-8.3	na	na		
Yugoslavia	Industrial output	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	35	3.72x10 ¹³ [93]

Source: The yearly 1989–95 data were supplied by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, London, January 1995. The figures for 1994 are estimates; those for 1995 are projections. A common method was used in the data collection. The 1993 industrial output data in relation to a baseline of 100 for 1989 are from Jacek Rostowski, *Macro-economic Instability in Post-Communist Countries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, forthcoming). No data were available for Bosnia. The data on inflation rates are also from Rostowski. The figure for inflation in Yugoslavia (3.72 times 10 to the 13th power) computes to one of the all-time world hyperinflation rates of over 37 trillion.

concerning the relationship between economics and democratization in the first five years of post-Communist Europe? Certainly, if we just look at relatively hard economic data, of the twenty-seven countries in post-Communist Europe, no country (except Poland) experienced positive growth in 1992. Indeed, all post-Communist countries in 1993 were still well below their 1989 industrial output levels (table 21.1).

If we look at the subjective perception of economic well-being in the six East Central European Warsaw Pact countries we have analyzed in this book, the mean positive rating (on a +100 to a -100 scale) among those polled between November 1993 and March 1994 for the Communist economic system was 60.2. But the mean positive rating for the post-Communist economic system was only 37.3, a drop of almost 23 points. The tightly coupled hypothesis would predict that the attitudes toward the political system would drop steeply, even if not the full 23 points. What does the evidence show? In the same survey, the mean positive rank-

same time giving some valuable room for accommodation to the political sentiments or fears of those most hurt by the fundamental socioeconomic changes being undertaken by the new democratic regime.

Table 21.2. Percentages Expressing Positive Attitudes toward Communist versus Post-Communist Economic Systems and Political Systems: Responses from Six East Central European Countries

Question	Country	Percentage of Positive	Percentage of Positive
		Responses for 1989	Responses for 1993-94
"Here is a scale ranking how the <i>economy</i> works: the top, plus 100 is the best; the bottom, minus 100 the worst."	Bulgaria	66	15
	Czech	42	66
	Hungary	75	27
	Poland	52	50
	Romania	52	35
	Slovakia	74	31
	Mean	60	35
"Here is a scale ranking how <i>government</i> works: the top, plus 100 is the best; the bottom, minus 100 the worst."	Bulgaria	51	59
	Czech	23	78
	Hungary	58	51
	Poland	38	69
	Romania	52	60
	Slovakia	50	52
	Mean	46	62

Source: Richard Rose and Christian Haerfer, "New Democracies Barometer III: Learning from What Is Happening," *Studies in Public Policy* 230 (1994), questions 22-23, 32-33. Percentages are rounded off. The polls were administered in these countries between November 1993 and March 1993.

ing of the Communist political system was 45.7. A one-point drop in political evaluation for every point drop in economic evaluation (a perfectly coupled correlation) would yield a positive evaluation of the political system of only 22.6. However, positive ranking for the post-Communist system did not fall as the tightly coupled hypothesis would expect but *rose* to 61.5, or 38.9 points higher than a perfectly coupled hypothesis would predict, (table 21.2).

How can we explain such incongruence? First of all, human beings are capable of making separate and correct judgments about a basket of economic goods (which may be deteriorating) and a basket of political goods (which may be improving). In fact, in the same survey, in *all* six countries of East Central Europe the citizens polled judged that in important areas directly affected by the democratic political system their life experiences and chances had overwhelmingly improved, even though in the same survey they asserted that their personal household economic situation had worsened (table 21.3).

We do not believe that such incongruence can last forever; however, it indicates that, in a radical transformation such as is occurring in East Central Europe, the deterioration of the economy does not necessarily translate rapidly into erosion of support for the political system.¹⁴ Table 21.2 indicates that the perceived legit-

14. In fact, in a regression model of their data, William Mishler and Richard Rose conclude that "our regression model shows that it takes a four point fall in either current or future economic evaluation to produce a one point fall in evaluations of the [political] regime." Their major explanation of this result is that

Table 21.3. Incongruent Perceptions of the Economic Basket of Goods versus the Political Basket of Goods in the Communist System and the Current System: Six East Central European Countries

Question	Percentage of Respondents answering "better now" versus those answering "worse now"					
	Bulgaria	Czech	Slovakia	Hungary	Poland	Romania
Economic Basket:						
"When you compare your overall household economic situation with five years ago, would you say that in the past it was better, the same, worse?"	16/58	23/49	18/62	6/76	17/62	21/65
Political Basket:						
"Please tell me whether our present political system by comparison with the Communist is [better, the same or worse] in the following areas:"						
"People can join any organization they want."	95/5	90/1	88/3	81/2	79/2	94/1
"Everybody is free to say what he or she thinks."	90/11	84/3	82/4	73/8	83/4	94/2
"People can travel and live wherever they want."	95/5	96/1	87/2	75/4	75/7	90/2
"People can live without fear of unlawful arrest."	88/11	73/4	62/5	59/4	71/5	81/1
"Each person can decide whether or not to take an interest in politics."	97/3	84/0	81/1	n/a	69/5	92/1
"Everybody is free to decide whether or not to practice a religion."	98/2	94/0	96/1	83/1	70/6	95/1

Source: Same as for figure 21.1, questions 26, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42. Where the percentages do not add up to 100 the respondents answered "equal."

imacy of the political system has given democratic institutions in East Central Europe an important degree of insulation from the perceived inefficacy of the new economic system.¹⁵ Indeed, most of the people in East Central Europe in 1993 had a fairly long-time horizon and expressed optimism that by 1998 *both* the

East Europeans have a fairly long time horizon. See their "Trajectories of Fear and Hope: The Dynamics of Support for Democracy in Eastern Europe," *Studies in Public Policy* 214 (1993): 27.

15. Some readers might recall that one of us, in a study of the breakdown of democracies—particularly in Europe in the interwar years—posed a more direct relationship between efficacy and legitimacy without data to prove that relationship. In fact, some of the data assembled later showed that the relation was true only for a few countries, particularly for Germany and Austria, but not for Norway and the Netherlands. Why the apparent difference today? We would call attention to the presence in the interwar years of alternative "legitimate" models for the polity: the Soviet-Communist utopia, the new Fascist Italian and later German model, the corporatist-authoritarian-catholic "organic" democracy, the prewar bureaucratic-monarchical authoritarianism, and even (in Spain) the anarchist utopia. They all appealed as alternative answers for inefficacious democracy. Up to now there are no such appealing alternatives to "difficult democracies" today. See Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

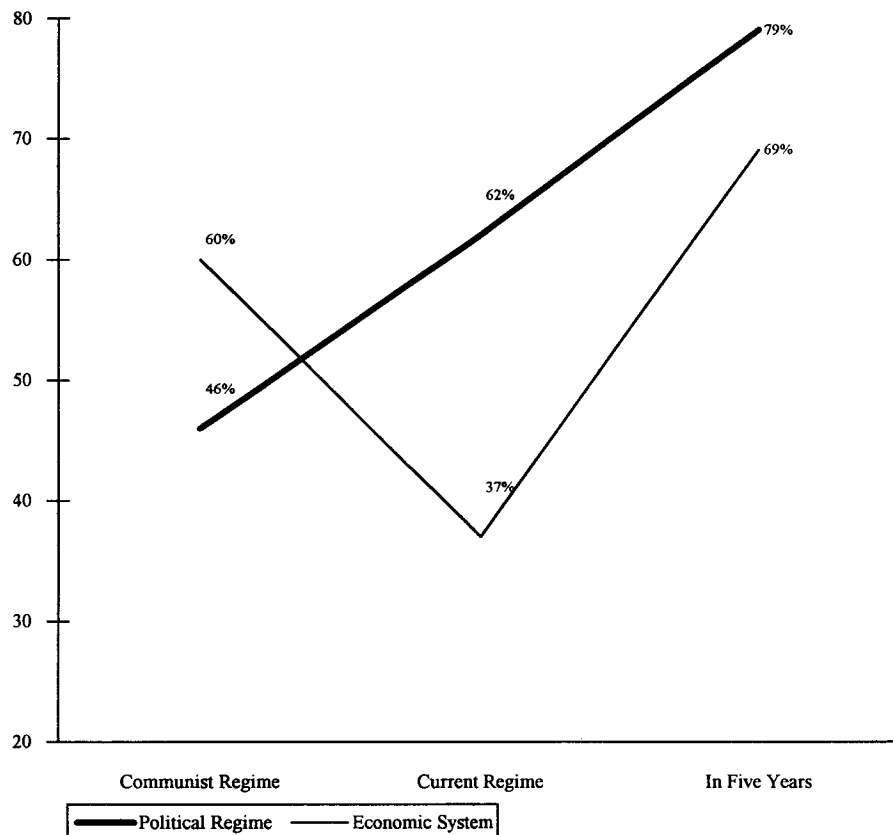


Fig. 21.1. Percentage of People Giving a Positive Rating to the Economic System and to the Political Regime in the Communist System, the Current System, and in Five Years: Six East Central European Countries.

Source: Richard Rose and Christian Haerper, "New Russia Barometer III," *Studies in Public Policy* 228 (1994), questions 24 and 34.

performance of the new democracy *and* the performance of the new economic system would improve significantly (figure 21.1).

In East Central Europe the evidence is thus strongly in favor of the argument that deferred gratification and confidence in the future is possible even when there is an acknowledged lag in economic improvements. Simultaneity of rapid political and economic results is indeed normally extremely difficult, but fortunately, as figure 21.1 shows, the citizens of East Central Europe did not perceive such simultaneity as necessary. The overall implication of the tables and figures presented thus far in this chapter seems to us further evidence of the potential danger of policies based on thinking that reflects the inverted legitimacy pyramid.

Before turning to the former Soviet Union, we should note briefly two other factors that help explain the surprisingly high degree of political support for the new political regime (political *regime*, not necessarily political *incumbents*), despite economic hardship. None of the former Warsaw Pact countries of East Central Europe (unlike the former USSR) experienced widespread bloodshed over statesness problems. Also, unlike Russia, there is no ambivalent legacy about the loss of an empire or the disintegration of the USSR.

How do the non-Baltic countries of the former Soviet Union compare with the Warsaw Pact countries of East Central Europe on the same set of dimensions concerning satisfaction with the pre- and post-Communist economies and political systems? Unfortunately, we have data only for Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, but the differences are striking, especially in the substantially lower ranking accorded to current support for the post-Communist political system (figure 21.2).

A panel of outside observers also notes a set of very different patterns within countries of East Central Europe, in contrast to the former Soviet Union, with respect to their political development. An annual publication of Freedom House has developed a common method to evaluate political rights and civil liberties for almost all of the countries of the world.¹⁶ Freedom House uses a 7-point scale to rank countries concerning political rights and a 7-point scale to rank political liberties. A score of 1 indicates the highest rights and liberties and 7 the lowest. For purposes of our argument about democracy, if a country is ranked no lower than 2 on political rights and no lower than 3 on civil liberties, we will label it as *above* the democratic threshold for that year. If a country is given a 4 or lower on political rights and/or a 5 or lower on civil liberties, we will consider it as *below* the democratic threshold for that year. Countries between the two categories will be labeled as on the *border* of the democratic threshold. In short, the lower the number the better the results for democracy. How does post-Communist Europe rank on this scale? See table 21.4.

To make table 21.4 a bit more useful for a comparative analysis of post-Communist Europe, let us separate these twenty-six countries into three broad categories: East Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the former Yugoslavia. Within the former Soviet Union, we will make a further subdivision between those countries that had been a part of the former Soviet Union since the early 1920s and that are now, with Russia, a part of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and those countries that became a part of the Soviet Union only after 1940 (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and that refused to join the CIS. The classification results are presented in table 21.5.

The implications of the numerous tables and figures we have presented in this chapter, as well as of the qualitative evaluations made in previous chapters, will

16. We discussed the methodology, sources, and panels utilized in this annual Freedom House publication in chapter 3, especially notes 4 and 5.

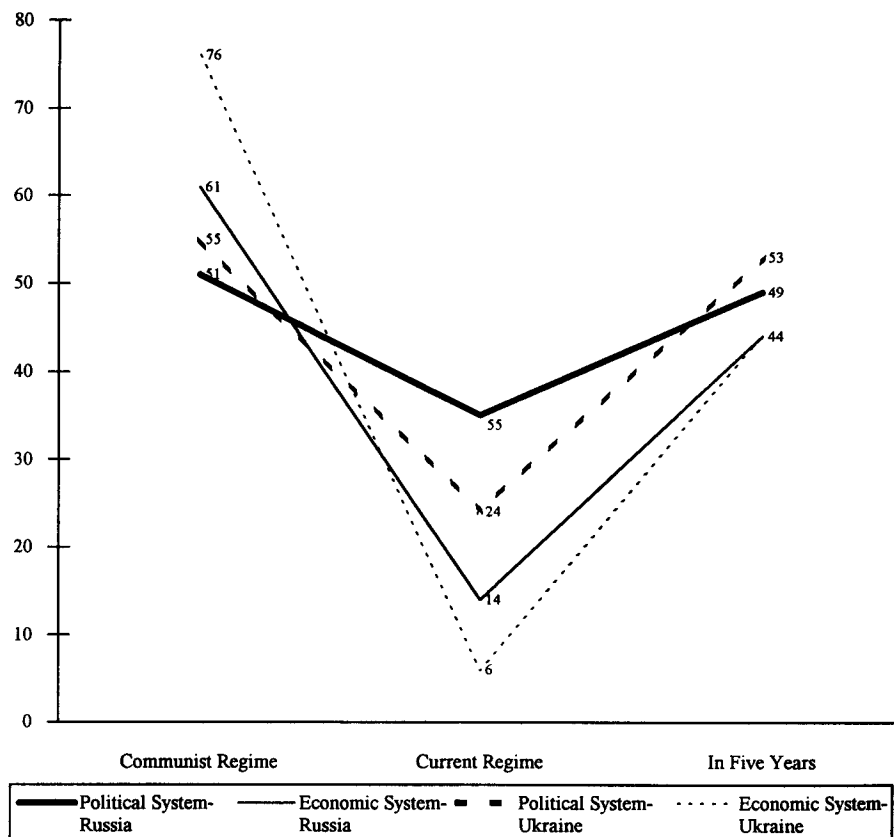


Fig. 21.2. Percentage of People Giving a Positive Rating to the Economic System and to the Political System in the Communist Regime, the Current Regime, and in Five Years: Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Source: For Russia see Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, "New Russia Barometer III," *Studies in Public Policy* 228 (1994), questions 15-17 and 27-29. For Ukraine see Rose and Haerpfer, "New Democracies Barometer III," questions 22-24, 32-34. The data for Belarus are roughly similar to those for Ukraine. Positive evaluations of the economic system under communism, in the present, and in five years are 78, 11, and 47, respectively, and positive evaluations for the political systems in these three periods are 64, 28, and 56, respectively. Sources same as cited for Ukraine.

have to be elaborated and analyzed more fully by the new generation of comparativists conducting research into European post-Communist politics. However, we can at least note some patterns.

Respondents in the six former Warsaw Pact countries of East Central Europe gave a mean positive rating of 62 to the post-Communist political system (a rise of 16 points over the positive rating they gave to the Communist political system). In sharp contrast, in the three former Soviet Union countries (Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus), a mean of only 29 gave the post-Communist political system a pos-

Table 21.4. Rating of Twenty-six Countries of Post-Communist Europe on the Freedom House Scale of Political Rights and Civil Liberties for the Year 1993

Country	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Democratic Threshold Rating: "Above," "Below," or "Border"
Armenia	3	4	Border
Azerbaijan	6	6	Below
Belarus	5	4	Below
Bosnia-Herzegovina	6	6	Below
Bulgaria	2	2	Above
Croatia	4	4	Below
Czech Republic	1	2	Above
Estonia	3	2	Border
Georgia	5	5	Below
Hungary	1	2	Above
Kazakhstan	6	4	Below
Kyrgyzstan	5	3	Below
Latvia	3	3	Border
Lithuania	1	3	Above
Macedonia	3	3	Border
Moldova	5	5	Below
Poland	2	2	Above
Romania	4	4	Below
Russia	3	4	Border
Slovakia	3	4	Border
Slovenia	1	2	Above
Tajikistan	7	7	Below
Turkmenistan	7	7	Below
Ukraine	4	4	Border
Uzbekistan	7	7	Below
Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	6	6	Below
Summary			6 of 26 Above 7 of 26 Border 13 of 26 Below

Source: Raymond D. Gastil, ed., *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1993-1994* (New York: Freedom House, 1994), 677-678.

itive rating (a decrease of 26 points from those who gave the Communist system a positive rating).¹⁷

Another finding is that *none* of the twelve CIS countries that had been part of the Soviet Union were above the minimal threshold of democratic practices, according to the 1993 annual Freedom House poll. In fact, three of the twelve countries (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan), received the *lowest* possible scores of 7 on political rights and 7 on civil liberties.¹⁸ In contrast, four of the six

17. Even here we should note a partial confirmation of the loosely coupled hypothesis in that the positive evaluation of the current post-Communist political system was 18.7 points higher than the evaluation of the current post-Communist economic system.

18. For the reader to get an idea of how far actual practices are from being democratic in Turkmenistan,

Table 21.5. Comparative Democratic Threshold Rating of Post-Communist Europe: The Countries of East Central Europe, the Former Soviet Union, and the Former Yugoslavia (1993)

Classification	Country	Political	Civil	Democratic Threshold Rating ("Above," "Border," or "Below")
		Rights	Liberties	
East Central Europe	Czech Republic	1	2	Above
	Hungary	1	2	Above
	Poland	2	2	Above
	Bulgaria	2	2	Above
	Slovakia	3	4	Border
	Romania	4	4	Below
Summary				4/6 Above 1/6 Border 1/6 Below
The former Soviet Union (since the 1940s, not CIS members)	Lithuania	1	3	Above
	Estonia	3	2	Border
	Latvia	3	3	Border
Summary				1/3 Above 2/3 Border 0/3 Below
The former Soviet Union (since the 1920s, now CIS members)	Russia	3	4	Border
	Armenia	3	4	Border
	Ukraine	4	4	Border
	Kyrgyzstan	5	3	Below
	Belarus	5	4	Below
	Moldova	5	5	Below
	Kazakhstan	6	4	Below
	Azerbaijan	6	6	Below
	Georgia	6	6	Below
	Tajikistan	7	7	Below
	Turkmenistan	7	7	Below
Uzbekistan	7	7	Below	
Summary				0/12 Above 3/12 Border 9/12 Below
The former Yugoslavia	Slovenia	1	2	Above
	Macedonia	3	3	Border
	Croatia	4	4	Below
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	6	6	Below
	Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	6	6	Below
Summary				1/5 Above 1/5 Border 3/5 Below

Source: Same as Table 21.4. The only country of post-Communist Europe not included is Albania, which did not start its transition until quite late. It also does not fit easily into any of the three geographical-historical categories utilized in the table. In our judgment, Albania as of mid-1995 would score "below" the democratic threshold.

East Central European countries were above the threshold. Romania received the lowest scores of the six former Warsaw Pact countries of East Central Europe, with 4 on political rights and 4 on civil liberties. Thus, it seems accurate to say that both the "ceiling" and the "floor" of democratic practices in East Central Europe were substantially higher in 1993 than in the CIS countries.

We must also note that, in contrast to the six East Central European countries, economic and political judgments are more tightly coupled in the CIS countries. There is thus a much lower propensity for deferred gratification in the non-Baltic parts of the former Soviet Union than in East Central Europe.

What explains such sharp contrasts between East Central Europe and the non-Baltic countries of the former Soviet Union? Let us begin with the question of deferred gratification. No doubt the pattern of difference is partly due to the extreme severity of the drop in positive economic assessments. (In East Central Europe the mean positive evaluation only dropped from 60 to 37, whereas the post-Soviet mean of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus dropped from 71 to 10.) Timing and perception of the future were also probably important. According to table 21.1 the worst year in East Central Europe in terms of economic decline was 1991. The worst year in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus was 1994, *after* the poll. The year 1995 will probably be economically somewhat better than 1994, but in late 1993 people might not have seen any light at the end of the tunnel.

We are almost certain, moreover, that economic historians will eventually document the fact that the severity of the stateness problem in the USSR and the subsequent state disintegration and widespread armed conflicts played an independent role in objectively deepening economic disarray. The continuation of such conflicts in 1995 in some CIS countries inevitably also decreased the subjective confidence as to whether deferred gratification was merited. After all, a politics of deferred gratification is rational only if some signs of potential gratification can be discerned. In a context of very weak and contested states, the confidence in the future that was an important ingredient reinforcing the "politics of deferred grat-

Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, we can say that they are significantly less pluralistic in regard to democratic oppositional electoral activity than in rump Yugoslavia (see the evidence for a degree of pluralism in Yugoslavia we supplied in note 1 of this chapter). In contrast to rump Yugoslavia, where the opposition presidential candidate received 43 percent of the vote in December 1992, open democratic contestation in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan was de facto insignificant in 1994. According to the *Economist's* useful political synopsis of the twelve members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Turkmenistan is described as a "one-party state. All members of the parliament, elected in December 1994, were unopposed. In February 1994, 99.99% voted to extend [President] Saparmurat Niyazov's term of office until 1999. Only 212 Turkmen voted No, officially." The *Economist* summarizes politics in Uzbekistan thus: "Main opposition parties banned; media under state control. Ruling party won over 80% of seats in parliamentary elections in December 1994; 99.96% of the electorate voted on March 26, [1995] to extend [President] Islam Karimov's term of office until 2000." The *Economist* notes of Tajikistan: "Imamali Rakhmonov confirmed as president last November [1994] in an election at which most opposition parties were banned. Widespread vote-rigging alleged." See "Less Poor, Less Democratic," *Economist*, April 22-28, 1995, 48. Clearly, no serious theorist should consider that the above three countries are involved in any form of a democratic transition. They are all clear cases of the mere "electoralism" we discussed in chapter 1.

ification" in East Central Europe was understandably weaker in the former Soviet Union and in much of the former Yugoslavia. To be sure, Czechoslovakia had a stateness problem, but because of the orderly and reasonably well-planned velvet divorce, no armed violence was involved and no significant economic downturn occurred in either the Czech Republic or Slovakia.¹⁹

Stateness problems and not just economic problems critically affect democratic outcomes. This becomes clear when we note that, of the twenty-two independent countries that emerged out of the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, only two—Lithuania and Slovenia—are *above* the democratic threshold rating (see table 21.5). Both of these countries are exceptions that prove the rule concerning the importance of stateness problems for democratization. As we stressed in the last chapter, Lithuania's economy is not as robust as that of Estonia, but Lithuania was the *only* Baltic country to grant inclusive citizenship to all residents, whether they were ethnic Balts or not. This policy has enabled Lithuania to manage its potential stateness problem in a more democratic fashion than Latvia or Estonia and, thus, Lithuania has, correctly, received a higher score for "political rights" than has Latvia or Estonia.

Of the five countries in the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia is the *only* country not to have a significant stateness problem. Slovenia does not have a significant ethnic minority population, so it has not been embroiled in actual or potential conflicts over a Serbian (or Albanian) irredenta of the sort that have occurred in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and rump Yugoslavia, where armed conflicts have contributed to widespread curtailment of political rights and civil liberties. Macedonia, more than Slovenia, has potentially severe stateness problems (with Albania *and* Serbia and even Bulgaria and Greece), and this has contributed to its less-than-inclusive citizenship and language policies.

Another factor that has no doubt contributed to greater support for the post-Communist regimes in East Central Europe (in contrast to Russia and to some extent Belarus) is that Russian citizens may be happy to be independent but feel nonetheless a sense of geopolitical loss and anger about the way the USSR disintegrated. Among other things, the disintegration of the USSR has left twenty-five million Russians as often beleaguered and sometimes stateless minorities in other countries. Also, unlike the citizens of the Czech Republic, who believe that the velvet divorce improved Czech standards of living, the Russians are convinced that the dissolution of the USSR contributed to the decline of their standard of living (table 21.6).

We can infer that, in contrast to Russian citizens' sense of geopolitical loss over 1991, the citizens of the "outer empire" in countries like Poland no doubt feel a

19. In fact, positive GNP growth in the Czech Republic was projected to be 3 percent and 6 percent for 1994 and 1995 and to be 3.5 percent and 3 percent for Slovakia. In contrast, for the same years the Russian figures were -15 percent and -7 percent and the Ukrainian figures were -23 percent and -5 percent. See table 21.1.

Table 21.6. Russian Attitudes in 1994 about the Dissolution of the USSR in 1991

Question	% at Age:			Total
	18-29	30-59	60+	
"In December 1991 leaders of Russia, Belorussia and the Ukraine decided to dissolve the USSR and found the CIS. What do you think of that now?"				
It was the right decision.	16	12	8	12
It was the wrong decision.	57	70	75	68
Difficult to answer.	28	18	17	20
"How has the disintegration of the USSR affected Russian living standards?"				
For better.	5	4	3	4
For worse.	68	76	83	76
No change.	11	8	5	8
Difficult to answer.	16	12	9	12

Source: Rose and Haerper, "New Russian Barometer III," questions 57-59. We believe a similar phenomenon is at work in Belarus as in Russia. The *only* deputy in the Belarus parliament to vote against independence, Aleksandr Lukashenko, was elected president in 1994. In May 1995 he sponsored a referendum in which he argued, "If people call for it, we will also have a political union that is even closer than the Soviet Union was. For the moment I am talking about economic union." See Matthew Kaminski, "Belarusians Seek the Future in the Past," *Financial Times* (May 17, 1995), 3. Lukashenko won support for all questions on the referendum. In the same article the *Financial Times* correspondent noted that "over three-quarters of Belarussian voters in a national referendum chose to bring back Soviet-era national insignia, make Russian the state language, and support economic integration with Russia."

sense of geopolitical gain due to the events of 1989. This is one of the reasons why citizens in Poland had a much stronger preference for the present political system than do those in Russia and thus more willingly accepted the politics of deferred gratification (table 21.7).

We do not want to overstress the preference for the old system in Russia, however. Many people in Spain believe that they lived better under Franco but would not like to return to that political system. The key question in politics is the desired future *alternative*. Russians, in fact, see the political basket of goods we reviewed in table 21.2 as *better* under the new political system, but they feel this by a smaller margin than do respondents in East Central Europe.²⁰ Thus, despite their sense of ambivalence and loss concerning the dissolution of the USSR, only a small percentage say that they would like to return to Communism and an even smaller percentage prefer military rule as a desired future alternative (table 21.8).

Other important explanatory factors for democratization differences in post-Communist Europe for future researchers to explore are, of course, those related

20. For example, the better/worse ratio concerning freedom to travel was 95/5 in the Czech Republic, 75/7 in Poland, and only 41/28 in Russia. The better/worse ratio for freedom from unlawful arrest was 73/4 in the Czech Republic, 71/5 in Poland, and only 23/15 in Russia. We believe these results, among other things, accurately reflect the stresses for individuals due to the continuing stateness crisis in Russia that we discussed in chapter 19. Data are from table 21.2 in this chapter and Rose and Haerper, "New Russia Barometer III," questions 30c and 30e.

Table 21.7. Preferences for Old and New Political Systems in Russia and Poland in January–February 1992

Preference	% at Age:				% Preferring Present System over Old System
	To 29	30–59	Over 60	Total	
In Russia					
Present system better	43	39	21	36	-18
Old system better	45	52	71	54	
Don't know	12	9	8	10	
In Poland					
Present system better				74	+51
Old system better				23	
Don't know				3	

Source: Irina Bolva and Viacheslav Shironin, "Russians between State and Market," *Studies in Public Policy* 205 (1992): 19–22.

Table 21.8. Russian Attitudes toward Restoring the former Communist System: April 1994

Agreement with Statement, "It would be better to restore the former communist system."	% Response at Age:			
	To 29	30–59	60+	Total
Completely agree	5	8	18	9
Generally agree	8	14	19	14
Generally disagree	30	29	23	28
Completely disagree	41	36	22	34
Difficult to answer	16	13	19	15

Source: Rose and Haerpfper, "New Russia Barometer III," question 31a. In the same poll, only 3% completely agreed and only 7% generally agreed with the statement that "the army should rule." Question 31b. The army is thus clearly not a desired alternative.

to time, prior regime types, and the presence or absence of a usable democratic legacy. The USSR lasted for about seventy-five years, during much of which totalitarian practices predominated. East Central Europe was a part of the Soviet sub-system for only forty years. In Poland for much of this period, authoritarian, not totalitarian, political realities predominated. In Hungary, mature post-totalitarianism evolved. Finally, pre-Communist history must be analyzed comparatively. Czechoslovakia, for example, was democratic from independence in 1919 until the Nazi interventions of 1938. There is virtually no such usable pre-Communist democratic past in the non-Baltic countries of the former Soviet Union. This does not mean that democracy is impossible in these countries; it does mean, however, that there will be longer and more perilous journeys toward constitutionalism and state reconstruction before democracy becomes, if ever, the only game in town.

The astute reader has no doubt noted that we have not built religion into our explanation of the comparatively weaker progress toward democratization in the CIS countries and the former Yugoslavia. We have not done so for two reasons.

First, it is becoming increasingly popular among analysts to make certain religions, *by themselves* (e.g., Orthodox Christianity, Islam, or Confucianism) a major explanation for difficulties in democratization in many parts of the world.²¹ The factors we have mentioned in this chapter, *in themselves*, are sufficient to explain the sharply different results of democratization in the non-Baltic countries of the former Soviet Union versus East Central Europe. Second, in an excursus on comparative religion, resistance, and civil society in chapter 16, we have already advanced the argument that religions differ in the range of their autonomously controlled resources and their relationship to the state. We noted that Roman Catholicism as a transnational, hierarchical organization can potentially provide material and doctrinal support to a local Catholic church to help it resist state oppression. To the extent that a Catholic church might resist the state, it could be considered a support for a more robust and autonomous civil society. Empirically, in the resistance stage of democratization we analyze in this book, the Catholic church played a supportive role in Poland and Lithuania, as well as in Chile and Brazil and in the last years of Franco in Spain. Protestantism, with its emphasis on individual conscience and its international networks, can also play a role in supporting civil society's opposition to a repressive state, as in East Germany and Estonia. Concerning civil society and resistance to the state, Orthodox Christianity is often (not always) organizationally and doctrinally in a relatively weak position because of what Max Weber called its "caesaropapist" structure, in which the church is a *national* as opposed to an *transnational* organization. In caesaropapist churches, the national state normally plays a major role in the national church's finances and appointments. Such a national church is not really a relatively autonomous part of civil society because there is a high degree, in Weber's words, of "subordination of priestly to secular power."²² Having acknowledged this, we do not believe that Orthodox Christianity is an inherently antidemocratic force. That is to say, if the leaders of the state are committed to democracy and follow democratic practices, the caesaropapist structures and incentives should lead to loyal support of democracy by the Orthodox Christian church, as in Greece since 1975. However, if the leaders of the state and political society are antidemocratic, the democratic opposition in civil society will not normally receive substantial or effective support from a national Orthodox church. We hope to develop our thinking on the role of the world's religions and democracy in a future project.²³

21. For an argument concerning the tension or even hostility between Orthodoxy, Confucianism, Islam, and democracy, see Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22–49. Also see his *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 298–311.

22. For Max Weber's discussion of caesaropapism, see his *Economy and Society*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 2:1159–63, quote from 2:1161.

23. Islam (unlike Confucianism) is an important value system in parts of post-Communist Europe. A complete argument concerning Islam would have to be much more complex than our argument concern-

DEMOCRACY AND THE RETURN OF COMMUNISM

Some interpreters have seen the “return of Communists” to power in Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania—countries that played a vanguard role in democratic transitions—as proof that economics and politics are so tightly linked that economic decline means democratic decline. For countries where there has been at least one legitimate victory by democratic electoral forces (and in many countries there has never been such a victory), we believe a more nuanced judgment is appropriate.

By the definitions of democracy we have advanced in this book, the return to power of reformed Communist Party–led coalitions in Lithuania in 1992, in Poland in 1993, and in Hungary in 1994, while a setback for some policies that were deepening democracy (such as local government reform in Poland) was not in itself an example of nondemocratic regime change. We say this because, by almost all reliable accounts as of this writing (July 1995), the reform Communist coalitions accepted the democratic rules of the game in how they contested the election and later in how they ruled. Also, very importantly, they were accepted as legitimate victors and rulers by the parties they defeated. In this sense there was not a *regime change* away from democracy as political scientists normally use the term. Strictly speaking, in comparative terms, the Lithuanian, Polish, and Hungarian elections represented a peaceful democratic alternation of power.

From a long historical perspective, it may even turn out that these elections actually strengthened democracy in Lithuania, Poland, and Hungary in one important respect. They indicated to victors and losers alike that democracy was becoming the only game in town. In fact, precisely because democracy was perceived in 1992–94 as the only game in town, the reformed Communists in Lithuania, Poland, and Hungary were extremely eager to demonstrate that they would govern as democratic parties. Their calculation was that, by so governing, they would be perceived, when they in turn were out of office, as part of the loyal democratic opposition and thus as a legitimate alternative government.²⁴ To make this point they are holding themselves in some respects to somewhat higher stan-

ing Orthodox Christianity. However, we note that the West’s fear of fundamentalism has frequently contributed to its shoring up of and even legitimating antidemocratic governments or movements that are seen as bulwarks against the spread of fundamentalism. This is so even when the Islamic parties were elected democratically and had not violated democratic practices. Nowhere was this clearer than in the West’s implicit and even explicit endorsement of the military coup in Algeria after Islamic forces had won the first electoral round in 1991. Thus, for geopolitical reasons, authoritarian governments in the former Soviet Union that share borders with Iran and/or Afghanistan (e.g., Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan) are to some extent treated by Western policy makers and commentators with a democratic “double standard.”

24. This point was stressed in a conversation between Alfred Stepan and Jerzy Wiatr, who chairs an important congressional committee for the former Communists in the Polish parliament. Wiatr stressed that “the most important thing we should accomplish in our government is that we prove we are a legitimate democratic alternative.” Conversation in Warsaw, November 5, 1993.

dards of civil liberties than did their predecessors in Hungary and Lithuania, who occasionally violated civil liberties in the name of their nationalist and anti-Communist “mandates.” For example, the reform Communists in Hungary are in coalition with the liberal Free Democrats and the coalition’s overall policy toward the media has been less flawed than that of the first democratically elected government. In Lithuania, the leader of nationalist independence, Vytautas Landsbergis, pursued his anti-Communist nationalism to such an extent that Anatol Lieven, in his excellent book, referred to him as a “backward-looking, religious-colored nationalist . . . [who] left the nation more divided than when he became its leader.”²⁵ His reform Communist successor, Algirdas Brazauskas, has paid somewhat more attention to providing a “political roof” of individual rights to all citizens and pursuing a politics of inclusion.

Conceptually and politically, what does the phrase “the return of Communists” to power mean and not mean in Central Europe in the mid-1990s? In the full sense of the word, a Communist regime in Central Europe before 1989, even in mature post-totalitarian Hungary or authoritarian Poland, meant a powerful, dependent alliance with a nondemocratic hegemonic world power. In the mid-1990s there is no such alliance, and Russia is not a hegemonic world power. In this new geopolitical context, the reform Communists’ best chance for power is to present themselves as—and to be—“social democrats.”²⁶ Even if some of the reformed Communists might not actually have undergone profound changes in their mentality (and many, of course, have not), the external reality to which the reform Communists must respond has changed profoundly. As long as democracy is the only game in town, the incentive structure of those who seek governmental power is derived from the democratic context.

Finally, since voters play a crucial role in weighting the incentive system, what

25. Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 274.

26. In 1989–90 the social democratic political space in post-Communist Europe was not effectively occupied in elections. The historic social democrats were too tarnished and too weak and the neoliberal discourse was too hegemonic. In 1992–94, some reformed Communist parties who were out of power partially restructured themselves to fill this space as the reaction to neoliberalism set in. Also, with the collapse of Communism, the Socialist International sought new allies in post-Communist Europe. The reform Communist parties could gain Socialist International certification and support only if in fact they ruled as democrats. In December 1994, the Council of the Socialist International, meeting in Budapest, recommended that the reform Communist party in Hungary, the Hungarian Socialist Party, be admitted as a full member of the Socialist International. For an astute analysis of the political and structural reasons for the social democratic turn, while out of office, of the Hungarian and Polish post-Communist parties, see Michael Waller, “The Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social Democratization?” (paper prepared for a conference on Political Representation: Parties and Parliamentary Democracy, Central European University, Budapest, June 16–17, 1995). At the same Central European University conference, the president of the Lithuanian Political Science Association, Algis Krupavicius, wrote that, for the Lithuanian post-Communist party that came to power in 1992 (the Democratic Labour Party), “the period in opposition was an extremely favorable opportunity to renew their membership [which dropped from 200,000 in 1989 to 8,000 in 1995], organizational structures, and ideological identity.” The quotation is from his conference paper, “Post-Communist Transformation and Political Parties,” 12–13.

did they actually want? Did they actually want a return to Communism?²⁷ The Polish voters, two months after the elections that had supposedly “returned” the former Communists to power, believed, correctly in our judgment, that they had not actually returned the old Communists to power. Polish respondents recognized the fundamental discontinuity in global and national power relations between 1988 and 1993. To the question, “Does the formation of the SLD-PSL [the reform Communist Party and their old Peasant Party ally] government coalition signify the return to power of persons who ruled prior to 1989?”, 63 percent answered “no,” 13 percent said “difficult to say,” and only 24 percent of the population answered “yes.”²⁸ We believe this answer is geopolitically, politically, and historically correct. An observation from the Spanish case may clarify our reasoning. If sometime in the 1990s—as seems probable—the Partido Popular, a party that is perceived by a segment of the electorate as representing a continuity with the right wing that governed with Franco, wins control of the government after an election, their victory in the changed Spanish environment would not signify a “return to francoism” as much as an alternation in power, in which a modern democratic conservative party has won the election with a mandate to rule democratically.²⁹

While we are happy to end this book on a somewhat optimistic note concerning the future of democracy in East Central Europe, we want to insist again that

27. In both Poland and Hungary, as we have already discussed, the electoral laws resulted in the reform Communist parties or coalition receiving many more seats than votes. Seats therefore were not a solid indicator of voters’ intentions. In Poland in 1993, 35.8 percent of the votes for the reformed Communists and their coalitional peasant allies yielded 65.8 percent of the seats. In Hungary in 1994, the reform Communist party, the Hungarian Socialist Party, received 33 percent of the vote in the first round but an absolute majority of seats after the second round.

28. Poll published by the Polish Public Opinion Service, Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, in November 1993, p. 1. Moreover, in late 1993 and early 1994, when a random sample of the population in Poland and Hungary was asked to comment on the statement, “We should return to Communist rule,” 47 percent of those polled in Poland “strongly disagreed” and 35 percent “somewhat disagreed” with this statement. The sum total of respondents in Hungary who disagreed was an identical 82 percent. See Rose and Haerpfer, “New Democracies Barometer III,” question 43. The highest percentage of respondents in East Central Europe who “strongly agreed” with the statement was in Bulgaria, with 9 percent. The next highest was Romania, with 4 percent.

29. For many readers the November 1995 victory in Poland of a former communist party leader, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, in the second round of the presidential elections might seem a more clear victory for communism. From the viewpoint of democratic consolidation, the two most important questions for Poland’s future are: 1) Will the post-communists (who as a result of the 1993 and 1995 elections had a two-thirds majority in the parliament and controlled the presidency) rule democratically? and 2) Will the anti-communist forces accept the legitimacy of the free election results? While not happy with the November 1995 elections, Timothy Garton Ash was more worried about the second question than the first: “Morally, as well as aesthetically, the triumph of the post-communists in Poland is deeply distasteful, but is it dangerous? Not, I believe, so far as their aims and policies are concerned . . . Kwaśniewski and his friends want desperately to be seen not as eastern post-communists but as regular western social democrats.” Concerning the second question, Garton Ash cites a number of post-election declarations by the Polish episcopate and Lech Walesa and concludes that the greatest danger in Poland is “a large right-wing extraparlimentary movement around Lech Walesa, supported by the Church and Solidarity, and simply not accepting President Kwaśniewski as the legitimate head of Poland’s Third Republic.” See Timothy Garton Ash, “Neo-Pagan’ Poland”, *New York Review of Books* (January 11, 1996), 10–14, quotes from 12 and 14.

we do not embrace a geopolitical or philosophical perspective of democratic immanence. It is probable that in some of the countries we have analyzed democracy will never be consolidated. In other countries democracy might become consolidated but will eventually break down. We also unhappily acknowledge that some countries will consolidate democracy but will never *deepen* democracy in the spheres of gender equality, access to critical social services, inclusive citizenship, respect for human rights, and freedom of information. They might, indeed, occasionally violate human rights.

All serious democratic thinkers and activists are now also aware that the much vaunted democratic Third Wave has already produced some dangerous undertows, not only in post-Communist Europe but also in Western Europe.³⁰ In the United States, influential ideologues of liberty are at times too simplistic and mean spirited for a healthy democratic polity. In this context democratic triumphalism is not only uncalled for but dangerous. Democratic institutions have to be not only created but crafted, nurtured, and developed. We think that we have made abundantly clear that to create an economic society supportive of democracy requires more than just markets and private property. It is time to problematize and transcend “illiberal liberalism” and also to theorize and socially construct integrative identity politics, as opposed to endlessly fragmenting identity politics. Further, to argue that democracy is better than any other form of government once alternatives have been in crisis is not sufficient. Democracy has to be defended on its own merits. Clearly, more research should also be devoted to learning about the great variety of democratic regimes that actually exist in the world. Most important, new *political projects*, as well as research endeavors, must be devoted to improving the *quality* of consolidated democracies.

30. Three excellent articles in a special issue of *Daedalus* called “After Communism: What?” (Summer 1994) are devoted to the unexpected crisis Western and Eastern European democrats began to experience after they had lost their legitimating enemy or “other” after the collapse of Communism. Many problems that had long been deferred or denied came on the agenda. For this new and challenging “paradigm lost” situation, see Tony Judt, “Nineteen Eighty-Nine: The End of Which European Era,” 1–20; Elemér Hankiss, “European Paradigms: East and West, 1945–1994,” 115–26; and István Rév, “The Postmortem Victory of Communism,” 157–70. Claus Offe, *Der Tunnel am Ende des Lichts: Erkundungen der politischen Transformation im Neuen Osten* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1994) throughout the book, and particularly in chapter 10, raises similar questions.