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East European Transitions, Elites, Bureaucracies, and the European Community

GEORGE J. SZABLOWSKI* and HANS-ULRICH DERLIEN**

The articles presented in this special issue examine the role of elites and bureaucracies in the processes of transition from authoritarianism to democracy and from command to market economy. The focus is on Eastern Europe which four years ago experienced historic and unprecedented changes when a number of apparently well-entrenched communist regimes collapsed one by one. New, independent and democratically-oriented regimes have emerged in their places, and each of them has embarked on a somewhat different road of reform and change. Although the people of those countries expect to be the beneficiaries of democratization and marketization, it is the elites, both politicians and bureaucrats, who shape these processes and will largely determine their success or failure.

Thus, studies of political and bureaucratic elites in the context of changing institutional and constitutional arrangements are absolutely crucial to the understanding of regime transitions. The contributions assembled in this issue of *Governance* represent recent and, in our view, fascinating results of such work. They fall into three categories:

1) six studies of individual countries addressing such topics as change and continuity of political and bureaucratic elites (Wollmann on Russia), elite fragmentation and conflict (Szablowski on Poland), national counter-elites (Andorka on Hungary), ethnocentrism and strife among political elites (Mircev on former Yugoslavia), bureaucratic integration by elite transfer (König on former GDR), and politics and economics of privatizing state enterprises (Blum and Siegmund on former GDR);
2) one comparative study of elite recruitment and replacement in selected East European countries (von Beyme); and
3) two critical-analytical studies which discuss counter-elites and bureaucracies, and privatization and democracy, and contribute to the general debate on transitions to democracy (Wilson; Feigenbaum and Henig).

* York University, Canada
** University of Bamberg, Germany

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Our objective in this introductory article is to propose and discuss a comprehensive comparative framework or perspective within which the role of elites and bureaucracies in transition to democratic rule and market economy can be effectively examined. We start with a phenomenology of East European transitions, proceed to analyze political and bureaucratic elites and their roles in transitions, and then briefly examine the issue of regime stability. We conclude with a section which links transitions in Eastern Europe to European integration and to the future enlargement of the European Community.

PHENOMENOLOGY OF EAST EUROPEAN REGIME TRANSITIONS

Regime *transitions* must be distinguished analytically and empirically from the *collapse* or *breakdown* of authoritarian political systems (Linz 1990). We are concerned here mainly with the former and much less with the latter. Transitions in Eastern Europe began with, after, and even before the breakdowns. Their length, complexity and eventual success or failure may not be directly related to the original causes of collapse. The exceptional and unprecedented nature of these transitions resides in the fact that two related but institutionally and procedurally different processes of change are taking place simultaneously, which has not been the case in recent transitions elsewhere (O'Donnell et al. 1986; Karland and Schmitter 1991).

First, an authoritarian, single-party, ideologically rigid and "correct" political system is changing into a form of liberal democracy. Second, at the same time, a state-owned and centrally planned and controlled system of economic production and distribution is being dismantled and replaced by a profit- and competition-oriented market economy.

By and large, in Eastern Europe democratization has preceded marketization but change and reform have not followed a single pattern from country to country, nor have they proceeded at the same or even at a similar pace. However, in nearly all countries the supremacy of the communist party was abolished, competitive elections were freely organized and fairly held, and a form of political pluralism started to take root. These first steps were followed by vigorous bursts of recruitment of new political elites which replaced (but not yet completely in every country) old communist party elites. Replacement (or, as it is now called, "lustration" or "cleansing") of ex-communist bureaucratic and industrial/managerial elites (some of whom have already switched successfully to private or privatized enterprises) is a complex and controversial issue which continues to be hotly debated in some East European parliaments.

Can transitions in Eastern Europe be called revolutionary? Not all

crises develop into revolutions (Eisenstadt 1992; Zimmermann 1981). We return to the distinction between "breakdown" and "transition." Major historical revolutions, such as the French Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, have resulted in a "breakdown" and destruction of the old regime and in a "transition" which gradually brought about a new political and economic order. The breakdowns and early stages of transitions were accompanied by widespread violence and bloodshed. The East European transitions, on the other hand, have been peaceful in all countries, with the exception of the special cases of Romania and Yugoslavia. In our view, studies of classical/historical revolutions (Moore 1966; Huntington 1968; Eisenstadt 1978) are instructive for the Eastern European experience provided that they recognize and distinguish the specific domestic and international conditions existing at the time.

The literature on revolutions increasingly recognizes that, beyond the structural-historical, socio-economic and demographic factors, the most cogent explanations of regime crises, breakdowns and transitions focus on the structure, culture, interactions, and capacities of elites. Thus, Tilly (1975) and Skocpol (1979) stress ruling elite cohesion and fragmentation, while Goldstone (1991) points to ruling elite capabilities to overcome fiscal and economic constraints and to ameliorate the conditions of the permanent and growing under-class.

We view Eastern European transitions as unique processes shaped by relative strengths and capacities of the new ruling and competing elites, as well as the strengths and capacities of those ex-communist and post-communist elite groups which still remain active and threatening in each country. Whatever the causes of the initial regime breakdowns were, the patterns of transitions are largely the outcomes of elite structure, orientation and interaction, subject of course to the existing constraints that place limits on elite behavior and decision-making. Given the exceptional and unprecedented nature of East European transitions, we remain unpersuaded by the arguments of those who see them as a mere subcategory of a more generic phenomenon of transition from authoritarian rule (Bova 1991).

Adam Przewórski in a recently published article gave the following description of communist elites in Eastern Europe prior to 1989:

> By the seventies, repression had subsided: as the communist leadership became bourgeoisified, it could no longer muster the self-discipline required to crush all dissent. Party bureaucrats were no longer able to spend their nights at meetings, to wear working class uniforms, to march and shout slogans, to abstain from ostentatious consumption. What had developed was "goulash communism," "Kadarism," "Brezhnevism": an implicit social pact in which elites offered the prospect of material welfare in exchange for silence.

> And the tacit premise of this pact was that socialism was no longer a model of a new future but an underdeveloped something else ... We [did not understand] how feeble the communist system had become (Przewórski 1991).

We accept Przewórski's description as accurate in general, but add that the communist regime and the ruling elite in each country reached its own level of ideological and organizational decay. The elites pretended that they still possessed the determination to maintain their supremacy and to command the state apparatus. In fact, their bluff could be called even by a relatively weak but adroit counter-elite. Significantly, most military leaders chose silence and neutrality.

We distinguish the following main types and patterns of East European transitions (Ekiert 1991; von Beyme 1992):

Negotiated Transition

In Poland concessions were made by the ruling communist party after extended opposition which included the imposition of war measures by General Jaruzelski in 1981 and a general strike in 1988. The decision to negotiate at the Round Table with the leadership of the counter-elite (Solidarity) was forced on the ruling elite by the Polish military (Przewórski 1991). Negotiations continued for two months in the spring of 1989 and were, in part, open to press and TV coverage. They addressed such issues as, *inter alia,* trade union pluralism, economic and social policy, political reforms, and administration of justice. The result was a historic compromise which led to the first free, albeit partial, election in June 1989, and a few months later, to the first Solidarity-led post-communist government in Eastern Europe. Later, Round Table accords became the source of a bitter division between Solidarity and post-Solidarity elites and, today, many elected politicians view them with scorn. Hungary, too, can be loosely included in this category (Ekiert 1991), although it reveals a longer history of reforms and liberalization and a well established and thriving private small business sector (Andorka in this volume). The Solidarity counter-elite was initially unified and very strong. Its dominance of the political scene in 1989–90 may have also caused its demise, and contributed to subsequent extensive elite fragmentation (Szablowski in this volume).

Evolutionary Transition

For Hungary, the transition process may be regarded as a broader and more intense continuation of an evolution which started two decades ago with liberalization of the communist regime (Grilli 1991). Typically,

the Hungarian regime did not collapse under the impact of mass demonstrations, as happened in GDR and in former Czechoslovakia. Already in December 1988, the ruling communist party decided to recognize the existing multi-party system and to plan an election (Grilli 1991). Before the election in November 1989, a referendum was held to settle important constitutional issues such as the date of the presidential election and the separation between the communist party and the state. Andorka (in this volume) argues that a smooth and peaceful transition can be accounted for by a long period of elite co-optation and cooperation between political (communist) and professional (non-communist) elites.

Implosion or Collapse Followed by Transition

In GDR and Czechoslovakia, transition started after Poland had provided a positive and successful example. With the abandonment of the Brezhnev doctrine by the former Soviet Union and the withdrawal of its military and political support, the two most conservative satellite regimes crumbled. The old communist party elite resigned and a counter-elite took over positions in all key political institutions: presidency, government and parliament. On January 1, 1993, Czechoslovakia was peacefully separated into two independent republics under an agreement negotiated by representative national (Czech and Slovak) elites; they decided not to submit the deal to a popular referendum fearing possible rejection. The GDR completely lost its former political identity by uniting with the Federal Republic. It clearly represents a very different and special case where the process of transition means, to a large extent, the ongoing importation of institutions, elites and capital from the West to the East. The practical difficulties of transforming former cadre bureaucracies into a Western-style public service (König in this volume), and the problems associated with the *Treuhandanstalt* model of privatization (Blum in this volume) highlight specific aspects of transition in the context of German unification.

Transition Accompanied by Moderate Violence

Romania is a case in point. A short civil war between the *Securitate* (fighting to protect the old regime and itself) and a part of the people led by members of a counter-elite, came to an end when the Romanian army joined the side of the reformers. The transition process, least advanced in Eastern Europe, may be slowed down to a halt by a reformist ex-communist president re-elected in October 1992. Romania

had a "sultanistic" regime prior to transition and a tendency in that direction may be still present in its political culture (Linz 1990).

Transition "From Above"

Initially, Gorbachev's *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* represented an extraordinary attempt to change the communist regime from above into a quasi-liberal modified command economy. This reform policy failed but it unleashed more radical forces which eventually led to the transformation of the Soviet Union into a loose Community of Independent States (CIS). The transition process took a sharp turn when the August 1991 *Putsch* failed and the communist party was declared illegal in Russia. In recent months, Yeltsin and his government followed a Polish-style economic shock-therapy until a showdown with the conservative-nationalist leadership of the Russian parliament forced him to retrench and accept an old style *apparatchnik* as prime minister. At the same time, however, Yeltsin was able to strengthen his economic reform team. The future direction and pace of transition will remain unclear until the next power struggle among contending elites. The current prognosis is mixed. It rules out the return to pre-Gorbachev days but does not exclude the onset of internal strife followed by some form of authoritarianism in Russia (Wollmann in this volume).

Violent Transition with Ethno-linguistic Conflict and Territorial Separation

In the former Yugoslavia, conflict among competing national elites has reached its ultimate end in civil war, "ethnic cleansing," and territorial separation. When peace and settlement come, democratic transitions will probably resume in the new independent republics where, in the meantime, forms of authoritarian rule persist. Although the former Yugoslavia may be regarded as a prototype of East European post-communist separatism (Mircev in this volume), this type of development is also visible in the CIS and what was once Czechoslovakia.

Extreme ethnic conflict may be seen, also, as a third problem area (in addition to economy and polity) to be addressed in the course of transition. On one hand, territorial separation may be the only option that will permit some democratization of authoritarian regimes; on the other, it may increase the plight of minority populations settled within the territories of newly created states. In parts of Eastern Europe, extreme nationalist ideology appears to serve as new legitimation for the old,

previously discredited, communist party elites and to permit their return to the political arena.

ELITES

We now turn to two issues that are important in assessing the chances for establishing democratic institutions: the mode of recruiting a new political elite and the manner in which this new elite controls and interacts with the bureaucracies inherited from the old regime and their elites, the former *nomenklatura*.

Classical elite theorists, Pareto and Mosca, have already raised the question: Why do established elites lose political control and open the door for those who will challenge their power positions? The generally accepted explanation blames the established elites themselves. Their ossification and their inability to adapt to changing conditions are apparently the by-products of a lengthy exercise of political power. An alternative explanation focuses on the new, contending elites themselves. It is easier and less costly to organize an opposition under unstable democratic or even authoritarian regimes than in repressive totalitarian systems. Most authoritarian regimes tolerate some degree of opposition and permit the existence of "marginal" socio-political enclaves where a potential counter-elite can develop their leadership skills. However, a counter-elite may also emerge from the established regime itself when disgruntled or neglected politicians decide to challenge top power-holders. In sum, a simple model of elite succession distinguishes between routine internal recruitment of new elites from the structures of the old regime and various forms of counter-elite formation from the outside.

Elite Recruitment, Renewal, and Lustration

What induces some members of an ideologically unified elite to defect? How does one explain the emergence of Gorbachev and Yeltsin in the former Soviet Union? The most satisfactory answer is that both of them (and others like them) retained the capacity to adapt and learn from changing circumstances while others in similar positions did not. The communist elite did not disintegrate. Even in Russia where the party was banned after the 1991 attempted coup d'état, its local social fabric survived. In Hungary, Poland and the former GDR, some former party elites underwent mutation into a new organizational and ideological form which they labelled "social democracy" or "democratic socialism." Others are making nationalism their cause, especially where anti-West-

ern feelings are strong or regime change is accompanied by separatism (Mircev in this volume).

Round Tables and other forms of negotiated transition, initially used by the governing elite as instruments of crisis management, emerged instead as highly effective forums for elite recruitment. They gave members of the counter-elite public visibility through the media, increased their political recognition and support, and sharpened their leadership skills. Moreover, some counter-elite members were co-opted to ministerial and other senior level positions in government. For example, in Poland after the June 1989 election, the communist premier-designate attempted to recruit a number of Solidarity leaders into his government before he gave up the task and resigned. Co-optation also occurred within parliament as in the former GDR and Czechoslovakia where the successors to resigned MPs took over their mandates.

These instances of co-optation may indicate the existence of an initial elite vacuum after purges and resignations within the old *nomenklatura*. The extent of elite circulation and exchange depends on its capacity for renewal and rejuvenation. Wollmann (in this volume) emphasizes generational change in the former Soviet Union; and a considerable degree of elite rejuvenation was also observed in East Germany in 1990 (Derlien 1991). In the former USSR, generational succession preceded political reforms, while in the GDR it accompanied regime transition. One explanation for this difference is that, in trying to adapt to transitional pressures and policy demands, the conformist elites tend to purge the party hierarchy and recruit successors from the lower ranks of the party organization and state apparatus. Von Beyme (in this volume) argues that early rotation and renewal of office-holders blocked by the gerontocracy of the old regime in former Czechoslovakia and GDR contributed significantly to the communist collapse and opened the door to a more sweeping elite replacement during the early stages of transition. Under the old regime, relative outsiders and those considered marginal by the ruling elite, such as Yeltsin, could advance to the center of power only when internal succession within the elite was no longer possible.

With some exceptions, individual members of the old communist elite were not physically threatened during the first years of transition. In Poland a nationalist group, currently well represented in parliament, conducted raids on the communist party headquarters in 1990 and, as a result, many of these offices were permanently closed or taken over by competing political groups. Relatively few former communist party or regime officials were actually charged in court or sued for damages for potentially illegal activities while in office. In former Czechoslovakia and in Poland, governments are currently conducting official investi-

gations of such activities which, in due course, may lead to charges being made.

In former Czechoslovakia a recently passed lustration law prohibits ex-communist elites from holding public offices for five years, and similar legislation is under consideration by the Polish parliament. These provisions, however, may not be easy to enforce, and the extent to which they will actually exclude the old elite from positions they currently hold is not clear. It is at least doubtful whether the lustration laws will increase the supply of new positions and result in so-called "elite cleansing." In general, the circulation and exchange of political elites is a relatively spontaneous process in liberal democratic regimes, influenced, not by government regulation, but by the dynamics of intra-party competition, the selection of candidates and, ultimately, by the electoral process itself. According to von Beyme (in this volume) "cleansing" of the former communist party elite is more likely in those countries where the old regime imploded (GDR and Czechoslovakia), than in those that embarked on a negotiated or an evolutionary course of transition. Systematic purges of tainted officials may be easier to accomplish in bureaucratic organizations where mobility depends on discretionary appointment and promotion. With the notable exception of East Germany, this is still not the pattern elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Pressure to keep experienced and skilled personnel on board is very strong in most countries, and the supply of competent newcomers very scarce. In the political realm, converted former communists are fully capable of competing successfully in free elections, as was recently demonstrated by results in Romania and Lithuania.

Some communist regimes permitted the existence of several "satellite" parties under the dominance of the communist party itself (GDR Hungary, former Czechoslovakia, Poland). This practice produced a type of "second rank" political elite whose members were not identified with the old regime and were thus able to join new political parties, win free elections and assume positions in new governments. For example, the present Polish prime minister, Hanna Suchocka, is a former member of the Democratic Party, now extinct but until 1989 aligned with the communists. To her considerable credit, as an early member of Solidarity she voted in 1982 in parliament against the government's bill banning the anti-communist trade union and later resigned in protest against Jaruzelski's domestic war measures.

Elite Import

Another highly effective method for elite renewal and replacement is importation from outside. König (in this volume) demonstrates that

since 1990, elite transfer from the Federal Republic to bureaucratic and judicial positions in what was East Germany has taken place at a very high rate. Also, three of the five current East German premiers are from the West. However, the case of the former GDR is clearly unique in this regard. Von Beyme (in this volume) is correct in observing that, in general, there is a greater degree of elite continuity in post-communist regimes than there was in post-fascist regimes. However, one crucial factor is often missed: the duration of totalitarian rule. East Germans experienced two consecutive totalitarian/authoritarian regimes lasting for sixty-six years. In West Germany, on the other hand, the Nazi regime was in place for only twelve years, short enough to allow post-war recruitment of the former Weimar republic political elite into the German federal system.

Are key political leaders who set transitions in motion capable of managing transition processes and attending to the routine problems of governance at the same time? There is some evidence from the history of charismatic leadership that those who can move mountains may be unfit for governing (Herzog 1991). The expressive qualities needed for the promotion of revolutionary causes appear to be largely counterproductive in the execution of tasks which require policymaking, administrative, legal, or judicial skills. Thus, for instance, some doubts exist whether Wałęsa, Havel, or Yeltsin cope adequately with routine governance problems.

Controlling Bureaucracies

The interplay between new political elites and bureaucratic establishments during the process of transition often holds the key to regime stability and to the success of the transition itself. This is a political and even strategic issue *par excellence*. Yet, existing theoretical and empirical literature does not address it fully or adequately. Available theories of bureaucracy, for instance, are static not dynamic, and biased toward stability. Bureaucracy plays a distinctly political role during regime transitions (Church 1981) as well as the instrumental role normally attributed to it. In the execution of the political role, members of the bureaucratic establishment in all policy sectors may engage in resistance and even in sabotage of decisions taken by the new governing elite.

The legitimacy of the new regime will often depend on the capacity of political leaders to respond to such activities promptly and firmly. During earlier regime transitions in this century, overcoming bureaucratic resistance was a central problem for new political elites. The tendency on the part of bureaucratic organizations is to maintain loyalty to the old regime, at least for a while. Given the relative inexperience

of new ruling elites in the art of governance, what strategies are available to them for the prevention of acts of resistance? How can they effectively exert political control over those who hold the key to the past and are unwilling to give it up? Wilson (in this volume) addresses these questions admirably.

BUREAUCRACIES

New Politicians, Old Bureaucrats

Max Weber firmly believed that, during the process of regime transition the bureaucratic apparatus must keep operating much as it did under the old regime because of its functional indispensability and because "this is in the interest of all those concerned" (Weber 1964, 727f). He was highly skeptical about the possibility and advisability of removing experienced and skilled public officials, even if their loyalties to the new political regime were in question. "Functional indispensibility" was, for him, the prevailing consideration. He believed also in the adaptability of public officials to new political realities and their readiness to shift loyalties to new political leadership. Available evidence indicates that, consistent with Weber's views, bureaucratic apparatuses in most East European countries have been left largely intact during transitions, and that new political masters have found a way to work with and depend on bureaucratic officials, even when the latter were closely associated with the old communist regime. Von Beyme (in this volume) points out that this does not hold for East Germany where purges in many areas of the public sector have been extensive and facilitated by the availability of elite import.

Access to scarce and valuable information or expertise is important for any government. A public official who possesses these qualities will be in demand especially among those politicians who want to demonstrate a capacity to analyze complex problems and to offer effective and persuasive solutions, and thus place themselves ahead of others at the decision-making table. It is, therefore, not surprising that in those circumstances past loyalties and ideologies play secondary roles in the relations between Eastern European bureaucrats and politicians. In general, however, most East European bureaucrats still lack the kind of knowledge and experience that is required for the execution of administrative tasks in a modern market economy (Kornai 1992).

Given Przeworski's conclusion about the fundamental decay of communist elites and institutions long before 1989, it is likely that the level of commitment and loyalty to the communist party, and to communist ideology, on the part of the East European bureaucratic establishments

may not have been very deep, at least in some countries. Thus, bureaucratic adaptation (which often includes doses of servility) to new political and economic realities should also come as no surprise. Wilson (in this volume) demonstrates that historically

> the survival of bureaucratic style and structure has been dependent on adaptation to the policies of successful counter elites ... The proportion of officials who have endangered their careers or their lives by resisting a new regime is not very high. This is perfectly understandable. Bureaucracies are perhaps by their very nature not courageous organizations; people join them to obtain income and status, not to make a political statement.

Administrative Reform

Several East European governments are currently involved in projects of administrative reform (Hesse 1991). Some of these projects focus mainly on local administration while others aim to strengthen the decision-making capability of central administration, that is the council of ministers, the prime minister's office, and the key committees of cabinet. Recently, the Organization for Economic Coooperation and Development (OECD) developed a program specially designed to support such administrative reforms in six East European countries: Hungary, Poland, the Czech and Slovak republics, Romania, and Bulgaria. The program, known as SIGMA, is funded from the PHARE budget of the European Commission. It makes OECD experts and consultants available to designated ministries and agencies of those governments needing assistance in the implementation of administrative reforms.

In general, East European countries are attempting to introduce Western models into their bureaucratic organizations (König 1992). East Germany is again a special case where administrative reform is accelerated by the process of legal, institutional and personnel transfer. The new political elites in charge of administrative reform insist that their fundamental goal is to change bureaucratic culture by developing such values as professionalism, integrity, neutrality, non-partisanship, and respect for rule of law and fundamental human rights. This is, obviously, a long-term project in all countries; but in some, namely Hungary, the Czech republic, and Poland, positive results may come sooner. In Poland, for instance, the Mazowiecki government created a new graduate school of public administration which admitted its first students in the fall of 1991. Its mandate is to produce each year about 60 graduates — top flight professionally- and democratically-oriented public officials — who will gradually replace those at senior levels of bureaucracy, trained under the old regime. The school is modeled on the French *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), and its curriculum is de-

signed to develop a new administrative elite for future Polish governments.

Dismantling Dysfunctional Organizations

Some East European governments are beginning to face the fact that large parts of their bureaucratic and military establishments built under communist regimes simply will have to be abolished because they are dysfunctional in a market economy and a liberal society, and are a huge drain on the budget. In 1990 the new Polish government implemented a radical transformation of the Ministry of the Interior from a military to civilian modus operandi. Many functionaries employed in police work and in the communist administration of justice lost their jobs, and the dreaded armoured police unit (ZOMO) was totally dismantled.

However, a very different picture emerges with respect to the intelligence services. In former GDR, the Stasi was abolished and all its agents dismissed. But in Poland, the Office for State Security has not been touched; on the contrary, its work is highly valued by those members of the government who have access to it. Apparently, there has been no disruption and no discontinuity in intelligence activities sanctioned by the Polish government, probably with the knowledge and approval of Western intelligence services.

TRANSITION AND REGIME STABILITY

Will transitions lead to stable democratic regimes? Is it possible to assess, at this stage, the chances for stability and the dangers of a return to authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe? (Linz 1975, 353-55; Linz and Stepan 1978).

To begin with, the outcomes of the transitions will be determined by domestic circumstances and the political traditions prevailing in each country and, to a lesser extent, by external forces. Some of the countries might draw on their short-lived pre-1939 experience with democratic governance (Poland, former Czechoslovakia, Hungary). In East Germany, stability and democracy will be a function of the political development in the entire Federal Republic.

Modern elite theorists stress the crucial role of inter-elite consensus in achieving a stable democratic rule after turmoil, especially with respect to the "rules of the game" (Higley and Burton 1989; Burton and Higley 1987). Elite culture, which includes operational values, orientations and behavioral norms, plays a key role in facilitating agreement and in preventing excessive conflict and fragmentation among the ruling and competing elites. In Poland, for example, evidence shows that the

political class is rooted largely in the intelligentsia whose values reflect the traditions of "collective mission" and "didactic functions," notions which are incongruent with democratic political culture (Szablowski in this volume). This may account for the continued "pathological" level of elite fragmentation in that country.

In particular, an intense conflict between old and new political elites in the context of institutional change may be an indicator of forthcoming regime instability (Eisenstadt 1989). Elite actors make strategic decisions to promote their individual or institutional interests, to build or destroy inter-party coalitions, to increase their chances for re-election, and to discredit their rivals and opponents. Such pursuit of "subjective rationality" may produce unintended consequences in the context of specific socio-economic and international constraints, and may contribute significantly to the regime's stability or instability.

Regime stability may also be understood and examined in terms of democratic institutions and processes and their evolution in the course of transition. In some East European states (such as Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland), presidents were elected by national popular vote, while other countries (Hungary, former Czechoslovakia) chose a parliamentary procedure. The latter cases indicate a constitutional preference for a parliamentary form of government with a symbolic head of state. In the two former cases (Russia and Poland) the elections led to a clash between those elites who favored presidential powers and those who preferred parliamentary powers. In the ensuing public debate (which still continues) the two sides attacked the legitimacy of these institutions in a democratic system.

In Poland, the conflict between President Wałęsa and the Sejm was partially resolved in November 1992 when parliament finally passed the "small constitution" which clarified presidential powers to some extent. The new amendments may have increased the chances for governmental stability during the process of transition. In Russia, President Yeltsin suffered serious defeats in December 1992 when he attempted to retain constitutional powers associated with the old regime: to appoint a prime minister and a cabinet without parliamentary approval. The constitutional battle between Yeltsin and the People's Congress has been addressed but not resolved in a referendum held in April 1993.

Apart from stabilizing the separation of powers between the executive and the legislative branches, it is important to achieve workable and relatively stable parliamentary majorities. This is especially difficult to do when coalition governments are prisoners of fragmented party systems. In such cases, the capacity and willingness of the elites to reach and maintain a consensus is a fundamental pre-requisite of stability.

Finally, both parliamentary and presidential democracies require sta-

ble extra-parliamentary conditions in society at large. Intense historically-rooted ethnic and religious identities which are given expression and representation in the state institutions are clearly inconsistent with liberal democracy. But the greatest threat to the stability of the fledgling East European regimes still comes from the malignant and benign legacies of communist rule (Walicki 1991).

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, EC ENLARGEMENT, AND EASTERN EUROPE

The concluding section of this article links the East European regime transitions to the process of European integration, and more specifically, to the enlargement of the European Community which itself is undergoing a transition.

Integration and the Treaty of Maastricht

In his book entitled *L'Europe en danger* which has recently received considerable attention in European capitals, Laurent Cohen-Tanugi presents a powerful argument against an early admission of Eastern European states into the future European Union (Cohen-Tanugi 1992), especially in Chapter V — La Nouvelle Frontière. The central point in Cohen-Tanugi's analysis is that a premature opening to the East will not only delay significantly the implementation of the Maastricht program but may also mark the end of the "European adventure" itself. The delay will force a reversal of the carefully constructed process of step-by-step evolution ("la stratégie d'approfondissement") formulated in 1990 by the twelve member-states. It is an "optical illusion," writes Cohen-Tanugi, to view European integration as an accomplished fact. The Maastricht treaty is just a first step on the delicate road toward a deeper level of institutional, political, economic and juridical cohesion. Its gradual implementation will take a decade to complete, provided that it is not derailed and delayed by an entirely new and different dynamic imposed by a dramatically enlarged Community membership. According to Cohen-Tanugi, the present functioning of the Community as well as its simultaneous and carefully managed evolution are characterized by a high degree of institutional and juridical sophistication coupled with a regime of economic, fiscal, and monetary discipline. These characteristics and their complexity are poorly understood outside of the Community, especially in the capitals of Eastern Europe. The great threat to the historic accomplishment of a fully integrated, federal European Union stems from the newly mobilized nationalist,

protectionist, and conservative forces which reject any form of federalism and call for a redefinition of European integration.

Clearly, Cohen-Tanugi makes a very strong case which, however, ignores the historic significance of East European transitions and their relationship to the process of European integration.

Enlargement of the European Community

It is now generally accepted that only three countries of Eastern Europe, Hungary, former Czechoslovakia, and Poland, have a chance to meet the essential political and economic pre-conditions for Community membership by the turn of the century. However, there are significant doubts about their capacity to incorporate into their political and economic systems the *acquis communautaire* (representing the entire stock of Community norms, laws, and procedures) and to replace inward nationalism by European solidarity. Consequently, membership negotiations with these countries could easily continue beyond the year 2000.

During the Edinburgh summit in December 1992, Germany had raised serious concerns about European stability and the security of the Eastern frontier through which thousands of refugees and economic immigrants enter the Federal Republic — thus the territorial domain of the EC. More recently, Germany started treaty negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic whereby these two countries would stop transmitting refugees and migrants from East to West and develop, with German technical and financial assistance, a comprehensive and effective system of controls. Bonn assigns a high priority to this issue in the light of recent outbursts of organized violence against visible minorities in various parts of the country. Clearly, membership in the Community would place a direct responsibility on Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to apply Community laws and standards in matters of immigration and security, and would render these countries eligible to receive substantial financial aid for regional and structural development.

Thus, under pressure from Germany, with Britain's support, and in exchange for a more generous regional aid budget benefiting Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland, an agreement was reached in Edinburgh on a gradual admission of new members. "Fast-track" negotiations with the rich EFTA countries (Austria and Sweden first, followed by Finland, Switzerland, and Norway) will start in 1993 for projected admissions in 1995 and 1996. This process will be followed by "regular-track" (meaning longer) negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech and Slovak republics for their anticipated admissions at the turn of the century. It remains to be seen whether the EC will decide eventually to

relax its strict admission standards for these countries with regard to full market economy, functioning liberal democracy, and capacity to internalize the *acquis communautaire*.

European Community and Eastern European Transitions

Clearly, the processes of transition in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech and Slovak republics are now directly linked to the enlargement of the European Community. Although regime transitions are essentially domestically driven, external factors may increase or decrease the costs, incentives and opportunities which necessarily attend these processes. Also, not all East European governments view EC membership or European integration as desirable or realizable objectives, or as highly relevant to their own paths of economic and political development.

Two scenarios emerge for the near future. First, if the path of European integration and construction is reversed or diverted from the ultimate goal of a federal Union to some other looser form of association, membership opportunities for East European states will increase appreciably. A decentralized form of the European Community, sometimes called "Community of Nations or Fatherlands," is highly favored by certain conservative and right-wing elites in the West and by the new nationalist and protectionist elites of Eastern Europe. In all likelihood, the qualifications for accession to such a loosely structured body will be more flexible and easier to meet. Since the Community itself will no longer be governed by rigid time-tables, strict rules and procedures, or by an ethos of internal discipline, the standards by which the economic and political conditions in the East will be judged are likely to be relaxed. Domestically, East European states may feel much less pressure to push ahead with extensive Western-type reforms and freer to develop "third way" approaches to the management of their economies and societies. Strong indigenous nationalist sentiments may no longer be seen as inconsistent with European "solidarity." But, at the same time, the loose and unstructured connection with the West will be no guarantee against state-sanctioned nationalism or the return of some form of authoritarian rule, state corporatism, or both, in the future.

Under the second scenario (which in our view is more probable), the initial setback in the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty will be overcome and its implementation will proceed largely on schedule (Ludlow 1992). Accession negotiations with Hungary, the Czech republic, and especially with Poland and the Slovak republic, may stretch into the 21st century to permit the completion of internal restructuring ("deepening") of the Community into the European Union envisaged in the Maastricht Treaty. Each of these four countries will have to give up a

significant degree of national independence and accept a permanent juridical division of responsibilities between the Union and the member-states according to the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of supremacy of Union law over laws of the member-states. These concessions may prove too high for some governments, or for some political parties, groups, and interests, or for the people as a whole.

The process of "deepening" will undoubtedly increase internal discipline, cohesion and integration among the member-states and bring them closer together. However, from the perspective of Eastern Europe, the Union will become a much more difficult entity to enter, or even to deal with, as it assumes the shape of a federal super-state with increasingly more complex and sophisticated institutional and legal arrangements. Thus, the institutional and decisional gap between Eastern and Western Europe is likely to increase, not diminish, especially in relation to those countries with the lowest opportunity for admission. For them, there will be no external incentives to continue intensive economic and democratic reforms, especially when internal costs will mount. The accessions of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech and Slovak republics to the European Union (if and when they do take place) will mark a division in the East and establish the Eastern frontier of the Union.

MATCHING POLITY AND ECONOMY

Time will ultimately test the accuracy of these predictions. During the forthcoming years, transitions to democracy and market economy will continue in Eastern Europe. All of the countries discussed in this introduction must organize a new relationship between politics and economics which has to guarantee the respective autonomies of these two subsystems. Contradictions are bound to occur between the functional imperatives of a democratic polity which must nourish its legitimacy and unceasingly respond to citizens' needs, and the potential and threatening anarchy of a market economy which tends to ignore and neglect mounting costs imposed on society.

From this perspective, the most critical issue for the governing and competing elites in Eastern Europe is to forge a longer-term consensus, a social contract, which will permit the freshly grafted reforms to take root in the fabric of their societies. Can the new ruling elites reach an agreement on constitutional and political issues and extend it to social and economic problems in the face of still mounting deprivations? According to *The Economist*, there are hopeful signs that the "corner has been turned from central planning to the market" (December 19, 1992). At least in the more advanced East European countries, GDP may be on the way up for the first time since the collapse of the communist

regimes, trade with the West is beginning to flourish, and unemployment may be leveling off at last. This is only a beginning and, as writes *The Economist*, "It will take at least a generation for Central and Eastern Europe to rid itself of the economic and psychological drag of the past" (1992).

Will the people wait peacefully when expectations are rising as rapidly as the inequalities of income and wealth? The new market forces unleashed in the course of the transition increase the gap between the growing number of those who continually suffer deprivations and those who benefit. One thing is clear: the impact of the economic and privatization strategies chosen by the governments will have a direct effect on the public's support for the new regimes. The level of that support still remains high; few favor a return to the old days, even in Russia. But populist and nationalist demagogues are at work and their message is gaining appeal. Democratic governments must develop "methods of cooperation" and "privatization strategies ... which nurture political habits and constituencies, and not simply economic values and norms" (Feigenbaum and Henig in this volume). They need time to match economy with polity and to build and preserve essential political consensus in their torn and dislocated societies.

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