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TRANSITION TO WHAT?

Legacies and Reform Trajectories after Communism

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The passage of sixteen years since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe provides a good vantage point not only for assessing the social and political trajectories of ex-communist countries but also for revisiting one of the most original and influential perspectives on the "transition," Ken Jowitt's "The Leninist Legacy." This essay analyzes to what extent a common Leninist legacy persists in the social and political fabric of the former communist countries, and discusses how this legacy can be reconciled with the dramatic divergence of developmental paths among the countries in that region. Specifically, I will focus on the degree to which precommunist cultural and developmental differences survived the homogenizing influence of communism, and how these differences were exacerbated by the peculiar nature of the Western approach to conditionality and integration in the post–cold war era.

Before launching into an empirical assessment of the theoretical half-life of some of the predictions advanced in several essays of Jowitt's book *New World Disorder—The Leninist Extinction*, let us briefly recall the intellectual backdrop against which Jowitt's theories developed. Politically, the late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by the triumph of Western liberalism over its last great ideological challenger, Marxism-Leninism, leading many observers to predict a widespread institutional convergence to Western liberal capitalism resulting in what Francis Fukuyama termed "the end of history." In the economic sphere, the widely (if not universally) accepted

Washington Consensus expected that with the retrenchment of the state from economic planning, liberal capitalist institutions would naturally emerge regardless of structural differences. Meanwhile, in political science the predominant theoretical approach to the study of democratization, drawing largely on the Latin American and southern European experiences, rejected earlier efforts to identify the structural preconditions for democracy and focused instead on more proximate explanations, such as elite politics, institutional design, and democratic crafting.[1] While most authors acknowledged that structural differences existed and could potentially be relevant, their overall approach towards legacies nevertheless embodied Adam Przeworski's view that democratization is defined not by the point of departure but by the end goal—democracy.[2]

As such, Jowitt's unequivocal insistence that "the Leninist legacy is currently shaping, and will continue to shape, developmental efforts and outcomes in Eastern Europe"[3] stood out as a fairly isolated skeptical voice amid the "possibilism" of the early 1990s. In fact, Jowitt's claim that Western liberal capitalism was only one—and a rather unlikely—possible endpoint of the postcommunist transformation questioned the very utility of "postcommunist transition" as an analytical concept.[4] After all, transition implies a common evolution *away* from a starting point (communist-style command economies and one-party rule) and *towards* some presumed endpoint, defined more or less explicitly as Western-style liberal democracy and capitalism. Moreover, by predicting that prolonged turmoil and (predominantly antidemocratic) political experiments would likely emerge from the rubble of Leninism,[5] Jowitt questioned another central component of the transition discourse—the notion of a return to a (however vaguely defined) *normality.* This expectation of normality was an understandable psychological reaction to the trauma of communism and the chaos of the early postcommunist period, and was initially fueled by the optimism of the "return to Europe" rhetoric.

Seen from this perspective, the theoretical debate between Jowitt's legacy-based approach and the transitions-to-democracy school boils down to the question of the degree to which the political outcomes in the former communist countries can be characterized as being "normal," and to what extent this normality corresponds to the theoretical blueprints envisioned by the two approaches. This essay first offers a broad empirical assessment of the relative normality of different countries of the former Soviet bloc. Having established the unevenness of postcommunist normalization, the discussion then turns to the factors that can help us explain cross-national divergence. Finally, I will discuss the theoretical implications of

these explanations for assessing the continued relevance of Leninist legacies in understanding the politics of postcommunism.

TRANSITIONS TO NORMALITY?

Before interpreting the nature of the political and socio-economic constellations after a decade and a half of change, it is worth noting that the speed of political and economic change has indeed slowed down in many postcommunist countries, implying the achievement of a steady state—a crucial component for "normal" polities and economies. Nevertheless, as recent events in Georgia and Ukraine suggest, many of the postcommunist regimes, particularly in the Balkans and the non-Baltic Soviet Union, are far from stable, let alone consolidated. Such instability, which has important contagion potential, is likely to be exacerbated by broader international crises, such as Afghanistan in the case of the Central Asian republics. Given that political elites still suffer from a profound legitimacy deficit even in the region's more democratic countries, fundamental challenges to the existing political order—whether in the form of extremist/anti-systemic political parties or movements of rage (like the miners' revolt in Romania in 1999)—should not be completely discounted.[6]

With regard to outcomes, the events of the last fifteen years have made it abundantly clear that normality has taken very different shapes in different countries. Thus, eight ex-communist countries have recently joined the European Union (EU), and two others—Romania and Bulgaria—are slated to join in 2007–8, which can be interpreted as a confirmation of their political and economic institutional convergence with Western norms. However, for most other countries the long-expected normalization has resulted either in distinctly illiberal economic and political arrangements (especially in Belarus and Central Asia) or in uneasy and volatile institutional hybrids (such as in Russia, the Ukraine, and Bosnia). Just as importantly, these cross-national differences are not merely a reflection of different speeds on a common one-way street leading towards Western liberal capitalism but are indicative of qualitative differences between the end points of the postcommunist transformations. Thus, at first glance, one could conclude that Jowitt's skeptical appraisal of post-Leninist democratic prospects was largely accurate for much of the Balkans and the former Soviet Union, whereas the eight first-wave EU candidates and (to a lesser extent) Bulgaria and Romania conform more closely to the optimistic expectations of the transitologists. However, such a conclusion is unsatisfactory, both because counting correctly predicted cases is a blunt analytical instrument,

and because in any case Jowitt's legacy-based predictions did not preclude the potential for liberal democracy, especially if the nascent democratic forces were to receive substantial foreign support through Western adoption.[7]

COMMON LENINIST LEGACIES

The question about whether ex-communist countries are still set apart by the Leninist legacies is primarily a question of cross-regional analysis. While an extensive analysis of the sort is beyond the scope of this essay, I will nevertheless provide a few glimpses into how postcommunist politics differ from those of other regions. In particular, I will draw on comparisons with two sets of countries: established Western democracies, whose social and political models have exerted a defining influence on postcommunist reforms, and may therefore be considered the ideal standard of "normality" by which to judge transition countries; and Latin American countries, whose authoritarian past and economic vulnerability arguably make them a more appropriate "control group" for evaluating the specifically Leninist influence on Eastern European social and political development. This latter comparison, while at odds with the Western aspirations of Eastern Europeans, addresses an increasingly common view that the standards by which to judge ex-communist countries should be those of developing countries at similar levels of development.[8]

Starting from the admittedly very broad perspective of civil and political rights, as reflected by the Freedom House scores for 2003, we find that only twelve of the twenty-seven countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were considered "free," nine were deemed "partly free," and the remaining six "not free,"[9] a tally that compared negatively not only to Western Europe but also to the Latin America/Caribbean region, where almost two-thirds of the countries received a "free" rating, and only two (one of them being Cuba) were coded "not free." Thus, a postcommunist democracy deficit seems to persist even after more than a decade of "transition," though surprisingly little of this deficit can be ascribed to democratic breakdowns along the lines predicted by Jowitt (military coups, the antidemocratic role of the Catholic Church, and novel political experiments). However, a closer look at the political patterns within these three broad categories reveals some interesting nuances about the links between Leninist legacies and the extent of political freedoms. First, it is worth noting that most of the ex-communist region's authoritarian leaders were very straightforward "Leninist legacies," in the sense that Nursultan Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan, Saparmurat Niyazov in Turkmenistan, Ilham Aliyev in Azer-

baijan, and Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan had all been leaders of their respective republics during Soviet times. Even where former communists were more willing to abide by democratic rules, the survival and remarkable political success of Leninist personnel produced significant political resentment and "emotional fragmentation" along the lines predicted by Jowitt.[10] The resulting tensions undermined the quality of democracy and in extreme cases (such as in Georgia, Albania, and Armenia) contributed to serious political violence.

Second, it is important to remember that, particularly among the "partly free" polities—and even among some of the region's democratic "pioneers"—there is significant subnational heterogeneity in the degree to which different citizens experience democracy. The first type of such heterogeneity is of an ethnic nature, and harks back to what Jowitt refers to as the legacy of "ethnic and territorial fragmentation" inherited from the communist regime.[11] Many of the restrictions on minority rights in postcommunist countries—such as the restrictive citizenship laws against Russians in Estonia and Latvia or against Serbs and Croats in Slovenia—are direct consequences of the disintegration of multinational communist states, and to a large extent represent retaliations for earlier abusive minority policies under Leninism. Other forms of ethnic/racial discrimination—most prominently the treatment of the Roma throughout Eastern Europe—is neither formally codified nor a direct outgrowth of communist policies but nevertheless reflects the broader "pluralism deficit" that plagues postcommunist societies. While ethnic tensions and discriminatory practices are obviously not a post-Leninist monopoly, the specific form and nature of these conflicts arguably continues to bear the indelible imprint of the communist approach to the "nationality question." The second type of heterogeneity is territorial, and refers to the uneven penetration of democratic norms into different parts of many transition countries. Even abstracting from the most obvious examples of this type—such as breakaway territories in Moldova and Georgia, or some of the more remote Russian regions—the general weakness of the postcommunist state implies strict limits on the ability of the central government to ensure respect for democratic principles at the local level. As a consequence, the actual civil and political rights of many citizens depend less on the democratic inclinations of the national government and more on the decisions of local leaders, who often rule in a much more traditional and authoritarian manner. Of course, the existence of such "brown areas" is hardly a unique postcommunist phenomenon (after all, Guillermo O'Donnell developed the term in reference to Latin America[12]). However, the social and political rela-

tions in postcommunist brown areas preserve much of the peculiar mixture of traditional and modern elements characteristic of Leninism. As a consequence, whereas an inhabitant of the capital may enjoy civil and political rights comparable to those of Western Europe, a villager from a remote rural area is likely to have experienced few if any changes in political leaders and practices compared to fifteen years ago.[13]

Another prominent socio-political legacy of communism, the "ghetto political culture," resulted from the Communist Party monopoly over the political realm and was characterized by popular avoidance and mistrust of politics.[14] While the communist-era political apathy was certainly overcome in most countries by the initial burst of political enthusiasm in the period between the fall of communism and the first competitive elections, the increasing popular disaffection with electoral politics—reflected most clearly in the rapidly declining voter turnout rates—suggests that the early participatory exuberance may have been only a temporary deviation from the long-term alienation between citizens and political elites. On the other hand, judging by the data from the 1995–97 *World Values Survey*,[15] the low regard of postcommunist citizens for key political institutions (the government, parliament, and political parties) was on average only slightly worse than in advanced Western democracies, and somewhat more positive than the evaluations of Latin American citizens, which suggests that the legitimacy deficit may be part of a broader crisis of political representation in the last decade, rather than a symptom of the Leninist legacy.

The development of postcommunist political parties presents a similarly mixed picture of the ability of transition countries to overcome the anomic political legacy of Leninism. Thus, the heterogeneous mixes of individuals who competed in the founding elections were hardly parties in their own right—in fact many avoided the party label (preferring vague names such as Civic Forum in the Czech Republic, National Salvation Front in Romania, Public Against Violence in Slovakia, Solidarity in Poland, etc.) and even proclaimed their reluctance to engage in factionalist party politics. Whereas in subsequent elections more mainstream political parties began to dominate politics (at least in the parliamentary and semi-presidential systems of Eastern Europe), more recently we have witnessed a revival of "unorthodox" political formations (ranging from personalist parties such as the National Movement Simeon II in Bulgaria in 2001 to the extreme-right Greater Romania Party in Romania in 2000 and the agrarian-populist Samoobrona in Poland) whose main appeal was their rejection of an increasingly unpopular mainstream political elite. This electoral volatility, which is considerably higher than in Western Europe or even Latin America, is

symptomatic of the weak institutionalization and shallow social roots of postcommunist parties, which in turn are clearly rooted in the diffuse, poorly articulated social and political cleavages inherited from the communist regime.[16]

Another significant and lasting Leninist legacy is the pervasiveness of paternalism in postcommunist politics. The remarkable organizational and electoral strength of communist successor parties should be interpreted not as a sign of the vitality of leftist ideology in the region (either in its communist or "refurbished" social-democratic versions) but rather as an expression of the deep-rooted appeal of paternalist politics in societies where individualism had been traditionally weak and was further undermined in the Leninist period. This argument is supported by the fact that, except in the Czech Republic, in Eastern European democracies with relatively weak showings by communist successor parties, the paternalism demand was met by national-populist parties, such as Vladimír Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia in Slovakia and Franjo Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union in Croatia. Among the former Soviet republics, where traditional authority patterns were even more prevalent both before and during communism, the role of paternal figures in postcommunist politics has been even more pronounced, as reflected in the ruling style of leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Eduard Shevardnadze (not to speak of Alexander Lukashenka or Nursultan Nazarbayev)

The discussion so far suggests that, as far as political attitudes and institutions are concerned, Leninist legacies are still discernible even though many of the shortcomings are starting to resemble the "normality" of other developing regions, such as Latin America. However, whereas formal political institutions can change almost overnight, and popular attitudes towards the political system can also respond quite rapidly to changes in leadership, other Leninist legacies are arguably more deeply ingrained in postcommunist societies, and can therefore be expected to change more slowly. One of the most important examples can be found in Jowitt's discussion of the distorted relationship between the public and the private, which can be traced back to the communist reinforcement of the traditional zero-sum mentality, and manifests itself in a deficit of "public virtues"[17] and a weakness of civic culture[18] in both communist and postcommunist societies.

This public virtues deficit is visible at the level of both the elite and the general population, thereby creating a vicious cycle that is difficult to break without significant external assistance. At the elite level, the widespread use of public office for private gain has become one of the most

salient political issues in postcommunist countries in the context in which communist-era disregard for public property and collective good was reinforced by the immense corruption opportunities inherent in the rapid privatization of large parts of the state sector. Indeed, corruption is not only pervasive in most of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union,[19] but there is little evidence that things are even moving in the right direction, despite numerous domestic and international anticorruption initiatives.[20] Compared to advanced Western democracies, ex-Leninist countries show a substantial gap in controlling corruption, as reflected by the perceptions of both business people and citizens.[21] On the other hand, the same sources suggest that, at least in its pervasiveness, postcommunist corruption is remarkably similar to corruption in Latin America with respect to regional averages[22] and to the large intraregional cross-national corruption differences.[23] While these broad cross-regional findings should be taken with a grain of salt, they nevertheless question the strength of a Leninist (as opposed to a postauthoritarian, low/middle-income country) corruption-boosting effect.

Surprisingly, the more significant symptoms of the post-Leninist syndrome can be found at the level of the average citizen. According to the *1995–97 World Values Survey,* compared not only to Western Europeans but even to Latin Americans, postcommunist citizens were on average significantly more likely to engage in a variety of activities that are at odds with the public interest, such as avoiding transportation fares, buying stolen goods, or cheating on taxes. While such actions may pale in comparison to the "sins" of high-level corruption, they nevertheless create a degree of complicity between elites and ordinary citizens, which helps to perpetuate the system in a way reminiscent of the complicity with the communist regime. The second public virtues deficit is of an organizational nature, and has to do with the underdeveloped "art of association" in ex-communist countries. When it comes to membership and participation in a variety of civic and political organizations (including churches, charities, professional and sports associations, unions, and political parties) Eastern Europeans appear to be considerably more reticent than citizens of other regions: thus, only 55 percent of ex-communist respondents reported belonging to any organization, compared to 71 percent in Latin America and 85 percent in Western democracies.[24] The disparity is even larger with respect to active rather than passive membership, with only 20 percent of Eastern Europeans reporting associational activity, well below the regional averages of Latin America (50 percent) and the West (57 percent). Thus, it appears that despite the widespread (and justified) focus on corruption, the burden of the Lenin-

ist legacies is reflected more clearly in the lack of public virtues at the level of ordinary citizens, possibly because they have been less directly affected by the "civilizing" pressures of Western conditionality. While this deficit is understandable as a reaction against the forced "collective" activities of the communist period, it nevertheless represents a significant obstacle to the development of stable democracies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The discussion so far has identified a number of important areas in the social and political development of the former Soviet bloc that still bear the clear imprint of the common Leninist legacy, including civic attitudes, civil society development, and paternalist politics. From this point of view, Jowitt's emphasis on shared legacies holds up well after sixteen years of "transition," especially compared to the optimistic tabula rasa expectations of the transitology school.

LEGACY DIFFERENCES AND THEIR POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

The dramatic and systematic divergence of postcommunist national trajectories raises an important theoretical challenge to the logic of an explanation that emphasizes primarily the *dominant and shared* Leninist legacy among the former communist "comrades."[25] In itself, the mere existence of democratic success cases and of cross-national differences is not necessarily problematic for Jowitt's theory, given its emphasis on the contingent and experimental nature of political developments in the fragile new democracies of Eastern Europe. Moreover, Jowitt does acknowledge the existence of national differences with respect to the predominant type of fragmentation and violence thresholds. However, given his clear emphasis on commonalities, Jowitt does not pursue these ideas much beyond discussing the potential differences in the roles of the army and the Catholic Church, neither of which has played an important antidemocratic role so far. The remainder of this essay is therefore devoted to discussing the key drivers of this divergence, and their implications for our understanding of the role of legacies during the postcommunist transformations.

Since the collapse of communism, the countries of the former Soviet bloc have diverged dramatically in their social, economic, and political trajectories. As mentioned earlier, reasonably stable and functional democratic institutions have arisen in East Central Europe and the Baltics, and political liberalization occurred later and was more susceptible to political instability in the Balkans (e.g., in Albania and Macedonia), whereas in most of the former Soviet Union democracy is either significantly flawed (such as

in Russia and Ukraine) or completely absent (as in Central Asia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus). Similar and largely overlapping geographic clusters can be observed with respect to the extent of economic reforms, political-party and civil-society development, corruption, ethnic and political violence, and state capacity. While such a brief overview can hardly do justice to some of the interesting nuances and exceptions, I would argue that without great loss of generality, we can conclude that sixteen years of postcommunist transformations have resulted in a number of very different types of "normality" in the former Soviet space.

How can we account for these profoundly different outcomes in the relatively short time span since these countries embarked on their postcommunist journey from what in many ways looked like fairly similar starting points? In answering this question, I will discuss several types of historical legacies that have affected postcommunist countries differently. While some of these legacies have deep historical roots and may be difficult or even impossible to reverse in the short term, focusing on concrete factors rather than adopting the vague and often unstated assumptions of geographical shortcuts[26] should facilitate a more nuanced and realistic assessment of democratic prospects in the former Soviet bloc.

The first cluster of largely precommunist legacy differences consists of several regionally distinct cultural and religious patterns. Even a brief survey of the postcommunist region reveals that the historically important European Kulturgefälle persists in the postcommunist period: whereas, with the exception of Croatia (and temporarily Slovakia), the Western Christian countries have been consistently the most democratic in the region, the Eastern Orthodox countries have had a bumpier political reform path (ranging from fragile democracies in Bulgaria and Romania to outright authoritarianism in Belarus), and in the predominantly Muslim countries (with the partial exception of Albania) democratic progress has been very limited. Of course, religious heritage also overlaps almost perfectly with imperial legacies, with the countries in the Central European sphere of influence inheriting not only Western religions but also Western institutions and civic values which set them apart from the regions dominated by the Russian or the Ottoman Empire.[27]

Even though communist rule had eroded the large prewar modernization and development differences both within and between the countries of the region, important cross-national differences survived with respect to levels of economic development, urbanization, and education. Once again, these differences largely followed the familiar west–east/south gradient, from the fairly affluent, highly urbanized, and educated Czech Republic to the much poorer and predominantly rural areas in Central Asia and the south-

ern Balkans, thereby contributing to social settings with very different potentials for developing civic attitudes and organizations. These differences in the strength of civil society played an important role in driving the uneven democracy patterns: whereas Eastern Europeans were for the most part able to check the authoritarian impulses of powerful leaders such as Lech Wałęsa, Ion Iliescu, Vladimír Mečiar, and Franjo Tudjman, in large parts of the Soviet Union political leaders met with much weaker organized social and political resistance.[28] To the extent that powerful leaders in such countries were challenged in their attempts to consolidate political power, such challenges often resulted in violent factional conflict, ranging from isolated political assassination attempts in Armenia and Macedonia to civil wars in Albania, Georgia, and Tajikistan.

After the collapse of communism, the newly liberated countries also faced a third set of problematic legacies—the state- and nation-building challenges characteristic of postcolonialism. Even where the upheaval associated with this difficult process did not deteriorate into outright ethnic violence, democracy was often delayed (and its quality diminished) by the centrality of the "nationality question." Just as clearly, the nature and intensity of the nation and statehood conflicts varied substantially across countries, and was highly correlated with the emerging regime patterns. Thus, of the only six ex-communist countries with unchanged borders since 1989, Poland and Hungary were consistently among the region's democratic frontrunners, Bulgaria and Romania also outperformed their Orthodox and Balkan peers, Mongolia stood out as a democratic outlier in Central Asia, and even Albania's conflict-ridden democracy was arguably above expectations. Meanwhile, ethnic conflict has seriously undermined democracy in the former Yugoslavia, where Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia had less democratic regimes than the relatively liberal nature of the Yugoslav regime would have predicted. On the other hand, despite some nontrivial blemishes in the first part of the 1990s, the political development of Estonia and Latvia shows that democracy is not impossible even in newly independent states with high ethnic fragmentation.

Turning to some of the more proximate legacies, variations in political reforms in the 1980s and the modes of extrication from communist rule exerted a surprisingly weak influence on postcommunist reform paths: while Hungary's and Poland's gradual political opening may have given them a democratic head start, and the Czech Republic did equally well despite its unreformed Stalinist regime in the 1980s, most former Yugoslav republics seem to have benefited little from the more liberal nature of Yugoslav communism. Similarly, differences in economic liberalization played only a

minor and temporary role after 1990, arguably because even the more advanced reformers of late communism did not fundamentally alter the logic of the socialist system, especially when compared to the depth of post-communist transformations. What mattered much more for both economic reforms and democratization were the structural economic distortions inherited from the communist regime, especially the prevalence of energy-intensive and polluting Stalinist-type heavy industry. While such industrial dinosaurs were a general feature of Soviet bloc economies, they were particularly prevalent in the countries/regions that had been less industrialized at the outset of communism, especially in the Soviet Union. Since these factories were particularly poorly prepared for free-market competition, the regions whose livelihood depended on them tended to support ex-communist and populist leaders and parties, thereby further reducing the prospects of democracy in some of the less-developed countries.

As the preceding discussion has shown, in addition to the powerful Leninist legacy shared by former Soviet bloc comrades, the collapse of communism left behind several important and strongly correlated cross-national legacy differences with respect to cultural/religious traditions, degrees of modernization, state- and nation-building challenges, and structural economic distortions. Thus, the countries of East Central Europe were not only historically and culturally closer to the West than their eastern and southern brethren, but were also richer, more modern, and less ethnically diverse, with longer statehood histories and relatively less distorted economies at the outset of the transition. Even though no single factor can fully account for the cross-national regime patterns since the collapse of communism, the various overlapping legacies jointly account for most of the variation in the extent of democracy across the region, and so far there is no evidence that the power of these legacies diminishes over time.[29] Of course, it is possible to point to exceptions from this "iron law of history": Belarus's authoritarian regime is at odds with its relatively benign legacies, whereas Mongolia and Moldova exceeded legacy-based expectations. However, these exceptions are not only rare but have a remarkable tendency to correct themselves, as suggested by the authoritarian backsliding in Kyrgyzstan, a one-time democratic overachiever, and the recent improvements in erstwhile democratic underachievers such as Slovakia, Croatia, and Serbia.

INTERNATIONAL FACTORS AND WESTERN INTEGRATION

Whereas the significant and lasting cross-national developmental differences discussed in the previous section led to important variations in the

democratic receptiveness of domestic social and political environments, the divergence of postcommunist regime patterns was further encouraged by the uneven nature of Western interventions in the region. As Jowitt had predicted in "The Leninist Legacy," the fate of postcommunist democracy was closely intertwined with the extent to which the liberal democratic West fulfilled its role of a constructive "Norman" entity able to shape the world in its own image. In theory the (at least rhetorically) open-ended integration promise should have had an equalizing effect on political and economic developments in the postcommunist space by encouraging the adoption of Western institutional blueprints. In practice this potential for overcoming the Leninist legacy and reducing the effects of structural differences may be realized among the countries that for developmental and historical reasons are close to the "deep integration" threshold (the eight new EU members, Romania, Bulgaria, and potentially Croatia and Serbia). The joint effect of close international scrutiny and substantial structural funding may help reduce the gap between Western and Eastern Europe, as well as between different Eastern European countries.[30] Despite the official "open-door" integration promise, however, the actual integration prospects of different countries have varied substantially. Even abstracting from Central Asia, which is not even geographically a part of Europe, it was clear from early on that by virtue of their geographic location, historical ties, and socioeconomic and political baggage, the short-to-medium-term integration prospects of many Balkan and former Soviet countries were rather limited. As a consequence, the reform incentives associated with the promise of European integration were considerably weaker both for the political elites and for the populations of the more peripheral postcommunist countries, which in turn meant that the immediate benefits of adopting Western economic and political standards were likely to be lower at the periphery. These weaker incentives may explain why voters and politicians alike were less willing to embrace reforms, especially when such reforms produced palpable economic and political costs in the short run.

However, the international influence on postcommunist political developments has not been limited to Western integration promises but has included concerted international efforts to monitor elections, human rights, and minority policies. In extreme cases, particularly in the case of the former Yugoslavia, the West has been willing to take an even more activist stance against extreme deviations from Western standards of civil and political rights. However, in this respect, too, there exists a geographic bias in Western involvement, in the sense that minority rights violations prompted military interventions in Kosovo but not in Chechnya, while civil wars trig-

gered a belated but considerable Western peacemaking and reconstruction effort in Bosnia but not in Tajikistan, Transdniestr, Nagorno-Karabakh, or Abkhazia. While the Western reluctance to intervene militarily in parts of the former Soviet space may reflect concerns about not crossing Russian strategic interests in its own "backyard," it nevertheless contributed to the widening gulf between democratic practices in different parts of the former communist bloc. Along similar lines, one should note the different democratic standards applied by the West in its conditionality towards different transition countries. Thus, whereas Western governments made repeated efforts to marginalize Mečiar in Slovakia, they were willing to accept and even support Yeltsin in Russia or Akayev in Kyrgyzstan, even though the latter two leaders were guilty of more significant violations of democratic norms than was Mečiar. Besides strategic interests and lesser-of-two-evils considerations, these different standards arguably reflect deep-seated Western views about the types of political institutions and practices that can be expected to take root in different parts of the former communist bloc.

ONE OR SEVERAL LEGACIES? THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

How can the wide diversity of postcommunist regime outcomes be reconciled with Jowitt's emphasis on the common and shared nature of the Leninist legacy in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union? There are two approaches to answering this question. The first answer starts from the assumption that the only potentially problematic cases to be explained are the instances of reasonably stable democracies in the region, whereas the remaining fragile democracies, hybrid regimes, and full-blown authoritarian systems are fully consistent with Jowitt's post-Leninist vision of the region. In this respect, the incentives provided by European integration appear to be crucial, given that (with the partial exception of Slovakia) the eight recently admitted EU members have been the region's most consistently democratic countries. Of the other four Eastern European countries ranked as "free" by Freedom House in 2003, Bulgaria and Romania have undoubtedly received an important "democracy boost" due to the prospects of EU membership (expected by 2007), whereas the more recent and fragile political opening in Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro also bears the imprint of Western interventions and incentives. Therefore, it appears that the countries which have so far been able to overcome the Leninist legacy obstacles to democratic stability were those fortunate enough to be included in the "adoption plan" of the European Union. Beyond this striking cor-

relation, even a cursory look at Eastern European political developments in the last sixteen years reveals the crucial importance of Western pressures on a broad range of vital components of democracy, such as minority rights, freedom of the press, and free and fair elections.

While such an explanation successfully reconciles regime diversity with the existence of powerful, shared Leninist legacies, it suffers from two drawbacks. The first one is relatively minor, and concerns the question of how to account for Mongolia's surprisingly vigorous democracy, which can hardly be attributed to hopes of Western integration. The second and theoretically more difficult problem is that the countries with the best initial Western adoption prospects were not chosen at random but represented the ex-communist countries with the most promising historical legacies in the region. The resulting selection bias makes it difficult to disentangle the effects of Western integration incentives from those of different initial conditions. Nevertheless, several observations indicate that legacy differences matter even beyond their crucial role of identifying likely candidates for Western integration. Thus, even among the countries with real integration perspectives, democracy was on more solid ground in the ethnically homogeneous, richer, and economically less distorted countries of the group (Hungary, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Poland), compared to the structurally and historically more disadvantaged EU aspirants (Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania). Furthermore, in early 1990 Serbia and especially Croatia were more prosperous and more integrated with the West than Bulgaria and Romania, which suggests that the rockier regime trajectory of the former can be better explained by their complicated ethnic and statehood legacies than by differences in Western integration prospects. Finally, the wholesale adoption of Bosnia by the international community in the second part of the 1990s has so far produced modest results in overcoming the difficult legacies of ethnic conflict.

The second answer to the question of how to reconcile Jowitt's emphasis on the common nature of the Leninist legacy with the diversity of postcommunist regime outcomes acknowledges the importance of cross-country legacy differences but treats them within the framework of Jowitt's analysis of the nature of Leninist regimes. More specifically, the "commanding heights" approach to economic development, which focused on priority sectors at the expense of nonessential areas, and the "production mentality," which regarded cultural transformation as a secondary and derivative accomplishment to economic change,[31] played an instrumental role in the survival of precommunist legacy differences. Since rural areas were particularly likely to suffer from such benign neglect,[32] it is easy to

see that traditional social, cultural, and political relations survived to a larger extent in the less-developed, predominantly rural countries of the former Soviet bloc. Moreover, the type of traditional relations that were reproduced by the communist system were likely to differ between subregions, which may explain why the countries with more functional interwar democracies were generally more democratic after the collapse of communism. Even in the industrial sector, where the Leninist cultural and political penetration was greater, one would expect a longer half-life of traditional work and social patterns in countries and regions where the overwhelming majority of industrial workers come from a rural background. Along similar lines, Jowitt's insight, that in Romania the public-private separation under the communist regime mirrored and reproduced the traditional Eastern Orthodox separation of religious ritual and private life,[33] implies that in Western Christian countries without such sharp traditional dichotomies, communist modernization efforts may have yielded more legal-rational power relations and a more complementary relationship between the public and private realm, thereby leaving behind a somewhat attenuated Leninist legacy. Finally, the region's long-standing ethnic and territorial tensions were not resolved by several decades of proletarian internationalism, not only because the nationality question, like that of culture, was of secondary importance on the ideological agenda but also because heavy-handed efforts to promote civic identities at the expense of ethnic ones, combined with substantial interregional economic transfers, provided steady fuel and popular legitimacy for nationalist claims to ethnic self-determination.

The remarkable persistence of a uniquely Leninist imprint on a wide range of political developments, particularly the prevalence of noncivic popular attitudes and the weakness of civil society organizations and political parties, set ex-communist countries apart not only from their Western democracy models but also from other developing regions, such as Latin America. On the other hand, the significant divergence of national regime trajectories is more difficult to reconcile with Jowitt's emphasis on the common and shared nature of Leninist legacies. However, of the two key drivers of divergence identified here , one—Western integration incentives—was actually acknowledged by Jowitt as a potential way to overcome the burden of Leninist legacies, whereas the second—historical legacy differences—although downplayed in Jowitt's predictions, can actually be fruitfully analyzed within his theoretical framework of the nature of Leninist regimes. Therefore, the legacy of Jowitt's theoretical contribution to understanding postcommunist political developments extends beyond the well-known role of a his-

torically grounded skeptical antidote to the democratic optimism of transitologists, since it provides an important framework for understanding the complicated interaction between ideological blueprints and pre-existing social and cultural conditions.

NOTES

1. See, for example, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives,* ed. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Terry L. Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter "Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal* (May 1991): 269–84; and Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

2. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market,* xii.

3. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 286.

4. Of course, in the postcommunist context, "transition" acquired a broader meaning than the "democratic transition" discussed by the transitology school, since it included at least three crucial dimensions: political, economic, and nation/state-building tasks.

5. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder,* 285.

6. Instability could be exacerbated if Western democratic conditionality suffers from the growing rift between the United States and Western Europe.

7. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder,* 304–5. This argument is discussed in more detail in Marc Howard's contribution to this volume, so I will not dwell on it here.

8. For a forceful argument in this sense, see Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, "A Normal Country," *Foreign Affairs* 8, no. 2 (2004).

9. The situation looks even worse once we include occupied/disputed territories such as Transnistria, Chechnya, and Kosovo.

10. Jowitt, *New World Disorder,* 296–97.

11. Ibid., 297.

12. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 1 (1994): 55–69.

13. For an interesting case study documenting such continuity in a Romanian village (Nucsoara), see Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, *Secera şi buldozerul. Scornicești şi Nucşoara. Mecanisme de aservire a țăranului român* (Iasi: Polirom, 2002).

14. Jowitt, *New World Disorder,* 288.

15. World Values Survey Group, *World Values Survey, 1995–97* (Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, 1998).

16. Ibid., 294–95.

17. Ibid., 292.

18. Ibid., 304.

19. According to the 2001 *New Europe Barometer,* of the ten Eastern European EU candidates, Slovenia was the only country where a minority of respondents (42 percent) believed that most or almost all public officials were corrupt. For the other countries, these distrust ratings ranged from 54 percent in Hungary to 80 percent in Slovakia, 89 percent in Romania, 92 percent in Latvia, and 95 percent in Lithuania. Richard Rose, *A Bottom-Up Evaluation of Enlargement Countries: New Europe Barometer 1* (Aberdeen, Scotland: CSPP Publications, University of Aberdeen, 2002).

20. Thus, judging by the evolution of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) between 1997–98 and 2001, among the Eastern European countries only Hungary showed real progress, whereas several countries—including Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania—actually slipped in the rankings. Transparency International, "Corruption Perception Index 2001," http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2001/cpi2001.html.

21. For the former, I relied on data from various years of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), while for the latter I used survey data from the *1995-7 World Values Survey.*

22. On the 1 to 10 (most to least corrupt) CPI scale, the average score for postcommunist countries was 3.6, compared to 3.7 for Latin America/Caribbean countries, and 7.9 for Western established democracies. Similarly, a *1995-7 World Values Survey* question about the pervasiveness of political corruption, scored from 1 (low) to 4 (high), revealed identical regional averages of 3.0 for Eastern Europe and Latin America, compared to 2.4 for Western countries.

23. Whereas Chile and Estonia had 2001 CPI scores that were superior to those of Italy, countries such as Bolivia or Ukraine "clustered" around the bottom of the scale among some of the world's more corrupt regimes.

24. Based on data from the *1995-7 World Values Survey.*

25. Jowitt, *New World Disorder,* 300.

26. One prominent example of such essentialism is the pejorative use of the term "Balkans," which, as Maria Todorova has argued quite eloquently, has been turned into "one of the most powerful pejorative designations in history, international relations, political science and, nowadays, general intellectual discourse." See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.

27. Janos discusses the different foundations of political authority (legal-rational in Western Christianity versus traditional in Eastern Orthodoxy) and Lal points to the differences in the relationship between church and state, and the higher degree of separation between them in Western Christianity. See Andrew C. Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World: The Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Deepak Lal, *Unintended Consequences: The Impact of Factor Endowments, Culture, and Politics on Long-run Economic Performance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

28. These two mechanisms may explain the trajectory of several postcommunist leaders in the former Soviet republics—most notably Boris Yeltsin in Russia and Askar Akayev in the Kyrgyz Republic—who failed to deliver on their early democratization promises. In both cases, the most serious political challenge to the president's authority came from largely unreformed communist parties, which not only limited the bargaining power of domestic democracy advocates but also contributed to a more lenient Western attitude toward the democratic lapses of the two regimes.

29. For a more systematic elaboration of this claim using cross-national statistical data for the twenty-eight ex-communist countries, see Grigore Pop-Eleches, "The Enduring Curse of the Past: Initial Conditions and Post-Communist Reform Trajectories," paper prepared for the 2003 annual meeting of *APSA*, Philadelphia, August 28–31, 2003.

30. The Irish economic miracle of the last two decades provides some hope, although results were more modest in Spain, Portugal, and particularly Greece.

31. Jowitt, *New World Disorder,* 60–61.

32. Ibid., 81.

33. Ibid., 83–84.

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