

# FROM POST-COMMUNISM TOWARD THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Aspects of Political and Economic  
Development in Eastern and South-Eastern  
Europe from 2000–2005

Josette Baer  
(ed.)



PETER LANG

This volume presents an overview of the political and economic developments in Eastern and South Eastern Europe in the years 2000 to 2005. Unlike the Central European states that achieved EU membership in 2004 and 2007, the countries in this volume, Bulgaria being the exception, share but one characteristic: diversity. One could call the phenomenon of the region's variety and diversity *the Eastern European pluralism of development*. The essays present detailed analyses of the region's main problems: corruption and bribery on all levels of society; a lack of transparency of state-business relations; a distinct disinterest in international critique or, rather, a distinct insistence on sovereignty and the refusal to adapt to European humanitarian standards of ethnic and religious tolerance. The essays are based on unique source material from the countries under scrutiny.

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# FROM POST-COMMUNISM TOWARD THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

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# Foreword

## Redefining Eastern Europe

Twenty years ago, the revolutions of 1989 liberated the countries of what North Americans and Western Europeans then called “Eastern Europe.” Since that time, ironically, “Eastern Europe” has largely disappeared from both political and academic discourse. Even before 1989, leading intellectuals in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Slovenia frequently pointed out that geographically, their countries were located at very near the center of Europe, if measured from the Atlantic to the Urals. The movements for Baltic independence from the USSR were inspired by a widespread belief that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania naturally belonged to Scandinavia or the Baltic Sea region, and not to the Russian Empire (by whatever name it might be known); by 1991, leading Baltic politicians rarely referred to their nations as “Eastern European.” And by 2004, nearly all of the countries that were subordinated to Leninist one-party dictatorships after World War II were members of NATO and the European Union – and hence firmly ensconced in “Europe” unmodified.

The inevitable rhetorical consequence of the successful promotion of the centrality of “Central Europe,” however, was gradually to reduce the status of the label “Eastern Europe” to the point where few national elites still wish to claim it. Those unfortunate countries left on the “wrong” side of the EU/NATO border have increasingly been recategorized in the West as belonging to something called “Eurasia” – a word much beloved by Russian nationalists and geopoliticians, but hardly a favored term of self-identification in the other countries in the region. Nor does the habit of referring to the non-EU European countries as part of the “former Soviet Union” or the “post-Soviet space” seem particularly appealing nearly two decades after the final collapse of the Soviet regime.

The default option for liberal elites in the countries bordering the current, post-expansion EU, therefore, is still to claim that their nations belong simply to Europe – even if the claim of being “Central European” becomes rhetorically impossible as one approaches the Volga river basin. But such a stance leaves would-be “Europeanizers” in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and former Yugoslav republics such as Macedonia vulnerable to quick disillusionment when elites and citizens in the newly-expanded European Union themselves fail to see “Europe” in such inclusive terms.

This volume of essays thus raises the question: is it perhaps time to rehabilitate “Eastern Europe,” both as a concept and as a subject for sustained intellectual analysis? Josette Baer’s wonderful project to bring together diverse scholars from a wide range of countries caught in the new nether world between “Europe” and “Asia,” and to analyze the interrelations between politics, economics, and institutional change in this region, convinces us that this project is one well worth pursuing. The countries represented here – Belarus, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Russia, and Ukraine – turn out to have much in common, and not only in the negative sense of not belonging to the major transnational European institutions. These countries share many common struggles, well analyzed in the essays collected here: to revisit burning historical debates in order to forge independent national identities; to work out new systems for governing state-business relationships in the turbulent, corrupt institutional environment generated by half-reformed command economies; to reform national education systems to generate graduates who can compete in the globalized economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and to find some way to keep the dream of belonging to “Europe” alive, even when membership in the EU itself seems impossible.

As Baer emphasizes, the responses chosen by these countries to such challenges have been highly diverse rather than uniform. Yet the very fact that political and economic change in the new Eastern Europe remains so unpredictable provides an additional reason for studying these countries in their full regional context. After all, even if no new Eastern European nation is invited to join NATO or the EU in the near future, each of them is still deeply affected by less institutionalized forms of transnational influence. “Colored revolutions” can spread from one part of Eastern Europe to another with

remarkable speed. Reactionary regimes like that of Belarus under Lukashenko or Russia under Putin have provided another sort of model from regional emulation. Interpretations of national identity and history, too, flow quickly from intellectual circles in one part of the region to affect the self-identification of neighboring populations. Finally, economic globalisation makes it highly unlikely that any state in Eastern Europe will be able to reestablish the sort of autarky that was typical of the Soviet planned economy. As in the West, relations between politicians and business elites in these countries will inevitably be shaped by larger transnational forces – as the current global economic crisis has made abundantly clear.

If we are to reestablish the legitimacy of studying “Eastern Europe” – including Russia, which despite the recent ascendancy of neo-imperialism among its ruling circles, remains a nation with a strong sense of European identity, facing many of the same dilemmas as its neighbors – it is imperative that our conversations include the voices of leading Eastern European scholars. Here is where Baer’s volume makes an especially important contribution. Based as it is on the research of intellectuals who have lived, worked, and taught in the region for an extended period of time, *From Post-communism toward the Third Millennium* will help those of us in “the West” better understand how key global problems appear from the perspective of European countries all too frequently left out of contemporary academic conversations. More broadly, Baer’s volume helps to open the door to the rebuilding of robust scholarly networks between academic circles on either side of the EU/NATO divide – in this way putting Western, Central, and Eastern Europe back into dialogue, at a crucial moment in world history.

Seattle, Washington, USA  
October 2010

Stephen E. Hanson



# Introduction

No amount of optimism about the twenty-first century should be allowed to obscure the significance of the nineteenth-century insight that political forms are integrally related to cultural and societal patterns. It would be a shame if, with the defeat of the Leninist organizational weapon, Western intellectuals replaced it with a superficial notion of democratic institution building.<sup>1</sup>

It is in the moment of defeat that the inherent weakness of totalitarian propaganda becomes visible. ... The members of totalitarian movements ... will not follow the example of religious fanatics and die the death of martyrs (even though they were only too willing to die the death of robots). Rather they will quietly give up the movement as a bad bet and look around for another promising fiction or wait until the former fiction regains strength to establish another mass movement.<sup>2</sup>

I heard many distinguished scholars of law supporting the view that the establishing of peace in a country torn by war is necessarily the first step, before justice can be exercised; that international justice cannot function if bullets are flying, bombs exploding, masses of people fleeing ... I also heard diplomats insisting that peace must be given precedence over justice; that peace agreements can only be formulated under the condition that at least one party in the conflict is being assured of immunity from prosecution. I disagree.<sup>3</sup>

In the quotes above, Ken Jowitt, Hannah Arendt and Carla del Ponte illustrate the essence of the post-89 developments in what Jacques Rupnik referred to as “the other Europe”<sup>4</sup>: the collapse of the Socialist utopia, the emergence of violent ethno-nationalism that replaced it in the Balkans and the helplessness, or lack of interest and preparedness to react of the former ‘West’. While the post-totalitar-

- 1 Ken Jowitt, “The new World disorder,” in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 (2)), 35. All translations into English are made by me (JB), if not indicated otherwise.
- 2 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), 363.
- 3 Carla del Ponte, *La caccia. Io e i criminali di guerra* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2008), 381.
- 4 Jacques Rupnik, *The Other Europe* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988).

ian<sup>5</sup> regimes in Central Europe fell peacefully one after the other, the secession of Slovenia and, more importantly, Croatia from the Yugoslav Federation led to a civil war, whose campaigns of ethnic cleansing shocked the world. Unlike the Visegrad states<sup>6</sup>, Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary and Slovenia and the Baltic states – the so-called “first round” of EU enlargement in May 2004 – the countries subject to this investigation chose different modes of exiting communism. Our volume focuses on their recent political and economic development in the period 2000 to 2005. Our contributions provide not only new and unique source material, but intend to offer a better understanding of a region that is often criticised for its apparent lack of economic and political reforms, meaning privatisation and democratisation.

An inductive comparison between Eastern Europe and the states of the former Yugoslavia and the successful Central European states that swiftly and efficiently reformed themselves and achieved EU membership will allow us to ask crucial questions that go beyond the usual inflammatory slogans of ‘economic backwardness’, ‘cultural-religious disinclination to build democratic institutions’ or, in regard to former Yugoslavia, ‘a certain cultural behavioural pattern that embraces violence’.

Our volume also aims to deepen our understanding of what we could call *the phenomenon of the coloured revolutions* at the beginning

5 To my knowledge, Juan J. Linz was the first to coin the concept of ‘post-totalitarianism’, adding a new category to the established types of authoritarian, democratic and totalitarian government. A post-totalitarian regime distinguishes itself from a totalitarian one in the characteristic tolerance of a limited social pluralism, which manifests itself in the so-called *parallel society* or *parallel structures* founded by dissident artists and intellectuals; Juan J. Linz, “Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,” in *Handbook of Political Science* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 3: 175–411.

6 The four Central European states gathered in January 1990 in the Northern Hungarian medieval town of Visegrad to discuss their exit from the Soviet political and military institutions. Their joint effort is an excellent example of political co-operation, clear agendas and, at the end of the day, the common goal of NATO and EU membership. The best introduction that assesses every single state’s policy in the 1990s up to EU membership is so far Jiří Vykoukal et al., eds., *Visegrád: možnosti a meze středoevropské spolupráce* (Praha: Dokořán, 2003).

of the third millennium. The 'orange' revolution in Ukraine, the 'pink' in Kyrgyzstan and the 'rose' in Georgia share common characteristics: firstly, the revolutionary leaders declaring their clear orientation toward Western institutions enjoyed the support of the majority of a populace that thought any change would be better than the stagnation they had been experiencing. Also, the West, which was eager to see democracy and market economy being pushed deeper into the East and in that, blocking Russian influence, was in support of the revolutions. But, for country-specific reasons, the revolutionary leaders lost a significant amount of trust once they were in governmental power and failed to realise the reform promises made during the revolution. The former leaders of the generation of the *apparatchiki*, who achieved power shortly before 1989 never stopped to contest the 'revolutionaries', usually referring to them in familiar communist-style terms such as 'agents of Western Imperialism' or 'traitors of the nation bought off by Western big business'. But the citizens that had taken to the streets before and called for transparency, anti-corruption reforms and civil rights, again gave preference to the 'old guard'. From a Western perspective, such a rapid change of climate and opinion seemed suspicious and an external factor had to be necessarily involved: till today, it is customary to blame Russian influence for the reluctant reforms of the governments and the seemingly inexplicable 'flimsiness' or 'indecisiveness' of the Eastern European citizens' voting behaviour. Nobody would seriously contest the fact that Russia is protecting her interests in the Eastern European region, all the more since NATO and the EU expanded. But – and this is a historical argument – the Western attitude *qua* policies critical of Russia originates in the 19<sup>th</sup> century's *Great Game*, the global competition for the oil fields in the Caucasus:

"Take a look at the map" – a stranger told me – "how could we possibly avoid the impression that Russia oppresses us with her overwhelming size ... like a terrible nightmare?"<sup>7</sup>

- 7 Nikolai Y. Danilevskii, *Rossiiia i Evropa* (Moskva: Kniga, 1991), 18. Nikolai Yakovlevich Danilevskii (1822–1885), a biologist by profession, published *Rossiiia i Evropa* (Russia and Europe) in 1868. Russia's size, so Danilevskii admitted, seemed indeed to be threatening the West, but her culture and eco-

Regardless of whether one agrees with the opinion expressed in the repeatedly used Western headlines of 'Russia's new imperialism' or 'Tsar Putin's Empire', one should not only take seriously the failures of the 'coloured revolutions', but also try to understand citizens' preferences, which themselves carry a distinct rationality, in particular in governmental elections. That Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia – and in this regard also Belarus and Russia – are not Western-type liberal democracies that protect the freedom of the press and opinion, is one fact; quite another one is that Eastern European citizens in the last twenty years have learnt to protest – also against those revolutionary leaders who failed to keep their promises. It would be a grave mistake for Western scholars not to take seriously the rationale of Eastern European voting behaviour of alternating between two major parties, that is, the reformers that are oriented toward the West and its institutions on the one hand, and the traditional politicians representing the 'modernising nomenclatura', who pursue the politics of the former communist party, on

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conomic and political backwardness were the real reasons behind the Western European empires' discrimination. Russia had saved Europe from Napoleon in 1812 and from the liberal revolutionaries in 1849. She, so Danilevskii, did not receive any gratitude or respect, and the West's protection of the Ottoman Empire was clear evidence of Europe's anti-Russian tradition. As the only independent Slavic state, Russia had thus to protect her fellow Slavs not only against the infidel Turks, but also against the political and cultural dominance of the West, against Austria-Hungary in particular, where millions of Slavs were being forbidden to use their language in the administration even in districts where they formed the majority of the population. Considering, in a nationalistic fashion, Western *decadence* as a vital threat to mankind, Danilevskii predicted that Russia, by virtue of her moral superiority and political unity, was the only empire capable of saving mankind from the *apocalypse*. Danilevskii's book is a masterpiece of Pan Slavist ideology, a milestone in Russian political thought – whether one agrees or not –, a good introduction to Russian imperialist nationalism legitimated by Orthodoxy and an exemplary text of apocalyptic literature. Danilevskii's claim that Russia would have a future leading role as the only true Christian state raised immediate fears in the West of her perennial aspirations for world leadership, which last to this day – even if the global reality speaks quite a different language and all Russian governments since Lenin are characterised by a distinctly atheist and rational perception of international relations – be it in the Cold War or now with 'the great game' doing its third global round.



the other. Exactly this *rotation between reformers and traditionalists* happened in Bulgaria in the early 1990s until the prospect of EU membership as a future legislative bulwark against corruption and organised crime convinced the citizens that they should opt for a pro-Western course.

Indeed, one could say that electing the reformers for one legislature and then, when one is disappointed that nothing noticeable changed, electing the former communist party to see whether they would come up with a better, socially acceptable reform package that would secure the citizens right to work and social welfare rights they had enjoyed under communism, is absolutely rational voting behaviour – which could be seen as proof that democracy has reached a level of being ‘the only game in town’. From a Western perspective, however, Eastern European states are still far away from the ideal of a liberal democracy, with the protection of human rights and the corruption involving the political elite still representing a crucial drawback. Even in linguistic terms, the ‘old guard’ has not really changed: they express a preference for ‘stability’ and ‘order’ and condemn ‘shock privatisation’ that would only open the way for ‘corruption’ and ‘criminality’, while the reformers use the key words ‘market economy’, ‘human rights’ and ‘progress’ which sound so familiar to Western ears. The classic post-communist Eastern European family with two working parents, two children and one or two grandmothers taking care of them tries to survive in dire times and if they do not see a noticeable change in the years the elected government is in power, be it a reformist or a traditional one, they elect the other party for the next period of legislature. I would not necessarily affirm that the citizens lack alternatives; many young and well-trained Eastern Europeans emigrate with a university degree and find jobs that allow them to support their relatives from abroad. The majority, however, cannot emigrate, while those, who chose to stay, have to take up with their politicians, to put it bluntly. We think that this distinct pattern resembling a *sine wave of reform willingness alternating with a preference for traditional socialist values caused by disappointment by the reformers* can not only explain the rather regular changes of reform-oriented and traditional governments occurring in states that embarked on a ‘coloured revolution’; but, this distinct alternation, this *oscillation*

*between reform and tradition in itself* represents a crucial factor of the democratisation of these transitional societies – it is the procedure the populace of these states chose to democratise. Hence, these alternating waves should not be understood in the Huntingtonian sense of democratisation waves that are being replaced by reverse waves,<sup>8</sup> but as a kind of *spiritus rector*, or an *agens movens*. Every wave, every change of government is actually a proof that Eastern European citizens realise their right to *vote in and to vote out* and take the political competition seriously. A different aspect is, of course, the quality of the competition and the personality of the politicians, who all seem united in their fight against corruption and nepotism, regardless of their party affiliation. Yet, this is a psychological aspect that – to a lesser extent – also applies to the elder democracies in the West. The states that embarked on ‘coloured revolutions’ will have to endure more years of this alternating phenomenon, which the West conceives as unstable and dangerous. For Ukrainian citizens, however, this alternating mode is not only very stressful and disappointing, but it is the closest they get to democracy and for the majority of the population the only way of participating in politics. What we can say for sure now is that the political transformation in Eastern Europe is not only more complicated, but also more diverse than the Central European one, in particular because of the lack of Western support. How did the support of Western institutions affect the swift consolidation of democracy in the Visegrad region?

As early as 1990, the Central European and Baltic states embarked on economic reforms and democratisation, membership in what former Czech president Václav Havel once called *Euro-Atlantic structures*, that being their primary and most pressing goal. Prospective EU and NATO membership came along with the deep-seated wish to re-establish sovereignty and leave the Soviet hemisphere. The urge to join the West led to a new and pragmatic alliance, known as the *Visegrad Group*, whose effectiveness and lack of bureaucratism was unprecedented in the region. The Visegrad

8 Samuel P. Huntington, “Democracy’s Third Wave”, in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, London, 1996/2), 3–25.

co-operation demonstrated to the then European Community and NATO that the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia were not only capable of establishing friendly and functional relations among economic competitors (that is, among themselves), but also of endorsing their integration wishes with active military support and participation. Last but not least, Prague, Budapest, Bratislava – after a bumpy start with the semi-authoritarian regime under Mečiar<sup>9</sup> – and Warsaw made every effort to swiftly consolidate their democracies, a procedure the majority of their citizens clearly supported.

Such clarity and commonly shared plans of exiting communism are, for various reasons, lacking in the states dealt with in this volume. The Eastern European states share but one characteristic: diversity. One could therefore call the phenomenon of the region's variety and diversity *the Eastern European pluralism of development*. Russia has chosen an independent modus of economic reforms, or perhaps more precisely, a *privatisation à la Russe*, so far affecting uncontested state institutions. While Ukraine's citizens took to the streets to initiate regime change, Belarus did not follow with a further 'coloured revolution', but, after a couple of years of lukewarm and disoriented attempts at reforms, reverted to an authoritarian state paternalism that reminds one of the Soviet Union under Brezhnev. The post-Yugoslav societies re-nationalised, excluding other ethnicities. The essays present detailed analyses of the region's main problems, which make future EU membership very unlikely: corruption and bribery on all levels of society; a lack of transparency of state-business relations; a distinct lack of interest in international criticism or, taken from a different angle, a distinct insistence on sovereignty, the idea that criticism represents an attack on sovereignty; the refusal to adapt to European humanitarian standards of ethnic and religious tolerance, and a contested *Vergangenheits-Bewältigung* as a heated debate about overcoming one's historic past. How does the scientific community deal with these developments?

Since 1989, scholars of various disciplines such as political and social scientists, historians and lawyers have been working on the

9 Josette Baer, "Boxing and Politics in Slovakia: Mečiarism – Roots, Theory and Practice", *Democratisation* 8, no. 2 (2001): 97–116.

old elites or the *nomenklatura* re-positioning itself, the emergence of political parties, the various economic agendas, the involvement and support of international organisations and the political thought of the transformational procedures. The unprecedented toppling of so many communist regimes resulted in a boom in the young discipline of democratisation studies. A vast number of studies scrutinised the countries in Central and Eastern Europe which were then still being referred to as 'post-communist'. Democratisation studies include theories, models and key studies on practically all issues the transitional societies had and have to face, and we can only mention a few here: path dependency or modes of exiting communism,<sup>10</sup> conditions required for the consolidation of democracy,<sup>11</sup> privatisation,<sup>12</sup> constitutional design,<sup>13</sup> nationalism,<sup>14</sup> the theory and role of civil society,<sup>15</sup> political thought and its relation to political

- 10 Juan J. Linz and Alfred E. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996 (2)).
- 11 David Beetham, "Conditions for Democratic Consolidation", *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 60 (1994): 157–172.
- 12 János Kornai, *The Road to a Free Economy. Shifting from a Socialist system: The example of Hungary* (New York, London: Harvard University and Hungarian Academy of Sciences, W.W. Norton & Co, 1990); Kazimierz Z. Poznanski, "Building Capitalism with Communist Tools: Eastern Europe's Defective Transition," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 15, no. 2 (2001): 320–355; Anders Åslund, "The advantages of Radical reform," in *Democracy after Communism* (Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 216–223.
- 13 Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," *World Politics* XXI, (1968–69): 207–225; Sid Noel, ed. *From Power Sharing to Democracy* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005); Adam Czarnota, "Constitutionalism, Nationalism, and the Law. Reflections on Law and Collective Identities in Central European Transformation", *Teoria Prawa. Filozofia Prawa. Współczesne Prawo i Prawoznawstwo* (Torun 1998), 29–47.
- 14 Ghia Nodia, "Nationalism and Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 3, no. 4 (1992): 3–21.
- 15 Robert Fine, "Civil Society Theory, Enlightenment and Critique," *Democratization* 4, no.1 (1997): 7–28; Michael Morjé Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling alone: America's Declining Social Capital," in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 (2)), 291–303.

culture,<sup>16</sup> electoral behaviour,<sup>17</sup> the new role of women after the systemic collapse<sup>18</sup> and the legacy of communism with regard to institutional changes.<sup>19</sup>

Compared with the Central European and Baltic states, the Eastern European countries are not only divided in their political prospects and plans, but intra-regional relations often display an unusually unfriendly tone, the gas/oil dispute between Russia and Ukraine and Belarus being just one example. Russia's own pace of democratisation and economic development, today often referred to as "guided democracy"<sup>20</sup>, is similar to that started in China in the 1970s and consists of controlled privatisation, combined with a noticeable lack of ideological fanaticism and pure rationalism in decision-making. It seems, indeed, that Kyiv, Minsk, Moscow and the capitals of the post-Yugoslav republics prefer sovereignty, above all taking into account a negative public image in the West and their immediate neighbourhood. A further difficulty relates to the fact that the origins of political motivations are hard to locate, e.g.

- 16 Josette Baer, *Slavic Thinkers or the Creation of Polities. Intellectual History and Political Thought in Central Europe and the Balkans, 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Washington D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007); Nikolai Biriukov and Viktor Sergeev, "The Idea of Democracy in the West and in the East," in *Defining and Measuring Democracy* (London, Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1994), 182–198; Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Centrality of Political Culture," in *The Global Resurgence...* 150–153.
- 17 Richard Rose et al., *Democracy and its alternatives. Understanding post-communist societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Dieter Fuchs and Edeltraud Roller, "Cultural Conditions of the Transition to Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe," in *The Postcommunist Citizen* (Budapest: Erasmus Foundation, Institute for Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1998), 35–77.
- 18 Barbara Einhorn, "Where have all the women gone? Women and the Women's Movement in East Central Europe," *Feminist Review* 39 (1991): 16–36.
- 19 Grzegorz Ekiert and Stephen E. Hanson, eds., *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. Assessing the legacy of communist rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- 20 Archie Brown, "From Democratisation to 'Guided Democracy'," in *Democracy after [...]*, 211. Brown describes Russia under Putin as a "hybrid – a mixture of arbitrariness, kleptocracy and democracy", conceding the system a certain amount of pluralism. For a chronology of the usage of the term "guided democracy" (upravlaemaia demokratia) see <<http://www.demos-center.ru/reviews/986.html>>; accessed 5 December 2008. I thank Marina Y. Malkina for this information.

it is difficult for social scientists to clearly distinguish between the political decisions of the elites and the support, or lack thereof, of the populace. Freedom of the press and freedom of speech are not yet as established as in Central Europe, and the participation in a peaceful anti-government demonstration in Minsk in March 2008 led to long prison sentences for the leaders of the opposition movement. Indeed, what Jacques Rupnik expressed so aptly in 1999 is still valid today in Eastern Europe:

Ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, one thing is clear: The word 'postcommunism' has lost its relevance. The fact that Hungary and Albania, or the Czech Republic and Belarus, or Poland and Kazakhstan shared a communist past explains very little about the paths that they have taken since.<sup>21</sup>

How should scholars of political science, historians and social scientists approach this *pluralism of development*, or rather, what factors or conditions would offer a satisfactory explanation? We hold firstly that there is *no single theory or model* that can provide a *general explanation of this pluralism*, and secondly, that a sound understanding of the historical development of the region is a helpful basis for future research on the states' current politics and policies. Let me therefore present a brief summary of established historical facts, which shall serve as the framework of this volume's contents.

After the democratic revolutions of 1989, three regions emerged that distinguished themselves in terms of political and economic development, geographical position and socio-cultural origins. The three regions declared different political goals and the pace of transformation divided them; they re-emerged for they had existed in European history before the divide of the Cold War. Considering the territorial closeness to Western Europe, we could speak of a first and closest *Central European or Visegrad region* which includes Poland, the Czech and Slovak republics, Hungary and Slovenia. The second region, somewhat farther away, could be called the *South Eastern or Balkan region* consisting of the republics emerging

21 Jacques Rupnik, "The postcommunist divide," *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 1 (1999): 57.

from the former Yugoslav federation, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia and the Eastern Balkans states Bulgaria and Romania. The third or *Eastern European region* could also be called the *hegemonic or imperial region*, since Ukraine, Russia and Belarus<sup>22</sup> have been integral parts of the Russian Tsarist empires and then the Soviet empire for most of their modern history, that is until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the emergence of the Community of Independent States, CIS, in 1992.

This division into three regions is not new. The distinguished historian Jenő Szűcz<sup>23</sup> focussed on how institutions have affected and shaped the political rights of the ruling elite in his famous essay "*The three historic regions of Europe*". He defined the East-Central European region as a hybrid of the Western and the Eastern European, including namely Ukraine and Russia. Szűcz's East-Central Europe consists of Bohemia and Hungary as parts of the Habsburg Monarchy and is based on a particular blend of Eastern and Western aspects: the Western aspect being the balanced socio-economic development, while the Eastern European region is characterised by enlightened absolutism and modernisation 'from above':

Peter the Great ... created the Holy Synod that ultimately subordinated the Eastern Church to the state (1721). Not even in theory was any leeway left to any stratum under the state ideology that chrystallized out of the indissoluble trio of autocracy, orthodoxy and the Russian people ... The legitimization of Western absolutism consisted of declaring the "legitimacy" of power. That of Eastern absolutism amounted to the declaration of the mystic "truth" of power ...<sup>24</sup>

The distinguished historian Carsten Goehrke states that the differing political and economic developments are the result of "a parallelogram of powers consisting of state, church, urban society and

22 An excellent introduction to this region's history is Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations. Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus 1569–1999* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2004).

23 Jenő Szűcz, "The three historical regions of Europe," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 29, no. 2–4 (1983): 131–184.

24 Szűcz, 166.



aristocracy”<sup>25</sup>. Further influential factors have been the geographic proximity to the ‘Western hub’, or the dynamic Western centre, trade and socio-economic development. The dynamic ‘Western’ centre that emerged already in the early Middle Ages, consisted of northern Italy, northern France, and southern and western Germany. This hub was joined in the late Middle Ages by Flanders, Brabant, the Netherlands and England and enlarged to the North Atlantic area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when it became the primary global player.<sup>26</sup> The countries of the western part of East Central Europe tried to reach the Western level in their attempts to “catch up with modernisation” (*nachholende Modernisierung*).<sup>27</sup> The hierarchical nature of feudalism, the dominant role of aristocracy and church and, to some extent, the cities, were the main vectors of development. Bohemia, Moravia, Krajin and parts of western Poland could balance these factors owing to their advanced levels of urbanisation and strong domestic trade. The ruling aristocracy in the eastern part of East Central Europe, by contrast, was primarily interested in maintaining its economic and political privileges, hence objected to any reforms, such as entrepreneurship or industrialisation, which threatened extensive agriculture as their source of income.

Considering Szűcz’s hybrid nature of political culture and identity, and Goehrke’s historic determinants that originate in the Middle Ages, the question now is whether it is realistic to expect the Eastern European states to one day reach the Western level of liberal democracy and market economy, particularly given the *current global financial crisis*? Or should we accept their particular development as being dependent on their individual historic development? How will these states deal with the impending economic downturn for which the so-called mature Western economies are responsible? Are the Eastern European citizens not acting rationally when they elect governments that adhere to a distinct

25 Carsten Goehrke, “Transformationschancen und historisches Erbe: Versuch einer vergleichenden Erklärung auf dem Hintergrund europäischer Geschichtslandschaften,” in *Transformation und historisches Erbe in den Staaten des europäischen Ostens* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000), 671.

26 Goehrke, 654.

27 Goehrke, 678.



amount of control of the economy? Regardless of what political thought or ideal one adheres to, it seems to me that Western critique of the Eastern European 'guided democracy' and 'semi-controlled economy' applies only in parts, i.e. freedom of the press and opinion, human rights and ethnic tolerance. The Eastern European citizens, whether the West likes it or not, will continue to elect governments that control and block the worst results of capitalism and abstain from establishing a Western-type *laisser faire capitalism*. Unemployment, pauperisation and the social humiliation the working poor are experiencing are not only Marxist ghosts taught endlessly in the past; they are the everyday experience in Western societies because of the near collapse of the banking and financial systems and the apparent failure of *laisser faire capitalism* to guarantee stability and prosperity. Many Western banks were saved thanks only to governmental decisions to bail them out by funds derived from taxation – which is the very opposite of *laisser faire capitalism*. We hold that the Eastern European citizens, whom ever they elect, have the right to make their own choice.

Finally, due to historical and political reasons the Eastern European societies are developing in their own distinct ways, the financial and energy dependency on Russia being one of the constraints they face. However, we think that to analyse these countries, above all, an acceptance of their diversity is required. Whatever the underpinning reasons for this diversity, be it economic backwardness or the often cited political conservatism instilled by the Orthodox faith that seems to view modernisation as something to be refused, one should accept that the Eastern European societies chose their own ways. Our view confirms *ex post* the essence of what Gennadi Gerassimov, the former spokesman of the Gorbachev government, called the *Sinatra doctrine*, referring to Frank Sinatra's famous song *My Way*. Indeed, Gerassimov's popular saying, which signalled the end of the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty – and initially described the *laisser aller* policy of the Gorbachev government towards the Warsaw Pact states in Central Europe – proved to be the central feature of Eastern European development after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Pluralism of development in the post-Soviet space will thus hardly invoke a "second round" of EU enlargement. It is therefore all the more important to provide deeper

insights into the region's pressing problems. The aim of this volume is to offer explanations that contribute to a better understanding of Eastern European societies and their paths of development, whether or not these paths include democratisation and economic transformation.

The idea of publishing a book containing our latest research on ongoing privatisation, relations to the EU, revolutions and the political circumstances of what is generally called "national identity", was born during the annual conference of the *Academic Fellowship Programme* (AFP) of the Open Society Institute OSI in Crimea in May 2005. The authors are all young academics who originate from and/or have taught in Belarus, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Russia and Ukraine. All authors are university teachers and researchers and have lived for at least one academic year in the countries analysed in this volume, where they had access to the daily press and archive material.

G.P.E. Walzenbach investigates the relationship between the EU and Ukraine, asking whether the model of multi-level governance is compatible with current Ukrainian politics. Questioning the roots of ethnic nationalism in the post-Yugoslav framework, Nenad Marković deals with aspects of political psychology and philosophy. Daniela Kalkandjieva analyses the status of religious studies in Bulgaria that have been determined by the myth of the Orthodox Church as an institution that helped the nation to unite. Petro Kuzyk focuses on the political identities that shaped the *Orange Revolution*, dividing Ukrainian citizens into the orange camp, led by Viktor Yushenko, and the blue camp of Viktor Yanukovich. Maxim Ryabkov investigates Russian health care, in particular the issue of supplementary payments in a system that is officially free of charge. Marina Y. Malkina's analysis focuses on the roles and relations of the state and state agents that are of crucial importance for understanding the current process of privatisation in Russia. Finally, my analysis of the political system of Belarus discusses the phenomenon of Neo-Soviet patriotism, which can be seen as the main reason for the passivity of the citizens keeping the Lukashenko regime in power.

*From Post-communism toward the Third Millennium* mainly addresses scholars of democratisation studies, economics, political science and contemporary history, as well as anybody interested in the recent development of the Eastern and South-Eastern European region. The volume offers new and unique source material and detailed insights. The authors hope that the contents of their research will give rise to further discussion.

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