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# 1. Introduction

## ***1.1. Problem of post-communist regime diversity***

Between 1989 and 2006 tens of former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and in former Soviet Union develop into a rainbow of different political regimes, from stable democracies to stable authoritarianisms through intermediate and unconsolidated regimes. This process of post-communist transition and political diversification starts almost simultaneously in all these regions after 1989. Several theoretical models attempt to explain this diversity, embracing cases as diverse as Hungary's<sup>1</sup> almost immediate and successful democratization in early 1990s to Turkmenistan's persistently undemocratic political regime up to late 2006. These theories focus on independent variables representing four major analytical categories: legacies, institutional choices, political leadership, and external influence. These categories look at politically relevant facts taking place before, during and after communism, factors that are deeper or shallower in terms of causality, and also more structural or agency-oriented. They all claim possessing explanatory power regarding post-communist political regime diversity.

This project puts forward following objectives. It will analytically separate major schools on post-communist political regime development and regime diversity from literature and provide typical examples for each of them. It will then draw upon existing research in each category to craft generic theories, outlining basic hypotheses and assumptions common to researchers within each category<sup>2</sup>.

Once this task is accomplished and generic theories are crafted, the project will evaluate them, testing their explanatory claims to a sample of post-communist countries representing different regime trajectories: democracy, authoritarianism, and intermediate political regime. Countries included in this sample are Romania (democracy), Belarus (authoritarianism), and Macedonia (intermediate regime), not only illustrating different political trajectories, but also different post-communist geographic areas: Eastern Europe, former USSR, and former Yugoslavia. Finally,

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom House Organization. 2006. "Freedom in the World Comparative Ranking: 1973-2005". Available on: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>

<sup>2</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Philip Oxhorn for suggesting this methodological approach of crafting generic theories in order to facilitate project design.

this project aims to begin addressing problems of incomplete explanation existing with the current research by suggesting new across approaches model.

This project advances following main points and provides following tentative conclusions. First, none of the existing major analytical categories taken as a cluster is powerful enough of predicting all main trends of post-communist regime diversity. Contrary to the claims they advance, their cumulative prediction is either inconclusive, or pointing at wrong direction. Second, ‘unpacking’ these analytical categories into a myriad of independent variables is not more helpful. Only few of them correlate well with one or another post-communist period across all cases. None of these is powerful enough in providing rigid explanatory model of political regime development going beyond mere positive correlations. Third, two independent variables provided by institutional choice approach, namely constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for parliament, i.e. proportional representation or single-member district, provide good correlation and explanation for opposing trends of political regime development, democracy or authoritarianism. Fourth, additional independent variables included in legacy and institutional choice approach, namely shared public identity between rulers and ruled, and existence of sovereign state, provide an additional insight as to the reason why certain post-communist countries still remain intermediate regimes. Fifth, this new explanatory model is applicable mainly to post-communist development after mid-1990s; it does not claim providing satisfactory explanation to trends occurring earlier during post-communist transition. Understanding post-communist development and diversity is a gradual process, not an instant snapshot; new literature will hopefully provide additional hypotheses and attached to them independent variables, within or outside existing schools, making further analysis more accurate and its conclusions more rigid.

## **1.2. Methodology**

Project methodology goes along following research steps: first, comprehensive review of literature, which is used in crafting generic theories,

representing four different theoretical approaches, claiming relevance in explaining post-communist regime diversity; second, defining dependent variable of political regime and choosing representative cases among post-communist countries with different political regimes; third, testing generic theories to chosen sample; and fourth, crafting new model providing tentative explanation for political regime diversity.

Comprehensive review of literature is a necessary first step in each research, but in the context of this project its significance is even greater. The goal is not only presenting earlier research on the topic of post-communist political regime diversity. The goal is also selecting different explanations as part of four larger approaches: legacies, institutional choices, political leadership, and extent of external influence and support. These main approaches borrow from earlier research and classification presented by Kitschelt (2003, 57-58). This project presents major arguments and expectations of each particular approach regarding post-communist political development. Each independent variable from each theoretical model is presented in “if-then” form, when “then” is specific post-communist political regime type.

Once earlier research and its expectations are presented and classified, the main task moves toward crafting generic models, one out of each theoretical approach. These four models represent simplified constructs showing basic and mutually reinforcing features of particular theoretical approaches and their expectations regarding post-communist political regime development. Purpose of crafting generic models is to simplify project design in order to allow it focusing on as few as possible comparable models, instead of tens of incomparable hypotheses. Without this simplification whole project may become unmanageable. An alternative way of simplifying thesis design is choosing only one particular work within each approach as fully representative. This will however lead to unjust elimination of some important variables explaining small but important part of the main problem.

Even after deciding not to eliminate most independent variables there are different ways of crafting generic models. More deterministic approach expects that

all variables within one particular model, e.g. legacies, must concur in order to cause particular political development. An alternative and more flexible way, the one used in this project, is accepting that independent variables are not causing each other but all contribute to regime type diversity. Crafting generic models is first occasion of filtering independent variables, leaving behind the weak ones that are not easily observable and measurable. Other variables not included in four basic models are those implying many different meanings, e.g. culture. At this point some independent variables may be conceptually split between different models. Good example of a variable that represents more than one analytical concept is communist party. It is part of communist legacy and at the same time part of political system after collapse of communism in most post-communist countries.

After we craft four generic models, next logical step is to look closer at post-communist political regime development, to define political regime itself and to choose cases representing different regime trajectories. We define political regime as *a set of political institutions, formal as well as informal, by which a state is organized in order to exert its power over a political community* (Kopstein and Lichbach 2005, 4). Political regime types depend on level of citizens' political rights and of popular influence on government. Political regimes are *democratic*, *authoritarian*, and *intermediate*. Political regime as dependent variable is measured using *Freedom House* (Freedom House 2005) classification of countries from 1 (most democratic) to 7 (least democratic) dependant on their level of freedom, using its combined index, representing average of political rights and civil liberties in each post-communist country (Table 1).

*Democratic regimes* always practice free and fair elections; elected officials effectively rule; minority groups can participate in government; and basic civil liberties, including freedom of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion, are protected. *Authoritarian regimes* deny their citizens most political and social rights; these regimes are based on oppression and fear. *Intermediate regimes* are those with intensive civil and unconstitutional political conflicts; elections are unfair, giving dominance to one political party or leader; some civil liberties are either suppressed or are not enforced.

This study does not question reliability of Freedom House methodology, nor it duplicates its research design and execution to verify accuracy of findings regarding post-communist countries. The author trusts these findings, which are supported both by numerous researchers through integration in their studies (Roeder 2001; Frye 2002; Grzymala-Busse 2006), and by independent projects like Polity IV Project (2003), which confirm main post-communist political trends.

This project however pays special attention to eliminate danger of conflating independent variables, i.e. possible explanations for regime diversity, and dependent variable, which is political regime itself. To do this each variable before being included in any generic model will be preliminary reviewed taking into account Freedom House definitions for each type of political regime. In this sense, hypothetically speaking, freedom of expression will not be allowed as independent variable because it is conceptually included in dependent variable definition; on the other hand, specific religious background will be allowed as possible independent variable because it is independent from political regime definition.

In this project I accept that post-communist countries rated by Freedom House as 'free' represent *democratic* political regimes; those rated as 'not free' represent *authoritarian* regimes; and 'partly free' represent *intermediate* political regimes. Also post-communist countries moving within limited range on Freedom House scale represent more stable political regimes, no matter their nature.

Next logical step is to determine which post-communist countries represent best each political regime trajectory. We must eliminate overdetermined cases of political development like Hungary or Turkmenistan, countries where democratization either occurs overnight or does not occur at all, thus leaving for investigation only countries where situation in early 1990s is described by Freedom House as 'partly free', leaving door open for democratization, authoritarian reaction, or for keeping the country into intermediate position. Elimination of overdetermined cases is necessary because for them most independent variables look convincing, but this overconfidence is in fact more problem than solution because it makes no difference between good causes and spurious correlations.

There are many post-communist countries that fit well with initial ‘partly free’ status, both from Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union (Table 1). Countries like Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, and Ukraine remain ‘partly free’ for entire post-communist period up until 2005 Freedom House report. Putting aside countries that democratize within months or a year in early 1990s, there are two remaining cases that represent gradual democratization from ‘partly free’ to stable ‘free’ status, Croatia and Romania. Cases representing opposite trend, reaching stable and ‘not free’ status, putting aside those moving to authoritarianism very fast within months or a year in early 1990s, are Belarus and Kazakhstan. Russia also moves to ‘not free’ status, but it is too early to call it a stable autocracy, therefore it will not be considered as a good example for authoritarian trend.

The sample that is tested includes only one case from each group because of time and space restraints of project. From first group of stable ‘partly free’ countries *Macedonia* is most representative. The reason for this is that it is moving within smallest margins over time compared to other stable intermediate political regimes. From second group of countries moving from ‘partly free’ to ‘free’ status *Romania* is the best choice. The reason for this is that it moves to a similar to Croatia level of freedom starting from much worse position, i.e. its political democratization is more spectacular over time. From third group moving from ‘partly free’ to ‘not free’ status I choose *Belarus*. The reason for this is that it reaches higher level on scale of lack of freedom than Kazakhstan after starting from a much better position in early 1990s, and also because Belarus experiences ‘partial freedom’ for a longer period than Kazakhstan. Difference between Macedonia and Romania may not look spectacular for the last year of observation (0.5), but over a longer period since Romania shifts from ‘partly free’ to ‘free’ status difference between two countries rises to 1.2 (2.1 for Romania and 3.3 for Macedonia).



Table 1. Freedom House's 'Freedom in the World Comparative Rankings' (excerpts)

	90/ 91	91/ 92	92/ 93	93/ 94	94/ 95	95/ 96	96/ 97	97/ 98	98/ 99	99/ 00	2000 /1	2001 /2	2003	2004	2005
Albania	6.5 NF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.5 PF	4.5 PF	4.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF
Armenia	-	5.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.5 PF	4.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.5 PF
Azer bajjan	-	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	5.5 NF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.5 PF	5.5 PF	5.5 PF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF
Belarus	-	4.0 PF	3.5 PF	4.5 PF	4.0 PF	5.0 PF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.5 NF
Bosnia -Herz.	-	-	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	4.5 PF	4.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF
Bulgaria	3.5 PF	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F
Croatia	-	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	2.5 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F
Czech Re.	-	-	-	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.0 F
Estonia	-	2.5 F	3.0 PF	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.0 F
Georgia	-	5.5 NF	4.5 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	4.5 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF
Hungary	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.0 F
Kazakh stan	-	4.5 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF
Kyrgyz stan	-	4.5 PF	3.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF
Latvia	-	2.5 F	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	2.5 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F
Lithuan Nia	-	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F
Macedo nia	-	-	3.5 PF	3.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF
Moldova	-	4.5 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF
Mongo lia	4.0 PF	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.5 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F
Poland	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.0 F
Roma nia	5.5 NF	5.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	2.5 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.0 F	2.5 F
Russia	-	3.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.5 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.0 PF	5.5 NF
Yug/ Ser-Mo	5.0 PF	4.5 PF	5.5 PF	5.5 PF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	5.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.0 PF	2.5 F	2.5 F
Slovakia	-	-	-	3.5 PF	2.5 F	2.5 F	3.0 PF	3.0 PF	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.0 F
Slovenia	-	2.5 F	2.0 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.5 F	1.0 F	1.0 F	1.0 F
Tajiki stan	-	3.0 PF	6.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	6.0 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF	5.5 NF
Turkme nistan	-	5.5 PF	6.5 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF
Ukraine		3.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	3.5 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	4.0 PF	3.5 PF
Uzbeki stan	-	5.5 PF	6.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	7.0 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF	6.5 NF

Source: Freedom House Organization. 2006. Available online: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>  
Legend: NF-Not free; PF – Partly Free; F- Free.

Having a sample including these three countries, representing at the same time former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and former Yugoslavia, makes any conclusion of this study fitter for generalization across post-communist countries. Countries that are eliminated from sample like Croatia, Kazakhstan, Albania, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia, are used at the end of project as control group for testing new model that explains political regime diversity.

After identifying these three countries, four generic models are tested separately to each of them. At this point of study I conclude that all four models make unsatisfactory predictions regarding post-communist political regime diversity, ranging from inconclusive to completely wrong. At best, but still far from providing comprehensive answer to main research problem, some of these models make correct predictions for some countries and for shorter periods.

Being unsatisfied with previous answers to the main problem, this project crafts new model with bigger explanatory power. It takes initially “unpacked” independent variable across different models proving in such a way that their weak predicting power is not due to their cumulative effect. Even separately most of them do not predict correctly different political trends across cases. Additional analysis shows that this problem has little to do with the fact that some variables may be designed to explain opposite political developments like democracy and authoritarianism much better than intermediate regimes.

“Unpacking” independent variables however represents a good opportunity for trying to combine elements across models correlating well with different post-communist trajectories. I discuss two possible approaches, more rigid and more flexible. Rigid model is finally abandoned because few remaining variables, usually taken from legacy model, contradict their proper logic by providing positive correlations only after a certain time lag without good explanation for these counterintuitive outcomes. Second best option is crafting more flexible two-stage model, by looking first at across models explanations for opposite democracy-authoritarianism trends, and only then adding missing variables that explain intermediate regimes. This more flexible new model explains opposite regime trends mainly with certain institutional arrangements during post-communist

transition like constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for legislature. They produce political outcomes, democracy or authoritarianism, after a certain time lag. Other factors, from legacy and institutional models alike, like existence of sovereign state and shared identity between rulers and ruled, provide convincing explanation for intermediate post-communist regime trajectory.

### **1.3. Organization**

Project organization closely follows its main scientific problem and methodology. After this introduction that lays out project foundations, chapter 2 provides review of literature. Literature used for analysis in this project is readily available in either hard copies or in online versions. It covers research published between early 1990s and 2006. I rely mainly on English-language books and on articles from English-language political and other social sciences' journals; occasionally I rely also on French- and Russian-language research and on public opinion polls results. Alongside literature that deals with post-communist transition, this review extensively borrows ideas from seminal books on democratization and comparative political development, e.g. Crawford and Lijphart (1997) or Linz and Stepan (1996), to mention a few.

Next chapters present theoretical part of this project. They consecutively offer generic models crafted out of four main approaches: legacies, institutional choices, political leadership, and external influence (chapter 3); test these four models to three cases representing different political regime trajectories (chapter 4); and offer new tentative model explaining post-communist regime diversity (chapter 5). In conclusion, I make a summary of main findings of this project and present questions coming out of it that may become a basis for new research.

Interest in understanding post-communist countries' political transformation and their possible democratization goes far beyond the group of current post-communist nations, for some of which the process of democratization is firmly an issue of the past. Some countries in the world still remain communist as far as their political system is concerned, not to mention tens of countries with different forms of undemocratic or unconsolidated political regimes. Still unable to predict speed,

direction and starting moment of their future post-authoritarian political transformations, we may use lessons accumulated during 1989-2006 experience in Central and Eastern Europe and former USSR in order to get prepared with a range of possible expectations and a menu of political suggestions making these democratic transitions smoother and hopefully irreversible. This makes research of causes for post-communist political regime diversity one with promising future as a sub-field of comparative democratization studies.

## **2. Literature review**

Many scholars have tried to explain post-communist political regime diversity, either in general or in some particular countries. Four broader groups of theoretical approaches, following Kitschelt classification (2003, 57-58), focus on the following groups of factors: legacies, institutional choices, political leadership, and extent of external influence and support. This chapter reviews these groups' major arguments and expectations regarding post-communist democratization. Presenting the literature on the main subject of research is a necessary first step toward crafting generic theoretical models of post-communist regime change, one for each broader group of explanations; presenting these generic models will be the next chapter's task.

### ***Legacy approach***

Legacy approach, chronologically the oldest school of post-communist democratization studies, tends to explain political regime diversity by the unique historical experience of each country. Differences in its past cause differences we can currently witness. This school looks at politically relevant events and processes, which may be political, social, economic, and religious practices or norms, accumulated during pre-communist and/or communist period. Compared to other main schools of post-communist democratization studies, legacies approach explanation presents the 'deepest' theoretical argument in terms of causality, according to Kitschelt's classification (2003). He makes a distinction between "deep" and "shallow" explanations; first type establishes clear temporal priority of the cause vis-à-vis the consequence, and independence of the cause from its effect; the latter is far less precise on both issues. The trade-off is that it is far more difficult for the "deep" explanations to prove that there is a real cause-effect relation and not just a positive correlation between independent and dependent variable.

Legacy approach school is not a static model, some of its supporters gradually move from the understanding that legacies act always as burden for democratization (Jowitt 1992) to a more balanced view according to which at least

some legacies may have a positive impact on democratization (Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, and Toka 1999).

There are two main streams within the school looking at legacies as main causes for post-communist political development. One of these sees legacies as burden for democratization; in this sense a process of democratization is a process that eliminates these legacies from political life. Another stream sees legacies as possibility for democratization (see **2.1.2. Legacies as possibility**). Some of those who see legacies as burden make bleak predictions of post-communist democratization (Jowitt 1992; Schopflin 1993). Other scholars however try to overcome this legacies' fatalism and have a more optimistic view for at least some post-communist countries. They either look at pre-communist legacies as being able to eliminate negative effect of communist era legacies (Brzezinski 2002), or point out at the gradual process of erosion of communist legacies in post-communist societies (Hanson 1995; 1997).

### **2.1.1. Legacy as burden**

Jowitt (1992) argues that communist era legacies matter most and that they are burden for democratization; they instead favor authoritarian political trends. Communist legacies, according to Jowitt, include reinforced dichotomy between public and private areas, low level of political participation, lack of shared civic identity, social atomization and presence of semi-autarchic economic institutions like cooperative farms (Jowitt 1992, 287-289). In addition to this many post-communist countries bear deep ethnic and territorial fragmentations, some inherited from pre-communist times. Cumulative effect of all these legacies plays negative role in post-communist process of democratization. Therefore countries where some of these legacies are weakest for historic reasons, like Poland, where widespread collective farming is missing for most of the communist era, or like in Yugoslavia practicing market socialism, have only slightly better chances for political development as democratic regimes.

Jowitt is very pessimistic regarding possibility of political democratization in post-communist world in general. These countries will not copy Western Europe

political present, their political development is more likely to resemble Latin America's authoritarian past. It will be demagogues, priests, and colonels more than democrats and capitalists who will shape post-communist countries' general institutional identity (Jowitt 1992, 300). As a better alternative to religio-ethnic, militant nationalist, even fascist regimes he suggests a form of liberal authoritarianism like nineteenth-century Western Europe (Jowitt 1992, 303).

Schopflin (1993) shares Jowitt's view that legacies matter most in post-communist political regime development. He also shares Jowitt's view that these legacies are burden for democratization, and that they instead favor authoritarian trends. His model enlarges the time framework of legacies' approach by including pre-communist legacies as most important.

Schopflin looks at pre-communist administrative and religious practices as main cause for present-day political developments (1993, 5-6). State-society relations, relative (in)dependence of the church, level of state (de)centralization, these are most important factors determining subsequent political regime development. Post-communist world offers two types of legacies, concentrated in Eastern Europe and Russia, different from one another, and both different from West European ideal type, where democracy is possible as a result of cumulative effect of centuries-old legacies (1993, 11). This difference between Russia as a clear example of state domination vis-à-vis society and church, and Eastern Europe where these forces are more in balance, apparently leaves some chances for democratization for the latter.

Schopflin however sees communist legacies as an additional burden on top of pre-communist legacies, making post-communist democratization much more difficult task for Central and Eastern Europe, countries that have developed in between the two extreme political models. He follows main points of the Jowitt's argument in enumerating communist era legacies and discussing their negative impact on democratization. This explains why he shares Jowitt's pessimistic view on the possibility of fast post-communist democratization, although he does not rule it out completely in more distant future (Schopflin 1993, 267 and 300).

Brzezinski (2002) looks at the pre-communist legacies in order to find factors capable of eliminating negative affects of communist legacies. Like Jowitt (1992) and Schopflin (1993) Brzezinski looks at communist legacies as an amorphous body, without conceptualizing any internal sub-division. He argues that communist legacies negative impact on democratization may be largely eliminated by a right dosage of pre-communist development.

Brzezinski looks at pre-communist history and culture as main causes for post-communist development (2002, 196-197). He is mostly interested of traditions of state (de)centralization, of different state-church relations, and of institutionalization of private economic entrepreneurship. Unlike Schopflin (1993) who puts East European legacies between Russia and Western Europe, Brzezinski divides Eastern Europe into sub-regions closely attached in terms of political behavior either to Russia as ideal type of state domination over society and church, or to Western Europe as representative of opposite trend. He predicts that there will be at least three groups of post-communist countries, developing into either authoritarian or democratic states or falling in between (2002, 194).

Hanson (1995; 1997) 'unties the package' of communist legacies, making a difference between ideological, cultural, political and economic legacies. He accepts the argument that they all have negative impact on democratization. He however emphasizes on the different speed with which they are overcome, faster for ideological and political, and slower for economic and cultural.

The reason why Hanson 'unties the package' of communist legacies is that he tries to find an answer for post-communist diversity without abandoning legacies' approach as a basic paradigm and also without jumping to pre-communist legacies explanation like Schopflin. Hanson argues that communist legacies represent a multilevel structure instead of an amorphous concept; different communist countries therefore are trapped into these legacies to a different degree. Democratization proceeds at different speed, in Russia this process is slower than in Central and Eastern Europe (1997, 249-250). He explains this with the fact that communism in Russia is homegrown and that large social groups still feel attached to different communist legacies.



Hanson's model is dynamic in a sense that it does not preclude, once certain democratization threshold is passed, a return to more authoritarian practices, e.g. October crisis in Russia in 1993 (1997, 243). Unlike Jowitt and Schopflin, and despite these reversals, Hanson is optimistic as to the general direction of post-communist democratization. For Hanson as well as for some other authors (e.g. Agopsowicz and Landon 1995, 155) short-term democratic pessimism may coexist with mid-term democratic optimism.

### **2.1.2. Legacy as possibility**

Not all scholars look at legacies as burdens impeding post-communist democratization. Some scholars, on the contrary, look at the past, communism included, as source of inspiration containing seeds of possible democratic renewal. Within this stream we distinguish different approaches, focusing either on administrative practices (Kitschelt et al. 1999), on specific policies (Ekiert 2003), on changing from country to country role of communist parties (Grzymala-Busse 2003), or on different economic and social legacies left by decades of communism (Volgyes 1995; Curry 1995).

Kitschelt et al. (1999) see legacies as inspiring both concerns and hopes regarding post-communist democratization. They argue that it is rather a unique combination of past political and administrative factors that mainly accounts for democratization. Some communist legacies are thus redeemed in accounting for post-communist regime diversity.

Two main legacies, going through both pre- and communist era, shape post-communist political development. One of them divides countries into two groups depending on whether they are administered by a formal bureaucracy or by a patrimonial ruler. The second legacy divides them into two groups depending on whether rulers repress opposition or co-opt its members (1999, 21-22). The cross-cuttings between these groups create three possible political combinations: patrimonial/repressive, bureaucratic/cooptive and bureaucratic/repressive. These different combinations lead to different strength of the communist regime,

patrimonial/repressive being the strongest; and to different types of post-communist transition: personal change or negotiated change or implosion; and also to different post-communist political regimes: democratic, authoritarian or intermediate (1999, 21-31).

Kitschelt et al.'s argument abandons simplistic understanding that communist legacies are always burden for democratization. These legacies can be assessed by the way they affect post-communism political elite's rational choice as well as the choice of political institutions (Kitschelt et al. 1999, 14). Looking deeper into legacies will allow observers seeing seeds of different political paths behind the curtain of almost identical post-communist institutions.

Kitschelt et al.'s analysis is strong in finding causes for post-communist regime diversity remaining entirely within legacies' approach. It is also strong in naming the countries with highest chances for democratization and consolidation, which are Czech Republic, German Democratic Republic, and Poland. Weakest side in this analysis however is its impossibility to see the seeds of post-communist regime diversity within the largest group of seemingly identical cases falling into the crosscutting group of patrimonial/repressive states, e.g. Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Kitschelt et al. 1999, 39). They are all expected to develop as authoritarian regimes, which is not true for some of them.

Grzymala-Busse (2002a; 2002b; 2003a; 2006) focuses on the role of the Communist party. It is worth mentioning that communist parties are not easy subjects for conceptualization. They can play roles in different theoretical approaches: legacies, institutional choices and political leadership. Within legacies' approach Grzymala-Busse makes some interesting observations linking this party's internal structure and behavior, both before and after 1989, with the type of post-communist political regime.

Grzymala-Busse is a dissident voice when it comes to the role of communist successor parties in post-communist development. She argues that a proper structure of decision-making within this party, when higher echelons are given enough discretionary power in the latest periods of communist era, can be very helpful in overcoming inevitable communist rank-and-file opposition against

democratization (2003a, 165). Higley et al. (1996; 2002) qualify to a degree this benevolent role of the communist party top echelon by a factor that partly falls outside legacies' approach strictly speaking, namely the high level of political struggle during transition. The existence of a strong anti-communist opposition at the earlier stages of post-communist transition may or may not be part of the communist legacies.

A separate argument that Grzymala-Busse makes is that the process in which communist party exits from power, disperses and regenerates, is vital for consolidating post-communist political and party system (2006). Elements of this argument fall into another theoretical approach, institutional choices (see **2.2.1. Institutional choice as counterbalance against legacies**). Here it is worth mentioning that some elements of it are also part of legacy approach. Post-communist party system as one of the main factors for democratization is almost entirely a communist byproduct; proof is bad electoral performance of parties claiming any direct link with pre-communist political life (Geddes 1995, 1997).

Volgyes (1995) argues that some fundamental elements within the communist system can also be counted as positive and necessary prerequisites for democratization. He divides communist legacies into two groups, either facilitating or impeding democratization. First group includes industrialization, urbanization, centralized welfare, education, women rights, and to a degree egalitarianism. Second group includes etatisation, psychological need of authority, and hyper centralization. All these factors are central, not secondary, for good functioning of communism; therefore they can be found in most communist countries. Political regime diversity and different speed of democratization therefore is product of the impact of these socio-economic factors, e.g. Central and Eastern Europe have best chances for democratization because they show higher level of first group facilitating factors and lower level of second group impeding factors.

By looking mainly at socio-economic communist legacies the argument advanced by Curry (1995) looks similar to that of Volgyes. Unlike him, however, Curry is much more pessimistic about post-communist democratization in most countries. She does not see real opportunity for western type liberal democracy, and

instead she predicts outcomes ranging from populist democracies through political fragmentations to open authoritarian regimes.

Ekiert (2003) follows the road of facilitating democracy legacies, naming factors that start producing effects in late communist period. He mentions in this category economic liberalization, pragmatization of ruling elite, birth of a strong political opposition, as well as strong and ever growing ties with the West (2003, 115). Ekiert argues that existence of such facilitating legacies, e.g. in Central and Eastern Europe, accounts for faster political regime democratization.

To summarize, legacies approach claims that past differences of pre- and communist period account for post-communist political regime diversity. There are however two opposing streams within this approach, seeing legacies either as burden or as opportunity for post-communist democratization. Some see legacies as uniform body affecting post-communist development in one or another direction. Others see legacies as a complex phenomenon where different past norms and institutions pull post-communist countries in different directions. Therefore scholars agreeing on legacy importance do not agree on how it does affect post-communist development. Some like Jowitt look pessimist and do not predict democratization but in very rare occasions; others like Volgyes make optimistic predictions for democratization in many post-communist countries. In general, if any political democratization is to be predicted in post-communist countries, scholars agree that it will occur in Central Europe.

## ***2.2. Institutional choice approach***

This school of post-communist studies tends to explain political regime diversity by the unique for each country pattern of institutional development set up early on during post-communist transitional period. This school is partly an early reaction to legacies-as-burden approach. This school balances undemocratic expectations by setting up institutions against legacies. It assumes that institutions are not neutral, and that some of them are friendlier for democratization. It focuses on the period immediately following abolishment of Communist party political monopoly, and therefore it is theoretically 'shallower' than legacies according to

Kitschelt's classification (2003, 57-58). This school puts emphasis on factors like building sovereign state, on constitutional relations between different branches of power, and on electoral and party systems. Crafted initially as reaction to the legacies' negative fatalism (Ackerman 1992), this school gradually develops into a body of studies comparing relative pros and cons of different institutions (Shvetsova 2002).

### **2.2.1. Institutional choice as counterbalance against legacy**

Institutional choice school shares assumption that communist legacies negatively correlate with democratization. It however presents counterargument that new institutions can eliminate completely effect of this negative correlation (Ackerman 1992). Moving on further with post-communist transition, main focus of this school shifts from political revolution implying small window of opportunity to ordinary political process. On the center stage previously missing fundamental institutional elements emerge like the need of sovereign state (Linz and Stepan 1996) as well as small but important party system elements like communist successor parties (Grzymala-Busse 2006).

Ackerman (1992) looks at 1989-1991 events as a potential for new liberal revolution. There is, as during any revolution, a small window of opportunity, a 'constitutional moment' (1992, 3) when new institutions eliminating legacy impact can be successfully set up. New institutions mean new constitutional arrangement between different branches of government, i.e. separation of powers and directly elected parliament. If these liberal institutions are set up during this short period of opportunity, they will then set in motion political processes independently from both legacies and from key political actors' preferences. According to Ackerman, the burden of legacies affects present political life through former and formal institutions (1992, 46). Once these institutions are replaced with new liberal ones legacy negative impact will quickly disappear.

Ackerman's model is optimistic regarding chances of democratization. It is also egalitarian, Russia as well as any Central European country has its constitutional moment, when burden of legacies may be eliminated (1992, 57). In a

sense, this is a negativist fatalist view of the legacies' approach taking complete U-turn, instead of all post-communist countries falling into the trap of their own past, they all can break with it and build democratic political systems.

The argument of Ackerman has a powerful impact on the entire institutional choice school. Roeder (2001) in a similar vein, after shifting his theoretical approach from more political leadership oriented to more institutional choice (for more on that see **2.3 Political leadership**), explains democratization and failure of authoritarian reversal with new liberal institutions like constitutional separation of powers set early on during transition period. These institutions create a unique balance of power between key political players and therefore do not allow for replacement of political bargain with political monopoly (2001, 23).

Elster, Offer, and Preuss (1998) offer a more optimistic view within the institutional choice approach than Ackerman. This additional dose of optimism comes from the fact that an extremely crucial 'constitutional moment' disappears from the explanatory model. New liberal institutional arrangements still do matter for democratization, but not the timing of their initial setting up. Legacies have no substantial impact on post-communist political development, because no former institutions survive transition, which begins from 'tabula rasa' (1998, 18-19). It is rather a choice between institutions that ultimately facilitates or obstructs democracy. Institutions that facilitate democratization and democratic consolidation are liberal constitution, parliamentary responsible executive, and political parties being at the center of political action (1998, 109-111). Colton shares the argument that institutions do matter much more than legacies, and that orderly party systems and above all institutionalized executives depending on party support are positively correlated with democratic consolidation (2004, 204-205). His quantitative research based on Russian experience under presidents Yeltsin and Putin fairly well measures party strength and party roles within the political system.

Grzymala-Busse (2006) looks within the post-communist party system at one important and structurally unavoidable element, the communist successor parties, and argues that the place they occupy and the weight they have within party systems correlates positively with improved political competition, which facilitates

democratization. She predicts therefore that communist successor parties that fail in either early exit from power, or in early dispersion and regeneration are usually part of party systems where levels of competition are minimal, and therefore democratization there is weak or inexistent.

Linz and Stepan (1996) offer an additional prerequisite for democratic transition, the sovereign state itself, which is an element that post-communist democratization studies building upon traditions from South America and Southern Europe initially miss. Within the model Linz and Stepan present, a model that borrows independent variables from different schools, building of a sovereign state is a paramount prerequisite for any political development, including democratic (1996, 16-19). Bunce (2004), building upon the Linz and Stepan's argument, presents less complex and more cohesive theoretical model. It is ultimately strong state capacity that offers political elites some choice between different institutional arrangements and policies (2004, 229).

### **2.2.2. Institutional choice threatening democratization**

Institutional choice scholars share main premise about the causal impact institutions have on political process, but they differ substantially on the direction of this process. Some argue that instead of facilitating democratization and its consolidation, some post-communist institutions may lead to democratic reversal. This stream within institutional choice approach is largely consistent with the Linz's argument about perils of presidentialism (1990).

The 'perils of presidentialism' argument presents executive office of president, popularly elected and independent from political accountability to national parliament, as a threat to democratization. Presidentialism facilitates confrontational political style, leaves large sections of population without adequate political representation, and uses political confrontation within parliament to increase executive power at the expense of legislature. Institution of a strong and popularly elected president therefore leads to democratic backslide.

Fish (2001) supports this argument in the context of post-communist transition. He sees in presidentialism the single most important factor accounting

for democratization reversal. It does not matter whether a president has democratic worldviews or not. What does matter is that president enjoys endorsement of popular confidence unmatched by other political players, that domestic opposition is weak to oppose his initiatives, and that president enjoys a support of powerful external patron, e.g. Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan (2001, 73-75). To borrow from Ackerman's terminology, strong president within post-communist context may use 'constitutional moment', the act of institutionalization of an independent executive, in order to shift the balance of power in his own favor.

Less categorical in his argument about 'perils of presidentialism' is Frye (2002), who throughout years gradually shifts his theoretical approach from political leadership to institutional choice (for more on that see **2.3.2. Power-seeking politicians**). He agrees with Fish that presidentialism is negatively correlated to democratization, but puts a qualification that this correlation cannot be observed in all cases, e.g. Poland and Ukraine (2002, 100-102). Frye shares Fish's position that strong office of president correlates positively with weak party system and fragmented parliament. Frye introduces an additional economic explanation for strong president; rent-seekers in countries with fragmented parliaments are looking for increased power for president in order to preserve their economic advantages (2002, 82).

Ishiyama and Velten (1998) relegate 'perils of presidentialism' argument to secondary role in their explanation of post-communist regime development. Main cause is electoral system for legislative elections, proportional representation causing democracy and single-member district causing authoritarianism (1998, 225). These electoral systems, they argue, ultimately decide how strong party system will be in post-communist countries. Strong presidential institution therefore acts only as an intervening variable, producing democratic reversals in countries where institutional basis for strong party system is already undermined by non-proportional electoral system (1998, 228). Shvetsova largely agrees with Ishiyama and Velten's argument as to the central role party system plays in post-communist democratization (2002, 55). She discusses the role of other institutions in either facilitating or obstructing party system consolidation.



To summarize, institutional choice approach claims that unique institutional development accounts for post-communist political regime diversity. There are two main streams within this approach, seeing institutional choice either as facilitating or as impeding factor for post-communist democratization. Some scholars see new liberal institutions like separation of powers as always leading to democratization. Many see at least some institutions as threatening to democratization, e.g. presidential system and single-member district elections for parliament. Therefore scholars who agree on institutional choice importance do not agree on how it does affect post-communist development. Some look optimistic and do not predict democratic backslide but in rare occasions; others make more pessimistic predictions for democratization in many post-communist countries.

### ***2.3. Political leadership approach***

This approach pulls the center of research interest toward political actors instead of legacies and new political institutions. It assumes that despite these legacies and institutional restraints key politicians still have plenty of freedom to change the picture according to their worldviews or preferences. Legacies and institutions however are not ignored. They may still act as possible intervening variables. Political leadership approach argues that active behavior of key political actors causes post-communist political regime diversity. Compared to legacies and institutional choices, political leadership approach is much more an agency-oriented one within Kitschelt's classification (2003). Depending on the level of influence it allows from legacies and institutions it may also be more or less agency-oriented within itself.

#### **2.3.1. Worldviews matter**

Within political leadership approach one stream takes worldviews of main political actors as most important independent variable. It is political ideology of those with greatest power that ultimately causes one or another political regime. For some scholars this explanation applies to all post-communist cases (McFaul 2002);

for others worldviews matter only when different political forces are more or less equal in strength (Brown 2002; Fish 2002). This stream within political leadership approach allows for all possible political regime outcomes.

For McFaul (2002; 2004) it is worldviews of the strongest political faction that ultimately determines whether political regime is democratic, authoritarian, or intermediate, e.g. if strongest faction has democratic worldviews political outcome is democratic (2002, 213-214). For McFaul therefore countries like Czech Republic and Hungary go democratic; countries like Belarus and Kazakhstan move toward authoritarianism; and countries like Albania and Moldova are intermediate regimes (2002, 227). Other factors like state capacity, western influence, cultural legacies, may play but secondary role in this model. If there is a balance of power between democrats and dictators the outcome will be an unstable regime. Nodia (2002) puts slightly less emphasis on worldviews; politicians may promote democracy not because they believe in it but because they find it necessary. In this case, key politicians recognize compelling power of democratic ideals, and see the need to accept or at least to give appearance of accepting these ideals and thus preserving a place in political decision-making in long-term.

Key element in McFaul's model, second only to elite's worldview, is distribution of power between main political factions. What makes his approach consistent more with political leadership instead of legacy or institutional choice is that specific legacies and institutions do not cause this distribution of power. These more structural factors have intervening significance only through human actions (2002, 214). The real causality for McFaul flows from these agencies to political regime type.

Brown (2001; 2002) disagrees with McFaul that politicians' worldviews matter in all cases, regardless of power distribution. Taking Russia as an example, he argues that only when power is on balance between different political factions, only then worldviews matter more than other more structural factors. Political elite during political stalemate may make a choice for either democracy or dictatorship. Without such stalemate more structural factors play predominant role in explaining regime evolution.

Fish (2002) abandons previously held more institutional approach (2001) (for more on that see **2.2.2. Institutional choice threatening democratization**) and like Brown argues that within an unconsolidated regime it is the choice of key political actors that causes regime diversity. Taking Russia as an example, he argues that different elements within Putin's policy can lead to different outcomes. For example, growing state monopoly over communications may lead to authoritarianism, but regularization of political competition may have good implications for democracy (2002, 246-247). Both Brown's and Fish's models predictive force however is very limited. By leaving to key actors in Russia to decide on the nature of political regime, they allow for any possible outcome. Between two models Fish's is more complicated implying different logic behind many simultaneously taken decision, some leading to more democracy and some to more authoritarianism.

### **2.3.2. Power-seeking politicians**

Second stream within political leadership approach takes as central key politicians as rational choice actors seeking to maximize and to keep power. Some scholars look at political outcomes as closely following power-seeking politicians' original design (Roeder 1994); others see these outcomes as result of incomplete contracting and therefore as not entirely following rational actors' expectations (Frye 1997). Power-seeking explanation within political leadership approach always predicts post-communist backslide to authoritarianism.

Roeder (1994) puts in the center of his analysis self-interested politicians, seeking to maximize their control over political process. Democracy and authoritarianism are not functions of politicians' worldviews. Power-seeking politicians unrestricted by more structural factors cause authoritarianism. Democracy is possible only when these authoritarian plans fail materializing for some reasons. Different shades of authoritarianism are the only logical consequences of power-seeking politicians' actions.

Roeder's explanation is much more concerned with authoritarian than democratic regime outcomes. He argues that there are three types of

authoritarianisms: autocracies, oligarchies, and exclusive republics. They differ according to the selectorate each regime establishes; selectorate is a group posing credible threat of removing policymakers (1994, 65). Clashes between competing strategies of power maximizing politicians produce these different authoritarianisms. Driven by rational choice dilemmas similar to security dilemmas in international relations (1994, 64) politicians choose among different regimes in order to keep as much as possible power. Roeder's model offers expectations making authoritarian regimes norm, and democracies exceptions to this norm, failures in authoritarian plans. Notwithstanding legacies or new post-communist institutions, real driving forces of political development are power-seeking politician, trying to limit the ways they are held accountable. Within his model political actors' influence and prospects for democratization have negative correlation, e.g. in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine.

Frye (1997) like Roeder (1994) puts power-seeking politicians in the center of political analysis. Frye claims that despite great uncertainty during transition actors understand their interests and design appropriate strategies for their accomplishment. Like Roeder, Frye looks at the different strategies power-seeking politicians are designing in order to keep and increase control over political process. Frye starts from incomplete contracting premise, where no decision can have entirely predictable outcomes, because nobody can predict every possible future contingency. Unlike Roeder, Frye sees authoritarianism not as a successfully accomplished plan pre-designed by power-seeking politicians, but rather as a possible outcome of incomplete contracting made by rational actors. Authoritarianism becomes especially feasible when subject of incomplete contracting is establishment of a strong presidential institution. Such an institution usually implies large residual powers of making decisions outside initial contract. It therefore makes possible significant democratic backslide and destruction of liberal constitutional norms.

Frye (1997) and Frye (2002) have one important difference for the purpose of this study. Frye (1997) takes power-seeking politicians as main cause for possible regime outcomes; therefore institutions these politicians design act as

intervening variables, able to facilitate or impede authoritarianism. Frye (2002), on the contrary, takes elective presidential institution as main independent variable causing authoritarianism (for more on that see **2.2.2. Institutional choice threatening democratization**).

To summarize, political leadership approach claims that main political actors cause post-communist political development. There are two main streams within this approach, looking for causes in politicians' worldviews or at them as rational actors in search for power maximizing. On the one hand, worldviews may cause opposing regime outcomes. On the other hand, politicians as rational actors, unrestricted by legacies and institutions, cause authoritarianism.

## ***2.4. External influence and support***

External influence and support approach claims that there is causality and strong correlation between external factors and post-communist regime diversity. Unlike other three groups of explanations: legacy, institutional choice and political leadership, different hypotheses within this approach can be situated anywhere on structure-agency continuum, and also anywhere in terms of causal deepness. This approach arrives chronologically last, its main concepts emerge ten years and more after the start of post-communist transition.

### **2.4.1. Positive external influence toward democratization**

External influence and support approach is divided into two main streams. One looks at western institutions, e.g. EU or NATO, as main independent variables. They play a role in post-communist development either as active actors imposing new institutions, or as passive actors diffusing values and changing expectations among political elites in post-communist countries. This stream of thought establishes positive correlation between external factors and democratization.

Vachudova (2005) presents a model where European Union (EU) acts at times as passive and at times as active leverage toward democratization in Central and Eastern Europe. During early stages of transition EU plays only secondary role. With EU membership emerging as real possibility external factor begins playing

ever-increasing and even predominant role. From passive leverage acting mainly through influencing domestic political actors' expectations in 1989-1994 period, EU turns into main driving force for democratization during active leverage period after 1994.

For Vachudova EU influence is always positively correlated to post-communist democratization. Its passive leverage changes domestic political elite rational calculations; its active leverage causes changes in political structures and increases political system competitiveness, thus shifting the balance of power against rent-seeking undemocratic elites (2005, 161). Vachudova's expectations are that the clearer are promises of EU membership, and the deeper is process of accession negotiations, the more likely is that accession countries will have democratic regimes.

Pridham (2001; 2005) shares Vachudova's argument about positive EU role in post-communist democratization. Unlike Vachudova however Pridham pays special attention to much narrower time framework of accession negotiations (2005). This shorter period is important for post-communist democratization because it provides accession countries' elites with first-hand experience in the art of pluralist politics (2005, 115). Pridham expectations linking positively Europeanisation and democratization are similar to that of Vachudova despite his concerns about possible bureaucratization of relations with Brussels (2005, 226).

Barany (2004) looks at another external factors, namely at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as more supportive than causing post-communist democratization. This organization does this by creating supportive international environment for securing national sovereignty for post-communist countries; the assumption here is that national sovereignty is main prerequisite for any democratization. NATO also promotes democracy in certain specific areas like civil-military relations and transparent military budgets (2004, 74-75). For Barany correlation between prospects for NATO membership and democratization is positive.

Levitsky and Way (2005a; 2005b) do not restrict their analysis with one particular external factor causing or supporting democratization; they focus their

attention on the West in general as a political, military and economic center without legitimate alternatives in the post Cold War world. Their model looks at democratization as caused by cumulative impact of two different factors: western leverages, i.e. level of pressure the West can exercise over post-communist countries; and western linkages, i.e. density of each post-communist country's ties with the United States, or EU, or Western-led multilateral institutions (2005a, 21). High external leverage and linkage lead in most cases to democratization, e.g. countries in Central Europe; high leverage and low linkage, e.g. Georgia and Moldova, lead to political instability but rarely to democratization; and low leverage and low linkage in most cases lead to authoritarian political outcomes, e.g. Russia and Belarus (2005a, 27-31). Everything else being equal only higher linkage allows for external factor to play predominant role in post-communist development. Higher linkage with the West is always positively correlated with democratization.

#### **2.4.2. Mixed or negative external effect on democratization**

Another stream within the school of external factors is much less optimistic about the role they play in post-communist democratization. Some scholars have mixed expectations, separating and opposing short- from long-term EU impact. Others see danger for democracy or to its quality coming from EU accession process, giving enormous power to executives at the expense of elected legislative bodies. Last but not least, by extending invitations to intermediate regimes to join EU this organization may unexpectedly give democratic legitimacy to these regimes and obstructs further democratization.

Kolarska-Bobinska (2003) argues that EU integration process has mutually inconsistent short- and long-term effects on democratization. In short-term Europeanisation leads to less democracy and to rise of populist movements; in long-term, however, it may lead to democratic reinforcement. EU integration in short-term leads to neglecting stabilization, strengthening and protection of many institutions, on which democratic order is ultimately based upon (2003, 91). Once EU membership is achieved however, expectations are that transfer of knowledge and skills, and strengthening of public institutions will lead to democratic

consolidation (2003, 97). Grzymala-Busse and Innes (2003b) share the view that EU integration has negative short-term correlation with quality of democratization, without denying that EU may affect positively post-communist democratization in long-term. They explain this short-term negative effect by the impact the Europeanisation has on political competition due to the fact that EU imposes several non-negotiable requirements to accessing countries.

Kristi Raik (2004) argues that EU enlargement contributes to democratic erosion in post-communist countries without mentioning any time limitation. The logic of inevitability of EU membership is not consistent with democratic principles. Accelerated speed of EU integration also contradicts more elaborated and slower process of democratic bargaining. Effectiveness of EU accession negotiations is always negatively correlated with the level of democratic consolidation. Last but not least, expert elite-driven negotiation process creates a widening gap between domestic political elites and their electorates. The logic of Europeanisation promotes bureaucratic, executive-dominated policymaking and leaves little and ever shrinking room for democratic politics in applicant countries (2004, 591). Democratic quality erosion may turn into democratic regime erosion.

Bideleux (2001) argues that EU is not a democratic but liberal project, thus making baseless any expectations about possible democratization effect on new member countries. He shares some arguments advanced later by Raik, e.g. that EU accession process gives enormous power to domestic executives at the expense of elected parliaments. Europeanisation and democratization are weakly correlated; when such correlation exists, Europeanisation is always negatively correlated to democratization. Therefore by becoming more integrated into EU post-communist countries, without exception, find themselves increasingly regulated by rules, laws, decision, procedures and policies formulated in Brussels rather than domestically and democratically (2001, 27).

Gallagher (2005a; 2005b) argues in a similar vein, providing examples from Romania that Europeanisation may sometimes correlate negatively with democratization. Unlike Raik and Bideleux, however, Gallagher's argument is that EU helps preserving old political patterns and behavior by giving democratic



legitimacy to communist successor parties and leaders, which obstruct democratization. In this sense, EU in Gallagher's model may preserve both democratic and undemocratic regimes.

To summarize, external influence and support approach claims that external factors cause post-communist political regime development. There are two main streams within this approach, claiming that external influence can affect either positively or negatively prospects for democratization. Both streams look at EU as major foreign factor. Positive correlation to democratization occurs when EU imposes new pro-democratic institutions or changes local political elite expectations. Negative correlation may occur when EU limits democratic process during accession period or gives democratic legitimacy to undemocratic political forces.

## ***2.5. Concluding remarks***

This chapter presented four different approaches to the problem of post-communist political regime diversity: legacies, institutional choices, political leadership, and external influence and support. It reviewed their major arguments and expectations regarding post-communist development. It was the first logical step into research of post-communist regime diversity. In the following chapter these four approaches will be critically assessed. Four generic models will be then crafted, one for each approach. These models will turn four major approaches into four theoretically testable hypotheses.

### 3. Generic models

The purpose of this chapter is to present four generic models crafted out of four approaches, already presented in previous chapter: legacy, institutional choice, political leadership, and external influence and support. A model here means simplified construct representing main features of theoretical approach and its hypothesis. Generic models combine mutually reinforcing independent variables from each approach. Purpose of this is to focus on four generic, comparable models, without which this project may become unmanageable.

There are three possible ways of crafting a generic model, which I will call selective, deterministic, and flexible. Each of them has strong and weak sides. **Selective** approach requires using as many as possible variables but only those that can be linked into a strong theoretical model. For example, medieval feudal norms of reciprocity cause creation of formal bureaucracy through mechanisms of rule of law; but these feudal norms will neither determine communist rulers political strategy nor these rulers' economic policy during communism. Selective approach therefore leads to unacceptable elimination of many variables for the sake of theoretical rigidity. **Deterministic** approach assumes that presence of all variables is necessary to produce one or another post-communist political outcome. It assumes that all independent variables are mutually linked, and that only their cumulative action causes certain political outcome. This approach does not leave behind any independent variable, but at the cost that it makes any clear-cut outcome almost impossible to achieve. **Flexible** approach, the one I use in this project, tries to eliminate weak sides of these two approaches without compromising with the main goal of this project. It does not claim that all independent variables are correlated between each other. It does claim however that any of them may be correlated to a degree with final outcomes, which are post-communist political regime and its diversity.

Once these four multivariable generic models are crafted, the task for the next chapter will be to test their relevance against post-communist case studies. We must be sure that even if this generic model correlates well with post-communist political development this is not a spurious correlation. To do this, when we

proceed of testing a model against a post-communist case, we must control this correlation by introducing consecutively three other models presented in this chapter. For example, if correlation between model 'A' and post-communist development in country 'X' is positive and by controlling by model 'B' this correlation completely disappears then we may face a spurious correlation, then maybe 'B' would be a better cause for 'X'. If introducing other models do not change initial correlation between causes 'A' and development of country 'X' then the correlation is not spurious.

### **3.1. Legacy generic model**

Legacy approach assumes that unique historical experience of each country causes post-communist political development and possible political regime diversity. For legacy generic model therefore all relevant independent variables should be located theoretically and chronologically before the end of communist system.

There are several independent variables that fit well with this model. Some are easier to observe and measure than others. Our task here is to present generic model combining mutually reinforcing and not contradicting each other elements, easily observable and measurable, claiming to cause post-communist political diversity.

Among independent variables that Jowitt proposes (1992) good candidates for generic model are lack of **shared public identity** of citizens, i.e. no symbolic equation between rulers and ruled as members of one national community; **communist party political monopoly**, alienating population from political realm; development of semi-autarchic **collective** socio-economic institutions, all of which obstructing democratization. We will keep these variables for legacy model. Regarding party political monopoly an important new element comes from Grzymala-Busse (2003a), claiming that **political monopoly of decision-making in the highest party echelons** during latest communist period can benefit democratization.

Another variable of Jowitt, **culture of impersonal measured action**, will be eliminated. He means by this that no communist country is able to create impersonal procedures replacing corrupt set of patron-client relations (1992, 291). His statement does not provide evidence in support of such claim; moreover, Kitschelt et al. (1999, 21-22) provide evidence supporting the opposite claim, that at least some countries have no patron-client relations. In addition to this division between **formal bureaucracies vs. patrimonial rulers**, Kitschelt et al. offer division between legacies of **repression vs. cooptation**. They claim that it is a combination of these cross-cuttings leading to different post-communist outcomes.

Schopflin's (1993) independent variables are easy to observe and integrate into one generic model. They include established through Middle Ages **dichotomy between secular and religious legitimacy**, obstructing later absolutism; **fragmentation of power**, which goes back also to the Middle Ages, ultimately facilitating rule of law; creation of autonomous from state commercial and urban spheres; all these variables ultimately facilitate democratization. Brzezinski's (2002) argument follows some of Schopflin's variables, e.g. secular-religious dichotomy and fragmentation of power. He indirectly elaborates on Schopflin's argument on autonomous from state commercial sphere by measuring it with the **level of institutionalization of private entrepreneurship**.

Hanson (1997) presents four independent variables affecting democratization. Some of them will be included into generic model. **Communist ideology** is a commitment to formal belief system of Marxism-Leninism by elite and population and thus is easily traced down through interviews and public opinion polls (where available); similar point makes Ekiert (2003) when he puts forward **ideological pragmatization** of the elite as an independent variable facilitating democratization. **Economic legacy** according to Hanson is reduced to Stalinist planning and thus is mutually incompatible with market economy; Ekiert (2003) makes similar point when he discusses **economic liberalization** during communism as facilitating democratization. Other two independent variables of Hanson will be excluded from generic model. **Political legacy** or the 'leading role' of the Communist Party is not just communist era constitutional clause. The reason

why we eliminate it is that Hanson's political legacy also includes the level of penetration of state bureaucracy outside elected elite with former communists, a phenomenon which is still not well studied. Another variable that should be eliminated is **cultural legacy** of communism. The reason for this elimination is unclear definition of 'culture' provided by Hanson, making it difficult to observe and measure.

Thus far we have more than a dozen remaining independent variables, each of them fitting well within broad legacy approach. Some are nominal like existence of religious authority independent of state authority; others are ordinal like those offered by Volgyes (1995), e.g. the levels of **industrialization**, **urbanization**, and **literacy**, all for him positively correlating with post-communist democratization. Within arguments presented by their authors these independent variables are not mutually excluding each other, i.e. late communist economic liberalization is always positively correlated, and patrimonial rulers in pre-democratic era are always negatively correlated with expectations of post-communist democratization.

Crafting out our legacies generic model we have following expectations as to post-communist political regime development. We expect that countries experiencing all or most of the following patterns will develop as democracies: medieval dichotomy between secular and religious legitimacy; medieval and more recent fragmentation of political power; historical autonomy of commercial and urban spheres, with respective institutionalization of private property; formal bureaucratic rule and elite strategy of co-opting opposition during communism; low level of communist party political monopoly over society; high autonomy of decision-making of high party echelons within the communist party at the end of communism; market liberalization during communism; low level of incidence of semi-autarchic collective economic entities; high level of elite ideological pragmatization; low level of ideological commitment toward Marxism-Leninism among population and elite during communism; high level of industrialization, urbanization and literacy; and high level of shared public identity between rulers and ruled during communism.

On the contrary, we will expect that countries experiencing all or most of the following variables will develop as authoritarian regimes: tradition of secular supremacy over religion; lack of history of political power fragmentation; no autonomy of commercial and urban spheres; patrimonial rule and elite strategy of repressing opposition during communism; high level of communist party political monopoly over society; low autonomy of decision-making of high party echelons within communist party at the end of communism; sticking to Stalinist planning system until the end of communism; high level of incidence of semi-autarchic economic entities; low level of elite pragmatization; high level of ideological commitment toward Marxism-Leninism among population and/or political elite during communism; low level of industrialization, urbanization and literacy; and low level of shared public identity between rulers and ruled.

We expect that post-communist countries where most important among these independent variables are more or less evenly distributed at the beginning of transition may occupy intermediate positions between democratic and authoritarian post-communist regimes.

### ***3.2. Institutional choice generic model***

Institutional choice approach assumes that unique for each post-communist country institutional development causes its political development and is ultimately accountable for political regime diversity. All independent variables of its generic model therefore are located theoretically and chronologically after the end of communist system.

It may seem unnecessary repeating, but democracy, as any other stable political regime, needs sovereign state. Unlike democratization studies focusing on Latin America and Southern Europe where sovereign state is taken for granted, democratization studies on post-communist countries should begin with state itself, given that most post-communist countries did not have a state within international community of states at the start of transition. Linz and Stepan (1996) put **sovereign state** as a main prerequisite for any possible democratization. It however does not automatically lead to democracy. Bunce (2004) builds upon this prerequisite by

introducing another one, **strong state capacity**, allowing for possible democratization. It is not only some clear territorial distinction between different polities, but also political elite's possibility within each polity to choose between different institutional arrangements that ultimately make democracy possible.

Ackerman (1992) focuses on **constitutional separation between different branches of government** early on during transition. Such early separation accounts for regime diversity, because the 'window of opportunity' for overcoming negative effects of legacies is relatively brief. Elster, Offe, and Preuss (1998) lift time limitations needed for introducing new constitutional arrangements. Roeder (2001) concurs with them on this issue. For him, however, new constitutional arrangements act more like insurance policy against possible authoritarian reversals than as cause for democratization.

Elster, Offe, and Preuss also explain post-communist democratization with **central role that political parties play** within political system (1998, 109-111), an argument Shvetsova concurs (2002). Colton (2004) adds new element to party system linking democratization to **institutionalized executive dependent upon party support and responsible to parliament**. Fish (2001) and Frye (2002) defend same argument from different perspective, they correlate democratic backslide with institutionalization of strong executive independent from party support and parliament, an argument consistent with **perils of presidentialism**. This argument relates democratic backslides with strong presidential power independent of elected parliament. Fish elaborates on this issue by introducing variable reinforcing this peril, **support for strong executive from powerful external patron**.

Ishiyama and Velten (1998) do not reject perils of presidentialism argument, but introduce a new important independent variable, **electoral system for legislative election**, that relegates perils of presidentialism to secondary position acting instead as controlling variable. It is the single-member district electoral system for legislative election that produces weak party system and weak parliaments, giving political executives opportunity of making authoritarianism possible. Grzymala-Busse (2006) looks within post-communist party system at one structurally unavoidable element, communist successors parties, and more

specifically at their behavior after beginning of transition. She argues that if they early **exit from power, disperse, and regenerate**, this will strengthen party systems, thus increasing political competition and making democracy more likely.

Thus far we have several independent variables, each of them fitting well within institutional choice approach. They do not contradict each other, e.g. nobody claims that strong executive independent from parliament and parties increases chances of democratization. Disagreements come mainly from relative weight of each variable, i.e. whether they are seen as main independent variables causing post-communist development, or acting more like intervening variables, increasing or diminishing impact of other main independent variables.

Crafting out institutional choice generic model we have following expectations as to post-communist political development. We will expect that countries experiencing all or most of the following patterns will develop as democracies: existence of sovereign state over particular territory; strong state capacity of choosing among different institutional arrangements; constitutional separation of different branches of government, where executive is dependent upon political party support; proportional representation electoral system for legislative election leading to strong political parties system; and communist successor party that exits early from power, disperses and regenerates.

On the contrary, we will expect that countries experiencing all or most of the following variables will develop as authoritarian regimes: lack of internationally recognized sovereign state over particular territory; weak state capacity of choosing among different institutional arrangements; executive is independent from parliament and from political party support and is supported by powerful external patron; single-member district electoral system for legislative election impeding creation of strong parties system; and communist successor party that does not exit early from power, does not disperse and does not regenerate.

We will expect that post-communist countries where many of these independent variables are more or less evenly distributed at the beginning of post-communist transition may occupy stable intermediate positions between democratic and authoritarian post-communist regimes.



### **3.3. Political leadership generic model**

Political leadership approach assumes that it is the active and purposeful behavior of key political actors that causes unique for each country political regime development. Political leadership generic model therefore looks at political process instead of focusing on political legacies or political institutions. Legacies and institutions still may play but secondary role in political regime development. Despite their incentives or restraints political actors still have plenty of freedom changing situation according to their worldviews and rational calculations.

Political leadership model unlike previous two models does not present multitude of possible and alternative independent variables; it assumes that main cause is located within very narrow circle of political elite. Differences within this model therefore do not deal with question ‘what causes?’ but rather with question ‘how they cause?’ Political leadership model therefore will present different causal mechanisms linking political actors and post-communist political regime diversity.

Two main streams within policy choices approach look *mainly* at political **actors’ political ideology** or at **actors as power-seeking maximizers**. McFaul (2002; 2004) explains post-communist regime diversity with ideology of strongest political faction. This explanation is good for predicting either democratic or authoritarian trend or intermediate political regimes. Roeder (1994), on the other hand, expects that power-seekers will always lead to post-communist authoritarianism, making this approach weaker in terms of explaining democratization otherwise than as authoritarian project failure.

Other authors reduce explanatory power of political leadership explanation to particular cases of post-communist development, e.g. Brown (2001; 2002) and Fish (2002) argue that political ideology causes political regime only if there is a balance of power between different political factions or within unconsolidated regimes. These multiple qualifications require for the purpose of our generic model taking McFaul and Roeder as basic representatives of each stream.

Instead of asking how to integrate **political ideology** and **rational choice power seeking** into one generic model, a question that may eliminate elements of

both streams for the sake of their consistency, we will ask question whether there is something that makes them really incompatible? This is an approach where any possible answer but total negative is acceptable; in the opposite case all possible answers but entirely positive would be considered unacceptable.

At first look there is fundamental inconsistency between political ideology and power seeking. Ideology has strong normative element of how power should be allocated regardless of whether this distribution benefits particular political actors. This normative element however creates own rational calculations as possible means leading to some particular goals. Within this broader understanding rational power-seeking actor is not incompatible with political ideology as far as this actor is using power for particular goal consistent with ideology. Unlike Roeder's bleak expectations regarding possibility of post-communist democratization, democratic opposition leaders seek power mainly as means toward democratic goal; a goal unachievable without their participation in power according to McFaul's expectations. Rational actor seeking power for the sake of absolute power is fairly consistent with authoritarian political ideology. To sum-up, rational calculation including power seeking is not theoretically incompatible with particular political ideology. Sometimes it is ideology that causes particular rational calculations.

Crafting out political leadership generic model we have following expectations as to the post-communist regime development. We will expect that countries experiencing following independent variables will develop as democracies: strongest among post-communist political factions are democratically minded politicians, and there is consistency between strongest political actors' worldviews and their rational calculations. Not so strong but still democratic are expectations for countries where strongest political factions are not democratically-minded, and there is no consistency between key political actors' political ideology and their rational calculations, these actors install democracy not because they see it as right regime, but because they find it necessary (e.g. Nodia 2002).

On the contrary, we will expect that countries showing following independent variables will develop as authoritarian regimes: strongest among post-communist political factions are authoritarian-minded politicians, and there is

consistency between their worldviews and their rational calculations; or strongest among post-communist factions are not authoritarian-minded, and there is no consistency between their political ideology and their rational calculations; in this situation key politicians install authoritarianism not because they believe in it, but because they think they benefit from it.

We will expect that post-communist countries where these variables are more or less evenly distributed at the beginning of transition will occupy stable intermediate positions between democratic and authoritarian regimes, e.g. democratic and authoritarian forces will be on a balance and the cost of changing this balance will be far greater than possible benefits for each faction.

### ***3.4. External influence and support generic model***

External influence and support approach tends to explain political regime diversity through variables geographically and/or institutionally located outside post-communist region, or within this region but outside any of countries under research, e.g. when one post-communist country influences political development in another post-communist country. This generic model, unlike legacies, institutional choice and political leadership, can therefore be situated anywhere on structure-agency continuum, and also anywhere in terms of causal deepness.

This model addresses mainly the issue of EU impact on post-communist political development. With some notable exceptions where EU does not play any conceptual role (Barany 2004), it is seen either as only independent variable, or as main variable acting in unison with other West-centered international organizations. The ‘apple of discord’ between different scholars comes mainly from political direction post-communist countries take under active EU influence.

EU influence over post-communist countries increases with these countries expectations of becoming EU members. Most scholars agree (e.g. Vachudova 2005) that during pre-accession period lasting for most of 1990s EU acts mainly through changing post-communist political elite expectations. Any move toward democratization is attributed to elite’s calculation that applying certain rules increases chances of being considered as democratic and therefore invited to join

EU. Democratization therefore is price to be paid even by undemocratically minded politicians who want that their countries join EU.

Second mechanism that causes democratization is accession negotiations. Many scholars agree (Vachudova 2005; Pridham 2001; 2005; Levitsky and Way 2005a; 2005b) that EU has powerful leverage to influence not only politicians' rational calculations, but also to require changes in political institutions and even in governments in exchange for inviting these countries.

Many scholars hold identical views positively correlating high expectations of EU membership and democratization during pre-negotiation period. Scholars however sharply disagree on the effects of EU influence on democratization during negotiation process itself. One group (Vachudova 2005; Pridham 2005; Levitsky and Way 2005a) sees it as a sign of further even more active pro-democratic influence. Others (Kolarska-Bobinska 2003; Grzymala-Busse and Innes 2003; Kristi Raik 2004; and Gallagher 2005) hold opposing views. They argue that negotiating EU integration without any viable alternative is undemocratic act; that high speed of negotiations does not allow for any substantial democratic negotiations between post-communist elites and their constituencies; that EU accession process allows narrow post-communist elites dictating rules and direction to entire society; and that these elites get EU democratic allure even if they have undemocratic political record.

The points that most scholars disagree over are few but all of them require brief discussion. First, I do not accept that negotiating EU membership without any real alternative downgrades per se quality of democracy because there is large consensus in many post-communist countries on EU membership. Such consensus can be measured by looking at public opinion polls during transition. Second, if higher speed of EU negotiations downgrades quality of democracy we may expect that some countries will clearly show democratization backslide during this process. Third, whether EU negotiations create and keep in office particular political elite can also be measured by electoral results before and after EU accession process. If EU negotiation process somehow erodes democracy or its quality, such backslides can be observed and measured.

Apart from EU, NATO also acts as leading democratization factor. The argument Barany (2004) makes is that NATO membership stabilizes state sovereignty over particular territory, and also that it puts military under civilian government leadership, therefore acting as prerequisite and cause for further democratic development.

Crafting out external generic model we have following expectations as to post-communist development. We will expect that countries experiencing the following patterns will develop as democracies: countries with high expectations for EU/NATO membership in reasonably short- to mid-term period; population supporting EU/NATO integration; EU/NATO exercise strong leverage over post-communist countries by requiring institutional and governmental changes in exchange for membership; negotiation process does not prevent normal democratic change of government and monopolization of political offices by unchecked elite; post-communist countries are not influenced mainly by strong authoritarian state.

On the contrary, we will expect that countries experiencing the following patterns will develop as authoritarian regimes: countries with low expectations for EU/NATO membership in reasonably short- to mid-term period; population not supporting EU/NATO integration; EU/NATO does not exercise strong leverage over post-communist countries by imposing institutional and governmental changes; if EU/NATO allows post-communist countries to begin accession negotiations this process prevents normal democratic change of government by keeping in office undemocratic political elite; post-communist countries are influenced mainly by strong authoritarian state.

We will expect that post-communist countries where these variables are more or less evenly distributed, e.g. bitterly divided political elite and public opinion over EU/NATO membership; or fairly equal influence coming from both EU/NATO and strong authoritarian states, will occupy stable intermediate positions between democratic and authoritarian post-communist regimes.

### ***3.5. Concluding remarks***

This chapter presented four multivariable generic models that turn four general theoretical approaches to the problem of post-communist political regime diversity into testable hypotheses. They look successively at historic legacies, post-communist institutional choices, political leadership, and external influence and support. Each of these models is crafted to be theoretically sufficient in trying to explain post-communist political regime diversity, i.e. to explain why they become democratic, or authoritarian, or remain between these two extremes. These models are flexible, they include as many as possible independent variables found in literature, which are internally not contradicting and are mutually reinforcing each other. The next logical step will be naming representative cases of post-communist political development and testing these four models to each of them.

## **4. Post-communist cases. Testing models**

The purpose of this chapter is presenting three case studies, Romania, Belarus, and Macedonia as representative for different political trajectories, namely democratic, authoritarian, and intermediate regimes (for more about the choice of these cases see **1.2. Methodology**). It contains short narratives about each country, including information about its pre-communist, communist and post-communist period. Then each generic theory, i.e. legacy, institutional choice, political leadership, and external influence and support, are tested separately to each case measuring and discussing their relative explanatory power.

For Romania this chapter concludes that two models, institutional choice and international influence, give too optimistic prediction regarding first half of 1990s, but are correct regarding post-1996 period; political leadership model for early 1990s makes too pessimistic prediction, but is correct for post-1996 period; legacy model is imprecise about entire post-communist period.

For Belarus this chapter concludes that three models, institutional choice, political leadership, and international influence, give too pessimistic predictions regarding first half of 1990s, but are very accurate as to the nature of political regime after 1996. The legacy model is again too imprecise for entire post-communist period.

For Macedonia two models, political leadership and international influence, give the country too pessimistic predictions regarding first half of 1990s, and too optimistic predictions for post-1998 period. Institutional choice model gives two mutually excluding but equally possible predictions, which at the end turn to be inaccurate. Legacy model is once again either too imprecise for entire post-communist period or too pessimistic.

### **4.1. Romania. General information**

Romania is currently the largest and most populous post-communist country in Eastern Europe west of former USSR save Poland; its current population stands at 22.3 million. It is located between other post-communist countries, east of Serbia

and Hungary, southwest of Ukraine and Moldova, and north of Bulgaria. As of 2002 largest ethnic group is Romanian (89.5%), and largest minority is Hungarian (6.6%). Predominant religion is Eastern Orthodox Christianity (86.8%), followed by different Protestant denominations (7.5%) and Roman Catholic Christianity (4.7%). Official language is Romanian<sup>3</sup>.

Romania under this name exists since 1859 when two principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, unite. The country gains independence and international recognition in 1878. Romania joins Entente forces during World War I. After victory in the war the country acquires new territories, mostly in Transylvania, partly populated with Hungarians. The country joins Axis powers during most of World War II, participating in invasion against the Soviet Union. Romania is defeated in 1944 by the Red Army and signs armistice joining anti-Nazi military coalition during final period of the war.

After World War II Romania is part of Soviet sphere of influence. In 1947 Romanian king abdicates and people's republic is proclaimed. Up until late 1980s Romania is ruled by one-party communist regime. Between 1965 and 1989 Nicolae Ceausescu effectively rules the country. His power is supported by secret police Securitate at the expense of communist party leadership. At the end of 1989 in a matter of days Ceausescu is overthrown, put on trial, sentenced to death and executed (Chiriac 2001, 124).

During post-communist period until 1996 former communist party officials led by Ion Iliescu dominate government. First peaceful political transition occurs in 1996 when a large coalition of opposition parties, led by Emil Constantinescu, wins both presidential and parliamentary election. Successful and peaceful political transitions occur also in 2000 (Popescu 2003) and 2004 (Downs and Miller 2005). Romania is a Council of Europe member since 1993, a NATO member since 2004 and a European Union member since January 1, 2007.

Freedom House (Freedom House 2005) puts Romania until 1996 into groups of undemocratic and intermediate countries; the country nevertheless moves

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<sup>3</sup> All statistical data regarding case studies' population, ethnicity, religion, and language is taken from CIA World Factbook 2006, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.



toward democratization during this initial post-communist period. Since 1996 up until now the country is considered to be a 'free' state.

#### **4.2. Belarus. General information**

Belarus is a former Soviet republic in Europe; its current population stands at 10.2 million. Geographically it is located between other post-communist countries, east of Poland, southeast of Latvia and Lithuania, northwest of Ukraine, and west of Russia. As of 1999 largest ethnic group is Belarusian (81.2%), and largest minority group is Russian (11.4%). Predominant religion is Eastern Orthodox Christianity (80.0%), followed by Roman Catholic Church and different Protestant denominations. Official languages are Belarusian since 1991 as well as Russian since 1995.

Belarus under this name exists since 1918 when Belarus National Republic is created for a brief period by occupying German army. Between world wars territory of Belarus is divided between Soviet Union (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) and Poland. At the onset of World War II Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is given parts of eastern Poland. Between 1941 and 1944 the country is occupied by Nazi Germany. After the war the status quo is restored as constituent part of Soviet Union. It remains part of the union until late 1980s.

In 1990 Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic declares national sovereignty. In 1991 its name changes to Republic of Belarus. Post-communist and post-Soviet era is clearly divided into two dissimilar periods, before and after Alexander Lukashenko becomes a president (1994) and the subsequent changes in constitution (1996). During first period the country makes painful steps toward democratization and economic liberalization. During second period the country moves quickly toward establishment of authoritarian regime.

In international perspective, Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between European Union and Belarus, negotiated in 1995, never comes into force. With brief suspension for some months during 1999, Belarus is a member of NATO Partnership for Peace program, but direct military cooperation between Belarus and NATO is minimal.

Freedom House (Freedom House 2005) puts Belarus until 1996 into group of intermediate regimes; the country later moves fast into group of authoritarian regimes, where it remains up until the last available report.

### ***4.3. Macedonia. General information***

Macedonia is a former Yugoslav republic, one of the smallest in territory and in population; its current population stands at 2.0 million. With exception of Greece in south, Macedonia geographically is located between post-communist countries, east of Albania, south of Serbia, and southwest of Bulgaria. As of 2002 largest ethnic group is Macedonian (64.2%) and largest minority group is Albanian (25.2%). Predominant religion is Eastern Orthodox Christianity (64.7%), followed by Islam (33.3%). Official languages are Macedonian and Albanian. Turkish, Serbian, and Romany are official languages in municipalities where they represent at least 20% of local population.

Territory of Macedonia in the past is part of multinational empires, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman. Name Macedonia is coined after an ancient Greek kingdom. Until early 1900s the territory is part of the Ottoman Empire. During the Balkan wars 1912-1913 the whole region is divided between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. Today's Macedonia is taken by Serbia and up to World War II it is part of South Serbia region as part of Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During World War II Yugoslavia is occupied by Axis powers and today's Macedonia is divided between Bulgaria and Italian-occupied Albania. After the war Macedonia is returned to Yugoslavia (People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) as a constituent republic (People's Republic of Macedonia). In 1963 both federation and republic change adjectives 'people's' to 'socialist' in the names.

Macedonia peacefully secedes from Yugoslavia in 1991 after a referendum, by keeping an open option for future federation with other former Yugoslav republics. Macedonia does not participate directly in any war fought on the territory of former Yugoslavia.

During post-communist period until late 1990s former communist party officials around Kiro Gligorov dominate executive power. First political transition occurs in 1998 and 1999 when a coalition of opposition parties, led by Ljubco

Georgievski, wins parliamentary and presidential election. Political transitions occur also in 2002 and 2006 parliamentary and 2004 presidential elections.

Macedonia becomes Council of Europe member in 1995. It is a member of NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace program. Macedonia aspires to become NATO member and participates in NATO's Membership Action Plan. NATO-Macedonian relations are intense. Macedonia applied to become European Union member in 2004 and since late 2005 has been granted a candidate status.

Freedom House (Freedom House 2005) puts Macedonia since early 1990s until now into the group of intermediate political regimes; the country shows stable scores throughout entire post-communist period.

#### ***4.4. Testing legacy model***

The purpose of this section is testing legacy model to all three cases consecutively, usually following the order Romania, Belarus, and Macedonia. It matches its variables to historical facts before the start of post-communist transition. It concludes with brief assessment of legacy model power of prediction regarding political regime development.

*Medieval dichotomy between secular and religious legitimacy.* Romania lies on both sides of major European religious division, separating Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholic Christianity since 11<sup>th</sup> century. Since same age Roman Catholic Church establishes separate legitimacy from political rulers. No such theological separation exists for Orthodox Church, including during communism (Linz and Stepan 1996, 451). Romanian Orthodox population represents vast majority of all population. Romania shows *some* medieval dichotomy between secular and religious legitimacy, but it is vastly outnumbered by Orthodox tradition, and is mainly concentrated in the northwest periphery that never exercises political and religious authority over the country.

Belarus also lies on both sides of this religious division. Christian Orthodox population represents vast majority. There is however a significant Roman Catholic minority. For centuries Belarus territory is ruled within political context of Polish-

Lithuanian Commonwealth giving privileges to Roman Catholicism. Belarus shows *some* medieval dichotomy between secular and religious legitimacy, and also has a history of Roman Catholic domination. On the other hand, this legacy is counterbalanced by contemporary domination of Christian Orthodox population.

Macedonia lies east of this main religious division in Europe. During medieval time there was no separation between secular and religious legitimacy for Orthodox Church as well as for the version of Islam imposed during Ottoman Empire domination. Orthodox and Muslim population represent almost all population. Macedonia has no legacy of medieval dichotomy between secular and religious legitimacy. Among three case studies Belarus occupies leading position because of its history as part of Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, Romania occupies intermediate position, and Macedonia occupies the third position.

*Medieval and more recent fragmentation of political power.* Being for many centuries borderland between large multiethnic empires like Ottoman, Austrian, and Russian, two Romanian principalities Wallachia and Moldavia develop high level of autonomy as well as certain level of internal political decentralization. This decentralization is gradually eliminated after they merge into Romanian state in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> c. (Mot 2002, 230) Transylvania traditionally experiences political decentralization, based on powerful local aristocracy; this decentralization is also gradually eliminated after it becomes part of Romania after World War I. In general Romania has a long history of political power fragmentation.

Up until 18<sup>th</sup> c. Belarusian lands are always part of loose and highly decentralized political entities, e.g. Kiev Russ and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Pankovski and Markou 2005, 14). This tradition is reversed and eliminated when these lands are incorporated into Russian Empire since 18<sup>th</sup> c. (Chouchkevitch 2005). In general however Belarus has long history of political power fragmentation.

For most of its medieval history Macedonia is part of multiethnic empires with substantial political and administrative centralization like Byzantine and Ottoman Empire. Between the Balkan wars (1912-1913) and World War II it is directly ruled from Belgrade as part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Macedonia has

no medieval or more recent history of political power fragmentation. Among three case studies Romania together with Belarus share first/second position and Macedonia occupies the third position.

*Historical autonomy of commercial and urban spheres.* Autonomous commercial and urban centers both in Wallachia/Moldavia and in Transylvania exist as early as late 12<sup>th</sup> c. Important difference between these two historically distinctive parts of Romania is that in Transylvania this autonomy is promoted by Hungarian kings giving German colonists special privileges building new towns, so-called ‘German law towns’, e.g. Kronstadt (Brasov), Klausenburg (Cluj-Napoca) and Hermannstadt (Sibiu) to name a few; on the other hand, in Walachia/Moldavia already established administrative centers are given limited commercial privileges. In general Romania has history of commercial and urban autonomy, but it applies mostly to its Transylvanian part.

In Belarus this autonomy is established during Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, providing large privileges under so-called ‘German law town’ to Grodno in 1441, Minsk in 1499, Mogilev in 1577, and Vitebsk in 1597. Unlike Transylvania in Romania, German colonists did not initially build these cities in Belarus despite their similar legal status. Belarus too has history of commercial and urban autonomy.

In Macedonia there is no history of autonomous commercial and urban centers. Multiethnic empires, that Macedonia is part of, have no tradition of giving such special privileges. Among three cases Belarus occupies leading position, Romania is second because its autonomy is mostly concentrated in Transylvania, and Macedonia occupies the third position.

*Nature of the rule and elite strategy during communism.* These variables taken from Kitschelt et al. (1999) divide post-communist countries into two groups, ruled during communism by formal bureaucracy vs. patrimonial leader, and into two different groups regarding extent to which communist-time leadership uses cooptation or repression as main strategy in dealing with opponents. This second variable is closely related to the *level of communist party political monopoly* (Jowitt, 1992). Romania up until overthrow and execution of Ceausescu in late

1989 falls clearly within the group of communist countries ruled by a patrimonial leader using repression against any opposition (Gilberg 1990, 431). The level of communist party political monopoly until the end of 1980s remains high (Nelson 1990, 355).

Belarus as part of the Soviet Union up until the end of communism is also ruled by patrimonial leaders using repression against opposition. This assessment however should be qualified given the process of personal-political paralysis due to communist leaders' illnesses since early 1980s as well as due to political liberalization under Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership in late 1980s (Pankovski and Markou 2005, 16).

Macedonia up until the death of Tito in 1980 is ruled by a patrimonial leader using repression against opposition. The level of communist party political monopoly until the end of 1980s remains high. During 1980s however the lack of strong personality able to fill the vacuum left after Tito makes the nature of the rule moving toward more formal bureaucratic. Despite this there is no political liberalization in Macedonia as part of Yugoslavia on the scale of Belarus as part of the Soviet Union in late 1980s. Among three cases Belarus occupies leading position, followed by Macedonia, and Romania taking the third place.

*Autonomy of decision-making of high party echelons.* In Romania up until the very end of communist regime political power is concentrated into the hands of patrimonial leader (Linz and Stepan 1996, 348). His political and physical elimination in late 1989 does not change this power concentration. New government dominated by former party officials (Nelson 1990, 355; Siani-Davies 1996, 462) has initially large autonomy of decision-making, illustrated by its decision not only to set up rules for first democratic election, but also to take part in this election as one of competing parties (Chiriac 2001, 124). In general in Romania autonomy of decision-making is high.

In Belarus up until 1980 political power is highly concentrated into the hands of patrimonial leader, Pyotr Masherov (Masherov) (Silitski 2005, 59). He dies in a suspicious car accident in 1980 after for quite some time being in conflict with Soviet Union leader Leonid Brezhnev (Marples 1999). Masherov's death

leaves Belarus without strong political personality, and this republic during 1980s follows closely political 'climate' of Moscow, 'deep freeze' during the first half and gradual political 'thawing' during the second half. Republican communist party leadership after 1980 has no large autonomy of decision-making vis-à-vis Moscow and is completely powerless to block political decisions dismantling Soviet Union and replacing it with CIS (Way 2005, 247). To conclude, autonomy of decision-making in Belarus is very low.

In Yugoslavia until 1980 political power is highly concentrated into the hands of patrimonial leader, Josip Broz Tito. He dies after long illness. His death unleashes two parallel processes of power decentralization from federal to republican levels, and on each level from personal to more collective decision-making bodies. As far as Macedonia is concerned its republican leadership gets additional power within Yugoslav federation, but this power is more equally distributed among its own leaders, thus producing inconclusive effect on the level of decision-making autonomy. The end of communist period therefore occurs without strong high party echelon able to take autonomous decision. Comparing cases, autonomy of decision-making is highest in Romania, followed by far by Macedonia, and Belarus occupying the last place because of its clearer subordination to federal center.

*Market liberalization during communism.* Romania is good textbook example of Stalinist planning economy throughout its communist period (Nelson 1990, 359; Sabates-Wheeler 2001, 32). Its position starts contrasting with other communist countries in late 1980s when many of them introduce elements of market liberalization (Gallagher 1995, 66).

Belarus up until mid-1980s is also good example of Stalinist planning economy. Some elements of market liberalization are introduced only in late 1980s, like cooperative companies for consumer goods production, retail trade and some services.

Macedonia as part of Yugoslavia stands apart from Romania and even from Belarus as part of Soviet Union in terms of market liberalization during communism. After brief post-World War II period when Yugoslavia applies

orthodox Stalinist planning; since 1960s ruling communist party introduces 'market socialism' concept, i.e. predominantly public ownership of means of production and market mechanisms of allocating goods and services without strict planning. Among three case studies Macedonia occupies leading position, followed by Belarus, and Romania occupying the third position.

*Level of elite ideological pragmatism and commitment toward Marxism-Leninism.* Romania starts its communist period with high ideological commitment to Marxism-Leninism in the way it is understood in Soviet Union. During this initial communist period level of ideological pragmatism is low. Since Nicolae Ceausescu takes power the country makes serious moves toward increasing the role of nationalism as complementary ideology (Nelson 1995, 213). Romania distances itself from Soviet foreign policy (Linz and Stepan 1996, 347). In 1980s Romania embraces ideologically more autarchic version of communism than most communist states. In general Romanian commitment toward this modified Marxism-Leninism remains high.

Belarus is good example for lack of elite ideological pragmatism and for unshakable commitment toward Marxism-Leninism. Even during the conflict between Masherov and Brezhnev it remains largely in the field of personal animosity. Belarusian local party elite always follows official Soviet ideological interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. In general ideological commitment in Belarus is high and pragmatism is low.

In Macedonia communist party elite always follows ideological line set by the League of Yugoslav communists. As far as this general line includes ideological pragmatism, e.g. nationalism, 'market socialism', Macedonian leadership shows similar pragmatism. In general, its ideological commitment to Yugoslav interpretation of Marxism is high. Comparing three cases ideological pragmatism is strongest in Macedonia because of Yugoslav nationalism and concept of 'market socialism', Romania follows by far because of its nationalism, and Belarus occupying the third position.

*Level of industrialization, urbanization and literacy.* Before communism Romania is predominantly agrarian country with high level of illiteracy. By the end



of 1980s agriculture engages only 28% of total workforce and different industries engage 38%. More than half of population lives in urban areas by late 1980s. The level of literacy reaches 97%.

In Belarus population is predominantly agrarian before communism with high level of illiteracy. By early 1990s agriculture engages only 20% of total workforce and different industries engage 42%. Almost 70% of entire population lives in urban areas. The level of literacy reaches 99%.

Macedonian population before communism is predominantly agrarian with high level of illiteracy. By early 1990s agriculture engages only 8% of total workforce and different industries engage 40%. More than a half of entire population lives in urban areas. The level of literacy reaches 96%. Regarding these variables all three cases show remarkable progress during communism and reach very similar levels by the end of it. Given Volgyes (1995) correlation between high industrialization, urbanization, and literacy with democratic post-communist development we should expect that they all would show similar democratic patterns.

*Level of shared public identity between rulers and ruled.* Romania is for many generations a nation-state, and politically relevant identity that unites rulers and ruled during communist 'nationalist' period is Romanian nationalism. Under Ceausescu Romania eliminates ideological domination of Soviet Union and therefore rulers are not considered anymore as having prime loyalty to another state.

Belarus during communism is part of Soviet Union and at the same time home for one of its constituent nations, Belarusian. Politically relevant identity that unites rulers and ruled does not exist because of federation structural restraint; ordinary people in Belarus may perceive themselves both as Soviet and Belarusian citizens; the rulers in Minsk and Moscow may mix in different ratio federal and republican identities (Chouchkevitch 2005; Pankovski and Markou 2005, 25).

Macedonia during communism is part of Yugoslav federation and at the same time home for one of its constituent nations, Macedonian. Politically relevant identity that unites rulers and ruled does not exist because federation imposes structural restraints; ordinary people may perceive themselves both as Yugoslavians

and Macedonians; the rulers in Skopje and Belgrade may mix in different ratio federal and ethnic identities. Macedonia has even less shared public identity than Belarus, another federative unit. Bulgaria and Serbia in the past claim that Macedonians are in fact Bulgarians or Serbs; Greece traditionally claims the right over the name of 'Macedonia'. These additional factors introduce even more confusion as to the public identity of people in Macedonia. In addition, an important part of population, Albanians, does not even recognize itself within this identity (Barany 2005, 89-95). In comparison Romania stands far above the other two cases, followed by Belarus, and finally by Macedonia.

Within legacy model Romania presents variables leading to post-communist democratization: history of power fragmentation; high level of decision-making autonomy of higher communist party echelon at the end of communist rule; high level of communist industrialization, urbanization, and literacy; and high level of shared public identity between rulers and ruled. On the other hand, Romania shows also variables that lead to authoritarianism: nature of communist rule is patrimonial and main regime strategy during communism is repression; and lack of market liberalization during communism. Variables where Romania performs intermediately are medieval secular-religious dichotomy; historical autonomy of commercial and urban spheres; and level of ideological pragmatism during communism. Legacy in Romania does not represent one particular cluster, democratic, authoritarian, or intermediate; so it can push the country in either direction. According to Freedom House, however, Romania gradually develops after communism as democratic regime. If legacy is main cause for this development then variables where Romania confirms expectations for democratization become important for further elaboration.

Belarus presents following variables leading to democratization: history of medieval secular-religious dichotomy; history of medieval political power fragmentation; historical autonomy of urban and commercial spheres; and high level of communist industrialization, urbanization and literacy. On the other hand, Belarus presents variables leading to authoritarianism: the nature of communist rule is patrimonial and main elite strategy during communism is repression except for

brief period in late 1980s; low autonomy of decision-making of high communist party echelon at the end of communism; no history of market liberalization during communism with exception of late 1980s; low ideological pragmatism during communism; and low level of shared public identity between rulers and ruled. Legacies in Belarus are concentrated in two opposing poles without intermediate nuances; they may promote either democratic or authoritarian political development. Belarus according to Freedom House develops after communism as intermediate regime moving in authoritarian direction. If legacy is main cause for this development, then variables leading to authoritarianism become important for further elaboration.

Macedonia presents following variables leading to democratization: market liberalization during communism; and high level of industrialization, urbanization and literacy during communism. On the other hand, most Macedonia presents variables leading to authoritarianism: no history of secular-religious dichotomy; no history of power fragmentation; no historical autonomy of commercial and urban spheres; nature of communist rule is patrimonial and main regime strategy during communism is repression with exception of years after the death of Tito; and low level of shared public identity between rulers and ruled. Variables where Macedonia performs intermediately are autonomy of decision-making of high party echelons at the end of communism; and level of ideological pragmatism of the communist elite. Legacy in Macedonia therefore promotes predominantly authoritarian development. Macedonia according to Freedom House however develops as an intermediate political regime between democracy and authoritarianism. If legacy is main cause for this development then variables where Macedonia confirms intermediate regime expectations become important for further elaboration.

#### ***4.5. Testing institutional choice model***

The purpose of this section is testing institutional choice model to all three cases consecutively. It matches its variables to facts from post-communist transition

period. It concludes with brief assessment of institutional choice model power of prediction regarding political regime development.

*Sovereign state.* This variable looks at existence of a sovereign state that is internationally recognized and not challenged by other political forces. Romania fits well with this notion of sovereign state. Its borders remain unchanged since post-World War II political arrangements in Europe. Post-communist Romania is a legal successor of communist-time and pre-communist Romania. It is internationally recognized as state since 1878. There are no alternative forces claiming authority over parts of territory despite ethnic diversity and existence of ethnic minority political parties (Stroschein 2001; Chirot 2005, 153-161).

Belarus exists as an independent and sovereign state since 1990-1991, when its parliament declares sovereignty (1990), and Soviet Union ceases to exist (1991). Belarus as a Soviet republic is internationally recognized with a seat in the United Nations after World War II (Chouchkevitch 2003). Real international recognition however occurs only after the collapse of Soviet Union. Sovereignty over territory is not absolute given the lack of clear border demarcation with other post-Soviet republics like Lithuania, Latvia, and Ukraine. Groups of political refugees and former politicians living abroad for years claim representing Belarusian people thus casting doubts over current regime legitimacy (Pankovski and Markou 2005, 29).

Macedonia becomes peacefully independent state in 1991. Greece's objection with constitutional name 'Republic of Macedonia' delays international recognition until a compromise name is found (Perry 1996, 114; Ackermann 2000), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR Macedonia or FYROM). It is only in 1995 that Greece lifts its trade embargo on Macedonia, thus allowing normalization of relations between Macedonia and EU, although differences over Macedonian official name still remain. Bulgaria does not recognize existence of Macedonian language (Perry 2000, 134). This issue has important political consequences. Having unique and internationally recognized language in the Balkan political context gives particular ethnic group a right to claim being a separate nation with a right to have a sovereign state on its own. In 2001 ethnic Albanian insurgency challenges governmental control over parts of territory.

Comparatively speaking Romania occupies top position in terms of state sovereignty, followed by Belarus, followed by Macedonia.

*State capacity.* This variable determines whether there is capacity within post-communist leadership of choosing among different institutional arrangements thus leaving behind communist institutional legacy. In Romania political leadership shows enough of such capacity. To illustrate this point, it takes less than two years to adopt post-communist constitution tailored upon French model of strong presidential office (Mihut 1994, 412; Siani-Davies 1996, 464). This constitution undergoes major amendment in 2003 when president and parliament terms in office are separated; the president's term in office is prolonged from 4 to 5 years.

Belarus declares sovereignty in 1990, but until 1994 its institutional arrangement remains within framework of Soviet constitutional legacy. Changing this legacy by establishing strong office of president is not balanced with establishing other independent branches of government. This illustrates weak capacity of choosing among institutional arrangements.

Macedonia leaves behind communist era institutions very fast by adopting new constitution in late 1991. This constitution broadly follows West European parliamentary model; the only element that stands outside this model is the office of president elected by popular vote. Political leadership again shows remarkable speed in revising constitution after ethnic Albanian insurgency in 2001 thus giving more legal protection for minority rights (Hislope 2004). These facts show high capacity of choosing among different institutional arrangements. Comparatively speaking Romania and Macedonia show much bigger state capacity than Belarus.

*Separation of powers.* This variable looks at constitutional separation of branches of government, where institutionalized executive is dependent upon parliamentary and party support. Romania has constitutionally separated powers; executive is split between office of president and government that is politically responsible to both president and parliament (Popescu 2003, 325; Mihut 1994, 415). Two chambers of parliament are elected by proportional representation. Two parts of executive, president and government, represent different parties or coalitions

throughout entire post-communist period. In Romania institutionalized executive is dependent upon parliamentary and party support.

In Belarus until 1994 there is no clear separation of powers; the country still uses Soviet constitutional legacy putting political executive under supervision of constantly changing parliament majorities without clear party affiliation (Silitski 2005, 38-40). Since presidential election of 1994 and rise in power of Lukashenko he does not rely on any parliamentary or party support.

Macedonia has split executive, president and government. President since 1994 is elected by popular vote; first presidential election is done by parliament in early 1991. First president Kiro Gligorov 1991-1999 is formally independent from party support. Political parties support all presidents that succeed Gligorov. Constitution of Macedonia assigns to president few real powers. Government, on the other hand, always represents party or coalition majority in parliament. Comparatively speaking, Romania and Macedonia show separation of powers and executives dependent on party support; Belarus has no such separation of powers and dependency on party support.

*Electoral system and party system.* This variable determines electoral system for legislative body, which in turn produces strong or weak party system, and therefore parliament dependent or not on party representation. Throughout entire post-communist period Romania applies proportional representation producing parliament with strong democratic legitimacy and strong party affiliation among electorate even before 1996 (Carothers 1996, 118).

In Belarus, before the rise of authoritarian regime of Lukashenko, proportional representation is not used as main electoral system (Shvetsova 1999). Parliament between 1990 and 1995 is elected under Soviet complicated and indirect system initially not allowing non-communist political parties to compete. Election of 1995 is under mixed system that makes possible more than half of all members of parliament to campaign as independent candidates (Marples 1999). Main political parties start developing as late as 1993. Belarus until 1996, when it becomes an authoritarian regime, is a country with electoral system that does not facilitate creation and development of political parties.

In 1990s Macedonia applies a mixture of single-member plurality and proportional representation (Shvetsova 1999; ICG Balkans Report 1998 and 1999); since 2002 parliament is elected by proportional representation producing even stronger party affiliation among the electorate. Comparatively speaking, Romania and Macedonia show similar electoral procedures promoting strong party system; Belarus clearly falls far behind the other two cases.

*Communist successor party behavior.* This variable asks the question whether communist successor parties strengthen party system by early exiting from power, dispersing and regenerating. In Romania communist successor, National Salvation Front rules until late 1996 (Mungiu-Pippidi 2004, 386-388). It exits from power, temporarily, only after it loses president and parliamentary elections. Even after 1996 it does not disperse (Gallagher 2005a, 17). In Romania communist successor party does not contribute to strengthening party system.

In Belarus communist successor parties, one of which is temporarily banned in 1991 (Pankovski and Markou 2005, 18), control parliament until the rise of Lukashenko. These parties do not exit from power, disperse and regenerate until Lukashenko dissolves parliament in 1996 (Chouchkevitch 2005). In Belarus communist successor party therefore does not contribute to strengthening party system.

In Macedonia communist successor, Social Democratic Union rules the country until 1998. It exits from power, temporarily, only after it loses president and parliamentary elections (ICG Balkan Report 1998 and 1999). Even after 1998 this party does not disperse. In Macedonia communist successor party does not contribute to strengthening party system. Comparatively speaking, in all three cases communist successor parties do not contribute to strengthening party system.

Within institutional choice model Romania presents following variables leading to post-communist political democratization: existence of a sovereign state; high state capacity; separation of power, with political executive dependent on party support; and proportional electoral system leading to strong party system. On the other hand, communist successor party behavior in Romania must lead to authoritarianism. Therefore most institutional choices in Romania push the country

toward democratization, which is confirmed by Freedom House index after 1996. What makes this model not entirely convincing as only cause for political development regarding Romanian case is the slow speed with which it democratizes having so many favorable variables that start acting immediately after the fall of communism.

Belarus does not show variables leading to democratization. The country however shows many variables leading to authoritarianism: weak state capacity; political executive that is independent from party support; electoral system that does not facilitate strong party system; and communist successor party behavior. In one variable, sovereign state, Belarus occupies an intermediate position. Therefore most institutional choices in Belarus push the country toward authoritarianism, which is confirmed by Freedom House index after 1996. With so many variables pushing the country toward authoritarianism from the very beginning of post-communist transition the only unsolved question within institutional choice model regarding Belarusian case is existence of early intermediate political regime.

Macedonia presents following variables leading to democratization: high state capacity; separation of powers, with executive dependent on party support; and mixed moving to proportional electoral system leading to strong party system. On the other hand, Macedonia shows presence of other variables leading to authoritarianism: weak state sovereignty; and communist successor party behavior. Therefore institutional choices in Macedonia push the country both toward democratization and toward authoritarianism. According to Freedom House Macedonia develops after communism as an intermediate political regime. This model well predicts post-communist outcome in Macedonia if we are able explaining how exactly different institutional choice variables are able to cancel off each other.

#### ***4.6. Testing political leadership model***

The purpose of this section is testing political leadership model to all three cases consecutively. It matches its variables to facts from post-communist transition



period. It concludes with brief assessment of this model power of prediction regarding political regime development.

*Strongest post-communist political faction.* In Romania strongest political faction emerging after the fall of Ceausescu's regime, National Salvation Front, brings together politicians with strong anti-democratic political views (Gilberg 1990, 410; Carothers 1996, 120). A proof for their ideology is that at numerous occasions Romanian government asks for unconstitutional support, e.g. appealing for coalmine workers, in order to suppress political opposition and to unleash anti-Hungarian popular demonstrations (Nelson 1990, 357). This anti-democratic behavior continues for almost entire post-communist period (Gallagher 2005a, 98). Even in opposition former communists use coalminers as tools for political struggle (Chiriac 2001, 126).

In Belarus strongest post-communist faction has anti-democratic worldviews (Pankovski and Markou 2005, 17; Way 2005, 242). At no point during post-communist period democratically minded politicians control executive power in Belarus, which is not completely institutionalized until creation of a strong presidential office in 1994. Last decade goes under Lukashenko's leadership, a personality that does not bother rigging elections and suppressing opposition.

In Macedonia strongest early post-communist political faction, communist party successor, Social Democratic Union, has anti-democratic worldviews. It eliminates existing ethnic minority rights (Perry 2000) and rigs elections thus forcing part of political opposition to boycott parliament election in 1994. Social Democratic Union is either dominant or main opposition party in Macedonia throughout entire post-communist period.

*Consistency between worldviews and cost-benefit analysis.* In Romania National Salvation Front and its political successor Social Democratic Party is one of two main political parties throughout entire post-communist period. Their political leadership remains largely unchanged. Their behavior however evolves gradually by eliminating unconstitutional political means for staying in or competing for power. By 1995 it already allows for normal party competition resulting in opposition electoral victory in 1996. Erosion of public support makes

this party looking for larger political coalitions by including first technocrats then populists into government after 1993 (Ratesh 1993, 391; Chiriac 2001, 127). 1995 is a threshold year for Romanian politics. Romania becomes EU associate member and has to provide proofs for its political democratization in order to be invited to join the Union. Dayton peace treaty for Bosnia and Herzegovina makes NATO a key player in the Balkans and the West sends signals that populist regimes in the region will not be tolerated. As a result cost-benefit calculations of Romanian leadership shift away from ethnic populism and authoritarian regime option; an illustration among others is treaty with Hungary resolving status of ethnic Hungarians (Chiriac 2001, 127).

In Belarus anti-democratic faction with majority in parliament during first half of 1990s, as well as president Lukashenko who rules ever since have no strong democratic opponents to make concessions to; they are not under democratic external pressure to provide freedoms in exchange for external support. Throughout entire post-communist period there is consistency between strongest faction anti-democratic worldviews and its cost-benefit calculation for staying in power.

In Macedonia Social Democratic Union's political behavior evolved gradually by eliminating unconstitutional political means for staying in power and by making openings toward Albanian minority. During second part of 1990s it already allows for normal party competition resulting in opposition electoral victories in 1998-1999. At that time crisis and subsequent war over Kosovo makes Macedonia a hosting country for thousands of Albanian refugees. Macedonia counts on NATO for preserving its territory from Serbia thus making western leverage for democratization very strong. Political and interethnic openness in Macedonia is therefore a signal that it will not follow Serbian model of ethnic cleansing and political opposition suppression. As a result cost-benefit calculation of Macedonian leadership shifts away from authoritarian regime option.

Within political leadership model Romania presents two distinctive post-communist periods. Up to 1995 strongest political faction is anti-democratic, and there is consistency between its worldviews and its cost-benefit calculation, resulting in its anti-democratic behavior. After 1995 this anti-democratic faction

remains one of two main players in Romanian politics, but its cost-benefit calculation changes profoundly. Its worldview is no more an obstacle for democratization. This model predicts that Romania will have authoritarian regime until 1995-1996, then it will shift to democratic regime as long as democratically minded politicians rule, then between 2000-2004 it will remain democratic but not so categorically, when communist successor party is again in government. According to Freedom House, Romania is an intermediate regime until 1996; it democratizes after 1996 and remains democratic without significant backslides. This explanation therefore is problematic for the first half of 1990s and more or less acceptable after 1996.

Belarus presents with some important nuances only one homogenous post-communist period, producing expectations for authoritarian regime. Strongest faction grouped within parliament or around president is anti-democratic, and there is consistency between its worldviews and its cost-benefit calculation. No strong democratic opposition ever threatens taking power during entire post-communist period. This model predicts that Belarus will have authoritarian regime, although level of authoritarianism may increase between first and second half of 1990s. According to Freedom House however Belarus is an intermediate regime until 1996, not without opportunities to become democracy, and only in 1996 it becomes authoritarian and stays this way afterwards. This model is problematic for first half of 1990s, but it has good predicting power ever since.

Macedonia presents two distinctive post-communist periods. Up to 1998-1999 strongest political faction is anti-democratic, and there is consistency between its worldviews and its cost-benefit calculation. After 1998-1999 this anti-democratic faction remains one of two main players in Macedonian politics. Under domestic and foreign pressure however its cost-benefit calculations change profoundly. Its worldview is no more an obstacle for democratization. This model predicts that Macedonia will have authoritarian regime up to 1998-1999, then it will shift to democracy as long as democratically-minded politicians rule, then after 2002 it will remain democratic but not so categorically, when communist successor party is again in power. According to Freedom House however Macedonia is an

intermediate regime throughout entire post-communist period; it barely moves up or down on political freedoms' scale. Instead of early authoritarianism and late democracy we observe neither consolidated authoritarian nor consolidated democratic regime.

#### ***4.7. Testing external influence model***

The purpose of this section is testing external influence model to all three cases consecutively. It matches its variables to facts from post-communist transition period. It concludes with brief assessment of this model power of prediction regarding political regime development.

*Expectations of EU/NATO membership.* Since early 1990s Romania has high expectations for EU/NATO membership in not so distant future (Gallagher 2005a, 158-164). EU-Romania Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 1991 and Europe Agreement of 1995, opening door for formal submission of EU application, confirm these expectations. Since 2000 Romania starts EU accession negotiations. Romania finally joins EU on January 1, 2007. Regarding NATO Romania receives early positive signals for increased cooperation by being invited into Partnership for Peace program in 1994. In 2002 it is invited to join NATO, which takes place in 2004.

In Belarus expectations for EU/NATO membership are low during entire post-communist period. Even before 1996 these foreign policy options remain low priority for politicians and public opinion (Lahviniec 2005, 125). EU and NATO keep their relations with Belarus at low level before 1996 accordingly. At no point EU or NATO identify Belarus as possible member within reasonable future.

In Macedonia expectations for EU/NATO membership during 1990s are low. At that time Macedonia is under trade embargo of Greece, EU and NATO member, and Greece blocks any progress in EU-Macedonian and NATO-Macedonian relations. Wars in former Yugoslavia, which do not affect directly Macedonia, are additional deterrence factor for both EU and NATO considering enlargement that may include Macedonia. Situation starts changing after fall of Milosevic regime in late 2000, but it is partially reversed after sudden increase in multiethnic violence in 2001. It is only after Ohrid Agreement between Macedonian government and Albanian minority of 2001 ending military clashes that EU gradually starts sending encouraging signals to Skopje. Regarding NATO, expectations for membership are even less clear than for EU membership. Macedonia is member of NATO's Membership Action Plan but the country is not invited joining NATO during its Riga summit of November 2006. Comparatively speaking Romania has highest expectations for EU/NATO membership and Belarus lowest; Macedonia moves from low to relatively high expectations between early 1990s and early 2000s.

*Population supporting EU/NATO integration.* Romanian population supports overwhelmingly EU membership (Popescu 2003, 328; Chiriac 2001, 128). It is among countries with highest EU approval rating of all post-communist EU members and EU-candidates (Dostal and Markusse 2004, 234). This positive attitude does not change significantly over time. Romanian population also supports NATO membership, although this support is less evenly spread over entire post-communist period, and in 1999 during war in Kosovo it experienced drop (Gallagher 2005a, 213-225).

Belarus population does not support EU integration. According to different polls this option is supported by no more than a third of population (IISEPS 2006). It is much less popular than integration with Russia. Belarus population does not support NATO integration either. In security matters too integration with Russia is more preferable.

Macedonian population shows recently strong support for both EU and NATO membership (USAID 2006). During 1990s however this positive attitude is less categorical. Some parts of population still see in this integration threat for national unity by conditioning membership upon giving more rights to ethnic minorities. Comparatively speaking Romanian population shows highest support for both EU and NATO integration, Belarus shows lowest support, and Macedonia moves over time from moderate to strong support for both organizations.

*EU/NATO leverages over post-communist countries.* This variable accounts for post-communist countries vulnerability to external, in this case to EU/NATO, pressure. During 1990s EU engagement heavily constrains government of President Ion Iliescu, making possible his defeat in 1996 election (Levitsky and Way 2005, 28). Throughout 1990s all Romanian governments make EU/NATO memberships top priority in foreign policy thus contributing to high western leverage over internal political process (Ratesh 1993, 394; Mot 2002, 375).

EU/NATO leverage over Belarus is low despite some formalized contacts between Minsk and both international organizations. At no point after 1991 membership in EU/NATO becomes foreign policy priority.

Macedonian foreign policy during 1990s evolves toward more openness vis-à-vis EU and NATO (Perry 2000, 133), and after fall of Milosevic regime in neighboring Serbia EU/NATO membership is declared foreign policy priority. EU/NATO leverage increases very significantly afterwards (Agh 1999, 274). Comparatively speaking Romania shows highest EU/NATO leverage, Belarus shows lowest leverage, and Macedonia shows intermediate but rising leverage, catching recently with Romania on this issue.

*EU/NATO negotiations and democratic change.* Romania applies to join EU in 1995. In 2000 start official accession negotiations. The country joins EU on January 1, 2007. Regarding NATO, Romania first applies for membership in 1996; invitation comes in 2002; and it joins alliance in 2004. Since 1995/1996 when applications are first submitted and since beginning of NATO/EU accession process political power changes hands in free and fair democratic elections (1996, 2000, and 2004). There are no indications that EU/NATO negotiations favor incumbents. On the contrary, process of peaceful power transition starts in 1996, after the country applied for EU/NATO membership.

This variable does not apply to Belarus, which has not applied for either EU or NATO membership.

Macedonia applies to join EU in 2004. In 2005 EU gives Macedonia status of candidate country. Relations between Macedonia and EU start in 1996 when it becomes eligible for funding under EC PHARE program. These relations intensify after fall of Milosevic; in 2001 EU and Macedonia sign Stabilization and Association Agreement, which is prerequisite before applying for EU membership. Macedonia seeks membership in NATO and currently is part of NATO's Membership Action Plan, precondition for inviting country to join the alliance. There are no accession negotiations between Macedonia and EU/NATO, but level of contacts is high. There are no indications so far that these contacts favor political incumbents during elections. It is however premature making conclusion whether future NATO/EU negotiations may influence political process.

*Influence by strong authoritarian state.* Since early 1990se main external influence in Romanian politics comes from the West, either from democratically

elected governments or from organizations of democratic governments (e.g. EU, NATO), or by international institutions where democratic governments play dominant role (e.g. IMF, WB). At no point Romanian government is influenced by strong authoritarian state. At the critical moment of high anti-NATO public attitudes during Kosovo campaign in 1999 Romanian government follows NATO political line.

For Belarus main external influence since early 1990s comes from Russia (Richard 2004, 50; Dostal and Markusse 2004, 234). For most of its transition however Russia is not authoritarian country, it has intermediate regime throughout 1990s and early 2000s. There is however political events in Russia before 1994-1996, time when Belarus becomes authoritarian regime that may have influenced Belarus of becoming more authoritarian by demonstration effect, e.g. confrontation between Russian president and parliament in late 1993 (Duhamel 2005, 91). This effect does not allow us to rule out completely roles that play some undemocratic foreign actors.

Macedonia is influenced during 1990s by Serbia, led by Milosevic, which turns into authoritarian regime. This influence has several dimensions. Macedonian economy is closely linked to Serbian. Macedonian leadership has close personal networks with leaders in Belgrade. Other Macedonian neighbors, Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania, are considered in Skopje as threats, thus increasing the leverage of former federal center. This influence is reason why Macedonia, even after referendum on independence in 1991, keeps door open for future federation with other former Yugoslav republics. This influence disappears after fall of Milosevic in late 2000. Comparatively speaking, Macedonia shows highest influence by foreign authoritarian state until 2000, Romania shows lowest influence throughout entire post-communist period, and Belarus shows influence by foreign authoritarian patterns until it becomes authoritarian regime.

Within external influence model Romania presents following variables leading to post-communist democratization: high expectations of EU/NATO membership, high level of popular support for EU/NATO integration, high EU/NATO leverage, low influence by strong authoritarian state. Romania shows no



variables leading to either authoritarian or to intermediate regime development. External influence in Romania is concentrated into one particular cluster, pushing country toward democracy. Question remaining unsolved is why a country so overdetermined to be democratic happens to have intermediate regime for almost half of its post-communist period.

Belarus presents no variables leading to democratization, but presents variables leading to authoritarianism: low expectations for EU/NATO membership, low popular support for EU/NATO membership, and low EU/NATO leverage over Belarus. On one variable, influence by strong authoritarian state, Belarus shows intermediate result. Thus variables for Belarus are almost entirely concentrated into one cluster, pushing country toward authoritarianism. Question remaining unsolved is why a country so overdetermined to become autocracy has intermediate political regime for several years.

Macedonia presents following variables leading to democratization: high popular support for EU/NATO membership since early 2000s, and high level of EU/NATO leverage over Macedonia since early 2000s. On the other hand, Macedonia presents other variables leading to authoritarianism: low level of EU/NATO leverage during 1990s, and strong influence by strong authoritarian state during 1990s. Variable where Macedonia shows intermediate result is expectation for EU/NATO membership. External influence in the case of Macedonia divides its post-communist period into two very different sub-periods, during 1990s it pushes Macedonia toward authoritarian development; since early 2000s it pushes country toward democracy. Neither prediction fits well with Macedonian stable intermediate status throughout entire post-communist period.

#### **4.8. Concluding remarks**

Four models have following expectations as to Romanian post-communist development. *Legacy* is not concentrated into one cluster; it can produce democratic, authoritarian, or intermediate political regime. *Institutional choice* is predominantly concentrated around democratic pole, predicting early democratization. *Political leadership* predicts authoritarian regime until 1996,

democratic regime after that, with backslide after 2000. *External influence* model predicts overwhelmingly democratic regime for entire post-communist period. Thus two models, *institutional choice* and *international influence*, make more optimistic predictions for Romania before 1996. *Political leadership*, on the contrary, makes more pessimistic prediction for the same period. *Legacy* is too imprecise for entire post-communist period. Three models, *institutional choice*, *political leadership*, and *international influence*, make right predictions after 1996. All three however are problematic before 1996.

For Belarus *legacy* is not concentrated into cluster; it can push the country in two opposite directions as democratic or authoritarian regime. *Institutional choice* is predominantly concentrated around authoritarian option, predicting early autocracy and consolidation. *Political leadership* predicts authoritarian regime throughout entire post-communist period. *External influence* model predicts overwhelmingly authoritarian regime for entire period. Thus three models, *institutional choice*, *political leadership*, and *international influence*, make more pessimistic predictions for Belarus for first half of 1990s, but provide accurate predictions after 1996. *Legacy* is too imprecise for entire post-communist period.

For Macedonia *legacy* is concentrated around authoritarian pole, although there are some variables pushing country toward democratization or intermediate regime. *Institutional choice* is concentrated around two opposite poles, therefore making two mutually excluding predictions, democracy or authoritarianism. *Political leadership* and *external influence* predict authoritarian regime throughout most of 1990s, and democratization afterwards. Thus two models, *political leadership* and *international influence*, make too pessimistic predictions for most of 1990s, and too optimistic predictions afterward. *Institutional choice* model makes mutually excluding and inaccurate predictions. *Legacy* is either imprecise for entire post-communist period or far too pessimistic.

Across three cases of post-communist political development *legacy* model at this stage of study looks to be most incorrect answer for regime diversity puzzle. It is too vague, making unspecific and mutually excluding predictions. In the case of Romania it gives equal chance for democratic, authoritarian, or intermediate

development. For Belarus it predicts either democratic or authoritarian regime. For Macedonia it wrongly tilts toward authoritarian pole. To use this model further as a base for new comprehensive model it needs to be ‘unpacked’, i.e. to eliminate variables that make it so imprecise, retaining only those that may correlate better with all three cases.

*Institutional choice* model makes better predictions, but it too is far from providing convincing answer to main study question. For Romania it predicts easy and fast democratization, which is not correct for first half of 1990s. For Belarus it predicts easy and fast authoritarian consolidation, which is also not correct for first half of 1990s. For Macedonia it predicts two opposing regime outcomes. To use this model as a base for further study it needs to be ‘unpacked’ and elements of it to be combined with elements of other models.

*Political leadership* model is far too pessimistic for all three cases. It predicts early authoritarianism, which is not correct in any country. It however provides correct prediction for subsequent political development in two countries, Romania and Belarus. For Macedonia it predicts much more dynamic development from authoritarianism to democracy instead of stable intermediate position. To use this model as a base for further study some elements of it may need being combined with elements of other models.

*External influence* model is also somehow inaccurate. For Romania it predicts easy and fast democratization, which is not correct for first half of 1990s. For Belarus it predicts easy and fast authoritarian consolidation, which is also not correct for first half of 1990s. For Macedonia it predicts authoritarianism during 1990s followed by democracy, which does not fit well with this country’s stable intermediate status. To use this model as a base for further study some elements of it may need being combined with elements of other models. Next chapter will discuss possible combination of elements across models and building of new explanatory model.



## **5. Discussing findings. Building flexible across-model explanation**

This chapter presents and discusses level of accuracy of all independent variables that are part of four major models of post-communist development, legacy, institutional choice, political leadership, and external influence. It begins with presenting a table (Table 2.) including all independent variables and how they correlate to all three cases, to their entire post-communist period and/or some particular sub-periods, if there is substantial difference between them. Then it discusses findings by looking at possible across models explanations, beginning with theoretically most rigid and ending with more flexible alternatives.

This chapter concludes that given existing independent variables in literature it is impossible to craft new rigid model of post-communist political development; rigid here means that independent variables apply to all cases for their entire post-communist period or to all their sub-periods. Alternative approaches for solving the problem, meaning introducing more flexible explanations, are however possible. They require making compromises and being less rigid either on some case and/or on some sub-period within post-communist development. I claim that for the period after mid-1990s combination of two different institutional variables, presented in more details in Chapter 3, constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for legislature best explain trends toward democracy (Romania) and authoritarianism (Belarus); for the period before mid-1990s main causal mechanisms still remain to be clarified. As for the intermediate political regime development, illustrated by Macedonia, presence of shared identity between rulers and ruled and existence of sovereign state provide best complementary explanation.

The following table presents all independent variables and how they correlate with all three post-communist cases. Variables are identified in chapter 2 as part of literature review on post-communist transition and discussed more extensively in chapter 4 as applicable to all three cases. In this table they all appear ‘unpacked’ from their respective general approaches, which may be possible solution for eliminating their inconclusive prediction power. Variables that apply correctly to entire post-communist period to particular case are marked ‘correct’;

those applying to some sub-period only mention this exact period of positive correlation; those not applying to entire post-communist period or to all sub-periods are marked ‘totally incorrect’; two boxes are left unmarked because one particular variable, EU/NATO negotiations’ effect, does not apply to Belarus and is too early to judge its effects on Macedonia. Thus, for example, marking as ‘correct’ the variable ‘strong authoritarian state’ for Romania means that lack of such influence, described in Chapter 4, correlates well with lack of authoritarian regime in this country throughout entire post-communist period.

### ***5.1. Impossibility of establishing rigid across-models explanation***

Findings in table 2 show that there are some variables, part of different ‘unpacked’ models matching correctly theoretical predictions across all three cases. This section tries to use these variables for producing rigid across-model explanation for post-communist regime diversity. This rigid explanation must satisfy two conditions. First, it must show positive correlation for some variables across models for *all* three cases. Without this it will not satisfy criterion of generalizability. Second, it must also prove links of causality between these variables and political outcomes. Without this precondition correlation may turn out to be spurious. More detailed look at these variables shows however that they cannot offer new rigid across-model explanation for post-communist regime diversity. Despite their good correlations to certain periods of post-communist development most of these variables contradict their proper logic. This section will prove this point. In search for post-communist regime diversity explanation therefore we need looking for more flexible theoretical alternatives.

There are six variables that positively correlate to all three cases of post-communist development. These variables are party high echelon autonomy during last period of communism, elite pragmatism during communism, and shared identity between rulers and ruled (legacies); sovereign state (institutional choice); and EU/NATO leverage and strong influence by foreign authoritarian state

Table 2. Independent variables / post-communist countries correlation

	<b>Countries / variables</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Macedonia</b>
<b>Legacy</b>	Secular/religious dichotomy	<b>Correct until 1996;</b> incorrect afterward	Totally incorrect	Totally incorrect
	Power fragmentation	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Totally incorrect	Totally incorrect
	Commercial and urban autonomy	<b>Correct until 1996;</b> incorrect afterward	Totally incorrect	Totally incorrect
	Elite strategy	Totally incorrect	<b>Correct until 1996;</b> incorrect afterward	<b>Correct</b>
	High party autonomy	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	<b>Correct</b>
	Market liberalization	Totally incorrect	<b>Correct until 1996;</b> incorrect afterward	Totally incorrect
	Elite pragmatism	<b>Correct</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1998; <b>correct afterward</b>
	Industrialization, urbanization, literacy	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Totally incorrect	Totally incorrect
	Shared identity	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	<b>Correct</b>
<b>Institut. Choice</b>	Sovereign state	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	<b>Correct</b>	<b>Correct</b>
	State capacity	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Totally incorrect
	Separation of power	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Totally incorrect
	Electoral system/ party system	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Totally incorrect
	Communist successor party	<b>Correct until 1996;</b> incorrect afterward	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	<b>Correct</b>
<b>Politic. Leadership</b>	Strongest political faction	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Totally incorrect
	Worldviews consistency	<b>Correct</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Totally incorrect
<b>External influence</b>	EU/NATO expectation	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	<b>Correct until 2000;</b> incorrect afterward
	EU/NATO support	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	<b>Correct until 2000;</b> incorrect afterward
	EU/NATO leverage	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	Incorrect until 1996; <b>correct afterward</b>	<b>Correct until 2000;</b> incorrect afterward
	EU/NATO negotiations' effect	Totally incorrect	Not applicable	Too early to say
	Strong authoritarian state	<b>Correct</b>	<b>Correct</b>	<b>Correct until 2000;</b> incorrect afterward

(external influence and support). Each of three variables representing legacies predicts political development correctly *after* 1996 for all three cases but only for one case any of them positively correlates *before* 1996. Sovereign state correlates positively to all three cases only *after* 1996. EU/NATO leverage does not correlate positively to even one particular sub-period across all cases. Strong authoritarian state influence, as findings show, correlates positively only during most of 1990s.

Logic of having party high echelon autonomy during last period of communism as beneficial for democratization is precisely because this autonomy brings *immediate* positive results during early transition, not many years later. Similar logic, although not so categorical, finds expression with other variables inside legacy approach, elite pragmatism and shared public identity between rulers and ruled. At earlier stages of transition it is legacy, political leadership, and external influence that can somehow determine political development; institutional choice is factor that still needs to be designed and executed and only then it can produce particular results after certain time lag. What this table illustrates however is that political leadership factor is initially correct only for Romania and only as far as consistency between worldviews and rational choice is observed. Another factor that initially correlates well with three cases is influence by strong foreign authoritarian state within context of external influence; but let us not forget that in case of Romania this influence has zero value, this country is *not* influenced by such state. This makes legacy only logical option for starting explaining early post-communist transition. Within rigid model applicable to all three cases however some elements of legacy correlate positively only for mid-term transition objectives, not to early transition.

Within institutional choice, looking at sovereign state as basic variable for unlocking puzzle of early transitional development is also unfruitful. Sovereign state per se does not make particular country democratic or authoritarian, although it is vital precondition for stabilization of either regime option. Not surprisingly it is good for Macedonia as a country that remains in between two extremes; it is good



to a degree for Belarus because it shows its gradual state consolidation, but definitely not for Romanian early transition. Most other variables within institutional choice are also unable of correctly predicting initial transitional development. Exception is only communist successor party behavior, but here all three cases show very similar patters. This means therefore that this variable can explain possible political regime uniformity across cases, but not diversity.

Political leadership also does not provide answer for early transition development. In addition it turns to be completely inaccurate in case of Macedonia for its entire post-communist development. Within context of external influence, apart from foreign authoritarian state influence, EU/NATO leverage is an interesting variable that at first sight may provide useful understanding of post-communist regime development. Unfortunately it too has no correlation with early transition in two cases, Romania and Belarus. Only for Macedonia it has good early correlation despite the fact that leverage is rather weak during this period.

To sum-up, despite some across-model variables that positively correlate with post-communist regime development in all three cases, more detailed analysis shows that this correlation is not sufficient for building rigid model explaining post-communist regime diversity. Most positive correlations are not so strong for entire post-communist period. Where such correlations exist, they often contradict logic of some variables, e.g. some legacy variables do not act during early transition, but act only after substantial period of time without any good explanation for this time lag.

Possible reason for being not able to build rigid model of political regime diversity may go with project design itself. We expect from very beginning three possible political options: democracy, authoritarianism, and intermediate regime, following Freedom House classification. Is it possible that most of the literature we take variables from is much more interested with explaining opposite regime types, e.g. democracy or authoritarianism, without paying enough attention to intermediate regimes? If this critique is true, then we will see not enough positive correlations in Table 2 of *any* or *most* variables with Macedonian as case of intermediate regime. In fact, however, we see that more than half of all variables may allow for good correlations with different aspects or periods of Macedonian regime development,

meaning at least half of all variables may allow for intermediate regime development. This critique nevertheless should not be completely ignored. Other two cases, Romania and Belarus, may allow for good correlations with even more variables than Macedonia, meaning at least some variables may allow for only two possible regime options, democracy or authoritarianism, ignoring intermediate regime as third possible option. Being unable to craft rigid model of political development, we must then look at second best option, i.e. building more flexible model.

### ***5.2. Tentative attempts of establishing flexible across-models explanation***

One way of making explanatory model less rigid is negotiating compromise on one of the cases. This does not mean however that one post-communist country will be completely eliminated from explanation in order to satisfy hypothesis' requirements. Each country within the sample represents particular transition pattern. Such elimination therefore will greatly reduce the effect of generalizability of any theoretical explanation. Alternative way to proceed is by taking two-stage approach. On the first stage two opposing cases, Romania and Belarus, will test all 'unpacked' independent variables. Once these variables representing rigid theoretical model are identified, Macedonia as intermediate case will be introduced. Variables that positively correlate to this intermediate case will not by default match other two cases; otherwise we will have rigid across countries explanation so far. Stage two therefore will answer questions like what makes possible intermediate political development or what stops democratic or authoritarian trends fully developing.

On stage one, reducing number of cases from three to two, Romania and Belarus, increases number of positively correlating variables from six to thirteen. Three new variables come from institutional choice: state capacity, constitutional separation of power, and electoral system for legislative body; two new variables represent political leadership; and two new variables represent external influence: EU/NATO expectations for membership, and EU/NATO public support. On stage two, Macedonia will be introduced shortly with five variables positively correlating

with its entire post-communist period. Three of them come from legacy model: elite strategy during communism, party high echelon autonomy, and level of shared public identity between rulers and ruled; and two come from institutional choice: sovereign state and communist party successor behavior.

There are two problems appearing on stage one. With exception of only one variable, namely influence by strong foreign authoritarian state, there are no other variables that correctly predict political development for both Romania and Belarus for entire post-communist period. The problem with this remaining variable is that in the case of Romania it has zero value, meaning it is the *lack of influence* by foreign authoritarian state that allows for particular political development, meaning *other* factors which value is different from zero must play decisive role in this country development. Another problem on stage one is that all positively correlating variables in fact act as predicted *only* after a time lag of several years. They may explain well post-communist development only when Romania and Belarus turn into democracy and authoritarianism respectively. Some correlate well with early transition in only one of these countries; most do not correlate well with early transition at all.

One way of solving these problems is to limit number of variables applicable to both Romania and Belarus throughout entire post-communist period, and on this narrow base building theoretical model that integrates Macedonia as intermediate regime on stage two. Unfortunately this cannot be done given really narrow base that applies to both Romania and Belarus before mid-1990s. It will look as if empirical reality is forced to fit with some pre-designed theoretical model. Another possible answer, again unacceptable, may be to give up any attempt of producing across countries explanation and to acknowledge that post-communist political regime diversity is in fact a problem that defies comparative analysis. In other words, this will mean to acknowledge that there are no common patterns across post-communist countries.

Tentative solution, away from both theoretical narrowness and total pessimism, is acknowledging that across different countries some common explanation is indeed possible, but independent variables that literature already

provides can still work much better on post-communist sub-period that skips early transition.

Back to problems on stage one we need reassessing a bit relative importance of all independent variables. Two main groups of variables, legacy and political leadership, are supposed to provide either constant effect over time (legacy) or immediate effect on political regime despite legacy and institutional constraints (leadership). Comparing Romania and Belarus as examples of opposing post-communist trends *after* mid-1990s requires eliminating these two groups of variables. These countries' drift in opposite directions is not gradual starting immediately with post-communist transition, which is contrary to logic of legacy explanation. Political leadership in each of these two countries is also not able to cause the nature of political regime because it does not act *against* logic of institutional choice framework. Therefore political leadership explanation providing good correlation without contradicting legacy or institutional explanation is spurious.

Putting apart legacy and political leadership leaves two broad groups of variables, institutional choice and external influence. Some variables within each of these two models not only correlate well with both Romania and Belarus after mid-1990s; some of them are also supposed to affect political development after a certain time lag, not immediately. This may be key for beginning to explain divergent political regimes in post-communist countries *after* mid-1990s.

Two institutional choice variables, constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for legislative body, and at least two external influence variables, EU/NATO membership expectations and leverage, are thus acting together in shifting political expectations and changing cost-benefit calculation of local political leadership. Separation of powers between legislative and executive within parliament system of government makes government unable to impose alone authoritarian rules. Proportional representation leads to strong party representation, thus increasing legislative leverage vis-à-vis government, which is checked politically by both parliament and by party system. EU/NATO act both as expectations and leverage. In expectations they shift rational choice of political

leadership toward democratization; through active leverage they may impose new institutions producing similar political outcomes over time.

Comparing Romania and Belarus however makes external factor much weaker explanation than institutional choice even if we assume that somehow they act in combination. Belarus is a country where EU/NATO as external factors have zero value, meaning they leave *other* factors playing predominant role in political development. From above discussion we see that these *other* factors cannot represent legacy or political leadership. Therefore analysis on stage one, comparing two opposing trends, Romania and Belarus, leaves only couple of good and common explanatory variables that produce political effect not immediately but with certain period of time *after* they are introduced. These variables are constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for parliament; they are both part of institutional choice model.

On stage two we introduce Macedonia as an example of intermediate regime. Before discussing this case it is worth mentioning one particularity. On both variables, constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for parliament, Macedonia tilts toward post-communist countries that are expected to democratize. This means that its intermediate status is not failed to materialize autocracy, but failed (hopefully thus far!) democracy. This particularity is important in order to look not to all possible additional well-correlating variables, but only to such positive value variables that indicate strong tilting toward authoritarian development. We are especially interested with variables that show good correlation with Macedonia and much weaker correlation with Romania as a case of democratization. If these variables are common to Macedonia and Romania then the question why they do not produce democratic backslide in Romania of similar magnitude will remain open and unsolved.

Variables that positively correlate to Macedonian intermediate situation, but do not correlate to Romanian case in general, or to sub-periods in Romanian case, are clustered in two groups: legacy and external influence. Up to four external influence variables correlate positively to Macedonian case for most of 1990s: EU/NATO expectations, EU/NATO support, EU/NATO leverage, and strong

authoritarian state influence. Weakness of these variables as explanations for Macedonian intermediate status is that they all have zero or weak value during this sub-period. Variables included in legacy model that correlate well to Macedonian cases, like elite strategy, party high echelon autonomy, and shared rulers/ruled identity, as well as existence of sovereign state from institutional choice, have however positive values.

These remaining four variables are independent from one another. To use as illustration, main elite strategy during communism does not cause any of other three variables, e.g. shared rulers/ruled identity, nor is caused by any of them. The same conclusion applies to all four variables. Theoretically any of them, or all of them in combination, may cause the failure of complete democratization in Macedonia. They are strong enough to keep the country in this position *despite* pro-democratization effect that EU/NATO are causing after the end of 1990s. Variables like elite strategy and party high echelon autonomy may however gradually erode as factors determining political development. As explanations they can clarify early transitional period but can hardly influence mid- and long-term political development. Lack of shared identity between rulers and ruled and lack of indisputable state sovereignty however are much deeper legacy and institutional explanations. They are able influencing political development of particular country for generations.

Thus most logical solution for explaining intermediate case of Macedonia will be looking at some legacy and institutional factors, or combination of both, that contradict strong democratization logic of constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for legislature. External factors are still weak to overcome legacy and institutional obstacles, but since early 2000s they move Macedonia very slowly toward more political democracy.

This flexible two-stage explanation for post-communist political regime diversity is powerful to a degree that it allows for broader generalization beyond initial sample. Post-communist countries with initial intermediate status, according to Freedom House, follow later same logic of development as cases discussed in this project. Kazakhstan has very strong and largely unaccountable presidential

office from beginning of transition, elected by general population, and a weak 2-chamber parliament, which members are elected or appointed using different techniques, with only tiny minority of them, approximately 10 pct, representing political parties elected by proportional representation (Frye 1997; 2002; Ishiyama and Velten 1998; CIA 2006). With these institutional prerequisites we will expect that Kazakhstan becomes authoritarian political regime, which is what does happen in reality.

On the other hand, Croatia, following our flexible model prediction, develops as democratic political regime because two main institutional ingredients, political accountable executive within system of separation of powers, and proportional representation for legislature are present from very beginning of transition (Ibid.). For this country delay of democratization is coming obviously from exogenous factors like wars of secession in former Yugoslavia. Once these factors are eliminated, main institutional choice variables produce almost instantly democratic political regime.

As for other intermediate regimes, e.g. Albania, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia, we see that variables that make Macedonia so far escaping from either of two political extremes: deficit in state sovereignty and lack of rulers/ruled common identity, are responsible for these countries situation too. There are however significant nuances between these intermediate political regimes. Albania and Moldova are parliament republics with mixed electoral systems or proportional representation, meaning deficit in sovereignty (Albania) and lack of rulers/ruled common identity (Moldova) prevent these countries from complete democratization; on the other hand, Armenia and Georgia have strong presidential office but use different electoral systems, in this case deficit in sovereignty (Armenia, Georgia) and lack of rulers/ruled common identity (Georgia) explain rather failures of authoritarianism.

### **5.3. Concluding remarks**

This chapter shows that it is impossible, hopefully only temporarily, given variables provided in literature so far, to offer comprehensive rigid model for post-communist political development. Such rigid model must satisfy at least two conditions; first, it must show positive correlation for some variables from one model or across models to *all* three cases. Second, it must also prove links of causality between these variables and all different political outcomes. Analyzing findings shows that there are no variables that satisfy both conditions. Therefore more flexible explanatory model is needed.

Flexible model presented in this chapter makes certain compromises without completely eliminating possibility of theoretical explanation and empirical generalizability. It introduces two-stage analysis when countries with opposing political trends are analyzed first and intermediate political regime is discussed later. This flexible model allows identifying variables that cause different political trends like constitutional separation of powers and electoral system, and also to identify other variables that may cause mid-term slowdown in political development like shared common identity between rulers and ruled, and existence of sovereign state. This flexible model also identifies legacy and institutional variables as stronger compared to external influence. It allows for broader generalization including other post-communist countries.



## 6. Conclusion

This project starts with some dissatisfaction with current level of research explaining post-communist political regime diversity and ends up with tentative explanation for main post-communist political trends. It divides literature analytically into four main approaches, looking for explanations either to legacies, post-communist institutional choices, transitional period political leadership, or level of external influence and support. Its literature review goes beyond usual assessment as necessary first step in each research. It also paves the way for crafting comparable explanatory models, without which this project may easily become unmanageable in terms of time and space. Finding best country cases representing different post-communist trajectories is next logical step. This step allows reducing project to the strict minimum of cases, which however are still able of producing generalizations across entire post-communist world. Testing four comparable models to three cases representing main political trends creates rich pool of findings that are analyzed in order to find best explanations for post-communist regime diversity. Questions raised from applying generic models to different cases find their tentative answers in the end of the project. The need of theoretical rigidity, of one-size-fits-all solution gradually retreats giving place to more flexible approach embracing across models variables.

This project makes following conclusions. First, none of existing major analytical categories taken in cluster is powerful enough of predicting all main trends of post-communist political regime diversity. Contrary to highly optimist claims they advance, their cumulative prediction is either too inconclusive, or pointing at completely wrong direction. Second, ‘unpacking’ these analytical categories into myriad of independent variables is not more helpful than taking them as clusters. Only few of them do correlate well with one or another post-communist period across all cases. None of these hypotheses is powerful enough in providing rigid explanatory model for political regime diversity going beyond mere positive correlations, thus making danger of spuriousness real. Third, some independent variables provided by institutional choice approach, namely constitutional separation of powers and electoral system for parliament, provide

good correlation and explanation for opposing trends of political regime development, i.e. democracy and authoritarianism. Fourth, additional independent variables included in legacy and institutional choice model like shared public identity between rulers and ruled, and existence of sovereign state, provide an additional insight as to the reason why certain post-communist countries still remain intermediate political regimes. Fifth, this new explanatory model is applicable mainly to post-communist development after mid-1990s; it does not claim providing satisfactory explanation to trends occurring earlier during post-communist transition.

Understanding post-communist political development and diversity is a gradual process, not an instant snapshot; new literature will hopefully provide additional theoretical models and attached to them independent variables, within or outside existing schools. This may make further analysis more accurate and its conclusions more rigid. Every research provides tentative answers to existing questions, but also poses new questions thus making possible new research in this field. Questions that this project raises in need of further explanations are few but substantial. What exactly produces initial intermediate political regime in so many post-communist countries? Is it due to activity of one or many factors, or on the contrary, is it due to inactivity of factors that can only influence country moving toward democracy or authoritarianism? Why factors that are good in explaining opposite political developments are not so good in explaining persistent middle ground situation? Is there only one type of intermediate regime, or what we see as intermediate regime indeed represents two separate groups, failed democracies and failed authoritarianisms accidentally having equal scores on the scale of freedoms? Model generalization, as seen in previous chapter, is so far tilting toward assuming that there are indeed two different types of intermediate regimes, but final answer still needs additional research. Much more fundamental epistemological question, existing far before this project and still without clear answer, is whether we can compare countries that may live in different historical times only because they happen to experience comparatively brief period of uniform political regime, namely communism? Is this period such a clear watershed making countries with

very different historical background sufficiently uniform and capable of further comparison? This project assumes that answer to this question is affirmative, but further research may prove the opposite.

Social sciences' interest in understanding post-communist countries' political transformation and their possible democratization goes far beyond the group of current post-communist nations, for some of which the process of democratization is firmly an issue of the past. It is not part of their everyday political life but rather part of their history. Some countries in the world however still remain communist as far as their political system is concerned, not to mention tens of countries with different forms of undemocratic or unconsolidated political regimes. Some of these undemocratic polities are former communist states. Still unable to predict speed, direction and starting moment of their future post-authoritarian political transformations, we may use lessons accumulated during 1989-2006 experience in Central and Eastern Europe and former USSR in order to get prepared with range of possible expectations and a menu of political suggestions making these post-authoritarian transitions smoother and hopefully irreversible. This makes research of causes for post-communist political regime diversity an area with promising future as a sub-field of comparative democratization studies.

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