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The Geography of the Eastern Enlargement:
Present and Future Limits

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1. Introduction

On January 1st, 2007 the accession of Bulgaria and Romania completed the enlargement of the European Union (EU) to ten Central and Eastern European (CEE) states. The same countries have also become NATO members. Other former Communist states, however, are far from sharing this privileged position. While the Western Balkans might, sometime in the future, join EU, chances are slim for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) republics. European Union's present Eastern border will probably remain unchanged for a very long time. The reasons of this division are explored in the following sections with an emphasis on the close association between democratization and EU accession. Unlike most research in the field, however, the analysis combines an International Relations institutionalist approach and transitology. Section 2 uses Freedom House evaluation of political rights and civil liberties to illustrate the completely different degrees of democratization of states within and outside EU's enlargement process. Section 3 builds an International Relations explanation of the post-Communist democratization process based on Alexander Wendt's constructivism. Section 4 adds transitology elements to explain the regional success or failure of democratization mechanisms. The

Conclusion summarizes this paper's main findings and evaluates the perspectives of further EU enlargement.

## 2. Enlargement and Democratization

The Freedom House annual evaluation of political rights and civil liberties provides a useful quantitative instrument to measure the degree of democratization of a state:

> "Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate. Civil liberties allow for the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state" (Freedom House 2006).

Figure 1 shows the evolution of political rights and civil liberties regional average scores for three groups of post-Communist states. A one-to-seven scale is used, with one representing the highest degree of freedom and seven the lowest. 3.0 is the limit for "partly free" states and 5.5 for "not free" ones (Freedom House 2007). Figure 1 gives a clear picture of differences between the trajectories of CEE-10, CIS, and the Western Balkans. The first rapidly democratized and continued to improve their score, reaching in 2005 a value very close to the ideal 1 (the highest possible degree of freedom). The CIS and the Western Balkans, on another hand, plagued by ethnic wars and authoritarian regimes, remained in the "partly free" area (and very close to the "not free" one). It was only in the early 2000s that the Western Balkans experienced a favorable change, which brought them closer to the early 1990s situation of CEE-10. On the contrary, there is no improvement for the CIS republics. Freedom is there in a worse situation than under Gorbatchev.

Figure 1
Freedom House Political Rights and Civil Liberties average scores for ten CEE states, the CIS
republics and the Western Balkans, 1990-2005
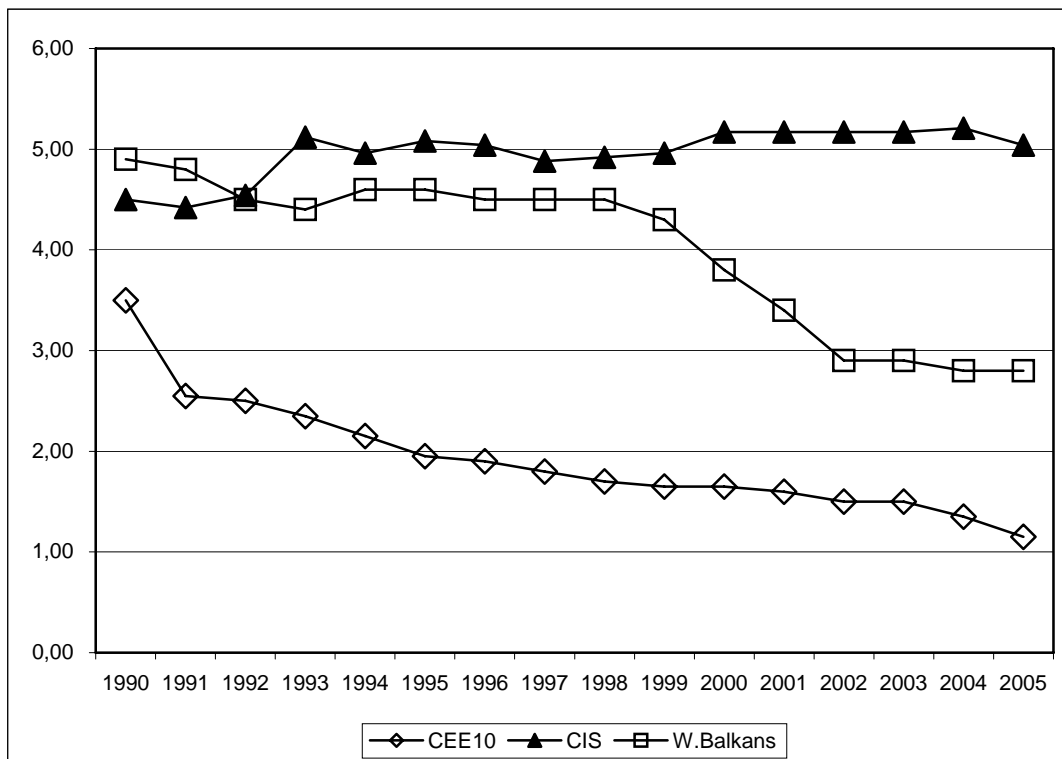
The relation between democratization and EU/NATO accession is obvious. The ten democratizing CEE states joined these organizations; their non-democratizing neighbors did not. This represents the central element of this paper's approach. The enlargement of the European Union was closely related to the success or failure of the democratization process in each post-Communist state. Furthermore, the EU accession and the democratization of these countries were not only intimately linked; they were mutually constitutive. On one hand, accession was possible only because of the democratization. On the other, democratization and especially democratic consolidation were possible only due to EU's pre-accession support and conditionality. However, this is not a total denial of the influence of other Western institutions and individual states, whose contribution cannot be ignored. The following section explores the details of this complex phenomenon.

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3. An International Relations Perspective

The study of transition to democracy is usually considered a branch of comparative politics. Scholars like Lipset, Almond, Verba, Rustow, O'Donnel, Schmitter, Diamond, and others contributed to the development of this field. Transition from Communism to democracy, however, is a special case due to the importance of external factors. While internal causes were significant, the 1989 revolutions did not have the fate of the 1956 Hungarian or 1968 Czechoslovak ones only because Gorbatchev had decided to put an end to the Cold War and give away the "external empire." Differences between Baltic States and CIS trajectories, for example, can also be explained by Kremlin's foreign policy decisions. Equally important, democratization-leading-to-EU-accession was a process actively supported by Western states and organizations (for a country-by-country detailed description of external determinants see Zielonka and Pravda (2001), volume 2). Consequently, an International Relations-based approach will be used to explain post-Communist democratization. This does not mean that internal causes are completely ignored. Rather, this paper regards them as factors that determined the geographical distribution of the democratization process and, implicitly, of the EU enlargment (see Section 4).

Unlike democratization processes elsewhere in the world, the fall of Communism had clear geopolitical causes and took place almost simultaneously in a large number of countries. A further singularity is the totalitarian character of the fallen regime, whose main consequence was the almost complete destruction of the civil society. Comparison with authoritarian regimes is therefore imperfect. Previous totalitarian systems (*i.e.* fascist ones) were eliminated through military defeat and foreign occupation, which makes comparison equally difficult. But the most important characteristic of the post-1989 period that cannot be analyzed on the basis of other democratic transitions is the ideological and identity vacuum that simultaneously affected the vast area previously known as the "Second

World" (except China and Vietnam). At the societal level, the disappearance of Communism left no dominant ideology. At international level, this was paralleled by an identity vacuum aggravated by the irrelevance of all previous regional political and security structures. In Yugoslavia and former Soviet Union this led to a wave of ethnic wars.

Three competing systems of values immediately tried to impose themselves. The first was the democratic one. As local pre-Communist experience with democracy was scarce or inexistent, this was basically a Western-imported ideology formalized by the 1990 Paris Charter of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Its provisions included respect of democracy, development of market economy, and peaceful foreign policy. As it will be shown later, the diffusion and assimilation of democratic values and norms were actively supported by Western states and organizations. Two competing systems had an endogenous genesis, based on local historical experience. They were the ultra-nationalist system of values, which led to ethnic wars and the creation of authoritarian regimes in former Yugoslavia, Slovakia, and certain ex-Soviet republics; and the neo-Communist system of values, which became the dominant ideology of non-democratic regimes in Romania, Bulgaria, and many CIS republics. In fact, in the early 1990s, only Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary seemed to have consolidating democracies. Nevertheless, continuing international interaction allowed further diffusion and assimilation of Western democratic values and norms. This process was important in all CEE-10 states, whose evolution demonstrates the strong relationship between internal and external change. Western influence contributed to the assimilation of democratic values. Under their influence ex-Communist societies undertook the democratization process while, at the international level, natural affinities were created with Western states sharing the same values. Progressive democratization encouraged pacific, pro-Western foreign policy, while the latter further contributed to democratic internal development.

This phenomenon is well captured by Alexander Wendt's "Social Theory of International Politics" (Wendt 1999). In this view, both state and society are relevant in international interaction;

therefore, the actors of international relations are not states but "state-society complexes." Such complexes are permanently involved in socialization and learning processes, which modify both their identities and interests. In turn, the interaction of state-society complexes modifies their international environment, sometimes changing the very "culture" of international anarchy. The CEE-10 probably represents the ideal case study for this latter aspect, as it experienced the absence of any security framework (which could have transformed ethnic tensions in Slovakia, Romania, Estonia, and Latvia in Yugoslav-type conflicts), then relative stability and, finally, membership of the Western security community. Wendt analyses "the three cultures of anarchy," associated to Hobbes, Locke, and Kant. Correspondingly, states are enemies, rivals, and friends. Following this approach, there can be an evolution (not mandatory, but at least unidirectional, except for an exogenous shock) between the three "cultures:" from Hobbes to Locke and then toward Kant. Things should not be idealized: even the existence of Kantian culture does not mean absolute harmony. All three cultures share three degrees of internalization of the norms (by force, price, and legitimacy), which simultaneously influence international relations (*ibid.*). It is clear that since 1989 CEE-10 states have followed exactly this trajectory. Ultra-nationalist or neo-Communist regimes in Slovakia (1994-1998), Romania (1990-1996), and Bulgaria (1995-1997) were overthrown. Ethnic tensions in Estonia and Latvia were reduced to irrelevant levels. Finally, EU and NATO enlargement confirmed the ten states' accession to the Kantian Western community.

This impressive transformation was possible due to the existence of three international structures linking CEE-10 and Western states. Chronologically, the first was the CSCE (which became in 1994 the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE). Its 1990 Paris Charter formalized the democratic system of values. As all post-Communist states were CSCE members and approved the charter, even those resilient to democratization accepted at least the superficial aspects of electoral democracy (Decaux 1992, Heraclidis 1993). This was the first step of the diffusion of democratic values and norms that finally imposed themselves in CEE-10 and are now progressively

assimilated by certain ex-Yugoslav and CIS republics. CSCE's contribution did not stop there. It developed specialized organs – the Office for Free Elections, later transformed in the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR); the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media; the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration – that effectively and efficiently helped develop democratic political systems (http://www.osce.org). The so called "seminar diplomacy," which included seminars and colloquia as well as different forms of multilateral diplomacy led to the creation of an epistemic community in the field of European security (Adler 1998: 138-9). This was extremely important in a region threatened by military conflicts. Equally important, CSCE's preventive diplomacy and especially the actions of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) helped reduce ethnic tensions, thus preserving regional peace and increasing concerned states' chances of democratization (Flyn and Farrell 1999: 522; Huber 1994: 25). Of course, the HCNM could not stop the Yugoslav wars. But he highly contributed to the prevention of ethnic conflicts related to Russian and Hungarian minorities in Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, and Romania. While less visible, this had an important effect on both the stability and the democratization of CEE.

The second institutional framework was initiated by EU's Europe Agreements. These were association treaties clearly stating the perspective of accession. Given the remarkable economic advantages associated to membership, it is not surprising that impoverished ex-Communist states did everything in their power to comply with accession criteria. Furthermore, European Union's Eastern enlargement was regarded by the huge majority of the CEE population as a natural reunification of the European family that Soviet military occupation had divided for half a century. Pro-accession efforts were therefore highly legitimated while political forces perceived as hampering the enlargement rapidly lost public support (a good example is provided by the end of the Slovak ultra-nationalist regime of Vladimir Meciar in 1998). Progressively, the European Union added further elements to the initial Europe Agreements. The Essen pre-accession strategy and the reinforced pre-accession strategy defined by Agenda 2000 brought significant improvements (see Demetropoulou 2002). But the

decisive step had been the 1993 adoption of the Copenhagen criteria, as they introduced political – and, more specifically, democratic – conditionality. This was an extremely effective instrument that forced candidate members to democratize their political institutions and practices in order to be accepted as EU members (see Tucny 2000; Schneider and Tucny 2002; Schimmelfennig *et al.* 2002; Vachudova 2002; Hughes and Sasse 2003; Grabbe 2006). European Union's conditionality had a visible impact on the very identity of concerned state-society complexes, which progressively evolved toward the model provided by their EU counterparts. This is why democratization and EU accession of the CEE-10 states were mutually constitutive. Through conditionality, the enlargement process forced them to fully democratize. But their inclusion in this process – only ten post-Communist states were granted Europe Agreements – was itself due to the fact that the ten countries had already begun to democratize. Unfortunately for them, authoritarian, war-thorn Western Balkans and CIS states remained outside this *cercle vertueux*.

The third structure belongs to the field of security and is related to NATO. The Partnership for Peace (PfP), created in 1994, did not provide security guarantees for CEE members. Initially it was even perceived as a modest alternative to NATO enlargement. Its main mission seemed to be peace keeping (Drew 1995: 27). Still, it created cooperation mechanisms and procedures and helped build an epistemic community reuniting NATO and CEE military. Furthermore, its functioning directly influenced a specific aspect of democratization. It helped modify post-Communist states' civilian-military relations, assuring the control of the armed forces by democratic institutions (Vankovska and Wiberg 2003: 27; Sherr 2004: 65). But PfP's major contribution was linked to its perception by CEE societies and political elites as a first step toward United States' involvement in the region. This was a subjective impression. Nevertheless, the perspective of active American hegemony significantly encouraged pro-Western political forces. It was widely believed that Washington's involvement would put an end to regional conflicts (as it did in Bosnia, imposing the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement). Through future NATO enlargement – which effectively took place in 1999 and 2004 – it would protect

the region from possibly hostile external powers. Accession to NATO as well as to the European Union would fully bring CEE states inside the Western community, thus fulfilling their population's desire of "returning to Europe" (for the case of Romania see Gros and Tismaneanu 1997: 28). Overall, the apparently modest Partnership for Peace was the final key element needed for a resolutely pro-Western – and implicitly pro-democratic – orientation of Central and Eastern Europe.

Individual Western states, other specialized international organizations (like the Council of Europe and the International Monetary Fund), and Western NGOs equally contributed to the process. The overall influence of these structures was three fold. Pressure was put on CEE decision makers. There were actions meant to influence CEE public opinion. And, most importantly, there was the very diffusion of democratic values and norms throughout the CEE societies. Pressures targeting non-democratic leaders are easier to identify. The European Union and OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities constantly acted in order to limit the authoritarian trends of the Romanian neo-Communist president Ion Iliescu (Kelley 2001: 253; Fürst 2003: 129; Kemp 2001: 237-8; Michalchuk 1998: 114). As his regime was dependent on Western economic support, Iliescu was forced to adopt an ambiguous attitude that limited the consequences of his anti-democratic convictions. In a similar situation, the Bulgarian Prime Minister Zhan Videnov chose to reject Western recommendations, including EU and IMF criticism of his economic policies. This led to the suspension of financial aid for Bulgaria, which contributed to the 1996 financial crisis that brought down the neo-Communist regime (Ganev 1997: 125-131). In Slovakia, the economy was stable enough to make external aid unnecessary. Furthermore, its ultra-nationalist Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar was convinced of his country's exceptional geopolitical position that would force EU and NATO to accept Slovak accession despite lack of democratization (Kelley 2001: 246-7). Consequently, Meciar is considered a typical example of authoritarian leader who did not respond to Western pressure. However, on one hand this is not completely true. Without these pressures, Slovak authoritarianism would have certainly been more aggressive. HCNM's systematic actions, for example, finally made Meciar to conclude a friendship

treaty with Hungary. Its consequences were rather limited (Kovrig 2000: 60), but it nevertheless attenuated the tensions between Bratislava and Budapest and prevented the escalade of tensions between the two countries. On another hand, it was under EU's pressure that Slovak opposition allied with the Hungarian minority's political parties, thus clearly rejecting the nationalist ideology (Papagianni 2003: 258). This could not influence Meciar's policies, but after his fall it facilitated Slovakia's rapid return to democracy.

Another set of actions targeted CEE public opinion. The HCNM frequently visited countries where ethnic tensions were present. Besides efforts to modify nationalist government policies and to reconcile opposing groups in minority-inhabited areas, he systematically made public statements, gave interviews, and expressed opinions intended to change the overall attitude toward ethnic minorities. The European Union made use of criticism, pressure, and conditionality in order to make local public opinion aware of dangers associated with authoritarian trends. Slovakia's non-inclusion in the first wave of EU enlargement is an excellent example, as it had an immediate and undeniable impact on popular support for Meciar and precipitated his fall. Statements by NATO and US officials, often made in the framework of the Partnership for Peace, had similar effects. These selective actions combined with the more general diffusion of democratic values and norms, which was encouraged by intense cultural, political, and economic contacts between CEE and the West. One of the main consequences was the development of a vibrant civil society vocally asking full democratization of local political systems (Papagianni 2003: 259, Drauss 2002: 61, Tismaneanu 1996: 9, Marrié 1996: 166; Giatzidis 2002: 113). Mobilization against CEE ultra-nationalist and neo-Communist regimes was stimulated by the activity of large numbers of newly created NGOs as well as of independent and sometimes even state media. An important contribution to the 1998 electoral defeat of Meciar was brought by the *SME* newspaper and the *TV Markíza* television station (Abraham 2000: 202-4); in Bulgaria, reporters of the public radio organized themselves in order to counter Videnov government's political pressure (Koinova 1996: 52-54). Equally important were elements as diverse as the Slovak Catholic Church

(Fisher 1996: 39-41) or Romanian syndicates (Ionescu 1992). This had a direct effect on population's convictions. Democratic values were progressively assimilated. By 1995-96 support for ultra-nationalism and neo-Communism was considerably lower than in early 1990s. In Slovakia, the negative attitude toward the Hungarian minority shrank from 58.4% in 1992 to 23% in 1996 (Abele 1996: 148, Bacova 1999: 157). In 1996 32% of the Romanians felt threatened by ethnic minorities against 60% in 1992 (Haerpfer 2002: 100). Also in 1996, only 22% of the Bulgarians preferred an authoritarian leader against 66% in 1992 (*ibid.* 34). It is not surprising that between 1996 and 1998 electoral defeat put an end to the authoritarian regimes of Iliescu, Videnov, and Meciar. Democratic consolidation followed, and by 2004 the identity change of all CEE state-society complexes was advanced enough to allow accession to both EU and NATO.

It can be concluded that OSCE, EU, and NATO-supported democratization explains the enlargement to the CEE-10 states. The Western Balkans and CIS republics, on another hand, followed undemocratic trajectories, which limited or eliminated the influence of the three organizations and made EU accession impossible. This is due to specific internal and external factors. The former will be analyzed in the following section. The latter belong to the domain of International Relations, but are only indirectly linked with the transfer of norms and values. They are geopolitical factors already mentioned at the beginning of this section. It was USSR's abandon of its "external empire" that allowed the democratization of CEE states while the Soviet Union itself remained Communist. When it was dismantled, Russian hegemony survived inside the newly created Commonwealth of Independent States. Moscow frequently supported pro-Russian authoritarian regimes and instrumentalized civil wars in Transdniestria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno Karabakh, and Tajikistan. It is not surprising that no CIS member is today a full-fledged democracy. On the contrary, Western (and especially American) political influence was important in CEE-10 countries. This encouraged the development of local pro-Western, democratic political forces, which highly contributed to the overall democratization of the ten states. This evolution was equally favored by the internal factors presented in the following section.

4. The Contribution of Transitology

Besides external factors, post-Communist democratization was influenced by internal causes best described by transitology. Students of previous transitions to democracy identified a set of internal factors, which usually determine the final result of the transition process. These factors are most useful in explaining why international mechanisms that proved efficient in bringing democracy to CEE-10 could not work efficiently in the Western Balkans and CIS.

An obvious precondition to any democratization process is national unity (Rustow 1970: 350). It is difficult to build democracy in a country plagued by violent secessionist movements. In former Yugoslavia, ethnic wars determined non-democratic developments in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kossovo. Macedonia closely avoided civil war, but ethnic tensions were important enough to hamper its democratization process. The only Yugoslav exception was Slovenia. Escaping regional wars, it rapidly democratized and had no difficulty in joining the European Union. Ethnic tensions were equally present in many former Soviet republics. They were the cause of civil wars in Moldova and Georgia as well as of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict for Nagorno-Karabakh. Ukraine stopped short of civil war, but in early 90s ethnic tensions were an important destabilizing factor. Finally, Tajikistan experienced a [non-ethnic] civil war. In all these cases, potential or actual violence made democratization impossible. In fact, even the Czech-Slovak "velvet" separation was not free of negative consequences. After independence, Slovak nationalists maintained their influence and supported the undemocratic, ultra-nationalist regime of Vladimir Meciar. However, overall the CEE-10 countries were far less vulnerable to this kind of threats, which improved their chances of democratization.

Socio-economic development represents another factor. Lipset (1959) was the first to state that economic development modifying the social structure in a way favorable to the middle class leads to a change of the political culture that supports democratization and democracy consolidation. This theory was used to explain differences between post-Communist Visegrad and Balkan countries (Lewis 1997: 410). Indeed, Table 1 shows that CEE-10 GDP per capita is two times bigger than that of the Western Balkans and three times bigger than that of the CIS. The agriculture is two to three times less important, while services are more developed and immunization is performed on a larger scale. Overall, the CEE-10 region is clearly more developed in socio-economic terms. Therefore, conditions are more favorable for the existence of a larger middle class able to promote democracy.

Table 1
Socio-economic development indicators (1995) (based on data available at
http://devdata.worldbank.org/data-query/ retreived February 28, 2005)

	GDP per capita (current US$)	Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	Services, value added (% of GDP)	Immunization, measles (% of children ages 12-23 months)
CEE-10	3,633	7.3	60.2	96.6
Western Balkans	1,728	17.5	55.3	88.4
CIS	1,024	22.6	45.4	93.8

For Lipset, political culture is an intermediate variable. In a different approach, Almond and Verba (1965) see it as the very engine of democratization. Or it is true that important differences exist between the political cultures of the three post-Communist regions. First, in terms of historical cultural influences, Central Europe belonged to the Hapsburg Empire and was open to Western influence. The Balkans were dominated for five centuries by the Ottomans while the CIS area was ruled by the tsars. The influence of these absolutist empires helped create and maintain political culture characteristics that would later hamper democratization. Second, religion equally played a role, separating Catholic and Protestant Central Europe from Orthodox Balkans and Eastern Europe. Some authors even claim

that Orthodoxy creates a cultural environment less favorable to democracy and market economy than Catholicism (Enev 2001). In fact, this is rather difficult to prove, as it is impossible to separate Orthodox influence form non-European influences due to Ottoman and Russian control. But religious differences clearly constituted a barrier further separating Central Europe from its Southern and Eastern neighbors, who developed different political cultures. Third, there are important differences in the pre-Communist democratic experience. While democratic episodes (and, sometimes, a genuinely democratic tradition) can be identified in the pre-WWII history of most CEE-10 states, they are completely absent in the CIS republics. Lacking even the remote memory of a democratic past, their citizens were reluctant to embark on a new social experiment. Fourth, the hardness of the Communist repression cannot be ignored. Due to more liberal regimes, most 1989 Central European countries already had an embryo of civil society, which rapidly developed and supported the democratization process. In the case of Poland, it might be even said that the creation of the Solidarność trade union marked the transformation of the totalitarian regime into an authoritarian one. CIS and some Balkan republics (Albania is the case in point), on the contrary, experienced more brutal regimes that completely destroyed civil society and prevented any contact with the outside world. Consequently, even today democratization remains a remote perspective. Overall, important differences in the historical influences, religion, pre-Communist democratic experience, and the hardness of the Communist repression led to the existence of different political cultures in CEE-10 states, on one hand, and Western Balkans and the CIS, on the other. While the first clearly favored democratization, the latter hampered it, allowing the development of ultra-nationalist and neo-Communist systems of values.

Institutional variables represent another factor used to analyze transition to democracy. For Huntington (1965), survival of new democracies is closely linked to the characteristics of the newly created political system. In general, parliamentary systems are considered more favorable to democratic consolidation than presidential ones. In the post-Communist case, the danger comes from the existence of a strong leader presented as the liberator of the nation and the creator of the state. If he can take

advantage of a presidential system (usually put in place due to his own maneuvers) there is a very important risk of non-democratic evolution (Bunce 2000: 711). Many Western Balkans and CIS leaders – Milosevic, Tudjman, and Central Asian dictators are of course the best-known examples – illustrate this theory. However, it is not certain that the political system represents an independent variable. Usually, it is only an instrument created by the dictator-to-be to serve his political objectives.

> "Even if certain constitutional solutions proved to be more efficient than others, they were not necessarily the product of 'constitutional engineering' but the result of cultural, economic, and social factors characterizing a given country at a given moment" (Elgie and Zielonka 2001: 47).

Therefore, it is doubtful that institutional factors should be taken into consideration in order to explain the differences between post-Communist democratization processes.

A final factor is related to "voluntarist" approaches taking into consideration the role of the elites. This view was highly influenced by the fact that transitology was created on the basis of Latin American and South European democratization processes, during which elites' actions were significant. Such research emphasizes the importance of the existence of a pact between old and new elites (Rustow 1970) or between a faction of the authoritarian regime (the "*blandos*") and moderate opposition (O'Donnel and Schmitter 1986). It was claimed that this could explain the difference between the successful Polish and Hungarian transitions, prepared by a pact between Communist and anti-Communist elites, and the difficult democratization of Romania, where the absence of any pact had led to the violent overthrow of the Communist regime. However, Czechoslovak and East German examples show that successful transition was possible even without a pact. This allowed Bunce to claim that the existence of pacts is in fact irrelevant (Bunce 2000: 716). A further argument is involuntarily provided by Roeder (2001: 23). In his view, socio-economic factors and political culture are not significant, as they cannot explain the democratic transitions in Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova. These transitions could only be explained by the negotiation process that accompanied the fall of Communism. In fact, the absence of democratic consolidation in the three countries and their difficulty to avoid authoritarian trends is precisely a confirmation of the importance of socio-economic and

political culture factors. A related approach was created by Adam Przeworski. Rejecting any influence of structural factors and any sociological or macro-historical determinism, he identifies a profound similarity between Latin American and post-Communist democratization processes. In both cases, the fundamental factors are the balance of political forces and their rational choice actions. It is the distribution of these elements that dictates the final outcome of transition processes, which range from full democratization to civil war. Insisting on similarities with Latin America, he claimed in the early 90s that economic difficulties would make CEE-10 democracies fragile and unable to consolidate. They would follow the uncertain destiny of Latin American countries (Przeworski 1991: 191). Today, such statements can only prove the inability of voluntarist approaches to correctly predict future evolutions. Consequently, their explicative value can be seriously questioned.

To conclude, national unity, socio-economic development, and political culture are the most likely internal factors that shaped the post-Communist democratization processes. These three elements are significantly different in CEE-10 states in comparison with their southern and eastern neighbors. The former could take advantage of a civic culture that rapidly developed in a way similar to the Western European one, generating widespread civic engagement, which in turn imposed full democratization. This is substantiated by the fact that both the fall of Communism and subsequent democratic consolidation were marked by massive public support and participation. CIS and Balkan societies, on the contrary, preserved their historical passivity, being reluctant to civic engagement and tolerant toward authoritarian practices. Especially in the CIS, the end of Communism was perceived far less enthusiastically than in Central Europe and did not bring the same fundamental changes. Against this different background, the same international mechanisms were able to efficiently diffuse democratic values in CEE-10 countries while only superficially affecting CIS and Western Balkans state-society complexes.

5. Conclusion

After the fall of Communism, the international diffusion of democratic norms and values targeted the entire area between East Berlin and Vladivostok. In the initial phase, all former Communist states adopted democratic constitutional frameworks. In principle, all presidents and parliaments are elected, the rule of law is unanimously accepted, citizens' rights and liberties are recognized. However, in order to have working democracies, democratic consolidation was needed. CSCE/OSCE, EU's Europe Agreements, and NATO's Partnership for Peace formed the institutional structure that maintained and intensified the transfer of democratic values. Still, geopolitical and internal factors (national unity, socio-economic development, and political culture) allowed further democratization in CEE-10 states while limiting or reverting it in Western Balkans and CIS republics. Given the importance of European Union's democratic conditionality, democratization and EU accession became mutually constitutive in CEE-10. Lack of democratic consolidation, on the contrary, determined other former Communist countries' exclusion from the Europe Agreement as well as their hesitant if not hostile relation with NATO. This further encouraged undemocratic trends, as EU and NATO lost their capacity to significantly influence the evolution of non-CEE-10 states. Consequently, only the ten Central and East European countries finally joined the European Union.

Of course, this does not mean that 2004 represents an East European "end of history." Further EU enlargement is possible and even foreseeable, be it in the long run. Western Balkans states are the most obvious candidates. It is true that, excepting Croatia, political culture, socio-economic development, and even national unity are still problematic. But European Union's vicinity and strong implication will most likely modify these elements, allowing one day an all-Balkans enlargement. Macedonia has already been accepted as a candidate country, even if opening of negotiations will probably not take place very soon. Unfortunately, the situation of the Commonwealth of Independent States allows less optimism. Most of its members have semi-democratic or clearly authoritarian

regimes. Even the three "colored revolutions" of recent years led to mixed results. In Ukraine, disputes between democratic parties allowed the return to power of conservative forces defeated in the Orange Revolution. In Kyrgystan, a bitter fight for power opposing former revolution allies leaves little room for democratic consolidation. In Georgia, the new president's exaggerated powers and the dispute with Russia over the separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia suggest future problems. Overall, it is most unlikely that internal and geopolitical factors will change enough to allow the full democratization and EU accession of any present CIS member.

The last case that has to be mentioned is that of Turkey. As Croatia, it has already started accession negotiations. However, the future of Turkish democracy is far from certain. Since its victory in the 1994 local and the 1995 parliamentary elections, an Islamic party represents the most important political force. It won the 2002 elections with 34.2 percent of the votes, being able to form a single-party government after several decades of rule by coalitions (Toprak 2005: 177-8). This ascending trend continues, reflecting the progressive islamisation of the Turkish society. Combined with army's resolutely secular stand (and its long tradition of coups d'état), it might seriously endanger Turkey's democratic future and EU accession.

Consequently, the perspectives of further EU enlargement are reduced to the Western Balkans. Even there, only Croatia will be able to become a member in the near future. The accession of the entire region will be a slow and complicated process, which might require up to 15 or 20 years. This is however a better perspective than that of the Commonewealth of Independent States. None of its members will be able to open accession negotiations in the foreseeable future. More disturbing, despite European Union's "good neighborhood policy," its present Eastern border will most probable become a new iron curtain separating prosperous European democracies from their impoverished, un-democratic former Soviet neighbors.

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