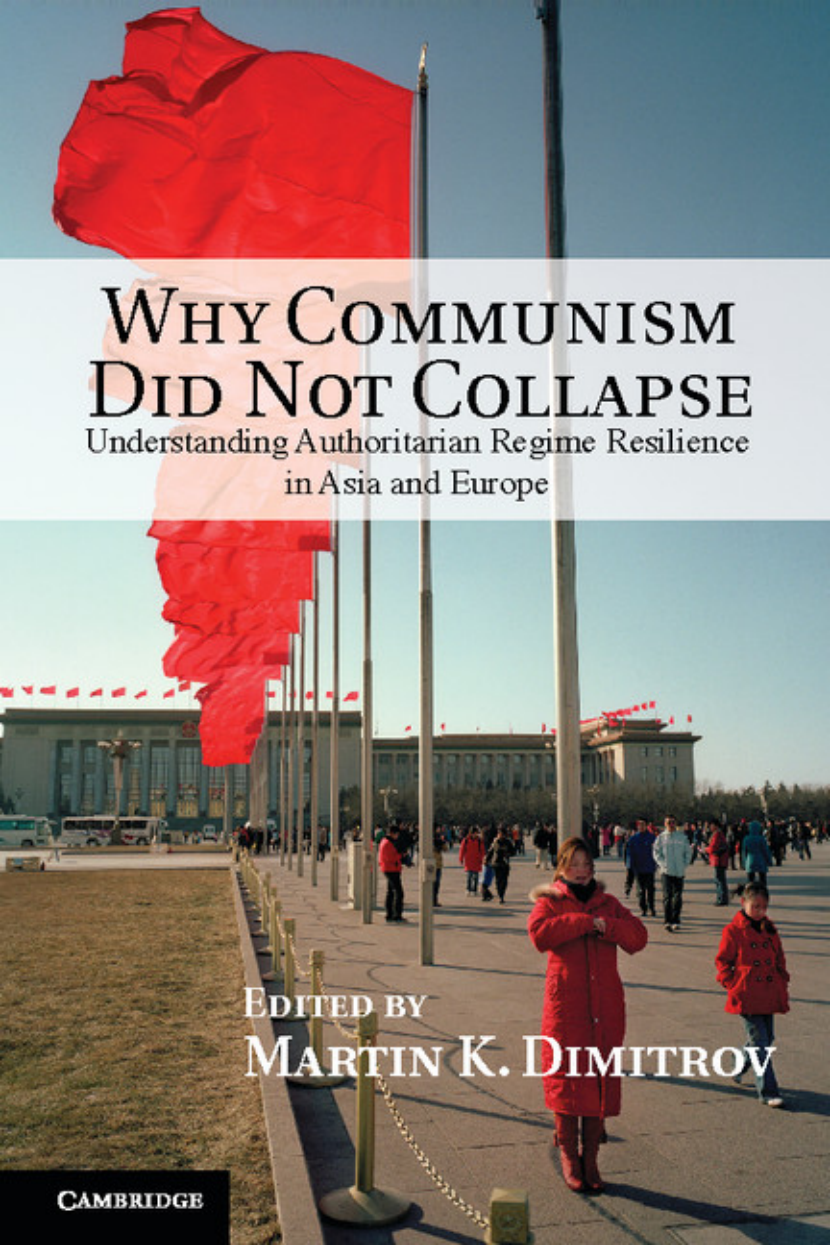

Why Communism Did Not Collapse

Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe

Edited by

Martin K. Dimitrov

Cambridge

Why Communism Did Not Collapse

Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe

This volume brings together a distinguished group of scholars working to address the puzzling durability of communist autocracies in Eastern Europe and Asia, which are the longest-lasting type of nondemocratic regime to emerge after World War I. The volume conceptualizes the communist universe as consisting of the ten regimes in Eastern Europe and Mongolia that eventually collapsed in 1989–1991 and the five regimes that survived the fall of the Berlin Wall: China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, and Cuba. Taken together, the essays offer a theoretical argument that emphasizes the importance of institutional adaptations as a foundation of communist resilience. In particular, the contributors focus on four adaptations: of the economy, of ideology, of the mechanisms for inclusion of potential rivals, and of the institutions of vertical and horizontal accountability. The volume argues that when regimes are no longer able to implement adaptive change, contingent leadership choices and contagion dynamics make collapse more likely. By conducting systematic paired comparisons of the European and Asian cases and by developing arguments that encompass both collapse and resilience, the volume offers a new methodological approach for studying communist autocracies.

Martin K. Dimitrov is an associate professor of political science at Tulane University. He is also an associate at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard and a Research Fellow at the East Asian Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School. Dimitrov previously taught at Dartmouth College and has held residential fellowships at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard, the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study, and the American Academy in Berlin. He is the author of *Piracy and the State: The Politics of Intellectual Property Rights in China* (Cambridge, 2009).

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MARTIN K. DIMITROV
Tulane University

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List of Contributors

Regina Abrami is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Senior Fellow in the Management Department, Wharton School of Business, and Director of the Global Program, the Lauder Institute for International Studies and Management, at the University of Pennsylvania.

Charles K. Armstrong is the Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Studies in the Social Sciences in the Department of History at Columbia University.

Thomas P. Bernstein is Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Columbia University.

Valerie Bunce is the Aaron Binenkorb Professor of International Studies and Professor of Government at Cornell University.

Martin K. Dimitrov is Associate Professor of Political Science at Tulane University, an Associate at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University, and a Research Fellow at the East Asian Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School.

Mary Gallagher is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor.

Jonathan K. Hanson is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University.

Mark Kramer is Director of the Harvard Project on Cold War Studies at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard and Editor of the *Journal of Cold War Studies*.

Edmund Malesky is Associate Professor of Political Science at Duke University.

Vladimir Tismaneanu is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Post-Communist Societies at the University of Maryland.

Kellee S. Tsai is Professor of Political Science and Vice Dean for Humanities, Social Sciences, and Graduate Programs at the Johns Hopkins University.

Sharon L. Wolchik is Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University.

Yu Zheng is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Connecticut.

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Abbreviations

ACFIC	All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce
AMVR	Archive of the Ministry of the Interior (Bulgaria)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
CC	Central Committee
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FDI	foreign direct investment
FEZ	free economic and trade zone
FPM	Popular Front of Moldova
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	gross domestic product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GONGO	government-organized NGO
HRS	household responsibility system (China)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
IRI	International Republican Institute
KGB	Soviet Committee on State Security
KOR	Workers' Defense Committee (Poland)
KWP	Korean Workers' Party
LPS	*Logic of Political Survival*
LSG	leading small group (China)
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment (Vietnam)
NA	National Assembly
NEP	New Economic Policy (Soviet Union)

NGO	nongovernmental organization
NPC	National People's Congress (China)
PBSC	Politburo Standing Committee (China)
PCI	Provincial Competitiveness Index (Vietnam)
PCOM	People's Committee (Vietnam)
PL	political liberalization
PLA	People's Liberation Army (China)
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
RTsKhIDNI	Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Most Recent History
S	selectorate
SAIC	State Administration for Industry and Commerce (China)
SMA	Shanghai Municipal Archive
SOE	state-owned enterprise (China)
TsDA	Central State Archive (Sofia)
TsKhSD	Center for Preservation of Contemporary Documentation (Russia)
TVE	township and village enterprise (China)
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VCP	Vietnamese Communist Party
W	winning coalition
WPK	Workers' Party of Korea
WTO	World Trade Organization

PART I

REFORM AND RESILIENCE

1

Understanding Communist Collapse and Resilience

Martin K. Dimitrov

In 1989 communist regimes from Berlin to Ulaanbaatar began to fall like dominoes. In the aftermath, social scientists produced many explanations for the fall of communism. Nevertheless, given the momentous and multicausal nature of the 1989 events, the question of why some communist regimes collapsed is still open to new interpretations. But 1989 is also notable for what did *not* happen. Several communist regimes survived the fall of the Berlin Wall: communist parties still rule in China, Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, and North Korea. Thus, attention to the "non-events" of 1989 allows us to ask a broader question – namely, why do some communist regimes survive the forces of contagion, even as others fall?

By focusing on the survival of some communist regimes and the collapse of others, we can approach the general problem of authoritarian regime resilience. Some authoritarian regimes are relatively short-lived, experiencing frequent breakdowns as a result of coups or revolutions. However, the regimes that underwent turmoil in 1989 had enjoyed very long average life spans. Regardless of whether they survived the watershed of 1989, all these regimes had been *resilient*. They had previously weathered serious domestic and international crises that had not brought them down (for example, de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe or the Cultural Revolution in China). What are the factors that explain such resilience? Why were these regimes capable of maintaining power? Given that some regimes failed and others survived, were there systematic differences among the survivors and the nonsurvivors that explain these divergent outcomes?

This volume investigates authoritarian resilience by focusing on communist regimes, which are autocratic single-party states where, at a minimum, a mass-based Leninist party enjoys a monopoly on the use of force, controls the flow of information, proscribes opposition parties, and exercises substantial control over the economy.[1] The main argument is that, apart from repression,

[1] Adapted from Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2nd rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 22.

communist resilience is a function of continuous adaptive institutional change. Therefore, collapse is more likely when adaptive institutional change stagnates. As scholars of the Middle East are now questioning basic assumptions of their subfield,[2] they have begun to suggest a similar structural explanation for the Arab Spring, finding that regimes that had inflexible political structures were more likely to collapse, whereas regimes that had room to maneuver institutionally (i.e., the monarchies) or had a strong nationalistic base of rule (i.e., Iran) were more likely to survive.[3] Despite the differences in the specific institutional adaptations necessary in the Middle East and in the communist world, a general point should be noted: autocracies cannot rely on force alone to survive – they also need to engage in adaptive institutional change.

Institutional Sources of Communist Regime Resilience

In recent years, some of the most exciting research in comparative politics has centered on efforts to understand the durability of different types of *noncommunist* authoritarian regimes.[4] A robust finding has emerged, demonstrating that

[2] F. Gregory Gause III, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 90:4 (July–August 2011), 81–90.

[3] Jack A. Goldstone, "Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Autocracies," *Foreign Affairs* 90:3 (May–June 2011), 8–16.

[4] See Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13:2 (April 2002), 21–35; Andreas Schedler, ed., *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006); Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On the Middle East, see Jason Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On Asia, see Thomas B. Pepinsky, *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes: Indonesia and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Dan Slater, *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On Latin America, see Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Kenneth F. Greene, *Why Dominant Parties Lose: Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). On Africa, see Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Leonardo R. Arriola, "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 42:10 (2009), 1339–1362. On post-Soviet Eurasia, see Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions, and Pacts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Kathleen Collins, *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Scott Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell

noncommunist single-party regimes last significantly longer than military or personalist regimes.[5] This empirical finding, which provided quantitative support for earlier insights in comparative politics,[6] gave rise to a large literature oriented toward uncovering the institutional foundations of authoritarian durability. Scholars primarily investigated how rewarding elites with membership in institutions for rival incorporation, such as legislatures and ruling parties, prolongs the life span of authoritarian regimes by preventing opposition coordination.[7] Although standard theories of authoritarian rule usually restrict the size of the winning coalition to a subset of the elite, known as the selectorate, new research has underscored that leaders also want to win mass support.[8] Because this research typically focuses on *electoral* autocracies, in which opposition parties are allowed to exist and to contest the elections meaningfully, it has identified fiscal transfers during electoral cycles as a key instrument for winning mass support.[9] The chapters in the present volume complement earlier scholarship by focusing on *communist* autocracies (which are a type of nonelectoral autocracy, as they proscribe opposition parties; though elections are held, they have at best only a very limited degree of competitiveness) and by identifying and analyzing nonelectoral channels through which communist autocracies can increase mass support and thus expand their winning coalitions beyond the selectorate.

Communist autocracies deserve special attention for both empirical and theoretical reasons. A basic empirical fact remains unappreciated: communist regimes are the most resilient type of nondemocratic regime, outlasting both noncommunist single-party regimes and nondemocratic monarchies.[10] This unusual longevity suggests that the survival tools used by communist regimes may differ from those used by noncommunist autocracies. Identifying these tools

University Press, 2010). See also Milan W. Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

5 Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Benjamin Smith, "Life of the Party: The Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence under Single-Party Rule," *World Politics* 57:3 (April 2005), 421–451. Geddes and Smith each exclude communist regimes when calculating regime duration.

6 Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).

7 See mainly Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

8 Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, *Popular Support for an Undemocratic Regime: The Changing Views of Russians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

9 Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy*.

10 As of 2000, the average life span of noncommunist single-party regimes was 28.51 years and that of nondemocratic monarchies was 34.75 years. In contrast, communist single-party regimes had an average life span of 46.2 years. My dataset includes 39 noncommunist single-party regimes (based partially on Smith, "Life of the Party"), 20 nondemocratic monarchies, and 15 communist regimes.

requires both empirical research and a theoretical reconceptualization of the foundations of authoritarian rule.

The theoretical contribution of this volume to the debate on the sources of authoritarian resilience is threefold. First, instead of conceptualizing governance institutions as static, the volume stresses the importance of dynamic institutional innovation and adaptation. Second, the chapters broaden the spectrum of instruments that are considered essential for the maintenance of communist rule, focusing on those institutions that ensure the loyalty of both the elites and the masses. Finally, the contributors to this volume pay particular attention to contingent leadership choices in times of uncertainty, which can either strengthen the effects of formal institutions on resilience or lead to institutional crisis, thus precipitating regime collapse. Taken as a whole, the chapters offer a balanced view of communist rule, highlighting structural explanations of resilience, while also stressing the role of contingency for collapse.

The chapters in this volume emphasize four types of adaptations that may prolong the life span of communist regimes by allowing them to expand their support base beyond the selectorate.[11] One essential adaptation pertains to the introduction of economic reforms. These reforms can bring about economic growth, which is essential for regime maintenance. However, economic reforms may also challenge communist rule by creating groups that are not incorporated into the existing political system. One such group is the reform winners (e.g., private entrepreneurs), and another is the reform losers (e.g., the unenfranchised). Therefore, a second type of adaptation requires the inclusion of both the reform winners (by making them stakeholders in the existing political structure) and the reform losers (by implementing redistributive and labor-protective policies). A third strategy is the deployment of institutions of horizontal and vertical accountability, such as parliamentary query sessions or offices for receiving and responding to citizen complaints. These institutions create legitimacy by increasing the responsiveness of leaders both at the elite level and at the lower rungs of the political ladder. A fourth adaptation is ideological, whereby an ideology that is credible to both ordinary citizens and to intellectuals is articulated. In practice, this type of adaptation is effected primarily through nationalism rather than by reinvigorating Marxism-Leninism. The cumulative effect of these adaptations is to reduce the need to rely on repression as a habitual tool of governance. That said, maintaining a repressive potential is also essential for survival. This explains why even a highly adaptive regime like China currently devotes a substantial portion of its budget to the repressive apparatus. Repression is even more important in North Korea, where, until Kim Jong Un took power in December 2011, the only

[11] The selectorate elects those in the winning coalition, which in turn selects the leader; in communist regimes, the selectorate consists of the Central Committee that is chosen by the communist party congress, the winning coalition is the Politburo, and the leader is the general secretary of the communist party.

adaptation the neo-Stalinist regime was willing to undertake was the adoption of an extreme form of militant nationalism.

Political Reform and Regime Collapse

In the absence of adaptive change, certain types of institutional reforms undertaken during periods of crisis may increase the likelihood or speed of regime collapse. As the experiences of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe indicate, such reforms include the introduction of genuine pluralism (the legalization of opposition movements and, eventually, of opposition parties) and the abandonment of the Leninist principles of party organization (most importantly, democratic centralism), both of which subvert the communist party's monopoly on power. At the same time, political reform undertaken in the context of ongoing adaptive change may serve to promote resilience. In China, village elections and inner-party democracy have strengthened the position of the party. Similarly, in Vietnam, the introduction of semicompetitive legislative elections and televised parliamentary query sessions has bolstered the party. Such effects are all the more notable given that semicompetitive elections and televised parliamentary debates destabilized the party in the Soviet Union in 1989–1990. The point to underscore from these contrasting examples is that the East European regimes collapsed not because they instituted political reform per se, but rather because they instituted political reform in a situation shaped by regime *failure to have implemented adaptive institutional changes*. The failure of the communist parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to implement adaptive change eroded the loyalty of the masses, and, in that context, political reform served not as a sign of flexibility but rather as a signal of regime weakness that facilitated mass defection to the opposition. This logic suggests why avoiding political reform remains an optimal survival strategy for a regime like North Korea, but also why limited political reform may be an option for other communist regimes that are institutionally more adaptive.

Although all communist regimes aim to maximize their chances of staying in power, only some of them implement adaptive changes. The chapters in the volume argue that the source of this variation lies partly in structural constraints that prevent the introduction of adaptive changes. In the Eastern Bloc, such constraints led to leadership decisions to place a priority on political reform, which turned out to undermine stability. A second reason for variation is geographical proximity to the West and the political integration among the countries of the Eastern Bloc that facilitated the diffusion of demands for political reform. This explains the speed and the clustering of collapse. In contrast, the surviving regimes did not belong to the European communist community. Political isolation and geographical distance allowed them to observe maladaptive change in Europe and eventually to implement policies aimed at promoting adaptive change, including the initiation of controlled political reform.

A Comparative Framework for Studying Communist Resilience and Collapse

A study of the institutional foundations of communist resilience requires a comparative framework. A methodological innovation in this volume is the classification of the fifteen communist regimes as a group. In so doing, this study transcends the historical divisions that have bifurcated communist studies and have produced two separate subfields, with scholars asking largely different questions. An assumption of incomparability between the two subgroups emerged during the Cold War and became even more deeply entrenched after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Students of Asia focused on resilience, whereas specialists on Eastern Europe aimed to explain the mechanisms of regime collapse. Although the contributors to this volume analyze the various differences between the European and the Asian regimes, the chapters as a whole make apparent the important similarities, primarily in terms of their institutional makeup, between the two groups. Focusing on these shared institutions of governance and their evolution over time allows us to isolate what is specifically *communist* about these cases and what distinguishes them from other, less durable authoritarian regimes.

This volume also makes use of a rare natural experiment. Communist regimes were established in fifteen countries with disparate histories, cultures, and geographical locations. What made these countries communist was a common set of institutions of governance, such as a communist party, a planned economy, repressive organs, and an ideological and propaganda apparatus. Of these regimes, ten eventually collapsed, whereas five continue to survive. The divergent outcomes on the dependent variable allow us to ask how the institutions of governance impacted the outcome of interest. The resulting theoretical explanation resembles a standard social science explanation, where the presence of variable X allows for outcome Y, and the absence of variable X accounts for the absence of outcome Y. With regard to resilience, this produces the following explanation: continuous adaptive change makes resilience more likely, whereas insufficient adaptive change increases the probability of collapse.

A third methodological feature of certain chapters in this volume is approaching the problem of collapse and resilience through a paired comparison of cases with similar institutions of governance but with divergent outcomes on the dependent variable nested within the larger sample of communist regimes.[12] Sidney Tarrow has argued that the method of paired comparison allows scholars to correct generalizations based on single cases, to assess the influence of institutions, and to generate hypotheses about causal relations between variables, which is an important step in theory development.[13] Contributors to this volume

[12] Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* 99:3 (2005), 435–452.

[13] Sidney Tarrow, "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice," *Comparative Political Studies* 43:2 (2010), 230–259.

either directly conduct such paired comparison or discuss how their argument about collapse applies in countries that remained resilient (and vice versa). These comparisons illuminate how regimes with similar institutions diverged because of choices about organizing and adapting these institutions to their respective environments over time.

Organization of the Volume

Rather than being organized by country or by region, the volume is organized in five thematic parts. Each part focuses on a different type of institutional adaptation and explores how this adaptation operated in the regimes that survived 1989 and in those that did not. The first question of interest is political and economic reform. Several chapters touch on this topic, but two chapters focus on it directly: this introductory chapter and, especially, Bernstein's chapter on political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union and China (Chapter 2). The second part of the volume examines the role of ideology and legitimacy for the survival of communist regimes. Tismaneanu contrasts ideological erosion and regime collapse in Eastern Europe with the ability of the Chinese and North Korean regimes to engage in different types of ideological adaptation that have proven to be conducive to regime resilience (Chapter 3). Armstrong's chapter discusses how ideological introversion in North Korea, which came about as a response to communist collapse in Europe, has served as a basis for regime resilience (Chapter 4). Part III focuses on international factors, with two chapters on how the diffusion of ideas and demonstration effects contributed to collapse in some communist regimes. Bunce and Wolchik (Chapter 5) analyze the two waves of democratization in the communist world (1987–1990 and 1996–2005), and Kramer discusses the relationship between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe (Chapter 6). The placement of the two chapters on contagion and collapse in the middle of the volume reflects two considerations. One is that had these chapters been placed at the end, the volume would imply a teleological account of communist rule. Another is that by placing these chapters in the middle of the volume, we can highlight the adaptive learning that took place in the regimes that survived 1989. The chapters in Parts IV and V explore different dimensions of this adaptive learning. Part IV focuses on inclusion, with chapters that approach this question from two complementary perspectives. Gallagher and Hanson argue that regimes with narrow selectorates create institutions to address the redistributive preferences of the unenfranchised segments of the population (Chapter 7). Tsai discusses the institutional changes implemented in China and Vietnam in order to integrate private entrepreneurs into the communist party (Chapter 8). The final part of this volume examines how institutions of accountability contribute to regime resilience. Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng compare and contrast the extent to which the Politburo and the government in Vietnam and China are subject to horizontal and vertical accountability (Chapter 9). Dimitrov focuses

on citizen complaints as one channel for vertical accountability in Bulgaria and China (Chapter 10). Taken together, the ten chapters in the five thematic parts shed new light on the institutional foundations of governance in communist societies as well as on the interactions between domestic and international factors and structure and contingency during the process of regime collapse. The final chapter (Chapter 11) concludes and offers some broader reflections about the ability of the five remaining communist regimes to maintain resilience.

The remainder of this introductory chapter examines these issues in more depth. It begins by defining the universe of communist regimes and by specifying the stages of their development. It then discusses how the arguments in this volume about adaptive change complement existing theories of regime resilience. It concludes with an analysis of the relationship between stagnation of institutional adaptation and regime collapse.

COMMUNIST REGIMES AND THEIR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This section has two goals relevant to the comparative study of communist autocracies. The first is to argue that communist regimes should indeed be thought of as a group and to define the criteria for inclusion in this group. The second is to stress the importance of the stages in the development of communist regimes and to show that the institutions necessary for regime survival in the early stages of development differ from those that are important in later stages. The section concludes with a discussion of the communist penumbra, which consists of regimes that, despite sometimes being classified as communist, did not possess the institutional characteristics of the fifteen core regimes.

The Universe of Communist Regimes

Scholars of communist rule early on noted the "unity in diversity" that characterized the communist world.[14] There were indeed numerous differences among the fifteen core countries prior to 1989. One difference can be traced back to the historical origin of the regime. In most countries communist parties gained power through a revolution (the Soviet Union, Mongolia, Albania, Yugoslavia, North Korea, China, Vietnam, and Cuba) or by victory in free (Czechoslovakia) or partially manipulated (Bulgaria) elections, but there were also countries where communist rule was imposed (Romania, Poland,

[14] Donald L. M. Blackmer, *Unity in Diversity: Italian Communism and the Communist World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968). See also Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Communist Ideology and Power: From Unity to Diversity," *Journal of Politics* 19:4 (1957), 549–590 and especially Chalmers A. Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970).

Hungary, the German Democratic Republic [GDR], and Laos).[15] Another difference stems from the relative importance of a foreign military presence. Soviet troops were stationed in four of the East European countries (the GDR, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia), as well as in Cuba and Mongolia; in Vietnam there were Soviet military advisers, whereas in Laos there were Vietnamese troops. However, there was no foreign military presence in Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, North Korea, China, or the Soviet Union. A third difference concerns the extent of economic integration with the West. Prior to 1989, most countries depended heavily on trade with the Soviet Union and the other communist countries that were members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). But by the 1980s, Albania, Yugoslavia, China, and, most surprisingly, the GDR traded primarily with non-Comecon members.[16] Membership in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) allowed countries like Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, and Poland to secure foreign loans and various amounts of foreign direct investment (FDI); China began to attract FDI in the 1980s as well. Last but not least, there were differences in their respective levels of socioeconomic development. In 1989, the communist world included countries that were poor (Albania, Mongolia, China, Vietnam, and Laos) as well as countries that were rich (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR).[17]

None of these differences impacted the likelihood of regime survival: some revolutionary regimes survived, whereas others failed; some countries that had no foreign military presence avoided collapse, but others did not; some regimes that were integrated into the international economy persisted, whereas others collapsed; finally, some poor countries survived, but others failed. Among the surviving regimes, economic and political differences persist. In terms of economic development, China is now a middle-income country; Vietnam, Laos,

[15] The Czechoslovak case deserves further elaboration: although the communist party won a plurality of the vote in the 1946 elections, communist rule was established after a coup in 1948.

[16] Statistics from Library of Congress, *Albania: A Country Study 1994*, http://countrystudies.us/albania/ (accessed April 21, 2013); Library of Congress, *Yugoslavia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 300; Library of Congress, *China: A Country Study*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1988), 615; and Statistisches Amt der DDR, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik '90* (Statistical Yearbook of the German Democratic Republic 1990) (Berlin: Rudolf Haufe Verlag, 1990), 277.

[17] Rich countries could have a per capita GDP almost ten times higher than that of poor countries: in 1989, Czechoslovakia had a GDP of $8,768 (in 1990 dollars), whereas Laos had a per capita GDP of $922 (in 1990 international Geary-Khamis dollars). Chinese GDP in 1989 was $1,827 (in 1990 dollars), three times lower than the East European average of $5,915 (driven down by Albania's low GDP). See Angus Maddison, *The World Economy* (Paris: Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation, 2006), 479, 562, 566.

and Cuba remain low-income states; and North Korea is one of the poorest countries in the world.[18] Related to this, whereas the private sector accounts for close to half of Chinese GDP, it has barely made inroads into North Korea. No less important, some communist states have an open trade regime, whereas others exist in varying degrees of isolation from the international economy. In relation to political reform, the five surviving communist countries constitute a spectrum, with neo-Stalinist North Korea at one end and Vietnam at the other (Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng argue that political reform has advanced further in Vietnam than in China).

This list of differences raises three questions. The first is whether the fifteen communist regimes were comparable prior to 1989. The second is whether the five remaining communist regimes are comparable to each other today. And the third is whether we can compare the regimes that collapsed in 1989–1991 to those that survive at present. This volume argues that the answer to all three questions is affirmative and that the core criterion for comparison is institutional similarities among communist regimes.

From Berlin to Bucharest to Beijing, communist regimes shared common institutional features, which made them into a recognizable genus: they were all single-party regimes that based their claim to rule on the promise to carry out a utopian social project – a proletarian revolution abroad and, more importantly, the building of a new society at home. Within the individual countries, identical tools of governance were used to implement this transformative social project: a communist party built on the principles of democratic centralism, a dominant ideology, mass mobilization, a commitment to central planning, and an implicit social contract that promised redistribution in exchange for political quiescence.[19] An overriding concern of most communist regimes was to ensure high levels of economic growth, which were necessary for effective governance, in particular so as to fulfill the redistributive commitments made under the social contract. Exceptionally, these regimes can survive periods of negative economic growth, provided that they have access to the tool of repression (to punish opponents) and to a credible external threat to stability (to mobilize support among loyal citizens), as, for example, in North Korea, in the Soviet Union during portions of the Stalinist period, or in Poland during martial law. These fundamental institutional similarities justify a comparison of the European and Asian communist regimes.

[18] See *World Development Indicators Online*, http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators (accessed August 12, 2012) and the *CIA World Factbook*, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/ (accessed August 12, 2012).

[19] On the social contract, see Linda J. Cook, *The Soviet Social Contract and Why It Failed: Welfare Policy and Workers' Politics from Brezhnev to Yeltsin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Stages of Institutional Development in Communist Regimes

When we discuss institutional similarities, we need to be mindful that most authoritarian regimes go through several stages of development.[20] Scholars of communist regimes have traditionally drawn a distinction between a Stalinist regime and a post-Stalinist regime.[21] Building on that distinction, this chapter argues that communist regimes go through three stages of development (establishment, consolidation, and maturation, with post-Stalinist regimes classified as mature communist regimes) during which new institutions appear and existing institutions evolve. Because of this institutional change, a comparison of regimes at different stages of development (e.g., China today with the Soviet Union under Stalin) may be misleading.

The initial establishment of a communist regime usually requires several months to several years; in the Soviet Union it spanned a decade. The period of regime consolidation typically is about a decade long; in the case of the Soviet Union, Mongolia, China, and Albania it lasted several decades. The maturation stage may span several decades, but in practice, we do not have examples of mature regimes that have survived for more than four decades. The historical record reveals that all regimes that collapsed were mature communist regimes that had entered a period of institutional decay. The process of collapse may unfold over a period of a few months, but sometimes it may last for several years. Table 1.1 lays out in detail the different stages in the life cycles of all countries constituting the universe of communist regimes. As indicated in the table, there is no synchronous element in terms of when regimes entered each stage; nor is there any teleological assumption that regimes will experience the stages of maturation and collapse.

We should note that data access problems make it difficult to determine whether North Korea has made a transition from regime consolidation to mature communism. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the death of Kim Il Sung, North Korea, which had not experienced de-Stalinization, reverted to an even more extreme version of international isolation than the one it had adopted during the Cold War.[22] Therefore, under Kim Jong Il, although it had some institutional similarities to a mature regime, North Korea more closely resembled a repressive neo-Stalinist regime than it did a post-Stalinist mature

[20] Barbara Geddes, "Stages of Development in Authoritarian Regimes," in Vladimir Tismaneanu, Marc Morjé Howard, and Rudra Sil, eds., *World Order after Leninism* (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, University of Washington, 2006), 149–170.

[21] Alexander Dallin and George W. Breslauer, *Political Terror in Communist Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970); Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist Systems*.

[22] On North Korea, see especially Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of Destalinization, 1956* (Honolulu: Center for Korean Studies, University of Hawai'i, 2004) and Charles Armstrong's chapter in this volume. For an optimistic view, see Bruce Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York: New Press, 2004).

TABLE 1.1. *Stages in the Life Cycle of Communist Regimes*

	Establishment	Consolidation	Maturation	Collapse
Albania	1944–1948	1948–1985	1985–1990	1990–1991
Bulgaria	1944–1948	1948–1962	1962–1989	1989–1990
Czechoslovakia	1948–1949	1949–1970	1970–1989	1989–1990
GDR	1945–1949	1949–1953	1953–1989	1989–1990
Hungary	1944–1948	1948–1956	1956–1988	1988–1989
Mongolia	1924–1928	1928–1952	1952–1989	1989–1990
Poland	1945–1948	1948–1956	1956–1988	1988–1989
Romania	1944–1948	1948–1965	1965–1989	1989–1990
Soviet Union	1917–1928	1928–1953	1953–1989	1989–1991
Yugoslavia	1943–1948	1948–1966	1966–1989	1989–1991
China	1949–1953	1953–1976	1976–	N/A
Cuba	1959–1962	1962–1970	1970–	N/A
DPRK	1948–1953	1953–2011	2012–	N/A
Laos	1975	1975–1989	1989–	N/A
Vietnam	1954–1975	1975–1986	1986–	N/A

Source: Coding by the author based on multiple sources.

regime. However, under Kim Jong Un, there were various signs of softening of the regime throughout 2012. Some are anodyne, like a more liberal attitude on social matters (women are now allowed to wear pants at public events and ride bicycles on the streets of Pyongyang) and the toleration of Western cultural influences (Kim endorsed the Moranbong girl band concerts and Mickey Mouse dance performances).[23] Others are very important, like the anticipated agricultural reforms that would allow peasants to keep surplus agricultural production once they meet the state procurement quota (this parallels the first stage of Chinese agricultural reforms in the late 1970s) and the firing of Vice Marshal Ri Yong Ho, the head of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army (this may signal a change in the Military-First Policy).[24] Kim Jong Un has also unveiled educational reforms, which should find approval among ordinary citizens.[25] Though a definitive assessment of the long-term impact of these changes is not

[23] "North Korea: Loosen Your Belts," *Economist*, August 11, 2012.

[24] On agricultural reforms, see "NKorean Farmers Told Sweeping Changes Could Give Them Unprecedented Ownership of Crops," *Washington Post*, September 24, 2012, www.washingtonpost.com/business/nkorean-farmers-told-sweeping-changes-could-give-them-unprecedented-ownership-of-crops/2012/09/23/610aed2c-05fa-11e2-9eea-333857f6a7bd_story.html (accessed September 26, 2012). See also Andrei Lankov, Seok Hyang Kim, and Inok Kwak, "Relying on One's Strength: The Growth of the Private Agriculture in Borderline Areas of North Korea," *Comparative Korean Studies* 19:3 (2011), 325–358.

[25] Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea's Leaders Promise Improvements to Educational System," *New York Times*, September 25, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/26/world/asia/north-korean-legislature-meets-amid-speculation-about-reforms.html (accessed September 26, 2012).

yet possible, they represent a departure from the Kim Jong Il period that is significant enough to justify provisionally classifying North Korea as having entered the stage of regime maturity despite the 2013 nuclear test.

The stage of initial establishment involves several key events: the wholesale takeover of power by the communist party, which necessitates the elimination or co-optation of opposition parties and organizations; the promulgation of a communist ideology, typically through the adoption of a new constitution and a new party program; the nationalization of banks, industrial enterprises, and large landholdings; the enactment of new social policies, such as the introduction of compulsory free education or increased female participation in the workforce; and the launch of a planned economy through the rollout of the first five-year plan. This period also witnesses a normative commitment to promoting world revolution; in conjunction with the doctrine of socialist internationalism, with respect to minorities, rights are protected and affirmative-action policies are introduced.[26] In response to strong domestic opposition to the establishment of a communist regime, levels of repression are very high during this period, and recalcitrant political opponents are sent to labor camps.[27]

The second stage involves an attempt to implement the utopian communist project in practice.[28] The commitment to world revolution may be temporarily relinquished to "build socialism in one country" first, as was done by Stalin, Mao, Hoxha, and Kim Il Sung at various points during their tenure. Land collectivization is implemented and private enterprise and market activity are nearly eliminated. The main task is heavy industrial development.[29] This necessitates continuous and massive mobilization of the workforce. During this stage, economic growth leads to small but steady improvements in the standard of living, as more funds are targeted toward redistributive programs that receive wide approval among the population.[30] Despite intermittent relaxation of terror, repression does not disappear and the labor camps continue to operate. Purges within the

[26] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

[27] On the camps, see S. S. Mironenko and N. Werth, eds., *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga: konets 1920-kh–pervaiia polovina 1950-kh godov* (The History of Stalin's Gulag: Late 1920s–Mid-1950s) (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004–2005); Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek, and Jean-Louis Margolin, *Le livre noir du communisme: Crimes, terreurs et répression* (The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression) (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997); and Tzvetan Todorov, *Au nom du peuple: Témoignages sur les camps communistes* (In the Name of the People: Testimonies on the Communist Camps) (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de l'Aube, 1992).

[28] On the utopian aspects of communism, see Shiping Hua, *Chinese Utopianism: A Comparative Study of Reformist Thought with Japan and Russia, 1898–1997* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009).

[29] On how China copied the Soviet industrial model, see Deborah A. Kaple, *Dream of a Red Factory: The Legacy of High Stalinism in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[30] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

party occur, with the levels of violence sometimes surpassing those during the initial stage, as evidenced by the Great Terror in the Soviet Union (1937–1939), the radical phase of the Cultural Revolution in China (1966–1969), the Hungarian events of 1956, or the repression following the 1968 crisis in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, intensive institution building takes place during this stage as institutions of governance are allowed to develop and consolidate.

During the mature stage of development, post-Stalinist regimes suffer an ideological crisis. The commitment to world revolution erodes to the point of being only rhetorical; in practice, socialist internationalism is replaced by internally oriented socialism ("national development"),[31] which in turn heightens the potential for the exclusion of national minorities; and the regime no longer relies on mass mobilization and large-scale repression to achieve its goals (even though both tools remain available and may be used on occasion). The original utopian communist project is abandoned in favor of more realistic developmental goals, such as increased redistributive spending.[32] Daily life becomes more predictable and less extreme. It is during this stage that various experiments may occur. For example, in the 1960s several East European regimes unexpectedly introduced changes. In the political sphere, they permitted elections with a limited choice and they encouraged citizens to lodge complaints with the authorities. In the economic realm, they legalized cooperative markets, some small-scale private activity, self-management, and foreign direct investment. China also introduced semicompetitive elections during this stage of its regime development in the 1990s, though so far they have been limited to the grassroots level. In the economic sphere, China's reforms were more comprehensive than those in the East European regimes. The radical changes that occur during the stage of mature communism are indicative of the regimes' ability to adapt.

Just as resilience depends on the ability of regimes to adapt, collapse becomes more likely when regimes are no longer capable of implementing adaptive change. In Eastern Europe, economic decline, ideological stasis, a failure of inclusion, and a crisis of accountability were all visible by the mid-1980s. These trends indicate regime decay. Empirically, collapse begins when communist parties are no longer able to orchestrate electoral outcomes, as when party candidates suffered unpredicted and embarrassing losses to independent candidates in the Soviet elections in March 1989. Collapse then proceeds with a decision to delete language about the leading role of the communist party from the constitution, thus legalizing opposition parties. In the Soviet Union, this occurred in April 1990, when Article 6 of the constitution was amended.[33] The end point of collapse is the moment when the first free multiparty elections

[31] Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania, 1944–1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

[32] Richard Lowenthal, "Development vs. Utopia in Communist Policy," in Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist Systems*, 33–116.

[33] Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (New York: Ecco, 2009), 101–114.

are held or when the country disintegrates, as in the cases of Bulgaria (June 1990) and the Soviet Union (December 1991), respectively. In Eastern Europe, the decline in economic growth diminished the ability of the state to meet its redistributive commitments, which in turn led to high levels of popular discontent. But by itself a decline in growth does not necessarily produce regime collapse. The cases of North Korea and Cuba amply demonstrate that regimes may undergo prolonged periods of negative economic growth, provided they have recourse to the tool of repression or exist under a credible external threat. In Eastern Europe, repression had to be used selectively after the Helsinki Accords, and external threats became less credible after rapprochement, *Ostpolitik*, and the Reagan-Gorbachev summits. An additional source of instability in some East European countries emerged from ethnic anti-regime mobilization, which was a justified response to the stigmatization or exclusion of minorities that had unfolded during the stage of mature communism.[34] Finally, a long overdue expansion of rights and freedoms that occurred during the mature stage further threatened regime stability, as it allowed for the formation of NGOs with antigovernment orientations. In contrast to the Eastern Bloc regimes, where a combination of such external and domestic factors brought about collapse, China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, and Cuba have used economic reform and/or externally oriented nationalism as tools to prolong their existence for, up to now, more than two decades since the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Because understanding mature communism gives us leverage both on collapse and on the types of institutional adaptation needed to ensure extended resilience, this volume focuses primarily on this last stage in the development of communist regimes, with special attention to those adaptations that facilitate resilience and to the mechanisms of collapse once they fail. Taken together, the chapters develop a set of general explanations that allow us to understand both collapse and resilience.

Beyond the Core of the Communist Universe: Regimes in the Communist Penumbra

In addition to the core group of fifteen states, various other regimes were designated as communist under the Reagan Doctrine, which focused on the rollback of pro-Soviet governments by supporting anticommunist insurgencies in the Third World. At one point or another between 1982 and 1990, eleven regimes were classified as communist in the *CIA World Factbook* and the *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*. These regimes included Angola, Benin, Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Grenada, Nicaragua, Cambodia,

[34] In the Russian Federation, for example, ethnic separatism was driven by competition in local labor markets, rather than by persecution or stigmatization. See Elise Giuliano, *Constructing Grievance: Ethnic Nationalism in Russia's Republics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

Afghanistan, and South Yemen.[35] A notable feature of this group is that the Soviet Union did not recognize any of its members as communist. Regimes designated communist by the Reagan administration were classified by Moscow either as "countries with a socialist orientation" or as "countries following a non-capitalist road of development."[36] Both of these classifications were understood to be entirely different from "socialist countries" (*sotsialisticheskie strany*), the term used to refer only to the fifteen core communist states. In line with Soviet understandings, the current scholarly consensus is that these eleven regimes were *not* communist during the Cold War.[37] A close look at these autocracies provides us with another opportunity to highlight what is distinctively communist about the fifteen core cases.

The most salient difference between the communist penumbra and the fifteen core regimes is the extent of institutionalization. Although they were single-party regimes with a self-declared Marxist-Leninist orientation, the regimes in the penumbra did not resemble the core fifteen countries in terms of the size of the ruling party or its penetration of society.[38] In the economic sphere, no regime in the penumbra managed to carry out wholesale nationalization or agricultural collectivization, let alone successfully implement a five-year plan. Instead of growing, in some of these countries the state sector's share of GDP *shrank* over time, with a corresponding expansion of the private sector.[39] In the ideological realm, Marxism-Leninism was not used as a tool for indoctrination and

[35] See *CIA World Factbook* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, various years) and Richard F. Staar, ed., *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, various years). Some authors also classify Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe as regimes that have professed to be Marxist-Leninist or Marxist in outlook and have been recognized as "socialist-oriented" by Moscow (see David E. Albright, "Marxist Regimes in Developing Areas and Changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," in Jane Shapiro Zacek and Ilpyong J. Kim, eds., *The Legacy of the Soviet Bloc* [Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997], 241–267).

[36] R.I. Khasbulatov, *Osvobodivshiesia strany v perekhodnyi period: Politiko-ekonomicheskii analiz* (Liberated States in a Transitional Period: Political-Economic Analysis) (Moscow: Ekonomika, 1987).

[37] Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, 104–105. For early criticism of the classification, see Robert T. Johnson, "Misguided Morality: Ethics and the Reagan Doctrine," *Political Science Quarterly* 103:3 (1988), 509–529. On the African cases, see Bratton and van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 77–78. On Cambodia, see Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002). On South Yemen, see Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 120–182.

[38] In Grenada, for example, at its peak in 1982 the New Jewel Movement had 356 members, or 0.4 percent of the population. Frederic L. Pryor, *Revolutionary Grenada: A Study in Political Economy* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 228.

[39] On Yemen, see I.A. Asadov, *Narodnaia demokraticheskaia respublika Iemen (NDRI): Sotsial'no-politicheskoe razvitie 60–70 gg.* (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen [PDRY]: Social-Political Development in the 60s and 70s) (Baku: Elm, 1991), 101–102.

mass mobilization, in part because of the very low levels of literacy.[40] Implementing a social contract featuring commitments to universal health care and compulsory education was an entirely fantastical proposition for countries in the penumbra, one of which had a mere fifty physicians when it declared its Marxist-Leninist orientation.[41] By the standards of the fifteen core regimes, the penumbra consisted of barely functioning postcolonial states, which, with the exception of Benin and Zimbabwe, had experienced civil war, interstate war, or prolonged international invasion for most of their existence as newly independent states. These regimes are best described as personalist single-party hybrids, where the party was devoid of any ideological function and existed simply to distribute patronage to the supporters of a first-generation military or civilian leader.[42] For the present argument, it is notable that, incapable of the intensive process of institution building and constant institutional adaptation that characterizes the fifteen core communist regimes, these regimes had short life spans, lasting on average only fourteen years.[43]

INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATION AND COMMUNIST REGIME RESILIENCE

Having defined the universe of cases and the stages in their development, we can move to a discussion of the institutional adaptations that allow communist regimes to prolong their existence. A number of prominent scholars have pointed to the use of Maoist revolutionary governance practices ("guerrilla-style decision making") to address contemporary policy problems in China creatively as one type of adaptation.[44] Contributors to this volume focus on adaptations in the economy, ideology, party inclusiveness, and the institutions of accountability. Although these adaptations primarily occur in mature regimes, this section also discusses the case of North Korea, which despite being a neo-Stalinist regime under Kim Jong Il, has engaged in one of these adaptations, namely, in the ideological sphere. In 2012 various changes were implemented under Kim Jong Un, which allow us to classify North Korea as entering the stage of mature communism. If this classification proves correct, we should anticipate further adaptations in North Korea.

[40] On Afghanistan, see M. A. Babakhodzhaev, ed., *Respublika Afganistan: Opyt i tendentsii razvitiia* (Republic of Afghanistan: Experience and Development Trends) (Tashkent: Fan, 1990).

[41] Mozambique had 50 doctors in 1975. See "UCSD Medicine in Mozambique," *At UCSD* 8:1 (January 2011), http://ucsdmag.ucsd.edu/magazine/vol8no1/waves/article9.htm (accessed September 5, 2012).

[42] Bratton and van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, 77–78. They use the term "plebiscitary single-party systems."

[43] Regime duration calculated by the author.

[44] Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds., *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

Economic Reform

Although all communist regimes had planned economies, some implemented more extreme versions of the plan than others. The planned economy was most pervasive in the East European regimes, as well as in Mongolia, Cuba, and North Korea, whereas countries like Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, and Laos experimented with a less totalistic version. In countries where the planned economy was fully implemented, agriculture was collectivized (except in Poland) and all means of industrial production were owned by the state. Because the planned economy privileged heavy industry, consumer goods were in short supply. Even when consumer goods were plentiful, they tended to be of poor quality because plan fulfillment was measured by the quantity rather than the quality of the goods. Officially, markets were not permitted, though a vibrant "second economy" developed in Eastern Europe, allowing citizens who had connections and money to obtain goods that were in short supply.[45] Because of the soft budget constraint (firm financing was not based on profitability), the planned economy proved to be very wasteful and inefficient. In Eastern Europe, extensive development based primarily on heavy industry delivered substantial growth in the 1950s and 1960s, but by the late 1970s, the limitations of this model had become obvious. Growth rates were slowing down. At the same time, the public had become accustomed to continuous improvements in living standards. But declining world oil prices resulted in a reduction in Soviet subsidies.[46] The need to provide consumer goods forced communist regimes to borrow heavily from the West, but this served only as a stopgap measure. The long-term viability of the system required a fundamental reorientation of the economy away from the plan.

China, Vietnam, and Laos provide powerful examples of a successful transition from plan to market. These countries undertook economic reforms in the late 1970s and the mid-1980s. They implemented gradual reform, focusing first on agricultural decollectivization, reinvigorating markets, and legalizing private entrepreneurial activity.[47] Later, they turned to the more sensitive tasks of

[45] Steven L. Sampson, "The Second Economy of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 493:1 (September 1987), 120–136.

[46] Egor Gaidar, *Gibel' imperii: Uroki dlia sovremennoi Rossii* (Collapse of an Empire: Lessons for Contemporary Russia) (Moscow: Rosspen, 2006).

[47] On China, see Barry Naughton, *Growing Out of the Plan: Chinese Economic Reform, 1978–1993* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). On Vietnam, see Adam Fforde and Stefan de Vylder, *From Plan to Market: The Economic Transition in Vietnam* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996). On Laos, see Grant Evans, *Lao Peasants under Socialism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); S. I. Ioanesian, *Laos v XX veke (ekonomicheskoe razvitie)* (Twentieth-Century Laos: Economic Development) (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN, 2003); and Vatthana Pholsena and Ruth Banomyong, *Laos: From Buffer State to Crossroads?* (Chiang Mai: Mekong Press,

restructuring inefficient state-owned enterprises (SOEs),[48] helping banks eliminate the problem of bad loans,[49] and introducing competition in government monopoly sectors, such as telecommunications. The results over the last three decades of reform have been impressive. GDP growth rates averaged 8.8 percent during 1978–2011 in China, 6.9 percent during 1986–2011 in Vietnam, and 6.3 percent during 1986–2011 in Laos.[50]

Until recently, Cuba studied the Chinese model closely but resisted adopting it.[51] The market was only allowed to penetrate some pockets of the economy, such as the export-oriented sector, the tourism sector, and the small family-owned business sector.[52] An important change occurred when, at the Sixth Party Congress in April 2011, an economic reform plan, featuring price liberalization, the end of rationing, economic decentralization (though with large enterprises continuing to be owned by the state), as well as a massive expansion of market activities and the concomitant limiting of the role of the planned economy, was presented.[53] In light of these measures, Cuba seems to be following the Chinese path of economic reform, with a three-decade delay. As of 2013, North Korea remains the only communist state committed to preserving the planned economy, but even there the nonstate sector exists in parts of the economy. Although special economic zones like Rajin-Sonbong and Mt. Kumgang have not fulfilled expectations, scholars are closely watching the Kaesong Industrial Zone (where many South Korean firms operate) and, especially, the Sinuiju Special Economic Zone on the border with China.[54] Under Kim Jong Un, Chinese-style private farming has been encouraged and large numbers of North Koreans have been

2006). In Laos, the rate of land collectivization never exceeded 25 percent, thus making agricultural reform considerably easier than in China and Vietnam.

48 On China, see Edward S. Steinfeld, *Forging Reform in China: The Fate of State-Owned Industry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). On Vietnam, see Gerard Clarke, "The Social Challenges of Reform: Restructuring State-Owned Enterprises in Vietnam," in Duncan McCargo, ed., *Rethinking Vietnam* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 91–109.

49 Nicholas R. Lardy, *China's Unfinished Economic Revolution* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1998); Victor C. Shih, *Factions and Finance in China: Elite Conflict and Inflation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

50 *World Development Indicators Online*, http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators (accessed September 3, 2012). During the reform period, per capita GDP (measured in constant 2000 U.S. dollars) increased 16-fold in China (1978–2011), 3.7-fold in Vietnam (1986–2011), and 2.7-fold in Laos (1986–2011).

51 Yinghong Cheng, "Fidel Castro and 'China's Lesson for Cuba': A Chinese Perspective," *China Quarterly*, no. 189 (2007), 24–42.

52 Javier Corrales, "The Gatekeeper State: Limited Economic Reforms and Regime Survival in Cuba, 1982–2002," *Latin American Research Review* 39:2 (June 2004), 35–65.

53 See "Informe Central presentado por el compañero Raúl" (Central Report Presented by Comrade Raúl), April 17, 2011, http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/secciones/6to-congreso-pcc/artic-04.html (accessed September 5, 2012).

54 On economic reform in North Korea, see Armstrong's chapter in this volume and Phillip H. Park, ed., *The Dynamics of Change in North Korea: An Institutionalist Perspective* (Seoul: Institute for Far Eastern Studies Kyungnam University Press, 2009).

sent to China to study its reform experience.[55] However, thus far it remains unclear whether North Korea will eventually go down the path of the other four communist regimes, in no small measure because whether Kim Jong Un has a genuine commitment to implement wide-ranging reform is unknown.[56]

A question that arises from the experience of China is whether Eastern Europe could have followed a similar trajectory of economic reform. This counterfactual needs to take into account that the Chinese experience is only indirectly applicable to Eastern Europe, given the very different stages of economic development. One revealing statistic is that when China initiated reforms in 1978, its per capita GDP was 22 percent of the per capita GDP in the Eastern Bloc.[57] In the 1980s, the Chinese reform strategy focused primarily on agricultural liberalization and secondarily on the promotion of township and village enterprises, with more complicated tasks like reform of state-owned enterprises deferred. Even if the East European regimes had implemented a full-scale dismantling of the agricultural cooperatives prior to 1989, it is unclear whether this reform would have bolstered regime resilience through breakneck economic growth, as it did in China in the 1980s.[58] The fact that Poland, where no agricultural collectivization occurred, had one of the worst growth records in the Eastern Bloc by the late 1970s speaks powerfully to the limits of the Chinese model. The Eastern Bloc consisted of highly urbanized, developed industrial countries, where the reform tasks centered on industry and services rather than agricultural liberalization. Twenty years after the collapse of communism, despite being fully liberalized, agriculture continues to be one of the least efficient sectors in post-communist Europe.[59] The higher level of development in Eastern Europe explains why China was looking to Yugoslavia and Hungary for examples of economic reform in the 1970s and 1980s.[60] In this light, it is difficult to see how the Chinese experience could have been replicated in Eastern Europe. It is also

[55] "Rich Village in China Checked Out by North: Some Analysts See Signs of Reform Willingness by Leader Kim Jong Un," *Korea Joong Ang Daily*, July 20, 2012, http://koreajoongangdaily.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2956548&cloc=joongangdailylhomelnewslist1 (accessed September 25, 2012).

[56] Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea May Take Action to Jolt Economy, Analysts Say," *New York Times*, September 6, 2012, A6.

[57] Chinese per capita GDP in 1978 was $1,352 (in 1990 Geary-Khamis dollars), whereas the average per capita GDP in seven East European countries in 1978 was $6,010 (in 1990 Geary-Khamis dollars). Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy 1820–1992* (Paris: Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation, 1995), 200–201, 204–205.

[58] On the modest results of agricultural reforms in Hungary, see Iván Szelényi, *Socialist Entrepreneurs: Embourgeoisement in Rural Hungary* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

[59] Jessica Allina-Pisano, *The Post-Soviet Potemkin Village: Politics and Property Rights in the Black Earth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[60] Nina P. Halpern, "Creating Socialist Economies: Stalinist Political Economy and the Impact of Ideas," in Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 87–110;

relevant that the transition from plan to market was technologically easier in China than in Eastern Europe: China never had more than eight hundred products that were subject to central allocation, whereas in the Soviet Union the number of such products stood at close to fifty thousand.[61] Thus, a gradual Chinese-style "growing out of the plan" would not have been possible in the Soviet Union and the other countries that had a pervasive planned economy.[62] What made matters worse for the East European reformers is that economic restructuring had to be carried out while political liberalization was already under way. As Bernstein argues in his chapter in this volume, the simultaneous reform of the political and economic spheres led to "agenda overload," with the consequence that the more difficult economic reforms were postponed.

In hindsight, economic reform appears to be an adaptive institutional change that contributes to regime stability by enhancing opportunities for entrepreneurship and economic growth. Nevertheless, over the short term, economic reform may produce instability. For example, in 1989 Chinese urban workers joined the students in Tiananmen Square to protest against the job insecurity that had been created by the new provisions on enterprise bankruptcy that deprived workers of entitlements to lifetime employment and other generous benefits known as "the iron rice bowl."[63] Similarly, reform initiatives in 1988 in Bulgaria were met with distrust because, with the introduction of markets, citizens were experiencing serious anxiety about unemployment.[64] As Bernstein's chapter makes clear, the Soviet market reforms initiated in 1990 and 1991 were also deeply unpopular. Certainly, anxiety generated by market reforms can contribute to regime instability and, ultimately, to regime collapse.

Even though Eastern Europe was not able to learn from the Chinese model, the reverse is not the case. Taking explicit note of the Soviet experience of radical reform ("shock therapy") and the vagaries of privatization in Russia in the 1990s, China approached the complex urban industrial reforms with a great deal of caution.[65] As Armstrong points out in his chapter, North Korea has also approached economic reform with caution, often backtracking on the minute progress it has made because "reform could cause the whole system to fall apart."[66]

Andrew G. Walder, ed., *The Waning of the Communist State: Economic Origins of Political Decline in China and Hungary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[61] Yasheng Huang, "Information, Bureaucracy, and Economic Reforms in China and the Soviet Union," *World Politics* 47:1 (1994), 102–134, at 112.

[62] Naughton, *Growing Out of the Plan*.

[63] Andrew G. Walder, "Workers, Managers, and the State: The Reform Era and the Political Crisis of 1989," *China Quarterly*, no. 127 (1991), 467–492.

[64] See top-secret opinion polls from Bulgaria in the Central State Archives (TsDA), f. 1b op. 55 a. e. 853, "Obshtestvenoto mnenie po niakoi osnovni problemi na preustroistvoto v nashata strana" (Public Opinion on Some Basic Questions of Perestroika in Our Country), December 1988, p. 24.

[65] For an early example of Chinese criticism of Gorbachev's acceptance of the "Harvard Plan" see *Neibu canyue* (Internal Reference), no. 40 (1991), 1–18. A more recent example is contained in *Neibu canyue*, no. 48 (2008), 3–15.

[66] P. 119 in this volume.

Although the experience of the communist world indicates the need for eventual transition away from the plan, China and Vietnam are exceptional in embracing the market so directly. Elsewhere this process has been slow and convoluted, in no small measure because of the necessary ideological readjustments. Regime collapse may well occur before the party adopts a pro-market position. As Rossabi argues, in 1990 in Mongolia the ruling party won the first competitive elections, giving it an opportunity to reinvent itself and eventually to adopt a pro-market orientation.[67] Similarly, examples from several East European countries indicate that ruling communist parties may eventually accept the market; yet, this process is protracted and typically involves first stepping down from power.[68] In Cuba and North Korea, economic reform has been delayed for as long as possible. However, these two communist holdouts have had access to a pillar that was unavailable to their East European counterparts in the 1980s: namely, nationalist ideology.

The Role of Ideology

Jack Goldstone has described the Middle Eastern autocracies that were swept by the Arab Spring as "sultanistic regimes" where "dictators appeal to no ideology."[69] In contrast, communist regimes cannot exist without an ideological foundation. According to Tismaneanu's chapter, these regimes' "only claim to legitimacy was purely ideological."[70] This ideology had both a domestic component (a promise of building a communist society) and an international component (a sense of belonging to a global communist movement).[71] An uncontested definition of ideology is that it comprises "a set of systematic theoretical principles projecting and justifying a sociopolitical order."[72] In communist regimes, these theoretical principles are embodied in the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism.[73] Surprisingly, communist ideology did display some flexibility: for example, after the death of Stalin the Soviet Union

[67] Morris Rossabi, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[68] Anna M. Grzymała-Busse, *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[69] Goldstone, "Understanding the Revolutions of 2011," 9.

[70] P. 67 in this volume.

[71] Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*; Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991); Stephen E. Hanson, *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); and Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, 101–114.

[72] Alex Pravda, "Ideology and the Policy Process," in Stephen White and Alex Pravda, eds., *Ideology and Soviet Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 224–252, at 227.

[73] Stephen White, "Ideology and Soviet Politics," in White and Pravda, eds., *Ideology and Soviet Politics*, 1–20.

abandoned the doctrine of the inevitability of war and the revolutionary road of transition to socialism.[74] Despite this de-radicalization, as Tismaneanu makes clear, communism as an economic and political ideology faced a crisis by the early 1980s in all countries that formally were governed according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Communist regimes were losing out to the West on the domestic front (finding it increasingly difficult to match Western levels of spending on the provision of social services)[75] and on the international front (where the number of new entrants to the communist club was dwindling, with Cuba and Laos the only countries to become communist in the 1960s and 1970s, respectively).

Although all regimes experienced some ideological crisis, they dealt with it differently. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the crisis was insurmountable and contributed to collapse (see Tismaneanu's chapter). But other countries survived the ideological crisis. In China, Marxism-Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought was supplanted by ideological commitments to the market, by nationalism,[76] and by the neo-Confucian populist notion of "harmonious society."[77] Vietnam and Laos also successfully used the market and nationalism to build a new ideological pillar of the regime.[78] In North Korea, the collapse of European communism led to introversion, which eventually resulted in "Military-First Politics," a version of the *juche* (self-reliance) ideology that justifies continued social control and militant nationalism (see Charles Armstrong's chapter). Cuba has also used anti-American nationalism as a key instrument to build ideological legitimacy.

Again, these divergent experiences raise the question of why the communist parties in the Eastern Bloc did not engage in an ideological adaptation similar to that in China. One answer is that in Europe the communist ideology was irredeemable. In his chapter, Tismaneanu argues that de-Stalinization in the late 1950s delegitimized communist ideology among intellectuals, and that glasnost aggravated the process by bringing to light additional evidence of the atrocities committed by the party under such iconic figures as Stalin and Lenin. These developments led to a definitive crisis of legitimacy for the party and to widespread questioning of its monopoly on power. Glasnost and perestroika therefore revealed to the general

[74] Robert C. Tucker, "The Deradicalization of Marxist Movements," *American Political Science Review* 61:2 (1967), 343–358.

[75] Herbert Obinger and Carinna Schmitt, "Guns and Butter: Regime Competition and the Welfare State during the Cold War," *World Politics* 63:2 (2011), 246–270.

[76] Yinan He, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[77] John Dotson, "The Confucian Revival in the Propaganda Narratives of the Chinese Government" (Washington, DC: U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2011).

[78] Tuong Vu, "Vietnamese Political Studies and Debates on Vietnamese Nationalism," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 2:2 (2007), 175–230; Joseph J. Zasloff, "The Foreign Policy of Laos in the 1990s," in Jacqueline Butler-Diaz, ed., *New Laos, New Challenges* (Tempe: Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1998), 127–145, esp. 142.

public that communism was moribund both as an economic system and as a political system: totally discredited, the party could not reinvent itself ideologically. In China, as Tismaneanu points out, Mao was criticized, but he was never fully repudiated. To this day, the worst aspects of Mao's disastrous policies (the Great Leap Forward and the radical phase of the Cultural Revolution) receive only brief mention in the official histories of the party.[79] Safeguarding Mao provides the party with room to maneuver without having to negate either its history or the ideological core of its identity. Another important difference, as emphasized by Tismaneanu, is that China has succeeded in keeping critical intellectuals within the party (and using them for ideological reinvention), in contrast to the situation in Eastern Europe, where critical intellectuals primarily existed outside the party, thereby contributing to the ideological crisis.

A different answer to the question of why European communism was unable to adapt its ideological foundations might focus on the content of the new ideology. In China, Vietnam, and Laos, the adaptation involved a commitment to the market; as already noted, Chinese-style economic liberalization could not be a successful reform tactic in the more industrialized Eastern Europe. Another ideological adaptation in all five countries that survived 1989 involved the promotion of externally oriented nationalism, where citizens remained loyal to the regime because of a real or manufactured external threat to the nation. In contrast, the East European regimes had already exploited externally oriented nationalism to secure regime legitimacy: propaganda about the imperialist threat was prominent during the earlier stages of regime establishment and regime consolidation.[80] But as these regimes moved to the stage of maturation, Western radio and Western culture slowly infiltrated Eastern Europe, rendering futile any regime attempts to gain legitimacy by ongoing claims of protecting the nation from the threat of imperialism.[81] By the mid-1980s, when Gorbachev was openly engaging with the United States, it had become abundantly clear that the West could no longer be portrayed as an external enemy of the Soviet Union and the other communist states.[82] This stands in sharp contrast to the Asian

[79] *Zhongguo gongchandang lishi 1949–1978* (History of the Chinese Communist Party 1949–1978), 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2011).

[80] Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[81] On anti-Western propaganda, see Lev Gudkov, ed., *Obraz vraga* (The Image of the Enemy) (Moscow: OGI, 2005). On the impact of Western music in the GDR, see Holm Felber, "Erscheinungsformen des Musikgebrauchs DDR-Jugendlicher Ende der 80er Jahre" (Forms of Music Use of the GDR Youth at the End of the 1980s), in Walter Friedrich and Hartmut Griese, eds., *Jugend und Jugendforschung in der DDR* (Youth and Youth Research in the GDR) (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1991), 105–113, at 108. On radio broadcasting, see A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta, eds., *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: A Collection of Studies and Documents* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010).

[82] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlia nashei strany i dlia vsego mira* (Perestroika and New Thinking for Our Country and for the Whole World) (Moscow: Izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1987). See also Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy* (Life and Reforms) (Moscow:

regimes and to Cuba, which continue to face external threats to their stability. Historical experience has lent credibility to the image of these threats in North Korea, China, Cuba, and Vietnam, all of which are indigenous communist regimes that emerged through armed struggle for national liberation from foreign occupation.[83]

Although nationalism varies in intensity from country to country, it remains a viable ideological platform in all five remaining communist states, thus providing an important source of legitimacy. Nationalism is strongest in Cuba and North Korea, the two regimes that face the greatest probability of external attack.[84] In North Korea, the memory of Japanese colonialism and the suffering of civilians at American hands during the Korean War (1950–1953) are carefully preserved and exploited by the regime.[85] In the Korean information-poor environment (the Internet is tightly controlled, as are foreign media), the Kim family has found it possible to produce mass support for resistance to the "isolate-and-stifle policy against socialism and the DPRK" of the "imperialists and their stooges."[86] In lieu of Marxism-Leninism, Kim Il Sung's thesis of *juche* has been elevated to a national ideology, justifying both nationalism and continued international isolation.[87] In Cuba, anti-American discourse has always had good traction, given the historical role of the United States as a colonizer and supporter of the brutal Batista regime. The ongoing blockade, the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, the 1996 Helms-Burton Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act, the invasion of Iraq, and the controversy surrounding abuses in Guantánamo have all served to maintain popular support for anti-American policies.[88] Fidel Castro skillfully inflamed and manipulated these

Novosti, 1995), vol. 2, 465. One indicator of the degree of rapprochement is the frequency with which the Soviet leader met with his American counterparts. Between 1964 and 1984, there was a total of five meetings between the Soviet and American presidents, whereas between 1985 and 1990 there were seven summits between Gorbachev and Reagan/Bush.

[83] The Laotian regime was imposed by Vietnam. On the resilience of indigenous regimes, see Jacques Rupnik, "On Two Models of Exit from Communism: Central Europe and the Balkans," in Sorin Antohi and Vladimir Tismaneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 14–24.

[84] The Bush administration, for example, considered North Korea part of the "axis of evil" and Cuba "an outpost of tyranny" and was committed to effecting regime change in both.

[85] Hye Hui Kim, *Glorious 50 Years* (Pyongyang: Korea Pictorial, 1995).

[86] Jo Am and An Chol Gang, *Korea in the 20th Century: 100 Significant Events* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2002), 196. Also see Chol Myong Kim, *Kongbu dawang: Meiguo* (America: The King of Terrorism) (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2003).

[87] See Cumings, *North Korea*; also see Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 79–95.

[88] Darío L. Machado, *Cuba: Ideología revolucionaria* (Cuba: Revolutionary Ideology) (Havana: Editora Política, 2000); Jesús Arboleya Cervera, *La Revolución del Otro Mundo: Cuba y Estados Unidos en el horizonte del siglo XXI* (The Revolution of the Other World: Cuba and the U.S. on the Horizon of the Twenty-First Century) (Bogotá: Ocean Sur, 2007).

popular sentiments.[89] Although Raúl Castro has proven to be more moderate than his brother, externally oriented nationalism remains a key instrument for maintaining regime legitimacy.[90]

In China, Vietnam, and Laos the likelihood of external attack is lower than in North Korea or Cuba, which is why these regimes have primarily relied on marketization and only secondarily on nationalism as a pillar of ideological legitimacy. In Vietnam, the historical enemy has always been China, which ruled it until AD 939 and then treated it as a tributary state until the establishment of the Nguyen dynasty in the late eighteenth century. The two countries fought a brief border war in 1979 (which Vietnam won) and since then have been engaged in small-scale confrontations over outlying islands like the Spratlys and the Paracels. Repeated protests against Chinese claims in the South China Sea in 2006–2007, 2010, and in 2012 demonstrated the strength of nationalist sentiments among Vietnamese citizens; the fact that these demonstrations were allowed to take place and to persist for some time underscores the importance the regime assigns to gaining legitimacy through externally oriented nationalism. In Laos, the external target of nationalism is Thailand: the two countries fought a brief border war in 1988 and Thailand has subsequently harbored anti-regime insurgents and remnants of the Lao royal family.[91] This explains why the regime has promoted anti-Thai sentiment.

Unlike North Korean or Cuban nationalism, modern-day Chinese nationalism is driven not by the possibility of external attack (which is small) but rather by narratives of victimization during "the century of national humiliation" and by the widespread desire to restore China to its former glory.[92] In the 1990s, regime-sponsored think tanks stoked nationalist passions in the wake of Tiananmen by writing about Japanese atrocities in the 1930s and 1940s, Taiwanese moves toward independence, and American global hegemony. With government encouragement, blockbuster publications like *China Can Say No* emerged.[93] Furthermore, throughout this period, individuals were allowed to engage in organized anti-Japanese or anti-American protests.[94]

[89] Fidel Castro, *Cuba es una prueba de que los pueblos pueden luchar, resistir y vencer* (Cuba Provides Proof that People Can Fight, Resist, and Win) (Havana: Oficina de Publicaciones del Consejo de Estado, 2004).

[90] Recent Venezuelan support has been crucial in this regard. See Germán Sánchez, *Cuba y Venezuela: Reflexiones y debates* (Cuba and Venezuela: Reflections and Debates) (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2006).

[91] Gerald W. Fry, "The Future of the Lao PDR," in Butler-Diaz, ed., *New Laos, New Challenges*, 147–179.

[92] For a careful assessment of the realpolitik elements in Chinese nationalism, see Thomas Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik: Reading Beijing's World-View," *Foreign Affairs* 75:5 (1996), 37–52.

[93] Song Qiang et al., *Zhongguo keyi shuo bu: Lengzhan hou shidai de zhengzhi yu qinggan jueze* (China Can Say No: Post–Cold War Politics and Emotional Choice) (Beijing: Zhonghua gongshang lianhe chubanshe, 1996).

[94] Anti-Japanese feelings run much deeper than anti-American feelings in China. See Jie Chen, "Urban Chinese Perceptions of Threats from the United States and Japan," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65:2 (2001), 254–266; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Chinese Middle Class Attitudes

Over time, however, the party leadership realized that there was a danger that nationalist activity could backfire and turn into antigovernment protests, ultimately undermining rather than strengthening regime legitimacy. Since increasing its global confidence in the early 2000s, China has been discouraging nationalist protests and instead has been promoting a cultural, neo-Confucian version of nationalism, as that which was on display during the Beijing Olympics.[95] Internal Chinese government documents reveal the consensus view that ideological crisis was one of the main reasons for the Soviet collapse.[96] It is therefore understandable that China's leaders have promoted efforts at ideological reinvention that go beyond nationalism to include inner-party democracy and Chinese-style democracy, two concepts that appeal to some members of the Chinese Communist Party and to certain social circles.[97] Of course, these initiatives stop far short of acceptance of multiparty democracy.

Inclusion

One salient difference between mature communist regimes and communist regimes at earlier stages of development is the distribution of patronage. During regime establishment and consolidation, patronage is distributed to a small group (typically members of the elite) and repression is widely used as a means of *exclusion*.[98] In a mature communist regime, the use of repression declines and patronage is distributed to a wider segment of the population. Taking the example of the Soviet Union, after the death of Stalin, the gulag was closed and although repression did not end, its use was increasingly targeted: annual reports of the KGB from the 1960s reveal that the volume of repression was small and that those who were repressed overwhelmingly were members of ethnic minorities.[99] As the massive repression declined, the source of stability was the social contract, under which citizens exchange political quiescence for universal employment, stable pay, and the provision of consumer

towards International Affairs: Nascent Liberalization?" *China Quarterly*, no. 179 (2004), 603–628; Zhao Mei, "Chinese Views of America: A Survey," in Carola McGiffert, ed., *Chinese Images of the United States* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, 2005), 59–76; and He, *The Search for Reconciliation*.

[95] On the Olympics, see Geremie Barmé, "China's Flat Earth: History and 8 August 2008," *China Quarterly*, no. 197 (March 2009), 64–86.

[96] *Neibu canyue jingxuan* (Internal Reference Selections) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998), 489–534.

[97] Cheng Li, "Intra-Party Democracy in China: Should We Take It Seriously?" *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 30 (Fall 2009), 1–14; Yu Keping, *Democracy Is a Good Thing: Essays on Politics, Society, and Culture in Contemporary China* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009).

[98] Mironenko and Werth, eds., *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga*; A. I. Kokurin and N. V. Petrov, eds., *Gulag (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei) 1917–1960* (Gulag: Chief Administration of Camps, 1917–1960) (Moscow: Materik, 2000); Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

[99] For KGB statistics on repression, see TsKhSD, Fond 89 Communist Party of the Soviet Union on Trial: Archives of the Communist Party and Soviet State, per. 51 d. 3 (1967).

goods.[100] This system has been described as post-Stalinism or late socialism,[101] and it has remained stable as long as the regime has been able to muster enough resources to satisfy the material demands of the population.[102] In both Europe and China, prior to 1989 the social contract was a primary tool for the inclusion of ordinary citizens. After 1989, however, the Chinese "iron rice bowl" was dismantled and urban workers could no longer expect lifetime employment. But as Gallagher and Hanson's chapter makes clear, a limited social safety net was created in the late 1990s and early 2000s in order to accommodate the "losers" from the reform experience. The package of redistributive policies introduced under Hu Jintao as part of the process of creating a "socialist harmonious society" served as a concrete mechanism for the inclusion of those who were less fortunate during the process of market transition.

Another method of inclusion is to welcome previously undesirable groups of individuals into the party. Empirically, we observe this type of adaptation in the regimes that survived 1989. Tsai's chapter analyzes the process of informal institutional change that culminated in the decision to admit private entrepreneurs into the Chinese Communist Party. Tsai also clarifies why the Vietnamese Communist Party adopted a similar policy. Other countries are also taking such steps. As Armstrong's chapter reveals, the North Korean regime displays a surprising indeterminacy in its handling of capitalists: limited marketization in the 1990s and 2000s produced some small-scale private entrepreneurs; however, their businesses were expropriated during the currency reform of 2009. In Cuba, increased inclusion has meant allowing religious worshippers to become members of the communist party.[103] These strategies resemble the phenomenon of "rival incorporation" described by scholars of noncommunist single-party regimes, where the party incorporates into its ranks elites who might otherwise defect to the opposition.[104] These processes of adaptation stand in contrast to the situation in Eastern Europe, where until the end those who desired entry into the communist party had to demonstrate ideological orthodoxy. Religious devotees and entrepreneurs ("black marketers") were strictly denied membership. The more practical attitudes of the remaining communist regimes reflect both their understanding of the importance of broad coalitions for regime

[100] Alex Pravda, "East-West Interdependence and the Social Compact in Eastern Europe," in Morris Bornstein, Zvi Gitelman, and William Zimmerman, eds., *East-West Relations and the Future of Eastern Europe: Politics and Economics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 162–187; Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[101] Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[102] Gaidar, *Gibel' imperii*; Stephen Kotkin, with a contribution by Jan T. Gross, *The Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009).

[103] Mark Falcoff, *Cuba the Morning After: Confronting Castro's Legacy* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute Press, 2003), 181–216.

[104] Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy*.

survival and the flexibility afforded by the demise of Marxism-Leninism as a guiding ideology.

The experience of Eastern Europe provides two cautionary tales for the remaining communist regimes. One regards the danger of limiting membership in the elite. This occurred in the 1980s in both the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, when reforms were introduced to limit the size of the central party *apparat*. In reducing the *apparat* by two-fifths, these reforms created profound discontent among elite party members and bureaucrats.[105] As Jonathan Harris argues, disaffected apparatchiks blocked economic reforms and thus "subverted the system."[106] In contrast, as several chapters in this volume indicate, China has created economic incentives for party elites to welcome reform. The general point is that limiting the size of the selectorate will lead to destabilization in mature communist regimes.

Another lesson from Eastern Europe is that the exclusion of ethnic minorities can also lead to regime destabilization. Archival documents reveal that in Bulgaria, for example, the regime by the 1970s had realized that ethnic Turks were significantly underrepresented in the Bulgarian Communist Party rank and file,[107] among the party *apparat*,[108] among the army officer corps,[109] and among the network of state security informers.[110] The failure of the regime to co-opt this minority through inclusion in networks of privilege meant that the compliance of its members was never ensured. High levels of discontent among the Turkish minority led to repeated anti-regime protests in the second half of the 1980s, which had a destabilizing effect on the party. Some of the remaining communist regimes are ethnically homogeneous (Cuba and North Korea), but minorities constitute a significant proportion of the population in Laos (40 percent), Vietnam (15 percent), and China (8 percent). Internal government documents reveal that minority unrest in Xinjiang and Tibet remains a serious cause of concern for the Chinese leadership.[111] On the basis of a comparison with Eastern Europe, in the future China will need to develop policies of inclusion that target both the entrepreneurial elites and the ethnic minorities.

[105] On Bulgaria, see "Nomenklaturnite kadri na shtatna rabota v partiiniia aparat (Sotsialnopoliticheska, vuzrastova i obrazovatelna kharakteristika)" (The Nomenklatura Cadres Working in the Party *Apparat*: Sociopolitical, Age, and Educational Characteristics), May 1989, TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 222, 25.

[106] Jonathan Harris, *Subverting the System: Gorbachev's Reform of the Party's Apparat, 1986–1991* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

[107] TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 1315 (1972).

[108] Ibid.

[109] TsDA f. 1B op. 82 a. e. 410 (1975).

[110] AMVR f. 22 op. 1 a. e. 11 (1973); AMVR f. 22 op. 1 a. e. 23 (1975).

[111] *Neibu canyue*, no. 32 (2008), 3–11.

Institutions of Accountability

In addition to economic growth and ideological legitimacy, communist regimes govern through institutions of accountability, including institutions of horizontal accountability (which subjects the executive to control by other party or state organs) and institutions of vertical accountability (whereby citizens have some control over those in power). The chapter by Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng assesses horizontal accountability in China and Vietnam by focusing on the degree to which the Central Committee holds the Politburo accountable, the independence of the government from the party, and the degree of control that the legislature can exercise over the government through parliamentary oversight. The authors find that, compared to China, Vietnam has better developed institutions of horizontal accountability. Archival sources reveal that similar institutions of accountability existed in Eastern Europe.[112] However, in contrast to China and Vietnam, such institutions did not serve to prevent the emergence of splits among the elite. Importantly, divisions among the selectorate led to the removal of incumbents in the communist regimes where "palace coups" took place in 1989 (e.g., Hungary, Bulgaria, and Mongolia). A relevant question for further research is under what conditions institutions of horizontal accountability serve to bolster elite cohesion and under what conditions they undermine it.

In addition to institutions of horizontal accountability, communist regimes created institutions of vertical accountability, such as elections, administrative litigation, and citizen complaints. These institutions allow citizens to demand some type of explanation or justification from leaders at various levels of the political system for their behavior – and if the leaders are unresponsive, the citizens are permitted to sanction them directly (by not electing them or by organizing protests against them) or indirectly through a system of proxy accountability, as described by Dimitrov in Chapter 10. The essence of proxy accountability is that a higher level of government sanctions a lower level of government on behalf of citizens who have a grievance with the lower level of government. Proxy accountability allows the central government to deflect being held directly responsible, but when proxy accountability malfunctions, the central government itself is the subject of public discontent, as occurred in Eastern Europe and China in 1989.

Elections with limited choice were introduced in some East European countries in the 1960s, as well as in China, Vietnam, and Cuba in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The extent to which these elections serve as effective tools of accountability is the subject of debate. Tsai, among others, argues that semi-competitive elections have limited utility as a tool of accountability of grassroots

[112] On the operation of these institutions in the Soviet Union, especially during perestroika, see documents in TsKhSD, Fond 89 Communist Party of the Soviet Union on Trial: Archives of the Communist Party and Soviet State.

leaders in China.[113] In the case of Vietnam, however, Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng find that national-level limited-choice elections can increase the responsiveness of the executive. In Eastern Europe, elections functioned as a weak tool of accountability, as they had primarily regime-legitimating purposes.[114] This was true even when the elections featured some limited choice, as they did in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, the GDR, and Romania.[115] A question for further inquiry can focus on why semicompetitive elections seem to be able to prevent elite defections to the opposition in Vietnam, whereas they were ineffective in this regard in Eastern Europe.

Administrative litigation and administrative reconsideration were introduced as additional tools of vertical accountability in the Eastern Bloc in the 1970s and 1980s and subsequently in China.[116] They allow citizens to hold the government accountable by challenging negligent or corrupt bureaucrats for failing to deliver on the social contract. Administrative litigation involves court proceedings, whereas administrative reconsideration is conducted within the government agency whose employees are being challenged by the citizens. But administrative litigation and administrative reconsideration were rarely used in pre-1989 Eastern Europe and have been even less frequently used on a per capita basis in China since they were introduced in the late 1980s.[117]

The third avenue for vertical accountability is citizen complaints and letters to the press, which may be directed to the party, the state, or various social organizations. These complaints were instrumental in establishing a system of proxy accountability, where higher-level governments acted as proxies for ordinary citizens vis-à-vis local officials. Complaints and letters to the press were always taken seriously, but as Dimitrov argues in Chapter 10, it is only during

[113] Elections are probably the weakest available lever of accountability in China because they occur primarily at the village and urban neighborhood levels. Grassroots leaders often lack the resources or the power necessary to respond to popular demands to fulfill the terms of the social contract (see especially Lily L. Tsai, *Accountability without Democracy: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in China* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007], esp. 187–227).

[114] Victor Zaslavsky and Robert J. Brym, "The Functions of Elections in the USSR," *Soviet Studies* 30:3 (July 1978), 362–371. For an argument regarding the regime-legitimating functions of elections in Mexico, see Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy*.

[115] Alex Pravda, "Elections in Communist Party States," in Stephen White and Daniel Nelson, eds., *Communist Politics: A Reader* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1986), 27–54.

[116] On administrative litigation, see Inga Markovits, "Law and *Glasnost*': Some Thoughts about the Future of Judicial Review under Socialism," *Law and Society Review* 23:3 (1989), 399–447.

[117] For studies of administrative litigation in Eastern Europe, see Markovits, "Law and *Glasnost*"; on China, see, for example, Minxin Pei, "Citizens v. Mandarins: Administrative Litigation in China," *China Quarterly*, no. 152 (1997), 832–862; Veron Mei-Ying Hung, "Administrative Litigation and Court Reform in the People's Republic of China," J.S.D. diss., Stanford University School of Law, 2001; and Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Suing the Local State: Administrative Litigation in Rural China," in Neil J. Diamant, Stanley B. Lubman, and Kevin J. O'Brien, eds., *Engaging the Law in China: State, Society, and Possibilities for Justice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 31–53.

the stage of mature communism that the leadership most clearly understands the potential of complaints to serve both as a source of information and as a tool for creating a sense among the population that the regime is responsive to its demands. It is during the stage of mature communism that these institutions become more widespread, become more meaningful, and are more frequently used.

These various institutions of horizontal and vertical accountability underpinned regime resilience, both individually and through their interactions, but they could not counteract the drops in both elite and popular support that occurred when economic crisis and ideological erosion set in. Once crisis engendered divisions among the elite and discontent among ordinary people, the latter withdrew their trust in the system by refusing to send letters of complaint to the authorities. Increasing press freedoms and electoral reforms in 1988–1989 rendered the widespread absence of trust in the system even more palpable. When true electoral choice became possible in Poland (in 1989) and the Soviet Union (in 1989–1990), the respective communist parties suffered heavy losses. Though created with the explicit purpose of strengthening the regime, the institutions of accountability ultimately served to undermine it by providing coordination mechanisms for both the elite and the ordinary citizens who opposed the regime.

INSTITUTIONS, CONTINGENCY, AND REGIME COLLAPSE

The chapters in this volume argue that adaptive institutional change is a prerequisite for regime resilience in communist autocracies. When adaptive change stagnates, the likelihood of regime collapse increases. In Eastern Europe, by the late 1980s none of the adaptations discussed in the previous section were feasible. The economy had underperformed to such an extent that marketization was received with hostility by the public. Ideological reform was impossible, in large measure because nationalism was no longer credible as an alternative to Marxism-Leninism. Inclusion either was never attempted or had failed. Finally, the institutions of accountability were not performing adequately. Cumulatively, this calcification of the instruments for adaptive change both eroded popular support for the regime and lowered the costs of mass and elite protest.

Against this background, the Soviet Union initiated a process of wide-ranging political liberalization, described at length by Bernstein in his chapter. Two aspects of the political liberalization had destabilizing effects on the regimes in the Eastern Bloc. One was the emergence of press freedom, which allowed the media to criticize the party. This empowered dissent and opposition, even in countries like Albania that had no economic or military links with the Soviet Union.[118] A second aspect was the increasing autonomy given to NGOs, which

[118] Albania never joined COMECON and exited the Warsaw Pact in 1968.

challenged the monopoly on power of the communist party. International factors were also at work, as Kramer's chapter shows. The spread of liberalization in the Eastern Bloc (primarily Poland) increased the pressure for liberalization in the Soviet Union. In turn, liberalization in the Soviet Union had a feedback effect on other countries in Eastern Europe. Thus, as several chapters in this volume emphasize, the ideological, economic, and military impacts of the Soviet Union on the other Eastern Bloc countries were the key external factor that precipitated regime collapse. With respect to the end of the Soviet Union, the collapses in Eastern Europe in 1989–1990 played the role of an external catalyst, even if, somewhat paradoxically, these collapses actually occurred as a result of Soviet policies. Additional details on how this process unfolded are provided in Kramer's chapter.

Both structure and contingency played a role in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. Structural limitations prevented further adaptive change. At the same time, contingent leadership choices (as emphasized by Bernstein) impacted the likelihood of collapse. These changes were then diffused throughout the Eastern Bloc. As Bunce shows, diffusion was facilitated by structural factors: Eastern Europe was a federation, with the Soviet Union at the center.[119] Bunce and Wolchik (Chapter 5) and Kramer (Chapter 6) provide additional details on how these contagion dynamics contributed to the collapse of communism in Europe and why they did not spread to other countries (for instance, China) that were politically and geographically separate from the Eastern Bloc.[120] China's isolation also explains why *negative* diffusion did not take place in the aftermath of the Tiananmen crackdown in June 1989: the crushing of the protests in faraway China was simply not relevant for protesters in East Germany or Czechoslovakia, whereas successful regime transformations in neighboring countries like Poland and Hungary were very salient.

Repression

The continued existence of five regimes that are still ruled by communist parties allows us to ask whether a different unfolding of events might have been possible in the Eastern Bloc. Could these regimes have survived? This counterfactual requires us to think about the willingness and ability of the regimes to suppress dissent.[121] According to this counterfactual, the East European regimes could

[119] Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[120] On contagion, see also Barbara Wejnert, "Diffusion, Development, and Democracy, 1800–1999," *American Sociological Review* 70:1 (February 2005), 53–81; Renée de Nevers, *Comrades No More: The Seeds of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); and Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[121] Mark R. Thompson, "To Shoot or Not to Shoot: Posttotalitarianism in China and Eastern Europe," *Comparative Politics* 34:1 (October 2001), 63–83. Also see Timur Kuran, "Now Out

have survived longer had they used force. Typically, two contrasting cases are given as examples of this logic: China's suppression of the student rebellion at Tiananmen and the unwillingness of the East German regime to use a "Chinese scenario" against the Leipzig demonstrators. Ultimately, Honecker did not implement the Chinese option because of the absence of support from Gorbachev and from the Stasi (the East German State Security).[122] But two East European leaders did use violence against demonstrators: Romania's Ceauşescu and Albania's Alia. In the Eastern Bloc, these two countries had made the least progress toward economic and political reforms; they also had the weakest opposition movements.[123] As a consequence, Ceauşescu and Alia felt they were in control of the secret police and the armed forces. Also, as leaders of countries that had been close allies of China, Ceauşescu and Alia intently followed the Tiananmen events and decided to resort to a Chinese solution.[124] But the use of violence against demonstrators in Timişoara and Bucharest in December 1989 and in Tirana throughout 1990 sped up regime collapse rather than helping to shore up the regime. Although there are several reasons why the use of violence was unsuccessful, available documents indicate that the leaders in Romania and Albania grossly overestimated the amount of popular support, as well as the loyalty of the repressive apparatus.[125]

The East European cases shed light on the two conditions that helped the Chinese regime successfully wield force in 1989: first, the leadership maintained tight control over the army and the state security apparatus;[126] and, second, state security reports revealed that the actual level of support for the government *outside the major cities that had universities* was very high.[127] This high level of support is not surprising when we take into account that the first decade of reforms (1978–1989) had primarily benefited China's peasants, who had seen

of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44:1 (October 1991), 7–48; and Susanne Lohmann, "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–91," *World Politics* 47:1 (October 1994), 42–101.

[122] See Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union" (part 2), *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:4 (Fall 2004), 3–64, at 34 (footnote 87); Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post–Cold War Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 16–22.

[123] Jiri Pehe, "An Annotated Survey of Independent Movements in Eastern Europe," Radio Free Europe Research RAD Background Report 100 (Eastern Europe), June 13, 1989.

[124] Romania in particular expressed support for China and as a result was rewarded with a visit by Politburo member Qiao Shi in November 1989.

[125] In the case of Romania at least, the secret police (Securitate) is suspected of having staged the December 1989 revolution in Bucharest. See Antonia Rados, *Die Verschwörung der Securitate: Rumäniens verratene Revolution* (The Conspiracy of the *Securitate*: Romania's Betrayed Revolution) (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1990) and Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[126] On the importance of preventing military defections during revolutionary moments, see Sharon Erickson Nepstad, *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[127] Zhang Liang, comp., *The Tiananmen Papers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 149.

rapid improvements in their standards of living. Since China was 80 percent rural in 1989, the government was thus able to secure the support of the bulk of the population. Although the leadership lost a great deal of legitimacy by using force, this legitimacy was lost chiefly in segments of the urban population; peasants either were unaffected by the Tiananmen events or approved of the use of force to maintain order. In contrast, in Eastern Europe peasants and urbanites were united in their dissatisfaction with the regime. Thus, maintaining order in Europe through the use of force was not a viable option.

Learning from the Soviet Collapse

All communist countries closely followed the collapse of communism in Europe and drew lessons from it. For North Korea, the lesson was that retreating further into isolation could prevent collapse. For other countries, the lesson was that adaptive change was necessary. In China, this adaptive change has involved economic liberalization, ideological readjustment, an expansion of inclusion, and the promotion of institutions of accountability. But the Chinese leadership also concluded that Gorbachev had destroyed belief in the unity of the party by allowing criticism of the party from both within (by factions) and without (by the press, NGOs, and opposition parties), which in turn brought about the demise of both the party and the Soviet state (*wangdang biran wangguo*).[128] Learning from the Soviet collapse, the Chinese leadership has carefully circumscribed media freedom and has attempted to oversee associational life. Despite experiments with "inner-party democracy," China is still a far distance from genuine political reform.[129] As Vietnam, Laos, and (since 2011) Cuba seem to be following the Chinese path of development, the question remains whether continuous adaptive change, vigorous economic growth, and a strong repressive capacity can ensure resilience over the long term or whether bold political reform will eventually become imperative for regime survival.[130]

Communist Regimes and Authoritarian Resilience

The arguments in this volume about the institutional foundations of communist regime resilience and the factors that increase the likelihood of regime collapse may have broader applicability beyond the communist world. This volume discusses four types of adaptations that nonelectoral communist autocracies

[128] *Ju'an siwei: Sugong wangdang de lishi jiaoshun* (Be Vigilant in Peacetime: The Historical Lessons of the Collapse of the Soviet Union), 6 videodisks (Beijing: Zhongyang jiwei fangzheng chubanshe and Jilin chuban jituan, 2006).

[129] For an impressive treatment of Chinese learning from the collapse of communism in Europe as well as from the experience of other resilient regimes around the world, see David L. Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[130] Minxin Pei, "Time to Reflect," *South China Morning Post*, September 6, 2011.

implement (of the economy, of ideology, of institutions for inclusion, and of institutions of accountability). Noncommunist autocracies may not require identical adaptations. But all autocracies need to maintain economic growth, possess ideological appeal, prevent massive defection to the opposition through inclusion, and create electoral or nonelectoral institutions of accountability.[131] In the absence of such adaptations, a massive use of force may ensure regime survival, but not long-term resilience. A future in-depth study of the resilience and eventual breakdown of authoritarian rule in the Middle East will provide one possible test of the arguments presented here. Currently available evidence indicates that ossified regimes in the Middle East had only very modest economic growth; had lost all ideological appeal; had failed to include youth, women, and Islamists; and were regarded by the population as unaccountable and corrupt. Scholars had long emphasized that the strength of the security apparatus in the Middle East would prevent regime collapse.[132] Yet, in 2011 the military in countries like Tunisia and Egypt was unwilling to back autocrats who had no popular support. This mirrors the military defections in countries like the GDR and Bulgaria in the fall of 1989 and underscores the general importance for autocratic resilience of popular support generated through adaptive change.

This volume focuses primarily on the domestic sources of resilience. However, the contributors are also mindful of the importance of external sources of regime resilience and the role that international factors play as catalysts of regime collapse. In 1989, Soviet refusal to back old-guard incumbents empowered members of the opposition in the Eastern Bloc. Similarly, in 2011 American refusal to provide financial, military, and diplomatic support to some of its allies in the Middle East strengthened the opposition in single-party autocracies like Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. Another noteworthy parallel concerns the role of contagion and demonstration effects during regime collapse. The waves of mutual learning and copying of protest tactics that took place in the Middle East bear close resemblance to those described by the contributors to this volume with regard to Eastern Europe. However, despite shared borders and a common culture, some autocracies in the Middle East either completely avoided turmoil (Iran) or were able to use a combination of economic and political concessions (Kuwait, Jordan, and Morocco) or concessions and repression (Bahrain and Oman) to quell popular unrest. The failure of ossified single-party regimes and the success of the Arab monarchies and of nationalistic Iran suggest that the ability to institute adaptive change may allow autocrats to avoid the effects of contagion even in a tightly integrated region like the Middle East.

[131] Martin K. Dimitrov, "The Resilient Authoritarians," *Current History* 107:705 (2008), 24–29.

[132] Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36:2 (2004), 139–157; Eva Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring," *Comparative Politics* 44:2 (January 2012), 127–149.

A final note is in order. This volume makes no prediction as to whether or when the existing communist regimes will collapse. However, by analyzing the factors that have allowed these regimes to remain in place despite the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Color Revolutions, and the Arab Spring, the volume suggests that a focus on repression is insufficient to understand the foundations of communist rule. Research on the adaptive changes that autocracies implement represents an important avenue for comparative inquiry not only into the resilience of communist regimes but also into authoritarian longevity more generally.

2

Resilience and Collapse in China and the Soviet Union

Thomas P. Bernstein

INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Union and China represent the largest and most strikingly different cases of communist resilience and collapse. In both countries, new leaders, Deng Xiaoping in 1978 and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, rose to power, having inherited crises of varying dimensions. Both leaders were determined to revitalize and reinvigorate the ruling parties and redirect their peoples' energies in new, more productive directions. The Soviet regime failed; its transformative quest unleashed forces that led to the end of communist party rule, the partition of the USSR into its fifteen constituent union republics, and the loss of its superpower status. In contrast, Deng Xiaoping and his successors succeeded in transforming China into a world-class economic and rising military power by maintaining a remarkable growth rate averaging 10 percent for thirty years. Extraordinary social, economic, and cultural transformations took place. Communist rule survived, showing a remarkable capacity to adapt to new circumstances.

This chapter offers four explanations for these drastically different outcomes. The periods covered are 1985–1991 in the Soviet Union and 1978–1992 in China.[1] First, collapse and resilience were largely due to decisions by leaders and their anticipated and unanticipated consequences. The most important difference in the roles of leaders pertains to Gorbachev's support of political liberalization and Deng Xiaoping's decision to suppress it. Political liberalization refers to the opening up of a dictatorship to free political participation, media, and the right to organize autonomous political groups. In the Soviet case, it was closely

This is a complete revision of an earlier paper, "China's Reforms Compared to Those of Mikhail Gorbachev," published in John Wong and Bo Zhiyue, eds., *China's Reform in Global Perspective* (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2010), 263–298.

[1] For deeper explanations rooted in history, culture, and the two revolutions, see the recent superb analysis by Perry Anderson, "Two Revolutions: Rough Notes," *New Left Review*, no. 61 (January–February 2010), 59–96.

linked to democratization, meaning competitive elections in party and state. In sharp contrast, China's dominant leader, Deng Xiaoping, restricted political reforms to repairing the damage suffered by political institutions during Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution and adapting authoritarian rule to the requirements of a modern state and of the gradually emerging market economy. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) monopoly of power was preserved. Fending off demands for political liberalization has enabled the CCP to maintain its monopoly to this day.

The breakup of the USSR was also an unanticipated consequence of political liberalization. It enabled some of the country's national minorities to mobilize for greater autonomy and eventually for independence. The latter was facilitated by the institutions of Soviet ethnofederalism in the constituent union republics, which could be adapted to independence. China, in contrast, is a unitary not a federal state and lacks similar institutions. Because Soviet minorities made up around a half of the population, in contrast to China's 8 percent, the weight of the nationalities was much greater in the Soviet Union than in China. Some Chinese minorities have had aspirations for independence, but they have not been able to disrupt the country's unity, if only because of the state's willingness to use massive force, in contrast to Gorbachev's Soviet Union. In both cases, structural opportunities and constraints played important roles.

Second, China's economic reforms were successful but Soviet reforms were not. Structural differences explain a substantial part of the difference. China's economy was much more backward and decentralized than that of the Soviet Union. This enabled the country's leaders to start economic reforms at the periphery by successfully decollectivizing agriculture and attracting foreign investment in coastal provinces. Decentralization made it possible to defer reform of the centrally planned economy, which was the core economy, until the 1990s. Soviet reformers had a much more difficult task of reforming a centralized, complex, and interdependent economy. They probably could not have adopted China's gradual and sequential approach. Soviet economic failure was a major source of popular and elite disillusionment with Gorbachev, thus contributing to collapse.

Third, the objectives of Soviet reformers were far greater than those of China's leaders. Gorbachev aimed at fundamental reforms in three different sectors: the economy, the military-industrial complex and foreign policy, and the political system. Each of these was a major undertaking in its own right, requiring extensive leadership attention. Simultaneous pursuit of all three overloaded the Soviet policymaking agenda and contributed to failure. China's leaders focused tightly on economic reform and growth.

Fourth, the reforms precipitated elite conflict in both countries, but because Gorbachev's objectives aimed at fundamental change in three sectors, the scope of elite opposition was far wider than in China. During much of his tenure, Gorbachev faced strong elite opposition to his reforms. The attempted coup of August 1991 was a manifestation of this opposition. China's reformers also had

opponents, but elite conflict, severe as it was, focused more narrowly on marketization and political liberalization. Soviet bureaucracies were also more unresponsive to reform directives than were the Chinese, since provision of economic incentives secured their compliance with reform policies.

The initial section of this chapter examines the responses of Gorbachev and Deng to the political and economic crises that faced them. Subsequently, the chapter discusses their divergent approaches to economic as well as to military and foreign policy reforms. We then move to a discussion of the failure of political liberalization in China and the process through which it led to regime collapse in the Soviet Union. A conclusion evaluates the differences.

CRISES AND RESPONSES IN BOTH COUNTRIES

The Soviet Agenda for Change

When Gorbachev attained power in April 1985, Brezhnev's long rule came to be called "the era of stagnation" (*zastoi*). Gorbachev inherited a political and economic system that was intact and deeply set in its ways. It had not undergone much institutional change since the Stalin era. During the later Brezhnev era, moreover, the quality of governance greatly deteriorated. Centralized control over the economy increased, further clogging bureaucratic channels and stifling initiative. Even as conservative a Politburo member as Yegor Ligachev complained that "administrative-command methods ... have taken the [planned economy] to the point of absurdity."[2] In addition, the military-industrial complex imposed a crushing financial burden on the country, accounting for as much as 40 percent of the budget.[3] A related drain on state funds was that of the country's costly international commitments. The Soviet Union subsidized communist Eastern Europe, Cuba, and various radical Third World clients, while also fighting a war in Afghanistan.

Gorbachev was not alone in believing that there was an urgent need for fundamental reform.[4] He rose to power determined to revitalize the country's hidebound state. Three slogans summarized his goals: perestroika (restructuring), glasnost (openness or transparency), and democratization, which initially meant greater participation and initiative from below and only later, in 1988, competitive elections. As a Western scholar observed in 1986, these were sweeping goals:

[2] *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin: The Memoirs of Yegor Ligachev* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 316.

[3] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 215. He notes that even he, a Politburo member since 1980, had been kept in ignorance of the true numbers until 1985.

[4] Jerry Hough goes so far as to claim that "in the mid-1980s, all members of the Soviet elite agreed that decisive steps were needed" to reform the country. See *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985–1991* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1997), 106.

His campaign for perestroika is a call for far-reaching departures from prevailing practices and norms across virtually all areas of Soviet life. Its success would entail radical changes not only in the organization of the Soviet economy, but also in social and cultural policy, in the nature of Soviet political life, and ultimately in the allocation of status, power, and rewards throughout the Soviet system.[5]

Early on, Gorbachev added two other ambitious goals, namely, to cut the country's huge military budget and to end the Cold War. Gorbachev hoped to end the arms race and achieve reconciliation with the West, thereby legitimating the allocation of badly needed funds to the civilian sector.

A detailed plan for the achievement of the objectives was not drawn up. Reformers tackled them more or less all at once rather than sequentially – an important contrast to the Chinese case. Under Soviet conditions, however, a multiple approach made sense. Thus, in order to make credible Soviet proposals for ending the Cold War to the West, they had to be linked to liberal domestic reform. But inevitably, some issues took priority over others. For instance, "between the June Plenum of 1987 and the summer of 1989, Gorbachev was less involved in economic policymaking than he had been before and was to be again from the middle of 1989 and especially in 1990. In the interim, foreign policy and the radicalization of political reform had been Gorbachev's major preoccupations."[6] This was a major instance of Soviet agenda overload.

Crisis as Impetus for Change in China

Mao Zedong's aspirations to turn China into a utopian society culminated in the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the most destructive of his many political campaigns. It severely disrupted political and economic institutions as well as society. When it ended, the elite and the population were exhausted, traumatized, and repelled by years of class struggle and factional and state violence. The public longed for stability and a better life. In short, the country was ready for something new.

Deng Xiaoping and other reformers who held power after Mao's death moved swiftly to substitute authoritarian for Mao's radical totalitarian rule. This was the most important political reform of the entire post-Mao period. It did not, however, extend to political liberalization. Instead, reformers sought to repair the country's battered institutions and to prepare the country for the accelerated achievement of modernization. The catastrophic state of China's science and technology prompted the immediate restoration of competitive university entrance examinations and later the dispatch abroad of tens of thousands of students to study in advanced countries. Deng deliberately exposed key members of the economic and managerial elites to the realities of modern

[5] Gail W. Lapidus, "Gorbachev and the Reform of the Soviet System," *Daedalus* 116:2 (Spring 1987), 1–2.

[6] Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 148.

economies by sending numerous delegations on study trips to Japan, Western Europe, and the United States.[7] This is something that did not apparently occur to Soviet reformers. The party greatly curtailed its demands on the society and on individuals. Material incentives were reinstated and individual initiative encouraged. The principle of inequality – "some can get rich ahead of others" – was given the imprimatur of legitimacy.

Reformers adapted the ideology to economic development, which became the country's "central task." It took priority over most other considerations except maintenance of stability. A revised promotion system rewarded territorial party secretaries primarily for growing their economies. The urgency, determination, and commitment to develop stemmed from recognition of China's continuing backwardness and poverty. These sentiments were largely shared by society as legitimate and necessary for the restoration of China's greatness.

In their quest to find new ways to develop, reformers adopted a pragmatic approach. China was defined as being in the "primary stage of socialism," during which a mixed economy was appropriate. Family-based farming, private enterprise, the hiring of labor, foreign investment, and stock markets were in due course legalized, the justification being that these innovations contributed to the growth of the "productive forces" and were therefore ipso facto socialist. By the turn of the century, this line justified admission of progressive capitalists into the CCP.

The CCP's continued monopoly of power included maintenance of the basic institutions of party dominance such as appointment of key officials (nomenklatura) and the coercive apparatus. The rulers also maintained a monopoly over party history, especially the evaluation of Mao Zedong, which was essential for the preservation of regime legitimacy and was in sharp contrast to Gorbachev's glasnost, in which critics undermined the legitimacy of Lenin and Stalin. Chinese rulers retained the prerogative to decide on the scope of permissible debate. They had the power to choose whether to loosen (*fang*) or tighten (*shou*) its scope.[8] Within these constraints, China saw the gradual emergence of a consultative political regime characterized by an enlarged scope of policy deliberation and debate, one in which various nondissenting elites were encouraged to participate.

ECONOMIC REFORM IN CHINA: GROWING OUT OF THE PLAN

Two aspects of China's early post-1978 economic reforms stand out as highly distinctive in terms of Soviet reforms. One was the "opening to the outside

[7] Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), chap. 7.

[8] Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), chap. 3, and elsewhere.

world" (*duiwai kaifang*) that began with a 1979 decision to establish special economic zones (SEZs) in China's coastal southern provinces, initiating a process that culminated in China's accession to the WTO in 2001.[9] The other, on which we will focus, was agricultural decollectivization and the creation of rural industry.

Agricultural Reforms and Rural Industry

Decollectivization was China's first great success. In 1978, some extremely impoverished villages entered a "forbidden zone" by contracting communal land out to the households. Initially skeptical or opposed higher-level leaders regarded the household responsibility system (HRS) as at best an emergency measure suitable only for poverty-stricken villages. But as peasant demand grew and success indicators proved increasingly compelling, amid much controversy, restrictions were gradually removed until HRS became a virtually universal practice by the end of 1982. "Socialist" elements were kept, ensuring support from conservatives, including collective ownership of land – land was not privatized – and continued compulsory state procurements.[10] Peasant autonomy was thus limited and bureaucratic arbitrariness continued to be a long-term problem. Nonetheless, HRS was a major success. It benefited the peasantry and greatly improved the urban food supply, providing a mass base of support for economic reform.

The division of means of production among households was facilitated because China's agriculture continued to rely heavily on draft animal power. China had also preserved much of its precommunist rural marketing structure. Thus, China enjoyed the advantages of backwardness.[11] Most important, underemployed laborers bottled up in the communes were now able to look for remunerative opportunities. Family farming provided incentives to foster the culturally ingrained entrepreneurial talents of the Chinese family. This was a major source of the rise of "specialized households" and of township and village enterprises (TVEs), which Deng Xiaoping in 1987 likened to an "army coming out of nowhere" (*yijun tuqi*).[12] TVEs flourished where there was access to urban markets, transportation, and investment, mainly on the eastern seaboard and less so in the interior. The TVEs grew to the point where their output contributed

[9] See Scott W. Harold, "Freeing Trade: Negotiating Domestic and International Obstacles on China's Long Road to the GATT/WTO, 1971–2001," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2008.

[10] See Thomas P. Bernstein, "Farmer Discontent and Regime Responses," in Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar, eds., *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 197–219.

[11] See G. William Skinner, "Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China," part III, *Journal of Asian Studies* 24:3 (May 1965), 363–399.

[12] *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan: Di san juan* (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: vol. 3) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1994), 238. After utterly failing during the Great Leap Forward, rural industry actually grew during the late Maoist period.

a major proportion of GDP. As collective industries, TVEs could produce more cheaply because they did not have to provide state-sector-type "unit" (*danwei*) benefits and services to their employees. TVEs were outside the state plan and hence could respond much more quickly to changing market demand. TVEs targeted the enormous unmet needs of urban and rural consumers for light industrial products.[13] Unlike state-owned industries, which were bailed out by the government when they lost money (the soft-budget constraint), they usually, but not always, had to compete in order to survive. The rise of the TVEs served to spur state industries to greater efficiency in order to compete with their country cousins. Rural party secretaries often led local efforts to establish TVEs, thereby turning themselves into entrepreneurs who benefited both their constituents and themselves. This was a major part of the adaptation of the party to profitmaking enterprise.[14]

Rural industry exemplified the Chinese pattern of "growing out of the plan," in which a market economy developed alongside the planned sector. A dual-price system was adopted for critical state-sector goods in short supply, such as diesel fuel, which was sold at both a lower state price and a higher, market-based price. The cost of this was that officials could engage in arbitrage, fostering corruption. But the dual-price system served its purpose and was eventually replaced by market prices in the 1990s.[15] The dual-track approach of combining plan and market allowed China to avoid "a Soviet-type collapse by disentangling itself gradually from the institutions of the planned economy."[16]

Elite Conflict over Economic Reform in China

In the 1980s, severe opposition arose against markets among conservative senior leaders, the party elders, who by virtue of their seniority had high prestige and influence. The economic reforms undermined old conceptions of central planning as an intrinsic part of socialism. Markets were regarded as fundamentally capitalist, although some conservatives, such as Chen Yun, a top leader and economic planner, agreed that they should have an auxiliary place, as in agriculture and perhaps light industry. But conservatives thought that markets should never dominate. The paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, also an elder, who was strongly committed to reform, argued that markets were compatible with socialism. He also supported special economic zones and foreign investment as beneficial rather than as forms of imperialist exploitation, as Chen Yun

[13] There is a huge literature on TVEs. See Jean C. Oi, *Rural China Takes Off: Institutional Foundations of Economic Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[14] Andrew Walder, "Local Governments as Industrial Firms: An Organizational Analysis of China's Transitional Economy," *American Journal of Sociology* 101:2 (1995), 263–301.

[15] For the classic statement, see Barry Naughton, *Growing Out of the Plan: Chinese Economic Reform, 1978–1993* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[16] Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 91.

seems to have thought. Deng believed that without economic reforms, China faced a bleak future.[17]

The main fear of the elders and of leftist ideologues was that economic reform would pave the way for "bourgeois political liberalization," that is, the opening up of the political system to society. Several campaigns against this threat were launched in the 1980s. Deng Xiaoping fully shared his conservative colleagues' hostility to political liberalization, fearing that it would plunge the country into chaos. But each time, such campaigns were short-lived because they spilled over into the economic realm and endangered the private sector. Those in the leadership who favored economic reform then appealed to Deng to curb such excesses, which he did.[18]

After the crushing of the Tiananmen "Democracy Movement" in 1989 (see later discussion), conservatives were able to put further economic reform on hold until 1991. But they were not able to reverse those reforms that had already been introduced. This was due to another Chinese structural factor, namely, the huge surplus labor force. Had foreign investment, SEZs, and private enterprise been severely curbed, millions of workers would have lost their jobs, threatening the vital goal of stability. For his part, Deng kept defending economic reform and opening against "some persons," that is, conservative leaders. In late 1991 he took the offensive.[19] He vigorously defended his policies during a "southern journey" to Shenzhen and other SEZs. After some protracted maneuvering, Deng's line fully prevailed in 1992 and a "socialist market economy" was endorsed at the Fourteenth Party Congress. Sniping by leftist ideologues continued but did not prevent further economic reforms. But during the Tiananmen years, the staying power of the economic reform program was by no means assured. From 1993 on, China was able to engage in two decades of continued economic reform accompanied by extraordinary growth rates.

ECONOMIC REFORM IN THE SOVIET UNION

In sharp contrast to China, economic reforms in the Soviet Union failed to improve the economy and people's lives. This applies to agriculture as well as to industry and commerce. Industrial output grew until 1989, but inflation eroded purchasing power. The reforms increasingly disrupted the economy. In 1991, GDP dropped by 17 percent. Food shortages angered the urban public. In China, economic success contributed to the regime's resilience; in the Soviet Union, economic failure contributed to its collapse.

[17] For extended analysis, see Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, chaps. 16 and 19. See also Bao Pu, Renee Chiang, and Adi Ignatius, eds., *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), especially parts 3, 4, and 5.

[18] See, for instance, Bao, Chiang, and Ignatius, eds., *Prisoner of the State*, 159–214.

[19] "Shicha Shanghai shi de tanhua" (Talks While Inspecting Shanghai), January 28–February 18, 1991, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, vol. 3, 366–367.

Agriculture

Given China's success in jump-starting reforms and growth in the agricultural sector, why did the Soviet Union not learn from the PRC? Interest in Chinese reforms among Soviet China specialists, prominent economists, and journalists was quite strong, especially with regard to agriculture. The economist Leonid Abalkin, a Gorbachev adviser, and Tatiana Zaslavskaia, a prominent sociologist, were impressed by Chinese decentralization, including the household responsibility system. In 1987 Academician Oleg Bogomolov returned from a China visit and talked with Gorbachev and Central Committee officials, seeking to convince them to adopt elements of the Chinese approach.[20]

Although Chinese approaches were not adopted, the Soviet Union did have experience with autonomous small-unit agriculture and did not necessarily have to look to China or other socialist countries such as Hungary for models. For years, experiments had been conducted with small groups, called "normless links" (*beznariadnye zvena*), which resembled the Chinese household responsibility system in that each group was responsible for the entire agricultural cycle on the land that it contractually farmed. The rewards derived from final output. As in China, this meant that tasks performed long before the harvest would be performed conscientiously rather than perfunctorily, a result of the reward systems practiced by collective farms. These experiments had proven successful in raising output. The link system, however, was never generally adopted and not only because of ideological barriers.[21]

First, Soviet collective and state farms were large, highly mechanized units, in which it would have been difficult to divide lumpy inputs among households or small groups. Second, Soviet agriculture depended much more on the industrial sector for inputs than was the case in China, where agriculture was highly labor intensive and used draft animals. Third, Soviet agriculture was at the receiving end of a highly centralized, rigid, and extremely inefficient bureaucratic apparatus, which often was unable to deliver inputs when they were needed and which prescribed farm operations in often irrational detail. Gorbachev, who had a lifetime of experience in agriculture and who was appointed Central Committee secretary for agriculture in 1978, complained that "gladiatorial capacities" were required to overcome bureaucratic barriers to "resolve small and perfectly clear issues."[22] During the Stalin period, in order to enforce the harsh exploitation of agriculture, tight controls had to be foisted on that sector.

[20] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, "China as a Factor in the Collapse of the Soviet Empire," *Political Science Quarterly* 110:4 (1995–1996), 501–518, esp. 511.

[21] For discussion and sources on the link system, see Thomas P. Bernstein, "The State and Collective Farming in the Soviet Union and China," in Raymond F. Hopkins, Donald J. Puchala, and Ross B. Talbot, eds., *Food, Politics, and Agricultural Development: Case Studies in the Public Policy of Rural Modernization* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), 73–106, esp. 90–91.

[22] Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 46

Bureaucratic supervision left a path-dependent legacy, which made itself felt long after the agricultural sector had become the recipient of huge state subsidies and investments during the Brezhnev era.

Gorbachev strongly supported autonomy for Soviet farmers, but appropriate legislation was not adopted until the years 1989–1991. This delay was also due to agenda overload. Because the general secretary's "top priorities were to begin political reform to weaken his conservative enemies and 'to end the Cold War,' he did not or could not devote enough time to agriculture when he still had the power to bring changes about."[23]

Groups or individuals who wanted to farm on their own depended on the goodwill of *raion* (county) leaders and farm chairmen, who were often unwilling to allocate good land, suitable mechanical equipment, and other inputs, such as fertilizer, or, after the harvest, storage facilities and transport.[24] Because of this continued dependence, the profitability of farming in small groups or on one's own was uncertain. Many villagers were not willing to take such risks, especially since basic security had been provided by Brezhnev – this was one of his major achievements – in the form of guaranteed wages and pensions.[25]

The state of the rural workforce was also problematic. When queried during a visit to Hungary about why the Soviets did not learn from that country's successful decentralizing experience, Gorbachev replied that "unfortunately, in the . . . last fifty years the Russian peasant has had all the independence knocked out of him."[26] Many of the most energetic and ablest rural inhabitants had migrated to the cities, leaving an elderly, often female, and unskilled workforce. At the same time, villagers were industrious and energetic when it came to their private plots, which for decades had produced disproportionate shares of products such as vegetables, milk, and eggs. Expanding private plots might have provided a basis for agricultural reform.

Had it been possible to adopt the link system on a large scale, the impact on the urban food supply would still have been problematic. Soviet grain harvests during the perestroika years were actually better than those of the first five years of the 1980s. Only in 1991 did production plummet. Yet, long before then, the sluggish bureaucracy often had trouble delivering foodstuffs on time, a problem exacerbated by the growing disarray in the economy.[27] In other words, without

[23] Ibid., 144, quoting an agricultural specialist.

[24] Seweryn Bialer, "Gorbachev's Move," *Foreign Policy*, no. 68 (Autumn 1987), 75.

[25] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was no sudden exodus from the collective farms. Many large farms remained and privatization did not become widespread. Stephen K. Wegren, "The Limits of Land Reform in Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism* 55:2 (March–April 2008), 14–24.

[26] Quoted in Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 143.

[27] William M. Liefert, "Distribution Problems in the Food Economy of the Former Soviet Union," in R. F. Kaufman and John P. Hardt, eds., *The Former Soviet Union in Transition* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 491.

successfully reforming the industrial and commercial sectors, agricultural supply could not improve, producing empty shelves, long lines, and discontent.

Reforming Industry

A law adopted in June 1987 called for decentralization of authority to the enterprises so as to reduce the power of central bureaucracies. Central planners were to confine themselves to general guidelines and not issue detailed production plans. Economic incentives were to stimulate enterprise initiative, especially technological innovation. The law allowed establishment of market relations between enterprises. However, obligatory state orders continued to absorb the vast bulk of output.[28] Reduction of central control over production decisions led to breakdowns of traditional supply relationships, causing new bottlenecks. In the absence of price reform, which was postponed, managers could not be held to strict standards of profit and loss. A 1989 survey of enterprise directors showed that 59 percent were unprepared to function on their own and needed continued ministerial tutelage.[29] As Jerry Hough notes, Soviet reformers failed to think seriously about how to motivate or retrain the "industrial managers ... who were supposed to become market-oriented actors."[30]

Soviet managers did not know how to operate in a market economy, but they quickly learned how to take advantage of new opportunities to enrich themselves. As Solnick put it: "In the brief period from 1989–1991 ... once it [had become] clear that the ministerial supervisors ... were unable to stop enterprise managers from claiming de facto ownership rights over assets, the pace of spontaneous privatization accelerated."[31]

As glasnost got under way, reformers began to be pressured by an increasingly vocal public. "Mass protests," for instance, resulted in the addition of environmental clauses to the economic reform laws.[32] However, on the core issue, market price reform, policymakers were trapped by the intensity of both popular and media criticism, since wage earners and pensioners feared that price reform would make inflation even worse. "Hands off prices" was the first slogan of the emerging radical democratic opposition, which angered Gorbachev, who accused them of seeking cheap popularity. He condemned the irresponsibility of journalists and the "apostasy" of economists. But he heeded warnings that price

[28] Marshall I. and Merle Goldman, "Soviet and Chinese Economic Reforms," *Foreign Affairs* 66:3 (1987/88), 565. See also Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms, 1985–1990* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1990), 279–280.

[29] Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, 281.

[30] Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, 103.

[31] Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 228–229.

[32] Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 249.

reform would "kill perestroika."[33] Price reform was postponed until the disastrous shock therapy of early 1992 under President Yeltsin. Jerry Hough observes that "no one among the reformers seemed to understand that democratization would redouble the political explosiveness of price reform."[34] In 1988, China also had to abandon price reform because of fears of unrest.

Elite Conflict

Gorbachev was able to set the policy agenda and to push through policy changes in the Politburo and the Central Committee by using the "traditional authority . . . and the real powers of the General Secretaryship."[35] Retirements and ousters from the Politburo and the appointment of committed reformers, especially Alexander Yakovlev and Eduard Shevardnadze, enabled Gorbachev to enlarge his support at the top. Still, he had to wage protracted political battles. Despite his great tactical skills, powerful conservative adversaries remained on the Politburo and the Central Committee until 1988, while Yegor Ligachev continued in office until 1990. Gorbachev sought to cooperate with him, perhaps fearing repercussions in the party at large if he were let go. For his part Ligachev did not attempt to oust Gorbachev. He was prepared to reduce planning to "rational limits" but not to introduce markets on a wide scale, since this meant "letting the money changers and Pharisees back into the temple." He opposed private ownership, that is, capitalism, because it "entails the impoverishment of the majority and the enrichment of the few."[36]

Ligachev writes of "fierce fighting" in the Politburo and Central Committee, inter alia, over economic policy. Nikolai Ryzhkov, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, who also stayed in power until 1990, tended to postpone introduction of markets until some time in the future. He was protective of his ministries, at one point responding to a query as to what functions the ministries would relinquish by snapping, "None at all."[37] The slow and cautious moves toward "greater acceptance of market and non-state forms of ownership, reflected the fundamental disagreements within the leadership, in which Gorbachev's own views did not necessarily prevail."[38]

Bureaucratic Obstruction

Already in the fall of 1986, a Central Committee resolution charged that reformist directives issued that year were "not being implemented with sufficient

[33] Ibid., 235–236.
[34] Hough, *Democratization and Revolution*, 128.
[35] Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 67.
[36] *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin*, 90–91, 318.
[37] Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 223.
[38] Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 147.

vigor ... the restructuring process is ... encountering various social-psychological and organizational obstacles."[39] A stream of similar complaints emanated from Gorbachev and his staff. He kept urging radical action, yet the response from below was always inadequate. At the time of the Nineteenth Party Conference in June 1988, he complained that "our ideas, even some specific guidelines, run into a wall of resistance that blocks their implementation."[40] Two years later, "the party and government apparatus were in widespread covert – and often overt – revolt against Gorbachev."[41]

Gorbachev replaced a great many officials, including two-thirds of the powerful provincial (*obkom*) and county (*raikom*) party secretaries.[42] Ligachev, in charge of party organization, however, insisted that the replacements for those ousted should be drawn from within the regional and local party committees rather than, as Gorbachev had preferred, from a broader pool of candidates who might be more receptive to perestroika. The replacements thus often shared the same conservative mind-set as their predecessors. Georgii Shakhnazarov, another adviser, thought this had been a "serious mistake."[43]

Obstruction in the apparatus was also caused by Gorbachev's leadership style, which was often characterized by lack of specificity and clarity, indecisiveness, hesitation, stealth, and tactical backtracking to more conservative positions. In January 1987, he had delivered the most stinging critique of the "sorry state of the economy" since Lenin's times. But his proposals consisted of conventional affirmations of socialism and demands that, according to Chernyaev, amounted to little more than asking everyone "to work better."[44] Moreover, his claim that his policies were in line with Lenin's conception of socialism made it difficult for officials to understand just what it was that he wanted, undercutting his authority.

After long hesitation, Gorbachev finally made a commitment to full-scale marketization in 1990. By then, however, the issue was caught up in the sharpening conflict between the two rival governments of Gorbachev's USSR and of Yeltsin's RSFSR, the upshot of which was to leave marketization once more in a state of limbo. In his *Memoirs*, Gorbachev admitted:

> We underestimated the odds against us. We allowed the time frame for structural transformation to be dragged out for three or four years and thus missed the most economically and politically favorable time for them in 1987–88.... As a result, the situation in the country rapidly worsened and conditions became less and less favorable for successful reform.[45]

[39] *Pravda*, October 1, 1986, in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (CDSP) 33:40 (November 5, 1986), 1.
[40] Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, 137.
[41] Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 150.
[42] Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, 156.
[43] William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 92–93.
[44] Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, 97.
[45] Quoted in Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 136.

MILITARY OPPOSITION TO REFORM

It will be recalled that Gorbachev and his colleagues were well aware that without a reduction of the military budget and of the Soviet Union's costly international commitments, the civilian economy could not be effectively renewed, while liberal domestic reform was required to dispel distrust abroad.[46] The "New Thinking" required that the military abandon its deeply embedded offensive war-winning doctrine, adopt one of "defensive sufficiency," and accept sharp cuts in the military budget.[47] Initially, the military went along with Gorbachev's plans for revitalization, but his policies gradually aroused unease, anxiety, criticism, and ultimately open opposition among military leaders. The prospective Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, in which the Soviet Union accepted an "asymmetrical formula for missile reduction," was seen by Marshal Sokolov as "a state crime."[48] The Central Committee secretary in charge of the defense industry, Oleg Baklanov, warned Gorbachev that this "unjustified" Soviet arms reduction would fatally break the strategic parity between East and West.[49]

Gorbachev's style of dealing with the military angered military leaders and contributed to the development of bad relations with them. He made decisions on military matters that in their view warranted extended consultations with the high command, such as decisions on strategic doctrine or force structure, e.g., his unilateral declaration at the UN that Soviet forces would be cut by a half a million. Gorbachev had no military background, was seen as lacking an understanding of military culture, and was therefore thought to be unqualified to make such decisions on his own. For his part, Gorbachev lost respect for the military after a young German landed an undetected plane on Red Square in 1987.[50] He offended the military by inviting civilian academics to discuss military policy.[51] Additionally, his refusal to take full responsibility for the repeated use of troops to put down civilian disturbances, causing deaths as in Baku, Tbilisi, Vilnius, and Riga, elicited "the spirited opposition of the majority of the officer-corps."[52]

Glasnost further inflamed the relationship. Gorbachev invited the army's rank and file to participate in politics by publicly airing their grievances,

[46] Andrei Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble: Soviet Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008), 66.

[47] Dale R. Herspring, *The Kremlin and the High Command: Presidential Impact on the Russian Military from Gorbachev to Putin* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 29.

[48] Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble*, 96.

[49] Ibid., 98.

[50] Herspring, *Kremlin and the High Command*, 23–24.

[51] See the excellent analysis in Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), chap. 6.

[52] Zoltan Barany, *Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 82. Gorbachev states that "the tragic incidents" in Vilnius and Riga in January 1991 "were in no way directed from the presidential office." See *Memoirs*, 651.

voicing their political views, and running for office.[53] The media exposed social problems within the military, such as drug use, crime, corruption, and the horrendous practice of *dedovshchina* (brutal hazing of recruits). The result was a sharp drop in public support. According to a poll, by 1990, only 59 percent had confidence in the military.[54] In response, officers organized assemblies in which they criticized their derogatory media treatment. Barany argues that "independent political participation" precipitated the breakdown of norms and standards. "The habit of insubordination was born in the late 1980s. By 1990, military officers would openly criticize Gorbachev's policies and his incompetence."[55]

In August 1991, a group of military, civilian, and KGB leaders staged a coup in order to roll back perestroika and prevent a looser union treaty from being signed.[56] The participation of elements of the military in the coup was a sign of disillusionment with Gorbachev. "In the end, Gorbachev's defense and security policies had profoundly damaged the Soviet Army's social standing, cohesion, effectiveness, and ultimately, hastened its collapse."[57] A Gorbachev assistant commented that "of all the tasks that fell to the duty of perestroika, the most complicated was demilitarization of the country." William Odom, a U.S. specialist, concurred: "Indeed it was, because it required the destruction of the Soviet system."[58]

The PLA and Deng Xiaoping

The paramount leader did not have to face similar difficulties. Deng's deep roots in the PLA as a first-generation revolutionary with a record of more than forty years of military-political leadership endowed him with immense authority within the military, an asset that Gorbachev simply lacked. He was able to persuade the military that it would have to accept declining budgets in relation to GNP until economic growth enabled the country to provide the funds for military modernization. As he put it in 1984: "The Army should subordinate itself to the general interest, which is to develop the country."[59] PLA budgets rose modestly in the 1980s but lagged far behind the national growth rate and inflation.

Costly modernization also needed to be postponed because of the military's professional deterioration, a result of its involvement in the Cultural Revolution. Already in 1975, Deng had sharply criticized the state of the PLA as "swollen,

[53] Odom, *Collapse of the Soviet Military*, 393, and Barany, *Democratic Breakdown*, 82.
[54] Herspring, *Kremlin and the High Command*, 39.
[55] Barany, *Democratic Breakdown*, 105.
[56] Herspring, *Kremlin and the High Command*, 62.
[57] Barany, *Democratic Breakdown*, 82.
[58] Quoted in Odom, *Collapse of the Soviet Military*, 117.
[59] "Jundui yao fucong zhengge guojia jianshe daju" (The Army Should Subordinate Itself to the General Interest, Which Is to Develop the Country), November 1, 1984, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, vol. 3, 98–100 (title quoted in English in text).

arrogant, slack, extravagant, and lazy."[60] The PLA needed first to be reduced in size, reorganized, and retrained before it could absorb modern military technology. In addition, China's increasingly benign security environment justified the delay in reequipping the PLA. Normalization of relations with the United States on January 1, 1979, combined with the first signs of a possible Sino-Soviet rapprochement, which occurred in 1982, enabled Deng to argue that there was a window of opportunity for peaceful construction. Naturally, the military was not happy about this state of affairs. It lobbied for more money and in the later 1980s went into business in order to supplement its income. In sum, the military was not a major obstacle to the priority accorded to civilian economic development. And, from the 1990s on, large increases in military budgets assuaged military discontent.[61]

UNSUCCESSFUL POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN CHINA

The most fateful difference between China and the Soviet Union was that Gorbachev opened up the political system, whereas Deng Xiaoping resisted demands and pressures to do the same. Political liberalization was a political issue in China in the 1980s until the watershed crisis of Tiananmen in May 1989. One problem was that the line between participation compatible with continued authoritarian rule and participation that might undermine it was not easily drawn. Deng himself spoke out in 1980 and again in 1986 about the stultifying bureaucracy and the unchecked power of "patriarchal" party secretaries, who sought to straitjacket popular initiatives.[62] In the second half of 1986, some party intellectuals took advantage of what seemed to be a more permissive climate by arguing that the rapid progress of economic reforms and growth had given rise to new societal interests and demands that suggested that interest groups should be allowed to voice their views and the media needed to be freed, thereby propelling economic reform forward.[63] In late 1986, several pro-democracy student demonstrations were encouraged by liberal journalists and professors, among them the distinguished astrophysicist and university vice president Fang Lizhi.

[60] "Junren zhengdun de renwu" (The Military Needs to Be Adjusted), July 14, 1975, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan, 1975–1982* (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975–1982) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), 20. This part of the talk is not reproduced in the English edition.

[61] See Brian Lafferty, "Buildup: Chinese Defense Budgets in the Reform Era, 1978 to the Present," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, June 2009, chap. 3.

[62] "Dang he guojia lingdao zhidu de gaige" (On Reform of the Party and State Leadership Systems), August 18, 1980, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan, 1975–1982*, 280–302, esp. 287–291; and "Guanyu zhengzhi tizhi gaige de wenti" (On the Question of Political Structural Reform), September–November 1986, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, vol. 3, 176–180.

[63] "Su Shaozhi Discusses Political Structural Reform," *Dushu*, no. 9 (September 10, 1986), in *Joint Publications Research Service*, no. 20 (April 8, 1987), 25–30.

The street demonstrations shocked Deng.[64] He sided with conservative colleagues who saw them as renewed threats to stability. Hu Yaobang, the party general secretary, deemed too sympathetic to "bourgeois liberalization" and "all-out Westernization," was dismissed from his post and a campaign to counter these threats was launched in early 1987. But it was short-lived, again because it spilled over into the economic sphere and private businessmen felt threatened. In April 1987, Zhao Ziyang, Hu's successor as general secretary, informed Deng that "certain people were using the campaign to resist reform."[65] Deng supported him but warned him to be vigilant against manifestations of political liberalization.

For the next two years, Zhao Ziyang, who favored economic reform and some political reform, found himself in the uncomfortable position of having to try to please conservative elders, even as he sought to blunt the onslaught of leftist ideologues, but he failed to satisfy them. He writes in his *Prisoner of the State* that he became "enemy number one of the left."[66]

An aborted price reform in 1988 that had caused panic buying (as in the Soviet Union) was a blow to Zhao's prestige. In this uncertain environment, intellectuals continued to talk about political reform. At Peking University, students discussed political issues in "democracy salons." Some liberal reform-oriented research institutes were set up, and some newspapers printed daring articles. In April 1989, the death of the former General Secretary Hu Yaobang precipitated a student movement to mourn his passing, which soon spread to an estimated 170 cities. Adults joined in the demonstrations, including workers. Some private businessmen provided material support. Deng sided with conservatives and took a hard line, charging that counterrevolutionary turmoil was being ignited. In contrast, Zhao and several other leaders took a conciliatory line, arguing for dialogue. Student protesters, aware of the split in the leadership, persisted in the mass protest. A declaration of martial law proved ineffective. During the night of June 3–4, the army forcibly dispersed the demonstrators, causing hundreds or even thousands of deaths in Beijing and elsewhere. Zhao was fired and spent the remaining years of his life under house arrest in Beijing.[67]

The Tiananmen Democracy Movement of May 1989 represented the most significant political challenge from below in the history of the reform period. It showed the ease with which masses of students and adults could be mobilized by grievances over inflation and corruption to demand political change. In addition, workers had set up autonomous trade unions and students established autonomous student groups. Their demands for recognition, however, were harshly rebuffed and repressed. As Andrew Nathan concludes:

[64] Bao, Chiang, and Ignatius, eds., *Prisoner of the State*, 175.
[65] Ibid., 194.
[66] Ibid., 196 and 199.
[67] See Baum, *Burying Mao*, chap. 11.

Here was the Trojan horse that the regime could not accept. Had this demand been granted, the students would have achieved the legalization of the first completely independent political organization in PRC history.[68]

Using military force against the Democracy Movement showed how far the Chinese rulers were willing to go to maintain their power when they believed that it was threatened. This was in sharp contrast to the unwillingness of Eastern European communist leaders (except in Romania) to use force against democratic forces in 1989. Gorbachev supported their refusal to employ the "Chinese solution." The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, together with the dissolution of the USSR, deeply shocked Chinese leaders. They sought to understand the sources of what they regarded as a great catastrophe. A multiyear program of academic research was launched. Some analysts identified systemic factors as a major explanation for the collapse, but most blamed Gorbachev. The upshot of these studies is that China must strenuously resist seeking solutions to its problems by taking the route of political liberalization, a principle that is still in effect.[69]

POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION, DEMOCRATIZATION, AND THE SOVIET COLLAPSE

Long before he rose to the top, Gorbachev had been exposed to liberal ideas and was thus predisposed to implementing them as political conditions allowed.[70] His predispositions were greatly strengthened by the difficulties of implementing perestroika. The nuclear catastrophe of Chernobyl in 1986, which was initially concealed by the bureaucracy, provided a concrete lesson of the failures of the system. It became a "turning point" in glasnost.[71] Openness gradually escalated into a searching examination of what was wrong, not just with the economy but also with the political system. Censorship weakened and collapsed by the end of 1989. Predictably, however, a critical press and public opinion enabled both fervent supporters and opponents of perestroika to speak out in public.[72] Some

[68] Andrew J. Nathan, *China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 135.

[69] See Guan Guihai, "The Influence of the Collapse of the Soviet Union on China's Political Choices," in Thomas P. Bernstein and Hua-yu Li, eds., *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949–Present* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 505–516. See also David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington, DC: Wilson Center Press; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), chap. 4.

[70] Influences on Gorbachev included the "thaw" under Khrushchev, Eastern European reforms, Western social democracy, extended conversations with liberal Soviet intellectuals, and the influence of Alexander Yakovlev. For details, see English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*. See also Aleksandr Yakovlev, *Omut pamiati* (A Whirlpool of Memories) (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000), chap. 7.

[71] Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 163.

[72] See Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms*, chaps. 5 and 6.

vociferously defended the old order while others pressed for immediate full-scale democracy and marketization. When Stalin's crimes were denounced, conservatives bitterly complained that the heroic achievements of his era were being ground into the dust.[73] As glasnost deepened, even Lenin, the ultimate source of Soviet legitimacy, came under attack as the initiator of communist terror, much to the discomfiture of Gorbachev, who still thought of the later Lenin as a precursor of perestroika.[74] Like many a reformer, Gorbachev found himself increasingly beset by polarizing forces that he could not control. Given the continued power of conservative adversaries, he had to be more cautious than many of the radical intellectuals who had supported him most strongly, incurring their distrust.[75]

Democratizing the Party and State, 1988–1991

Still, by the time of the Nineteenth Party Conference in mid-1988, Gorbachev embarked on a radical transformation of Soviet political institutions. He launched a major effort to strengthen the government at the expense of the party. The powerful Central Committee departments that had supervised the economy were replaced by less powerful party commissions. As Kotkin points out, Gorbachev "deliberately broke the might of the apparatus."[76] Together with the weakening of the ministries, the capacity of the USSR authorities to steer the economy largely disappeared. As lower-level entities refused to transmit taxes to Moscow, its government was financially starved. At the local level, the power of the soviets was increased as economic power was taken away from the all-controlling party committees, who were left in search of a role. But at the same time, as Chernyaev notes, since the soviets had hitherto played only "decorative roles," they did not know how to fulfill their new duties, adding to the economic disarray.[77]

Gorbachev also sought to democratize the party by subjecting its secretaries to competitive elections, striking a further blow against the self-perpetuating nomenklatura. In the localities, first party secretaries were required to run for election for the chairmanship of the relevant soviet. Failure to win would require the loser to vacate his/her party post.[78]

Amid battles between conservatives and reformers the Nineteenth Party Conference mandated creation of a new Congress of People's Deputies, to be

[73] In March 1988, a public controversy broke out over a letter vehemently defending Stalin, allegedly instigated by Ligachev. See his *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin*, 301ff., and Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, 153ff.

[74] See Chernyaev's observations, in *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, 202 and 212–213.

[75] Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, 193.

[76] Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 77.

[77] Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, 179.

[78] Ibid., 158.

chosen in part by nationwide competitive elections. Held in March 1989, the elections constituted a watershed in the democratization of the country. In contested constituencies in Moscow, Leningrad, and elsewhere, communist officials were defeated, striking an enormous blow to both the self-image of the CPSU and Gorbachev's hopes that a democratized communist party would be accepted by the country. As a senior Soviet journalist put it: "We have told ourselves over and over that the party and the people were one, and however hollow we thought these words were, we never suspected that the gap was so wide."[79]

During the first session of the Congress of People's Deputies, full TV coverage of open and free debate astonished the Soviet public, as those who had won in competitive constituencies spoke out against the terrible ills of the system, extending public awareness to the remote corners of the country and beyond the hotbeds of radicalism of Moscow and Leningrad. The realization that Soviet socialism was not superior to Western capitalism provoked shock and anger.[80]

One of the electoral outcomes was the resurrection of Boris Yeltsin, a populist and something of a maverick. He had been demoted from the Politburo in 1987 for violating party discipline by attacking Gorbachev for building a "cult" and for slowness in implementing perestroika. In 1989, he won a landslide victory in a Moscow district. A year later, in March 1990, he won another landslide election to the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies. And in June 1991, he was elected president of the RSFSR by a popular vote of 57 percent. In contrast, Gorbachev was elected president of the USSR by its congress in 1990, meaning that he lacked the legitimacy conferred by a popular election. He had rejected advice to run in a nationwide election, a misjudgment "of biblical proportions," to quote Timothy Colton.[81] Yeltsin had become Gorbachev's chief rival and threat, emerging as a decisive champion of rapid democratization, market transition, and, most threatening for the survival of the USSR, Russian independence.

In February 1990, a Central Committee plenum voted to delete Article 6 of the state constitution on the party's "leading role," that is, its monopoly of power. The plenum agreed to a multiparty system, which was legally authorized in the fall of 1990. And it agreed to adopt the principle of "humane, democratic socialism." The abandonment of the core premises of the Leninist regime provoked furious debate. The CPSU held its final congress in July 1990 and reelected Gorbachev as general secretary.

The CPSU effectively died after the failed August 1991 coup, having been implicated in the plot. According to one source, numerous subnational party

[79] "Defeat of Some Party Officials Natural, Gorbachev Says," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1989.

[80] Stephen Kotkin, "In Search of the Nomenklatura: Yesterday's USSR, Today's Russia," *East European Constitutional Review* 6:4 (Fall 1997), 104–120, at 106.

[81] Timothy J. Colton, *Yeltsin: A Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 180.

committees sided with the coup leaders or took a wait-and-see attitude.[82] Upon his return from house arrest in the Crimea, Gorbachev promised to remove hardliners from the party but insisted that that there were a good many loyal party members. "Tone-deaf to the end," Gorbachev affirmed his continued adherence to socialism.[83] Yeltsin had already banned party activities in the RSFSR on August 23; six days later, the USSR's Supreme Soviet took the same step (by a vote of 283 to 29), while also freezing the party's assets.[84] Only then did Gorbachev resign as general secretary.

Nationalities and the Breakup of the Soviet Union

As emphasized in the introductory section of this chapter, the disintegration of the Soviet Union was the result of "nationalist mobilization," which in turn was caused by glasnost and political liberalization.[85] National grievances and demands were increasingly articulated in public while protest demonstrations on behalf of national causes occurred with growing frequency. While other issues led to demonstrations and protests, as over the environment, work conditions, and the pace of democratization, it was nationalism that gained "a particular force and momentum." After the liberalizing party conference in mid-1988, protests took on "tidal proportions and increasingly organized forms."[86] "Waves of contention" swept over parts of the country, but not all national groups were caught up in them, even as contagion effects made themselves felt. The process was generally characterized by escalating demands, first, for greater autonomy, for instance, with regard to language rights; then for demands for sovereignty and acceptance by the USSR of the proposition that union republic laws should take precedence over USSR legislation; and finally for outright independence.[87]

The CPSU with its unionwide organization and nomenklatura had been the major politically integrative mechanism by which the fifteen union republics were kept under Moscow's political control. At the same time, under the ethnofederal system, the union republics had had their own governments and representative institutions as well as the constitutional right to secede. These institutions could readily be converted to independence. Gorbachev failed "to

[82] David R. Marples, *The Collapse of the Soviet Union, 1985–1991* (New York: Pearson Education, 2004), 88.
[83] Colton, *Yeltsin*, 185.
[84] Marples, *Collapse*, 87–88.
[85] For an excellent analysis, see Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[86] Ibid., 49 and 85.
[87] Beissinger's analysis is much more complex than indicated here. He examines the cyclical interplay of preexisting structural conditions, institutional constraints, and agency. One of his insights is that the claims to nationhood can suddenly emerge or crystallize; they are not just cause of action but also the consequence of action.

grasp that by undermining the Party Secretariat and enhancing the state (the Supreme Soviets of the Union and of the republics), he was exchanging a unitary structure for a [genuinely] federalized one."[88]

Even as separatist pressures grew, Gorbachev did not use force on the scale required to hold the country together. There were several cases of state repression in which lives were lost. Sporadic state violence against peaceful protesters caused a political backlash, which then made the central authorities more reluctant to use force.[89] Kotkin argues that Gorbachev could have mobilized the army and KGB troops against the independence forces.[90] Whether these troops would have been effective in view of the corrosive impact of the Gorbachev years on the military can, however, be questioned. Most important, Mikhail Gorbachev's unwillingness to use force on a large scale was rooted in his own belief in the possibilities of a humane, democratic socialism, but also in the realistic calculation that massive military force would jeopardize his goals of ending the Cold War, pursuing detente, and obtaining aid from the West.

The Role of Russia. The demands for separatism and independence did not just arise at the periphery, but from 1990 on, from the RSFSR itself, under Yeltsin's leadership. As Colton observes, Yeltsin "opted for nation-building over empire-saving."[91] His Russian nationalist rhetoric sought to inspire the public to think of itself as a separate country and no longer as the core of the USSR. Mobilization of Russian separatism drew support not just from those who defended Russian sovereignty against an "over-bearing, imperial USSR," but also from liberal intellectuals and workers.[92] Within the RSFSR, conservative forces bent on defending the USSR lost out as well.[93] The decision to dissolve the USSR was made by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia. It was passively accepted by the public "as inevitable" if only "out of a sense of a lack of alternatives among its remaining supporters."[94]

The Chinese Case. The dissolution of the Soviet Union constitutes the most significant difference from China. The majority Han Chinese have always valued unity as an unquestioned good. After 1949, the regime abandoned its earlier espousal of a Soviet-type federal system. Instead, it established a unitary, centralized state, in which provinces with large minorities were designated as "autonomous" regions, as in the case of Tibet, and without a right to secede. Revolts by minorities striving for autonomy or independence were harshly suppressed.

[88] Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, 77.
[89] Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization*, 40 and chap. 7.
[90] Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, 84.
[91] Colton, *Yeltsin*, 208.
[92] Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization*, 394–395.
[93] Ibid., 399.
[94] Ibid., 441.

Were China to liberalize politically, its most restive minorities, the Uighurs and Tibetans, would probably use their new freedom to mobilize for greater autonomy, if not independence. Were this to happen, the regime, backed by the highly nationalistic Han population, would most likely use massive force to crush efforts to divide the motherland. The prospect that minorities would take advantage of freedom to mobilize is the greatest single obstacle to liberalization and democratization in China. It is noteworthy that after the dissolution of the USSR, China hardened its nationality policies by strengthening the unitary elements in the governance of the "autonomous" regions. China now defines itself as a Chinese nation with ethnic diversity (*duoyuan yiti*) rather than a state with multiple national groups.[95]

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Two decisive differences deserve to be highlighted. One was Gorbachev's promotion of political liberalization and democratization, which undermined and destroyed the Leninist core of the Soviet political system, whereas Chinese leaders fought off attempts to promote liberalization even to the extent of shedding blood to crush the Tiananmen movement. The other was the sheer immensity of the Soviet reform undertaking. After the initial anti-Maoist political reform, China focused on one task: economic reform and growth. The Soviets sought to undertake three major tasks: economic reform; reform of foreign and security policy, including the military-industrial complex; as well as political reform. Moreover, in contrast to China, Soviet reforms were not sequenced. Inevitably, this approach overloaded the agenda, all the more because power was concentrated in the person of the general secretary. This chapter has repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that for long periods, economic reforms were subordinated to the other two tasks.

To be sure, the Soviets did have to cope with the interdependence of the three tasks. The highly centralized Soviet economy would have made a sequential Chinese-type approach very difficult if not impossible. And, in order to bring about reconciliation between East and West, liberalizing domestic political reforms were necessary to demonstrate that the Soviet Union was changing in its political fundamentals.

At the same time, one cannot but wonder whether more careful planning and thinking about the implications of the reforms might have enabled Gorbachev to

[95] See Minglang Zhou, "The Fate of the Soviet Model of Multinational State-Building in the PRC," in Bernstein and Li, eds., *China Learns from the Soviet Union*, 477–503, esp. 490–492. The regime, it is worth adding, rejects the examples of Hong Kong and Taiwan as applicable to Tibet and Xinjiang, which had already undergone "socialist transformation." Theoretically, it is possible for a state to accommodate particularistic religious or cultural demands of territorially distinct minorities. See Alfred Stepan, Juan J. Linz, and Yogendra Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), chap. 1.

avoid some of the pitfalls of his policies. As Anatoly Chernyaev, a key adviser, put it: "for a reformer of Gorbachev's magnitude it was a major, perhaps fatal, mistake not to foresee what democratization might mean for national issues."[96] Similarly, his failure to understand the importance of electoral legitimacy prevented him from leading in the establishment of a strong democratic state, one that could serve as a replacement for the CPSU, which had been the country's most important governing institution. Perhaps better strategies and tactics could also have overcome or reduced in weight some of the structural obstacles to which this chapter has drawn attention.

In the final analysis, then, leadership made a fundamental difference. Compared to Deng Xiaoping, Gorbachev was less decisive, less authoritative, beset by more adversaries, and less ruthless. But in evaluating Deng's legacy, it must be kept in mind that while he played the main role in preserving and boosting economic reform and growth in 1992, he also blocked any opening to political liberalization. His authoritative opposition burdened the country in its later years, when a diversified society increasingly demanded an accountable political system, which continues to be steadfastly opposed by most of the regime.

[96] Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, 108.

PART II

IDEOLOGY AND RESILIENCE

3

Ideological Erosion and the Breakdown of Communist Regimes

Vladimir Tismaneanu

INTRODUCTION

Communist regimes are partocratic ideocracies (as discussed by authors such as Leonard Schapiro, Alain Besançon, A. Avtorkhanov, and Martin Malia). Their only claim to legitimacy was purely ideological, that is, derived from the organized belief system shared by the elites and inculcated into the masses that the party benefited by special access to historical truth and therefore it enjoys infallibility. If this interpretation is correct, then de-radicalization (Robert C. Tucker), primarily in the field of ideological monopoly, leads to increased vulnerability. The demise of the supreme leader (Stalin, Mao, Hoxha) has always ushered in ideological anarchy and loss of self-confidence among the rulers. Attempts to restore the "betrayed values" of the original project (Khrushchev, Gorbachev) resulted in ideological disarray, change of mind among former supporters, desertion of critical intellectuals from the "fortress," criticism of the old dogmas, awakening, a break with the past, and eventually, as in the case of Kołakowski or the Budapest school, apostasy.

This chapter looks into the adventures of critical Marxism in Soviet-style regimes and its corrosive impact on the "Moscow Center" during the 1970s and particularly the 1980s. I conceptualize the "Gorbachev phenomenon" as a culmination of the revisionist ethos in the socialist bloc, which implicitly turns the focus of my contribution to the inherent paradoxes and fallacies of his perestroika. The latter are perceived to be inherent in the incompleteness of revisionism's promise for change. Nevertheless, I by no means deny the role of this fascinating chapter of

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intellectual and political history in providing a fundamental lesson about the role of ideas in the disintegration of authoritarian regimes of Leninist persuasion. What I do state is that only the reinvention of politics operated by the dissident movements could offer the *possibility* to achieve genuine democracy and full liberty in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. I will also introduce the cases of China and North Korea in order to situate the demise of communism and Gorbachev's reform within a comparative framework. I argue that communism in China has survived because, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen repression, the party created avenues of reintegration for the intellectual elite, thus lowering the impact of dissent and opposition. I therefore counterpose the sequence, so typical of communism's evolution in Europe, revisionism to apostasy, to what I have called the technocratic revisionism of post-1989 Chinese intellectuals. In other words, the communist regime in China re-legitimized itself by means of de-radicalization of the group that initially shaped up as a counterelite. North Korea is the paradigmatic case of unreformed communism, what I have labeled national Stalinism. Dissent is close to nonexistent (or unknown), while change would most likely happen because of a connection between a crisis of succession and structural problems. Dynastic, autarkic, terroristic communist rule was the North Korean party's answer to the collapse of the Soviet Union. In other words, hyperradicalization was their survival strategy at the end of the Cold War. The following chapter also draws upon and develops my theses on the role of ideological disillusionment in the ultimate decline (de-radicalization) of Leninist regimes as formulated in the 1980s and early 1990s.[1]

PATHS TO DE-STALINIZATION: THE SOVIET BLOC AND CHINA

Several generations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have come of political age by assimilating a radical promise of universal redemption and emancipation. Dialectical and historical materialism became the official outlook, the main political, philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic corpus of hypotheses, theses, values, norms, and opinions that guided, inspired, and motivated the political-intellectual development of East European societies. Marxism, that is, its Leninist avatar, was imposed as the philosophy par excellence, the unique scientific worldview, and the spiritual complement of the technological-industrial evolution of the society. Moreover, under the specific circumstances

[1] See Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Critical Marxism and Eastern Europe," *Praxis International*, no. 3 (October 1983), 248–261; Vladimir Tismaneanu, *The Crisis of Marxist Ideology in Eastern Europe: The Poverty of Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1988); Vladimir Tismaneanu, "The Neo-Leninist Temptation: Gorbachevism and the Party Intelligentsia," in Alfred J. Rieber and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, eds., *Perestroika at the Crossroads* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991), 31–51; Vladimir Tismaneanu, "From Arrogance to Irrelevance: Avatars of Marxism in Romania," in Raymond Taras, ed., *The Road to Disillusion: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 135–150.

of the Stalinist period, Marxism, converted into *Diamat*, a simulacrum of dialectical jargon combined with pseudoscientific claims, was gradually instituted as a monopolistic orthodoxy imagined according to the requirements of self-sufficient, noncontradictory, and a priori unquestionable quasi-religious dogmas. Conceived as such, it brought about a continual stiffening of intellectual life in Eastern European countries, as well as a normal, absolutely logical counterreaction of refusal and dissatisfaction with the prevalent ideas. The Stalinist functionalist-pragmatic Weltanschauung succeeded in emphasizing as altogether certain and genuinely axiomatic a number of theses from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's *The German Ideology* (e.g., economic determinism, the assumption that the dominant ideas within a social organization are the ideas of the hegemonic group) as well as several naïve materialist positions defended and promoted by Lenin in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, above all Lenin's vulgar representation of the philosophical parties. Under Stalin, dialectics suffered a strange metamorphosis, a process of *refunctionalization*, the result of which was the transformation into a mere ideological weapon, a mythological instrument supporting each political step of the regime, each tactical turning. *The Short Course of History of the CPSU*, published in 1938, represented the paradigm of the Bolshevik intellectual debasement. Turned into a gospel for the international communist movement, this parody of Marxism was extolled as the pinnacle of human wisdom. The human being that Stalinism wanted to build up was supposed to repudiate the classical distinctions between *good* and *evil*, scornfully discredited as obsolete through the exposure to another moral code, in many points suggestive of the Nazi Übermensch. The final goal was annihilation of the free will, and the achievement of total intoxication, moral dereliction, and, thereby, absolute identification with the system.

After the occupation of Eastern Europe by the USSR and the establishment of Soviet-style regimes, the same form of primitive Leninism – they never dared to call it Stalinism – was decreed the unique interpretation of Marxism.[2] The ersatz Marxism of the epoch was subsequently the ideological framework created by Stalin and his followers and was, in fact, a compendium of trivial metaphysical ideas interwoven with pragmatic rules and mythological fixations, a simplistically crude yet enormously seductive political religion. Stalin's death and the promises of the thaw caused certain semantic modifications within the rigid structure of the dogmas, especially in the context of Nikita Khrushchev's fulminating attack on Stalinism at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February 1956. One needs to emphasize here the slight move away from the petrified doctrine corpus toward the origins of Marxism as philosophy, toward the so-called young Marx as an archetype of a pure, nonadulterated socialist impetus. "Revisionism," a term coined by neo-

[2] See Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed., *Stalinism Revisited: The Establishment of Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2009).

Stalinist orthodoxies to stigmatize critical currents of thought and the main adversary encountered by ruling bureaucrats since the factional struggles of the mid- and late 1920s, became the main foe of the neo-Stalinist ideological construct.[3] Consequently, the political radicalization of the East European intellectuals coincided with – and was catalyzed by – the wave of liberalization touched off by Nikita Khrushchev's historical revelations.[4] All the Stalinist theoretical and political constructions had been denounced as a horrible hoax: the illusions could no longer cover the squalid reality. The dogmas had proved their total inanity. The yearning for a moral reform of communism was the basic motivation for the neo-Marxist revival in Eastern Europe. The intellectuals' rebellion against totalitarian controls became a massive threat to the endurance of Soviet-type regimes. The dubious legitimacy of these governments was questioned by critics who could not be accused of belonging to the defeated social classes. With their outspoken advocacy of humanism and democracy, they contributed to the erosion of the apparent monolithic consensus.

The importance of the Khrushchevite moment as a fundamental rupture in the history of communism in Eastern Europe is demonstrated by contrasting it to the behavior of the party elite in China during the post-Mao successions. None of the leaders who followed "Chairman Mao" engaged in open condemnation of his crimes. De-Maoization occurred nonostentatiously, nonvociferously, and in a most cautious way. The departure from the first phase of communist rule in China was rather tacit and programmatically self-limited. It was founded on the acknowledgment that the country and the system had entered a new phase rather than on the statement that the new leadership was faced with overcoming the errors (and even crimes) of the former leader. In the words of Deng Xiaoping, "discrediting Comrade Mao Zedong . . . would mean discrediting our Party and state."[5] A party resolution issued in 1981 stated that Mao's "merits are primary and his errors secondary." It noted that he had made "gross mistakes" in his later years but described Mao Zedong Thought as "Marxism-Leninism applied and developed in China."[6] Indeed, as Archie Brown remarked, "to debunk Mao so soon after his demise would have been a much riskier step for the Chinese leadership than was Khrushchev's attack on

[3] Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: The Founders, the Golden Age, the Breakdown* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005); Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995). Two classics on the topic of Marxist revisionism in Eastern Europe are Leopold Labedz, ed., *Revisionism: Essays on the History of Marxist Ideas* (New York: Praeger, 1962) and Wolfgang Leonhard, *Three Faces of Marxism: The Political Concepts of Soviet Ideology, Maoism, and Humanist Marxism* (New York: Paragon Books, 1979).

[4] William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003).

[5] Joseph Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen: From Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[6] Thomas Heberer, "The 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution': China's Modern Trauma," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3:2 (2009), 177.

Stalin."[7] It seems that the Soviet example served as a lesson for the Chinese leadership, as the latter avoided open and public de-Stalinization (de-Maoization). Deng Xiaoping preferred to seek a different approach of post-Maoist development, since the Soviet bloc after 1956 functioned as a negative example, a path that ought not to be taken. Such an observation seems more plausible if one takes into account the fact that, in contrast to Khrushchev, who was a member of Stalin's inner circle, Deng was twice subject to vicious purges during Mao's Cultural Revolution.[8] Deng chose to depart from Mao's vision of mass mobilization as the engine of change and to bring forth a more technocratic vision of China's future. Nevertheless, his vision of socialist transformation was based on "the four cardinal principles" that he formulated in 1979. These were as follows: "upholding the socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat (later, the people's democratic dictatorship), the leadership of the communist party, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought."[9] By referring to the crucial role of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the need to preserve the party's monopoly on power, Deng circumscribed the reformist agenda to basic streamlining rather than democratization.

This specific path taken by post-Mao China produced a different (and difficult) environment for the development and for the role of critical thinking in the country. Instead of following the trajectory from disenchantment to apostasy, intellectuals relied on "institutional parasitism" to crystallize into a counter-elite.[10] After Tiananmen, in the context of a massive show of force by the party, this same path allowed for some of them to reintegrate and participate in the further transformation of socialism in China. In itself, this led to the reconfiguration of the role of Chinese intellectuals: from moral and cultural beacons of society to specialists and academics of systemic transformation, not to forces of opposition to the regime.[11]

REVISIONISM AND THE ELITES

To return to the post-Stalin era in the Soviet bloc, the immediate effect of the general intellectual unrest caused by the Secret Speech in 1956 was the

[7] Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (London: Bodley Head, 2009), 438.

[8] David S. G. Goodman, *Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese Revolution: A Political Biography* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[9] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 28.

[10] X. L. Ding, *The Decline of Communism in China: Legitimacy Crisis, 1977–1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4. Ding identifies two characteristics of institutional parasitism: "(1) the boundary between institutional structures is vague and indeterminate, mainly because one institution grows and is sheltered on or in a different institution from which it draws its partial or total resources; and (2) the nature of individual institutions is amphibious or even indeterminate; that is, a single institution can be used for contradictory or conflicting purposes or functions" (26).

[11] See Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen* and Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2006).

configuration of a fundamentally *radical* answer to the obvious structural crisis of the East European Soviet-type societies. It was an exhilarating search for the "realm of freedom" prophesied by Marx, an explosion of the *unglückliches Bewusstsein* (unhappy consciousness), the revolt of the libertarian undercurrents, which succeeded in surviving the mortifying experience of Stalinism. Their theoretical manifestations were the emergence of a *new semantic horizon*, the coalescence of a new emotional and intellectual infrastructure translated into the resurgence of repressed philosophical topics, above all *humanism* as a privileged metaphysical concern. The crushing of the Hungarian Revolution and the attempt to tame the Polish intelligentsia, the hardening of the political line in all East European countries between 1957 and 1961, and the harsh antirevisionist campaign after the publication of the program adopted by the Communist League of Yugoslavia could not obstruct the creative philosophical openings nor hinder the antidogmatic impetus that had resulted in the *humanist-ethical outlook* execrated by the unrepentant Stalinists and neodogmatics. Revisionism was nearly suppressed because of its own commitment to values fatally perverted through official manipulation. It was a fallacious strategy based on wishful thinking and impossible desiderata of moral regeneration of the ruling elite. It foolishly yearned for dialogue with those who valued only brutal force. Adam Michnik aptly describes the inescapable dilemma of neo-Marxist revisionism in East Central Europe:

> The revisionist concept was based on a specific intraparty perspective. It was never formulated into a political program. It assumed that the system of power could be humanized and democratized and that the official Marxist doctrine was capable of assimilating contemporary arts and social sciences. The revisionists wanted to act within the framework of the Communist party and Marxist doctrine. They wanted to transform "from within" the doctrine and the party in the direction of democratic reform and common sense.[12]

The dominant ideological apparatus in the East European communist parties tried to maintain control over, and eventually to paralyze, all these potentially dangerous spiritual developments. From the outset, the ideological apparatchiks attacked the very idea of the *liberal reforms* as well as the "revisionist" claim for a profound, inclement analysis of the Stalinist system and of the whole tragic texture of events and situations euphemistically designated by the communist parties as the "cult of the personality." They rapidly became aware of the subversive implications of the Marxist "return to the source" and discovered the negative-libertarian appeal of such concepts as alienation, humanism, self-managed democracy, human rights, and freedom of the subject. "Revisionism" became the obsessive projection of the Stalinist ideologues, the embodiment of their secret anguishes. To paraphrase Leszek Kołakowski, the "jester" could not

[12] See Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 135.

avoid the confrontation with the intolerant reaction of the wrathful "priests"; he had to radicalize his "attitude of negative vigilance in the face of any absolute."[13]

Trying to avoid any simplifying scheme, we can distinguish three fundamental levels of ideological-spiritual stratification within the Eastern European "bureaucratic-collectivist" societies in the 1960s and 1970s. First of all, there was the official ideological party apparatus, whose main concern was to preserve the purity and the integrity of the apologetic dominant doctrine and to assure its hegemony. There were, of course, differences between the East European regimes: in Hungary the party bureaucrats spoke about the *hegemony* of Marxism, whereas in Romania or in the German Democratic Republic, Marxism, or, more precisely, the party interpretation of Marxism, was supposed to enjoy total cultural-philosophical monopoly. The second level could be represented by the intellectuals who were trusted by the party apparatus and who shared the dominant values and myths of the regime. From within their ranks the party recruited many of the future apparatchiks, especially in the cultural field, thus bringing about a new type of social structure of the political elite. The third level was represented by those whose subversive and antisystemic voices gradually became more articulate from the ranks of the silent intellectual majority. This stratum of the *challenging subgroup of dissidents* was made up both of all-out anticommunist individuals and those who started along the path of revisionism but through disenchantment found the door open to apostasy. The interaction of these three camps (anticommunist, revisionist, apostate), especially in the last decade of the Soviet bloc's existence, represents one of the most important keys in explaining the sudden and shocking end of the communist regimes. Their positioning in relation to one another set up the trajectories for liberalization and "democratization" in the region.

A similar structure can be noticed in post-Mao China, before Tiananmen. Deng Xiaoping adopted a "dual traffic" policy that was "'anti-Left' in economics and 'anti-Right' in politics."[14] However, he considered that the success of his program of socialist transformation depended on the broad support of the better-educated social groups, that is, intellectuals. But the integration of this category in the process of modernization raised expectations and opened the door to counterappeals. The very social group on which reform was relying wanted to take a step further and carve an autonomous public space. Thus, following X. L. Ding's argument, a "counterelite" that emphasized science, democracy, cosmopolitanism, and the leading role for intellectuals as societal conscience came about.[15] In China, during the period from the stabilization of

[13] See Stanley Pierson's chapter on Leszek Kołakowski's intellectual journey from revisionism to dissent in Stanley Pierson, *Leaving Marxism: Studies in the Dissolution of an Ideology* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 128–174.

[14] Ding, *Decline of Communism*, 2.

[15] Ibid.

Deng's leadership position to Tiananmen, the role of the revisionist school and of the later dissidents was adopted by a group coined by Joseph Fewsmith as "enlightenment intellectuals." They were proponents of a return to the ideals of the May 4 movement (1919), which drew inspiration from the European Enlightenment and hence was dubbed the "Chinese Enlightenment."[16] Moreover, just as in the Soviet bloc, they also drew on Marx's writings on alienation, especially the 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts;* the writings of East European reformers; and democratic socialist ideals. These intellectuals produced a "cultural fever" during the 1980s that was on a collision course with Deng's middle path that used "'reform and opening up' to oppose 'leftism' and the 'four cardinal principles' to oppose 'bourgeois liberalization.'"[17] The repression of Tiananmen was the ultimate proof of the unwillingness of the party elite to give up its leadership position[18] at the expense of a counterelite formed in the context of the simultaneous phenomena of communism's reform and criticism in China.

Turning back to a more general assessment of critical Marxism, one must stress that this phenomenon signified more than just a resurrection of the original humanist-emancipatory drive of the philosophy of praxis: it brought about a new sense of intellectual responsibility, renewing the *critical* dimension of spiritual action. In this respect, providing a different matrix than its counterpart in the Western world, the critical Marxist paradigm developed by East European radical thinkers offered the main epistemological and historical-political categories and concepts necessary for a thorough comprehensive criticism of the authoritarian-bureaucratic institutions and methods. It subsequently provided the prerequisites for a project of essential change. There was no greater fear of the state-ideological apparatuses in the Soviet-type regimes than the crystallization of the interior resistance, the structuring of a critical social consciousness, and the radicalization of the intelligentsia. The latter was perceived as the most perilous evolution, a menace to the stability of the dominant institutions and values. East European critical Marxism attempted to counterbalance the inept official "dialectical triumphalism," the conservative-dogmatic functionalism assumed and promoted by the ruling communist parties. Its project was to offer the spiritual arms for criticism of the system in order to engender a more humane, less asphyxiating, and eventually democratic sociopolitical order. Ultimately, it succeeded, as correctly shown by Ferenc Fehér, in transforming

[16] On the May 4 movement and its legacy under communism see Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[17] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 27.

[18] Most recently, Stephen Kotkin convincingly made the argument that the suicide (self-imposed capitulation) of the nomenklatura was the most important factor in the disappearance of communism in most of Eastern Europe. See Stephen Kotkin, with a contribution by Jan T. Gross, *The Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009).

"the semantic potentialities of their vocabulary into the language of an actual politics of dissent."[19]

REVISIONISM AT THE CENTER OF THE SOVIET BLOC

The antinomies of the East European Marxist project became most obvious in the last decade of the existence of the Soviet Union, when the tribulations of the "Gorbachev phenomenon" were perfect examples of the failure of ideological reform. The fundamental question here, identical in its nature to the one that kick-started revisionist thinking, was "Could the Soviet system reform itself into something really different without ceasing to be the Soviet system?"[20] On the one hand, by the late 1980s, Gorbachev and his followers had a clear idea of what they were fighting against, what they were trying to reform: "a system that suffocated individuals, a totalitarian regime, a State monopoly over everything," one not merely imposed by the Cold War, because "there was also, within it, a dominant group that sought embitterment, pursued utopia, yearned for War Communism, and thought it could govern with continued repression."[21] On the other hand, however, the revitalization of the USSR's status on the world stage and the re-legitimization of socialism (both domestically and internationally) were dependent, in Gorbachev's view, on a successful systemic transformation of the Soviet state. In other words, the Soviet leader rejected "the option of muddling through" (Mark Kramer) characteristic of his predecessors.[22] Ultimately, his staunch belief in the possibility of simultaneously dismantling "Stalinist socialism" (a formula used by the weekly *Literaturnaia gazeta* in May 1988) and refounding the Soviet polity lies at the heart of the paradoxes that brought about the collapse of the "Moscow Center." Retrospectively, this approach, which time proved fatally contradictory, leaves us with a historical image of Gorbachev best described by Stephen Hanson in 1989 as "a pure revolutionary romantic, believing absolutely in the creative power of the masses, unable to countenance in principle any concrete institutionalization of revolutionary politics that might stifle this creativity, and therefore doomed to be

[19] Ferenc Fehér, "The Language of Resistance: 'Critical Marxism' versus 'Marxism-Leninism' in Hungary," in Taras, ed., *Road to Disillusion*, 41–57, at 48.

[20] I am rephrasing Alain Besançon's evaluation of Gorbachev's project of reform from his article "Breaking the Spell," in G. R. Urban, ed., *Can the Soviet System Survive Reform? Seven Colloquies about the State of Soviet Socialism Seventy Years after the Bolshevik Revolution* (London: Pinter, 1989). More recently, *Slavic Review* 63:3 (Fall 2004), 459–488, reignited this discussion through the publication of Stephen F. Cohen's piece "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" along with replies from Archie Brown, Mark Kramer, Stephen E. Hanson, Karen Dawisha, and Georgi M. Derluguian.

[21] See Silvio Pons, "Western Communists, Gorbachev, and the 1989 Revolutions," *Contemporary European History* 18:3 (August 2009), 349–362.

[22] Mark Kramer, "The Reform of the Soviet System and the Demise of the Soviet State," *Slavic Review* 63:3 (Fall 2004), 509.

defeated by others who had no such scruples."[23] One can therefore safely say, as Archie Brown does throughout his work, that Gorbachev was in fact a genuine Marxist revisionist, who, although paying lip service to Lenin's iconic figure, did move away from Bolshevism as a political culture based on fanaticism, sectarianism, and voluntarism to a self-styled version of Marxist revisionism. In the Russian tradition of reforms from above, Gorbachev's attempt to restore the moral impetus of communism was based, however, on a miscalculation: the gradual elimination of the bonds over society opened the door to alternatives, autonomous or independent of the thrust of his intentions. The politics of glasnost unleashed pluralism, which owned its own dynamics that transgressed the focus of Gorbachev's reform project.

When trying to understand the complex picture of the context and consequences of perestroika, one must not overlook the role that ideas played in the course of events. In itself, the prehistory of Eastern European revisionism was, along with the mythical "original Leninist moment" (the 1917 soviets or the New Economic Policy [NEP] period), the stepping-stone for the soviets in the 1980s. Moreover, the successes of the dissident movement in the region (greatly aided by Gorbachev's commitment to "nonintervention") heightened the sense of revolutionary transformation among the actors involved in the process of change. I mentioned earlier in this chapter the three layers of the intellectual establishment in a Soviet-type system (ideological apparatchiks, party technocrats/intellectuals, and challenging dissidents). In the 1980s, these three groups influenced each other to the extent of provoking a wholesale alteration of the discursive horizon, of the conceptual pool employed, and of the expectations both at the level of policymaking and of the public space. It can be argued that by the last decade of Leninism, there was a general consensus within Soviet intellectual milieus regarding the imperative to *rethink* the possible solutions (some more radical than others) to the USSR's problems. Here lies the oddity of the situation: the Soviet polity was indeed on a decline (especially as a symbol of the leader of the world communist movement), but it was far from being in turmoil. According to Stephen Kotkin, "nationalist separatism existed, but it did not remotely threaten the Soviet order. The KGB crushed the small dissident movement. The enormous intelligentsia griped incessantly, but it enjoyed massive state subsidies [that were] manipulated to promote overall loyalty."[24] The mixture of a fading and compromised international status (the U.S. challenge,

[23] Stephen E. Hanson, "Gorbachev: The Last True Leninist Believer?" in Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 54.

[24] Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 27. Mark Kramer, who develops Kotkin's point of view, strengthens his argument on Gorbachev's refusal to continue with the muddling through of the stagnation years by quoting a telling statement made by Islam Karimov during a Politburo meeting in January 1991: "Back in 1985, Mikhail Sergeevich, if I may say so, you didn't have to launch perestroika. . . . Everything would have continued as it was, and you would have thrived, and we would have

the post-Helsinki embarrassments, the Third World adventures, the Afghan quagmire, or even Eurocommunism), the obvious lack of legitimacy of the Eastern European communist regimes (and their glaring inability to counter/silence without widespread violence the dissident movements), and the almost unanimous belief among large sections of the party elite in the necessity of proposing reform (in the aftermath of the Brezhnev "stagnation" and of the Chernenko debacle) produced an environment in which Gorbachev and his followers' ideas could turn into a political program. In other words, it was time for revisionism to rise to power at the very center of the empire. Herein lies the difference between the 1980s in the USSR and 1956 or 1968 in Central Europe. In the latter case, critical Marxism officialized into policy was a response to chronic delegitimization of and turmoil within the respective regimes; in the former, it functioned rather as a preemptive measure and as a perceived need for systemic revival.[25] In the Soviet Union the "new thinking," as the epitome of the *mentalité* of the leadership ranks, "did not merely signal a reconsideration of policy efficacy or recalculation of ends and means, but reflected instead a long-term and wholesale revision of beliefs, values, and identity."[26]

The group of party intellectuals who rallied around the CPSU general secretary did inform and influence his own political thought and major choices. These advisers and associates not only shared Gorbachev's reformist drive, but also contributed to its radicalization.[27] The glasnost campaign notwithstanding, some elements never changed in the structure of the Soviet propaganda rituals. The general secretary was still the dominant voice authorized to express the revealed truth. The limits of the discussion and the scope and objectives of openness were prescribed by the ideological nomenklatura. Even important figures such as Aleksandr Yakovlev were confronted with vilification by hard-core communists, the KGB top brass, and Great Russian xenophobes as being Gorbachev's "evil spirit" and archtraitors to socialism. Other such representatives of the reformers' group, who moved into the crosshairs of those threatened by the "Gorbachev phenomenon," were Ivan Frolov, philosopher and for a while CPSU Central Committee secretary; Georgii Shakhnazarov, president of the Political Sciences Academy; Anatoly Chernyaev, Gorbachev's foreign policy

thrived. And no catastrophes of any sort would have occurred." Kramer, "Reform of the Soviet System," 511.

[25] For a synthetic analysis of the various trends of thinking that were born in the post-Stalinist USSR and that culminated by the end of the 1980s in the collapse of Marxism-Leninism as a state ideology, see Archie Brown, ed., *The Demise of Marxism-Leninism in Russia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[26] Robert English, "The Sociology of New Thinking: Elites, Identity Change, and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7:2 (Spring 2005), 43–80, at 43.

[27] Archie Brown, *Seven Years That Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also his previous research on Gorbachev and the aftermath of perestroika: Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) and Archie Brown and Lilia Shevtsova, eds., *Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin: Political Leadership in Russia's Transition* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2001).

adviser; Otto Latsis, deputy editor in chief of the CPSU theoretical journal *Kommunist*; Georgii Smirnov, the director of the CPSU Institute of Marxism-Leninism; Ivan Voronov, the head of the Central Committee's Cultural Department; and many others.[28] Some of them had worked in Prague in the 1970s as editors of the monthly *World Marxist Review* and were attracted to ideas that, within the general atmosphere of *zastoi*, were unorthodox, if not altogether heretical.[29] What remains crucial regarding the "young policy-academic elite" surrounding Gorbachev was that the bond that held it together was a common experience of acculturation in reform. Robert English identifies two levels in the process of learning a new identity: "*comparative-interactive learning*, whereby foreign ties facilitate a shift in the intellectuals' essential 'self-categorization' of the nation among allies and adversaries; and *social learning*, in which growing numbers of intellectuals from diverse professions are drawn into an informal domestic community."[30] People such as Yakovlev, Alexei Arbatov (department head of the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR), Abel Aganbegian, Evgenii Velikhov, Chernyaev, Shakhnazarov, and others, became proponents of a "new thinking" in international politics that rejected the Soviet tradition of "capitalist encirclement" and/or "permanent revolution" in favor of integration with "the common stream of world civilization." They brought about what conservatives called the "conspiracy of academicians" that engineered the volte-face that brought an end to the Cold War.[31] They were also among the first to attack the reality of *Brezhnevshchina* – political paralysis accompanied by moral disarray, intellectual despair, and a continuous erosion of the ruling ideology. Robert C. Tucker rightly describes the pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union as a profoundly troubled society:

[28] For an analysis of the transformations within the Soviet leadership and higher ranks of the CPSU in the last decades of the USSR see Jerry F. Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985–1991* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997) and *Soviet Leadership in Transition* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1980).

[29] See Georgi Arbatov, *The System: An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics* (New York: Times Books, 1992) and Alexander Yakovlev, *The Fate of Marxism in Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

[30] English, "Sociology of New Thinking," 76. English's article is part of a thematic issue of the *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7:2 (Spring 2005) on the role of ideas in the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. See also Nina Tannenwald and William C. Wohlforth, "Introduction: The Role of Ideas and the End of the Cold War," 3–12; Nina Tannenwald, "Ideas and Explanation: Advancing the Theoretical Agenda," 13–42; Andrew Bennett, "The Guns That Didn't Smoke: Ideas and the Soviet Non-Use of Force in 1989," 81–109; Daniel C. Thomas, "Human Rights Ideas, the Demise of Communism, and the End of the Cold War," 110–141; and William C. Wohlforth, "The End of the Cold War as a Hard Case for Ideas," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7:2 (2005), 165–173.

[31] For an intellectual history of the ideas and the ascendance of this group, see Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

People en masse have stopped believing in the transcendent importance of a future collective condition called "communism." They have stopped believing in the likelihood of the society arriving at that condition and the desirability of trying to achieve it through the leading role of the Communist party, or through themselves as "builders of communism," which is how the official party program defines Soviet citizens. In a society with an official culture founded on just those beliefs, this spells a deep crisis.[32]

The whole ethos of the Soviet political class had thus suffered a process of slow and apparently irreversible dissolution. Not surprisingly, the regeneration of the Soviet political culture emerged as a widely shared concern among the elite stalwarts. Gorbachev's 1989 unpublished manuscript in which he delineates the main directions for an overall pluralist renewal of the Soviet system can be considered an answer to those who expressed skepticism about his determination to go beyond the boundaries of a revamped Leninism (including many Soviet dissidents as well as Western academics and politicians). By promoting the idea of a system based on the rule of law, Gorbachev did in fact unleash an unstoppable political process with world-historical effects. In February 1990, Gorbachev convinced the Central Committee to accept the principle of a multiparty system and to relinquish the communist party's constitutional privilege: "The party in a renewing society can exist and play its role as vanguard only as a democratically recognized force. This means that its status should not be imposed through constitutional endorsement."[33] One can easily notice that Gorbachev was actually restating the 1968 pronouncement of his friend Zdeněk Mlynář on the two conditions of validity for the preservation of the leading role of the party.[34] According to many authors, even this approach was just the tip of the iceberg, in the sense that starting in 1987 and until 1991, Gorbachev and his entourage jostled with the idea of splitting the CPSU in the search for stronger legitimacy and wider support of the perestroika version of the USSR.[35]

GORBACHEV TOWARD NEW SOCIALIST SHORES

In 1988, Brown argues, a major shift occurred in Gorbachev's intellectual awakening. By that time, he had already publicly condemned Stalin's "unforgettable and unforgivable crimes." For all practical purposes, he converted to a

[32] Robert C. Tucker, *Political Culture and Leadership in Soviet Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 132.

[33] *Pravda*, February 6, 1990.

[34] See Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdeněk Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev: On Perestroika, the Prague Spring, and the Crossroads of Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 56–58.

[35] See comments along these lines made in the *Slavic Review* 63:3 (Fall 2004) issue by Stephen F. Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" 459–488, at 478; Archie Brown, "Soviet Union: Reform of the System or Systemic Transformation?" 489–504, at 498; and Kramer, "Reform of the Soviet System," 506.

version of Marxist revisionism directly inspired by Eduard Bernstein's evolutionary socialism. In the words of Anatoly Chernyaev, Gorbachev was going through a process of "sweeping de-ideologization."[36] The Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in 1986 had already replaced the iron law of class struggle with "a new doctrine emphasizing the priority of 'universal human values,' including human rights and self-determination."[37] By denouncing Stalin's reign of terror, Gorbachev was effectively bidding farewell to Lenin's ideology-driven partocratic system. Contrary to those who consider civil society pressure as the major cause of perestroika, Brown argues that, "with the principal exception of Poland, it is doubtful that the growth of civil society should be seen as a source of fundamental political change in the communist world rather than as a consequence of it."[38] It was "institutional amphibiousness"[39] that explains much of the transformation. In other words, institutions designed to foster and legitimize the system (ideological departments, party academy, theoretical journals, and think tanks) began to undermine the role they were supposed to play. This point indeed clarifies the unexpected intellectual trajectories within the nomenklatura, including some spectacular apostasies that represented responses to the system's insoluble moral and cultural crisis. Cynicism, corruption, and cronyism were the rampant pathologies to which Gorbachevism tried to offer antidotes. The last years of the Soviet Union were fundamentally characterized by a process of national iconoclasm, with the major mythological foundations of the existing system falling apart one after the other.

Ultimately, however, Gorbachev's incapacity to overcome the old ideological dramaturgy affected the extent of change within the Soviet system. Whereas Yakovlev drew the conclusion that Stalinism was inseparable from the whole Bolshevik tradition, which needed to be dramatically and drastically jettisoned, Gorbachev could not breach a certain mental horizon determined by his attachment to the existing system. He did it for tactical reasons, but also because of his deep inner convictions. Together with many of his associates, he was a child of the Twentieth Communist Party Congress, the 1956 watershed conclave in which Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin's myth. For Yakovlev, Lenin was guilty of crimes against humanity, a stance that Gorbachev would barely endorse. Yet, the break with Leninism, less strident than Yakovlev's, was real. At the end of the day, one can see Gorbachev as a combination of Imre Nagy and Alexander Dubček: unable to abandon the outworn Leninist model fully, desperately searching for "socialism with a human face," torn between nostalgia for the old ideals and the tragic awareness of their hollowness. More than a neo-

[36] Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, trans. and ed. by Robert D. English and Elizabeth Tucker (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 105.

[37] Thomas, "Human Rights Ideas," 129.

[38] Brown, *Seven Years*, 157.

[39] X. L. Ding, "Institutional Amphibiousness and the Transition from Communism: The Case of China," *British Journal of Political Science* 24:3 (July 1994), 293–318.

Menshevik, or a Western-style Social Democrat à la Willy Brandt (whom he admired), Gorbachev remains the last and most influential of those East European Leninist leaders who tried to humanize an inherently inhuman system. Yakovlev himself was the prototypical case of the apparatchik-turned-apostate in the terminal stages of Bolshevism. His volume of dialogues with Lilly Marcou does try to point to a so-called democratic potential of Leninism. At the time, he argues that

> through the return to universal values and the process of European integration, the socialist idea is taking root in Europe. The way out of this dead end that was the Cold War will be through *perestroika* in the USSR and through the evolution in the other East European nations. . . . For the moment, the people are refusing socialism: the idea has stumbled on the real conditions of East European countries; it was destroyed by the Stalinist counterrevolution. Now that the Stalinist model has been eliminated, we will see the emergence of a post-Thermidor socialism. This new socialism, which will no longer know bureaucratic oppression, will be made in the name of mankind.[40]

Of course, after 1992 the break was complete, allowing him to become the president of the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Stalinism's Victims. Moreover, his book *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* bears witness to his journey from dogma to democracy.

The need for a dramatic divorce from the past was nevertheless recognized by the most radical partisans of perestroika. The "Declaration of the Moscow Conference of Socialist Clubs" issued in August 1987 formulated the following demands: legal status for independent organizations and associations; the granting to them of the right to initiate legislation and to secure the fulfillment of party decisions aimed at democratizing the electoral system; the granting of the right to social organizations to nominate their own representatives to all levels of the Soviets of People's Deputies without restrictions and in accord with free access of candidates to the mass media; establishment in law of a sharp distinction between criticism of the shortcomings of the existing system and antistate activity; and realization of the first point of the program of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party concerning the rights of citizens to prosecute in court officials responsible for illegal acts, independent of complaints made at administrative levels.[41] Political mobilization from below in the Soviet Union, as the perestroika policies advanced, zoomed in on the elimination of the counterweights preventing the realization of true democracy. These counterweights, according to Stephen Cohen, infringed on what he considers "the institutions of a representative democracy [existent already in the Soviet polity] – a constitution that included provisions for civil liberties, a legislature, elections, a

[40] Quoted in Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 212. See Alexandre Yakovlev, *Ce que nous voulons faire de l'Union sovietique: Entretien avec Lilly Marcou* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1991), 104.

[41] See *Labor Focus on Eastern Europe* 9:3 (November 1987–February 1988), 5–6.

judiciary, a federation."[42] Their removal seemingly would have finally unveiled the long-awaited "reformed Soviet socialism." The USSR's rapid collapse combined with the political reorientation of large sections of the federation's population arguably rebukes Cohen's argument. As Archie Brown already commented on this matter, perestroika did not succeed in overcoming the state of systemic limbo. It never completed the transition from one system to another, thus reinforcing the increasingly widespread perception of the unreformability of the Soviet polity.[43] Both Karen Dawisha and Stephen Hanson correctly indicate that what Gorbachev envisaged as reform turned into, within the specific context of the last decade of the "Moscow Center" (Ken Jowitt), "a (counter)revolutionary self-destruction of the party-state."[44] To paraphrase Dawisha, the perestroika, through policies and by consequence, publicly acknowledged the elephant in the "communal apartment" – there was a critical and fatal error in communism's hard drive.[45]

The ruling elites in communist countries failed exactly because of their inability to function under circumstances of political pluralism. The principal function of communist bureaucracy was to exert dictatorship over mind and body. The communist bureaucratic ethos involved a strong esprit de corps, a solidarity developed through common existential experience, continued paternalistic behavior, and a jealously guarded monopoly of power. It can be argued that Gorbachev was too self-conscious of the revolution from above that he initiated. The policy of glasnost, for example, was, for him, primarily an instrument for clearing through the ranks of the state and party bureaucracy. Acceptance of the imposed degree of economic reform and democratization also divided the Soviet ruling elite. Gorbachev seemed to have been blindsided by the popular reaction and extrapolation of his policies, as he primarily focused on eliminating his rivals (from Ligachev to Yeltsin). He therefore incidentally assisted what Stephen Hanson coins "a breakdown of elite unity" that left the door opened for "damaging, short-run opportunistic behavior by lower-level agents of the state bureaucracy throughout the USSR."[46] Gorbachev indeed triggered and implemented a revolution from above but

[42] Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" 487–488.

[43] Brown, "Soviet Union," 494–495.

[44] Stephen E. Hanson, "Reform and Revolution in the Late Soviet Context," *Slavic Review* 63:3 (Fall 2004), 533.

[45] Karen Dawisha, "The Question of Questions: Was the Soviet Union Worth Saving?" *Slavic Review* 63:3 (Fall 2004), 513–526.

[46] Hanson, "Reform and Revolution," 533. It is no surprise that Stephen Cohen, who throughout his scholarly work has sought to find the ever-elusive solution from above (Bukharin, Gorbachev) to counter Stalin's Great Break, dismisses arguments in favor of an anti-Soviet revolution from below. For descriptions of the development of alternative politics from below before and during Gorbachev's reign see M. Steven Fish, *Democracy from Scratch: Opposition and Regime in the New Russian Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Edward W. Walker, *Dissolution: Sovereignty and the Breakup of the Soviet Union*

candidly missed the mass revolutionary effect upon the population produced by it. His ultimate commitment to the existence of a Soviet state under the rule of the CPSU, an additional avatar of the old revisionist fancy of ideological craft from within with supposedly preexisting tools, is another explanation for his downfall. It is indeed key for his vacillations from early 1991, when he briefly approached the hard-liners in the party (sacrificing, among others, Yakovlev along the way); or his dubious stand regarding the use of force in Latvia, Lithuania, or Azerbaijan; or the January 1991 CPSU resolution that advocated using "the export of energy sources to Eastern Europe as the most important instrument" for "reestablishing our [Soviet] 'presence' in the region" in order to "neutralize or at least diminish the anti-Soviet tendencies in the East European countries."[47] Even the famous abandonment of the CPSU's constitutionally guaranteed leading role in society (Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution) occurred three days after a 100,000-person demonstration in Moscow against the communist party.

If one analyzes Gorbachev and Mlynář's dialogue on "What to Do with the Party?" it becomes obvious that the Soviet leader was utterly confused about how to bring about political pluralism while sustaining state socialism. He correctly took the first step by digging up from the Great October rubble the principle of "All Power to the Soviets!" in order to secularize power and decision making in the USSR. In other words, he attempted to place party officials under the control of society. The original slogan of the 1917 revolution meant "freedom from party dictates not only for elected government bodies but also for executive bodies established by those legislative bodies. It meant a law based on separation of government powers."[48] The parallel structures ran into a stalemate under the circumstances of the preservation of Article 6 of the constitution. Gorbachev's own description of the events shows how the protracted negotiations within the Central Committee did produce change, but under the pressure of the 1990 republican elections. He admits that only in July 1991 did the leading body of the party succeed in producing "a program of democratic socialism in the modern sense of the word."[49] Political pluralism for Gorbachev meant a rather dubious "development of the party into a social organism, that is, to regroup and reshape the millions of communists who

(Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); also Walter D. Connor, "Soviet Society, Public Attitudes, and the Perils of Gorbachev's Reforms: The Social Context of the End of the USSR," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5:4 (Fall 2003), 43–80; Astrid S. Tuminez, "Nationalism, Ethnic Pressures, and the Break-up of the Soviet Union," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5:4 (Fall 2003), 81–136; and Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union," part 1, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5:4 (Fall 2003), 178–256; part 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:4 (Fall 2004), 3–64; part 3, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7:1 (Winter 2005), 3–96.

[47] Kramer, "The Collapse" (part 1), 214.

[48] Gorbachev and Mlynář, *Conversations*, 111.

[49] Ibid., 115

were not part of the *nomenklatura*."[50] He apparently maintained a belief in the inner-worldly vocation that characterized the virtuosi of the early years of Bolshevism. A question therefore remains, one I initially raised in 1990 – Did Gorbachev's reforms have the potential for an anti-Leninist revolution? His plans do seem to have maintained the features of a "movement regime" defined by an encompassing "socialist spirit." He attempted to formulate a new social contract based on mutual trust and respect between leaders and citizens. The party as a collective intellectual in the Gramscian sense, its re-legitimization through intellectual competence and moral authority, never succeeded, however, in becoming a viable alternative to the political and national pluralism and/or fragmentation of the Leninist twilight.

Following Archie Brown, one can identify three main causes for the failure of the Gorbachev experiment: first, he did not champion economic reforms in the direction of a market economy; second, he reacted late and often self-defeatingly to the rise of centrifugal nationalist and separatist movements; third, he underestimated the nomenklatura's capacity for retrenchment and delayed an alliance with the genuine democratic forces. It was indeed Boris Yeltsin who knew how to capitalize politically on the tempestuous rise of civil society in Russia. But it was due to Gorbachev and the Gorbachevites that the USSR moved from a state based on contempt for the individual and the rule of law to one in which human and civil rights were taken seriously. Whatever one thinks of Gorbachev's post-Leninist political philosophy, it is certain that he dissociated himself from the obnoxiously despotic features of the old regime. Gorbachev's problem was that he and his followers advocated what Jacques Lévesque coined "an ideology of transition" permeated by "a Promethean ambition to change the existing world order, based on new, universal values."[51] It provided the justificatory bases for Soviet foreign policy and it created the legitimacy that held in check and ultimately defeated the conservative forces within the CPSU.[52] It also fueled a twofold illusion: the capacity to control change in the context of a society ravaged by the workings of the Marxist-Leninist political religion and the belief in this society's will for socialist transformation under circumstances of doctrinal competition and political pluralism. In other words, Gorbachevism did not realize at the time that no phoenix could be reborn from the ashes of "the first workers' state."

PERSISTENT COMMUNISMS: CHINA AND NORTH KOREA

A brief overview of developments in post-Mao China provides, comparatively, important insights into alternative state practices aimed at achieving the sustainability of a communist regime. Deng Xiaoping's program of reform was

[50] Ibid., 117.
[51] Lévesque, *The Enigma*, 6.
[52] Ibid., 3–5 and 252–258.

fundamentally based on two principles: pragmatism and stability. At the same time, despite his insistence on collective leadership, Deng consistently reinforced his position as "core" of the party[53] and never renounced the axiom according to which the Chinese Communist Party should have uncontested monopoly over political power.[54] His vision was one of socialist rather than political pluralism. According to Brown, "he [Deng] did not accept the idea that 'freedom is indivisible'. On the contrary, he contrived to divide it, according quite a high degree of economic freedom to individuals and enterprises, while curtailing political freedom and dividing intellectual freedom by subject."[55] The aim of his program was the construction and preservation of a strong state. Deng's project was one of reform toward a form of "consultative authoritarianism" (Brown) that was furthered by his successors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. Besides relying on economic liberalization and party monopoly, such a system perpetuated itself through two other means: co-optation of groups that could potentially articulate a challenge to the regime and the reaffirmation of national identity.

After Tiananmen, an additional factor should be stressed when explaining the survival and, why not, perhaps even the boom of the communist regime in China. One of the by-products of repression was the growing shift toward the question of *how* to reform the system. The profile and salience of reform itself were not to be questioned. What mattered was how to advance policies within the vision imposed by the party. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the pragmatic and gradualist nature of Deng's departure from Mao allowed for, especially after 1992, a reconfiguration of the role of intellectuals in society. With the costs of all-out critical and dissenting attitudes sharply increasing after June 1989, intellectuals increasingly became part of the establishment. Moreover, as Fewsmith argued, the distance between government leaders and their advisers and intellectuals

> both narrowed *and* broadened. It has narrowed in the sense that government leaders are themselves often intellectuals and thus share the same general background as other intellectuals. This trend should, *ceteris paribus*, narrow the gap between the two communities and facilitate communication. However, the increasing specialization of many government leaders and advisers means that they are often better informed on specific issues than are their intellectual counterparts. They no longer need to be given broad advice about whether to reform.[56]

The outcome of this new form of specialized/technocratic co-optation gave the 1990s a radically changed set of priorities, indeed a commitment to avoiding

[53] According to Fewsmith, "although vague, the term 'core' suggests a leader who occupies the center of a wide-ranging web of formal and informal relations that confer an authority not easily displaced." See Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 23.

[54] On this, also see Thomas Bernstein, Chapter 2 in this volume.

[55] Brown, *Rise and Fall of Communism*, 448–449.

[56] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 12.

dramatic political changes while pursuing bold economic reforms. The primary focus lay not in the possibility of the transition from a communist regime to democracy, but in establishing an agenda of reform and in finding China's place in the world as one of the last (but most important) practitioners of state socialism. In this context, scholars have identified at least three new large groups among the strata of intellectuals: neoliberals (who rely on the writings of authors such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Frederick von Hayek, or Milton Friedman and focus on the necessity of defining property rights in what the party coined, at the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992, as a "socialist market economy"), neoconservatives (who focus on the extractive capacity of the state and on the importance of systemic stability), and New Left/postmodernists (who advocate a critique of Western modernity and rationality, rely on Immanuel Wallerstein's world system theory, and often fall back on Sinocentric argumentation).[57] These schools of thought among Chinese intellectuals situate themselves in the space allowed by the Dengist thesis of "one center and two basic points": "economic development was the center; the two basic points were reform and opening up on the one hand and opposition to 'bourgeois liberalization' on the other."[58] Furthermore, one needs to add that each of the groups presented here is associated with various wings of the communist party, thus directly influencing policy agendas both domestically and at the level of foreign policy.

Another source of reinvention for Chinese communism is that of national specificity. One must not forget that Deng stressed the fact that he was creating "socialism with Chinese characteristics," in contrast to Mao's "Chinese road to socialism." Chen Cheng has correctly stated that, in contrast to the Soviet Union, in China the relationship between Leninism and nationalism had always been ambiguous: "For the purpose of national development, the regime strategy could be adjusted or even reversed according to different situations. Thus, unlike the Soviet Union, where nationalism was always subordinated to Leninist ideology, Leninism went through a series of metamorphoses in China because of nationalist concerns."[59] Several incidents in the post-Tiananmen period have showed the regime's willingness to instrumentalize nationalist sentiment for the purposes of legitimation (the rejection by the U.S. Congress of Beijing's bid for the 2000 Olympic Games, the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, China's participation in the WTO, the various crises over Taiwan and Tibet, etc.). Moreover, sections of the party leadership are inclined toward advancing

[57] For details on the evolution of the various trends among Chinese intellectuals from the 1980s onward, see Ding, *Decline of Communism*; Minxin Pei, *From Reform to Revolution: The Demise of Communism in China and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*; Cheng Chen, *The Prospects for Liberal Nationalism in Post-Leninist States* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); Daniel A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*.

[58] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 23

[59] Chen, *Prospects*, 96.

populist agendas, particularly because of the growing inequalities and corruption that sprang out of the Dengist economic policies. Nevertheless, Cheng Chen points to the fact that despite instrumentalization of populist nationalism, the party did not succeed in controlling its direction. This seems to be the Achilles' heel of the current communist regime:

> The Party's movement away from suppression and towards co-optation or acquiescence suggests that a popular nationalism is now emerging in China that increasingly challenges the Party-state. Struggling just to keep up with popular nationalist demands, the Party is slowly losing its hegemony over Chinese nationalism.[60]

As one scholar noted, such a legitimation source is rather "a double-edged sword,"[61] for it can also be turned against communist rule.

In the past, the emphasis on Chinese specificities allowed the regime to reinvent itself. Currently, the same factor is a latent source of systemic subversion and divisiveness. The future of communism in China seems to hinge on the ability of the party to respond to democratic pressure, social criticism, and nationalist rhetoric. China's integration into world economy, its relationship with the United States, and the specters of globalization are some of the preferred topics of nationalist rhetoric. And sometimes, its proponents and the communist leadership are not on the same side of the fence. But, to paraphrase Chen, this situation has yet to generate systemic action. Overall, it can be argued that in the aftermath of Tiananmen, Marxism-Leninism has hardly been the calling card of mass mobilization and regime legitimacy. Support, acquiescence, and participation of intellectuals are achieved in China by means of engagement in specific policies and through the advancement of specific agendas on various issues of relevance for the self-perfection of the reform program as it had been laid down originally by Deng Xiaoping.

Another case of surviving communism is that of North Korea, though, in contrast to China (but similar to Cuba), it arguably does so by the skin of its teeth. Three fundamental factors helped the preservation of the communist regime in North Korea: continuous repression (bordering on terror, as in the case of the famine in the mid-1990s), the cult of personality ("Parental Leader"), and the ideology of self-reliance (*Juche*).[62] This country is the paradigmatic example of what I have labeled, in my discussion of the communism in Romania, as *national Stalinism*.[63] The development of communism in North Korea was

[60] Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 132. Also, on the "volatile mix of potentially troublesome attributes" of Chinese nationalism, see Maria Hsia Chang, *Return of the Dragon: China's Wounded Nationalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

[61] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 10.

[62] On this, also see Charles Armstrong, Chapter 4 in this volume.

[63] Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and Vladimir Tismaneanu, "What Was National

predetermined both by Kim Il Sung's policies before the collapse of the Soviet Union and by Kim Jong Il's inability or refusal to learn from and adapt to (in the sense of a significant change in his system of beliefs) the lessons of the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of globalization.[64]

North Korea is a case of communism imposed, developed, and preserved by a guerrilla dynasty.[65] After 1991, this organizing principle has been reinforced through succession. In 1997, Kim Jong Il introduced the dynastic calendar "counting from the birth year of its [Kim Il Sung] founder (1912) and named after his ideology of *Juche* (the year 2000 is Juche 89)."[66] In the late 1990s, the principle of "military first" was adopted, transforming the Korean People's Army into the most important resource for the regime's survival. "The National Defense Commission (of which Kim Jong-il is chairman) became the country's most powerful body. Kim has proclaimed the military the 'pillar' of socialism and at the forefront of the revolution."[67] To make matters worse, in 1998 Kim Jong Il officially reverted to "the economic policies of the 1950s, that is, mass mobilization, concentration on heavy industry, and increased ideological indoctrination."[68]

In order to preserve his rule, Kim Jong Il constructed his legitimacy on the shoulders of his father. In other words, he transformed Kim Il Sung into a close to heavenly figure, thus granting himself an almost divine right to rule as the offspring of the founding father. Statements such as this are therefore hardly surprising: "All the communist revolutionaries of Korea have been accorded immortal political integrity by the fatherly leader."[69] By 1992, even Marxism-Leninism was dropped from the constitution, which states that "the Democratic People's Republic of Korea makes *Juche* ideology, a revolutionary ideology with a people-centered view of the world that aims towards the realization of the independence of the masses, the guiding principle of its actions."[70] The ruling elite in North Korea is predominantly bound by blood ties or by attendance of the same school. According to Byman and Lind, the graduates of the Mangyongdae Revolutionary School make up "20 percent of the personnel on

Stalinism?" in Dan Stone, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 462–479.

[64] For an interesting analysis of Kim Il Sung's and Fidel Castro's lack of learning from changing political and economic conditions that came about at the end of the Cold War, see Akan Malici and Johnna Malici, "The Operational Codes of Fidel Castro and Kim Il Sung: The Last Cold Warriors?" *Political Psychology* 26:3 (June 2005), 387–412.

[65] Adrian Buzo, *The Guerrilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999).

[66] Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea through the Looking Glass* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 3.

[67] Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind, "Pyongyang's Survival Strategy Tools of Authoritarian Control in North Korea," *International Security* 35:1 (Summer 2010), 44–74, at 62–63.

[68] Oh and Hassig, *North Korea*, 8.

[69] Ibid., 22

[70] Ibid.

the KWP Central Committee, 30 percent of Politburo members, and 32 percent of the military commission of the Central Committee."[71]

The citizenry is asked and educated to show boundless love to the leader, while its possibilities of both survival and resistance are dwindling every year. In contrast to all cases discussed in this chapter, in North Korea the communist party, personalized in the figure of Kim Jong Il and his family, has not renounced even an ounce of its history-given right to rule. In the words of the leader: "If we weaken the dictatorial function of the government . . . we can not provide the people with democratic freedom and rights, defend our revolutionary achievements and we can leave the socialist system itself endangered."[72] With communism collapsing in the Soviet Union and reforming in China, the North Korean leadership decided to salvage its historical fate by focusing exclusively upon itself. According to the *Juche* ideology that was formulated by Kim Jong Il, the destiny of the country depended solely on the revolutionary transformation and progress of the nation.

EUROPE FROM REVISIONISM TO CIVIL SOCIETY

In Europe, the dissolution of civil society and the preservation of an atomized social space, the sine qua non features of Soviet-type totalitarianism, engendered widespread moral indifference and intellectual corruption. In the words of Archie Brown, "there were almost certainly more true believers in a radiant future during the worst years of mass terror than forty years later."[73] The official language was second nature, a protective shield against outbursts of spontaneity. People simulated loyalty to the system, generating a flourish of ritualistic behavior rather than of sentimental attachment. As Václav Havel put it:

> Because of this dictatorship of the ritual, however, power becomes anonymous. Individuals are almost dissolved in the ritual. They allow themselves to be swept along by it and frequently it seems as though ritual alone carries people from obscurity into the light of power. . . . The automatic operation of a power structure thus dehumanized and made anonymous is a feature of the fundamental automatism of this system.[74]

Citizens of socialist countries were master practitioners of double-talk and double-think. The life of the mind was split, and the result of such an excruciating process was that not even the Soviet general secretary was entirely convinced of what the party proclaimed. Ideology functioned more as a residual institution than as a source of mystical identification with the powers-that-be. Since the Twentieth CPSU Congress and the Hungarian Revolution, official slogans have sounded like a succession of senseless sentences. The only effect of ideological

[71] Byman and Lind, "Pyongyang's Survival Strategy," 67.
[72] Oh and Hassig, *North Korea*, 26–27.
[73] Brown, "Soviet Union," 489.
[74] Václav Havel and John Keane, *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1985), 33–34.

sermonizing was an immense, all-pervasive ennui. Ironically, ideological imperialism resulted in a simulacrum of faith, which was merely a camouflage for the ideological vacuum. At the moment this imposture was exposed, the whole castle would fall apart. In Havel's words:

> Ideology, as the instrument of internal communication which assures the power structure of inner cohesion is, in the post-totalitarian system, something that transcends the physical aspects of power, something that dominates it to a considerable degree and, therefore, tends to assure its continuity as well. It is one of the pillars of the system's external stability. This pillar, however, is built on a very unstable foundation. It is built on lies. It works only as long as people are willing to live within the lie.[75]

In every society man needs a set of guiding values whose observance promises to ensure his tranquility and worldly achievements. Soviet-type regimes ignored this and forced the individual to divide his soul between the public and the private person. Man and citizen were different entities in these societies. The outcomes were apathy, general disgust with politics, drug addiction, interest in exotic cults, or even fascination with Nazism, as in the case of certain Soviet youth groups. One can therefore regard the extinction of mystical ardor as the major liability of communist political systems. These systems experienced a perpetual ideological crisis: their promises had long lost any credibility. Gorbachev's injunctions received lukewarm support from those he wished to mobilize. The party call for innovation failed to galvanize social energies.

The CPSU leader became the victim of his own policies because he underestimated the extent of the detachment between the will for revolutionary change in the Soviet bloc and the preservation of the organizational big picture in the area. He overlooked what I would call, employing Mark Kramer's terminology, "the demonstration effects" of empowerment.[76] Gorbachev undercut Marxist-Leninist ideology; he internalized the vulnerability of the Soviet regime; and he diminished his leverage on curbing unrest within both the bloc and the federation. He first misinterpreted the Eastern European civil societies' visions of regime transformation and then was taken aback by the intensity of the contagiousness of democratization – essentially an alternative to his vision. Following Michnik's statement, "the perestroika virus" was indeed the last ingredient necessary to finally open the floodgates of dissent.[77] But the virus of the Eastern European reinvention of politics also irreparably subverted "the Gorbachev phenomenon," amounting to a permanent challenge that in the end pushed systemic change into the collapse of the system. The transnational, intra-bloc, cross-border "demonstration effect" of social movements, political platforms, and state policies accelerated the crystallization and articulation of nonviolent revolutionary consciousness first among the intelligentsia and second

[75] Ibid., 35.
[76] See Mark Kramer, Chapter 6 in this volume.
[77] Mark Kramer, "The Collapse" (part 1), 180.

within the population at large. Contrasting with earlier crises in the socialist camp, during the 1989–1991 events people both knew what was being demonstrated and understood the ideas being diffused. Mark Kramer appositely points to the fact that this situation fostered parallels, analogies, and contagiousness among those mobilized in the revolutionary process. The "tightness" of the socialist camp, which had earlier kept it together under circumstances of a Soviet interventionist regime, now proved the catalyst for the lightning speed of change and for the flux of ideas about it:

> Having begun as a largely unidirectional phenomenon in 1986–1988, the spillover became bidirectional in 1989 but then shifted back to a unidirectional pattern in 1990–1991. Unlike in 1986–1988, however, the direction of the spillover in 1990–1991 was mainly *from* Eastern Europe *into* the Soviet Union. . . . The paradox of the changes that occurred under Gorbachev is that, from 1989 on, this same structure *facilitated* rather than impeded the spread of political unrest and democratizing influences from Eastern Europe into the USSR – the very sorts of influences that eventually undermined the Soviet regime and the Soviet state.[78]

Revisionist intellectuals who had done so much to subvert the ideological façade of communist regimes ultimately abandoned their illusions about the reformability of the system from within the ruling party. In the context of the density of the Soviet–East European environment, their apostasy created the premises for seeing democracy beyond any arrangement that a revolution from above could bring. They turned instead toward rediscovering the virtues of dialogue and the advantages of civil discourse. Members of the newly born democratic opposition proposed the need to create an alternative form of politics. The Hungarian writer George Konrád spoke of the emergence of antipolitics as a challenge to the apocryphal version of politics embodied by the system: "The ideology of the democratic opposition shares with religion the belief that the dignity of the individual personality (in both oneself and the other person) is a fundamental value not requiring any further demonstration. The autonomy and solidarity of human beings are the two basic and mutually complementary values to which the democratic movement relates other values."[79] Bitter experiences in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia convinced these critics that the crux of the matter was to go beyond the logic of the system. Revisionism's crucial contribution to putting an end to Marxist-Leninist self-satisfaction was undeniable, but its main weakness was the submission to the rules dictated by officialdom. The new radical opponents of totalitarianism saw revisionism as a halfhearted plea for change, regardless of its utterly heretical quality for the regimes' ideological zealots. These writings became esoteric, especially if contrasted with dissident literature, with little appeal to the larger public. But the most important fallacy of

[78] Kramer, "The Collapse" (part 3), 69 and 94. For his discussion of the "demonstration effects" for the Soviet Union, see "The Collapse" (part 2).

[79] George Konrád, *Antipolitics: An Essay* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984), 123.

revisionism was that it generated a criticism that was still encoded in the language of power and in the logic of the Soviet-type dictatorship. There was no doubt, however, that the revisionist ideas of the 1960s catalyzed the emergence of the dissent counterculture. Disenchantment with Marxism was an opportunity to rethink the radical legacy and reassess the commitment to Jacobin ideals of total community.

In the struggle between state and civil society, it was the latter's chance and task to invent a new principle of power that would hold in deep respect the rights and aspirations of the individual. This counter-principle was rooted in the independent life of society, in what Václav Havel aptly called "the power of the powerless."[80] A new epoch came of age. It was the inception of the all-out debunking of the duplicitous infrastructure of communist power. First Solzhenitsyn, then East and Central European dissidents announced their decision to restore the normative value of truth. Rejecting official lies and reinstating truth in its own right turned out to be a more successful strategy than revisionist criticism from within. Dissent in East Central Europe subverted Leninism into oblivion along two trajectories: "the self-conscious creation of a site of resistance" (bearing multiple names, such as "parallel *polis*," "second society," "antipolitics") and "the twin strategies of new evolutionism and non-violence" (e.g., Kuron's "self-limitation" or Kis's "radical reformism").[81] The ultimate goal of communism, overcoming politics in a fully unified body social, the celebrated "leap into the kingdom of freedom," found itself challenged by a moral imperative of political responsibility. Concepts such as central planning, the leading role of the party, the principle of class struggle on the world stage, and the pyramid of soviets were legitimated in terms of historic legitimacy, "a process that was greater than what they, as temporal forms of organization, represented."[82] Gorbachev's implicit acknowledgment that these had not been the correct ways for the CPSU to develop society and his inability to instill trust in and determination within the population that his policies were a legitimate way of mending the errors of the past spelled doom for the Soviet polity. In a sense, Gorbachev wished that the party would recapture its soul in the struggle for the modernization of Soviet political culture but discovered that the times rendered such an endeavor futile. Only when it was too late, in July 1991, at a moment of devastating ideological disarray within the CPSU, did he urge "a decisive break with outmoded ideological dogmas and stereotypes."[83] He failed to look for solutions outside the party. He refused to adopt the roundtable

[80] Havel, *Power of the Powerless*.

[81] Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe: Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (New York: Central European University Press, 2003), 313.

[82] I am further developing Neil Robinson's argument in Neil Robinson, "What Was Soviet Ideology? A Comment on Joseph Schull and an Alternative," *Political Studies* 43:2 (1995), 325–332. See also Neil Robinson, *Ideology and the Collapse of the Soviet System: A Critical History of Soviet Ideological Discourse* (Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, 1995).

[83] Kramer, "The Collapse" (part 2), 11.

strategy – the symbol of the 1989 Central European peaceful revolutions. His was a view of transition to democracy by means of socialism (yet incoherently articulated). But, under circumstances of pluralism, his version was not the only one competing in the public square. It is now obvious that the main strength of communist regimes was their ability to maintain a climate of fear and hopelessness; their main weakness was the failure to muzzle the human mind. I do not underestimate the intrinsic economic problems of these regimes, but their main vulnerability was the failure to generate confidence. Glasnost was an attempt to solve the insolvable, a desperate effort to create a less-suffocating environment without changing the principle of party domination. The upheavals of 1989 and 1991 showed that the fabric was perhaps softer, but the straitjacket remained unchanged, generating the ultimate stand – complete popular systemic rebuke.

IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE AND SYSTEMIC SURVIVAL IN CHINA

China (and perhaps Vietnam, which is emulating Beijing's road to "consultative authoritarianism") seems to defy, to a certain extent, the general diagnostic of the failure of communism in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. The party leadership has emphasized in the past three decades performance legitimacy derived from successful policies of reform based upon a rigorous interpretation of the realities of a lonely communist system in a changing world. Deng taught his successors that practice is the vital criterion of falsifiability for decision making. The one constant dogma of Chinese communism is the monopoly of power by the communist party. In the summer of 1991, after the CPSU had given up its monopoly on politics by means of constitutional change, an article in *People's Daily* was calling for "building a 'great wall of steel against peaceful evolution' in order to protect the country from 'hostile forces' at home and abroad." If such hostile forces win, the commentator article warned, "it would be a 'retrogression of history and a catastrophe for the people.'"[84] Furthermore, in 1994, Deng's successor, Jiang Zemin, achieved the "core" position in the party by reasserting the principle of democratic centralism at the Fourth Plenum of the Fourteenth Central Committee.

In contrast to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (if we consider Gorbachev's ultimate failure to stabilize his leadership position and to preserve his rule), in China, the third generation of communist leadership succeeded in legitimizing its grip over power. In another step aimed at furthering the authority of Jiang Zemin, a volume published in 1996 and entitled *Heart-to-Heart Talks with the General Secretary* analyzed the cause of state socialism collapse in the Soviet Union. Interestingly enough,

[84] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 58.

the authors placed the blame on Brezhnev and not on Gorbachev, as China's leftists were wont to do. Brezhnev-type leaders easily appear in difficult circumstances, the authors argued, but the result of Brezhnev was not eighteen years of "stability" but eighteen years of stagnation. The lesson to be drawn from the experience of Brezhnev is that, without reform, there will indeed be instability.[85]

Indeed, the most important facet of Chinese communism was and still is, to quote Jiang, its capacity to learn that "there is no way out if we study Marxism in isolation and separate and set it against vivid development in real life."[86] The Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Party Congresses have defined the new road taken by China: a socialist market economy regulated by the rule of law.[87] But economic reform and welfare policies are yet to find a consistent counterpart in the political realm (though one must mention the experiment of village elections). The latter area remains the exclusive domain of the party. Jiang Zemin insisted at the Fifth Plenum of the Fourteenth Central Committee in 1995 that

our senior cadres – especially provincial party committee secretaries, provincial governors, ministers, Central Committee members, and members of the CCP Central Committee Politburo – must pay attention to politics. By politics, I mean political direction, political stand, political viewpoints, political discipline, political perception, and political sensitivity. . . . Can we afford not to pay attention to politics, or can we afford to lower our guard and stop fighting when hostile forces in the West want to "Westernize" (*xihua*) and "divide" (*fenhua*) us, and impose their "democracy" and "freedom" on us?[88]

The Chinese Communist Party enhanced its potential for openness in 2000 when Jiang Zemin began the "three represents" campaign. He basically stated that the party, throughout its history, had always represented the most advanced productive forces, the most advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the broad masses. He was taking Deng's "theory of black cat, white cat, whichever cat catches the mice is a good cat" a step further. Moreover, with a striking resemblance to Krushchevite political language, the "three represents" campaign transformed the Chinese Communist Party from a vanguard, proletarian-first party into an "all people's party."

The essential advantage of the decision makers in communist China, as compared to their counterparts in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, was their willingness to "cross swords," for, as one party elder, Wan Li, stated, "If

[85] Ibid., 185.

[86] Jiang Zemin's speech at the Central Party School in late May 1997, quoted in Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 199.

[87] For an example of the functioning of the rule of law as the "the institutional foundation of a market economy and a constitutional government," see Doug Guthrie, *China and Globalization: The Social, Economic and Political Transformation of Chinese Society* (London: Routledge, 2006), 217–255.

[88] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 184.

swords aren't crossed enough, there will not be enough reform?"[89] But undeniably, they have yet to take the bull of political democracy by the horns. The present system in China has at its foundation, besides Deng's vision of reform, the brutal repression in Tiananmen.

China's survival and subsequent prosperity in the aftermath of the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have often given way to triumphalist conclusions on the part of both its leaders and some of the scholarship. Such ambivalences require, however, a rather more cautious assessment. The party's swift crackdown on the authors and signatories of Charter '08 and the imprisonment of the dissident Liu Xiaobo go a long way to revealing the inability of the regime to overcome its Leninist heritage.

COMMUNISM BETWEEN COLLAPSE AND CONTROLLED TRANSFORMATION

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, democratic opposition in Eastern Europe anticipated the latent limits of reformed communism. Their guarded evaluation of Gorbachev's reforms provides insights that seem to ring true for the case of China as well. The Hungarian dissident philosopher G. M. Támás expressed at the time a widespread feeling among East European independents when he refused to consider Gorbachevism as God-sent:

> I don't agree . . . with the complacency of most Western observers, especially now with the advent of Gorbachev, who would confine us within the limits of a mildly reformed communist system where power still lies with the Party, but where some other people can also shout a bit. If people don't have to suffer for their views but nevertheless have no real influence over what happens, the longer such a situation continues the greater the difference develops between words and deeds. We cannot develop a normal life for the future on such a basis.[90]

Or, as the dissident thinker and activist Miklós Haraszti puts it in the afterword of the American edition of his book on artists under socialism: "For decades Hungary has been a textbook model of a pacified post-Stalinist neo-colony. This fact has not been lost on Mr. Gorbachev as he attempts to wrap more velvet on the bars of his prison in order to create a less primitive and more manageable order in the heart of his empire."[91]

Returning to our analysis of the causes of the collapse of communism in the Soviet bloc, one needs to emphasize that the ideological relaxation in both the Soviet Union and East Central Europe allowed for a redistribution of the constellation of power as a consequence of social self-organization. The experience

[89] Quoted in ibid., 200.

[90] "There's More to Politics than Human Rights," an interview with G. M. Támás, *Uncaptive Minds* 1:1 (April–May 1988), 12.

[91] Miklós Haraszti, *The Velvet Prison: Artists under State Socialism* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

of the Workers' Defense Committee (KOR) established in 1976 in Poland demonstrated that a tiny nucleus of committed intellectuals could fundamentally change the posttotalitarian political equation.[92] KOR contributed to the creation of a climate of cooperation between the radical core of the intelligentsia and the militant activists of the working class. Neither a political party nor a traditional trade union, Solidarnosc prefigured a synthesis of nonutopian language for a rational polis and an emancipated community. The pace of reforms in the Soviet Union did have vital importance for the fate of the East European nations. The intensification of dissident activities in the two years before 1989 in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic anticipated the daring, all-out challenge to the regimes. The October 1986 statement signed by dissidents from Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic inaugurated a new chapter in the history of antitotalitarian struggles. It showed that international actions could and should be undertaken to emphasize the values and the goals of the opposition. It was the historical calling of critical intellectuals to counter the strategy of co-optation and assert the primacy of those values that the system was stifling.

At the moment when genuine independent social movements coalesced, intellectuals did provide an articulate program for political change, the exact type of alternative that revisionism had failed to realize. In their seminal volume *Dictatorship over Needs*, Fehér, Heller, and Márkus offer the most straightforward explanation of the demise of Marxism-Leninism:

> A social order is legitimated if at least one part of the population acknowledges it as exemplary and binding and the other part does not confront the existing social order with the image of an alternative one as equally exemplary. Thus the relative number of those legitimating a system may be irrelevant if the non-legitimating masses are merely dissatisfied.[93]

Again, the Chinese case reinforces our argument that a communist regime's preservation in power depends on its ability to set and control the agenda of the dominant themes that define the public discourse. In other words, its survival, first and foremost, hinges on the monopoly over the language of politics (of course, other factors matter, such as monopoly of violence, economic reform, international context). In China, after Tiananmen,

> the prospect of governmental collapse and social chaos, the object lesson provided by the economic decline in Eastern Europe and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union, a newfound respect for the complexity of reform and state building, and (especially after 1993) a new sense of nationalism – as well as the costs of continuing

[92] Jan Jósef Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976–1981* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[93] Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, and György Márkus, *Dictatorship over Needs: An Analysis of Soviet Societies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 137.

opposition – inclined many intellectuals to be more tolerant and even supportive of government efforts.[94]

Intellectuals in China have lost the role of models/beacons of ethical and political reform. Since the 1990s, they seem to have opted for what I would label *technocratic revisionism*. That is, they have taken the long road through institutions, not in the direction of subversion, but rather in the sense of affecting the policy agenda of socialist transformation. This situation has allowed the regime to survive, though the possibility of internal erosion and disintegration of the sociopolitical organization of the society remains very much alive.

As we have seen, North Korea preferred to "muddle through" rather than choose the path of reform.[95] At the same time, the totalitarian nature of the regime makes opposition or dissidence close to impossible. As Scott Snyder remarked,

> The defection of Hwang Jang Yop, who has proved to be a bitter critic of Kim Jong Il, may illustrate the limits of internal criticism within the North Korean political system. That a senior figure such as Hwang Jang Yop found himself with no choice but to abandon his position within North Korea's current political structure may be an indicator of the limits of dissent within North Korean society.[96]

Kim Jong Il opted for autarky, desolation, and terror in order to salvage his regime at a time of crisis of communism. The only solution of systemic change seems to be that of succession, in the sense that a possible vacuum of power in the interim years can open the door to opposition, dissent, or revisionism. Recently, Chang Yong Seok, research director at the Institute for Peace Affairs in Seoul, gave the following evaluation of the potential breach that succession can create for a totalitarian system: "If a new generation of leaders comes in, this is not a bad thing. They could be less bound by ideology and more pragmatic about opening up."[97] North Korea is, to quote the former South Korean Vice Minister for Unification, Song Dae Sung, a case of "stability within instability."[98] Despite growing and deepening systemic problems, the communist elite remains in full control. But the future dimensions of the crises that will inevitably hit the country and the communist party will most probably prove at some point fatal for this dynastic, totalitarian regime.

[94] Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 165.

[95] Marcus Noland, "Why North Korea Will Muddle Through," *Foreign Affairs* 76:4 (July–August 1997), 105–118.

[96] Scott Snyder, "North Korea's Challenge of Regime Survival: Internal Problems and Implications for the Future," *Pacific Affairs* 73:4 (Winter 2000–2001), 517–533.

[97] Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea Takes Steps to Extend Dynastic Rule," *New York Times*, September 2, 2010, A8.

[98] Snyder, "North Korea's Challenge," 533.

CONCLUSION

Communist regimes disappeared because they lost their hierocratic credentials. Moreover, their ritualized hegemony was successfully challenged by the reinvention of politics brought about by dissent. The existence of an alternative in a space previously dominated by myth and ideology triggered a process of individual and collective self-determination. The logic of consent, of emancipation within "ideocratic" limits, was replaced by a logic of revolt and freedom.

The communist project of modernity oriented toward "an integrated accumulation of wealth, power, and knowledge" while relying on the "embedded phantasm of a shortcut to affluence through total social mobilization"[99] was rejected on moral grounds. The crystallization of a critical theory focusing on subjectivity and negativity reasserted the central position of the human being in the symbolic economy of Central and Eastern European politics. Ironically, the Soviet pronouncement "Either we destroy revisionism or it will destroy us!" now seems stunningly clairvoyant. Thanks to critical intellectuals, relying on the tradition and the grounds set up by revisionist Marxism, revolts ultimately morphed into revolutions.

[99] Johann P. Arnason, "Communism and Modernity," *Daedalus* 129:1 (Winter 2000), 61–90.

4

Ideological Introversion and Regime Survival

North Korea's "Our-Style Socialism"

Charles K. Armstrong

On October 3, 2010, the (North) Korean Workers' Party newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* dedicated a signed article to the twentieth anniversary of Kim Jong Il's essay "The Workers' Party of Korea Organizes and Guides all the Victories of Our People."[1] Appearing a few days after the KWP (Korean Workers' Party) Delegates' Conference – the first major party meeting to be held in thirty years, at which Kim Jong Il's son, Kim Jong Un, emerged as heir apparent – the article stressed ideological purity and generational continuity with a hammering force:

> What is important among the undying exploits of Kim Jong Il is that he has developed the WPK [Workers' Party of Korea] into an ideologically pure party equipped with the revolutionary idea of President Kim Il Sung, the Juche idea, invincible militant ranks united as firm as a rock around the headquarters of the revolution and an experienced and tested guiding force advancing the Songun revolution to victory.
>
> The WPK is demonstrating its might as an ideologically pure party guided by the monolithic idea, the revolutionary idea of President Kim Il Sung. Only Juche type blood is running in the veins of all its members and they are advancing along the road indicated by the Juche idea no matter which way the wind may blow. This is the real picture of the WPK.
>
> The whole party has become an organizationally and ideologically integral whole as its all members are united as firm as rock around the Party Central Committee headed by Kim Jong Il and integral body for action and the most elite vanguard ranks transparent in ideology and faith and strong in the sense of organization, unity and militancy. This is the ever-victorious WPK.

This strange, archaic language, seemingly so out of place in the second decade of the twenty-first century, is typical of North Korea. Of all the Marxist-Leninist

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[1] Korean Central News Agency, October 3, 2010.

regimes that survived the "collapse of communism," North Korea has been the most resistant to reform and the most adamant about ideological purity. Even compared to Cuba, to say nothing of its quasi-capitalist neighbors China and Vietnam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has insisted on its own unique path to "socialism": in 1994, Kim Jong Il defiantly declared that "socialism is a science" and would ultimately triumph despite setbacks in certain parts of the world.[2] North Korea, the new "hermit kingdom" – as Korea had been nicknamed by Westerners in the late nineteenth century – retreated into its ideological shell. North Korea's response to the shocking loss of like-minded regimes and allies was stubborn adherence to its old ways, alone against the world if necessary. This self-reliant, sui generis posture is what I call in this chapter "ideological introversion." For better or worse, it has worked. North Korea has defied twenty years of predictions in the West, South Korea, and Japan that regime collapse was imminent. Despite economic catastrophe and a recurrent confrontation with the United States and other countries over its nuclear program, an ideologically introverted North Korean regime remains in power more than two decades after communism disappeared from its European heartland. Even North Korea's ruling family has not changed, as it now moves forward under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, grandson of the founding leader, Kim Il Sung.

The collapse of communist regimes in Europe, especially the loss of the USSR as North Korea's main source of trade and economic assistance, contributed to the political isolation and economic near-collapse of the DPRK. But in terms of ideology, it reinforced a trend long under way toward "going it alone" in North Korea's domestic and foreign policy. From the late 1960s onward North Korean media had emphasized the concept of *juche*, often translated as "self-reliance," in all areas of political, economic, and social activity. Juche was in turn closely linked to the leadership and ideas of the founding leader, Kim Il Sung. The DPRK Constitution of 1972, the first version of the Constitution to institutionalize "Juche thought," declared North Korea to be "the socialist motherland of Juche which has applied the idea and leadership of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung." No mention of Marxism appeared in this or subsequent constitutional revisions in 1992 and 1998. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Juche was supplemented by the concept of "Military-First Politics" (*Songun chongch'i*), closely associated with Kim Jong Il just as Juche had been identified with his father, Kim Il Sung. Although sometimes seen as a new "ruling ideology," Songun did not replace Juche entirely in North Korea propaganda. Rather, Songun appeared to be a more military-oriented version of Juche. This was a response to the precarious international position of the DPRK in the post–Cold War era, the need for Kim Jong Il to consolidate power after the death of his father in 1994, and the subsequent economic crisis of the late 1990s. Unlike

[2] Kim Jong Il, "Socialism Is a Science." http://www.korea-dpr.com/lib/106.pdf (accessed September 17, 2011). Kim's essay was originally published in *Rodong Sinmun*, November 4, 1994.

China and Vietnam, North Korea coped with the collapse of communism not through reform and opening but by the opposite path: battening down the hatches, reaffirming central control, and stressing a highly defensive nationalism against a hostile region and world. A reform path was deemed too risky, because it would open North Korea to the possibility of a "hostile takeover" by South Korea. The collapse of East Germany, absorbed into its capitalist rival and fraternal state, was a chilling precedent for North Korea. As the North Korean leadership saw it, the downfall of East European communism was the direct result of materialist corruption and the erosion of ideology. Reform was the root of the problem, not the path to a solution. The legitimacy of the North Korean state was delinked from the fate of global communism and from near-term economic betterment in the lives of ordinary North Korean people. Nationalism, the military, and the Kim family have been the three pillars of North Korean regime legitimacy since the end of the Cold War.

In the 1990s, after the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe, North Korea frequently evoked the slogan *urisik sahoejuui*, "our-style socialism" or "socialism of our style." On the surface, "our-style socialism" might be reminiscent of Deng Xiaoping's "socialism with Chinese characteristics," a slogan that gave communist party legitimacy to market reform in the 1980s. But the content of "our-style socialism" was unclear. On the one hand, the slogan clearly suggested North Korea's political system was not of the same family as Eastern Europe's and would not suffer the same fate. On the other hand, the term neither promoted nor precluded the possibility that North Korea might engage to some degree with the global capitalist economy. Largely interchangeable with Juche, "our-style socialism" was a potentially flexible concept, and North Korea in the 1990s and early 2000s greatly expanded its political and economic ties with the capitalist West and embarked on limited economic reform, while insisting on unwavering adherence to Juche. The DPRK maintained that fidelity to *Juche Sasang* (Juche ideology or thought) was the sine qua non of the regime. In practice, however, the core principle of Juche was not economic autarky, but political self-determination and freedom from outside control. In this sense, "our-style socialism" was not so much Marxist-Leninist, perhaps not even socialist, as it was nationalist. "Our-style socialism" was a defensive attempt at national identity mobilization, the legitimation of an incomplete nation-state that found itself besieged by stronger external powers as well as a powerful competitor for national legitimacy in the form of the Republic of Korea in the South. The dilemma North Korea faced in the post–Cold War era was that its legitimacy was based on the guiding principle of Juche and "socialism," however they were defined, yet at the same time the DPRK had little choice but to seek assistance from the capitalist West and even from South Korea in order to salvage its economy – a move that could undermine the northern regime's very raison d'etre. By the beginning of the new millennium, North Korea had weathered the storm of communist collapse and economic disaster under the leadership of Kim Jong Il and the new slogan of "Military-First

Politics." But by the end of the first decade of the 2000s, even relatively minor attempts at reform and opening had been scaled back, and the regime based its security less on engagement with the West and South Korea than on Chinese economic support and the development of nuclear weapons. To some extent, the political and economic systems of the North had gained new regional and global connections. Ideologically, however, North Korea was as introverted as ever.

A HISTORY OF DEVIANCE

North Korea has long been an outlier in the communist world. As early as the beginning of the 1960s, observers from Soviet-aligned states in Eastern Europe complained of North Korea's "deviation" from Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. This deviation was most troublingly expressed in the cult of personality surrounding the supreme leader Kim Il Sung and the strident Korean nationalism that accompanied it. For example, the East German embassy in Pyongyang reported in March 1961 that in the DPRK,

> party propaganda is not oriented toward studying the works of Marxism- Leninism, but rather is solely and completely oriented toward the "wise teachings of our glorious leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung."... Dogmatism in the Korean Workers' Party is closely linked to mystical ideas of Confucianism, which extend to certain nationalist tendencies.[3]

Although "mystical ideas of Confucianism" may not have been quite accurate, the East German analysis pointed correctly to the East Asian basis of the familial cult, strongly linked to nationalism, a trait North Korea shared with China – another "deviant" in the communist world– as well as with (North) Vietnam. The three East Asian communist regimes also shared a similar emphasis on ideological indoctrination and "correct" thought leading to proper economic and social relations, rather than the other way around, as one might expect in a Marxist, materialist framework. Of course, Marxist-Leninist regimes all depended on ideology and information control when neither coercion nor material incentives were sufficient. As Katherine Verdery argues in her work on socialist Romania, such regimes appear to be strong but in certain respects are actually quite weak: in terms of efficiency, in terms of dependence on unreliable local actors to implement central policies, and in terms of the internalization of official ideology among ordinary citizens. Such weaknesses, Verdery suggests, require these states to rely extensively on normative or "symbolic-ideological" strategies of control,[4] what in North Korea is called *sasang*, or "thought."

[3] Embassy of the German Democratic Republic in the DPRK, Report, March 14, 1961. Federal Republic of Germany, Federal Archives, Archives of Party and Mass Organizations of the German Democratic Republic (SAPMO-BA), DY 30, IV 2/20/137.

[4] Katherine Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism: A Prologue to the 'Transition,'" *American Ethnologist* 18:3 (August 1991), 419–439.

This emphasis on ideology in North Korea may have derived from Soviet-style socialism, but it was reinforced by the deep-rooted values of education and moral guidance inherent in Korea's neo-Confucian tradition. Moreover, the content of North Korea's official ideology has always mixed socialist ideas with homegrown Korean nationalism, with a noticeable shift in emphasis to the latter after the Korean War in the 1950s. Like its counterparts in China and Vietnam, the ideology of North Korean state socialism has much greater grounding in popular nationalism than was the case for Soviet-dominated states in Eastern Europe. Although both Marxism-Leninism and nationalism coexisted in North Korean ideology from the beginning of the regime, as the regime evolved, the language of socialism became increasingly sidelined (or absorbed) by the language of nationalism.

Kim Il Sung's first known reference to Juche was in a speech in December 1955, although later North Korean texts claimed that the idea originated in Kim's anti-Japanese guerrilla days of the 1930s. While in foreign analyses this term is most often associated with economic matters, it is significant that Kim's original Juche speech was concerned with ideological work.[5] Much more than a slogan for economic self-reliance, Juche has been the preeminent expression of North Korea's emphasis on the ideological over the material, thought over matter, superstructure over base. Portrayed as a supplement to and an improvement on Marxism-Leninism, Juche in effect reversed the historical materialism of Marx. Rather than superstructural transformation resulting from changes in relations of production, in North Korean official ideology "thought revolution" is the first step in transforming individuals and society, out of which "correct" political organization, and finally increased economic production, will emerge.[6]

As a philosophical concept and political principle, Juche has often been rather vague, at times nearly indefinable, but at its core Juche reflects a deep sense of Korean nationalism – "putting Korea first." Kim Il Sung's 1955 speech emphasized the need to know Korea's unique history, geography, and culture in order "to educate our people in a way that suits them and to inspire in them an ardent love for their native place and their motherland."[7] Everyone must "have *juche*," which does not mean that individuals themselves are "self-reliant" (although the term may imply flexibility and adaptation to local circumstances), but on the contrary that individuals submerge their separate identities into the collective subjectivity of the Korean nation.

The term itself is not unique to the DPRK; Koreans from the early twentieth-century nationalist Shin Ch'aeho to the South Korean president Park Chung Hee have used the term Juche (also romanized *chuch'e*) to refer to the national subjectivity, political independence, and self-identity of the Korean people.

[5] Kim Il Sung, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work," in Kim, *Works*, vol. 9 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 395–417.

[6] See Bruce Cumings, "Corporatism in North Korea," *Journal of Korean Studies* 4 (1983), 269–294.

[7] Kim, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism," 396.

Juche or *Juchesong* ("Jucheness") was often used in contradistinction to *Sadae*, or "serving the great," the traditional Confucian expression for Korea's subordinate relationship to China. Sadae was the antithesis of the independence advocated by Korean nationalists from the late nineteenth century onward.[8] In the DPRK of the 1960s, as North Korea navigated its way through the treacherous shoals of the Sino-Soviet split, Juche became the key concept for an increasing range of activities and was portrayed as an original North Korean contribution to revolutionary ideology as well as a model for other emerging Third World societies to emulate. At a speech in Indonesia in 1965, during his first official visit outside the communist bloc, Kim Il Sung declared, "Juche in ideology, independence in politics, self-sustenance in the economy, and self-defense in national defense – this is the stand our Party has consistently adhered to."[9] In 1972, as mentioned previously, Juche became official orthodoxy when it entered the DPRK Constitution. In 1997, three years after the death of Kim Il Sung, North Korea established a new "Juche Calendar" based on the birth year of Kim Il Sung, 1912. Thus, the year 2011 is "Juche 100," the centenary (by East Asian reckoning, which adds a year at birth) of Kim Il Sung's birth. In this way the elder Kim, who was declared the "Eternal President" in 1998, became fully identified with Juche, while his son was becoming associated with the new principle of Songun, which will be discussed later. The Juche Calendar is of course unique to North Korea, further reflecting the DPRK's post–Cold War ideological introversion.

The nationalism at the heart of Juche has its antecedents in the resistance to foreign intrusion and domination since the nineteenth century, a resistance portrayed positively by the DPRK even if the Confucian leaders of that resistance are decried as "feudal" and "reactionary." The DPRK state has incorporated this antiimperialist nationalism into its justification for legitimacy and fused it with the life, person, and family of Kim Il Sung. In turn, the Kim Il Sung cult, especially after Kim's eldest son, Kim Jong Il, became heir apparent in 1980, incorporated traditional Korean concepts of paternalism and hereditary rule into an image of leadership originally derived from Stalin and heavily influenced by Mao. By the end of the Cold War period, family rule was too entrenched in the North Korean system to allow a viable alternative for regime legitimacy. By 2008, the transition to third-generation Kim family rule was under way, and at the end of 2011 Kim Jong Un was officially pronounced "Supreme Leader of the Party, the Army, and the Military," after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il.

Antiimperialist nationalism, Marxist-Leninist socialism, and hereditary leadership succession uniquely converged in the DPRK. At the same time, the centrality of ideology itself became a key factor in North Korea's regime

[8] Michael Robinson, "National Identity and the Thought of Shin Ch'ae-ho: *Sadaejuui* and *Chuch'e* in History and Politics," *Journal of Korean Studies*, no. 5 (1984), 121–142.

[9] Kim Il Sung, *On Juche in Our Revolution* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1977), 428–429.

legitimacy under the rise of Kim Jong Il in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. From the beginning of his ascension until his formal assumption of power in the late 1990s, the younger Kim was most often associated with ideology and culture, secondarily with domestic politics, and only rarely with economic and foreign policy questions. Kim's first official position, shortly after he graduated from Kim Il Sung University in 1964, was with the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Korean Workers' Party. The majority of Kim Jong Il's writings were concerned with sociocultural issues, and all of his major pronouncements in the first several years after his father's death focused on domestic politics and ideology. In particular, Kim Jong Il was long identified with cultural production, especially movies.[10] This is due in part to his own apparent fondness for films, as well as to the importance placed in North Korea on mass culture – especially cinema – as a means of ideological indoctrination.[11] More importantly, North Korea's stress on culture and ideology, and their identification with the second-generation Great Leader, is consistent with the regime's emphasis on ideological correctness and the primacy of "thought" in politics. In the aftermath of the East European communist collapse, Kim Jong Il said repeatedly that ideology takes precedence over material concerns, and that communism failed in Eastern Europe precisely because of ideological corruption and pro-Western materialism.[12]

Ideological centrality is in turn linked to the hereditary succession and its overtones of filial piety: as a dutiful son, Kim Jong Il was expected to carry on his father's legacy of Juche and not deviate from the ideological line that both Kims espoused for decades. The "legacy" (*yuhun*) of Kim Il Sung thought became the touchstone for North Korean politics after the leader's death. Unlike in the Soviet Union after Stalin or China after Mao, Kim Jong Il could not reject his predecessor's line, much less condemn him as Khrushchev did Stalin in 1956. Nor was there a North Korean "Gang of Four" that could serve as scapegoats for the mistakes and failed policies of the Great Leader. The very stability and continuity of the leadership make a radical break with the past extremely difficult to justify. Carrying on his father's legacy, or "rule by the last will and testament" (*yuhun t'ongch'i*), was the very basis of Kim Jong Il's leadership, and presumably will be for Kim Jong Un as well.[13]

The maintenance of ideological uniformity in the DPRK has been aided by an atmosphere of constant external threat since the Korean War, which has enabled a continuous mobilization of the society. With the even more beleaguered siege mentality of the 1990s, the DPRK's emphasis on Juche and the Kim cult (even

[10] See, for example, Kim Jong Il, *On the Art of the Cinema* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973).

[11] Yi U-yong, "Kim Chongiil's [Kim Jong Il's] Image as Reflected in North Korean Movies," *Shin Tong-a*, September 1994, translated in FBIS-EAS, October 19, 1994, 40–46.

[12] Kim Jong Il, "Giving Priority to Ideological Work Is Essential for Accomplishing Socialism," *Pyongyang Times*, July 1, 1995, 1.

[13] Jae-Cheon Lim, *Kim Jong Il's Leadership of North Korea* (London: Routledge, 2009), 106.

without the physical presence of the founding leader) became more pronounced than ever. Nor did economic difficulty lead to the abandonment or deemphasis of ideology in the DPRK, as a "pragmatic" approach would have suggested. This does not mean North Korea behaved irrationally; rather, as Verdery's thesis about regime weakness and reliance on normative control mechanisms would suggest, there seems to be an *inverse* relationship between economic performance and the intensity of ideological rhetoric in North Korea. It was precisely when the economy began to slow down in the mid-1960s that Juche reached new heights of dominance, and it was with the economic crisis of the 1990s that "our-style socialism" became a common slogan. In contrast, as Tismaneanu's chapter in this volume argues, most Eastern European regimes were suffering ideological erosion since the 1960s and could not reinvigorate their ideological appeal in the 1970s and 1980s, when severe economic problems emerged.[14]

THE POST–COLD WAR CRISIS

North Korea's economic crisis of the 1990s was decades in the making. The North's economic difficulties were partly due to the structural inefficiencies and diminishing returns faced by all maturing centrally planned economies, partly due to diversion of resources to the military, and partly due to a decline in Soviet and other foreign assistance. After extremely impressive rates of industrialization and GNP growth in the late 1950s and early 1960s, North Korea was surpassed by South Korea in economic growth sometime in the early 1970s – 1973 to be precise, according to CIA estimates.[15] According to Eastern European analysts with a close knowledge of the DPRK, the loss of aid from the socialist bloc after the end of post–Korean War reconstruction in the early 1960s, combined with the decision to divert vast resources to military buildup a few years later (the policy of "equal emphasis" on the civilian and military economies), precipitated economic slowdown as early as the mid-1960s.[16] In the context of the growing conflict in Indochina, the consolidation of military rule in South Korea, and the deepening Sino-Soviet split, Kim Il Sung spoke of the need "to turn the whole country into an impregnable fortress" against American imperialism.[17] Military defense took an ever-increasing portion of the national budget, draining precious

[14] Tismaneanu, Chap. 3 in this volume.

[15] United States Central Intelligence Agency, *Korea: The Economic Race between North and South* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978).

[16] According to U.S. and South Korean intelligence estimates, North Korean military spending nearly tripled between 1965 and 1967. See Byung Chul Koh, *The Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 59. Karoly Fendler, a Hungarian diplomat stationed in Pyongyang in the 1960s, suggests that militarization in the mid-1960s was the turning point, after which North Korea's economy would never fully recover. Author's interview with Dr. Fendler, July 22, 2002 (Budapest, Hungary).

[17] Ralph N. Clough, *Embattled Korea: The Rivalry for International Support* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 50.

resources from the civilian economy at the very moment when South Korea was embarking on a new path of industrialization under the leadership of General Park Chung Hee. Thus the North Korean economy began slowing down just as the South Korean economy, after two decades of corruption and stagnation, began to take off.

In the early 1970s North Korea began looking to the West for help in alleviating its economic difficulties, purchasing technology and whole plants from Japan and Western Europe. Unfortunately for North Korea, the timing of its outward economic expansion was not good, occurring just before the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil shock of 1973 and the resulting global downturn. Soon North Korea was having difficulty repaying its loans from Japanese and European banks and firms. By mid-1975, according to U.S. intelligence estimates, North Korea was some $200–300 million in arrears. The DPRK soon had the dubious distinction of being the first communist country to default on its debts to the West.[18] The result of North Korea's enthusiastic borrowing was not economic reinvigoration but a substantial foreign debt that the DPRK was unable to repay: by 1989 North Korea had defaulted on some $5 billion in foreign debts to Western and Japanese interests. North Korea's unpaid debt to the Soviet Union was not much less.[19] By the beginning of the 1990s, North Korea's economic difficulties were becoming acute, and the country was in urgent need of acquiring foreign currency, updating its physical plant, and improving its infrastructure. These internal difficulties were compounded considerably by the loss of major sources of trade and economic assistance after the communist collapse in Eastern Europe and the USSR. During the first half of the 1990s, North Korea's economy shrank by an average of 5 percent per annum, according to outside estimates, and by mid-decade its per capita GNP had fallen to one-tenth that of the South.[20] Finally, an unrelenting series of natural disasters, including flooding in 1995 and 1996 and a severe drought in 1997, pushed North Korea into a severe famine. Estimates of the death toll from the 1995–1998 famine vary widely, but the number of famine-related deaths was certainly in the hundreds of thousands, if not millions.[21]

North Korea had quietly turned to the United Nations for food aid as early as 1993. In the full-blown famine of the late 1990s (which the DPRK

[18] Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum, "North Korean Payments Problem with the West," June 1975. CREST, CIA-RDP86T00608R000600050021–9. Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration.

[19] Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea and the Non-Communist World," in Chong-Sik Lee and Se-Hee Yoo, eds., *North Korea in Transition* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1991), 34.

[20] See Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, "Country Studies: North Korea," http://countrystudies.us/north-korea/46.htm (accessed November 10, 2010).

[21] Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid and Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

euphemistically called a "food shortage") North Korea became one of the world's largest recipients of bilateral and multilateral food aid, with the bulk of assistance from China, South Korea, Japan, and the United States. North Korea had become dependent on aid from some of its avowed enemies for its very survival. But while economic factors pushed the DPRK toward engaging with the West, political and military concerns reinforced its isolation and militarism. When North Korea emerged from what it called the "Arduous March" of famine in 1998, Kim Jong Il was established as the supreme leader and the DPRK faced both a South Korea (under Kim Dae Jung) and a United States (under Clinton) that seemed willing to engage positively with the North. Economic decline had been arrested, at least temporarily; according to Seoul's Bank of Korea estimates, the DPRK economy grew 6.2 percent in 1999, its first increase in a decade, followed by a more modest 1.3 percent growth in 2000.[22] At the turn of the millennium, North Korea appeared to be breaking out of its international isolation and ready to embark on significant internal economic reform.

In June 2000, the leaders of North and South Korea held the first summit meeting in the history of the divided nation. This was preceded by an unprecedented flurry of diplomatic activities directed toward Western countries, beginning with the normalization of ties with Italy in January 2000. Within two years, Pyongyang had established diplomatic relations with all but two of the European Union member states, the EU itself, Canada, Australia, the Philippines, Brazil, and New Zealand. In July 2000, with Seoul's encouragement, North Korea joined the ASEAN Regional Forum for intra-Asian security dialogue. North Korea also attempted to mend fences with Russia, and in 2001 Kim Jong Il visited both China and Russia, his first official visits abroad as North Korean leader. On the economic front, there were strong signs of reform – including the use of the heretofore forbidden word "reform" itself – in the first two to three years of the new millennium. For nearly a decade before that there were indications of liberalization and the growth of local markets in the North Korean economy, what one American observer calls "reform by stealth."[23] In January 2001 *Rodong Sinmun* announced a policy of "New Thinking" (*Saeroun kwanjom*) that called for scrapping outmoded habits and mentalities and putting all efforts into the technological reconstruction of North Korea.[24] The sixtieth birthday celebration of Kim Jong Il in February 2002 and the ninetieth anniversary of Kim Il Sung's birth in April were further occasions for the DPRK media to exhort the people to work harder and focus on the

[22] Cited in Ralph C. Hassig and Kongdan Oh, "The New North Korea," in Hassig and Oh, eds., *Korea Briefing 2000–2002: First Steps toward Reconciliation and Reunification* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 79–110, at 90.

[23] Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 25.

[24] *Rodong Sinmun*, January 9, 2001, 1.

development of science and technology. Whether these well-worn techniques of socialist moral exhortation will help North Korea move technologically into the twenty-first century remains to be seen.

At the beginning of July 2002 the DPRK began to institutionalize some of the most far-reaching economic changes since the regime was founded in 1948.[25] The food distribution system on which much of the population had depended (at least until the famine of the 1990s) was reduced and modified; the price of rice was raised to near-market levels, and wages were correspondingly increased as much as thirtyfold; the official exchange rate for the North Korean won was reduced from 2.2 to the dollar to nearly 200 won, approaching the black market rate; the taxation system, abolished in 1974, was revived.[26] These changes emerged out of "New Thinking," which emphasized ideological and economic flexibility, industrial restructuring, and a focus on computers and information technology.[27] In order to accomplish this, the famously isolated DPRK demonstrated a new willingness to learn from the outside world: in 2002, North Korea sent nearly five hundred government officials and students abroad to study technical subjects, economics, and business, almost triple the number Pyongyang sent in 2000.[28]

However, by the middle of the decade, North Korea began to backtrack on reform. Or rather, the state removed its imprimatur from the economic changes that had largely arisen from below, in response to the failure of the state to meet the basic needs of its people after the disaster of the 1990s.[29] The reforms of July 2002 reflected not so much an attempt to effect market change from above, as in China in the 1970s, as the effort to control reform already under way. However, officially sanctioned reform had unexpected consequences, not least of which was the emergence of a newly affluent group – potentially a nascent middle class – not dependent on the state, similar to groups that began to emerge in China and Vietnam in the 1990s. In November 2009 the DPRK announced a new currency that would in effect wipe out the financial gains made by private entrepreneurship over the previous decade. The regime seemed determined to stop the disease of individualism from spreading and restore North Korea to

[25] For an analysis of the mixed results of these reform measures, see Christopher D. Hale, "Real Reform in North Korea? The Aftermath of the July 2002 Economic Measures," *Asian Survey* 45:6 (November/December 2005), 823–842.

[26] "North Korea Undergoing Economic Reform," *Chosun Ilbo*, July 26, 2002; "Stitch by Stitch to a Different World," *Economist*, July 27, 2002, 24–26.

[27] "Let Us Examine and Solve All Problems from a New Perspective and Position," *Rodong Sinmun*, January 9, 2001, 1.

[28] Nam Kwang-sik, "One Year of a 'New Way of Thinking,'" *Vantage Point* 24:2 (February 2002), 10–15, at 10.

[29] As Tsai argues in this volume, similar bottom-up innovations emerged in China in the early 1980s. However, in contrast to North Korea, the Chinese leadership initially tolerated and eventually fully supported adaptive informal institutions that led to the emergence of a large number of private entrepreneurs. See Tsai, Chap. 8 in this volume.

ideological orthodoxy.[30] It is difficult to say with certainty what motivated the regime to take these steps, but presumably the leadership felt their position threatened by the emergence of a budding and potentially independent entrepreneurial class. North Korea's brief attempt to turn outward was deemed too risky to continue. Instead, North Korea once again turned inward.

NORTH KOREA'S NONCOLLAPSE

In retrospect, it should not have been surprising that North Korea would not simply repeat the experience of communist collapse in Eastern Europe. North Korea was quite different from East European communist states in several respects. First, the DPRK was not a pure Soviet creation like the "satellites" in Europe, lacking domestic legitimacy and depending on the Soviet military for survival, and therefore was not likely to go the way of East Germany, Poland, Hungary, or Bulgaria when the Soviet Union withdrew its support. The collapse of communist Mongolia, the first Soviet satellite and the one true Soviet dependency in Asia, makes the contrast with North Korea even more clear. Although the DPRK began under Soviet auspices in the aftermath of World War II, since at least the Korean War, North Korea has exhibited a combination of populist nationalism and revolutionary socialism much more akin to the regimes in Beijing and Hanoi than to those of East Berlin, Warsaw, or Prague. Second, the "domino effect" that toppled even the more nationalistic and indigenous communist regimes of Yugoslavia, Romania, and Albania was absent in East Asia – again with Mongolia, the only true Soviet satellite in Asia, as the exception that proved the rule.[31] If the People's Republic of China had collapsed, an event that did not seem entirely impossible at the time of the Tiananmen incident in 1989, North Korea might very well have gone with it. But the PRC weathered the 1989 crisis, and the DPRK did as well. Third, economic crisis alone would not necessarily lead to the demise of the DPRK. A combination of political centralization, existing if somewhat weakened social control mechanisms, and a highly indoctrinated populace largely isolated from outside information enabled the North Korean regime to survive beyond the rupture of 1989–1991 and into the twenty-first century. Foreign assistance helped alleviate famine conditions and stabilize the economy, enabling North Korea to survive its "Arduous March" without substantial change in its political or economic systems. North Korea dealt with its crisis through neither

[30] Ruediger Frank, "Currency Reform and Orthodox Socialism in North Korea," Nautilus Institute Policy Forum Online 09–092A, December 3, 2009, http://www.nautilus.org/publications/essays/napsnet/forum/2009-2010/09092Frank.html (accessed September 17, 2011). See also Andrei Lankov, "Staying Alive: Why North Korea Will Not Change," *Foreign Affairs* 87:2 (March/April 2008), 9–16.

[31] For more on the Mongolian case, see Morris Rossabi, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

significant reform nor dramatic collapse, but rather by "muddling through."[32] It continues to do so.

In any case, the collapse of East European communism showed no direct correspondence between economic crisis and political collapse. Relatively well-to-do Hungary shook off communist rule as quickly as did destitute Albania. Historically, the periods of greatest economic hardship and even widespread starvation in the USSR and China, resulting from Stalinist collectivization and the Great Leap Forward, respectively, did not precipitate the collapse of these two states. Long-term economic problems contributed to the political transitions in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union but did not determine their timing. It was not economies that collapsed, but governments, partly but not entirely as a result of economic difficulties. Conversely, regimes have managed to survive severe economic dysfunction in the recent past; Mugabe's Zimbabwe is perhaps the most glaring and tragic example.

North Korea's post–Cold War emphasis on "our-style socialism" was a response to the changing external environment faced by the DPRK after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the establishment of close ties between China and South Korea, and the seemingly unassailable superiority of South Korea over the North in the new world order. The precise content of "our-style socialism" was left vague, except to insist that it was unique, inseparable from the leadership of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, and "people-centered" – exactly what the DPRK had been saying about Juche for decades.[33] A typical editorial statement of the 1990s declared, "The socialism of our style centered upon the masses is developing fully under the refined leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Il by imbuing the whole society with the Juche idea."[34] This "socialism" has little to do with class struggle, economic redistribution, or social equality. It has everything to do with national independence and autonomy, and the primacy of ideas over material circumstances. The article makes this quite explicit: "The ideal of socialism, *the people's idea of independence*, can never be suppressed or destroyed."[35]

With such a definition of North Korean–style socialism, the DPRK media gave extensive coverage to foreign investment and noted approvingly the moves toward improved relations with Japan and the United States. In the mid-1990s, the DPRK media covered with some enthusiasm the new Free Economic and

[32] Marcus Noland, "Why North Korea Will Muddle Through," *Foreign Affairs* 76:4 (July/August 1997), 105–118.

[33] The September 2010 Workers' Party Conference referred to the DPRK with the neologism "People's Regime" (*Inmin Chongkwon*) and made no reference to Marxism or the ultimate goal of communism. See Korean Central News Agency, "Resolution of WPK Conference on Revision of Rules, September 28, 2010," http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm (accessed November 14, 2010).

[34] Ch'oe Chol Nam, "Socialism Unites People with One Mind and Will," *Korea Today*, January 1993, 5.

[35] Ibid. Emphasis added.

Trade Zone (FEZ) in the Rajin-Sonbong area of northeastern North Korea, where the DPRK held its first-ever international investment conference in September 1996.[36] This was especially the case in publications intended for foreigners, such as the English-language Japan-based *People's Korea*.[37] This contradictory stress on economic flexibility, on the one hand, and unswerving ideological uniformity, on the other, may have reflected differences within the leadership on the desirability, extent, and nature of economic reform, as well as differences between pronouncements intended for domestic consumption and those aimed at foreigners. No doubt, the regime would have wanted the best of both worlds: the economic benefits of Western investment and assistance, without any compromise of the existing political system or weakening of the ruling elite. As material circumstances deteriorated, the DPRK increasingly stressed the supremacy of thought over "objective conditions," turning Marx on his head. North Korea's neo-Hegelian Weltanschauung was expressed ever more openly; an article in the 1990s stated that "the decisive factor in the victory of the revolution is not objective and economic conditions. . . .The decisive guarantee for the victory of socialism is *giving precedence to the enhancement of the independent ideological consciousness of the popular masse*."[38] Following this logic, a sufficiently indoctrinated population need not fear the introduction of capitalist means of production so long as those means are kept subordinate to larger collectivist concerns, including the maintenance in power of the current leadership. "Our-style socialism" could, in theory, be compatible with market reform. For a time, North Korea seemed to be preparing for that path.

For example, at a DPRK-sponsored "Juche Seminar" held in Moscow in February 1996, the director-general of the Institute for the Juche Idea, a Japanese by the name of Inoue Shuhachi, quoted Kim Jong Il as saying,

> The Juche idea explains that the motive force of social movement is not the objective conditions, but man himself, not as an isolated individual, but as a socio-political collective united with the common idea of independence.[39]

The complete identification of North Korean ideology with nationalism reflected simultaneously the abandonment of Marxism and a rejection of liberal democracy. In Russia's first post-Soviet decade, Boris Yeltsin treated the DPRK with undisguised contempt, as if it were a relic of the past about to disappear. On the

[36] Andrew Pollack, "Behind North Korea's Barbed Wire: Capitalism," *New York Times*, September 15, 1996.

[37] See for example "Rajin-Sonbong Zone Being Developed as International Economic Center," *People's Korea*, January 20, 1996, 5. This full-page article included names of foreign companies that had sent representatives to visit the zone and boasted that the region would become "an international economic center like Singapore" with "unlimited economic potential." Unfortunately that potential has not yet been realized.

[38] Sin Hyon Sok, "Juche Revolutionary Cause Continues," *Korea Today*, February 1995, 15.

[39] "Keynote Report at International Seminar on the Chuch'e [Juche] Idea in Moscow," translated in FBIS-EAS, February 4, 1996. Emphasis added.

other hand, North Korea's Juche was praised both by diehard Russian communists and by ultranationalists such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky.[40] Upon gaining power, President Vladimir Putin mended fences with North Korea, and in 2000 became the first top Russian or Soviet leader to visit the DPRK. In 2001, Kim Jong Il paid a reciprocal visit to Russia.

The accelerated shift from Marxist orthodoxy to nativist themes was also linked to the death of Kim Il Sung in 1994. One longtime North Korea watcher called this a "shift from the politics of patriarchy to the politics of filial piety."[41] At one level, this meant that Kim Jong Il had to show loyalty to his deceased father's policies and ideas and undergo a long and respectful period of mourning before assuming his official political positions in 1997–1998. The three-year gap between the elder Kim's death and the younger Kim's assumption of power did not reflect a power struggle among the elite. Kim Jong Il's succession had been prepared since the 1970s. Rather, this gap resonated with the traditional three-year mourning period of Korean subjects for their deceased kings, or sons for their fathers.

At a deeper level, after Kim Il Sung's death North Korea sought to situate regime legitimacy more solidly in Korean history, bypassing the historical dead end of Soviet socialism. The media placed greater emphasis on traditional Korean history, virtuous and benevolent leadership, and the central importance of the family to society – including the symbolic and literal lines of paternal descent of the Kim family. Thus, North Korean propaganda focused not just on the actual ancestry of Kim Jong Il, but also on tracing a kind of symbolic ancestry that linked Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung to great leaders of the past – not the communist pantheon of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao, but Korean historical figures, especially dynastic founders such as Wang Kon of Koryo and Yi Song Gye of Choson. This process was already under way before Kim Il Sung's death, with the North Korean "discovery" in 1993 of the alleged remains of Tangun, the mythical progenitor of the Korean race some five thousand years ago.[42]

The family unit became more than ever the metaphor and explicit foundation for regime legitimacy. The family itself had never been under attack in North

[40] Evgeny Bazhanov, "A Russian Perspective on Korean Peace and Security," Nautilus Institute Policy Forum, July 30, 1997. Zhirinovsky called North Korea "a country envied even by Russia, which was once the strongest power, and an oasis for the world." See http://www.nautilus.org/publications/essays/napsnet/forum/security/8a_Bajanov.html (accessed November 10, 2010).

[41] Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "In Search of a New Identity: Revival of Traditional Politics and Modernisation in Post–Kim Il Sung North Korea." Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Working Paper No. 1995/3 (May 1995), 7.

[42] The remains of Tangun and his wife were allegedly discovered near Pyongyang on October 2, 1993, and determined by North Korean archaeologists – with a precision in carbon dating unknown to scientists elsewhere in the world – to be 5,011 years old. Kim Jong Il oversaw the construction of a zigguratlike mausoleum to be built honoring Tangun as "the father of the nation." *Korea Today*, February 1995, 6.

Korea, as it had in the early years of the Soviet Union or China during the Cultural Revolution. Rather, from the beginning of the North Korean regime the family was extolled as the basic "cell" of Korean society.[43] In the post–Cold War years, North Korean publications and media turned toward traditional themes of popular Korean neo-Confucianism: filial piety, respect for elders, and moral education. Needless to say, the DPRK did not refer to neo-Confucianism as its guiding principle in the 1990s and made appropriate references to "revolution" and "socialism" in its pronouncements. But the sentiments behind this modern language were deeply traditional. For example, an article by Kim Jong Il that appeared in *Rodong Sinmun* on Christmas Day 1995 made much use of the phrase "respect for revolutionary elders."[44] The article is suffused with the language of love, benevolence, duty, family, and history. Society is represented as harmonious, indivisible, and centered around the great leader (that is, the deceased Kim Il Sung). The key social value is collectivism, and the recurrent metaphor is the family, in particular the parent-child relationship: the leader is the father, the party is the mother, and the people are the children. The highest duty of the revolutionary is reverence for the leader, and the relationship between "elders" (*hubei*) and "juniors" (*sonbae)* should also be like that between parents and children. "Our-style socialism" is said to mean that the people "love and help one another as one family," and the goal of revolutionaries is to "create a sublime and beautiful model of moral duty arising out of the tradition of anti-Japanese revolution." In short, North Korea was one big family, with the family of the great leader at its apex, embodying the tradition of anti-Japanese struggle and thereby possessing the natural right of leadership. One could hardly find a language more distant from Marxist materialism or Leninist internationalism, nor one more perfectly suited for hereditary rule.

As in his other writings of the time, including "Socialism Is a Science," Kim Jong Il in his *Rodong Sinmun* article argued that Korea followed a unique path very different from that of the failed socialisms of Eastern Europe. Without naming any countries specifically, the article attacks "opportunists, traitors to socialism, and modern revisionists" who have distorted Marxism-Leninism, become tainted by the ideology of bourgeois individualism, and (temporarily) set back the cause of socialism worldwide. The key to maintaining ideological correctness, the loss of which led to the disasters in Eastern Europe and the USSR, is the education of the young. This had long been a prominent theme in North Korean propaganda, at least since Kim Il Sung's speeches in the 1960s. If Eastern Europe was a negative example of youth education, North Korea presented itself – and Kim Jong Il personally – as a model of proper transgenerational indoctrination. "History teaches us," Kim Jong Il writes, "that if the youth

[43] Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), chap. 5.

[44] Kim Jong Il, "Respect for Revolutionary Elders is the Sublime Moral Duty of Revolutionaries," *Rodong Sinmun*, December 25, 1995. Note the phrase "moral duty."

of a socialist society are not properly educated, they cannot grow up believing in revolution, and cannot maintain socialism." In proper Confucian fashion, youth must learn from the experiences of previous generations; school education, social education, and family education must be harmonized; education must have a strong moral element; and young people must behave as "filial sons" (*hyoja*). North Korea's emphasis on morality, respect for leadership and tradition, and "family values" was more than a conservative defense of the communist status quo. The ideology of "our-style socialism" reflected a reformulation of Marxism-Leninism as cultural nationalism and resonated with a long history of Korean defense of neo-Confucian order against the Western incursions of the late nineteenth century. Like the anti-Western Confucian conservatives of nineteenth-century Korea, the North Korean leadership of the 1990s argued that only a moral revitalization of the people could save Korea, the last holdout of civilization (whether Confucian or socialist) against barbarism.[45]

MILITARY-FIRST POLITICS

North Korean ideological discourse shifted again in the new millennium, and the dominant slogan of the 2000s was "Military-First Politics" (*Songun chongch'i*) or sometimes "Military-First Ideology" (*Songun sasang*). North Korea had been a militarized society from the beginning of the regime, but after the collapse of European communism, the newly isolated and defensive DPRK became militarized as never before. This military emphasis was evident immediately after the fall of the USSR, reflected in – among other things – new titles for North Korea's top two leaders. In December 1991 Kim Jong Il assumed North Korea's top military position as head of the Korean People's Army, and on April 20, 1992, he was named "Marshal" (*Wonsu*).[46] Kim Il Sung had been named "Generalissimo" (*Taewonsu*) one week earlier, on April 13. The leadership succession to Kim Jong Il was fully consolidated by April 1992, and the younger Kim – despite his lack of any real military experience – would henceforth be known primarily by his military titles: as commander in chief (*Ch'oego saryonggwan*) in North Korean state media, in popular parlance simply "the General" (*Changgunnim*). Kim Jong Il became chairman of the National Defense Committee in 1993, and his position was reconfirmed in 1998, four years after his father's death. The younger Kim would thus rule North Korea primarily as a military leader.

The term *Songun*, relatively rarely used before, grew in frequency and importance in DPRK media in the years after Kim Il Sung's death. In 1999, *Songun* appeared in the joint New Year's editorial among the three leading newspapers

[45] See Chai-sik Chung, "Confucian Tradition and Nationalist Ideology in Korea," in Kenneth M. Wells, ed., *South Korea's Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 67.

[46] *Rodong Sinmun*, April 21, 1992, 1.

in the DPRK, representing the party, the military, and the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League (North Korea's version of the Soviet Komsomol). In 2003, the New Year's editorial referred for the first time to *Songun sasang*, or Military-First Ideology, implicitly putting Songun on the level of Juche. In one sense, Songun was the logical next step in the evolution of Juche as an ideology of militant nationalism. But more specifically, Songun placed the institutional military as the vanguard of the revolution, replacing the working class. Indeed, the army was now placed above the party: *Rodong Sinmun* announced that North Korea "puts the People's Army, not the working class, to the fore as the main force of the revolution," and "the army is precisely the party, the state and the people."[47] If Juche represented North Korean independence and autonomy, embodied in the great leader, Kim Il Sung, Songun placed the defense of that independence in the vanguard institution of the military, closely identified with General Kim Jong Il. For most of its existence the DPRK has been a highly mobilized, militarized society that served as a living example of what Marx once called "barracks communism." Songun seemed merely to remove any remaining pretense of North Korea's adherence to Marxism. Having lost confidence in its modest experiments with reform and opening, the DPRK instead put its stock in a military defense, successfully exploding a nuclear device in 2006 (and again in 2009 and 2013) in an attempt to guarantee regime survival through nuclear deterrence. North Korea's clashes with the South in the West Sea in 2010, including the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island by northern artillery in November, seem to reflect this heightened militarism of North Korea as well.

THE NEXT GENERATION

The beginning of the second decade of the century marked another milestone for North Korea. On September 28, 2010, North Korea hosted a "conference of party delegates" (*tang taep'yoja hoe*), the third in its history and the first since 1966. This was ostensibly not a "party congress" (*tang taehoe*), the sixth and most recent of which took place in October 1980. It was at the Sixth Party Congress that Kim Jong Il officially emerged as the successor to Kim Il Sung. At the September 2010 conference, Kim Jong Il was reaffirmed as party secretary and chairman of the Military Defense Commission, but much of the world's attention was focused on the question of his own successor. There was no obvious choice of successor to Kim Jong Il when he disappeared from view in 2008, apparently the victim of a stroke. Given the consolidation of the regime as a "family business" over the last four decades, it was almost certain that Kim would pass power to one of his sons. Kim's eldest son, Kim Jong Nam, appears

[47] Cited in Ruediger Frank, "The End of Socialism and a Wedding Gift for the Groom? The True Meaning of the Military First Policy," December 11, 2003, Nautilus Institute, DPRK Briefing Book, http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/dprkbb/transition/Ruediger_Socialism.html (accessed November 14, 2010).

to have fallen out of favor after his arrest at Narita Airport in 2001, when he tried to sneak into Japan with a false passport. Little is known about Kim Jong Chul, the second son, but he seems not to have been a contender. Rumors that the third son, Kim Jong Un, was the chosen one began to emerge in early 2009. By midyear he had gained the official sobriquet *Yongmyonghan Tongji* or "brilliant comrade." He joined the Military Defense Commission and traveled to China with his father in August 2010. On September 27 he was named a "*Taejang*," or "four-star general" (along with, among others, Kim Jong Il's younger sister, Kim Kyong Hui), and the following day he was designated a vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the KWP and appointed to the Party Central Committee.

Kim Jong Un, barely known inside or outside North Korea just two years earlier, had risen meteorically in the party and military but did not yet appear as the number-two leader in the system, as his father had thirty years earlier.[48] The Party Delegates' Conference marked the beginning of the transition to third-generation Kim family rule, and the process of consolidation of Kim Jong Un's power has proceeded rapidly since his father's death in December 2011. Immediately after Kim Jong Il's death, the North Korean propaganda apparatus went into overtime portraying Kim Jong Un as a military genius (including a state television video of him riding a white horse), a charismatic leader, and a faithful heir to the revolutionary tradition of his father and grandfather. At the end of December, the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee Politburo named him supreme commander of the military. The North Korea media refer to him as "The Supreme Commander of the Party, the State and the Military,"[49] but it appears that the real power behind the throne is Kim's uncle Jang Song Taek, Kim Jong Il's brother-in-law; Jang's wife, Kim Jong Il's sister Kim Kyong Hui; and a handful of other senior military and party leaders.[50] Presumably this "regency" will guide Kim Jong Un through the process of transition as he consolidates his own power base. Despite much foreign media speculation about power struggles and possible coups, all indications were that the post–Kim Jong Il leadership transition was going according to plan in the months following Kim's death.

All of this has been couched in the Leninist-cum-nationalist-cum-militarist language that has characterized North Korean ideological discourse for the last

[48] About one month after the Party Delegates' Conference, some South Korean analysts argued that North Korean media listed Kim Jong Un as second in command behind his father, but this ranking was not yet made official. "Kim's Son Is Now North Korea's Number Two: Analysts," Yonhap (Seoul), November 7, 2010. http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/ (accessed November 14, 2010).

[49] As with his father, the word "leader" used for Kim Jong Un is *yongdoja*, a less elevated word than *Suryong*, which is used exclusively in reference to Kim Il Sung. Kim the grandfather remains "the Eternal President."

[50] The South Korean media have dubbed this caretaker elite the "Gang of Seven." See "The 'Gang of 7' behind Kim Jung-un," *Chosun Ilbo*, December 29, 2011, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/12/29/2011122901522.html (accessed August 18, 2012).

twenty years. It is, of course, impossible to determine to what degree ordinary North Koreans accept this dynastic transfer. Obviously they have little choice in the matter. Still, despite the best efforts of the regime to keep its population isolated, North Koreans are much more aware of realities beyond their country's boundaries than they were a decade or two ago. It seems unlikely that ideological controls will have the same effect going forward as they did in the past. Even if overt criticism of the regime is forbidden, there are growing signs of North Korean people going around the official system: entrepreneurship at many levels, local self-reliance, leaving the country, and widespread connection to media and entertainment from outside the DPRK, including South Korea. All of this is officially forbidden, of course, but much of it is more or less tolerated.[51] The control of the state is not what it once was, and North Koreans are dealing with the state not (yet) through resistance, but through evasion and cynicism, similar to Eastern Europe in the 1970s and early 1980s. As leadership transition is under way in the DPRK, North Korea may finally be moving toward a more "ordinary" authoritarian state, from the consolidation stage to "mature" communism.[52] It remains to be seen whether or for how long Kim Jong Un, and the core elite around him, can use mid-twentieth-century ideological control mechanisms to rule a twenty-first-century nation – especially if they are serious about North Korea's becoming "powerful and prosperous."

CONCLUSION

Among the surviving communist states of the post-1989 era, North Korea's method of regime survival is unique. The degree of militarization, isolation, and social control found in the DPRK is simply not replicable elsewhere and does not constitute a model for any other communist regime. In its strident nationalism, directed especially against the United States, North Korea most closely resembles Cuba among the still-existing communist states. In both cases there is a good deal of historical justification for anti-Americanism, and U.S. policy has done little to alleviate the sense of America's existential threat to their regimes, which in turn only reinforces the hard-liners in Havana and Pyongyang. But Cuba's market reforms have gone far beyond North Korea's, and Cuba is much more connected to the outside world than is the DPRK. Perhaps North Korea could have followed a more reformist path, but its leaders were more fearful of the

[51] For a sense of the changes on the ground in North Korea in recent years, see the fascinating collection of underground reportage by North Korean citizens in the journal *Rimjingang*, edited by the Japanese journalist Ishimaru Jiro, http://www.asiapress.org/rimjingang/(accessed November 14, 2010).

[52] Unique among communist states, North Korea seems never to have moved beyond the "revolutionary" or consolidation stage. See János Kornai's classic typology of communism, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). On stages in the development of communist regimes, see also Dimitrov, Chap. 1 in this volume.

political threat of a genuine opening than the economic consequences of maintaining the status quo. With few material goods to offer its citizens, the DPRK fell back on ideology, essentially sloughing off the last residues of Marxism and fully embracing militant nationalism.

Few predicted, in the aftermath of the European communist collapse at the beginning of the 1990s, that North Korea could survive without substantial reform. Yet reform could cause the whole system to fall apart. Neither reform nor collapse happened. North Korea's system has often been described as "brittle," capable of collapsing with a blow from just the right angle, but so far the system has on the contrary shown remarkable resilience.[53] Ideological introversion may not have been a workable strategy for any other regime, and the DPRK itself may not be able to depend on this strategy indefinitely. But two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the same party, military, and family that have ruled North Korea for sixty years are still in power. From the point of view of that elite, North Korea's strategy has been a success.

[53] Among many predictions that the North Korean collapse was imminent because of the system's inherent brittleness, see Aidan Foster-Carter, *Korea's Coming Unification: Another East Asian Superpower?* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1992). Foster-Carter predicted a collapse of the DPRK by 1995.

PART III

CONTAGION AND RESILIENCE

5

Bringing Down Dictators

Waves of Democratic Change in Communist and Postcommunist Europe and Eurasia

Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik

> It was amazing that the "Serbian revolution" unfolded in such a velvety, Czech way.[1]
> We Children of 1968 Have Worthy Children[2]
> There are no miraculous events here, but many years of concerted action.[3]

CLUSTERED COLLAPSE

Why did communism end in some countries, but not in others? The purpose of this volume is to present a range of specialists in both former and more durable

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[1] Aleksa Djilas, "Funeral Oration for Yugoslavia," in Dejan Djokić, ed., *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 317–333, at 318 (on the 2000 Serbian election).

[2] Graffiti on the walls of FAMU, Prague, 1989.

[3] Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe, 1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 16.

communist regimes in order to provide answers to this question. The usual approach in explaining variations in political outcomes, such as regime durability and departure, is to treat countries as separate units and compare them with one another – through either the use of case studies or more quantitative approaches – in order to assess the explanatory power of rival hypotheses. Although a perfectly logical way to proceed and one that has certainly served the test of time, such an approach may not always be warranted. This is particularly the case when there are reasons to think that political outcomes in different countries might be connected to one another. In this situation, the assumption of separate political trajectories is problematic; international and transnational influences must be taken into account; and methodologies need to be readjusted to recognize the interlinked nature of political change.

What is striking about the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and "Eastern" Europe from 1987 to 1990 – that is, from the protests that engulfed the Soviet Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, beginning in 1987, to the decision in the Soviet Union in 1990 to eliminate the leading role of the communist party in the constitution – is the extraordinarily compact character of these remarkable developments. What we find, in particular, is a region-wide dynamic that materialized within a brief span of time. The regimes that composed this region, moreover, were not just similar to one another with respect to their political and economic institutions; they also shared borders and in most cases were members of the same political-economic and security bloc, that is, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. By contrast, the "holdouts" from communism's demise, such as China, Cuba, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam, while sharing many similarities with the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (as Martin Dimitrov argues in his introductory chapter), were either not members of these organizations or at best peripheral participants, and they were located on the geographical fringes, rather than at the core, of the Soviet and Eastern European regional system.

In this sense, one can portray the collapse of communism from 1987 to 1990 as a double-edged dynamic. On the one hand, as Mark Kramer observes in his chapter in this volume and as Valerie Bunce argued on the eve of Gorbachev's rise to power in the Soviet Union, shared borders, commonalities in culture, and the sheer density of political and economic ties among states meant that communism was a "joint enterprise" in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Thus, if communism fell in one country located in this region, it was very likely to fall in the remaining states.[4] By contrast, because of geographical dispersion, cultural differences, and limited institutional linkages, communist regimes located in other parts of the world were less susceptible to "importing" regime collapse from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

[4] Valerie Bunce, "The Empire Strikes Back: The Evolution of the Eastern Bloc from a Soviet Asset to a Soviet Liability," *International Organization* 39:1 (Winter 1985), 1–45.

There are in fact three other reasons to argue in favor of reframing the contrasting political trajectories of communist states from one that focuses solely on differences among countries to one that emphasizes these factors but in the context of the uneven impact of cross-national waves of challenges to communist party rule. First, there is the irrefutable observation that communist regimes either ended during the years from 1987 to 1990 or survived this period only to endure up to the present time. There was, in short, something very important about that period. Second, it is important to remember that, even today, the Soviet Union remains the longest-lived communist experiment. For example, communism in the Soviet Union lasted for seventy-three years (1917–1990), whereas the regime in China was only sixty-four years old in 2013. Finally, it is striking that the cross-national spread of mass-based challenges to authoritarian rule in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe occurred again after there was no Soviet Union, and "Eastern Europe" had reverted to its earlier identity as Central and Eastern Europe. Here, we refer to a wave of elections that took place from 1996 to 2008 in a series of postcommunist regimes in the region that straddled dictatorship and democracy by combining incumbent authoritarian leaders (often former communists) with competitive elections. Although eight of these elections succeeded in bringing democratic oppositions to power, many other major electoral efforts by oppositions to win office failed, even when, as in many of the successful cases, fraudulent elections were followed by large-scale public protests. Thus, the wavelike nature of the collapse of communism was followed by a series of democratizing events that had the additional parallel of assuming a wavelike pattern. This remarkable run of electoral turnovers in mixed regimes, moreover, is distinctive to the postcommunist region.

The purpose of this chapter is to build on these insights by offering, like Mark Kramer in the chapter that follows, a framing of the puzzle motivating this volume that devotes significant attention to the role of international processes in shaping the durability of communist regimes. Thus, instead of assuming that the resilience of communism rested on the internal characteristics of these regimes and their domestic and foreign policies and performance, we instead argue that variations in the survival of communist regimes reflected differences in their susceptibility to cross-national diffusion effects. Thus, what played a critical role in these events and "nonevents" in the communist world was whether the regimes were more or less susceptible to what scholars have defined in studies of diffusion as a horizontal dynamic involving the transmission of an innovation from a core site to a series of other sites – or, when translated into the interest of this chapter, the cross-national spread of large-scale and politically significant challenges to authoritarian rule by ordinary citizens and opposition groups.[5]

[5] On diffusion processes, see, for example, Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Transnational Networks, Diffusion Dynamics, and Electoral Change in the Postcommunist World," in Rebecca

We develop this argument in three stages. We begin by providing an overview of the two waves of mobilization against authoritarian rule in Europe and Eurasia. These two rounds of democratic change are instructive for our purposes because they share some key similarities but also exhibit some important differences. On the one hand, they took place in the same region (albeit renamed), and both waves exhibited a similar repertoire of actions, that is, mass mobilizations against authoritarian rule. These commonalities provide insights into how diffusion works, why the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe seem to be so prone to diffusion effects, and why states outside this region fail again and again to join the regional waves of democratic change. On the other hand, whereas the first wave was propelled by mass protests and/or roundtables between the regime and the opposition, the second wave concentrated on electoral confrontations with authoritarian rule and in some cases postelection protests as well. This contrast means that we are providing an unusually demanding assessment of diffusion dynamics.

We then step back from the details of these events and make a case for interpreting them as diffusion dynamics. Here, we focus on two types of evidence: cross-national patterns of change and the presence of identifiable drivers of the cross-national transmission of challenges to authoritarian rule. We close the chapter by addressing the question of why each of these diffusion dynamics was limited in its geographical and temporal reach. Here, we emphasize two influences: local receptivity to change and the availability of diffusion drivers. Thus, we argue that the durability of authoritarian regimes – whether in the case of communist party-states or other types of such systems – depends not just on a regime's capacity to fend off local pressures for democratic change, but also on its ability to resist international pressures. Although the communist and other regimes in what used to be called the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that fell did so because they were in a poor position to block cross-national diffusion of democratic change, the ones that survived the onslaught did so because of successful containment of both domestic and international pressures for regime change. It was, as Mark Kramer argues in Chapter 6 (though without the inclusion of the electoral wave), the interaction among domestic, international, and transnational influences that either defended or ended the communist experiment.

WAVE ONE: THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

There is a sizable literature on the events of 1987–1990, and our summary, as a result, will just touch on the main elements of this process.[6] The mass protests that eventually led to the disintegration of communism and communist states

Kolins Givan, Sarah A. Soule, and Kenneth M. Roberts, eds., *The Diffusion of Social Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 140–162.

[6] See, for example, Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); John K. Glenn III,

began in fact in two places: in the Soviet Union in 1987, with the rise of popular fronts in support of perestroika in the Russian republic and the Baltic states in particular, and in Slovenia, with the rise of a student movement that, by entering the forbidden zone of military affairs, took on both the Yugoslav state and the regime.[7] Protests then broke out in Poland in the fall of 1988 (much to the consternation of Lech Wałesa, who was losing control over his movement) and culminated in an unprecedented roundtable between the opposition and the party in the early months of 1989 that focused on ending the political stalemate in Poland, in place since martial law was declared in 1981, through the creation of a transitional regime that added some competitive political features to authoritarian rule in Poland. However, by August of that year semicompetitive elections in June 1989 had led to an unthinkable development: the formation of an opposition-led government that then laid the groundwork for a rapid transition to democracy.

The Polish precedent, coupled with the considerable loosening of strictures on political change in Eastern Europe as a result of the Gorbachev reforms, was powerful enough to lead in the late summer of 1989 to a roundtable in Hungary, which was different in important respects from its Polish counterpart – for example, it was not televised; it featured a more complex and focused set of working groups; and it involved more detailed planning for a democratic future, including fully competitive elections in the following year. In the fall of 1989, massive protests broke out in East Germany, which were then followed by similar developments in Czechoslovakia – with participants in the latter speaking directly of demonstration effects and similarities in domestic conditions. Protests, albeit smaller and with less direct translation into democratic politics, then followed in Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania. In the course of these developments, moreover, protests within the Soviet Union continued and spread, as they did within Yugoslavia, where the Slovenian developments influenced, by all accounts, the subsequent mass mobilization in both Croatia and Serbia in particular. Indeed, even the Hungarians, scarred by 1956, eventually carried out demonstrations of their own on Republic Day – though these protests occurred later and grew out of renewed debates about what happened during the Hungarian Revolution.

Framing Democracy: Civil Society and Civic Movements in Eastern Europe (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Christian Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989: Social Movement in a Leninist Regime* (New York: New York University Press, 1995); Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Archie Brown, "Transnational Influences in the Transition from Communism," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 16:2 (April–June 2000), 177–200; and Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[7] Tomaž Mastnak, "From Social Movements to National Sovereignty," in Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft, eds., *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements, Prospects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 93–112.

Although challenges to communist party hegemony spread rapidly throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, these challenges were nonetheless quite uneven in their intensity and political consequences. Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and the Baltic states quickly established full-scale and consolidated democratic orders. Other regimes in the region, however, either straddled democracy and dictatorship or maintained fully authoritarian political orders.[8] Indeed, it was the middle category, rather than the extremes, that proved to be the regional norm after communism, and communist leaders, whether as heads of communist parties or renamed parties, usually stayed at the helm. Moreover, as the transitions from communism continued, these mixed regimes tipped in either a more democratic or a more authoritarian direction.[9] Put simply, the transition from communism was one thing, and the rise and consolidation of democracy quite another.

MASS MOBILIZATION AND ELECTORAL REVOLUTIONS

Let us now turn to the second wave of citizen confrontations with authoritarian rule – from 1996 to 2005.[10] In this round, the form of protests changed to some degree, moving from an entirely street-based activity to an electoral one that was combined, in many cases, with street demonstrations. The regime context also changed: that is, not communism, but, rather, regimes that either fell short of being full democracies (as with Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia) or were either somewhat or very authoritarian (with the clearest contrast between Georgia and Croatia in the last years of dictatorial rule, on the one hand, and Serbia, on the other). These distinctions aside, however, the issue on the table was the same, whether in Bulgaria in 1996 to 1997 or Ukraine in 2004: popular challenges to authoritarian rule. Moreover, in most cases,[11] the pivotal elections featured an upsurge in the turnout of voters supporting change – and in Croatia, Slovakia,

[8] Valerie Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism," *Slavic Review* 58:4 (Winter 1999), 756–793.

[9] Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Mixed Regimes in Postcommunist Eurasia: Tipping Democratic and Tipping Authoritarian," paper presented at the workshop "Democratization in European Former Soviet Republics: Limits, Obstacles and Perspectives," Florence, Italy, June 13–15, 2008.

[10] For a more detailed analysis, see Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Getting Real about 'Real Causes,'" *Journal of Democracy* 20:1 (January 2009), 69–73; "Democratizing Elections in the Postcommunist World: Definitions, Dynamics and Diffusion," *St. Antony's International Review* 2:2 (February 2007), 67–79; and Michael McFaul, "Transitions from Postcommunism," *Journal of Democracy* 16:3 (July 2005), 5–19.

[11] But see Scott Radnitz, "A Horse of a Different Color: Revolution and Regression in Kyrgyzstan," in Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 300–324.

and Ukraine, an overall increase in turnout, especially in comparison with declining turnout across earlier elections over the course of the postcommunist era.[12] For example, in the 1998 Slovak elections turnout increased 9 percent over that in the 1994 elections and in the 2000 Croatian elections 6 percent over the 1997 presidential elections and 8 percent over the 1995 parliamentary elections. In discussing this wave, we will provide greater detail, largely because these events have been less fully explored by scholars interested in comparisons among them or the role of diffusion.[13]

As we noted previously, there is rarely a hard and fast answer to the question of when a process of diffusion actually begins. In our view, the emergence of the model of democratizing elections began with four interconnected political struggles in Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia in 1996–1998 – countries that provided a regional hothouse for political change because of the combination of democratic deficits, active and interactive oppositions, and shared borders. From 1996 to 1997 there were massive three-month-long protests in Serbia – protests that were motivated by Milošević's attempt to deny the opposition its significant victories in many of the local elections that took place in 1996.[14] These protests, as in the cases that followed in their footsteps, built on previous rounds of political protest – in the Serbian case going back to the early 1980s and in Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia to 1989 (and even to the communist period, as in Hungary in 1956 and Poland in 1956, 1970, 1976, and 1980 and the miners' strikes in Romania during the 1980s). As Jim O'Brien, who served as the Washington-based coordinator of American assistance to Serbian opposition groups from 1999 to 2000, put it: "We built on the plumbing of the past."[15] Although the Serbian protests failed in the short term, they succeeded in the longer term – that is, in 2000.[16]

[12] Here, we draw upon the data collected by the Swedish-based organization International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, at http://www.idea.int/vt/ (accessed August 24, 2009).

[13] Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes," *World Politics* 62:1 (January 2010), 43–86; Bunce and Wolchik, "Democratizing Elections in the Postcommunist World"; Lucan Way, "Deer in Headlights: Authoritarian Skill and Regime Trajectories after the Cold War," paper presented at the Workshop on Africa–Central Asia, Cornell University, September 26–27, 2008; McFaul, "Transitions from Postcommunism"; and Joerg Forbrig and Pavol Demeš, eds., *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund, 2007).

[14] Mladen Lazić, ed., *Protest in Belgrade: Winter of Discontent* (New York: Central European University Press, 1999); Dušan Pavlović, "Polarizacija stranackog system a nakon 2000 godine" (The Polarization of the Party System after 2000), in Zoran Lutovac, ed., *Političke stranke u Srbiji: Struktura i funkcionisanje* (Political Parties in Serbia: Structure and Functioning) (Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/Institut Društvenih Nauka, 2005); and Robert Thomas, *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

[15] Interview with Jim O'Brien, Washington, DC, November 16, 2006.

[16] Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 4; Ray Jennings, "Serbia's Bulldozer Revolution: Evaluating Internal and External Factors in the Successful Democratic Breakthrough in Serbia," Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law (CDDRL) Working Paper,

The second set of struggles took place in Romania, where the liberal opposition finally came together and ran a sophisticated political campaign that succeeded in 1996 in replacing the former communist incumbent president with a candidate with far stronger liberal credentials and commitments.[17] The third set of struggles took place in Bulgaria at roughly the same time.[18] In Bulgaria, Serbian protests next door were influential in particular in bringing labor and other groups into the streets. Although lagged in their response and to some degree shamed by the spontaneity of their own citizenry, Bulgarian intellectuals and leaders of the opposition finally recognized, especially given the poor performance of the incumbent regime, that such protests could lead to a new election and pave the way for the Union of Democratic Forces (which, prior to this time, would be better characterized as a fractious ensemble) to take power (as they did in 1997). Although the cohesion of the Bulgarian liberal opposition proved to be temporary and its effectiveness limited (as in the Romanian opposition story as well), its victory, again as in Romania, served as a decisive political turning point – as indicated, for example, by the consistent improvements in Freedom House scores following these pivotal elections in both countries.[19]

The same generalization applies to the fourth participant in the story of the spread of the electoral approach to democratic change: Slovakia.[20] It was in that country where all the components of the electoral model of defeating authoritarian leaders merged, with a variety of players, such as leaders of the Slovak, Bulgarian, and Romanian oppositions; the American ambassadors to Slovakia and the Czech Republic; "graduates" of the Romanian and Bulgarian turnarounds; and representatives of organizations such as the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, Freedom House, and the National Endowment for Democracy, combining forces to create the OK98

Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University (March 2009); Stojan Protich, *Izneverena revoliutsija: 5 oktobar 2000* (The Betrayed Revolution: 5 October 2000) (Belgrade: Chigoya Publishers, 2005); Florian Bieber, "The Serbian Opposition and Civil Society: Roots of the Delayed Transition in Serbia," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17:1 (Fall 2003), 73–90; and Ognjen Pribicevic, "Serbia after Milosevic," *Journal of Southeast European & Black Sea Studies* 4:1 (January 2004), 107–118.

[17] See Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 3.

[18] See Tsveta Petrova, "A Postcommunist Transition in Two Acts: The 1996–7 Antigovernment Struggle in Bulgaria as a Bridge between the 1989–92 and 1996–2007 Democratization Waves in Eastern Europe," in Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 107–133.

[19] See Lucia Kurekova, "Electoral Revolutions and their Socio-Economic Impact: Bulgaria and Slovakia in Comparative Perspective," Master's Thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 2006 and Venelin I. Ganev, *Preying on the State: The Transformation of Bulgaria after 1989* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

[20] See Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 3 and "Defining and Domesticating the Electoral Model: A Comparison of Slovakia and Serbia," in Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 134–154.

campaign that led to the defeat of Vladimir Meciar in the 1998 Slovak parliamentary elections. This model, which can be termed the innovation that diffused throughout the region, included such components as the formation of a cohesive opposition; pressures on election commissions to improve their procedures and render them more transparent; ambitious campaigns to register voters, advertise the costs of the incumbent regime, and get out the vote; and the deployment of both domestic and international election monitoring, as well as exit polls, to provide quick feedback on turnout during election day, to catalog election day abuses by the regime, and to provide evidence of actual voter preferences.[21]

Once fully articulated and successful when implemented in Slovakia in 1998, the electoral model was then applied in a number of other competitive authoritarian regimes in the postcommunist region.[22] Its first stop in the diffusion process was in 2000 in Croatia, where the death of the longtime dictator, Franjo Tudjman, in 1999 had weakened the governing party and provided an opportunity for the opposition to win power. In this case, as in Bulgaria and Romania, the election was for the presidency, and, as in these cases as well as in Slovakia, the electoral outcome produced a smooth transition. The Croatian opposition also benefited (as would that in Serbia later in the same year) from assistance provided by the Slovak opposition and the electoral playbook it devised in collaboration with regional and Western actors, along with some earlier successes in local elections and earlier actions by the hard-line regime to prevent the translation of voter preferences into representative governments. As in Slovakia, and in contrast to the situation in Bulgaria and Romania after these pivotal elections, the electoral revolution had dramatic effects on democratization in Croatia. A political corner was turned.

Later in 2000, the electoral revolution moved to Serbia.[23] Although the implementation of the electoral model was as careful and thoroughgoing as it had been in Slovakia and Croatia, there were, nonetheless, some differences that distinguish Serbia from these other cases. One was that the struggle against Milošević was severely constrained by the increasingly heavy authoritarian hand of the regime. Thus, for example, there were no external election monitors in Serbia in the fall 2000 elections and the media were closely controlled by

[21] See Susan D. Hyde, "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment," *World Politics* 60:1 (October 2007), 37–63.

[22] See Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13:2 (April 2002), 51–65; Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "Competitive Authoritarian Regimes: The Evolution of Post-Soviet Competitive Authoritarianism 1992–2005," paper presented at the conference "Why Communism Didn't Collapse: Understanding Regime Resilience in China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, and Cuba," Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, May 25–26, 2007; Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13:2 (April 2002), 21–35; and Andreas Schedler, ed., *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006).

[23] See Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 4 and "Defining and Domesticating the Electoral Model"; Jennings, "Serbia's Bulldozer Revolution."

Milošević. However, there was one similarity to Slovakia: the key role played by young people and their organizations, such as Otpor (Resistance) in Serbia.

The Serbian presidential election of 2000 was a turning point for elections as democratizing agents because the incumbent regime had been in power much longer and was far more authoritarian than the earlier sites for such revolutions, and because these very characteristics meant that the regime refused to vacate office once the election and the tabulations of the vote, both fraudulent and accurate, had concluded. This led to massive political protests that succeeded in taking control over the capital and forcing Milošević to resign. The Georgian opposition then followed suit in the 2003 parliamentary elections – though this produced, it is important to recognize, a coup d'état by the opposition, since the long-ruling president, Eduard Shevardnadze, left office without having been in fact up for reelection.[24] In Georgia, the political context was less constraining than in Serbia, especially given the lackluster campaign by Shevardnadze's allies, the defection of so many key players (such as Mikheil Saakashvili, who later became president) from the ruling group to the opposition, the relative openness of the Georgian media, the formation of a youth group (Kmara) in support of political change that worked closely with the Georgian opposition around Saakashvili, and the presence of a significant number of local and international election monitors.[25] As with the other cases, moreover, it was clear that the Georgian opposition modeled its campaign on the previous electoral breakthroughs in the region and benefited as well from various kinds of support from the Open Society Foundation and other American groups.[26]

The next successful democratizing election occurred in Ukraine a year later.[27] As in the Georgian case, a single charismatic politician – in this case, Viktor Yushchenko – played a critical role. As in both the Georgian and Serbian cases,

[24] See Cory Welt, "Georgia's Rose Revolution: From Regime Weakness to Regime Collapse," in Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 155–188; Lincoln A. Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); and Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 6.

[25] Zurab Karumidze and James V. Wertsch, "Enough!" *The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia, 2003* (New York: Nova Science, 2005) and Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 6.

[26] See Jaba Devdariani, "The Impact of International Assistance on Georgia," Discussion Paper 11, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), May 2003, and Alexander Cooley and James Ron, "The NGO Scramble: Organizational Insecurity and the Political Economy of Transnational Action," *International Security* 27:1 (Summer 2002), 5–39.

[27] See, in particular, Michael McFaul, "Importing Revolution: Internal and External Factors in Ukraine's 2004 Democratic Breakthrough," in Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 189–225; Michael McFaul, "Ukraine Imports Democracy: External Influences on the Orange Revolution," *International Security* 32:2 (Fall 2007), 45–83; Amichai Magen, "Evaluating External Influence on Democratic Development: Transition," Working Paper, No. 111, Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law,

the successful political breakthrough exploited the record of a leadership that had grown increasingly corrupt, careless, and violent; benefited from defections from the ruling circles; built upon earlier rounds of protests and recent successes in local elections; and reached out to diverse groups, with young people playing a role nearly as important as the one seen in Serbia with Otpor. Moreover, as in Serbia and Georgia, political protests after the election (which were as large and longer-lasting than those in Serbia) were again necessary to force the authoritarian challenger to admit defeat. More distinctive to the Ukrainian case, however, were the breakdown of central control over the media during the campaign and especially during the protests and the remarkable role of the Supreme Court, which came down in support of the opposition's argument that the elections had been fraudulent and had to be repeated.

Significant electoral challenges to authoritarian incumbents, coupled with mass demonstrations challenging the official electoral results, also took place in a number of other countries in the region, including Kyrgyzstan in 2005, where President Askar Akayev panicked in the face of protests following the parliamentary election and left office,[28] and in a series of presidential and parliamentary elections that took place in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus from 2001 to 2008. However, in the latter three countries authoritarian incumbents or their anointed successors remained in power in the face of popular protests over electoral fraud.[29]

Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, March 2009; Taras Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine's 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution," *Problems of Post-Communism* 52:2 (March/April 2005), 29–44; Paul Kubicek, "The European Union and Democratization in Ukraine," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 38:2 (June 2005), 269–292; Lucan A. Way, "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave: The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine," *World Politics* 57:2 (January 2005), 231–261; and Lucan Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 16:2 (April 2005), 131–145; Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul, eds., *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006); Andrew Wilson, *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); and Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 5.

[28] Scott Radnitz, "What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?" *Journal of Democracy* 17:2 (April 2006), 132–146 and "A Horse of a Different Color"; Noor Sophia Inayat Borbieva, "Development in the Kyrgyz Republic: Exchange, Communal Networks, and the Foreign Presence," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2007; and Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 6.

[29] See Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chap. 7; and "Opposition Versus Dictators: Explaining Divergent Election Outcomes in Post-Communist Europe and Eurasia," in Staffan I. Lindberg, ed., *Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 246–268; Anar M. Valiyev, "Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan: A Failed Revolution," *Problems of Post-Communism* 53:3 (May–June 2006), 17–35; and Vitali Silitski, "Contagion Deterred: Preemptive Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union (The Case of Belarus)," in Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 274–299.

It is hard to predict, however, whether this diffusion dynamic has ended. For example, the Azeri opposition made significant strides in 2011 in forging a united front; protests broke out in Kazakhstan in the fall of the same year; and the December 2011 parliamentary elections in Russia produced sizable demonstrations against electoral fraud.[30]

DIFFUSION OF MOBILIZATION: GENERAL PATTERNS

We can now step back from the details of these two waves of popular mobilization against authoritarianism and ask whether cross-national diffusion dynamics were at play. We begin at the most general level. Each round of collective action aimed against dictators featured a roughly similar repertoire of innovative behaviors that were adopted by key actors in lagged fashion in a number of countries in the region. What we find, in short, is a diffusionlike dynamic. Moreover, each wave was foreshadowed by a clear expansion in international opportunities for democratic change – opportunities that were exploited, albeit to varying degrees, by local democratic activists and everyday citizens. Here we refer, for example, to the role of the Helsinki process and the Gorbachev reforms in the first wave, and in the second the rise, beginning in the early 1990s, of an international democracy promotion community that provided important assistance to democratic activists in the postcommunist region.[31] Just as important for both rounds was a transnational factor: the development of regionally based opposition networks that collaborated closely with one another in support of a showdown with the incumbent authoritarian regimes.[32]

[30] See, for instance, Joshua Tucker, "A Coloured Revolution in Moscow?" Aljazeera, December 12, 2011, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/12/201112119592290020 0html (accessed September 15, 2012).

[31] See McFaul, "Ukraine Imports Democracy" and "Importing Revolution"; Milada Anna Vachudová, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chaps. 3–6, 9, 10; and Bunce and Wolchik, "Transnational Networks, Diffusion Dynamics, and Electoral Change."

[32] See, for example, Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "International Diffusion and Postcommunist Electoral Revolutions," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39:3 (September 2006), 283–304; "Favorable Conditions and Electoral Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy* 17:4 (October 2006), 5–18; "Enabling and Enhancing Democracy: Global Patterns and Postcommunist Dynamics," paper presented at the first meeting of the Project on Democratic Transitions, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, January 20, 2006; "Democratizing Elections in the Postcommunist World"; and "Transnational Networks, Diffusion Dynamics, and Electoral Revolutions in the Postcommunist World," *Physica A-Statistical Mechanics and Its Applications* 378:1 (May 1, 2007), 92–99. For the earlier round, 1986 appears to have been a turning point in building cross-national ties, particularly among oppositions in Eastern Europe, but also between these oppositions and various Western groups. As a small sample, see, for example, "Budapest Forum as Seen by Prague," Radio Free Europe, CZSL SR0001, January 7,

Although these networks benefited primarily from what can be termed a more "permissive" international environment in the first round, in the second wave international actors played a more active role – by supporting the development of civil society, open media, and free and fair elections; encouraging the unity of the opposition; encouraging ties between the opposition and civil society groups; providing training and support with respect to campaign techniques; and offering strong and very public criticisms of authoritarian incumbents when they attempted to steal the elections.

Finally, our overview of the two waves provides strong support for the importance in diffusion dynamics of structural mechanisms, such as the obvious institutional similarities among the regimes during the communist period and common membership in the same regional organizations, and similarities after communism in the combination of democratic deficits but also electoral competition. In addition, we find in both waves an actor-rich process that involved, most importantly, local actors, but also their regional and Western allies, and that was responsible for exploiting domestic and international opportunities for democratic change by defining strategies, applying them, and transferring them to new locales. Moreover, as noted in the discussion of the two waves, we also see changes in the innovation itself as it moved from the point of origin to other contexts, and the declining effectiveness of the model as it proceeded down the country chain from more to less supportive local settings. Such patterns, it is important to recognize, are typical of diffusion processes.

For example, just as the protests in Bulgaria at the end of 1989 – in contrast to the earlier protests against communism in Czechoslovakia – were carried out by a less experienced and smaller opposition and were more successfully countered by a better prepared and more ensconced communist party, with the result that the break with communist party rule was less clear-cut, so in the second wave the electoral challenges to authoritarian rule in Slovakia in 1998 were more successful in consolidating democratic change in that country than the challenges to Milošević that took place two years later in Serbia. In the latter context, the regime was far more authoritarian; popular protests had been added to the electoral model of democratic change; and these protests served as an indicator of how difficult subsequent democratic development would be after the 2000 election.

Beginning the Diffusion Dynamic

Let us now turn to some more specific questions, all of which are central to an understanding of how diffusion actually works. First, why were particular

1986; "Polish Solidarity Contacts Charter 77," Radio Free Europe, CZSL SR/0012, September 5, 1986; "Eastern European Dissidents Appeal on Hungarian Revolution Anniversary," RAD BR 0151, October 28, 1986; and "Eastern European Dissidents Join Western Groups in Addressing Vienna Conference," RAD BR0164, November 14, 1986.

models of citizen challenges to authoritarianism selected: that is, the focus in the first wave on popular protests and in a few cases roundtables, and the focus in the second wave on elections, sometimes combined with popular protests? The simple answer is that these models of change were selected because of historical experiences and the parameters placed on forms of opposition activity by the nature of the regime itself. To elaborate: in the first wave, the focus on political protests reflected the constraints in state socialist regimes on how citizens can register their preferences and their dissatisfaction, along with a time-tested dynamic in the Soviet bloc during the communist era, wherein divisions within the Soviet leadership or a decisive shift by them in a reformist direction had the predictable effects of weakening the Central and East European communist parties and thereby creating opportunities for citizen mobilization. Also critical was the accumulation of experiences with protest, aided by regimes that, because of their centralization of politics and their control over the economy, unwittingly forged optimal conditions for concerted actions on the part of the public. State socialist regimes, for example, identified a common enemy for their citizens, and they introduced major and sudden shifts in policy that affected citizens in similar ways at virtually the same moment.[33] Moreover, although elections under communism could serve indirectly as instruments of policy accountability, they were too controlled and too ritualized to be used as referenda on communist party rule.[34]

The selection of electoral confrontations in the second round also spoke to a number of influences. They included successful application of the electoral model in other parts of the world (that American democracy promoters, at least, recognized); the close ties in the popular mind between democracy and competitive elections; the expectations unleashed by the fall of communism about democratic possibilities, yet the continuing power of the communists in these hybrid regimes; and striking similarities between the rigged electoral rituals of the past and the partially rigged character of elections after communism. Here, we can cite a succinct and telling observation made by Robert Gelbard, who was involved in the discussions in the National Security Council during the Chilean referendum in 1988 and in American support for the Serbian opposition from 1999 to 2000: "If leaders use the forms of democracy, publics come to expect the substance."[35]

However, perhaps the most important influence is that elections were widely recognized by local and international democracy activists as an *ideal* mechanism for challenging the regime. All the regimes where electoral revolutions took place allowed oppositions to participate, although with varying constraints. Moreover,

[33] See, for example, Bunce, *Subversive Institutions*.

[34] Victor Zaslavsky and Robert Brym, "The Functions of Elections in the USSR," *Soviet Studies* 30:3 (July 1978), 362–371.

[35] Interview with Robert Gelbard, Ithaca, New York, March 1, 2007; also see Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism*, 691–728.

elections are understood by citizens as verdicts on the regime's right to rule. Finally, elections have visible results that speak to power, rights, and policies, and they have the advantages for both oppositions and citizens of being associated with specific activities that are bounded in time and that have scheduled and visible consequences. It is also far harder for regimes to justify the use of force against their citizenries during elections than at other times.[36]

The differences in the particular strategies selected for regime confrontation across the two waves, however, should not blind us to several commonalities. One is that the electoral model was in fact often combined with popular protests – either before the election, as in Bulgaria, or after the election, as in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. Another similarity is that we see in both rounds a "selection moment" that reflects a sudden decline in the costs of mobilization and a rise in expected payoffs. In the case of the successful electoral breakthroughs, there were both significant support for democratic change provided by the United States and, to a lesser extent, the European Union – not just long-term investments in civil society and fair elections, for example, but also clear signaling of dissatisfaction with both the incumbent regime and its conduct of the election (though this was less apparent in the Bulgarian and Romanian cases) – and increasingly visible evidence testifying to the vulnerability of the regime and its rejection of political niceties and the democratic rules of the game.

In the first round, evidence of a growth in regime vulnerability was also important, as was the clear message that the Soviets were unwilling to use force against protesters within the Soviet Union (though there were some exceptions) and certainly in Central and Eastern Europe. However, like American assistance in the second wave, this version of international change was not a purely short-term development. In fact, long before Gorbachev we find a clear decline over time in the Soviet use of force against their allies in Central and Eastern Europe – a pattern that reflected in part Soviet concerns about the longer-term costs of such actions and in part variations in the forms of local resistance to Soviet intervention. Thus, the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 involved a large number of deaths; the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was far less bloody; and declaration of martial law, rather than armed intervention, in 1981 was the Soviet strategy of choice in Poland in reaction to the rise of Solidarity a year earlier. In addition, there is some evidence that there were in fact significant divisions within the Politburo regarding the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 – divisions that grew out of the fears of the Ukrainian members at the time that Slovak efforts to gain greater recognition of Slovak nationalist aims might diffuse to Ukraine.[37] This pattern also explains why the

[36] Karen Dawisha and Stephen Deets, "Political Learning in Post-Communist Elections," *East European Politics and Societies* 20:4 (November 2006), 691–728.

[37] Grey Hodnett and Peter J. Potichnyj, "The Ukraine and the Czechoslovak Crisis," Australian National University, Research School of Social Sciences, Dept. of Political Science, Occasional Paper, no. 6 (1970).

violent transitions in Central and Eastern Europe when communism fell took place in the states that had distanced themselves most from the Soviet bloc – Romania, Yugoslavia, and Albania – and that did not have Soviet troops stationed within their borders. In these three countries, command and control resided in the local party, not in Moscow, and it was the local party (or, more specifically in the Yugoslav case, the party in Serbia) that deployed force to protect its privileges.

This observation leads to a second insight about the beginning of the two waves and the sources of innovations in the key countries. In both rounds of mass mobilization, the "lead" states in this diffusion story fit the profile of contexts that exhibited, by regional comparative standards of the time, the optimal conditions for anti-regime mobilization. This was because expanded opportunities for democratic change (or what social movement theorists term a change in the political opportunity structure)[38] were joined with two other factors that were much more in evidence in some countries than in others. One was regime vulnerability, which grew out of a variety of conditions, ranging from mounting economic difficulties and recent changes in political leadership to a history of anti-regime protests and lack of legitimacy from the beginning for rule by the communists, whether local communists or those in Moscow. The other was the existence of substantial resources available for popular mobilization against the regime. Here, the key indicators included the existence of popular grievances, an established tradition of protest, and the rise of more liberalized politics during the communist era. Also helpful was religious and ethnic homogeneity – although protests also took place, of course, in more diverse cultural settings, such as Latvia and Estonia.

Poland in 1988–1989 provides the closest fit to this profile, and this is a major reason why Poland became, not surprisingly, a leader, if not the leader, in the fall of communism. However, some of the other "early risers"[39] in the collapse of communism share many (but usually not all) of the same characteristics. For example, Armenia, Lithuania, and Slovenia were unusually homogeneous republics, and the three Central and Eastern European leaders of 1989 (Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia) were distinctive in combining severe economic crises with comparatively liberal politics. Not surprisingly, these states, along with the Czech Republic and Slovakia (and Armenia and Georgia), had a history of protests or efforts to reform during communism, and they had, as a result, large and experienced oppositions.

In a similar vein, the rise of the electoral model in Serbia (1996–1997), Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia is far from surprising. In Serbia, the key issue was the long-term ripening of the opposition. Also critical in all these countries

[38] See Sidney G. Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[39] To borrow from Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization*.

were their close proximity to one another and a domestic context (with the exception of Serbia) that permitted significant room for democratic maneuver. Moreover, as already noted, the Romanian and especially the Bulgarian and Serbian economies were in terrible shape (as is typical of the postcommunist regimes that straddled democracy and dictatorship);[40] the incumbent regimes were extremely unpopular as well as corrupt and incompetent; and American democracy promoters, like the EU, had made democratic change in Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia a very high priority (as they were to do a few years later in Serbia, when the Dayton-related pressure for tolerating the Milošević regime had dissipated).

Diffusion Mechanisms

This leads to another question of interest in this chapter: how and why the mobilization models traveled across national boundaries. Both waves of popular challenges to authoritarian rule reflected in fact the impact of all three diffusion models outlined earlier: that is, demonstration effects, similar conditions, and the spread of transnational networks. However, as the domestic and international regime contexts were very different in the two waves, the weights of these three drivers of diffusion were different as well.

Demonstration effects, which were unusually important in the first wave, can be seen most clearly in the changing calculus of opposition leaders and citizens. It was not just that they were aware of successful confrontations in the neighborhood; it was also that these precedents pointed to far fewer costs attached to change than they had come to expect. The role of the Soviet leadership in the 1987–1990 events is a case in point. It was not simply that Gorbachev encouraged the rise of popular fronts in support of perestroika; supported the Polish roundtable and even favorable stories of Lech Wałesa in Soviet newspapers; chided the hard-line East German and Romanian regimes (which often censored his speeches), while refusing to back up their demand that the Hungarian government should prevent defection of East German tourists to the West; and stood aside while massive protests broke out in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and other countries. It was also that in the early part of the wave regimes did not use force to defend themselves – in part because control over force resided in Moscow. Thus, the early mobilizations against communism were both successful and seemingly low cost – conditions that, especially given unusually similar domestic regimes and the common effect of a more permissive environment for political change, encouraged emulation.

For some of the same reasons, demonstration effects were also critical in the spread of electoral challenges to authoritarian rule. Although we should not minimize the hard work and risk involved in these struggles, the electoral precedents of Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia from 1996 to 1998 were quite

[40] Bunce, *Subversive Institutions*.

attractive for several reasons. One was that these early electoral confrontations in the neighborhood had been both successful and relatively cost-free. The other was that competitive elections had become a staple of political life in the post-communist world. As a result, focusing on elections was seen as an efficient and effective way to get rid of incumbents and, not incidentally, as a winning strategy for opposition leaders finally to succeed in their goal of capturing political power.

Similar Conditions

This leads to a second mechanism at play in both waves. As implied in the discussion thus far, a critical factor was also the existence, at least in the minds of opposition leaders viewing their victorious counterparts, of similarities in problems, opportunities, and goals. These similarities, however, were easier to draw in the first than in the second wave.

A number of analysts have commented on the ways in which the structure of domestic communist regimes, the Soviet bloc, and even the ethnofederal Yugoslav, Soviet, and Czechoslovak states was ideally suited for the transmission of political and economic change, whether supportive of Soviet and local party control or threatening to both. The case for structural isomorphism and the ways this eventually undermined the centers in these three constellations – that is, the Soviet Union in the bloc, the communist parties in individual countries, and the center as opposed to the republics in the ethnofederations – has been made in detail elsewhere.[41] However, it is important to recognize the *attitudinal* side to this story. These similarities were widely recognized, not just by Soviet leaders intent on homogenization and domination and Soviet generals afraid that one leak could bring the entire ship down,[42] but also by oppositions and citizens. This is one major reason why, despite political constraints, the oppositions in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech lands began to pool ideas and resources in the second half of the 1980s; to issue common manifestos; and to publicize in various ways their support for oppositions in more repressive contexts, such as Romania, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Russia. Thus, although the oppositions were diverse in size, strategies, and goals, they nonetheless assumed that their struggle against authoritarianism was a common struggle.[43]

The multiplication of states and types of regimes that took place in the region from 1989 to 1992, in contrast, erected boundaries among regimes in the postcommunist period that, in theory at least, should have weakened

[41] Ibid.

[42] Zdeněk Mlynář, *Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism* (translation of *Mráz přichází z Kremlu*) (New York: Karz, 1980).

[43] See Joppke, *East German Dissidents*; Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution*; and Alan Renwick, "Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist? Varieties of Dissidence in East-Central Europe and Their Implications for the Development of Political Society," *East European Politics and Societies* 20:2 (May 2006), 286–318.

considerably the regional impulse for cross-national diffusion of political change. However, there were nonetheless some factors that rendered these new boundaries more porous than they might have seemed from a purely structural perspective. One was widespread awareness on the part of the oppositions and citizens throughout the region as a result of the political and economic performance of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia in the 1990s that there was an optimal approach to transition, and that it consisted of a sharp political (including electoral) break with the authoritarian past followed by a rapid transition to democracy and capitalism.[44] At the same time, to downplay the potential for diffusion on the basis of growing dissimilarities after communism is to ignore the existence of many parallels among the regimes that served as the sites of democratic change through application of the electoral model.

Just as these countries shared a communist past, with its similar ledger of obstacles to transition, they shared a similar postcommunist profile. This profile included in most cases a recent transition to independent statehood; earlier rounds of political protests, both accompanying state disintegration and more recently focusing on such issues as corruption and threats to democracy; former communists in power who used familiar and similar ploys to maintain their political positions; and heterogeneous populations that, while often providing a pretext for authoritarian leaders to maintain power by accentuating cultural and ethnic differences, also made consolidation of authoritarianism difficult as a result of the politicization of difference. With the exceptions of Bulgaria and Slovakia, moreover, the regimes that experienced these pivotal elections tended to be hybrids of democracy and dictatorship that featured regular elections, limited opportunities for political competition, and some civil liberties and political rights, but also (in every case) fragmented liberal oppositions and corrupt authoritarian incumbents. Moreover, most of them suffered from serious economic problems – though this was less true of Slovakia and Croatia.

Collaborative Networks

The third mechanism by which innovations move from place to place is the existence of transnational collaborative networks that fan out from the original site of the innovation and that "carry" the new model with them. It is easy to forget that the history of communism was not just the history of the spread of a regime type and its eventual decline; it was also a history of the spread of networks that first supported the diffusion of communism and then another set of networks that poked holes in its legitimacy and that were eventually responsible for ending its political hegemony. In the course of this chapter, we have already said a great deal about these networks under communism and postcommunism. However, it is important to recognize that these networks

[44] Valerie Bunce, "Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from the Postcommunist Experience," *World Politics* 55:2 (January 2003), 167–192.

featured different structures in the two waves and played a far more important role in the cross-national diffusion of electoral confrontations with authoritarian rule.

During communism, the networks were primarily contained within the region, even though the Helsinki Process and periodic linkages with various Western European groups did occur.[45] However, these ties with groups outside the region were difficult to forge, given the closed borders for most of these countries and the ideological tensions between a Western Left focused on issues of peace and divided over the Soviet experiment and the politics of dissent in the communist region, which was less taken with the overarching importance of peace and certainly not divided over the meaning of the Soviet experiment.[46] Moreover, cross-national linkages among dissident communities within the region were hard to assemble and solidify, because of both border control and variations in dissident cultures from place to place. As a result, it was primarily in the 1980s that dissidents from various countries in the region began to make common cause.

The transnational networks that arose in support of the electoral model of democratization, by contrast, drew together an unusually complex array of players, including local and regional dissidents; a range of nongovernmental organizations; "private" players, such as the Open Society and its founder, George Soros; the Mott Foundation; Rockefeller Brothers; and democracy promoters from both Europe and the United States (such as the United States Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy and their funded projects and groups, such as Freedom House, the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems).[47] Although authoritarian leaders tried to prevent these networks from ending their rule, especially in the more authoritarian contexts of Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, and while they have been especially successful in this endeavor in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan, for the successful electoral challenges to authoritarian rule at least there were far fewer barriers after communism than during it to the expansion and geographical extension of

[45] See, for instance, Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies* 8:1 (December 1993), 153–188; Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect*; Gillian Wylie, "Social Movements and International Change: The Case of Détente 'From Below,'" *International Journal of Peace Studies* 4:2 (July 1999), 61–82; Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution*; and Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002).

[46] Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution*; Joppke, *East German Dissidents*; and Wylie, "Social Movements."

[47] See Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*; and Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004).

transnational networks supporting the defeat of dictators. Moreover, the West, in direct contrast to the situation for much of the communist era, had shifted in the decided direction of full support for democracy abroad – especially, it is important to recognize, in the postcommunist region (although even there, concerns about oil and gas, as well as security, sometimes trumped this priority).

Two other factors were critical. One was the rapid proliferation of the nongovernmental communities in postcommunist countries, beginning in the late 1980s – a proliferation that served as both a focus of Western assistance and a focus for opposition activities. At the same time, the electoral model itself facilitated transnational organization. Political protests do not always invite support, even from purportedly committed democrats, but free and fair elections do. And electoral assistance, it can be argued, is far less complex to administer and far easier to frame as legitimate activity to leaders in target states than, say, external support for mass demonstrations against the government.

We have addressed elsewhere the role of the United States in electoral revolutions and the role of regional networks in bringing together "graduates" of these electoral revolutions with local oppositions and nongovernmental organizations.[48] Suffice it to note here that the electoral challenges to authoritarianism depended upon a convergence among American verbal and financial support of free and fair elections; committed and energetic regional exporters armed with valuable lessons about strategies; and vibrant local oppositions and NGO communities. While it is fair to argue that the first wave of mobilization from 1987 to 1990 was assisted by transnational networks, the second wave of electoral revolutions was *fueled* by such networks.

This comparison of the drivers behind the two waves of mobilizations against authoritarianism carries several key lessons insofar as diffusion and the role of domestic and international factors in regime change are concerned. One is that perceptions – and not just objective conditions – matter. As our interviews with participants in both waves indicate, the assumption by opposition groups of similar political contexts and opportunities played a key role in the cross-national spread of challenges to authoritarian rule. Another is that the spread of subversive innovations has stiff requirements. Similar conditions, demonstration effects, or transnational networks are not sufficient in themselves to transfer highly controversial innovations from one country to another. This is a conclusion that also appears in the chapter written by Mark Kramer. Finally, the weight of our three mechanisms nonetheless varied across the two waves, given changes in both domestic and international regime contexts.

[48] Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*; "International Diffusion"; and "Transnational Networks."

THE UNEVEN CHARACTER OF DIFFUSION

Our focus thus far has been on dynamics that tied groups of regimes together in each wave of mobilization against authoritarian rule. However, as we note in our overviews of what transpired in each of the waves, there were always holdouts: that is, either countries where such mobilizations failed to take place or countries where they occurred but did not succeed in toppling authoritarian rule. The reach of diffusion, in short, was finite – as it always is. The question, therefore, is why diffusion was uneven across time and space – a question that returns us to the very puzzle that motivated this volume. We would argue that similar factors came into play, whether we examine the first or the second wave or focus on the uneven spread of challenges to authoritarian rule across time and space within each of our waves. First, as our overviews demonstrate, the diffusion of innovation, especially when that innovation is radical and therefore subverts the existing order, always moves from more to less optimal circumstances – which is one reason why some countries emerge as leaders in this difficult process and others as followers. Thus, from a purely structural standpoint, as we argued earlier, there were significant differences among communist regimes during the Cold War period and, more recently, among regimes that straddled democracy and dictatorship with respect to their geographical proximity, their cultural similarities, and the density of their institutional ties. At the same time, as Martin Dimitrov highlights in his introductory chapter and as Kellee S. Tsai (Chapter 8), Thomas P. Bernstein (Chapter 2), and Mark Kramer (Chapter 6) in particular note in their chapters, some authoritarian regimes are, again in a structural sense, more vulnerable than others, given differences in, say, economic performance, the size and experience of the opposition and civil society organizations, the adaptability of political institutions, and the capacity of authoritarian leaders to institutionalize their rule and to build durable and united coalitions.[49] In turn, a regime like North Korea, as Charles Armstrong argues in his chapter, has been particularly successful at resisting diffusion. In short, not all communist regimes or the mixed regimes that succeeded them are equally good candidates for participation in significant and successful cross-national challenges to authoritarian rule.

At the same time, agency effects play a key role as well. As the wave of demonstrations against communism and the wave of electoral defeats of authoritarian leaders or their anointed successors spread, authoritarians, especially if they are vigilant, have more and more opportunities to learn from the

[49] See, especially, Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chaps. 2 and 8; Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," and "Deer in Headlights"; Bunce and Wolchik, "Getting Real"; Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, "Comparing Oranges and Apples: The Internal and External Dimensions of Russia's Turn Away from Democracy," in Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 253–273.

experiences of their neighbors. Thus, they are able, because of the luxury of being "structural laggards," to fashion strategies that protect their rule from internal and external challenges. For example, they court the police and security forces; increase their control over public spaces, the media, civil society organizations, and electoral procedures; harass, divide, and demobilize the opposition; crack down on allies who might consider defecting; promote their own political and economic models abroad and form alliances with one another; and use the economy to court citizens in general and difficult groups, such as students, in particular (as Nazarbayev did on the eve of the 2005 elections in Kazakhstan; as Yeltsin did in 1996; and as Putin and Medvedev did as well in the 2007 to 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections in Russia).[50] At the same time, because these actions make mobilizations more difficult and because oppositions often assume in light of the run of electoral victories in the neighborhood that successful challenges to authoritarian rule are not so hard to orchestrate, challenges to authoritarian rule that take place later in the wave tend to be far less planned and elaborate and, therefore, weaker in their impact than mobilizations that occur earlier in the wave. For instance, just as the size of the protests in Armenia in 2008 was much smaller than what we saw in Serbia in 2000 and Ukraine in 2004, so the Armenian opposition, like the oppositions in Belarus in 2006, Azerbaijan in 2005, and Russia in 2008, although forging greater unity than in the past, nonetheless fell considerably short of forming the broad electoral coalitions that were victorious in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine. Also striking is the fact that electoral mobilizations failed to unseat dictators when the elections lacked the full-scale deployment of external and/or internal election monitors – a failure that prevented democratic oppositions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus from being able to document for all citizens to see, once the votes were tabulated, a clear contrast between the "real" election results and the ones announced by the regime.[51]

Yet another constraint on the ability of each of these waves to blanket the region as a whole and to extend beyond the region was the accumulation over the course of the wave of less and less attractive political outcomes associated with mobilizations against authoritarianism. For example, just as authoritarian

[50] See Randall W. Stone, *Lending Credibility: The International Monetary Fund and the Postcommunist Transition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 116–168; Aryeh Neier and Leonard Benardo, "Russia: The Persecution of Civil Society," *New York Review of Books* 53:7 (April 27, 2006); C.J. Chivers, "Kremlin Puts Foreign Private Organizations on Notice," *New York Times*, October 20, 2006, A8; M. Steven Fish, *Democracy Derailed in Russia: The Failure of Open Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); National Endowment for Democracy, *The Backlash against Democracy Assistance: A Report* (Washington, DC, 2006); Bunce and Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*, chaps. 7, 8; and Karrie Koesel and Valerie Bunce, "Dictatorships in Collaboration: Russian and Chinese Efforts to Stop the Diffusion of Democratic Change," paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting, Chicago, April 22–24, 2010.

[51] Bunce and Wolchik, "Defeating Dictators."

leaders in both Armenia and Azerbaijan have been very quick to try to legitimate their rule and cast serious doubt on the wisdom of mounting popular protests against them by highlighting (and usually exaggerating) the chaos next door as a result of the Georgian electoral breakthrough in 2003, so Lukashenka in Belarus and Putin/Medvedev in Russia have done the same with respect to developments in Ukraine after the victory of Yushchenko in 2004. Similar arguments, moreover, have been made by the Chinese with respect to what followed the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and the political instability that followed the fall of Askar Akaev in Kyrgyzstan in 2005.[52] Put succinctly: nothing supports the continuation of authoritarian rule like nearby examples of the costs involved in challenging such rule.

In the case of the second wave, moreover, three additional constraints on collective action against regimes presented themselves as the wave of electoral confrontations with authoritarian leaders moved from the Balkans to the post-Soviet space. One was the absence of political opportunities for change in China, North Korea, Laos, Vietnam, and Cuba. In none of these countries do we find even semicompetitive national elections. Second, as already noted, there was a fraying of the transnational network as it spread to locales farther and farther removed from Central and Southeastern Europe, where it had originated and where it had benefited from shared borders, established contacts among oppositions, and accumulated rich experiences, in particular among U.S. democracy promoters drawn from multiple postings in the states of Eastern and Central Europe. If such networks were very thin in countries such as Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan, moreover, they were nonexistent in China, Vietnam, Laos, and Cuba. The final constraint on the spread of collective challenges to authoritarian rule was a change in U.S. policies regarding democracy promotion. Energy politics, strategic geopolitical location, large domestic markets, and concerns about the victory of Hamas in Palestine in 2006 together reduced the priority the United States attached to, say, the defeat of dictators in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, and Kazakhstan or democratic change in China.

Thus, diffusion dynamics are limited in their reach and their impact, because the wave moves to more and more challenging environments; such environments in turn are less supportive of demonstration effects and assumptions of similarities among sites; transnational networks fray as they radiate outward from the original contexts in which they formed; authoritarians are able to engage in preemptive strikes based on what they learn from dangerous precedents in their neighborhood; and oppositions lack the resources and the patience to emulate in detailed fashion the ensemble of strategies their counterparts elsewhere in the region used to win power. For these reasons, therefore, a once very powerful process of transmitting challenges to authoritarian rule begins to fail and finally draws to a close.

[52] See, especially, Koesel and Bunce, "Dictatorships in Collaboration."

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter has been to frame the puzzle of variations in the durability of communist regimes as a question involving differences in the receptivity of these regimes, along with the more or less authoritarian regimes that succeeded them in postcommunist Europe and Eurasia, to the cross-national diffusion of anti-regime mobilizations by opposition groups and ordinary citizens. The logic in looking at the survival rates of such regimes in this fashion is based upon three observations. One is that the collapse of communism took place in a relatively brief span of time in a group of contiguous states that were in most cases part of the same regional economic, political, and security system. Another is that the communist regimes that resisted this development were more removed from this region in geographical, cultural, and organizational terms. Finally, the region where communism ended also served as a site for subsequent rounds of mobilizations against authoritarian rule. Put simply, there seems to be a distinctively regional effect in the durability and the demise of both communism and authoritarianism. That recognized, however, the cross-national diffusion of popular protests can take place in other regions, especially if, as in the Middle East and North Africa, they resemble in many ways the region of concern in this study.[53]

We then compared these two waves of challenges to authoritarian rule in Europe and Eurasia and drew the following conclusions. First, a diffusion dynamic was indeed at play in both rounds, and this dynamic reflected the impact of similar local contexts, demonstration effects, and the impact of transnational networks. Second, differences in local regime contexts and in the availability of the drivers of diffusion explain why some countries participated in a significant way in these two waves of change, others featured lower levels of mobilization, and still others resisted even limited degrees of engagement.

What implications can we draw from this comparative analysis of diffusion processes about the larger question of communist collapse versus durability? Here, we would conclude with three observations. First, what used to be called the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and what is currently called Eastern and Central Europe and postcommunist Eurasia is a region of the world that is unusually prone to diffusion dynamics in general and the cross-national spread of innovative challenges to authoritarian rule in particular. In this sense, communism fell there, but not elsewhere, for a simple reason: this region was distinctive in its ability to support the cross-national diffusion of democratic change. One major reason for this striking regional effect, aside from shared boundaries, cultural commonalities, proximity to a democratic West, and a

[53] See, for example, David Patel, Valerie Bunce, and Sharon L.Wolchik, "Fizzles and Fireworks: A Comparative Perspective on the Diffusion of Popular Protests in the Middle East and North Africa," in Marc Lynch, ed., *The Arab Uprisings in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

history of the cross-national spread of democratic change that dated back to 1848, was the density of institutional and opposition ties that developed during the communist experience. These ties, in turn, lived on after communism departed from the regional stage. Second, even in this region, however, the dynamics of regime change were quite uneven across country and over time. Thus, resistance to diffusion in this region, as in others, such as the Middle East and North Africa, is an important component of what happens when domestic capacities for change interact with external influences that shape both opportunities for change and the resources available to exploit these opportunities. Finally, we can learn a great deal about the vulnerability and durability of communist regimes from the experiences of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe under communism and the experiences of this part of the world after communism. In particular, we can argue that authoritarian regimes are unlikely to unravel if they are located in regions that are loosely integrated, that are composed of primarily authoritarian regimes, and that are dominated by states intent on preserving authoritarian rule. At the same time, we can conclude that transitions from authoritarian politics may require not just domestic receptivity to such changes, because of the values, interests, experiences, and strategic sophistication of the democratic oppositions and the vulnerability of the regimes they confront, but also because of international influences that expand opportunities for change. These latter influences include the power of demonstration effects in neighboring countries; the parallels, both objective and subjective, that can be drawn between authoritarian regimes that have experienced democratic breakthroughs and regimes in the neighborhood that have not; and the role of transnational networks that combine a range of local and international democracy activists. Put differently: transitions from authoritarian rule in fact have steep requirements, and the puzzle of why communism endured or departed can only be explained by the interaction between domestic and diffusion dynamics.

6

The Dynamics of Diffusion in the Soviet Bloc and the Impact on Regime Survival

Mark Kramer

This book explains why some communist regimes collapsed, whereas others – China, Cuba, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam – withstood the revolutionary upheavals of 1989–1991. To understand why these five communist regimes survived when so many others perished, we need to examine the factors and processes that led to the demise of communism in Eastern Europe, Mongolia, and the Soviet Union but did not end communist rule elsewhere. One crucial element in the downfall of communist regimes was the process of international "diffusion," a topic I will be exploring in this chapter.

The chapter begins by briefly explaining why the spillover of political change and turmoil from one country into another played such an important role in the collapse of the Soviet and allied communist regimes. The chapter then specifies how the concept of "diffusion" has been elaborated by scholars of varying perspectives (realist, liberalist, constructivist) and applied to various geographic and temporal contexts, not just to the Soviet bloc in 1989–1991. Using this framework, the chapter distills several points about the process of diffusion that linked the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Mongolia in the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. The concluding section explains why this process did not destabilize the resilient communist regimes. The Chinese regime did experience significant effects of diffusion in the spring of 1989 with the emergence of the Tiananmen Square protests, but the threat to the regime's survival was abruptly eliminated in early June 1989 when the Chinese Politburo ordered troops to open fire on serried crowds of demonstrators, killing vast numbers. If the Chinese authorities had not brutally crushed the Tiananmen Square unrest, diffusion from the Soviet bloc might well have extended further, potentially undermining some of the resilient communist regimes. The decisive crackdown in Beijing not only solidified Chinese communist rule but also kept the process from subverting any of the other communist regimes outside the Soviet orbit.

POLITICAL SPILLOVER AND DIFFUSION

The Soviet bloc loosened a good deal after Iosif Stalin's death, but the constraints imposed by the Brezhnev Doctrine (the term coined in the West after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia to refer to the Soviet Union's determination to preserve orthodox communist regimes in Eastern Europe, if necessary through the use of force) ensured that the bloc remained far more tightly integrated than any "normal" grouping of states.[1] Developments in one communist country therefore could, and often did, have repercussions in other Eastern Bloc states. On numerous occasions, major political changes in the Soviet Union spilled over into the East European countries. In 1953, for example, the post-Stalin leadership struggle in Moscow had a crucial impact on the political situation in the East European countries, and the same pattern was evident three years later when Nikita Khrushchev moved ahead with de-Stalinization at home and abroad.[2] On other occasions the spillover was in the opposite direction. Soviet leaders feared that political unrest and instability in an East European country, if left unchecked, would prove "contagious" in the Soviet Union. Concerns about this prospect played a salient role in the Soviet Politburo's deliberations during the crises in 1953, 1956, 1968, and 1980–1981.[3]

This structural feature of the Soviet bloc took on added significance in the late 1980s when the Soviet Union embarked on policies of glasnost (much greater openness) and democratization that generated ferment throughout Eastern Europe. Young people in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and other East European countries were emboldened by the changes in the Soviet Union, and they pressed for sweeping reforms in their own countries. Although most of the East European governments tried to maintain orthodox policies, they found it increasingly difficult to resist the "winds of change." The emerging situation was reminiscent of what happened in 1956, when political realignments and de-Stalinization in the USSR fueled turmoil in Eastern Europe. In early November 1956, after a violent revolution erupted in Hungary and led to the

[1] On the genesis and nature of the Brezhnev Doctrine, see Mark Kramer, "The Kremlin, the Prague Spring, and the Brezhnev Doctrine," in Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed., *Promises of 1968: Crisis, Illusion, and Utopia* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 285–370.

[2] See Mark Kramer, "The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making (part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1:1 (Winter 1999), 3–55; Mark Kramer, "The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making (part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1:2 (Spring 1999), 3–38; Mark Kramer, "The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making (part 3)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1:3 (Fall 1999), 3–66; and Mark Kramer, "The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33:2 (April 1998), 163–215.

[3] See the sources adduced in note 1 of Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5:4 (Fall 2003), 178–179.

collapse of the communist regime, the Soviet Union undertook a large-scale invasion to restore Hungary's communist system.

The surge of unrest in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s followed a similar pattern, but the calculus in Moscow about how to respond was fundamentally different. Unlike in 1956, when Nikita Khrushchev ultimately relied on military force to preserve the communist bloc, Mikhail Gorbachev was intent on eschewing all military options in the region.[4] Instead, he actively encouraged drastic political changes in Eastern Europe that would defuse the potential for another violent uprising like the one that engulfed Hungary in October–November 1956. Although Gorbachev could not foresee that his promotion of far-reaching change in Eastern Europe would help precipitate the downfall of the communist systems there, he correctly sensed that unless he acted in a timely manner to head off violent rebellion in the Warsaw Pact countries he might soon be confronted by the same sort of dilemma that nearly undermined Khrushchev in the autumn of 1956. The combination of Gorbachev's domestic reforms and his reorientation of Soviet foreign policy had a profound impact on the politics of Eastern Europe. The sweeping changes in Moscow filtered into the rest of the Soviet bloc, affecting not only Hungary and Poland but also the countries that staunchly resisted liberalization.

Although the spillover within the Soviet bloc initially was unidirectional (i.e., from the USSR into Eastern Europe), this pattern began to change by early 1989. Far-reaching political changes in Hungary and Poland increasingly reverberated within the Soviet Union as well as within the four East European countries that were trying to resist liberalization (East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania). The upheavals that swept through Eastern Europe in the latter half of 1989 magnified the spillover into the USSR. The ensuing recriminations in Moscow about the collapse of East European communism helped to fuel a hard-line domestic backlash in late 1990 and 1991, culminating in the failed coup in Moscow in August 1991. Events that Gorbachev once thought were under his control ultimately had repercussions far in excess of what he had anticipated.

The direction of the spillover in Soviet–East European relations was thus inverted by the rapid series of convulsions in 1989. Having begun as a largely unidirectional phenomenon in 1986–1988, the spillover became multidirectional in 1989, spreading initially from Hungary and Poland into the USSR and subsequently from Hungary, Poland, and the USSR into the four other Warsaw Pact countries. In the last four months of 1989, the spillover into the Soviet Union and the hard-line East European countries emanated not only from Poland and Hungary but also from additional East European countries, as turmoil overtook East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania in swift succession. In the wake of the 1989 revolutions, the spillover in Soviet–East European relations

[4] See Mark Kramer, "The Demise of the Soviet Bloc," *Journal of Modern History* 83:4 (December 2011), 788–854.

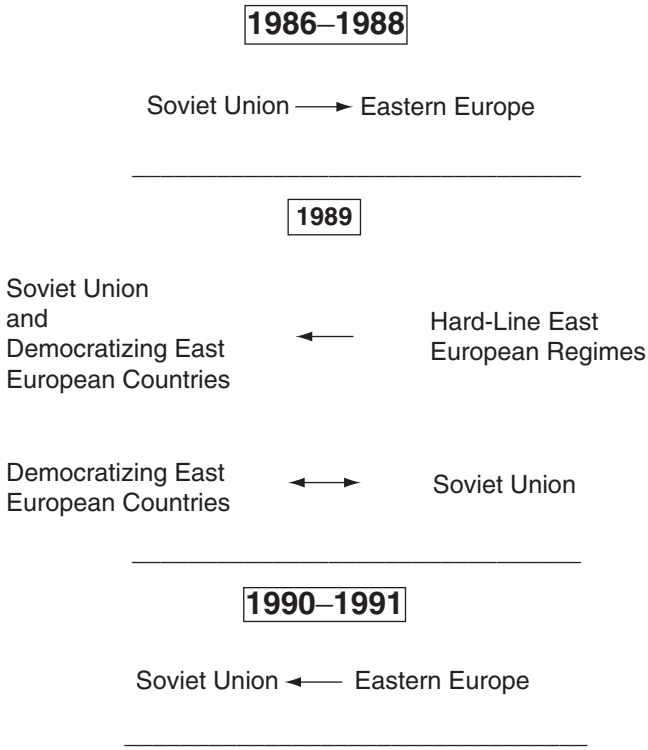

FIGURE 6.1. Directionality of Spillover in Soviet–East European Relations, 1986–1991.

shifted back to a unidirectional pattern. Unlike in 1986–1988, however, the direction of the spillover in 1990–1991 was mainly *from* Eastern Europe *into* the Soviet Union. The changing directionality of the Soviet–East European spillover in 1986–1991 is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

This aspect of the transformation of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s sheds interesting light on recent scholarly discussions of "waves" of democratization, the international context of democratic change, the transnational diffusion of norms and ideas, the cross-national spread of social movements and collective action, the reciprocal transfer of policies and institutions from core to periphery, and the potential for cross-border "demonstration effects."[5] Economic historians, sociologists, organizational theorists, legal

[5] Sarah A. Soule, "Diffusion Processes Within and Across Movements," in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2004), 294–310; Marco G. Giugni, "The Cross-National Diffusion of Protest," in Hanspeter Kriesi, Ruud Koopmans, and Jan W. Duyvendak, eds., *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995),

scholars, public policy specialists, and military analysts have long been interested in the international diffusion of technological innovations, commercial practices, popular culture, welfare policies, criminal activities, political ideologies, moral and ethical principles, environmental and legal standards, warfighting techniques, and other social and political phenomena, but the literature on the spread of democratization, economic liberalization, and separatism is much more rudimentary.[6] As recently as 1986, one of the editors of a landmark four-volume compendium of essays analyzing transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy claimed that "local political actors [in democratic transitions] operate with an exceptionally high degree of autonomy" and experience little or no influence from forces and events outside the country undergoing transition. He

181–206; Pamela E. Oliver and Daniel J. Myers, "Networks, Diffusion, and Cycles of Collective Action," in Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, eds., *Social Movements and Networks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 173–203; Daniel J. Myers and Pamela E. Oliver, "The Opposing Forces Diffusion Model: The Initiation and Repression of Collective Violence," *Dynamics of Asymmetrical Conflict* 1:2 (2008), 164–189; Pamela E. Oliver and Daniel J. Myers, "The Coevolution of Social Movements," *Mobilization* 8:1 (2002), 1–24; Ruud Koopmans, "Protest in Time and Space: The Evolution of Waves of Contention," in Snow, Soule, and Kriesi, eds., *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, 19–46; and Holger Lutz Kern, "Foreign Media and Protest Diffusion in Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of the 1989 East German Revolution," *Comparative Political Studies* 44:9 (September 2011), 1179–1205.

[6] The literature on international diffusion is immense. For a sample of important works, see Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2003), which includes an extensive bibliography (on pp. 477–535) of items pertaining mostly to the diffusion of technological and organizational innovations; Kerstin Tews and Martin Jänicke, eds., *Die Diffusion umweltpolitischer Innovationen im internationalen System* (The Diffusion of Environmental Innovations in the International System) (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005); Barbara Wejnert, "Integrating Models of Diffusion of Innovations: A Conceptual Framework," *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002), 297–326; Zachary Elkins and Beth Simmons, "On Waves, Clusters, and Diffusion: A Conceptual Framework," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 598 (2005), 33–51; Beth A. Simmons, Frank Dobbin, and Geoffrey Garrett, eds., *The Global Diffusion of Markets and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Joel Best, ed., *How Claims Spread: Cross-National Diffusion of Social Problems* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2001); Paul Lopes and Mary Durfee, eds., *The Social Diffusion of Ideas and Things* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999); Nebojša Nakićenović and Arnulf Grübler, eds., *Diffusion of Technologies and Social Behavior* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1991); Peter J. Hugill and D. Bruce Dixon, eds., *The Transfer and Transformation of Ideas and Material Culture* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988); Peter Schmidt, ed., *Innovation: Diffusion von Neuerungen im sozialen Bereich* (Innovation: The Diffusion of Innovations in the Social Sphere) (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1976); Josef Kleine, *Investitionsverhalten bei Prozessinnovationen: ein Beitrag zur mikroökonomischen Diffusionsforschung* (Investment Behavior of Process Innovations: A Contribution to Microeconomic Research on Diffusion) (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1983); Lawrence A. Brown, *Innovation Diffusion: A New Perspective* (New York: Methuen, 1981); Michael Mintrom and Sandra Vergari, "Policy Networks and Innovation Diffusion: The Case of State Education Reforms," *Journal of Politics* 60:1 (February 1998), 126–148; David Strang and John W. Meyer, "Institutional Conditions for Diffusion," *Theory and Society* 22:4 (August 1993), 487–511; and Torsten Hägerstrand, *Innovation Diffusion as a Spatial Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). For a conceptual discussion that is illuminating on many points but diverges in a few important respects from my own understanding of diffusion, see Benjamin A. Most and Harvey Starr, "Theoretical and Logical Issues in the Study of International Diffusion," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 2:4 (December 1990), 391–412.

averred that "external factors can play only a secondary role" in democratization and that "internal forces [are] of primary importance in determining the course and outcome of the transition."[7] One of his coeditors later regretted that "one of the most confident assertions [in the compendium] was that 'domestic factors play a predominant role in the transition.'"[8] The international context was so often omitted or downplayed in early studies of democratization that one scholar referred to it as the "forgotten dimension" of democratic transitions.[9]

Although many political scientists, historians, and economists in the 1970s and 1980s studied the international diffusion of war, rebellion, military coups, terrorism, urban violence, and financial crises,[10] the notion that this same process could be associated with democratization and separatism (the two phenomena that are of particular relevance in the case of the former Soviet bloc) did not really take hold until dramatic changes suddenly occurred in Eastern Europe and the Soviet

[7] Laurence Whitehead, "International Aspects of Democratization," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 4, 20. For a differing perspective, see Samuel P. Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly* 99:2 (Summer 1984), 193–218, which emphasizes the potentially "decisive importance" of external influences, albeit not the types of influences discussed here.

[8] Philippe C. Schmitter, "The International Context of Contemporary Democratization," *Stanford Journal of International Affairs* 2 (Fall/Winter 1993), 2.

[9] Geoffrey Pridham, "Democratic Transition and the International Environment," in Geoffrey Pridham, ed., *Transitions to Democracy: Comparative Perspectives from Southern Europe, Latin America, and Eastern Europe* (Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth, 1995), 445.

[10] See, for example, Stuart A. Bremer, "The Contagiousness of Coercion: The Spread of Serious International Disputes, 1900–1976," *International Interactions* 9:1 (January–March 1982), 29–55; Stuart Hill and Donald Rothchild, "The Contagion of Political Conflict in Africa and the World," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 30:4 (December 1986), 716–735; Rodger M. Govea and Gerald T. West, "Riot Contagion in Latin America, 1949–1963," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25:2 (June 1981), 349–368; Benjamin A. Most and Harvey Starr, "Diffusion, Reinforcement, Geopolitics, and the Spread of War," *American Political Science Review* 74:4 (December 1980), 932–946; Henk W. Houweling and Jan G. Siccama, "The Epidemiology of War, 1816–1980," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 29:4 (December 1985), 641–663; Jan Faber, Henk W. Houweling, and Jan G. Siccama, "Diffusion of War: Some Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Evidence," *Journal of Peace Research* 21:3 (September 1984), 277–288; Andrew M. Kirby and Michael D. Ward, "The Spatial Analysis of Peace and War," *Comparative Political Studies* 20:3 (October 1987), 293–313; Brian L. Pitcher, Robert L. Hamblin, and Jerry L. L. Miller, "Diffusion of Collective Violence," *American Sociological Review* 43:1 (February 1978), 23–35; Richard P. Y. Li and William R. Thompson, "The 'Coup Contagion' Hypothesis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 19:1 (March 1975), 63–88; Leonard Berkowitz and Jacqueline Macaulay, "The Contagion of Criminal Violence," *Sociometry* 34:2 (June 1971), 238–260; Stephen J. Kobrin, "Diffusion as an Explanation of Oil Nationalization: Or the Domino Effect Rides Again," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 29:1 (March 1985), 3–32; Reuven Glick and Andrew K. Rose, *Contagion and Trade: Why Are Currency Crises Regional?* National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 6806, 1998; Randolph M. Siverson and Harvey Starr, "Opportunity, Willingness, and the Diffusion of War, 1816–1965," *American Political Science Review* 84:1 (March 1990), 47–67; and Randolph M. Siverson and Harvey Starr, *The Diffusion of War: A Study of Opportunity and Willingness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

Union in 1989–1991.[11] In a book published in 1991 assessing the recent global "wave" of democratization, Samuel Huntington argued that "snowballing" (which, he says, "may be variously termed demonstration effect, contagion, diffusion, emulation, . . . or perhaps even the domino effect") had contributed to the spread of democratic change. But Huntington acknowledged that "analyzing . . . demonstration effects in individual cases is difficult and would require more intensive study than is possible here."[12] He offered no way of gauging whether "snowballing" had been a significant factor in the latest surge (i.e., "third wave") of democratization. In the years since then, the literature on this topic, including conceptual and theoretical discussions, individual case studies, comparative overviews, and large-n statistical analyses, has burgeoned, but some key issues remain in dispute.

The concepts of "diffusion," "demonstration effects," and "spillover" have at times been used loosely or ambiguously in the literature, and it is therefore important to clarify them here. The term "spillover," as used in this chapter, refers to three external-internal links between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (and Mongolia) during the Gorbachev era: (1) the spread of political reform and democratization from the USSR into the East European countries and Mongolia in the late 1980s, (2) the spread of revolutionary change and upheavals from country to country in Eastern Europe in the latter half of 1989, and (3) the impact of the demise of East European communism on the internal complexion of the Soviet Union (and Mongolia) after 1989. Unlike in China, where the spillover from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was decisively halted by the Tiananmen massacre, the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were ultimately unable to prevent the surge of political turmoil from undermining them.

The destabilizing impact of the disintegration of East European communism on the Soviet Union in 1989–1991 was manifested in numerous ways, which in a series of earlier articles I grouped into two broad categories: direct effects and indirect effects.[13] Direct effects included the emergence of new actors and governments in Eastern Europe that provided support and inspiration to

[11] For an important early study of the diffusion of democratization in the period from 1974 to 1987, see Harvey Starr, "Democratic Dominoes: Diffusion Approaches to the Spread of Democracy in the International System," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35:2 (June 1991), 356–381. For an updated and substantially revised version of Starr's analysis, covering the years through 1996, see Harvey Starr and Christina Lindborg, "Democratic Dominoes Revisited: The Hazards of Governmental Transitions, 1974–1996," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47:4 (August 2003), 490–519.

[12] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 33, 100–106, 287–289.

[13] Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (part 1)," 178–256; Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:4 (Fall 2004), 3–64; and Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (part 3)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7:1 (Winter 2004–2005), 3–96.

separatist movements and pro-democracy activists in the Soviet Union, the measures adopted by hard-line Soviet officials to try to prevent the spread of unrest from Eastern Europe into the USSR, the steps taken by Soviet opposition groups and by newly elected leaders in some of the union republics (especially Russia, the Baltic republics, Georgia, and Moldova) to counter the hard-liners' rearguard actions, and the high-level recriminations and acrimonious public debate in Moscow about the "loss" of Eastern Europe, a debate that not only led to ever greater political polarization in the USSR but also detracted from the legitimacy of the Soviet regime. These effects, in combination, helped to precipitate the collapse of the Soviet state.

Indirect effects of the demise of East European communism included the lessons drawn by Soviet elites and opposition groups from the de facto (and later de jure) collapse of the Warsaw Pact. The leaders of separatist movements and pro-democracy organizations in the Soviet Union increasingly sensed that they had much greater leeway to pursue fundamental change in their own country, especially if they went about it nonviolently. They also concluded, more firmly than before, that the Soviet government was unwilling to use force consistently and decisively even when confronted by severe challenges to the stability of the USSR. Soviet elites, for their part, were aware that the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe had cast doubt on and discredited the Marxist-Leninist ideology and institutions that had long undergirded both the Soviet bloc and the Soviet regime itself. Even those who wanted to crack down ruthlessly on the opposition were increasingly uncertain and diffident about their ability to restore order. Others came to believe that the Soviet system had already reached a point of no return and that their only recourse was to defect to the pro-democracy forces. These growing cleavages within the Soviet elite reinforced Gorbachev's own lack of resolve. He desperately hoped to prevent the Soviet Union from unraveling but was never willing to use all-out force.

SPILLOVER THROUGH DIFFUSION

The spillover in all these cases – from the Soviet Union into Eastern Europe (1986–1989), from democratizing East European countries into the Warsaw Pact states that were resisting liberalization (1989), and from Eastern Europe into the Soviet Union (1990–1991) – was driven by the process of diffusion. Diffusion occurs within countries as well as across borders, but the chief focus here is on *international* diffusion, which encompasses the spread of ideas, events, institutions, procedures, innovations, identities, customs, or policies from one country to another, whether directly or indirectly. Specifically, international diffusion refers to a process whereby an event in state A (the adoption of an innovation, the onset of a financial crisis, the outbreak of ethnic unrest, etc.) affects the likelihood that a similar event will occur in state B. This process can be either planned or spontaneous, and the "adopters" of a practice are not necessarily aware that they are assimilating it from a "source" abroad. The process of

diffusion characterizes many social phenomena, including the spread of political unrest and political turmoil from one country to another, as in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.[14]

The phrasing of this definition leaves open the possibility that the occurrence of an event in state A will reduce rather than increase the likelihood that a similar event will occur in state B – a point emphasized in one of the early studies of international diffusion, by Manus Midlarsky.[15] In several articles on international diffusion published in the 1980s and 1990s, Benjamin Most and Harvey Starr likewise stressed the importance of considering "negative diffusion" as well as "positive diffusion," arguing that "inhibitory effects [are] as exemplary of diffusion processes as various forms of emulation." They acknowledged that negative diffusion is "difficult to deal with because the researcher is placed in the awkward position of trying to analyze 'events' that do not occur," but they stressed that "it is . . . entirely plausible that such processes operate."[16] Although my earlier work on the collapse of East European communism and its impact on the Soviet Union focused mainly on positive diffusion, my analysis left little doubt that inhibiting effects (or what I termed an "anti-demonstration effect") also played a key role.

A major advantage of studying the spillover from the Soviet Union into Eastern Europe in 1986–1989, from individual East European countries into others in 1989, and from Eastern Europe into the Soviet Union (and Mongolia) in 1989–1991 is that we know how the "adopters" in each Warsaw Pact country perceived the practices and innovations they were "importing" from other Eastern Bloc countries. That is, we can trace the *microprocesses* of cross-border diffusion. Such precision is infeasible when analyzing most other situations in which diffusion is thought to occur. As David Strang and Sarah Soule noted in their cogent overview of the literature on diffusion, "we typically know that potential adopters are brought into contact with the diffusing practice but do not know quite what they see, particularly whether they observe results. This inability to specify what is observed produces some theoretical fuzziness about the

[14] For other definitions, see the sources adduced in footnote 6 supra. For an interesting attempt to develop a stochastic hybrid dynamical systems model of diffusion within a country, showing how individual protests can steadily burgeon into a mass rebellion, see Richard Colbaugh and Kristin Glass, "Early Warning Analysis for Social Diffusion Events," *Security Informatics* 1:18 (November 2012), 1–44. Equally intriguing is the simple but powerful Bayesian model of information cascades developed in David Easley and Jon Kleinberg, *Networks, Crowds, and Markets: Reasoning about a Highly Connected World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 483–508. Although neither of these models can be applied directly to international diffusion, similar approaches (suitably adapted) can be used for a formal model of international diffusion, a task I will be undertaking elsewhere.

[15] Manus Midlarsky, "Mathematical Models of Instability and a Theory of Diffusion," *International Studies Quarterly* 14:1 (March 1970), 60–84, esp. 75.

[16] Quoted from Most and Starr, "Theoretical and Logical Issues in the Study of International Diffusion," 394; and Most and Starr, "Diffusion, Reinforcement, Geopolitics, and the Spread of War," 933, respectively.

microprocesses involved in diffusion."[17] One of the main purposes of my previous work on this issue was to examine the microprocesses of diffusion within the Soviet bloc as closely as possible.

Much of the theoretical and empirical literature on international diffusion (and diffusion in general) seeks to explain why and how it happens. Barbara Wejnert has rightly pointed out that "the manner of channeling information from an innovation's source to an adopter differs depending upon the innovation's consequences" and that "different mechanisms of interaction between the source of an innovation and an adopter result in diffusion processes that differ in nature."[18] The distinction rests on whether the consequences of the diffused phenomena are mainly public or private. Phenomena that have public consequences involve collective actors (governments, social movements, etc.) and public goods, or at least goods that affect large parts of society. Phenomena that have private consequences affect mainly the well-being of individuals or small private groups. The emphasis here is primarily on the spread of democratization, political unrest, collective protest action, and separatism, all of which are clearly phenomena with public consequences.

Numerous explanations of the cross-border diffusion of these sorts of activities have been proposed. The explanations can be grouped into six broad categories that are potentially relevant when analyzing the spillover from the USSR into Eastern Europe and vice versa:

1. realist conceptions of a powerful state (or international organization) that induces weaker states to embrace its own preferred policies or practices. The dominant state or organization may do this by forcibly imposing its preferences on weaker states (as the Soviet Union did in Eastern Europe under Stalin),[19] by demanding that certain policies be adopted as a quid pro quo for the provision of coveted "goods" (as the U.S. government and the International Monetary Fund have done when setting conditions for foreign aid recipients, or as the European Union has done when setting terms for prospective new members),[20] by serving as a focal point for the harmonization of policies (as the United States has often done in key areas of commercial, transportation, and financial regulation, and as the

[17] David Strang and Sarah A. Soule, "Diffusion in Organizations and Social Movements: From Hybrid Corn to Poison Pills," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998), 269.

[18] Wejnert, "Integrating Models of Diffusion of Innovations," 300.

[19] See Mark Kramer, "Stalin, Soviet Policy, and the Consolidation of a Communist Bloc in Eastern Europe, 1944–1953," *Europe-Asia Studies*, forthcoming.

[20] Gordon Crawford, *Foreign Aid and Political Reform: A Comparative Analysis of Democracy Assistance and Political Conditionality* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Colin J. Bennett, "Review Article: What Is Policy Convergence and What Causes It?" *British Journal of Political Science* 21:2 (April 1991), 215–233; Olav Stokke, *Aid and Political Conditionality* (London: Frank Cass, 1995); and Karen Henderson, ed., *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union* (London: UCL Press, 1999).

European Union has done with regard to the monetary, social, and fiscal policies of its member-states),[21] or by establishing a hegemonic international order embodying the dominant state's preferred institutions and ideas, which are then adopted and become taken for granted by other states in the system (as the United States was able to do after World War II when it ensured that liberal capitalism became the basis of the global economic order with the exception of the Soviet bloc).[22]

2. structural realist conceptions of a diffusion/emulative mechanism inherent in the competitive nature of international relations. In this depiction, states come to pursue similar military, economic, and technological policies in order to prevent other states from gaining a military or economic edge.[23] The great powers, according to this school, will seek to deny advantages to their rivals and may even strive for military or economic superiority of their own.[24] Perhaps the best-known proponent of this view

[21] Armin Schäfer, *Die neue Unverbindlichkeit: Wirtschaftspolitische Koordinierung in Europa* (The New Non-Binding: Economic Policy Coordination in Europe) (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2005); Christopher Knill, "Cross-National Policy Convergence: Concepts, Approaches, and Explanatory Factors," *Journal of European Public Policy* 12:5 (2005), 764–774; Simon Bulmer et al., *Policy Transfer in European Union Governance: Regulating the Utilities* (London: Routledge, 2007); Simon Bulmer and Stephen Padgett, "Policy Transfer in the European Union: An Institutionalist Perspective," *British Journal of Political Science* 35:1 (2005), 103–126; and Claudio M. Radaelli, "Policy Transfer in the European Union: Institutional Isomorphism as a Source of Legitimacy," *Governance* 13:1 (January 2000), 25–43.

[22] See, for example, Beth A. Simmons and Zachary Elkins, "The Globalization of Liberalization: Policy Diffusion in the International Political Economy," *American Political Science Review* 98:1 (February 2004), 171–189; G. John Ikenberry, "The International Spread of Privatization Policies: Inducements, Learning, and Policy Bandwagoning," in Ezra N. Suleiman and John Waterbury, eds., *The Political Economy of Public Sector Reform and Privatization* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 88–110; Jacint Jordana and David Levi-Faur, "The Diffusion of Regulatory Capitalism in Latin America: Sectoral and National Channels in the Making of a New Order," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 598 (2005), 102–124; and John Gerard Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order," *International Organization* 36:2 (Spring 1982), 379–415.

[23] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 76–77, 92, 127.

[24] Structural realists are divided on the question of whether states actively pursue superiority or are content to maintain their existing position in the international order. "Defensive" realists like Kenneth Waltz argue that states seek to maintain their current position and to ensure their survival but are not driven by aggressive motivations or a desire for global or regional domination. "Offensive" realists like John Mearsheimer argue that because "states quickly understand that the best way to ensure their survival is to be the most powerful state in the system," they continually seek to increase their power. See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 33–35. On the offensive-defensive realist split, see Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay," *International Security* 17:1 (Summer 1992), 190–196; Benjamin Frankel, "Restating the Realist Case: An Introduction," in Frankel, ed., *Realism: Restatements and Renewal* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), esp. xiv–xviii;

is Kenneth Waltz, who has argued that "contending states imitate the military innovations contrived by the country of greatest capability and ingenuity. And so the weapons of the major contenders, and even their strategies, begin to look much the same the world over."[25] Waltz's argument implies that even if some states might prefer, ceteris paribus, to go their own way, the competitive pressures of the international system induce them to emulate one another. This process is the international analogue of what Michael Hannan and John Freeman have described as the "competitive isomorphism" of government and corporate organizations.[26]

3. rational learning (sometimes called "lesson-drawing") whereby actors in one country observe events or policies in another country and modify their own behavior and ideas accordingly.[27] Individuals or groups or government organizations in state A may decide to emulate a successful tactic used in state B, or, conversely, they may decide to avoid certain policies or practices that seem, on the basis of state B's experience, to be risky, ineffective, or unduly costly to adopt. This category of explanations overlaps with the previous category, but it merits a separate listing to indicate that it is not necessarily tied to considerations about the structure of the international system. Moreover, this category implies a greater degree of autonomy and initiative on the part of domestic actors.

Randall L. Schweller and David Priess, "A Tale of Two Realisms: Expanding the Institutions Debate," *Mershon International Studies Review* 41:1 (May 1997), 1–32; and Jack Snyder, *The Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 9–13.

[25] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 127.

[26] Michael T. Hannan and John H. Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations," *American Journal of Sociology* 82:5 (March 1977), 929–964.

[27] For a cogent critique of the "lesson-drawing" and "policy-transfer" literature, see Oliver James and Martin Lodge, "The Limitations of 'Policy Transfer' and 'Lesson Drawing' for Public Policy Research," *Political Studies Review* 1:2 (April 2003), 179–193. Prominent examples and useful surveys of the rational-learning literature include Mark Evans, "At the Interface between Theory and Practice: Policy Transfer and Lesson-Drawing," *Public Administration* 84:2 (June 2006), 479–489; Covadonga Meseguer, "Rational Learning and Bounded Learning in the Diffusion of Policy Innovations," *Rationality and Society* 18:1 (2006), 35–66; Richard Rose, *Lesson-Drawing in Public Policy: A Guide to Learning across Time and Space* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1993); Richard Rose, *Learning from Comparative Public Policy: A Practical Guide* (London: Routledge, 2004); David P. Dolowitz and David Marsh, "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making," *Governance* 13:1 (January 2000), 5–23; Mark Evans, "Understanding Policy Transfer," in Mark Evans, ed., *Policy Transfer in Global Perspective* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 10–42; David Dolowitz and David Marsh, "Who Learns What from Whom? A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature," *Political Studies* 44:2 (October 1996), 343–357; Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, "Systematically Pinching Ideas: A Comparative Approach to Policy Design," *Journal of Public Policy* 8:1 (January 1988), 61–80; Lawrence A. Grossback, Sean Nicholson-Crotty, and David A. M. Peterson, "Ideology and Learning in Policy Diffusion," *American Politics Research* 32:5 (September 2004), 521–545; and Kurt Weyland, ed., *Learning from Foreign Models in Latin American Policy Reform* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004).

4. social constructivist notions of the spread of international norms through social mobilization and social learning. From the social constructivist perspective, cross-border diffusion becomes possible when the collective identities of important actors in state A change in response to an international norm (a shared set of expectations about proper standards of behavior and proper attitudes).[28] Once this identity change occurs, the norm can spread to state A either from the bottom up or from the top down, depending on the specific actors involved.[29] In the bottom-up version, diffusion occurs when nonstate actors unite in support of the

[28] Constructivism is a rubric for a large, diverse body of work. Some strands of constructivism are incompatible with other strands (e.g., modernist versus postmodernist). For useful overviews and analyses of the constructivist literature, see Emanuel Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations," in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2003), 95–118; Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), chap. 1; Emanuel Adler, *Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2005); Antje Wiener, "Constructivism: The Limits of Bridging Gaps," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 6:3 (September 2003), 252–275; Theo Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Regime," *International Studies Review* 4:1 (June 2002), 49–72; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4:1 (2001), 391–416; Ted Hopf, "Constructivism All the Way Down," *International Politics* 37:3 (September 2000), 369–378; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. 3–47; Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23:1 (Summer 1998), 171–200; Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory: A Review Article," *World Politics* 50:2 (January 1998), 324–348; and Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf, and Paul Kowert, eds., *International Relations in a Constructed World* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998).

[29] For a thoughtful explication of the social constructivist perspective on norm diffusion, see Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe," *International Studies Quarterly* 43:1 (March 1999), 83–114, which overlaps with Checkel's earlier discussions in "Social Construction and Integration," *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4 (Special Issue 1999), 545–560 and "International Norms and Domestic Politics: Bridging the Rationalist-Constructivist Divide," *European Journal of International Relations* 3:4 (December 1997), 473–495. Checkel relies, at least implicitly, on this same framework in some of his subsequent analyses of European integration; see, for example, his "Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change," *International Organization* 55:3 (August 2001), 553–588. Similar perspectives focusing on the international spread of democratization can be found in Hans Peter Schmitz, "Domestic and Transnational Perspectives on Democratization," *International Studies Review* 6:3 (September 2004), 403–426; Andrew P. Cortell and James W. Davis, "How Do International Institutions Matter? The Domestic Impact of International Rules and Norms," *International Studies Quarterly* 40:4 (December 1996), 451–478; and Thomas Risse, "The Power of Norms versus the Norms of Power: Transnational Civil Society and Human Rights," in Ann M. Florini, ed., *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 177–209. For a critique of the constructivist emphasis on norm diffusion, see Sidney Tarrow, "Transnational Politics: Contention and Institutions in International Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4:1 (2001), 7–8.

norm and are successful in pressuring government elites to comply with it. In the top-down version, diffusion occurs when high-level government officials themselves internalize the norm and modify state A's policies accordingly. Diffusion in this latter instance is more than a simple process of emulation or political pressure; it involves a deeper social learning that transforms intersubjective understandings of the world. Although collective (and individual) identities normally are slow to change in any major way, a political crisis or another dramatic event that contravenes long-shared understandings can greatly expedite the process.

5. spatial-diffusion models emphasizing the importance of "neighborhood effects" (geographic proximity) in the spread of democratization. Statistical analyses covering many decades of experience have shown that if state A is an authoritarian regime surrounded by democratizing (or democratic) states and state Z is an authoritarian regime surrounded by nondemocratic states, state A will be far more likely than state Z to undergo democratization.[30] The larger the number of democratic states in the "neighborhood," the greater the odds that state A will embark on democratic reforms. In principle, the spread of democracy will gradually encompass the whole of state A's neighborhood. Although most advocates of this view have not clearly specified the mechanisms of diffusion, the notion seems to be that democracy will spread to neighboring states through a demonstration effect and through deliberate actions taken by key actors in newly democratizing states – either the governments or unofficial groups – to promote democracy in their "neighborhood." At one time, geographic propinquity was crucial to facilitate communications between protest movements in state A and those in state B. Although this factor is no longer as relevant in an era of wireless telecommunications and the Internet, the unrest in the Arab world in 2011 suggests that other aspects of the spatial diffusion model, especially demonstration effects, do remain salient.
6. concrete spillover from one state to another. Even without any process of emulation or identity change, an event can diffuse from one state to another if the concrete by-products of the event spread either deliberately or inadvertently to neighboring states. This dynamic has been cited as one of the possible reasons for the diffusion of a phenomenon like ethnic

[30] Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, *All International Politics Is Local: The Diffusion of Conflict, Integration, and Democratization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002); John O'Loughlin et al., "The Diffusion of Democracy, 1946–1994," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88:4 (December 1998), 545–574; Mark J. Gasiorowski, "Economic Crisis and Political Regime Change: An Event History Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 89:4 (December 1995), 882–897; Starr, "Democratic Dominoes," 356–381; Starr and Lindborg, "Democratic Dominoes Revisited," 490–519; and Renske Doorenspleet, "The Structural Context of Recent Transitions to Democracy," *European Journal of Political Research* 43:3 (May 2004), 309–335.

conflict.[31] Violence between ethnic groups often produces outpourings of refugees from one or more of the warring groups. The flight of these refugees from state A to neighboring state B can lead to ethnic imbalances and large congregations of displaced, angry people in state B, increasing the likelihood that ethnic conflict will occur there as well. Similarly, some of the perpetrators of ethnic attacks in state A may pursue refugees across the border into state B, further increasing the chance that the sort of ethnic conflict under way in state A will be replicated in state B.

This last category of explanations is potentially compatible with most of the other explanations, but it deserves separate mention because the dynamic it posits is distinct from any of the others. The fifth category also is potentially compatible with the first four categories, but it, too, deserves separate mention because it highlights spatial considerations that are not intrinsic to explanations 1 through 4. The first four categories of explanations tend to be mutually exclusive of one another, though some variants of them are compatible.

In addition to explaining how and why international diffusion occurs, scholars have highlighted numerous factors that, in their view, are conducive to the process. Among the circumstances that are thought to facilitate cross-border diffusion are extensive media coverage of innovative actions or events in foreign countries, cultural and political similarities between the "adopters" and "sources," the use of the same (or a closely related) language in states A and B to facilitate the spread of information, interpersonal ties between the adopters and sources, inexpensive means of direct communication, the outbreak of a political or economic crisis that creates opportunities for collective political action and official departures from existing policies, a decision-making structure that

[31] See Stephen M. Saideman, "Is Pandora's Box Half-Empty or Half-Full? The Limited Virulence of Secessionism and the Domestic Sources of Disintegration," in David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, eds., *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 127–150; Kathleen Newland, "Ethnic Conflict and Refugees," in Michael E. Brown, ed., *Ethnic Conflict and International Security* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 143–163; Michael E. Brown, "The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict," in Michael E. Brown, ed., *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 571–602; John James Quinn, "Diffusion and Escalation in the Great Lakes Region: The Rwandan Genocide, the Rebellion in Zaire, and Mobutu's Overthrow," in Steven E. Lobell and Philip Mauceri, eds., *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics: Explaining Diffusion and Escalation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 111–131; Myron Weiner, "Bad Neighbors, Bad Neighborhoods: An Inquiry into the Causes of Refugee Flows," *International Security* 21:1 (Summer 1996), 5–42; Monty G. Marshall, "Systems at Risk: Violence, Diffusion, and Disintegration in the Middle East," in David Carment and Patrick James, eds., *Wars in the Midst of Peace: The International Politics of Ethnic Conflict* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 82–115; and Stephen John Stedman and Fred Tanner, eds., *Refugee Manipulation: War, Politics, and the Abuse of Human Suffering* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

encourages (or at least does not discourage) innovative policies and actions, temporal contiguity, shared cultural understandings that a particular action is both effective and morally right to pursue, relatively low transaction costs involved in adopting an innovative approach, and direct encouragement by authoritative and trusted actors.

How do these alternative ways of thinking about international diffusion help us to understand the collapse of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe (and of the Mongolian communist regime) and the subsequent demise of the USSR itself? A comprehensive analysis of this issue is beyond the scope of this chapter, but several key points are worth noting.

RELATIVE POWER AND THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND SEPARATISM

Realist studies have suggested that diffusion occurs when a strong state imposes policies or procedures on a weaker state or when an international organization requires that a state adopt certain policies in exchange for receiving assistance of some sort (usually economic) or for being granted membership in the organization.[32] My three articles on "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union" make clear that diffusion can occur even when a relatively weak state is promoting changes it desires in a much more powerful state. The governments and organizations in Eastern Europe that were providing support to separatist movements and pro-democracy groups in the Soviet Union were able to achieve a good deal of success even though the Soviet government was well aware that they were "interfering in the USSR's internal affairs." Soviet leaders were deeply averse to the steps taken by groups like Solidarity vis-à-vis the Baltic states and Ukraine and by the Romanian government toward Soviet Moldova, but they were unwilling to retaliate directly against the East European states.

The ability of East European leaders and groups to intervene with impunity in the USSR's internal affairs underscored how drastically the Soviet–East European relationship had changed during Gorbachev's tenure. Until the late 1980s, the power asymmetry between the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact states was reflected in a rigid hierarchy, with the USSR in a clearly dominant position. The asymmetry still existed after 1989, but the hierarchy did not. The relevance of the unequal power relationship was eliminated by the collapse of East European communism. The transformation of the region greatly

[32] The notion that coercion (the imposition of certain rules) is inherently an action taken by a stronger state against a weaker state, and never the other way around, is by no means limited to realists. See, for example, Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53:2 (Spring 1999), 379–408. Hurd provides an insightful critique of the realist position and offers an alternative perspective focusing on perceived legitimacy, but he implies that coercion is always practiced by stronger states against weaker states.

circumscribed Gorbachev's options and undermined most of the Soviet Union's leverage vis-à-vis its erstwhile allies. Not only was it infeasible after 1989 for Soviet leaders to contemplate the use of military force in the region, but Gorbachev even felt constrained about responding to East European "meddling" in Soviet politics. The Soviet Union's unwillingness to take forceful action against the political spillover from Eastern Europe went far beyond the "strategic restraint" displayed in the past by some great powers toward weaker states.[33] In those cases, the dominant power behaved with restraint but would not have stood by if groups within its territory that were hoping to secede or to overturn the existing political order had begun receiving assistance from outside. The steps taken by the East European governments and by organizations like Solidarity to support pro-democracy forces and separatist groups in the USSR contributed to the instability that ultimately doomed the Soviet state, yet the Soviet authorities did remarkably little to try to thwart this external influence.

INFORMATION AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

The importance of information and communications has been highlighted in almost all studies of cross-border diffusion.[34] Not surprisingly, these factors played a vital role in the spread of political ferment in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (and Mongolia). Because West German television broadcasts reached the large majority of households in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), almost all East German citizens were able to watch uncensored coverage of Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost, much to the dismay of the GDR authorities. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe the amount of information available about the Soviet reforms increased sharply in 1988, when Gorbachev ended the jamming of Western shortwave radio transmissions and urged the East European governments to do the same. From then on, millions of people in Eastern Europe could learn as much as they wanted about the dramatic changes under way in the USSR.[35]

[33] The exercise of "strategic restraint" by victorious powers after major wars is the theme of G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also John Gerard Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). For a cogent critique of Ikenberry's argument, see Randall L. Schweller, "The Problem of International Order Revisited: A Review Essay," *International Security* 26:1 (Summer 2001), 161–186.

[34] For a brief overview, see John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields, "Diffusion of Innovations Theory," in John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields, eds., *Understanding Communication Theory: The Communicative Forces for Human Action* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1998), 175–207.

[35] Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 257–259.

The Soviet Union's own mass media also were instrumental in spreading the "winds of reform" into Eastern Europe. Soviet periodicals and newspapers, which had always been circulated but largely ignored in the East European countries, suddenly became a hot item during the Gorbachev era. The impact of the Soviet publications was especially far-reaching in countries like East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, where the authorities were staunchly opposed to any liberalization of their own media. Citizens in those countries avidly bought Soviet publications and shared them with their friends. Although the East German, Czechoslovak, Bulgarian, and Romanian regimes tried to halt the distribution of several Soviet periodicals and newspapers, their efforts proved largely futile as the sweep of glasnost in the Soviet media widened.[36] The East European governments had long required their citizens to learn Russian as a second language, and that policy came back to haunt them.[37] (In Bulgaria and, to a lesser extent, Czechoslovakia, linguistic similarities also heightened the impact of the Soviet periodicals and newspapers.) As more and more people in Eastern Europe obtained Soviet publications and read about the extraordinary debates and political reforms taking place in the USSR, they increasingly put forth collective demands for similar changes in their own countries.

The role of information during and after the 1989 upheavals in Eastern Europe was equally crucial, but in this case the direction of the spillover was *into*, not from, the Soviet Union. The advent of glasnost allowed Soviet elites and ordinary citizens to learn almost instantly about the events in Eastern Europe and to discuss their own country's problems much more freely. Despite a few lingering restrictions, the glasnost-era mass media kept millions of people in the Soviet Union informed about the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe, thus ensuring that those events had a powerful demonstration effect. The concept of demonstration effects presupposes that people know what is being demonstrated, and the concept of diffusion requires that people learn what is being diffused. In the pre-Gorbachev era, when the Soviet and East European media were tightly controlled and censored, such knowledge would have been impossible. But the advent of glasnost and the lifting of almost all restrictions in 1988–1989 enabled Soviet citizens to follow what was going on in Eastern Europe and

[36] See, for example, "Mitteilung der Pressestelle des Ministeriums für Post und Fernmeldewesen" (Communication from the Press Office of the Ministry of Postal Services and Telecommunications), *Neues Deutschland* (East Berlin), November 19–20, 1988, 2; Erich Honecker, "Mit dem Blick auf den XII. Parteitag die Aufgaben der Gegenwart lösen" (Solving the Tasks of the Present with a View to the 12th Party Congress), *Neues Deutschland* (East Berlin), December 2, 1988, 3; and the interview with Kurt Hager, the chief East German ideological official, in "Jedes Land wählt seine Lösung" (Each Country Chooses Its Own Solution), *Stern* (Hamburg), April 9, 1987, 140–141.

[37] On the importance of a common language in facilitating the spread of ideas from "sources" to "adopters," see Joel Best, "The Diffusion of Social Problems," in Best, ed., *How Claims Spread*, 6–7.

to push for comparable changes in the USSR. It also meant that they understood parallels and analogies to Eastern Europe when political leaders in the Soviet republics (Vytautas Landsbergis in Lithuania, Boris Yeltsin in Russia, the leaders of the Rukh Party in Ukraine) invoked them.

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL AND POLITICAL SIMILARITIES

Many empirical and theoretical studies have stressed that the likelihood of international diffusion is greatest when the adopters and sources are culturally and linguistically similar (or at least when they believe they are culturally similar).[38] My articles on "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union" bear out this finding. The spread of democratization from Poland, led by Solidarity, into the USSR was strong all through the western Soviet republics, but the Polish organization's influence was especially powerful in Lithuania and western Ukraine, regions with close historical and cultural ties to Poland and large populations of ethnic Poles. Similarly, the individuals and groups that spearheaded democratization in Hungary in 1989 had their greatest impact in the USSR on Estonia and portions of western Ukraine. Estonia has linguistic and cultural affinities with Hungary, and western Ukraine includes a sizable community of ethnic Hungarians, many of whom had been sympathetic to pro-democracy activists in Hungary since the 1950s (when demonstrations occurred in western Ukraine in support of Imre Nagy and the Hungarian Revolution). The Romanian officials who gained power in 1989–1990 after the removal of Nicolae Ceauşescu wielded far-reaching influence in Soviet Moldova, a republic that had been part of Romania before World War II and that used Romanian/Moldovan as its official language.

Political as well as cultural similarities played a salient role in the diffusion of political unrest and democratic change within Eastern Europe in 1989 and from Eastern Europe into the USSR after 1989. From mid-1989 on, pro-democracy groups in Russia and in other Soviet republics sought advice from democratic activists in Eastern Europe and attempted to emulate their tactics. The Democratic Russia movement and the popular fronts in the Baltic states explicitly invoked the changes in Eastern Europe when pressing for roundtable talks and other far-reaching measures in the Soviet Union. The political

[38] See, for example, Strang and Meyer, "Institutional Conditions for Diffusion," 487–511; Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*; David Snow and Robert Benford, "Alternative Types of Cross-National Diffusion in the Social Movement Area," in Donatella della Porta, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Dieter Rucht, eds., *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 23–39; and Marco G. Giugni, "Explaining Cross-National Similarities among Social Movements," in Jackie Smith and Hank Johnston, eds., *Globalization and Resistance: Transnational Dimensions of Social Movements* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 13–29.

affinities between these groups were conducive to the spread of political unrest even when no ethnic and cultural similarities existed. The prevailing mood was summed up by a Polish Solidarity official who gave the keynote speech at a mass rally of the Popular Front of Moldova (FPM) in August 1989, a time of sharply increasing political ferment in Moldova. The Solidarity representative declared, to thunderous applause, that the goals of Solidarity and the FPM were "one and the same."[39] Subsequent events revealed that the goals of the two organizations were in fact not identical (the FPM veered in an increasingly nationalist direction), but the desire for sweeping political change had become so widespread by 1989 that it spurred a diverse mix of pro-democracy and separatist groups in the Soviet Union to attempt to emulate Poland and Hungary.

IDENTITY CHANGE AND IDEOLOGICAL DISSOLUTION

The effects of the East European upheavals on the ideological underpinnings of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union shed interesting light on constructivist notions of norm diffusion and identity change. As I discussed at some length in one of my earlier articles, the collapse of East European communism undermined the ideological raison d'être of the Soviet regime.[40] Because many Soviet elites, including Gorbachev, had started out as genuine believers in communism and the official Marxist-Leninist ideology, they had to come to grips in 1989 with the demise of a core feature of their collective identity. Although Soviet ideology had moderated in the years since Stalin's death, the collective identity of Soviet elites had changed relatively little. The collapse of East European communism in 1989 thoroughly discredited Marxism-Leninism, thereby shattering whatever was left of the Soviet elites' shared identity. This development, in turn, facilitated the embrace of new societal norms such as "all-human values" (a nebulous term espoused by those who wanted a more flexible and accommodating foreign policy and a more open and less militarized domestic polity). Even those officials who had once fervently defended the communist system and Marxist-Leninist ideology were increasingly drawn toward norms associated with West European–style social democracy. By all indications, the acceptance of these democratic norms was, for many, a genuine process of social learning, rather than a mere tactical ploy. Although diehard Soviet communists sought to stem the spread of "alien" Western norms into Soviet political discourse, their efforts were undercut by the spillover from Eastern Europe.

[39] Cited in Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (part 1)," 216.

[40] Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (part 2)," 3–64, esp. 4–17.

The restructuring of ideological discourse in the Soviet Union conferred legitimacy on certain policy options that would have been inconceivable in the past.[41] For example, although Gorbachev ultimately decided not to hold a competitive election for the newly created Soviet presidency in March 1990, the very fact that several aides and Politburo members privately urged him to stand for election in a free and open vote was an indication of the profound discursive shift within the Soviet polity. Issues that had never even been considered in the past were suddenly on the agenda, and republic leaders who gained office through popular election, such as Yeltsin in Russia and Landsbergis in Lithuania, acquired much greater legitimacy than Gorbachev himself could command.

The spread of democratic norms into the Soviet Union in the wake of the East European upheavals also strengthened the authorities' desire to eschew violent repression. In earlier decades, Soviet leaders would not have hesitated to crush serious challenges to communist rule – the very sorts of challenges that became commonplace in 1989–1991. Gorbachev's (and others') reluctance to use large-scale force to hold the USSR together was not simply a matter of expediency or an effort to avoid antagonizing the West (although those considerations were certainly relevant). Rather, it reflected a fundamental change in the reformers' collective identity. By delegitimizing the resort to mass bloodshed under any circumstances even as fundamental challenges to Soviet rule were mounting, the reshaping of Soviet identity had fateful consequences for the Soviet state.[42]

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND THE INITIATOR-SPINOFF DYNAMIC

Many studies of the origins of protest movements have emphasized that new movements are most likely to arise when the structure of political opportunities expands (i.e., when "changes in either the institutional features or [the] informal political alignments of a given political system . . . significantly reduce the power disparity between a given challenging group and the state").[43] This notion, however, applies to the emergence of new movements *within* a country. In a

[41] On a similar point in a very different context, see Diane Stone, "Non-Governmental Policy Transfer: The Strategies of Independent Policy Institutes," *Governance* 13:1 (January 2000), 45–70, esp. 62, 66.

[42] The norm of avoiding large-scale violence lasted through the end of the Soviet period but not much beyond that in post-Soviet Russia, as the outbreak of the Russian-Chechen war in December 1994 demonstrated all too well. The reasons for the change of heart in Yeltsin's Russia lie beyond the scope of this chapter.

[43] See, for example, Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements: Its Impact on Their Mobilization," in J. Craig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans, eds., *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*

1995 essay on "initiator" and "spinoff" protest movements, Doug McAdam adapted this approach for the international context, arguing that spinoff movements can emerge in a foreign country (state B) even if the political opportunity structure in state B has not changed. McAdam claimed that the main reason an initiator movement in state A would give rise to spinoff movements in state B is not that the political opportunity structure in state B had become more favorable for protest movements (though it might have), but that the initiator movement was able to impart "ideational, tactical, and organizational 'lessons'" to the spinoff movements.[44]

McAdam's conception of the cross-border diffusion of protest movements fits well with the experience of established democratic states (he looked specifically at student movements in the United States and West Germany), but it needs to be significantly modified when applied to authoritarian or newly democratizing states, as in the case of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989–1991.[45] In the late 1980s the example of Solidarity in Poland inspired fledgling labor activists in Soviet Russia and Ukraine to seek to form their own independent labor unions – efforts that paid off remarkably well when crippling strikes erupted at Soviet coal mines in the summer of 1989. But one of the main reasons these efforts paid off is that by mid-1989 political opportunities in the Soviet Union had expanded immensely. During the heyday of Solidarity in 1980–1981, opportunities for workers in the Soviet Union to emulate the Polish union simply did not exist. Soviet leaders at the time were concerned that workers in the USSR might hear Western radio broadcasts about Solidarity and try to set up spinoff movements in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Politburo adopted numerous

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 167–198; Sidney Tarrow, "States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements," in Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 41–61; Doug McAdam, "Political Opportunities: Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions," in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, 23–40; Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); and Marco G. Giugni, "The Other Side of the Coin: Explaining Crossnational Similarities between Social Movements," *Mobilization* 3:1 (February 1998), 89–105. The concept originated with Peter K. Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," *American Political Science Review* 67:1 (March 1973), 11–28. For an insightful critique, see William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, "Framing Political Opportunity," in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, 275–290.

[44] Doug McAdam, "'Initiator' and 'Spin-off' Movements: Diffusion Processes in Protest Cycles," in Mark Traugott, ed., *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 217–239.

[45] In later work, McAdam acknowledged the need to study the cross-border spread of social movements in "non-democratic" and "non-Western countries." See, for example, Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, "Toward an Integrated Perspective on Social Movements and Revolutions," in Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 142–173.

measures to prevent such actions and to crush any attempts that might be made.[46] As a result, no spinoff movements ever took root in the pre-Gorbachev era. Gorbachev's reforms in the late 1980s, including the leeway he created for the emergence of unofficial groups, vastly expanded the opportunities for contentious politics in the Soviet Union. Spinoff movements modeled on foreign initiators (including Solidarity) were suddenly feasible.

Because the greatly expanded political opportunity structure in the Soviet Union allowed spinoff movements to form, a wide range of new social movements in the USSR – unofficial labor unions, environmental groups, student organizations, and many others – emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These spinoff movements were able to make use of "ideational, tactical, and organizational 'lessons'" from initiator movements in Eastern Europe, a process broadly analogous to McAdam's description of initiator and spinoff student movements in the United States and West Germany. Both during and after the Soviet coal miners' strikes in 1989, Polish union organizers and coal miners worked closely with their counterparts in Soviet Ukraine and Russia to help them strengthen their newly formed independent workers' organizations and to provide advice about strategy, tactics, fund-raising, and the like. The repertoire of contention established by Solidarity in 1980–1981 and 1988–1989 was replicated in the Soviet Union in 1989 and after.[47]

The spinoff movements in the Soviet Union benefited from both relational and nonrelational ties with the East European initiators. "Relational ties" are direct, interpersonal contacts, whereas "nonrelational ties" are indirect contacts via the mass media and other channels. In an article on the institutional conditions for cross-border diffusion of innovations, David Strang and John Meyer proposed a sharp distinction between these two mechanisms.[48] Subsequently, Doug McAdam and Dieter Rucht challenged this characterization, arguing that

> instead of two distinct types of diffusion, we see virtually all such processes making use of a mix of relational and non-relational channels. It is simply the distribution and relative importance of these two channels that shift as we move from geographically proximate to geographically distant groups of actors. Even in the case of cross-national diffusion, therefore, we expect direct interpersonal contacts to play a role. Specifically, we see

[46] On concerns about a spillover from Poland and the Soviet authorities' response, see Mark Kramer, "The Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact, and the Polish Crisis of 1980–1981," in Lee Trepanier, Spasimir Domaradzki, and Jaclyn Stanke, eds., *The Solidarity Movement and Perspectives on the Last Decade of the Cold War* (Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza, 2010), 27–47, esp. 33–39.

[47] On the international diffusion of "contentious repertoires" (the term coined by the late Charles Tilly to denote the forms of protest used by social movements), see the insightful analysis in Doug McAdam, "On the International Origins of Domestic Political Opportunities," in Anne N. Costain and Andrew S. McFarland, eds., *Social Movements and American Political Institutions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 251–267.

[48] Strang and Meyer, "Institutional Conditions for Diffusion," 487–511.

such ties as especially critical at the outset of the process in helping to encourage the identification of adopters with transmitters.[49]

The experiences of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Mongolia in 1989–1991 confirm the basic point made by McAdam and Rucht. Although nonrelational ties were vital at all stages, relational contacts made a critical difference early in the process and continued to play an important role thereafter. The spillover within Eastern Europe in 1989 and from Eastern Europe into the USSR and Mongolia in 1989–1991 encompassed both forms of diffusion.

The bonds between Solidarity and the fledgling workers' movements in the Soviet Union were closer than the links between most of the other East European initiator movements and their Soviet spinoffs. This difference was attributable in part to the shared identities of coal miners and other manual workers based on their common material (as opposed to strictly normative) interests. Studies of diffusion have long emphasized the importance of common occupational and class backgrounds in promoting the spread of innovations or unrest *within* a country.[50] This phenomenon is apt to be strongest when workers' occupational and class identities are not eclipsed by other social cleavages (e.g., along racial or ethnic lines).[51] The protest-movement spillover into the Soviet Union suggests that occupational commonalities can play a significant role in cross-border as well as domestic diffusion, spurred on by a genuine sense of labor internationalism.[52]

The advice and assistance that East European initiator movements provided to spinoff movements in the Soviet Union were reinforced by another important aspect of the spillover – the promotion of what McAdam has described as "insurgent consciousness."[53] Events in Eastern Europe helped to foster and congeal the perception among key groups in the Soviet Union that the existing political order was illegitimate (and indeed intolerable) and that it could be fundamentally changed through collective action. The new insurgent consciousness in the USSR was reflected in the way that protests against the regime were framed. Whether deliberately or inadvertently, activists in the Soviet Union emulated the slogans,

[49] Doug McAdam and Dieter Rucht, "The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528 (July 1993), 56–74, at 60.

[50] See Lopes and Durfee, eds., *The Social Diffusion of Ideas and Things*, passim; and Guy van Gyes, Hans de Witte, and Patrick Pasture, eds., *Can Class Still Unite? The Differentiated Work Force, Class Solidarity, and Trade Unions* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001).

[51] Ethnic unrest in the USSR, especially in the Baltic states, Moldova, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, did not have a fissiparous impact on the workers' movements in Ukraine and Russia, where ethnic differences per se were much more muted.

[52] See McAdam and Rucht, "The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas," 64. On the nature of labor internationalism, see the essay by August Thimtz, "Marx and Engels: The Prototypical Transnational Actors," in Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 245–268.

[53] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), chaps. 6–7. See also McAdam, "'Initiator' and 'Spin-off' Movements," 227–230.

symbols, concepts, and tactics of East European pro-democracy movements like Solidarity and Civic Forum.[54] This process bore out McAdam's observation that "the presence of a highly visible initiator movement makes the 'framing work' of all later struggles much easier" and that "the diffusion and creative adaptation by latecomers of the ideas of the early risers" can intensify a protest cycle.[55]

CYCLES OF PROTEST AND THE ADVENT OF UNTHINKABLE CHANGE

Sidney Tarrow's work on "protest cycles" and the spread of unrest from one part of society to another can also be applied to the diffusion of political ferment from one country to another, as in Europe in 1848 and the Soviet bloc in 1989–1991.[56] Tarrow characterizes a cycle of protest as the "rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors; a quickened pace of innovation in the forms of contention; new or transformed collective action frames; a combination of organized and unorganized participation; and sequences of intensified interaction between challengers and authorities which can end in reform, repression and sometimes revolution."[57] In the regions of the Soviet Union that were most heavily influenced by the spillover from Eastern Europe – the Baltic states, western Ukraine, and Moldova – Tarrow's description of a protest cycle fits extremely well. The unrest that spread from Eastern Europe into these regions took diverse forms depending on the specific context, but the "master frame" of the protests in every region was – as in Eastern Europe – the oppressiveness of life under Soviet communism.[58] The salience of this frame narrowed the leeway for moderates like Gorbachev and left the USSR increasingly polarized between radical reformers and separatists, on the one

[54] A similar process had occurred in 1989 in Eastern Europe. See Anthony Oberschall, "Opportunities and Framing in the Eastern European Revolts of 1989," in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, 92–121.

[55] McAdam, "'Initiator' and 'Spin-off' Movements," 228.

[56] Tarrow himself extended the concept to analyze coterminous surges of protest in multiple countries. See, for example, Sidney Tarrow, "'Aiming at a Moving Target': Social Science and the Recent Rebellions in Eastern Europe," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24:1 (March 1991), 12–20; Sidney Tarrow, "Cycles of Collective Action: Between Moments of Madness and the Repertoire of Contention," in Traugott, ed., *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action*, 89–115; and Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

[57] Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 154. For an elaboration on the concept, see Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 65–68.

[58] On the nature of "master frames" in protest cycles, see David A. Snow and Robert Renford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization," in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movements across Cultures* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1988), 197–218.

hand, and hard-line officials in the Soviet Communist Party, the state security organs (KGB), and the armed forces, on the other.

The start of the protest cycle in the Soviet Union depended on the huge expansion of political opportunities under Gorbachev, but the cycle itself, spurred on by the East European spillover, caused a further steady increase in both the political opportunity structure and the repertoire of contention. After the momentous events in Eastern Europe in 1989, protest actions in the Soviet Union that earlier would have been unthinkable – such as industrywide strikes and mass demonstrations against the central government – began to seem almost quotidian by 1990 and 1991. As Tarrow writes: "Forms of protest that would have [had] revolutionary implications in one system or time period may be treated as routine in another."[59] Individuals in the USSR who had been standing on the sidelines prior to 1989 and who then saw that their counterparts throughout Eastern Europe were able to achieve what they wanted by taking to the streets were more inclined to engage in similar protest actions against their own government. Much the same calculus applied to unofficial groups in the Soviet Union, whose numbers rapidly proliferated, and to the republic and local elites who sought to win the backing of these groups by embracing an increasingly radical agenda. Had it not been for the spillover from Eastern Europe, the protest cycle in the Soviet Union might well have peaked in mid-1989 and begun to fade thereafter (especially if the Soviet authorities had followed up on the April 1989 Tbilisi crackdown with the consistent use of repression elsewhere), but the demonstration effect from the upheavals in Eastern Europe gave a momentum to the protest cycle in the USSR that was much harder to contain and that took on a life of its own.

The final outcome of the diffusion process in the Soviet bloc and the USSR, with the continuation of the protest cycle until all the communist regimes (and the Soviet state) were dissolved, was highly atypical. Tarrow notes that "protest cycles can either end suddenly, through repression, or [end] more slowly, through a combination of features: the institutionalization of the most successful movements, factionalization within them and between them and new groups [that] rise on the crest of the wave, and the exhaustion of mass political involvement."[60] The spillover from Eastern Europe helped to sustain the protest cycle in the Soviet Union long enough and at a high enough level of intensity to keep the Soviet regime at bay until an exogenous event (the August 1991 coup attempt) intervened and drastically weakened the Soviet state, producing a further change in the political opportunity structure. During the remaining four months of the USSR, the Soviet government was so enervated that the granting of independence to the Baltic states, Moldova, and Georgia seemed almost like an anticlimax. The earlier protest cycle gathered momentum in the pivotal republic of Ukraine, which had received extensive help and advice from Polish Solidarity in 1989 and after. The growing defiance in Ukraine in late 1991, combined with the unmistakable

[59] Tarrow, "'Aiming at a Moving Target,'" 17.
[60] Ibid., 15.

ascendance of the Russian government over the Soviet regime, was bound to undermine the central Soviet institutions.

FAILED RESISTANCE TO DIFFUSION

The forces that are likely to resist diffusion have been highlighted in some studies, but they generally have received far less attention than the factors that promote diffusion. The main exception is in the study of social movements. Scholars in this field have produced an extensive literature on efforts by governments (or government-aligned groups) to repress and undercut social movements. One of the general conclusions to emerge from the literature is that violent repression can halt the spread of political unrest, provided that it is used consistently and decisively.[61] The inconsistent and irresolute use of force is likely to stimulate, rather than diminish, the level of protest. In this sense, the spillover from Eastern Europe proved crucial. Gorbachev's conspicuous unwillingness to use force in Eastern Europe decreased his ability to rely on violent repression at home. Not only did the East European events lend impetus to the norm of avoiding large-scale bloodshed, they also emboldened many of the groups within the USSR that were intent on challenging the regime – a trend that fueled the protest cycle. The continued diffusion of protest ensured that the longer Gorbachev delayed in carrying out mass repression, the greater the amount of violence he would need to use. This built-in escalation of the protest cycle, amid the growing perception that Gorbachev would not resort to large-scale violence under any circumstances, was untenable over the longer term.

Quite apart from Gorbachev's inconsistency and indecisiveness in the use of force at home, the far-reaching political changes he introduced within the USSR – notably the advent of electoral competition, the rise of unofficial groups and social movements, and the much greater freedom of assembly – thwarted rearguard attempts by hard-line officials in the Soviet Communist Party and the KGB state security apparatus to counter the spillover from Eastern Europe after 1989. The emerging political order in the Soviet Union encouraged politicians at the republic and local levels to vie for support among influential social movements, including some that were pursuing overtly political aims (e.g., pro-democracy activists, hard-line antireformists) and others that were seeking autonomy and even outright independence for ethnic communities (e.g., popular fronts representing titular nationalities in the republics). As fears of a

[61] Charles D. Brockett, "A Protest-Cycle Resolution of the Repression/Popular-Protest Paradox," in Traugott, ed., *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action*, 117–144; Julia A. Heath and T. David Mason, "The Calculus of Fear: Revolution, Repression, and the Rational Peasant," *Social Science Quarterly* 81:2 (June 2000), 622–633; and T. David Mason, *Caught in the Crossfire: Revolutions, Repression, and the Rational Peasant* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), chap. 5. See also Mark Kramer, "Introduction: The Collapse of the Soviet Union (part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5:4 (Fall 2003), 24–29.

Tiananmen-style crackdown dissipated in the Soviet Union, these groups urged local political leaders to step up the pace of change. The local authorities, in turn, had an incentive to accommodate the groups' increasingly radical demands in order to maintain their loyalty and votes. The reforms thus had a ratcheting effect on the boldness of local elites and social groups.[62]

As pro-democracy organizations and separatist movements intensified their demands and earned the support of key politicians, hard-line officials both at the local level and in Moscow were increasingly worried that everything they held dear would soon be lost. The situation evolved into a group security dilemma whereby even a small gain by reformist and separatist groups was perceived by the hard-liners as a dire threat.[63] Backed by nominally unofficial groups like the ultranationalist Soyuz, hard-liners in the KGB and the communist party sought to crack down on the individuals and groups in the Soviet Union that wanted to replicate the East European upheavals. But as the cycle of contention escalated, the challengers consistently stayed ahead of the antireformists in what Doug McAdam has described as an "ongoing process of *tactical interaction* in which insurgents and opponents seek, in chess-like fashion, to offset the moves of the other."[64] When hard-line officials in the Soviet Union tried to foreclose certain options, pro-democracy groups (led by Yeltsin) and separatist movements (e.g., Sajūdis) proved adept at expanding their repertoire of contention by emulating the tactics used by protesters in Eastern Europe in 1989. Social movements usually wither and die when they run out of tactical innovations that can sustain their efforts in the face of official resistance and repression. The spillover from Eastern Europe in 1989–1991 was crucial in enabling the "insurgents" in the Soviet Union to outflank their increasingly irresolute opponents.

THE SPILLOVER AND THE SALIENCE OF "NEIGHBORHOOD EFFECTS"

The pattern of Soviet–East European relations in the late 1980s and early 1990s confirms the importance of regionalism and neighborhood effects in the diffusion process. The primary "neighborhood" in this case was the Soviet

[62] On this phenomenon in the Soviet Union, see Charles F. Furtado Jr. and Michael Hecter, "The Emergence of Nationalist Politics in the USSR: A Comparison of Estonia and the Ukraine," in Alexander J. Motyl, ed., *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities: History and Comparison in the Study of the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 169–204. On the pattern more generally, see Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 113–118.

[63] Most of the time a security dilemma within a country is conceived of in ethnic terms. See, for example, Jack Snyder and Robert Jervis, eds., *Civil War and the Security Dilemma* (New York: Institute on War and Peace Studies, Columbia University, February 1997). In the Soviet Union, however, the group security dilemma involved political as well as ethnic groups, who often found common cause against hard-line opponents.

[64] Doug McAdam, "Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency," *American Sociological Review* 48:6 (December 1983), 735–754, at 736 (emphasis in original).

Union and the other Warsaw Pact countries, which formed a contiguous and politically cohesive unit in the eastern part of Europe. Because of the proximity of Albania and Yugoslavia to this neighborhood, these two countries experienced some of the democratizing spillover from the Soviet Union and (after 1989) its Warsaw Pact allies – which is precisely what one would expect from the theory of neighborhood effects. The situation in Albania and Yugoslavia played out differently, but the communist systems in both countries failed to survive.

Outside the Eastern Bloc neighborhood, the spillover into communist countries was much more containable. Although the "winds of reform" from the Soviet Union did have powerful effects on China in the spring of 1989, that phenomenon, as noted earlier, came to a decisive end in early June when the Chinese authorities implemented an all-out crackdown, killing and wounding thousands of people. The mass bloodshed in Beijing in June 1989 stood in marked contrast to the limited and ultimately ineffective repression pursued by Gorbachev in the USSR. The repression in China established the boundaries of the neighborhood, limiting it, with one exception, to just the communist countries of Europe. Despite the major political spillover from Eastern Europe into the Soviet Union in 1989–1991, there was no discernible spillover from Eastern Europe into the other communist countries well outside the region, such as Cuba, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam. The only exception was Mongolia, which, unlike the other Asian communist countries, had been under pervasive Soviet influence and Soviet military occupation for many decades.[65] In contrast to the other non-European communist countries, Mongolia was clearly a part of the Soviet bloc and in that sense was the exception that proved the rule.

RAPID DIFFUSION AND THE PARADOX OF TIGHT INTRA-BLOC TIES

The rapid pace of the spillover within the Soviet bloc highlights an important aspect of the spatial diffusion of democratization. As noted earlier, spatial explanations suggest that the spread of democratization from state A to state B is driven in part by the complexion of the region in which those states are located (i.e., by the proportion of neighboring states that are democratic). My articles on "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union" show that the strength (or "tightness") of ties among states in the region must also be taken into account when gauging the prospects for diffusion. The Soviet bloc was far more tightly integrated than any other region of the

[65] Sergey Radchenko, "The Soviets' Best Friend in Asia: The Mongolian Dimension of the Sino-Soviet Split," Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 42, November 2003. See also Morris Rossabi, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

world. The bloc encompassed dense political, military, state security, and economic links among all the countries, particularly between the Soviet Union and each of the East European states.[66] Until 1989 this expansive network of regional and bilateral ties bolstered Soviet control of the bloc and served as a barrier to political liberalization. But the paradox of the changes that occurred under Gorbachev is that, from 1989 on, this same structure *facilitated* rather than impeded the spread of political unrest and democratizing influences from Eastern Europe into the USSR – the very sorts of influences that eventually undermined both the Soviet regime and the Soviet state.[67]

On an international scale, this phenomenon was similar to what Matthew Evangelista has described as the "paradox of state strength" in the Soviet Union. Until 1985 the USSR's highly centralized and rigidly controlled political institutions were a barrier to unorthodox ideas, but after Gorbachev decided to solicit innovative advice about Soviet foreign policy, those same institutions proved conducive to the rapid upward flow of "new thinking."[68] Insofar as the density of Soviet–East European relations ultimately facilitated the spillover from Eastern Europe into the Soviet Union, it validates a point made by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, who have argued that "the more tightly coupled a group of countries are, the more a successful transition in any country in the group will tend to transform the range of perceived political alternatives for the rest of the group."[69]

STRENGTH OF DEMONSTRATION EFFECTS

In a 1992 assessment of the international diffusion of separatist and interethnic violence, John Vasquez concluded that "pure contagion plays an important role in spreading communal conflict through demonstration effects."[70] More recent studies, however, have tended to play down the significance of the international

[66] Mark Kramer, "The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: Spheres of Influence," in Ngaire Woods, ed., *Explaining International Relations since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 98–126. See also Mark Kramer, "The Soviet Bloc and the Cold War in Europe," in Klaus Larres, ed., *Blackwell History of Modern Europe* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2009), 108–143.

[67] Kristian Gleditsch considers the tightness of regional integration and the diffusion of democracy in *All International Politics Is Local*, 119–146, 188–190, but unfortunately he does not look at the connection between the two phenomena. Instead he assesses the connection between integration and the likelihood of conflict.

[68] Matthew Evangelista, "The Paradox of State Strength: Transnational Relations, Domestic Structures, and Security Policy in Russia and the Soviet Union," *International Organization* 49:1 (Winter 1995), 1–38.

[69] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 76.

[70] John A. Vasquez, "Factors Related to the Contagion and Diffusion of International Violence," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *The Internationalization of Communal Strife* (London: Routledge, 1992), 165.

dimension of this process. Stephen Saideman, for example, has argued that although "secessionism within [a] state increased the probability of more secessionism within [that same] state," it often had little or no impact on "the chances of separatism in other states."[71] Yet even if Saideman's argument holds true for Africa and Asia, the demonstration effect of political change in Eastern Europe clearly gave an important fillip to pro-democracy and separatist movements in the Soviet Union. Why were cross-border demonstration effects so powerful in this particular case? Three related factors account for the strength of the spillover.

First, until the late 1980s the domestic polities and economies of the East European countries were, in large part, replicas of the Soviet polity and economy. Although each country in the Soviet bloc had a few particular features of its own, the political and economic systems in those countries were overwhelmingly based on the Soviet model and were fundamentally different from the liberal democratic polities and market economies of Western countries. Hence, what happened in one East European country – or, even more, what happened in several East European countries simultaneously – was far more likely to affect other East European countries and the Soviet Union than if the Soviet and East European political and economic systems had been sharply different from one another. The broadly similar internal configuration and foreign alignments of the Warsaw Pact states meant that the local populations had many of the same political and economic grievances, giving greater resonance to demonstration effects.

Second, from the late 1940s on, the identity and self-legitimacy of the Soviet regime – and, to a large degree, of the Soviet state – were based in part on the maintenance of a communist bloc in Eastern Europe, a bloc that officially became known as the "socialist commonwealth" from the mid-1950s on. On numerous occasions – in 1953, 1956, 1968, and, indirectly, 1981 – Soviet leaders used military force to keep the socialist commonwealth intact. Although two isolated defections in Europe occurred with the departure of Yugoslavia in the late 1940s and Albania in the early 1960s, both of those states retained their communist systems even after they left the bloc. (Much of the same is true about China after it split with the USSR at the end of the 1950s.) Moreover, Soviet leaders strictly controlled the information available to the Soviet public about the rifts with Yugoslavia and Albania and the more serious rift with China. Hence, the impact of those defections on the internal complexion of the USSR was negligible. In 1989, by contrast, the changes in Eastern Europe were so rapid and enormous, and the availability of information about those changes was so much greater than

[71] Saideman, "Is Pandora's Box Half-Empty or Half-Full?" 171. Saideman slightly modifies his view in his later work. See, for example, R. William Ayres and Stephen Saideman, "Is Separatism as Contagious as the Common Cold or as Cancer? Testing the International and Domestic Determinants of Secessionism," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 6:3 (Autumn 2000), 91–114.

in the past, that they were bound to raise doubts about the legitimacy of the Soviet regime and the Soviet state.

Third, through the late 1980s the same actor – the Soviet government – had the ultimate say in *both* Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union on whether to accept or resist drastic political change. The Soviet authorities could have stepped in with large-scale military force to prevent the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989, just as they had numerous times in the past. But Gorbachev pointedly refused to do so. The upheavals in Eastern Europe had much stronger demonstration effects in the Soviet Union than they would have had if the final say on change in Eastern Europe had rested not with Moscow but with the local governments. This conclusion suggests, more generally, that cross-border demonstration effects are likely to be strong if the separatist movements and opposition groups in state A and those in state B are confronting the same central governing body. If the veto on change in state A does not emanate from the same central authority as in state B, cross-border demonstration effects are likely to be weaker.

CONCLUSION

The spillover in Soviet–East European relations in 1986–1991 occurred in three main stages – going from the Soviet Union into Eastern Europe in 1986–1989, from democratizing East European countries into antireformist East European countries in 1989, and from Eastern Europe into the Soviet Union in 1989–1991. This multistage process, culminating in the demise of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe (and Mongolia) and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union, illuminates important aspects of cross-border diffusion and neighborhood effects. Even though the impact of the East European upheavals on the Soviet polity was only one of many factors that led to the downfall of the Soviet regime and the unraveling of the Soviet state, the importance of the spillover should not be underestimated. The momentous changes that Gorbachev introduced in the Soviet Union would have made it difficult for him to preserve the Soviet system (and perhaps even the Soviet state) under the best of circumstances, but the repercussions from the collapse of East European communism greatly complicated his task.

The role of diffusion in the collapse of East European communism and in the dissolution of the Soviet Union underscores the potential for the rapid spread of turbulent change to upset even seemingly immutable social arrangements. In a scene from Henrik Ibsen's play *Pillars of Society* (1877), one of the characters, Lona Hessel, confronts the most powerful man in the town (her former lover) and warns him of the precariousness of hierarchical structures that appear permanent: "No one in the town dares to do anything other than defer to your wishes.... But all this grandeur, and you along with it, are founded on a treacherous swamp. A moment may come, a word may be spoken, and you

and all your grandeur will totally collapse."[72] Such was the fate of the Soviet bloc in 1989. The dramatic events of that year not only doomed the Warsaw Pact but also led to sweeping changes in Soviet society and politics that helped to precipitate the end of the USSR itself.

The process was not unstoppable if the Soviet authorities had been willing to crack down brutally and decisively in 1989 or 1990. The Chinese regime had shown in June 1989 that the overwhelming use of violence was highly effective in quelling unrest in Beijing before the situation got totally out of hand. Much the same was true of the harsh clampdown by Uzbek President Islam Karimov in May 2005. The mass bloodshed in Andijon not only allowed Karimov to stay in power and tighten his repressive rule, but also brought an abrupt halt to the seemingly inexorable wave of "colored" revolutions in the former Soviet Union.[73] If the Chinese authorities had failed to act as decisively as they did in June 1989, the far-reaching changes under way in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe might have caused political turmoil in China to intensify, possibly endangering communist rule there. Similarly, if Karimov had failed to respond as brutally as he did, he might have found Uzbekistan engulfed by a wave of destabilizing unrest.

The ability of the Chinese, Cuban, North Korean, Laotian, and Vietnamese communist regimes to survive the upheavals of the late 1980s and early 1990s rested in large part on their demonstrated willingness to rely on ruthless violence to deter or, if necessary, stave off any potential challenges. The absence of that factor in Moscow in 1989–1991 allowed the diffusion process to accelerate essentially unchecked in all the countries that had long been in Moscow's orbit (the Warsaw Pact member-states and Mongolia) as well as in the two other communist countries that were in the European "neighborhood," Albania and Yugoslavia. The same fate could have befallen the resilient communist regimes if they had emulated Gorbachev's desire to eschew the use of all-out repressive force, but the Tiananmen Square massacre left no doubt that they did not share Gorbachev's aversion to the use of large-scale violence when faced with mortal threats to their rule.

[72] Henrik Ibsen, *Samfundets støtter: Skuespil i fire akter* (Pillars of Society: Drama in Four Acts) (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1877), 109.

[73] For a variety of perspectives, see the chapter in this book by Valerie Bunce and Sharon L.Wolchik (Chap. 5); Mark R. Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5:2 (June 2007), 259–276; and Lucan Way, "The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy* 19:3 (2008), 55–69.

PART IV

INCLUSION AND RESILIENCE

7

Authoritarian Survival, Resilience, and the Selectorate Theory

Mary Gallagher and Jonathan K. Hanson

In this chapter, we delve into two of the key questions that Dimitrov (Chapter 1) argues are central to a theory of communist resilience. First, what is the basis of the rule of communist regimes, and how does it change over time? Second, why do some regimes collapse while others survive? As a framework for this analysis, we draw upon the selectorate theory as set forward in the *Logic of Political Survival* (*LPS*) by Bueno de Mesquita et al.[1] and later amended by Bueno de Mesquita and Smith.[2] This theory is presented as a parsimonious explanation for the survival of rulers, authoritarian and otherwise, based on key characteristics of a country's institutions for selecting a ruler. As such, it is a useful point of reference for evaluating many of the arguments raised in this volume. If the theory's predictions are accurate, a more narrow theory of communist resilience is unnecessary. We find, however, that the theory cannot explain the divergent outcomes of communist regimes.

The crux of the matter is that the selectorate theory predicts that outcomes in communist countries should resemble the outcome in North Korea: highly repressive rule by a narrow elite, unaccountable to the mass of citizens and offering little improvement in general welfare. The theory is thus unable to provide an adequate explanation for authoritarian rulers who mix political repression and growth-generating public goods, producing resilient authoritarian regimes buttressed by robust economic performance. Two of the five surviving communist regimes, China and Vietnam, fit this description, and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party appears intent upon pursuing a similar strategy.

Several decades ago, we might have described the Soviet Union and other European communist regimes using similar terms. As Dimitrov (Chapter 10)

[1] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

[2] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, "Political Survival and Endogenous Institutional Change," *Comparative Political Studies* 42:2 (2009), 167–197.

argues, however, the stability of these regimes was performance based. As long as they could fulfill their social contract, the regimes remained resilient. When lack of growth made the provision of social spending unsustainable, these regimes were weakened and eventually collapsed. Yet, Cuba and North Korea survived severe economic challenges in the 1990s. A theory of communist resilience should be able to explain these divergent outcomes.

We argue that both the shortcomings of the selectorate theory and insights regarding the divergence in outcomes across communist regimes can be revealed if we think in general terms about authoritarian rule as a balancing act involving the supply of carrots and sticks.[3] Carrots are measures intended to buy loyalty or acquiescence, while sticks are repressive measures that raise the costs of collective action against the ruler. It has become common in the growing literature on authoritarian politics to describe rulers' policy choices using some formulation of this dichotomy.[4] The relative costs of these measures depend upon country context. Accordingly, the optimal combination of carrots and sticks for survival of the ruler varies across cases and over time.

Additionally, we find it useful to expand the analysis to include the capitalist developmental states of East Asia. In terms of the selectorate theory, these cases are an important test. They make up some of the fastest growing economies in the post–World War II era, the kind of outcome that is predicted to appear only when rulers are accountable to broad coalitions. The rise of East Asian economic and political power began with Japan, and it has continued nearly unabated with the subsequent rapid development of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Since the 1980s, these capitalist economies have been joined by the reforming Asian socialist states, China and Vietnam, with both achieving high levels of economic growth, large reductions in poverty, and vastly increased integration into the global economy. Even if these countries are mere outliers, which we do not believe to be the case, the region as a whole should be examined for institutional differences that allowed these regimes to maintain high rates of economic growth despite domination of politics by a narrow elite.

Including general examples of authoritarian resilience in our analysis permits insight into the origins of communist resilience and collapse. The successful and adaptive resilience of China and Vietnam appears to have more in common with the developmental path of capitalist autocracies in the same region than with the other surviving communist states of North Korea and Cuba. The *resilience* of the Vietnamese and Chinese Communist Parties may be explained by reasons that

[3] Mary Gallagher and Jonathan K. Hanson, "Coalitions, Carrots, and Sticks: Economic Inequality and Authoritarian States," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42:4 (2009), 667–672.

[4] For examples, see Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2:1 (1999), 115–144; and Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

do not extend to the *survival* of the North Korean and Cuban regimes.[5] In other words, we make a distinction between regime resilience and survival. Survival is simply a matter of maintaining power over an extended period. Resilient regimes, however, not only survive but also thrive and adapt while fostering the growth of the national military and economic power. They remain the unchallenged authority during periods of significant social and economic change. Kellee S. Tsai (Chapter 8) also focuses on this ability of the Chinese state to adapt to new social and economic realities through reliance on informal institutions that incorporated into the Chinese Communist Party a revived private entrepreneurial class.

Examination of these cases reveals not their idiosyncrasies but rather general problems in the selectorate theory's analysis of authoritarian political survival. Two interrelated problems stand out. First, the selectorate theory, even as modified by Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, deals inadequately with the possibility of a challenge from the unenfranchised, those who are outside the selectorate. In particular, the theory imposes a limited range of policy options upon authoritarian rulers involving few carrots and many sticks. Second, if we part with the assumption of the *LPS* that members of the selectorate have homogeneous preferences, it becomes clear that the composition of the ruling coalition is at least as important as its size. Narrow ruling coalitions are fully compatible with rapid development, depending on the preferences of those in the coalition. In the East Asian capitalist developmental states, as well as China and Vietnam, these alliances fostered the provision of public goods despite the exclusion of the popular sector from substantive political power.

The general structure of this chapter is as follows. The selectorate theory is described more fully in the first section. The subsequent section describes the two shortcomings of the selectorate theory in greater detail. The third section draws evidence from the East Asian cases to underscore the importance of accounting for the preferences of the unenfranchised in the ruler's decision-making calculus as well as the composition of the selectorate. The final section concludes.

THE SELECTORATE THEORY

The selectorate theory connects a polity's institutions for selecting rulers to the policy choices rulers make and their prospects for survival, and it describes these selection institutions in the most skeletal terms possible. The actors in the formal model presented in *LPS* include the members of the selectorate (S), a ruler, and a challenger. The unenfranchised, residents of the polity who are not part of the selectorate, appear in the model only to the extent that rulers and

[5] It is unclear whether Laos falls into the first category of resilient states or the second category of states that have merely survived. The Laotian leadership seems to be attempting to shift its survival strategy through marketizing reforms, following the models of China and Vietnam. Additionally, as Dimitrov notes (Chap. 1), there are some signs that Cuba is doing the same since 2011.

challengers must take their work-leisure trade-off into consideration when setting the tax rate.

In every polity, regardless of its particular institutional arrangements, there exists a subset of the population "whose endowments include the qualities or characteristics institutionally required to choose the government's leadership and necessary for gaining access to private benefits doled out by the government's leadership."[6] Typical characteristics that might serve as criteria for inclusion in this selectorate, or exclusion from it, include the following: personal origin and lineage; special skills, proficiency, or knowledge; wealth; and gender or age. Members of the selectorate derive utility from public goods, private goods, after-tax income from labor, and leisure. Notably, members of the selectorate are assumed to share identical preferences with respect to these items. Their choice of support for the ruler or challenger, as well as their work-leisure allocation, depend on the package of goods each offers, as well as the expected tax rate.

The winning coalition (W) is the "subset of the selectorate of sufficient size such that the subset's support endows the leadership with political power over the remainder of the selectorate as well as over the unenfranchised members of society."[7] What constitutes a "sufficient" size varies according to a country's particular institutional arrangements. Even across democracies with full franchise, for example, differences in electoral rules create different thresholds for winning office and thus winning coalitions of different size.

First and foremost, rulers desire power and gain utility from any government revenues not spent on either public or private goods. Accordingly, they offer a tax rate and a package of public and private goods just attractive enough to match the best offer of the challenger and to win the support of a coalition of size W, retaining as much revenue as possible for themselves.

A key assumption of the model is that the cost of delivering private goods to the members of the winning coalition is proportional to coalition size. When winning coalitions are small, the least costly method of buying the support of the coalition is with private goods. As W increases, however, private goods become expensive relative to public goods, and rulers are induced to shift their allocation of goods accordingly. Since public goods by nature flow to all members of the polity, a large W produces greater overall welfare. In the empirical section of *LPS*, Bueno de Mesquita et al. find that W is associated with higher levels of public spending on education and health care, higher rates of childhood immunizations, lower rates of illiteracy, higher life expectancy, greater access to clean water, and faster rates of economic growth. Crucially, however, since public goods flow to all citizens, the benefits of membership in the ruler's coalition decline. The position of rulers thus becomes increasingly tenuous as W becomes larger.

Rulers are in an advantageous position when W is small relative to S. As Bueno de Mesquita et al. state, "Leaders survive longest when they depend on a

[6] Bueno de Mesquita et al., *Logic of Political Survival*, 42.
[7] Ibid., 51.

small coalition and a large selectorate. They also do least under those conditions to promote the well-being of most people living under their control."[8] In this scenario, members of the winning coalition are the fortunate few who receive private goods, and the probability is low that they will remain so fortunate should a challenger gain power. With no incentive to defect from the ruler's coalition, they remain loyal.

Measurement of S and W across a large sample of countries is difficult. The data available for this purpose are far from ideal, leading to the use of index variables that the authors themselves describe as crude. These indexes are created using general characteristics of political systems that are assumed to be correlated with the sizes of the selectorate and winning coalition, but they are also highly correlated with other important concepts, such as the level of political competition and the level of political rights. The authors' statistical efforts to separate the effects of S and W from measures of these other concepts have drawn criticism.[9] Hanson, looking at the interrelationship of W and ethnic heterogeneity, finds only weak and inconsistent evidence that W matters for public goods delivery in any way that is not already captured by typical measures of political rights and political competition.[10]

Accordingly, separating the effects of W, as measured, from the effects of political competition and political rights is quite difficult. Care should be taken to avoid the assumption that the size of the winning coalition, per se, is responsible for any observed statistical correlations. Skepticism over the statistical findings in the book is strong. As Clarke and Stone, who present a detailed analysis of the statistical findings in the *LPS*, conclude:

> *The Logic of Political Survival* makes the arresting claim that it has isolated the key mechanism by which democracy generates its benefits, thereby resolving the debate between the advocates of institutions, behavior, and political culture. The empirical evidence, however, does not support this claim because the effects that they ascribe to coalition size are attributable to democracy.[11]

In response, the *LPS* authors admit that their original statistical tests were misspecified, but they present a new set of tests, which, it is claimed, correct these errors and support the original theory.[12] Given the measurement problems with W and S, we remain skeptical.

[8] Ibid., 329.

[9] Stephen Knack, "The Logic of Political Survival," *Journal of Economic Literature* 43:4 (2005), 1068–1070; Kevin A. Clarke and Randall W. Stone, "Democracy and the Logic of Political Survival," *American Political Science Review* 102:3 (2008), 387–392.

[10] Jonathan K. Hanson, "Political Institutions, Social Heterogeneity, and Development Outcomes," presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 2007.

[11] Clarke and Stone, "Democracy and the Logic," 391.

[12] James D. Morrow, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith, "Retesting Selectorate Theory: Separating the Effects of *W* from Other Elements of Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 102:3 (2008), 393–400.

Nevertheless, like Clark and Stone, we agree that the model is a useful starting point, reducing the otherwise daunting range of regime types, governmental forms, and electoral systems to two key institutional characteristics. The benefits of such parsimony are potentially enormous. As with any model, however, simplification of reality is useful only to the extent that it does not distort its predictions in any systematic way. We find two aspects of the model problematic in this respect. The first is that the model forces an unrealistic policy choice on rulers with respect to dealing with the unenfranchised. The second is the assumption that all members of the selectorate have identical preferences, rendering the composition of the winning coalition irrelevant. These two potential shortcomings of the theory are discussed in the following section.

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE SELECTORATE THEORY

The Role of the Unenfranchised

The preferences of the unenfranchised have little role in the selectorate theory's core model, as presented in 2003. Their only source of power is to deny the ruler tax revenue by choosing "leisure" over work if the tax rate becomes too high. Provision of goods to the unenfranchised has no bearing on the ruler's political survival. In other words, the possibility of revolution does not exist in the model, thus permitting an unambiguous prediction that provision of public goods will be low in polities where winning coalitions are small.

Bueno de Mesquita and Smith amend the selectorate theory to incorporate revolutionary threats into the policymaking calculus of rulers and challengers. Their stated goal is to permit the possibility that "revolutionaries or subsets of the masses can be bought off by the ruling elite and for the possibility that such efforts will fail."[13] In the revised model, the unenfranchised revolt when doing so is expected to improve their welfare. This decision depends on the expected cost of the revolution, the expected policies of the revolutionary leaders once installed in office, and the level of public goods supplied by the current ruler. The mixture of carrots and sticks supplied by the ruler, in other words, helps determine whether revolution is worthwhile.

At first blush, then, it appears that the amended theory might permit a ruling strategy that combines repression with growth-oriented policies, thus broadening the range of predicted outcomes in communist regimes. Because of the particular definition of public goods in the model, however, this hope does not materialize.

There are two general categories of public goods in the selectorate theory. First, public goods enhance economic productivity by providing education, health care, and infrastructure. Second, public goods provide greater government transparency and a range of political freedoms, such as the freedoms of

[13] Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, *Political Survival*, 170.

speech and the press and assembly. This latter category is referred to as "core" public goods. In the model, the policy choice of rulers and challengers concerns only the aggregate level of public goods of all types. They do not distinguish between the two categories. Accordingly, the model rules out policy combinations in which rulers seek to provide welfare-enhancing economic growth in conjunction with repressive politics. In the selectorate theory, by assumption, providing carrots always means fewer sticks.

In the revised model, accordingly, the level of public goods provision remains a function of the size of the winning coalition. When W lies below a particular threshold, the optimal response of the rulers to revolutionary threat is to reduce public goods provision from the level that would otherwise be optimal in the absence of such a threat. In this case, the repressive effect of reducing core public goods reduces the probability of successful revolution enough that the expected welfare gains of successful revolution are outweighed by the certain costs of revolution. When W is sufficiently large, however, the optimal policy of rulers is expansion of public goods provision to reduce the expected payoff of revolution compared to the status quo. In this case, the welfare gains from public goods are sufficient such that revolution is not worth the cost despite the much greater probability of success.

In summary, the winning coalition size determines the optimal response to a revolutionary threat. This response involves low levels of public goods provision, with the associated repressive effects, for winning coalitions below a certain threshold and higher levels of public goods provision, with a politically liberalizing effect, for winning coalitions above that threshold. The model thus rules out an important range of policy responses that involve a combination of repression with measures to enhance economic welfare. We argue that a robust theory of autocratic resilience cannot exclude such critical cases.

In contrast to the *LPS*, other theories of autocratic behavior incorporate a trade-off between the costs of repression versus the provision of public goods. A calculus of this kind is theorized by Acemoglu and Robinson, among others, allowing for the character of small-coalition systems to vary more widely.[14] In *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Acemoglu and Robinson examine specifically the problem of revolutionary threat from the unenfranchised.[15] They write, "The major constraint that faces those controlling political power in nondemocracy is a danger that those excluded from political power might attempt to gain political power or to overthrow those who are in control."[16] This "revolution constraint" affects the calculus of the leaders as they attempt to pursue policies that are in their sole benefit. If the revolution

[14] Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[15] Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, use several terms to describe the politically unenfranchised, including "the poor," "the majority," and "the citizens."

[16] Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 120.

constraint is sufficiently strong, leaders will compromise by shifting policies closer to the preferences of the unenfranchised citizens.

Acemoglu and Robinson's model of interaction between the elite and the majority thus goes beyond the arguments laid out in the *LPS* regarding the threat of revolutions and mass action. As discussed later, in the East Asian cases we find that the selectorate model is less flexible and thus cannot fully account for the rulers' actions.

Homogeneity of Preferences and the Composition of W

As stated previously, the members of the selectorate have identical utility functions and therefore share the same preferences with respect to public goods, private goods, and their work-leisure allocation. As a result, there are no constituencies within the selectorate for any particular policy mix. Selectors choose to support the ruler or challenger on the basis of which one offers the better overall package of goods. The mix of goods in this package is a function of the size of W rather than the preferences of the coalition members.

In this way, the selectorate theory is strikingly different from most theories that involve voting, or what is quasi-voting in this case. There is no median voter. There are no segments of the population with competing interests, such as capitalists and laborers or urban and rural residents. In terms of what they seek from the ruler, members of the winning coalition are fully interchangeable with members of the selectorate outside the winning coalition. Thus, the composition of the winning coalition does not matter. By assuming away differences in preferences over policies, the model assumes away politics itself.

Consider, for example, how this model differs from the one that appears in North's foundational work in the New Institutional Economics.[17] Like rulers in the selectorate theory, North's rulers always face rivals. This "competitive constraint" forces rulers to avoid offending powerful constituencies, leading them to "agree to a property rights structure favorable to those groups, regardless of its effects upon efficiency."[18] As a result, the property rights structure (i.e., policy mix) that maximizes the ruler's utility may conflict with the structure that maximizes economic growth. For North, it is not the size of the ruler's coalition that matters but its composition.

Nevertheless, the selectorate theory's assumption of homogeneous preferences could be a useful simplification of reality if there is a systematic link between the size of a ruler's coalition and the degree to which its demands are particularistic.[19] To the extent, however, that there exist cases where small winning

[17] Douglass C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981).

[18] Ibid., 28.

[19] Recall that in the selectorate model this link is driven solely by assumptions concerning the relative prices of public and private goods as W becomes larger.

coalitions have preferences either for development-oriented policies or for policies that benefit themselves but have developmental side effects, abstracting away from the preferences leads to inaccurate predictions.

There are strong reasons to doubt a systematic linkage between coalition size and particularistic preferences. Empirically, the level of economic performance in small-coalition polities varies considerably. Using various methods of regime classification, for example, Almeida and Ferreira find that both the best and worst economic performances occur in authoritarian states.[20] Indeed, one of the more enduring puzzles in political economy is explaining why some dictators pursue developmental policies whereas others do not.[21] As Przeworski et al. write:

> Much of the appeal of dictatorships stems from the fact that at various moments they have seemed to offer "the best practice." The "tigers" have tended to be dictatorships. But are dictatorships necessarily tigers? The list of disasters generated by authoritarianism is long and tragic. . . . For every developmental miracle, there have been several dictatorships that have engaged in grandiose projects that have ended in ruin, or else dictatorships that have simply stolen and squandered.[22]

Some of the most prominent developmental miracles are among the cases discussed in this chapter. The Chinese case, in particular, represents a dictatorship that has produced both catastrophic developmental tragedy (the Great Leap Forward famine) and impressive developmental achievements under the rule of the same party. These cases illustrate why the composition of the winning coalition matters, particularly in small-coalition systems.

APPLICATION TO THE EAST ASIAN CASES

Figure 7.1 illustrates how the sizes S of W, as measured in the *LPS*, evolved over time in a set of East and Southeast Asian countries.[23] Also depicted in each figure is the level of real GDP per capita in year 2000 constant dollars from the Penn World Tables version 6.2.[24] Examination of these figures provides an indication

[20] Heitor Almeida and Daniel Ferreira, "Democracy and the Variability of Economic Performance," *Economics and Politics* 14:3 (2002), 225–257.

[21] Olson's "stationary bandit" is one noteworthy example: Mancur Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," *American Political Science Review* 87:3 (1993), 567–576.

[22] Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[23] W is a 0–1 index composed of four items: whether the regime is a civilian regime, whether the executive is competitively elected, whether recruitment of the executive is open (all members of the politically active population are eligible for selection), and whether there are stable and enduring political groups that compete for power. S is 0 when a polity has no legislature, .5 when it has a nonelected legislature, and 1 when it has a directly or indirectly elected legislature.

[24] Alan Heston, Robert Summers, and Bettina Aten, *Penn World Table Version 6.2* (Center for International Comparisons of Production, Income and Prices at the University of Pennsylvania, 2006), at http://pwt.econ.upenn.edu/php_site/pwt_index.php (accessed August 31, 2009).

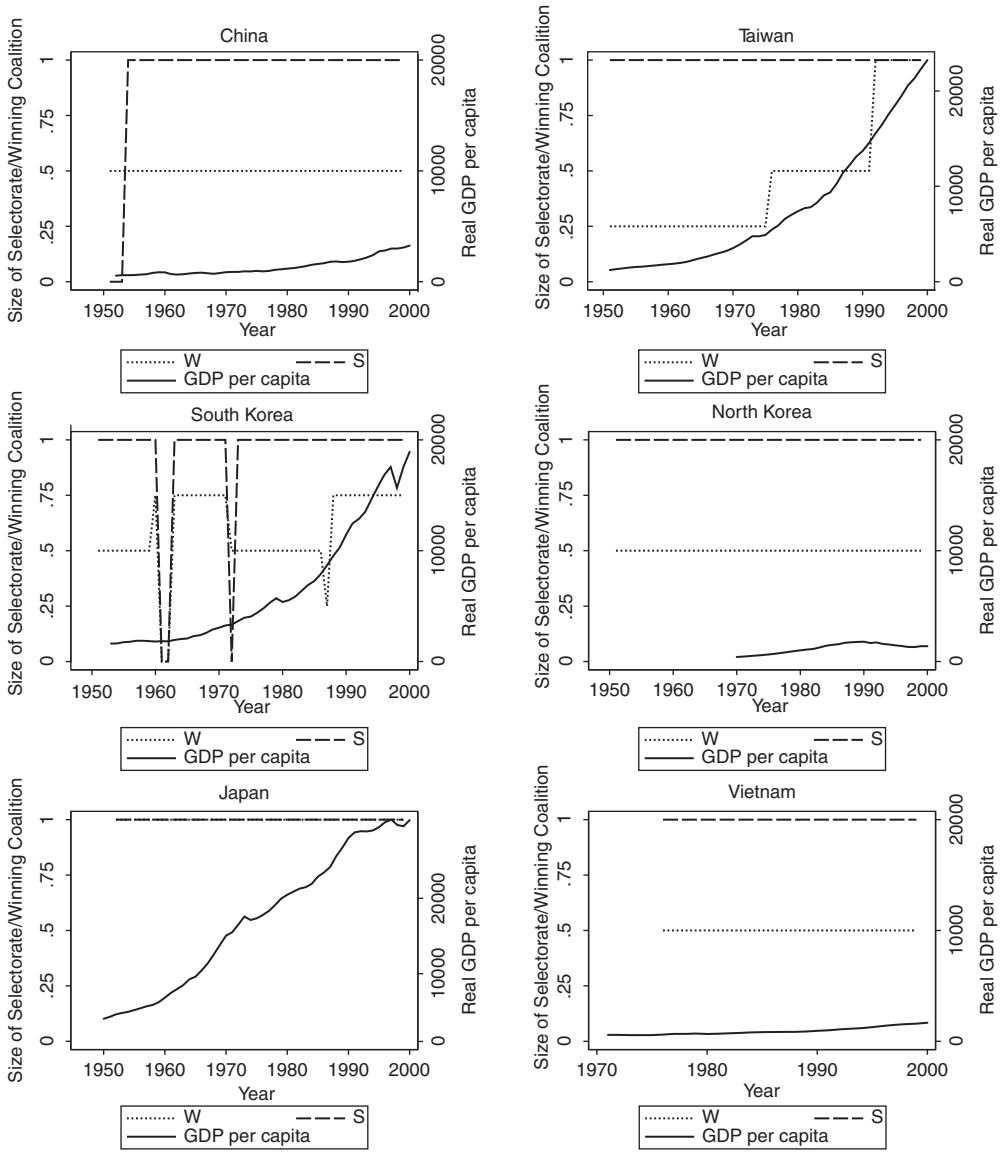

FIGURE 7.1. Size of Selectorate/Winning Coalition.

of the difficulty of establishing a causal connection between the size of W and economic growth.

From 1950 to 1970, for example, growth in the Philippines ought to have been considerably faster than growth in Taiwan or South Korea given the respective values of W in these countries, but in fact it was slower. Likewise, the values for W and S are identical and unchanging for China, Vietnam, and North Korea throughout nearly all the period covered by the available data. Yet,

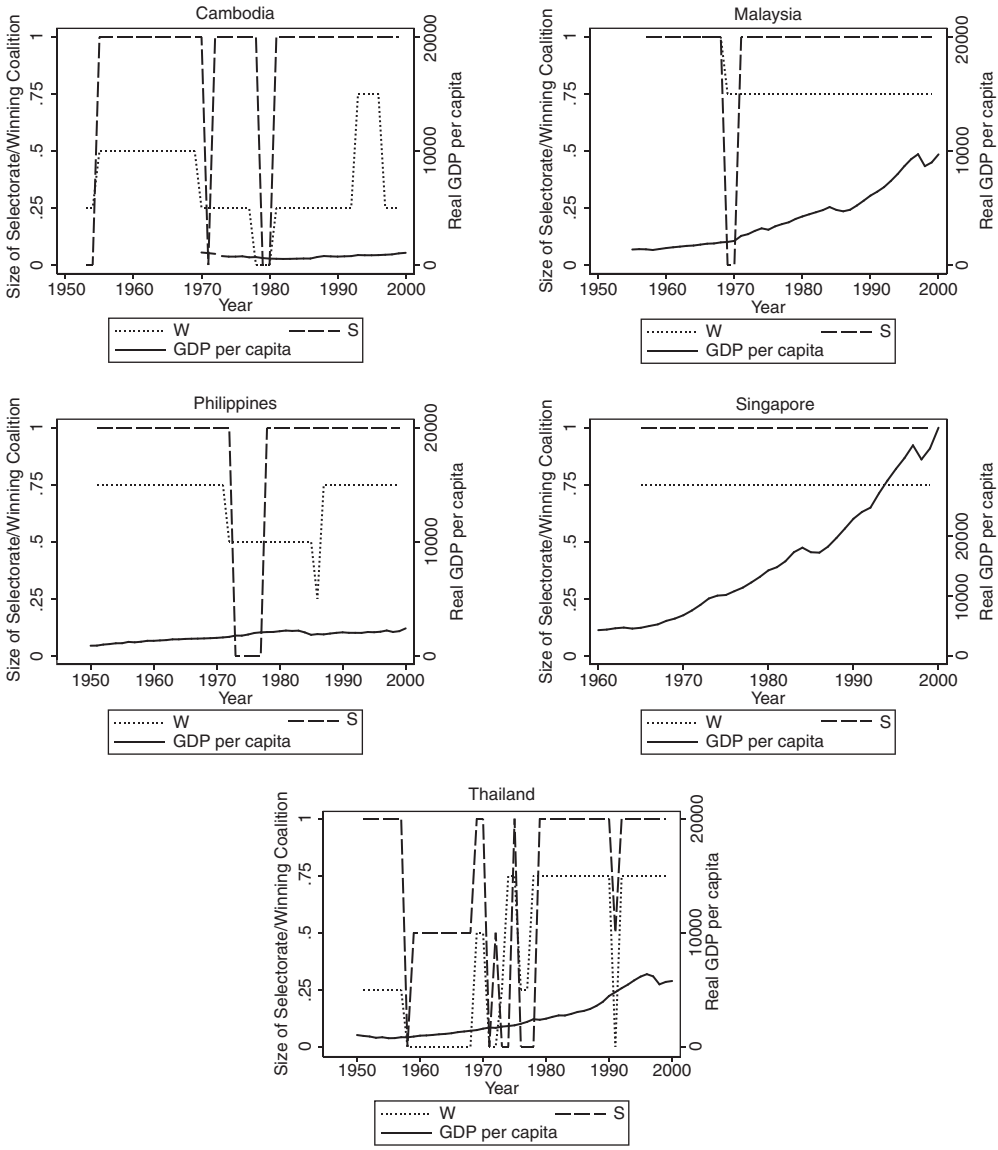

FIGURE 7.1. (*cont.*)

after decades of developmental failures, China began a period of rapid growth, whereas North Korea remained mired in a poverty trap. Vietnam's postreunification experience has been similar to that of China. Finally, growth in Thailand was quite rapid despite considerable instability in S and W as measured. It would be premature to use these cursory observations as grounds for dismissal of the selectorate theory, but they are useful for demonstrating why East Asia supplies several good test cases for the theory.

East Asian Capitalist Developmental States

The development trajectories of many states in East Asia belie the argument in the *LPS* that states with small winning coalitions will focus on provision of private goods to key supporters. In these countries, small ruling coalitions with developmental preferences fostered their survival in the face of internal and external threats through a combination of repression and policies that produced high rates of economic growth. These rulers reduced "core" public goods, in the *LPS* terminology, while increasing provision of other public goods. We argue that this mixture of sticks and carrots was facilitated by "Janus-faced" institutions that could deliver both.

In *State-Directed Development*, Kohli describes "cohesive-capitalist states" as characterized by a "narrow elite alliance between the state and capital," with centralized politics and tight control over labor.[25] Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are archetypical of the cohesive-capitalist states in this framework. Their stunning rates of economic growth during the postwar period were fostered in large part by a close alliance of state and industrial interests that focused on economic transformation as an overriding national objective. Repression of the popular sector, especially labor, made these states "a paradise for big industrialists."[26] Yet, worker welfare did improve as these economies grew, and the project of industrialization received widespread support. In short, as Woo-Cumings writes, "the power of the developmental state grew both out of the barrel of the gun and its ability to convince the population of its political, economic, and moral mandate."[27]

None of these countries can be aptly described as having a large winning coalition during the early decades of its economic miracles. As Pempel contends, the ruling coalition in South Korea was either military dominated or under the domain of a single party, while Taiwan was "overtly authoritarian."[28] Even Japan, which has the highest-possible score on W as measured in *LPS* for the entire postwar period, has "nonetheless forged a tight conservative coalition that for most of the postwar period was also invulnerable to most mass politics."[29]

Mobilization for industrial development was a rational choice for leaders who faced myriad threats amid relative resource scarcity. In the post–World War II era, many East Asian states faced difficult political and economic environments. These constraints shaped the incentives and choices of the political elites, in particular by increasing the threat of political unrest and upheaval while

[25] Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10.

[26] Meredith Woo-Cumings, ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 17.

[27] Ibid., 20.

[28] T. J. Pempel, "The Developmental Regime in a Changing World Economy," in Meredith Woo-Cumings, ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 166.

[29] Ibid.

decreasing the range of elite options. Scarce resources and limited territory circumscribed elite choices and room for maneuver. Doner, Ritchie, and Slater label this condition as "systemic vulnerability."[30] Although the populations in these countries were repressed by the authoritarian machinery of the regimes, the leaders in both pursued broad-based development, investment in infrastructure and education, and export-led industrial development.

These threats were not wholly internal. The communist regimes of North Korea and the People's Republic of China ruled over peoples and territories claimed by South Korea and Taiwan. In these countries, the communist-capitalist competition made famous by Khrushchev's exhortation that "we will bury you" was an intimate race between brethren. These constraints increased the importance of the unenfranchised to the elite. Politically, the threats of rebellion *and* invasion were front and center. Economically, resource scarcities limited other options available to states with large resource endowments such as oil. Like a hard-budget constraint, the geographic and geological challenges of Northeast Asia produced a gritty developmental success story of smart policies, delayed gratification, and resilient autocracy.

That Doner et al. focus on institutions that link the state to social actors is an important part of the story. The ability of these states to build and support institutions that facilitated repression and extraction (of labor) reduced the ability of social actors to organize autonomously, raising the cost of fomenting revolution. Provision of rapid economic growth with investment in education and infrastructure also reduced the benefits of political upheaval to those outside the formal political system (i.e., almost everyone).

Likewise, despite the simplifying assumptions and somewhat narrow focus in Acemoglu and Robinson's models, we can apply their logic of the "revolution constraint" on elite preferences to the empirical accounts of capitalist development in East Asia. The political and economic constraints already noted in post–World War II East Asia increased the threat of revolution (in all likelihood combined with external invasion), whereas the choices for economic policy were limited by scarce natural resources and poor populations. Policies that merely extracted existing resources would have been short-lived and meager for a self-centered elite; simple predation would have also increased the attractiveness of populist revolution for the majority.

In summary, the East Asian capitalist developmental states bear little resemblance to the large winning coalition polities described in the selectorate theory. Small winning coalitions are consistent with rapid economic growth under some circumstances. The outcome depends greatly on the preferences of the members of the winning coalition and the capacity of the state to carry out these preferences.

[30] Richard F. Doner, Bryan K. Ritchie, and Dan Slater, "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective," *International Organization* 59:2 (2005), 327–361.

The Chinese Case

The case of China during the reform era has many similarities with the capitalist developmental states described previously. Since the death of Mao and the success of the economic reforms inaugurated in 1978, the preferences of the ruling coalition have shifted toward market-oriented policies. The Chinese regime has successfully combined rapid economic growth, significant reductions in poverty, fast-paced urbanization and industrialization, and integration with the global economy in trade and foreign direct investment inflows. Since the student movement of 1989 was brutally suppressed by the Chinese military, mass mobilization and challenges to regime rule have been few and easily snuffed out using media campaigns and carefully directed repression and imprisonment of key dissidents.

In the 1990s, China scholars followed the collapse of the Soviet Union with musings and debates on whether the Chinese empire would suffer the same fate.[31] We now see more and more articles that probe the Chinese body politic for its mystery of "authoritarian resilience."[32] Although China's political survival fits the logic of the *LPS* – tiny winning coalition and large selectorate – it is more difficult to explain the increases in public goods that have accompanied CCP rule within the confines of the theory. To do so, we need again to take into account the role of the unenfranchised and how the state is institutionally linked to social actors. These links allow the state to do what Acemoglu and Robinson predict under the "revolution constraint" – to provide public goods and to repress. The state should increase the benefits of the status quo while raising the costs of anti-regime mobilization. It may be that the real difference between successful autocracies (resilient autocracies) and breakdown is the relative strength and health of institutions that facilitate the efficient allocation of punishments and rewards.

Bueno de Mesquita and Downs tackle the Chinese case in a 2005 article in *Foreign Affairs*.[33] Tellingly, in explaining the success of the Chinese regime, the article makes no mention of the importance of the selectorate or the winning coalition. Rather, the authors focus on the ability of authoritarian regimes to distribute some public goods but not others efficiently. Resilient autocracies, like China, Vietnam, and other cases discussed here, provide the foundations of economic growth through public goods such as investments in education, infrastructure, and so forth, while holding back provision of key public goods that

[31] See Yasheng Huang, "Why China Will Not Collapse," *Foreign Policy*, no. 99 (1995), 54–68. See also Jack A. Goldstone, "The Coming Chinese Collapse," *Foreign Policy*, no. 99 (1995), 35–53. See also David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal, *China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade and Regionalism* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[32] Andrew J. Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* 14:1 (2003), 6–17. Also see Elizabeth J. Perry, "Studying Chinese Politics: Farewell to Revolution?" *China Journal*, no. 57 (2007), 1–22.

[33] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs, "Development and Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 84:5 (2005), 77.

would allow potential challengers to coordinate and mobilize. These include political rights, human rights, freedom of the press, and access to higher education.

This argument runs the danger of becoming a tautology of "repressive governments survive because they repress." However, the article avoids this danger by acknowledging what is ignored in the *LPS*: authoritarian governments have strong incentives to provide an array of goods to a wider part of the population because even those who have absolutely no say in policy or leadership selection are potential challengers to the regime's monopoly on power. Although the article does not explain why some regimes, like China, Singapore, and others, respond rationally to this incentive, it may be possible that most authoritarian regimes try to balance goods provision with repression but that only some, perhaps even only a few, have the institutional capacity to do so effectively.

As Geddes notes in her study of variation across authoritarian regimes, "single-party regimes survive in part because their institutional structures make it relatively easy for them to allow greater participation and popular influence on policy without giving up their dominant role in the political system."[34] Although she points mainly to electoral devices like legalized opposition parties, single-party regimes can also develop other effective institutions, including mass organizations like trade unions, corporatist business associations, government-owned NGOs (GONGOs), and parastatal organizations in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools. China has used all of these and now also allows competitive elections of village leaders in the countryside. Elected village officials rule in tandem with an appointed communist party secretary. Tsai's research in Chapter 8 demonstrates how new formal institutions that incorporated important rising social actors (private entrepreneurs) were developed during the early reform period. These are not "coalitions" of broad-based support as Doner et al. argue for in the earlier cases of Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore; rather, they are efficient channels of goods provision and, when needed, strategic repression.

How these institutions delay the revolutionary crises laid out in Acemoglu and Robinson can be illustrated by one example. From 1997 to 2001, Chinese state-owned enterprises laid off more than 30 million people and employment figures for the urban public sector dropped dramatically. Many scholars and onlookers predicted a rising tide of unrest, labor mobilization, and political upheaval. This was not only because the scale of the layoffs was great but also because urban state workers formerly had been privileged members of society, enjoying lifetime employment, extensive welfare benefits, and high ideological status. Although strikes, labor disputes, and mass demonstrations did occur and continue to occur, we have seen only a handful of protests that have joined workers across workplaces and few incidences of labor mobilization that have crossed

[34] Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?"

regional boundaries.[35] Institutions including the socialist workplace *(danwei)*, the communist-run trade union, workplace-level communist party cells, local-level neighborhood committees, and street-level committees have all served the dual functions of repression and compensation. In many cases of mass unrest, striking workers have been compensated monetarily, with back wages and pension arrears, whereas labor activists and leaders have been arrested and imprisoned. Broad-based welfare programs including the minimum-income guarantee (*dibao*), unemployment insurance, and socialized pension funds have all been expanded, with massive increases in the number of urban citizens receiving income subsidies. The state's efficient use of these institutions to monitor and repress Chinese workers has been matched by a more benevolent form of co-optation and compensation.

Alongside the maintenance of significant repressive capacity, the Chinese regime has bolstered its strength through economic policies that have produced significant material benefits. These policies were not the result of changes in the size of the ruling coalition but instead emerged through a gradual process of change in the composition of the preferences of coalition members. Reformers built a coalition in support of market-oriented policies that both sustained their own power and also benefited the overall economy.

In the early 1980s as Deng Xiaoping began to implement the shift away from Maoist autarky and the planned economy, he sent dozens of communist party officials to the nearby East Asian capitalist economies, including South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The point was to observe how far China had fallen behind and how successful these smaller neighbors had become. But Deng's reformist strategy did not attempt a frontal assault on socialism; rather, reformist leaders at the top gradually shifted the composition of the selectorate to reflect those who benefited from reform and globalization. The formal political institutions have become more routinized and systematic, but, with the exception of the expansion of the standing committee of the Politburo from seven to nine members in 2002, there have been no dramatic changes in size of the selectorate, only in its composition.[36] As Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng point out in Chapter 9, China's political system is significantly more constrained and less accountable than the similar system in Vietnam. China's economic achievements are not the result of greater political liberalization at the top.

In *The Political Logic of Economic Reform*, Shirk provides a detailed study of the murky leadership selection process in China. She finds that leaders in the center used economic decentralization initiatives in the forms of central-provincial fiscal

[35] The strikes in foreign-invested enterprises in the spring of 2010 did cross regional boundaries. But these striking workers tended to be migrant workers from the countryside, newly hired into China's industrial miracle. The CCP's reaction included attempts to develop greater institutional ties to this new workforce, including more effective use of the party-run union and collective wage bargaining under the CCP's direction.

[36] The expansion of the Standing Committee may have been a compromise between the factions of the outgoing party secretary, Jiang Zemin, and the incoming leader, Hu Jintao, allowing both factions to gain crucial seats on the committee. In 2012, the number of seats reverted to seven.

contracts and profit contracting in state-owned enterprises to build their own constituencies among provincial officials. The lower-level officials benefited from the policy changes, providing a counterweight to opposition from the hard-liners and the central bureaucracy to some of the reform measures. A virtuous cycle developed, whereby economic reforms generated supporters for their perpetuation.

Yang offers a detailed critique of Shirk's description of the Chinese selectorate, arguing that Shirk neglects the influence of party elders and the military in the leadership selection process and focuses too much on economic policy at the expense of other policy arenas.[37] Yet these criticisms reinforce the argument of this chapter that careful attention to the composition of the selectorate and the preferences of those who comprise it is central to understanding policy outcomes. The debate among China specialists focuses mainly on defining the selectorate accurately and on determining how lower-level elites exercise power in a system where they are appointed by higher-ups in a semicompetitive process. Shirk argues that there is a system of "reciprocal accountability" in which those selected for membership on the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party then go on to exercise some degree of oversight and influence on the leaders in the Politburo. Although it is still unclear how this process operates, more attention to the composition of the Central Committee has become the norm in the study of Chinese politics.[38]

During the reform period, shifts in the composition of the Central Committee "selectorate" have been significant, reflecting the ability of key leaders, including Deng Xiaoping, to redirect policy through the gradual empowerment of provinces and provincial elites who had fallen out of favor during the Maoist era. Institutionally, the central CCP leadership was able to sustain reform-building efforts by building reformist goals into the cadre evaluation system and the nomenklatura system of elite appointment. As Whiting shows, during the reform era, the two main criteria for measuring local cadre success have been the rates of local economic growth and inward flows of foreign direct investment.[39]

By incentivizing the reform program in the system of cadre evaluation, reformist leaders also strengthened the bond between local officials and foreign

[37] Dali L. Yang, "Review: Governing China's Transition to the Market: Institutional Incentives, Politicians' Choices, and Unintended Outcomes," *World Politics* 48:3 (1996), 424–452.

[38] Xiaowei Zang, "The Fourteenth Central Committee of the CCP: Technocracy or Political Technocracy?" *Asian Survey* 33:8 (1993), 787–803; Li Cheng and Lynn White, "The Fifteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Full-Fledged Technocratic Leadership with Partial Control by Jiang Zemin," *Asian Survey* 38:3 (1998), 231–264; Victor Shih, Wei Shan, and Mingxing Liu, "The Central Committee, Past and Present: A Method of Quantifying Elite Biographies," in Allen Carlson, Mary Gallagher, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Melanie Manion, eds., *Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods and Field Strategies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 51–68.

[39] Susan Whiting, "The Cadre Evaluation System at the Grass Roots: The Paradox of Party Rule," in Barry J. Naughton and Dali Yang, eds., *Holding China Together: Diversity and National Integration in the Post-Deng Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101–119.

investors. Foreign investors, eager to take advantage of China's low labor costs and large internal markets, were met by equally eager local officials willing to bargain and compete for foreign investment into their regions.[40] These reformist policies not only strengthened the reformist faction at the top, but also built new reformist coalitions below as provincial leaders jumped onto the reform bandwagon.[41] The key was not to change the mechanisms of leadership selection or to change the size of the formal political elite, but rather to change the composition of the selectorate and to change the incentives of elites generally to favor reform.

The Chinese case fits the portrayal of autocratic survival as a complicated balancing act between measures that make opposing the ruler more costly and measures that reduce the expected gains of a successful overthrow. Since it does not account for this trade-off, the *LPS* cannot predict the outcomes we observe in China.

As Bernstein (Chapter 2) describes, a key contrast between the Chinese and Soviet economic reform efforts was that Gorbachev faced entrenched opposition within the party bureaucracy. Unlike Deng, he was unable to create pro-reform alliances with lower-level officials to shift the balance of power. He thus pursued political liberalization to increase the pressure for reform, but the pressures could not be contained. The state withdrew the sticks during a period when the carrots were few, and the regime collapsed.

The Vietnam case bears many similarities to the Chinese case. Economic reforms in Vietnam emerged in a piecemeal manner in response to the economic crisis that followed from attempts to impose centralized planning in the southern part of the country from 1976 to 1982. These reforms were not driven by the design of rulers at the center but instead were "pushed by the actions of individual communities and factories which spontaneously experimented on their own with various kinds of market-oriented solutions to the manifest failures of the planning system."[42] The emergence of a political coalition to make economic liberalization an official policy goal took time and a substantial amount of political maneuvering around vested interests. Even during the 1990s, policy change remained an incremental process. The Vietnamese case thus provides additional support for the notion that the composition of the selectorate is more important in determining the direction of policy change than its size.

Focus on the changing composition of the Vietnamese elite is centered around different types of analysis, including generational, factional, personalistic, and

[40] David Zweig, *Internationalizing China: Domestic Interests and Global Linkages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). See also Mary E. Gallagher, *Contagious Capitalism: Globalization and the Politics of Labor in China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[41] Dali Yang, *Beyond Beijing: Liberalization and the Regions in China* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[42] James Riedel and William S. Turley, "The Politics and Economics of Transition to an Open Market Economy in Viet Nam," OECD Working Paper No. 152, 1999.

ideological models of communist elite competition. Malesky examines a similar divide among the Vietnamese elite in the Central Committee.[43] Although Malesky shows that gerrymandering the division of provinces in Vietnam increased the size of the selectorate, the absolute size of the Central Committee is not relevant to his argument. Rather, Vietnamese reformist leaders divided provinces according to a political logic that created a greater proportion of reformist elite in the Central Committee. This diluted the power of those who continued to support the planned economy and the state sector at the expense of market reform and foreign investment.

CONCLUSION

The selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita et al. is an important and ambitious effort to reduce the wide variation in institutional forms into two simple factors and to use these factors as an explanation for a breathtaking range of outcomes, from economic growth to war and peace. Work of such scope is bound to provoke discussion and argument as various scholars test out these predictions in the areas of their expertise. By looking at the theory as an explanation for the resilience of autocratic regimes, we join this discussion. Although our work covers only a small set of countries, we believe that these cases nevertheless shed light on two key shortcomings of the theory and help explain the course of communist resilience.

It is difficult to imagine China's rulers' keeping the possibility of mass unrest far from their minds, and this possibility ensures that they use carrots as well as sticks to maintain their survival, leading to a regime that is resilient well beyond the expectations of many experts decades earlier. Although rulers of other countries (North Korea comes to mind) appear to find that a different mix of carrots and sticks ensures their survival, the same calculus is present. By making the size of the winning coalition the critical factor in their model and linking political repression to low levels of public good provision, Bueno de Mesquita et al. predict that all small-coalition polities are like North Korea rather than like China, South Korea, Taiwan, or Singapore. The analysis in this chapter suggests that a theory of autocratic resilience must go beyond the *LPS* in permitting rulers to respond to revolutionary threats with different combinations of carrots and sticks.

Likewise, the findings from the cases in this chapter lend support for the contention that the assumption of homogeneous preferences among the members of the selectorate leads to predictions that do not accord with real-world outcomes. The composition of the membership of the selectorate matters at least as much as its size. The East Asian capitalist developmental states established narrowly based winning coalitions that were consistent with rapid economic

[43] Edmund Malesky, "Gerrymandering – Vietnamese Style: Escaping the Partial Reform Equilibrium in a Nondemocratic Regime," *Journal of Politics* 71:1 (2009), 132–159.

growth. Additionally, as seen in China and Vietnam, dramatic changes in economic policy result from changes in the composition of the selectorate, rather than its size, and from political maneuverings that elevate some sets of preferences over others.

The implications for an explanation of the resilience of communist regimes are twofold. First, one factor that distinguishes resilient regimes from those that merely survive is the preferences of the ruling coalition. There exists an alignment between the personal interests of the members of the ruling coalition and the more encompassing interests of the society. By promoting the general welfare, rulers not only augment the strength of the regime, but also benefit themselves. In the Soviet Union, even though leaders at the top pursued economic reforms, the linkages between the desired reforms and the personal interests of stakeholders in the regime were few.

Second, regime resilience or survival appears to be predicated on the ability, given certain conditions, to maintain an optimal mixture of carrots and sticks. As noted previously, there are some general similarities between China during the reform era and the Soviet Union in its days of strength. For many decades, the Soviet model appeared to be very successful in promoting growth and general welfare in conjunction with repression. Over time, however, the underlying economic inefficiencies rendered the system unable to deliver continued economic success. The strategy of political liberalization as a means to promote economic reform removed repression as a means of maintaining the regime. With neither carrots nor sticks, the regime fell. In other cases, such as North Korea and Cuba, political repression and nationalism are sufficient to keep the regime alive despite severe economic constraints, but these regimes seem unlikely to adapt to change over time as have Vietnam and China.[44] These cases represent authoritarian survival, but not resilience.

The lesson of the Soviet collapse surely is not lost upon CCP leaders. Although the Chinese economy appears vibrant, the advent of serious economic troubles could prove very problematic for regime stability. The question then is whether the sticks will prove sufficient when the carrots become small and thin.

[44] Whether Cuba's recent shift in strategy will enable the regime to become resilient remains to be seen.

8

Cause or Consequence?

Private-Sector Development and Communist Resilience in China

Kellee S. Tsai

> Taking a page from students of Latin America and Eastern Europe, China specialists routinely invoke the concept of "regime transition," despite the fact that the post-Mao period of PRC history has already lasted longer than the Maoist era that preceded it.
>
> Elizabeth J. Perry (2007)[1]

Students of modernization theory and political development have been anticipating regime change in China for quite some time. In a straight application of modernization theory, for example, in 1996 the Stanford economist Henry Rowen predicted that if China maintained a 5 percent per capita growth in GDP, then by 2015 it would reach a critical level of $7,000–8,000 per capita GDP and become democratic.[2] In 1998 Arthur Waldron predicted impending communist collapse: "Will there still be a People's Republic of China governed by the Chinese Communist Party in ten years? My bet is 'no.'"[3] Bruce Gilley contends with equal confidence in *China's Democratic Future*, "The laws of social science grind away in China as elsewhere, whether we like it or not."[4]

This chapter draws in part from Kellee S. Tsai, "Adaptive Informal Institutions and Endogenous Institutional Change in China," *World Politics* 59:1 (October 2006), 116–141; and *Capitalism without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

[1] Elizabeth J. Perry, "Studying Chinese Politics: Farewell to Revolution?" *China Journal*, no. 57 (January 2007), 6.

[2] Henry S. Rowen, "The Short March," *National Interest*, no. 45 (1996), 61–70.

[3] Arthur Waldron, "The End of Communism," *Journal of Democracy* 9:1 (January 1998), 41.

[4] Bruce Gilley, *China's Democratic Future: How It Will Happen and Where It Will Lead* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), xiii. Gilley also indicates that he "would be surprised if this change were delayed beyond the year 2020." Additional references to those prognosticating democracy in China are in Tsai, *Capitalism without Democracy*, chap. 1.

Following years of double-digit growth,[5] the private sector now accounts for two-thirds of China's industrial output, a level comparable to that of the United Kingdom on the eve of Margaret Thatcher's reforms in the 1980s.[6] The accompanying growth in the ranks of Chinese capitalists has fueled popular expectations that they will rise as a class to overthrow the communist regime and demand democracy in the spirit of "no taxation without representation." Yet the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues to monopolize political power, as it has since 1949. Neither communist demise nor democratic transition appears imminent. Meanwhile, major changes have occurred in China's formal institutions. How can this be explained?

Rather than asserting that China thus defies apparently inviolable "laws of social science" – and by implication, making a case for Chinese exceptionalism – this chapter proposes that communist resilience is best understood by drawing on comparative explanations for authoritarian durability and institutional development. I argue that the capacity of key political institutions for endogenous change may help explain the durability of regimes whose legitimizing basis has shifted over time. Significant transformations in the principles and practices of official governing institutions are possible short of formal regime change. More specifically, the case of China demonstrates that incremental economic and political reforms can contribute to regime durability by creating opportunities for local actors to pursue their interests through informal means. Over time, these informal coping strategies may take on an institutional reality of their own and become "adaptive informal institutions." By selectively incorporating adaptive informal institutions, the center has proven to be responsive to the actors fueling the country's economic growth, that is, the private entrepreneurs, thereby preempting a potential threat to regime durability. To be sure, in theory, other sectors of society, such as farmers, workers, or intellectuals, could also challenge authoritarian rule.[7] However, at present none of these groups possesses the political will or collective resources to do so. This analysis thus focuses on the traditional political enemy of the Chinese Communist Party: capitalists.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section considers explanations of authoritarian durability and compares them with analyses of communist resilience and the political economy of reform-era China. It also builds upon theories

[5] Zhang Houyi, Ming Lizhi, and Liang Zhuanyun, eds., *Siying qiye lanpi shu: Zhongguo siying qiye fazhan baogao* (Blue Book of Private Enterprises: A Report on the Development of China's Private Enterprises) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, various years).

[6] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Economic Survey of China 2005* (Paris, 2005).

[7] Several chapters in this volume argue that the longevity of communist regimes depends on their ability to maintain responsiveness to both the elite (the selectorate) and ordinary citizens (the unenfranchised). Gallagher and Hanson (Chap. 7) discuss responsiveness to the unenfranchised. Abrami, Maleski, and Zheng (Chap. 9) compare and contrast responsiveness to the selectorate and to the masses in Vietnam and in China. Dimitrov (Chap. 10) discusses the role of citizen complaints in Eastern Europe and in China as an avenue for responding to the needs of ordinary citizens.

of institutional development to demonstrate how explanations for endogenous institutional change may contribute to understanding the dynamics of regime durability. The chapter then examines empirical cases to show how adaptive informal institutions underlying private-sector development have stimulated substantial changes in China's most important formal institutions – economic ideology, the party, and the state constitution. The chapter then moves beyond the Chinese case to discuss the process of informal institutional change in Vietnam. The concluding section reflects upon the theoretical implications of the argument developed in this chapter.

COMMUNIST RESILIENCE: AUTHORITARIAN DURABILITY AMID INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Most of the recent scholarship on change in communist systems has focused on either communist collapse or the challenges of postcommunist reform.[8] Given that the political economy of contemporary China does not fit neatly into either category, I propose that two literatures derived from other comparative contexts are perhaps better suited for understanding the explanatory objective of this chapter, namely, what accounts for the coexistence of authoritarian durability and institutional change? The two respective literatures have developed in isolation from one another, largely because they derive from the empirical experiences of countries in different regions. First, analyses of authoritarian durability emerged out of Middle Eastern studies in political science that tried to explain the persistence of authoritarian regimes in the region despite the third wave of democracy. Second, historical institutionalists who analyze endogenous institutional change generally rely on cases in American political development and those in other advanced industrial democracies. I propose that insights from the latter branch of literature may be used to supplement explanations for authoritarian durability by elucidating the processes of institutional reinforcement and institutional innovation. In addition, examining the informal coping strategies inspired by the formal institutional environment provides a key, yet typically overlooked, dimension in analyses of political and economic change. This is not to say that all informal interactions are causally relevant in explaining formal institutional change and regime durability, but rather, that under political circumstances such as those found in reform-era China, extensive reliance on adaptive informal institutions may foreshadow the possibility of institutional reforms that bridge the gap between official regulations and everyday practices. For the present purposes, we are especially interested in the transformation of formal institutions that play a defining role in the polity or political economy.

[8] See the copious references in Martin Dimitrov, Chap. 1 in this volume.

Authoritarian Durability

Studies examining the striking absence of liberal democracies in the Middle East generally rely on cultural, economic, social, and/or institutional variables.[9] All four approaches mirror narratives about the absence of democracy in China, though they vary in the extent to which they provide convincing accounts of the causal mechanisms underlying regime durability.

First, studies that emphasize cultural reasons for authoritarian persistence in the Middle East typically point to attributes of the Islamic religion that appear irreconcilable with liberal democratic values.[10] The imposition of Islamic law (*shari'a*) in Iran and other countries is often cited as evidence that Islamic rules are inherently unlikely to adopt democratic procedures. Cultural explanations for authoritarianism in Asia run along similar lines, albeit without reference to religious tradition.[11] Robert Scalapino, for example, attributes the fragility of democracy in Asia to "a cultural heritage strong on communalism and weak on individualism, with little toleration for opponents."[12] Meanwhile, regional leaders such as Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir Mohamed of Malaysia have been among the most outspoken proponents of the notion that Asian values are inconsistent with liberal democracy.[13] And in the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen Square crisis, an official newspaper explained that democracy is incompatible with Chinese culture, especially given Chinese "people's limited capacity to withstand political and psychological strains."[14]

Despite the popularity of cultural explanations within the region, critics have pointed out that many countries have developed democratic political systems even though they have religions and value systems that have also been cited as being fundamentally inimical to democracy.[15] Stephen Manning explains:

[9] Marsha Pripstein Posusney, "Enduring Authoritarianism: Middle East Lessons for Comparative Theory," *Comparative Politics* 36:2 (January 2004), 127–138.

[10] For example, Elie Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1994); Yahya Sadowski, "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," *Middle East Report*, no. 183 (July–August 1993), 14–21, 40; and Hishan Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[11] Lucian W. Pye, with Mary W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985).

[12] Robert A. Scalapino, *The Politics of Development: Perspectives on Twentieth-Century Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[13] Michael D. Barr, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Beliefs behind the Man* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000); Seah Chee-Meow, ed., *Asian Values and Modernization* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1977); Mark R. Thompson, "The Survival of 'Asian Values' and '*Zivilisationskritik*,'" *Theory and Society* 29:5 (2000), 651–686.

[14] Zheng Wen, "China Can Never Copy Wholesale the Western Democratic System," *Jingji ribao* (Economic Daily), July 18, 1989, cited in Merle Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 330–331.

[15] Kim Dae Jung, "Is Culture Destiny? The Myth of Asia's Anti-Democratic Values," *Foreign Affairs* 73:6 (November/December 1994), 189–194; Stephen Manning, "Social and Cultural Prerequisites of Democratization: Generalizing from China," in Edward Friedman, ed., *The*

> A central problem with cultural explanations is that they are circular. They explain what has already taken place. One will not find culturalists in 1962 contending that Korea would democratize. At that time its dictatorship was explained in terms of its authoritarian cultural tradition. Culture as the critical explanatory variable may be ex post facto rationalization. Although it always seems true, it never explains anything.[16]

Besides the democratization of the Latin American countries dominated by Catholicism, the spread of democracy in the Confucian-influenced countries of East Asia provides strong empirical counterexamples to the expectations of cultural theories.

Second, the availability of natural resource endowments and related access to rents has also been associated with the persistence of authoritarianism.[17] In rentier states, citizens lack a fiscal basis for demanding democracy because the state finances benefits to its citizens through natural resources rather than taxes. In addition to the contention that rentier states maintain power by distributing rents throughout the population, Eva Bellin proposes that another explanation for the authoritarian persistence of rentier states is that they possess the fiscal means to maintain a "robust coercive apparatus."[18] The latter, in turn, inhibits the expression and development of political opposition. Notwithstanding disagreement about the role of repression in explaining the durability of oil-rich states,[19] overall, the rentier state argument points to the underlying economic means for maintaining regime legitimacy and authority.

Although the PRC is not a rentier state, a related explanation for the CCP's continued monopoly of political power is that the country has experienced significant and sustained improvement in its economy since the late 1970s. In other words, one possible reason that the PRC has withstood the third wave of democracy and the collapse of communism in the former Soviet bloc is due to its strong economic performance. On the basis of cross-national analysis, Adam Przeworski et al. find that economic growth is positively correlated with regime survival: when growth rates are declining, the probability that a regime will die is twice as high as when the economy is growing.[20] Hence, the argument can be made that regime durability in China is simply a function of the economy's high

Politics of Democratization: Generalizing East Asian Experiences (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 232–248; Alfred Stepan, "The World's Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the 'Twin Tolerations,'" in *Arguing Comparative Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 213–254.

[16] Manning, "Social and Cultural Prerequisites of Democratization."

[17] Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciano, eds., *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

[18] Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36:2 (January 2004), 139–157; and Michael L. Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53:3 (April 2001), 325–361.

[19] Benjamin Smith, "Oil Wealth and Regime Survival in the Developing World, 1960–1999," *American Journal of Political Science* 48:2 (April 2004), 232–246.

[20] Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 190.

growth rates. Those who hold this view expect that economic slowdown, and especially an economic or financial crisis, will precipitate regime collapse sooner or later.[21]

Although this materialist explanation is plausible, it is limited by the implicit assumption that high growth rates explain regime survival.[22] The living conditions of most Chinese citizens have improved since the Mao era, but the commoditization of economic and political life has fostered potentially destabilizing effects such as widespread corruption and rural unrest.[23] Indeed, in other contexts rapid economic modernization has been associated with instability and/or democratization.[24] As such, especially in the aftermath of the mass demonstrations in 1989, the regime's allocation of fiscal resources to maintain the robustness of the party-state's coercive apparatus appears to be a more compelling explanation for authoritarian durability than the conventional rentier state or economic performance arguments.[25] In a complementary manner, Bueno de Mesquita and Downs argue that economic growth will not necessarily lead to democracy if the autocratic regime limits the availability of "strategic coordination goods," meaning public goods that facilitate political coordination (e.g., freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of press, access to higher education).[26] Yet as Martin Dimitrov points out, the repression hypothesis does not hold up to comparative empirical scrutiny: force was used in Romania, the Soviet Union (though it was disavowed by Gorbachev), and Yugoslavia – and their communist regimes all collapsed.[27]

The third approach to explain authoritarian persistence in the Middle East is social structural in the sense that it focuses on the relative political positions and preferences of various social forces in the regime. David Waldner, for example, argues that rural incorporation before 1980 explains regime durability in both

[21] Gordon G. Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Random House, 2001); Gilley, *China's Democratic Future*, chap. 5; and cf. Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). In this regard, the severity of the global economic downturn that started in 2008 can be viewed as an eventual "test" of this belief.

[22] For an analysis of the survival of the communist regime in North Korea despite disastrous economic performance, see Charles Armstrong, Chap. 4 in this volume.

[23] Thomas P. Bernstein and Xiaobo Lü, *Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Yan Sun, *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Pei, *China's Trapped Transition*.

[24] The classic arguments are Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); and Seymour Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53:1 (March 1959), 69–105.

[25] For example, Mark R. Thompson, "To Shoot or Not to Shoot: Posttotalitarianism in China and Eastern Europe," *Comparative Politics* 34:1 (October 2001), 63–83.

[26] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs, "Development and Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 84:5 (2005), 77–86.

[27] Dimitrov, Chap. 1 in this volume.

postcolonial democracies and dictatorships.[28] The reasoning is that political incorporation of the rural middle classes minimizes the intensity of inter-elite conflicts, while providing the regime with a key source of political support for negotiating relations with other social classes, especially labor and capital. Meanwhile, Bellin traces the authoritarian preferences of labor and capital in Tunisia (and in other late developing countries) to their dependence on state sponsorship.[29] This support for authoritarianism is reinforced by labor's privileged status relative to the popular sectors and capital's fear of the consequences of mass empowerment.

Fourth, presenting an institutional twist on structural explanations for authoritarian persistence, Steven Heydemann attributes the "success"/durability of Syria's populist authoritarianism since 1946 to the Ba'th Party's strategy of combining state building with populism.[30] As Raymond Hinnebusch has pointed out, the durability of populist authoritarianism in Middle Eastern countries has depended on a number of different variables, including their establishment through revolutionary coups, the institutional strength of their single-party systems, dominance of a personalistic leader, distribution of patronage to key groups, and considerable repressive capacity.[31] Both Heydemann's and Hinnebusch's arguments about the durability of populist authoritarianism emphasize the ability of political and social institutions to incorporate key segments of society, while maintaining the institutional capacity to expand the extent of state intervention in the economy for redistributive purposes.[32]

[28] David Waldner, "Democracy and Dictatorship in the Post-Colonial World," unpublished paper, University of Virginia, January 1, 2004.

[29] Eva Bellin, *Stalled Democracy: Capital, Labor, and the Paradox of State-Sponsored Development* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[30] Steven Heydemann, *Authoritarianism in Syria: Institutions and Social Conflict, 1946–1970* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[31] Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Viability of Authoritarian Rule in the Middle East: An Overview and Critique of Theory," *Mafhoum*, January 8, 2004, 7.

[32] Yet the absence of formal institutionalization does not necessarily portend authoritarian demise. Unlike institutionalized regimes, which operate according to standardized procedures and the rule of law in the rational Weberian sense, neopatrimonial regimes are governed by cronyism and are subject to the personalistic whims of the ruler (Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997]). Although neopatrimonial regimes are thus portrayed as being weakly institutionalized, scholars have reached mixed conclusions about their durability. H. E. Chehabi and Juan Linz (*Sultanistic Regimes* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998]), for example, view "sultanistic regimes" as prone to breaking down, whereas Bellin, "Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," 149–53, observes that the enduring ones can command significant loyalty in their coercive apparatus. By including counterfactual cases of regimes that have survived crises – not only cases of regime transition – Jason Brownlee's study of neopatrimonial regimes ("... And Yet They Persist: Explaining Survival and Transition in Neopatrimonial Regimes," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37:3 [2002], 35–63) convincingly finds that in the absence of foreign intervention, "extensive patrimonialism" may enable regimes to survive serious political challenges and reassert their authority by using

Both the social structural and institutional explanations for regime durability are applicable to post-1949 China. The Communists defeated the Nationalists and consolidated their power on the mainland through a strategy of rural incorporation, and it would not be a stretch to characterize the Mao-era regime (1949–76) as populist authoritarian on the basis of the qualities enumerated here. Besides rural incorporation, the party-state granted urban labor various privileges in the name of socialism, whereas private capital was politically persecuted and effectively eliminated.[33]

Since the late 1970s, however, China's reforms have produced a wide range of social and economic tensions, including massive growth in surplus agricultural labor from decollectivization, a rise in urban unemployment due to the reform of state-owned enterprises, an increased fiscal burden on farmers, de facto privatization of education and health care, and widespread discontent concerning the rise of both regional and urban-rural inequalities.[34] Arguably, the economic reforms have eroded the PRC's original social – and indeed, socialist – basis for regime durability. At the macrolevel, private entrepreneurs now appear to be the primary beneficiaries of the regime's market-oriented reforms. As Hinnebusch has observed with respect to reforms in postpopulist authoritarian regimes, "The key lesson . . . is that in most cases movement away from authoritarianism actually translates, *not into more popular power but into privileged class power* and less popular inclusion."[35] Although China's formal institutions have become more accommodating to the private sector over time, private capital as a whole has not been dependent on the state in the manner observed by Bellin in Tunisia and others in bureaucratic-authoritarian Korea and Brazil. For example, China's private entrepreneurs lack access to state banks, relying instead on informal finance.[36] Moreover, the current generation of business owners cannot be considered a unified class that shares similar identities, interests, resources, and, most importantly, political preferences.[37]

Given the recent tenuousness of the regime's social bases of support, institutional explanations for authoritarian durability may be more appropriate for understanding China's situation. Indeed, if we were to place reform-era China

force. This suggests that relatively uninstitutionalized or patrimonial regimes are not necessarily at a disadvantage compared to institutionalized ones in terms of capacity for internal repression.

[33] Dorothy J. Solinger, *Chinese Business under Socialism: The Politics of Domestic Commerce in Contemporary China, 1949–1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[34] Overviews include Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar, eds., *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen, eds., *State and Society in 21st-Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); and Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict, and Resistance*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003).

[35] Hinnebusch, "Viability of Authoritarian Rule in the Middle East," 7.

[36] Kellee S. Tsai, *Back-Alley Banking: Private Entrepreneurs in China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[37] Kellee S. Tsai, "Capitalists without a Class: Political Diversity among Private Entrepreneurs in China," *Comparative Political Studies* 38:9 (November 2005), 1130–1158.

along the spectrum of institutionalized to less institutionalized (or neopatrimonial) regimes, it would be closer to the institutionalized end.[38] Since the death of Mao Zedong, China has not had a paramount leader with an effective cult of the personality, as would be expected in a neopatrimonial or sultanistic regime. Furthermore, post-Mao political elites have not only resuscitated political institutions that stagnated during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), but have also established a high level of institutionalization in the Huntingtonian sense of adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence of state organizations.[39] In particular, Andrew Nathan attributes authoritarian resilience in China to four aspects of the regime's institutionalization – first, the increasingly rule-bound nature of succession politics; second, the growing use of meritocratic rather than factional criteria for political promotion; third, the increasing differentiation and functional specialization of the regime's institutions; and fourth, the establishment of "input institutions" that give individuals outlets to express their grievances and thus serve to bolster regime legitimacy.[40]

Although these indicators of institutionalization are certainly important components of regime durability, this chapter draws attention to the causal mechanisms underlying the relevant institutional dynamics. That is, the persistence of authoritarianism in China may also be traced to the ability of formal institutions to adapt to popular innovations that originate from informal interactions between state and nonstate actors at the subnational levels. Institutional change is possible in the absence of cataclysmic events or complete institutional breakdown, and institutional adaptability can contribute to regime durability. These contentions are developed further in the following.

EXPLAINING ENDOGENOUS INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: THE ROLE OF ADAPTIVE INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS IN A RELATIONAL APPROACH

Theoretically, this chapter makes two complementary suggestions for furthering our understanding of institutional development – first, adaptive informal institutions may play an analytically meaningful role in explaining endogenous institutional change; and second, the causal process underlying endogenous institutional change is relational, meaning that it derives from interactions among various grassroots actors.

The case of China demonstrates that even in nondemocratic settings where formal institutions appear to be imposed in top-down fashion rather than subject to popular suffrage, everyday actors may quietly appropriate formal

[38] Dali L. Yang, *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[39] Huntington, *Political Order*, 12–24.

[40] Andrew J. Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience: China's Changing of the Guard," *Journal of Democracy* 14:1 (January 2003), 6–17.

institutions to serve their own ends. This is most likely to occur when there is a gap between the original intentions of formal institutions and the perceived needs and interests of local actors. At the same time, local state agents may collaborate with ordinary people by intentionally misinterpreting the formal institutions that they are supposed to uphold. Such bureaucratic deviance is more likely to be found in situations, first, where different formal institutions have conflicting mandates (a situation that facilitates ignoring one set of rules in order to comply with another); second, where policy implementation is relatively decentralized; and third, where local officials have convergent interests with local citizens in a particular policy area (for example, promoting local economic growth, hiding revenues from higher levels of government, protecting local industry, bending rules to attract external investment, and so on). In turn, these collaborative interactions may generate adaptive informal institutions that provide a powerful demonstration effect and prompt policy elites to transform key attributes of the official political and economic orders. Institutions depend on human interaction for their survival and transformation. They are not simply imposed and enforced by state agents and other proprietors of formal institutions. The analytical basis and implications of these claims are clarified in the following.

The Formal Origins of Adaptive Informal Institutions

The present argument advanced here starts from the assumption that rules are meant to be observed, enforced, and followed. This view of formal institutions resonates with that of sociological institutionalism, which views formal institutions as being behaviorally prescriptive and normative: institutions tell actors how they should or should not act.[41] Formal institutions are intended to provide a certain element of predictability and stability to human interactions. Given this assumption, certain outcomes should predictably follow from certain institutions. Even complex multilayered institutional environments can be modeled elegantly to yield convincing explanations for why counterintuitive behaviors or policy choices occur.[42] However, formal institutions do not always function as intended: unintended consequences can flow from formal institutions and cases of institutional failure abound throughout the world. This reality, in turn, has inspired entire research agendas devoted to explaining the gap between intended and unintended institutional outcomes.

It is in this context that institutionalists have paid greater attention to "softer variables," such as ideas, norms, and culture[43] – or what others might call

[41] Walter W. Powell and Paul. J. DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[42] George Tsebelis, *Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[43] Robert H. Bates, "Contra Contractarianism: Some Reflections on the New Institutionalism," *Politics and Society* 16:2 (September 1988), 387–401; Sheri Berman, "Review: Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis," *Comparative Politics* 33:2 (January 2001), 231–250; and Mark

informal institutions. The underlying rationale for turning to less formal variables is relatively straightforward. If formal institutions are expected to produce X outcome, but Y occurs instead, then the noise must stem from exogenous informal variables. The analytic shortcoming of this reasoning is that informal institutions effectively become residual variables that are expected to bear the explanatory slack whenever formal institutions can no longer account for the variation in outcomes. And more typically, informal institutions are blamed for inhibiting the normal functioning of formal institutions. Cultural explanations for why certain countries are neither more developed nor more democratic are often cited as cogent examples of how informal institutions may undermine formal ones.[44] As Douglass North explains, in certain contexts "the formal rules change, but the informal constraints do not. In consequence, there develops an ongoing tension between informal constraints and the new formal rules," which may be attributed to "the deep-seated cultural inheritance that underlies many informal constraints."[45]

This observation leaves us with the analytic conflation of informal constraints, informal institutions, and cultural inheritance – and the vague impression that all three compromise the intended functions of formal institutions. A more organized effort to specify the causal impact of informal institutions is Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky's typology of the relationship between formal and informal institutions, such that they may be complementary, accommodating, competing, or substitutive.[46] The typology represents a helpful first step to clarify the nature and function of informal institutions relative to formal ones, but it does not develop a theory about the processes by which informal institutions emerge and change or are formalized. And indeed, a large part of the challenge in inserting informal institutions into causal explanations is to determine where to place them temporally, given that almost no society is completely devoid of some semblance of formal institutions.

For the purposes of capturing the causal effects of informal institutions at a more manageable intermediate stage, this chapter thus brackets the "deep-seated cultural inheritance" underlying informal institutions and starts with the blank slate of formal institutions, which I define as rules, regulations, policies, and procedures that are promulgated and meant to be enforced by

M. Blyth, "Review: 'Any More Bright Ideas?': The Ideational Turn of Comparative Political Economy," *Comparative Politics* 29:2 (1997), 229–250.

[44] For example, Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

[45] Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 91.

[46] Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* 2:4 (2004), 725–740. Five types of informal institutions are identified in Hans-Joachim Lauth, "Informal Institutions and Democracy," *Democratization* 7:4 (Winter 2000), 21–50.

entities and agents generally recognized as being official.[47] As in my earlier work, this study regards formal institutions as being both constraining and enabling.[48] On the one hand, formal institutions limit the range of officially permissible behavior. On the other hand, multilayered institutional environments offer transformative possibilities; in particular, formal institutional contexts with overlapping jurisdictions and inconsistent or unrealistic mandates provide opportunities for actors to adjust, ignore, or evade discrete portions of formal institutions.

Initially, many of these adaptive responses may appear to be idiosyncratic or isolated. However, over time they may evolve into "adaptive informal institutions," which I define as regularized patterns of interaction that emerge as adaptive responses to the constraints and opportunities of formal institutions, that violate or transcend the scope of formal institutions, and that are widely practiced. In order for this intermediate stage of institutional adaptation to develop, at least the base-level guardians of formal institutions need to be complicit in allowing the institutional distortions to occur, over and over again. As such, adaptive informal institutions are more likely to arise and thrive in localities where the enforcers of formal institutions and the creators of informal adaptations have convergent interests. By definition, this means that although local state and nonstate actors benefit mutually from the resulting adaptive informal institutions, those arrangements transgress existing formal institutional mandates. This is the first part of my argument in a longer sequence explaining endogenous institutional development.

The second part concerns what happens after adaptive informal institutions emerge. At the most basic level, the proliferation of adaptive informal institutions may undermine the legitimacy of formal institutions. The relevance of institutions, whether formal or informal, depends on their capacity to guide human perceptions and practices. But do the enforcers of formal institutions discipline, ignore, or incorporate the actors sustaining adaptive informal institutions? The answer to this question is historically and nationally contingent. In the case of China, adaptive informal institutions that threaten to undermine social stability or to compromise the CCP's political monopoly are likely to provoke official censure. Official tolerance for mass mobilization and political dissent remains limited. Meanwhile, crackdowns on adaptive informal institutions in the economic realm are most likely to occur during political campaigns

[47] This definition draws from Helmke and Levitsky ("Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics," 727) but also includes public policies because they typically have institutional consequences. Pierson suggests: "It makes good sense to think of public policies as important institutions. For the individuals and social organizations that make up civil society, public policies are clearly very central rules governing their interactions"; Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 165.

[48] Tsai, *Back-Alley Banking*.

against corruption and at times when there is heightened political sensitivity to local deviations from national mandates.[49] But if the law enforcers themselves are party to the offending activities, then efforts to curb them are unlikely to be sustainable beyond those priority moments.

Beyond China, we may expect that when adaptive informal institutions constitute flagrant forms of criminal activity, they will elicit the attention of law-enforcement entities. Yet even the definition of "flagrant" criminal behavior is contextually variable. In some cases, embezzlement of state assets would constitute flagrant criminal activity, but under other circumstances, asset stripping of public enterprises by managers and workers might be so common that it fails to trigger strong official reactions. For the present purposes, I will simply define flagrant forms of criminal activity as illegal practices that are readily discernible and have immediate social costs that are difficult to cover up. An example of this would be Ponzi schemes: by the time they collapse, they have usually entangled large numbers of enraged people.[50] Another example would be violations of food and drug safety standards, which endanger lives and motivate regulatory development.[51]

In contrast, adaptive informal institutions that merely stretch the limits of formal institutions or create new patterns of interaction not explicitly governed by formal institutions may endure and even thrive unencumbered for some length of time. The adaptive practices discussed in this chapter fall into these quasi-legal and extralegal gray areas. They are informal institutions that arise in a context where some local political and economic actors face incentives to promote private-sector development but where formal institutions at the national level lag in adjusting to new businesses and their associated externalities.

This focus on the origins and effects of adaptive informal institutions resonates with the logics of nonreinforcing event sequences and structural friction found in the multiple institutional layers of historical institutionalism and American political development.[52] When adaptive informal institutions arise in response to the dissonance between existing formal institutions and the operational preferences of actors, adaptive informal institutions start to

[49] For example, distinct cycles of crackdowns on local financial institutions such as trust and investment companies were apparent and corresponded with the broader policy reform cycles through the late 1990s when Zhu Rongji was premier. Correspondence with Yi-feng Tao, November 10, 2006.

[50] Mitchell Zuckoff, *Ponzi's Scheme: The True Story of a Financial Legend* (New York: Random House, 2005).

[51] Waikeung Tam and Dali Yang, "Food Safety and the Development of Regulatory Institutions in China," *Asian Perspective* 29:4 (2005), 5–36.

[52] On nonreinforcing event sequences, see James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29:4 (August 2000), 507–548; on structural friction, see Robert C. Lieberman, "Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order: Explaining Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 96:4 (December 2002), 697–712.

redirect and undermine the previously self-enforcing formal institutions.[53] In this narrative, the use of preexisting formal institutions as the analytical baseline against which actors devise coping strategies is important. Indeed, the formal-informal-formal sequence represents the core of the argument. The next section illustrates this contention more concretely with three instances of major institutional changes relating to private-sector development in China.

RED HAT DISGUISES AND PRIVATE-SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

In contemporary China "wearing a red hat" (*dai hongmaozi*) refers to the practice of registering a business as a collective enterprise when it is really privately managed and owned. A related disguise is paying a state-owned enterprise for use of its name to run a private business; those are called "hang-on" enterprises (*guahu qiye*) because they are registered as appendages to established government operations. Red hat operations emerged as an adaptive informal institution during the first decade of economic reform, when private enterprises with more than eight employees (*siying qiye*) were not legally permitted.[54] Therefore, until 1988, China's private sector technically consisted of only "individual households" (*getihu*) with fewer than eight employees.[55] In reality, however, many of the collective enterprises were larger private businesses wearing red hats.[56] One entrepreneur I interviewed in Huizhou, Guangdong, for instance, explained that he was able to open a sizable piglet store as early as 1978 because he ran it under the auspices of the local township's communal supply shop.[57] Another entrepreneur in Nanjing, Jiangsu, proudly recounted that in 1982 she was able to run a large and lucrative clothing business as a collective enterprise, while running the same business as a private one would have been "impossible."[58] By the time private enterprises were permitted, an estimated half a million businesses were already using the red hat disguise. And in certain localities, it was commonly known that between 90 and 95 percent of the registered collective enterprises wore red hats.[59]

[53] Cf. Avner Greif and David Laitin, "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change," *American Political Science Review* 98:4 (November 2004), 633–652.

[54] The eight-employee limit has an ideological rationale: in *Das Kapital* (1867), Marx indicates that capitalist producers with more than eight employees are exploitative and surplus accumulating, while those with fewer than eight workers are nonexploitative household producing units.

[55] For more detail, see Susan Young, *Private Business and Economic Reform in China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995).

[56] Barry Naughton, "Institutional Innovation and Privatization from Below," *American Economic Review* 84:2 (May 1994), 266–270.

[57] Author interview with anonymous entrepreneur, Huizhou, Guangdong, October 16, 2002. As part of a larger project, I conducted interviews with more than three hundred Chinese entrepreneurs and officials over the course of 2001 to 2005. A list of interviewees is available in Tsai, *Capitalism without Democracy*.

[58] Author interview with anonymous entrepreneur, Nanjing, Jiangsu, October 10, 2002.

[59] Kristin Parris, "Local Initiative and National Reform: The Wenzhou Model of Development," *China Quarterly*, no. 134 (June 1993), 242–263.

After the 1988 regulations permitting private enterprises – and the politically rooted economic downturn of 1989–92 following the Tiananmen Square crisis – the private sector boomed. Between 1990 and 2000, the average annual growth rate in the number of registered private businesses was 32.8 percent, the number of people employed in the private sector grew at an average annual rate of 29.2 percent, their registered capitalization grew at 65.1 percent, their value added to GDP grew at 58.7 percent, and their volume of retail sales grew at a rate of 70.2 percent.[60] In the interim a network of formal institutions governing the private sector had developed throughout the country.

On the most superficial level, it is tempting to attribute China's rapid private-sector development to official policies and institutions regulating the nonstate economy. I would argue, however, that China's formal institutions have presented local state and economic actors with more of a constraining rather than a permissive environment for private capital accumulation – and key to our purposes here, local actors have exercised agency in manipulating formal institutions to their advantage.

Throughout the 1980s and most of the 1990s, private entrepreneurs experienced not only a social stigma but also political persecution for being profit oriented. There was considerable political uncertainty about the trajectory of economic reform, and private entrepreneurs were publicly criticized during the national campaigns against "spiritual pollution" in 1983–4 and against "bourgeois liberalization" in 1987. On a day-to-day basis, entrepreneurs were also subjected to arbitrary treatment by tax collectors and harassment by other bureaucrats. By contrast, state and collective enterprises received favorable treatment relative to private ones in terms of tax breaks, bank loans, and use of land. Those were the operating realities that business owners faced beneath the impressive statistics.

Why, then, were entrepreneurs willing to enter and stay in business? As suggested previously, one way for entrepreneurs to avoid social and political ostracism was to wear a red hat. This adaptive strategy was so widespread that "wearing a red hat" became (and remains) a common term in everyday discourse. The practice became institutionalized as a standard, albeit informal, operating practice for private entrepreneurs.[61] Yet the actual process through which this occurred was not simply a case of entrepreneurs deceiving local bureaucrats; instead, the actions of agents were collaborative and reflexively strategic. Most local cadres knew exactly what they were doing when they accepted, or perhaps extracted, a registration fee from a local entrepreneur to

[60] *Zhongguo tongji nianjian* (China Statistical Yearbook) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, various years).

[61] On local variation in the use of red hat strategies and development of private property rights, see Jean C. Oi and Andrew G. Walder, eds., *Property Rights and Economic Reform in China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); and Susan H. Whiting, *Power and Wealth in Rural China: The Political Economy of Institutional Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

run a collective enterprise. Because of fiscal decentralization and the hardening of local budget constraints, cadres in many rural localities had a vested interest in allowing profitable businesses to operate and contribute to local revenues regardless of their true ownership status.[62] As a result, hundreds of thousands of both state and nonstate actors were complicit in popularizing the red hat phenomenon. Meanwhile, China's collective sector flourished and represented the basis of rapid rural industrialization.[63]

In the spirit of Deng Xiaoping's dictum to focus on practical results rather than ideology, when central-level elites realized that so many collectives were really private enterprises, it was futile – and indeed, impractical – to insist on limiting the private economy to household producing units with fewer than eight employees. Although conservative or "leftist" political elites would have preferred to restrict the nonstate sector, both the popularity and economic effectiveness of wearing a red hat gave reformers concrete evidence and, thus, political support for expanding the scope of China's nascent private economy. Influential scholars, such as Yu Guangyuan and Xue Muqiao from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, drew on their observations of local empirical realities to help reformist leaders reach a consensus about the appropriate next steps in China's reform process. During a pivotal academic policy meeting held in Beijing in 1986, they reasoned that since China was still at the initial stage of socialism, the following points were applicable: first, it was impossible to avoid private-sector development; second, the advantages of developing the private economy outweighed the disadvantages; and third, the private sector could still be subject to state guidance and control under a socialist system.[64]

Broad-based agreement on these key points about China's "initial stage of socialism" paved the way for shifts in the official guiding principles and policies of the party-state. On the party side, at the Thirteenth National Congress of the CCP in 1987, Premier Zhao Ziyang announced, "cooperative, individual and private sectors of the economy in both urban and rural areas should all be encouraged to expand. . .. We must formulate policies and enact laws governing the private sector as soon as possible, in order to protect its legitimate interest."[65] Following the party's lead, on the state side, the National People's Congress (NPC) passed a constitutional amendment accepting Zhao's proposal in April 1988, and two months later the PRC State Council issued regulations

[62] By the same token, Whiting points out that local officials and entrepreneurs "shared a common interest in the security of shareholding cooperatives" as legitimate collective enterprises in localities that were dominated by genuine collective enterprises, as well as localities that were dominated by private businesses. Ibid., 163–164.

[63] Jean C. Oi, *Rural China Takes Off: Institutional Foundations of Economic Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[64] Author correspondence with anonymous government researcher, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, November 19, 2006.

[65] *Beijing Review*, November 9–15, 1987, cited in Rashid Malik, *Chinese Entrepreneurs in the Economic Development of China* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 15.

governing "private enterprises" with eight or more employees. In an acknowledgment that these regulations were really post hoc sanctioning of ground-level realities, official publications disclosed that by then China already had 225,000 private enterprises employing 3.6 million employees with an average of 16 employees per business – that is, twice the number of workers that individual private businesses were permitted to employ.[66]

In sum, the practice of wearing a red hat is an example of how an adaptive informal institution contributed to the institutional conversion of a formal regulation, the collective registration status. Camouflaging the true ownership structure of a business rendered the formal distinction in nomenclature between collective and private enterprises virtually meaningless. By the same token, as an adaptive informal institution, the red hat practice also became an increasingly prominent institutional layer in China's once-limited field of corporate organizational types. Instead of displacing the collective sector, red hat enterprises represented an additional form of collective enterprise; this innovative layer not only expanded the institutional space in which private businesses operated but also created a politically acceptable rationale for devising a more transparent registration status for larger private enterprises. In this case, the impetus for institutional change stemmed from two strains of "structural friction" in China's political economy – first, there was tension between preexisting institutions that privileged the collective sector and policies that sanctioned limited development of the private sector; and second, there was an inconsistency between fiscal reforms that enabled rural localities to retain more revenue and national restrictions on larger private enterprises. Both state and economic actors coped with these institutional incongruencies by popularizing the adaptive informal institution of wearing a red hat. The economic success and widespread use of this adaptive informal institution then provided reformers with the requisite evidence that expanding the scope of the private sector would enhance China's productive forces during the initial stage of socialism. As we will see, ultimately the adaptive informal institution of wearing a red hat not only influenced the legalization of private enterprises with more than eight employees but also provided the basis for subsequent institutional changes in the CCP and state constitution.

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S INCORPORATION OF CAPITALISTS

The first generation of profit-oriented business operators in post-Mao China generally had two different backgrounds. The "individual entrepreneurs" (*getihu*) consisted of street peddlers, itinerant vendors, and small retail business owners who subsisted on the fringes of the socialist-era economy and did not

[66] *Beijing Review*, July 18–24, 1988, 6, cited in Malik, *Chinese Entrepreneurs*.

receive the benefits of state employment. The popular perception of *getihu* was that they were criminals and social outcasts who lacked alternative employment options; hence, they experienced considerable political and social discrimination. In reality, however, most were simply underemployed farmers who no longer had to work in the collectives.

At the other extreme, the other strata of society active in commerce were "cadre entrepreneurs" and "red capitalists" who used their privileged political status to run businesses indirectly or to help others run red hat operations. Even though CCP members were not allowed to operate private businesses, it was apparent throughout the 1980s and 1990s that many were active participants in the nonstate sector. Indeed, official surveys reveal an increasing proportion of self-identified CCP members among private entrepreneurs over time, such that only 7 percent of business owners admitted to being party members in 1991, but by 2003 more than one-third admitted to being party members.[67] It is reasonable to assume that the earlier official figures underestimate the true proportion of party members in the private sector because of the politico-ideological sensitivity concerning the appropriate relationship between the CCP and "market socialism with Chinese characteristics." For many years, the uneasy coexistence or "friction" between China's official socialist ideology and the reality of private-sector development accounted for the simultaneous growth of business owners among party members – and the underreporting of party members in official surveys of private entrepreneurs.

On the CCP's eightieth anniversary on July 1, 2001, however, General Secretary Jiang Zemin gave a landmark speech widely interpreted as inviting private entrepreneurs to join the party. Although the rationale was woven into Jiang Zemin's "Theory of the Three Represents," which was supposed to represent the theoretical extension of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory, it actually made the controversial recommendation that the party should represent "the most advanced forces of production, the most advanced cultural forces, and the interests of the overwhelming majority of people." The CCP had launched a mass-media campaign publicizing the Three Represents leading up to the anniversary, but it was the July 1 speech, followed by the Sixteenth National Party Congress in late 2002, that clarified the implication of the "theory," that is, that the CCP should not only not discriminate against private entrepreneurs but should in fact embrace them because they were contributing (the most) to China's economic development. A number of the party's old guard disapproved of the sharp ideological turn advocated by Jiang and his supporters. Even online chat

[67] China State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC), *Zhongguo siying jingji nianjian* (China Private Economy Yearbook) (Beijing: Zhonghua gongshang lianhe chubanshe, various years).

rooms and message boards were filled with colorful, passionately argued objections to the selling out of the CCP.[68]

As such, it is remarkable that the CCP agreed to change – and indeed, reverse – its former ideological depiction of capitalists as exploitative "class enemies." Bruce Dickson suggests that allowing private entrepreneurs into the party was a strategic decision to incorporate a growing and increasingly wealthy portion of Chinese society.[69] It was an effort to preempt autonomous political organization on the part of private business owners. Although this interpretation of the party decision makes sense, I would add that the underlying causal mechanisms leading to this decision were rooted in the growing power of the informal rules of the game that had evolved over the first two decades of economic reform. Party members were already active in the private sector well before private entrepreneurs were formally permitted to join the party. But how was this possible, given that China remains an authoritarian regime dominated by a Leninist party?

As discussed, the adaptive informal institution of wearing a red hat offered Chinese Communist Party members an ideologically appropriate cover for participating in for-profit activities. This, in turn, led to the adaptive practice of being a "red capitalist" (*hong zibenjia*). Because private entrepreneurs were explicitly banned from joining the party, after 1989 wearing a red hat became a safer way for party members to run large businesses. And local party cadres were willing to look the other way because red capitalists often contributed more to the local economy than did ordinary entrepreneurs.

By the early 2000s the spread of red capitalists presented the party with the critical dilemma of whether to condemn their economic activities or to embrace them: 19.8 percent of entrepreneurs surveyed by official entities in 2000 indicated that they were already CCP members.[70] Should such a large percentage of business owners remain politically marginalized? After consulting provincial and subprovincial officials throughout China, the party's core leadership decided that it was in the interest of continued economic growth, as well as party rejuvenation and survival, to legitimize the existing red capitalists and to co-opt other private entrepreneurs.[71] Shortly after the party lifted the ban on cultivating capitalist members, a party theoretician explained, "if our party doesn't build more branches [under the circumstances of rapid growth in the nonpublic economic organizations], then other social forces will attract those people. If

[68] For example, "Deng Liqun, Others, Criticize Jiang Zemin for Agreeing to Admit Capitalists into the CPC," *Renmin ribao*, July 20, 2001, translated text from FBIS-China, July 28, 2001.

[69] Bruce Dickson, *Red Capitalists in China: The Party, Private Entrepreneurs, and Prospects for Political Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[70] SAIC, *Zhongguo siying jingji nianjian*, 2005.

[71] These consultations "took place over a period of perhaps two years." Joseph Fewsmith, "Rethinking the Role of the CCP: Explicating Jiang Zemin's Party Anniversary Speech," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 1 pt. 2 (Spring 2002), 3, at http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/clm2_JF.pdf (accessed August 25, 2012).

the party doesn't open up its organizations [to private entrepreneurs], then other organizations will hold activities for them."[72] The report further highlighted the relative underrepresentation of business owners in the party: "By the end of 2002 there were 2.1 million party members in nonpublic economic organizations, which accounts for only around 2 percent of the total membership, and over 80 percent of foreign-invested enterprises and private enterprises do not have party members."[73]

Within a relatively short period, the party line shifted from banning capitalists to welcoming them. Such a policy reversal would have been difficult to justify in the absence of preexisting grassroots deviations from the party line. Wearing a red hat enabled party members to become red capitalists, with the result that the occupational composition of the party was changed from within. As employees of the party-state began running their own businesses, albeit disguised as collective ventures, the party's ban on private entrepreneurs became increasingly unrealistic, if not anachronistic. Although Jiang Zemin is generally credited (or blamed) for allowing capitalists into the party, the decision was not the impulsive act of a dictator. The decision did not occur in a societal void, as evidenced by the series of discussions with local officials throughout the country. And at a deeper causal level, all of the informal coping strategies that both state and nonstate actors had reproduced in their daily interactions took on an institutional reality of their own, thereby challenging national leaders to adapt preexisting formal institutions to assimilate these hitherto informal practices. The cumulative effects of this dynamic can also be seen in the revisions to the PRC Constitution that have become increasingly favorable toward the private sector.

PRIVATE-SECTOR–FRIENDLY REVISIONS TO THE PRC CONSTITUTION

Revisions to the PRC Constitution have generally lagged behind developments in practice. Of the various constitutional changes that have occurred since 1982, the first two revisions represent reactive formalization of local practices and realities. Meanwhile, the most recent revision puts forth an ambitious objective that was inspired by the two adaptive informal institutions discussed earlier – the wearing of a red hat and the proliferation of red capitalists. Of all the institutional changes discussed thus far, the following sequence of constitutional revisions illustrates most organically this chapter's argument about the causal mechanisms underlying endogenous dynamics of formal institutional change.

First, as mentioned earlier, in 1988 the First Session of the Seventh NPC added a paragraph to Article 11 that "permits the private sector of the economy

[72] Li Yan, "Jiada zai fei gongyouzhi jingji zuzhi jianli dang zuzhi de gongzuo lidu, buduan guangda dang zuzhi de fugai mian," in SAIC, *Zhongguo siying jingji nianjian 2002–2004*, 107.

[73] Ibid., 108.

to exist and develop within the limits prescribed by law." The paragraph stated, "the private sector of the economy is a complement to the socialist economy." This new section provided the legal basis for allowing "private enterprises" (*siying qiye*) with more than eight employees to operate, while indicating that the private sector would still be subject to state control, as stated in the final clause of the paragraph: "The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the private sector of the economy, and exercises guidance, supervision, and control over the private sector of the economy." This formal recognition of larger private businesses trailed ground-level practices, as ambitious entrepreneurs were already scaling up in the guise of collective enterprises, but going forward, legal recognition of private enterprises rendered the adaptive informal institution of red hat disguises less necessary.

Second, in 1999 the Second Session of the Ninth NPC amended the aforementioned paragraph in Article 11 to say, "individual, private and other nonpublic economies that exist within the limits prescribed by law are major components of the socialist market economy." The 1999 revision also included a statement indicating "[t]he People's Republic of China governs the country according to law and makes it a socialist country ruled by law." The combination of elevating the nonstate sector to a "major component" of the economy and introducing the notion that the country is governed by the rule of law signaled a more legitimate and secure status for the private sector. The reason these amendments may not appear to be groundbreaking is that, once again, the constitutional revisions followed changes that were already taking place in the Chinese economy. By 1999 spontaneous "privatization" or restructuring (*gaizhi*) of collective enterprises had already been occurring in rural China for five years.[74] Because of various local innovations in property rights structures, the nonstate sector was already a "major component" of the economy by the time the constitution acknowledged it.

Third, in 2004 the Second Session of the Tenth NPC made the more radical revision of encouraging private-sector development and protecting private property rights under the constitution. Article 11 was changed again to stipulate:

> The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the private sector of the economy, including individual and private businesses. The state encourages, supports and guides the development of the private sector, and exercises supervision and administration over the sector according to law.

And Article 13 introduced "the lawful private property of citizens shall not be encroached upon." Meanwhile, the Theory of the Three Represents – which

[74] As Whiting points out (*Power and Wealth in Rural China*), the privatization of collectives was the result of changes in the fiscal system, the cadre evaluation system, and the national political economic environment. Furthermore, by 1999 the selling off of small and medium-size state-owned enterprises, announced at the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1997, was gaining momentum.

makes the controversial claim that the party represents the "most advanced forces of production" (that is, private entrepreneurs) – was incorporated into state ideology alongside "Marxism, Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and the Theory of Deng Xiaoping." Because the Sixteenth Party Congress in 2002 had incorporated upholding the Three Represents into the CCP's mission statement, it was not surprising that the state constitution would be similarly amended.

Unlike the first two amendments discussed, however, the constitutional stipulation that private property rights would be protected should be viewed as an objective rather than post hoc recognition of ground-level realities. Although certain adaptive informal institutions enable economic actors to engage in contractual exchanges as if they were guaranteed by a formal legal system of private property rights,[75] the rise of serious disputes concerning asset ownership demonstrates that such arrangements are not immune to government intervention/expropriation. Of course, this is a risk that all adaptive informal institutions face, but the point here is that because the most recent constitutional revisions have more complex systemic implications for China's political economy, lags in actual implementation should be expected. Formal protection of private property rights requires strengthening the institutions that support the rule of law. As Yu An, a Tsinghua University law professor who served on the constitution's drafting committee, commented:

> Some revised articles are an acknowledgement of the current situation, while others are new stipulations. That means adjustments should be made to existing laws, or new laws should be implemented. . . . The Constitution itself can hardly regulate the particular behavior of the government and the people. Without significant adjustment of current common laws, the impact of the constitutional revision may be greatly reduced.[76]

In the interim, various adaptive informal institutions will continue to serve as self-enforcing substitutes for property rights.

Although the series of constitutional revisions relating to the private sector appears to be a linear progression of increasing official recognition and legal protection of its interests, there was nothing automatic or predetermined about the development of various formal institutions to support the private sector. In the context of evolving property rights regimes in rural China, Susan Whiting observes, "even dramatic change occurs incrementally. The presence of complementarities among institutions and policies means that singular changes interact to bring about more fundamental changes in the incentives and constraints in the institutional environment."[77] I would add that in the case of China's constitutional revisions, the "singular changes" are rooted in the informal adaptive strategies of grassroots actors.

[75] Oi and Walder, eds., *Property Rights and Economic Reform*.

[76] Yu An, cited in "Constitutional Revision Requires Law Adjustment," *China Business Weekly*, March 8, 2004.

[77] Whiting, *Power and Wealth in Rural China*, 299.

Given the opacity of China's political system, it is challenging to prove with definitive data that the spread of adaptive informal institutions used by private entrepreneurs directly influenced the various constitutional amendments. On the basis of published sources as well as field interviews with government officials, elite intellectuals, and private entrepreneurs, however, we may infer the plausibility of the counterfactual to my argument. That is, in the absence of the adaptive informal institutions discussed previously, it is unlikely that reform-oriented elites would have found the pro–private sector constitutional amendments either desirable or feasible. Both the economic success of private businesses and the popularity of private entrepreneurship among party members offered reformers evidence (against "leftist" or conservative leaders) that enhancing the scope of the private sector would be in the country's political and economic interests. Indeed, various legal scholars were already pushing for the protection of private property rights during the drafting meetings of the 1999 constitutional revision, but their recommendations were shelved as a result of opposition by more conservative party members.[78] Only after the party came to terms with its red capitalist members in 2002 was it politically possible to revisit the earlier constitutional proposals to protect private property.

Although there was still internal debate over the inclusion of protecting private property in the consultative processes leading up to the 2004 constitutional revision, by 2003 and early 2004 proponents of private property rights were able to build their case by implying that there was societal support for constitutional revision along those lines. Even though private entrepreneurs themselves never mobilized from below to lobby for constitutional protection of their assets, reformers strategically solicited input from the official mass association representing private entrepreneurs, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC, *gongshang lian*). In practice, state-sponsored mass associations in Leninist systems usually serve to transmit official policy to constituent members in a state corporatist fashion, but in principle they are also meant to represent the interests of their members. As such, during the earlier rounds of constitutional revision, the ACFIC was charged with convening small-scale forums with entrepreneurs throughout the country to gather their opinions about the upcoming constitutional revisions.[79] Prior to the 2004 revision, however, the official narrative of the process is that the ACFIC initiated the consultative discussions with entrepreneurs and that it played an important role in advocating constitutional protection of private property.[80] In other words, reformers gave the ACFIC credit for representing the voice of private

[78] Lian Xisheng, former vice chair of the China Constitution Society, cited in "Amendments Protect Private Property," *China Business Weekly*, January 4, 2004.

[79] Author correspondence with Scott Kennedy, University of Indiana-Bloomington, November 2, 2006.

[80] Author correspondence with anonymous government researcher, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, November 12, 2006.

entrepreneurs and pushing for the private property clause to create a stronger political case for revising the constitution along the lines that they had been hoping for at least five years earlier. In reality, private entrepreneurs themselves were remarkably absent from the actual process, but the cumulative effect of their adaptive informal institutions and the changes that they engendered in formal institutions governing the private sector enabled reformers to justify further protections on their behalf. The causal mechanisms were indirect, informal, incremental, and fundamentally political.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: ADAPTIVE INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS IN VIETNAM

Lest these claims appear bound to Chinese idiosyncrasies, it is worth noting that comparable dynamics have characterized Vietnam's reform process. Although the initiation of *doi moi* or "renovation" in 1986 frames most studies of Vietnam's contemporary political economy, creeping liberalization of the planned economy had already commenced in the preceding years. A host of adaptive informal institutions – or what Vietnam scholars call "fence-breaking" activities[81] – eroded socialist institutions and contributed to creating a more hospitable political environment for economic experimentation.

First, the formal demise of cooperative farming in 1990 has been traced to "the power of everyday politics" that had been percolating for decades.[82] In collaboration with local officials, villagers in Vietnam engaged in a host of unofficial practices that undermined the viability of cooperatives as the centrally mandated institution for collective agricultural production. Amid these local transgressions, national leaders made repeated attempts to preserve cooperative farming, while allowing adjustments at the margins. For example, by the 1970s, it became apparent that various cooperatives were signing "production contracts" (*khoan san*) with individual households such that farmers agreed to deliver a set amount of grain and would be permitted to keep the remainder. The informal use of production contracts boosted agricultural productivity significantly. After much deliberation, in response, the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) Secretariat sanctioned production contracts in 1980. But in the ensuing decade, production contracts gave way to yet another adaptive informal institution, "blank contracts" (*khoan trang*), whereby local officials granted

[81] Adam Fforde and Stefan de Vylder, *From Plan to Market: The Economic Transition in Vietnam* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); Edmund Malesky, "Leveled Mountains and Broken Fences: Measuring and Analyzing De Facto Decentralization in Vietnam," *European Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3:2 (2004), 307–337.

[82] Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, *The Power of Everyday Politics: How Vietnamese Peasants Transformed National Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); cf. James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

villagers the autonomy to farm as they pleased.[83] The pervasiveness of such informal practices ultimately convinced national leaders to authorize decollectivization and a return to family farming.[84]

Despite the dismantling of cooperative farming, during the early years of reform, the center nonetheless tried to preserve collective ownership of land. In the absence of private land markets, localities that wanted to attract foreign investment engaged in the "fence-breaking" practice of selling extended land-use contracts to domestic investors, who then leased those rights to foreigners.[85] Central efforts to clamp down on such sales were not effective. As such, the center issued a new Land Law in 1993 that sanctioned the sale of long-term land-use rights certificates. In a parallel manner, the 1998 revisions of the Land Law removed restrictions on the use of land as collateral because various provincial governments were already allowing private companies to collateralize bank loans with collective land.[86]

Meanwhile, liberalization of state-determined wages and consumer prices also preceded formal initiation of reform in Vietnam and was spearheaded by one locality's creative interpretation of an official decree. Specifically, in 1980, the VCP Politburo passed a resolution that required subsidization of cadres' basic necessities. But since the resolution did not explicitly require rationing these items, the Long An provincial government decided to stop issuing ration coupons and allowed both local prices and wages to be determined by the market instead.[87] As a result, the production of meat and rice nearly tripled, the provincial contribution of grain to the center increased more than fivefold, and local increases in prices were accompanied by comparable increases in cadres' wages. These practices became known as the "Long An model." The model was emulated by other provinces and attracted the attention of national authorities, who dispatched delegations to study Long An. By 1985, the VCP's Central Committee formally suspended the single price system and use of ration cards.

Finally, under *doi moi* the creeping development of a more favorable regulatory and political environment for private enterprise has been analogous to that in China. While private household businesses in Vietnam typically operated on the margins of legality in the 1980s, by the end of the decade, the 1990

[83] Kerkvliet, *The Power of Everyday Politics*, chap. 6.

[84] On spontaneous decollectivization in China, see Daniel Kelliher, *Peasant Power in China: The Era of Rural Reform, 1979–1989* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992) and Kate Xiao Zhou, *How the Farmers Changed China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); but cf. Jonathan Unger, *The Transformation of Rural China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002) on how national reformers may have exaggerated the extent of popular demand for decollectivization to justify accelerated implementation of the reform.

[85] Malesky, "Leveled Mountains and Broken Fences," 313–314.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Gareth Porter, *Vietnam: The Politics of Bureaucratic Socialism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 123–125.

Company Law enabled a variety of private ventures to register formally, and the 2000 Enterprise Law further simplified licensing requirements. By the VCP's Fifth Plenum in 2002, the socialist stigma against capitalist activity was further lifted: the VCP heralded the private sector as "an integral part of the national economy" and announced that party members were formally permitted to own businesses. The successive layering of rules and regulations governing the non-state sector ultimately contributed to the conversion of the VCP's ideological orientation and membership.

In brief, the post hoc evolution of formal laws governing Vietnam's transitional economy mirrors the aforementioned dynamics of endogenous institutional change observed in China's experience. As Brian Van Arkadie and Raymond Mallon observe, "changes in formal rules have often responded to a spontaneous process of institutional development, accommodating changes in informal practices."[88] As in China, informal institutional innovations at the local level have shaped national policy debates and decisions to reconfigure socialist institutions. And in all of these examples, formal incorporation of adaptive informal institutions occurred in the absence of societal mobilization for those changes. The reactive sequence of formal institutions inspiring adaptive informal institutions that feed back into the formal institutional environment was not only endogenously generated, but nonconsequentialist in logic. To be sure, farmers, entrepreneurs, and local officials acted purposively, but their informal quotidian practices were not directed to the objective of reforming formal institutions at the national level.

CONCLUSION

Of the existing explanations that have been proposed for regime durability, the importance of various forms of institutional capacity emerges as a recurring theme. Whether the primary reason for authoritarian persistence is attributed to economic variables, the state's coercive apparatus, or the incorporation of key social forces, the causal logic in these arguments involves a role for institutions. Indeed, even the absence of institutionalization has been cited as an explanation for the durability of neopatrimonial regimes. Although these various accounts appreciate the explanatory value of institutions, this chapter emphasizes the importance of informal interactions in contributing to institutional adaptability and flexibility. Regime durability does not necessarily reflect institutional stasis and/or structural stagnation in society. As Charles Armstrong shows in the case of North Korea, however, regimes that experience stasis of certain institutions may be resilient (see Chapter 4 in this volume). Significant transformations in the principles and practices of governing institutions are possible short of formal regime change. To be sure, not all institutions are equally important. But the

[88] Brian Van Arkadie and Raymond Mallon, *Vietnam: A Transition Tiger?* (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press at Australian National University, 2003), 107.

capacity of *key political institutions* for endogenous change may help to explain the durability of authoritarian regimes whose legitimizing basis has shifted over time. Hence, in a country such as North Korea, where the legitimizing basis of the regime has remained stable over time through ideological institutional change, no market-oriented institutional change has been necessary for survival. (See Chapter 4 on *institutional reversal* in North Korea, where the regime first recognized the private market, which had emerged informally and spontaneously, and then penalized private entrepreneurs by instituting currency reform.) In the specific case of China, these "key political institutions" include the economic ideology, the Chinese Communist Party, and the PRC State Constitution. Each of these institutions defines the official values and priorities of the (once staunchly socialist) party-state – and their fundamental redefinition has enabled the regime to avert political opposition from the fastest growing and most economically powerful sector of society: private entrepreneurs. As this chapter has argued, similar dynamics exist beyond the case of China, most notably in Vietnam,[89] as well as in Laos and, since 2011, in Cuba.

When we look beyond the group of resilient regimes, it becomes apparent that informal adaptive institutions can also serve to undermine communist regimes. This process unfolded in various East European regimes, but the Soviet Union is an especially interesting case for analyzing the conditions under which private economic activity does not promote resilience. In the Soviet Union, adaptive informal institutions emerged as early as the 1960s.[90] Although small-scale private entrepreneurial activity had the passive acquiescence of the party under Brezhnev, it did not receive legal sanction prior to perestroika. When Gorbachev authorized the passage of a series of laws in 1988–1990 on private economic activity, entrepreneurial activity rapidly increased in volume. However, instead of supporting the regime, entrepreneurs worked against it (in Steven Solnick's apt metaphor, they "stole" the state).[91] Private entrepreneurs thus weakened the Soviet Union and contributed to its eventual collapse. The contrast between the Soviet case and that of China allows us to highlight the centrality of continuous firm political control during the process of institutional adaptation. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was strong under Brezhnev but had become so weak by the time that private activity was legalized that it even relinquished its constitutional monopoly on power in April 1990. In contrast, the Chinese Communist Party maintained firm control over power both when informal adaptive institutions first emerged and when they eventually received legal sanction. Private

[89] On how changes in informal institutions preceded the major reorientation of government policy toward supporting the market in Vietnam, see also Gallagher and Hanson, Chap. 7 in this volume.

[90] James R. Millar, "The Little Deal: Brezhnev's Contribution to Acquisitive Socialism," *Slavic Review* 44:4 (Winter 1985), 694–706.

[91] Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

entrepreneurs therefore received different signals about the need to cooperate with the regime in the Soviet Union and in China.

Theoretically, this chapter builds on the notions of institutional sequencing, layering, and conversion in historical institutionalism by proposing the following: first, the causal mechanism for institutional change depends on interactions between various state and nonstate actors; and second, adaptive informal institutions may play an important role in endogenous accounts of such change. Specifically, adaptive informal institutions may emerge out of the collaborative coping strategies of state and nonstate actors when they find formal institutions too constraining. In reform-era China, the contextual conditions that are conducive to the emergence of adaptive informal institutions include conflicting mandates among different formal institutions, a bureaucratic structure with a certain degree of decentralization in policy implementation, and policy areas in which local state and nonstate actors have convergent interests. After the initial emergence of adaptive informal institutions, what enables them to endure is the implicit recognition by local bureaucrats that they are better suited to local conditions than the existing central-level regulations. This chapter presents cases where the diffusion of adaptive informal institutions facilitated substantial transformations in formal institutions by providing elites with political support for introducing key reforms. It is worth pointing out, however, that many informal practices do not reach the point of becoming institutionalized or having policy influence. The complicity of local policy implementers is critical to the survival of adaptive informal institutions. In the case of informal finance, for example, some localities have proven to be more tolerant of underground financial activities than others.[92] Meanwhile, elite-level disagreements remain about the extent to which China should truly commercialize its banking system. As a result, the center has designated only certain localities as experimental zones for financial reform. But the broader point of the chapter remains – a reactive sequence of institutional change can occur even in authoritarian regimes where political institutions are not necessarily expected to be responsive to grassroots interactions.

Furthermore, a central component of my argument is that this apparent political "responsiveness" occurs through indirect means. Private entrepreneurs as a group have not lobbied directly for protection of their property rights or for membership in the Chinese Communist Party.[93] Instead, people with different social backgrounds entered the private sector as a self-help strategy to enhance their material welfare and in the process appeared to party-state elites as an increasingly important constituency. In the course of their daily interactions with one another and with local staff of the party-state, business owners have had a

[92] Tsai, *Back-Alley Banking*.

[93] Business owners lobby for narrower, sector-specific issues such as setting industry standards and prices. Scott Kennedy, *The Business of Lobbying in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

structural impact on the direction of formal institutional reforms. Therefore, even though the regime has pursued policies that imply a strategy of corporatist inclusion of private capital, this chapter suggests that the causal mechanism underlying these preemptive corporatist efforts lies in the cumulative effect of informal interactions at the local level rather than in purely economic or social pressures.

Ultimately, the ability of the nominally socialist regime to accommodate private-sector development is only one expression of the broader transformation that has occurred in China's institutional context. Although the PRC is still an authoritarian regime, the nature of its political economy has changed so dramatically that China scholars have felt compelled to qualify its categorical nomenclature with various adjectives to distinguish it from the party-state of the 1950s and 1960s.[94] Rather than worrying about whether contemporary China is now a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime or a capitalist developmental state, however, greater attention should be paid to the causal mechanisms and processes underlying the regime's institutional resilience. Informal interactions and informal institutions may represent an important, yet typically overlooked part of the story.

Indeed, beyond the case of China there is comparative analytic value in viewing adaptive informal institutions as vehicles for change in formal institutions. Attending to the rise of informal adaptive responses expands the scope of those factors that we typically deem to be relevant in political analysis. Local innovations, evasive tactics, and other extralegal practices often seem distant from the hallowed ranks of political elites and their associated formal political institutions. The concept of adaptive informal institutions moves them a little closer. Sporadic acts of noncompliance or random criminality are not at issue. By contrast, strategic responses that are repeated, widespread, systematically reproduced, and therefore "institutionalized" through informal praxis generally attract official attention in some form or another. Determining when and whether adaptive informal institutions will have such catalytic effects is politically contingent and requires empirical study of both the high politics *and* the apparently apolitical low politics of grassroots adaptations to formal institutions.

Finally, although I have highlighted how China's institutional adaptability has thwarted short-term threats to regime durability by attending to the interests of capitalists, the logic of this argument does not preclude the possibility that other sources of pressure could undermine the Chinese Communist Party's monopoly of political power. Although popular protest remains ad hoc and regionally dispersed, intensification of elite-level, intraparty disagreements could

[94] Richard Baum and Alexei Shevchenko, "The State of the State," in Goldman and MacFarquhar, eds., *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*.

undermine the institutional flexibility that Beijing has allowed during the last three decades of reform. Be that as it may, it is highly unlikely that the major institutional transformations that have already occurred will be reversed or modified in a manner that inspires disloyal political mobilization on the part of private entrepreneurs.

PART V

ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESILIENCE

9

Vietnam through Chinese Eyes

Divergent Accountability in Single-Party Regimes

Regina Abrami, Edmund Malesky, and Yu Zheng

This volume aims to identify the foundations of communist regime resilience. Some chapters focus on economic and political reforms as mechanisms for resilience, others on strategies for inclusiveness, and still others on ideology and legitimacy. We approach this important issue by analyzing formal institutions of horizontal and vertical accountability in China and Vietnam. We find important differences that are becoming more salient over time. Yet both sets of accountability institutions serve these resilient single-party regimes, protecting rather than threatening them.

While our finding supports this volume's main conclusion that institutional design plays a key role in shaping the form and degree of a regime's resilience, our comparative cases also show that institutions going by the same name may operate by quite different rules. What is understood as order making in one country may therefore be viewed as a cause of instability in another.

For example, in 2006, a flurry of articles appeared in Chinese newspapers comparing China's democratic development unfavorably with that of Vietnam. Although both countries were led by a communist party, Chinese journalists could point to several attractive features of governance in Vietnam that were not to be found in their own country, including (a) the direct election of the general secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party;[1] (b) the power of the Vietnamese Central Committee (CC) to make decisions independently of the Political Bureau (Politburo) and even to overrule it on occasion;[2] (c) the encouragement of public commentary on the Vietnamese Communist Party's political report in advance of its party congress;[3] (d) countrywide direct

[1] Yawei Liu, "China's Township People's Congress Elections," United Nations Network on Public Administration and Finance Working Paper (2006).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Zhou Ruijin, "Yuenan gaige zhide guanzhu" (Vietnamese Reform Worthy of Attention), *Yangcheng wanbao* (Guangzhou), July 12, 2006.

elections of members of Vietnam's National Assembly, including a relatively high number of candidates per seat;[4] (e) the strengthening of Vietnam's National Assembly by increasing the proportion of permanent members to 25 percent;[5] (f) televised sessions during which National Assembly members query high-ranking government officials and Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) members;[6] and (g) Decrees 37 and 108, which require legislators and senior officials in Vietnam to declare their assets publicly in order to stamp out corruption.[7]

While Vietnam remains a one-party state, its pervasive attention to these political institutions had compelled Hu Jintao, the former president and general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), to issue an internal CCP document. He criticized the Vietnamese authorities for moving "too quickly toward inner-party democracy," even warning that a destabilizing Mikhail Gorbachev–like figure could come to power.[8] The CCP also banned public discussion of Vietnam's reforms, deploying party intellectuals to argue publicly against such a political development in China.

What for Hu Jintao was an unwanted comparison is for us an intriguing puzzle. Indices of governance currently found in the subfield of comparative politics can no more account for the aforementioned institutional differences between Vietnam and China than they can account for the persistence of communist rule in both countries. In the comparative politics literature, political dynamics continue to be assumed by way of a close conceptual association of regime type with degree of political accountability: given a particular species of regime, scholars assume that it will have a particular level of political accountability. A comparison of Vietnam and China – whether by indignant Chinese journalists or curious American scholars – shows that the resulting inability of existing scales to capture within-typology variation is an important gap in our understanding of authoritarian regimes, particularly of the mechanisms by which they thrive or collapse.

Taking this shortcoming as our starting point, we focus on formal institutions of accountability in these two single-party states. By "formal institutions," we mean government- and party-related written rules and the resulting organizational

[4] Xu Xing, "Zhenggai: Yuegong neng, Zhonggong buneng" (Political Reform: VCP Can, CCP Cannot), *Kaifang* (Hong Kong), 2006, http://www.open.com.hk/2006_9p43.htm (accessed May 11, 2007).

[5] Zhou Ruijin, "Yuenan gaige zhide guanzhu."

[6] "Zhengshi goutong zouxiang wangge, Yuenan xianxin yi bu" (Online Political Communication, Vietnamese Government Is Ahead), *Nanfang dushi bao* (Southern Metropolitan Daily), October 26, 2006, http://www.southcn.com/opinion/gjgc/200610260244.htm (accessed June 13, 2009).

[7] "Corruption in China: Not the Best Way to Clean Up," *Economist*, April 19, 2007; Decree 37/2007/ND-CP, Transparency Assets and Incomes, dated March 9, 2007 and Decree 108/2004/ND-CP, On Guidelines about Declaring People's Councils Candidates' Assets, dated April 1, 2004.

[8] Gu Sanyue, "Yuenan chule ge 'Deng Xiaoping'" (There Is a Deng Xiaoping in Vietnam), *Blog China*, December 2, 2006, http://vip.bokee.com/article.php?id=197040 (accessed on May 11, 2007).

frameworks rather than habits, norms, and nongovernmental institutions such as families and churches. Our goal is to identify how these two countries differ significantly in the distribution of powers within the party apparatus, within government institutions, and between the party and government. We also document an increasing divergence in the openness and competitiveness of elections for the CC and the national parliament in Vietnam and China. Elsewhere, we have shown that these differing formal institutional arrangements have resulted in noticeable differences in policy outcomes, particularly with regard to income redistribution.[9]

As Dimitrov points out in the introduction to this volume, institutions of accountability – combined with high economic growth and successful mobilization of externally oriented nationalism – appear to be critical to the survival of communist regimes.[10] The Chinese experience has been studied extensively in that regard, while the durability of Vietnam's single-party regime has received far less scholarly attention.[11] Hoping to narrow this gap, we examine institutions of political accountability in both countries. But unlike Dimitrov (Chapter 10), we focus our attention on the relation between elite accountability within party ranks and regime durability. We show that both regimes have well-oiled checks and balances that control their most powerful members through party membership and political positions. In exploring how both countries' institutions of accountability operate, we establish more generally a critical link between a regime's ability to hold its most elite members accountable and its ability to maintain its political legitimacy.

From our perspective, then, the survival or collapse of a regime is ultimately a matter of the ability of those in power to obey their own rules. Comparing institutions in this way not only allows for greater specification of within-regime type variation, but also permits us to explore what the durable regimes of China and Vietnam have in common.

ACCOUNTABILITY: CUTTING INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCE, REGIME DURABILITY, AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN A NEW WAY

For more than two decades, a steady stream of research has looked to formal and informal institutions to explain an enormous range of political phenomena.[12]

[9] Edmund Malesky, Regina Abrami, and Yu Zheng, "Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China," *Comparative Politics* 43:4 (2011), 409–427.

[10] Chap. 1 in this volume.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ira Katznelson and Barry R. Weingast, eds., *Preferences and Situations: Points of Intersection between Historical and Rational Choice*

An important literature has focused on the institutions of political and economic governance. Here, Vietnam and China are commonly treated as more alike than different in their formal institutional composition.[13] Wide differences nonetheless exist. The political science discipline has yet to capture these differences or to employ them more fully in a causal analysis of each country's political dynamics.

As Table 9.1 shows, most classification systems, including some of the most fine-grained and pathbreaking work on authoritarian regimes, code China and Vietnam in exactly the same way.[14] The only coding systems detecting even minimal differences are the World Bank's Voice and Accountability measure and its Rule of Law measure,[15] composite scales of perception surveys of firms and individuals, and the Henisz *Political Constraints* measure, where differences remain extremely small. This failure to register existing variation is unfortunate. After all, many of the political differences that the Chinese journalists noted – including the roles of public participation, electoral competition, checks and balances, property rights, and transparency – receive emphasis in the comparative politics literature. They have served as causal variables in explanations of economic performance, civil war, and regime duration and as dependent variables to establish regime typologies.[16]

Institutionalism (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005); Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda," *Perspectives on Politics* 2:4 (2004), 725–740; Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science," in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, eds., *Political Science: State of the Discipline* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 693–721; James Riker, "The State, Institutional Pluralism, and Development from Below: The Changing Political Parameters of State–NGO Relations in Indonesia," Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1998; Lee J. Alston, Thráinn Eggertsson, and Douglass C. North, *Empirical Studies in Institutional Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44:5 (1996), 936–957; Jack Knight, *Institutions and Social Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[13] Benjamin Smith, "Life of the Party: The Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence under Single-Party Rule," *World Politics* 57:3 (2005), 421–451; Raymond Chad, Mark Selden, and Kate Zhou, "The Power of the Strong: Rural Resistance and Reform in China and Vietnam," *China Information* 14:2 (2000), 1–30; Anita Chan, Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, and Jonathan Unger, eds., *Transforming Asian Socialism: China and Vietnam Compared* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999).

[14] Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2:1 (1999), 115–144; Paul Brooker, *Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, "Authoritarian Regimes: Stability, Change, and Pathways to Democracy, 1972–2003," Kellogg Institute Working Paper 331, University of Notre Dame, 2006.

[15] Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996–2004," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series No. 3630, May 2005.

[16] Anna M. Gryzmala-Busse, *Rebuilding Leviathan: Party Competition and State Exploitation in Post-Communist Democracies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Steven

TABLE 9.1. *Regime-Type Classification Schemes*

Country	Freedom House – Civil Liberties (2006)	Freedom House – Political Rights (2006)	Combined Polity IV Democracy Score (2006)	Polity IV: Constraints on Executive (2006)	Cheibub and Ghandi (2002)
China	6	7	−7	3	1
Vietnam	6	7	−7	3	1
Scale	1 Highest; 7 Lowest	1 Highest; 7 Lowest	10 Most Democratic; −10 Least Democratic	7 Highest; 1 Lowest	0 Democracy; 1 Dictatorship

Country	World Bank: Voice and Accountability (2006)	Bueno de Mesquito, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (2003)	Henisz: Political Constraints on Decision Making (2004)	Geddes: Classification of Authoritarian Regimes (1999)	Brooker: Non-Democratic Regimes (2000)
China	−1.38	.5	0	Single-Party	Non-Personalist Dictator
Vietnam	−1.36	.5	.13	Single-Party	Non-Personalist Dictator
Scale	Mean (−.02); SD (1.0)	Winning Coalition/ Selectorate	Mean (.28); SD (.21)		

Sources: Freedom House, Polity, Cheibub and Ghandi, and World Bank measures were all collected from the The Quality of Government Institute Web site (http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/) at the University of Goteborg, Sweden (accessed January 21, 2013).

For information on Henisz Political Constraints, see Witold J. Henisz, "The Institutional Environment for Multinational Investment," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 16:2 (2000), 334–364, http://www-management.wharton.upenn.edu/henisz/ (accessed January 21, 2013).

Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2:1 (1999), 115–144.

Paul Brooker, *Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government, and Politics* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

I. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino, "The Quality of Democracy: An Overview," *Journal of Democracy* 15:4 (2004), 20–31; Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Hilton L. Root, eds., *Governing for Prosperity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); North, *Institutions,*

With respect to the latter, recent work on differences in authoritarian regimes has identified subtypes and constructed new typologies.[17] Mary Gallagher and Jonathan Hanson's chapter, for example, addresses a need to revise the measure of selectorates, a key concept that distinguishes many political institutions. Related work considers both the durability of authoritarian regimes and their prospects for change, often building on these subtypes.[18] Nonetheless, Vietnam and China are still typically lumped together in this work as very similar cases.

Comparable logics of incorporation,[19] regime origin,[20] and "gradualist" economic reform have been cited to explain both regime durability and political dynamics in these two countries. But while earlier work in comparative politics causally links the incorporation of farmers and labor to regime durability,[21] the incorporation of new types of citizen – especially private business people – often takes center stage in recent explanations of continued single-party rule in Vietnam and China.[22] In Chapter 8 of this volume, for example, Kellee S. Tsai

Institutional Change and Economic Performance; Margaret *Levi, Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[17] Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?"; Barbara Geddes, "Stages of Development in Authoritarian Regimes," in Vladimir Tismaneanu, Marc Morjé Howard, and Rudra Sil, eds., *World Order after Leninism* (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, University of Washington, 2006), 149–170; Brooker, *Non-Democratic Regimes*; Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski, "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats," *Comparative Political Studies* 40:11 (2007), 1279–1301; Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski, "Cooperation, Cooptation, and Rebellion under Dictatorships," *Economics & Politics* 18:1 (2006), 1–26; Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13:2 (2002), 51–65.

[18] Dan Slater, "The Architecture of Authoritarianism: Southeast Asia and the Regeneration of Democratization Theory," *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 2:2 (2006), 1–22; Jay Ulfelder, "Contentious Collective Action and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes," *International Political Science Review* 26:3 (2005), 311–334; Smith, "Life of the Party."

[19] Bruce J. Dickson, *Wealth into Power: The Communist Party's Embrace of China's Private Sector* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jonathan R. Stromseth, "Reform and Response in Vietnam: State-Society Relations and the Changing Political Economy," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1998.

[20] Dimitrov, Chap. 1 in this volume; Smith, "Life of the Party."

[21] James Mahoney, *Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); David Waldner, *State Building and Late Development* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Deborah J. Yashar, *Demanding Democracy: Reform and Reaction in Costa Rica and Guatemala, 1870s –1950s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[22] Lily Tsai, "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China," *American Political Science Review* 101:2 (2007), 355–372; Jonathan Stromseth, "Business Associations and Policy-Making in Vietnam," in Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, Russell H. K. Heng, and David W. H. Koh, eds., *Getting Organized in Vietnam: Moving in and around the Socialist State* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 62–109; Dickson, *Wealth into Power*.

focuses on institutional adaptations related to the rise of China's private sector. Yet even with respect to the treatment of similar social classes, the differences across cases are considerable.[23] Indeed, what makes the Vietnam-China comparison so very compelling is precisely its insistence that we move away from an unquestioned link between regime type and the scope of political accountability and, in turn, political and economic interests.

In other words, explanations of political behavior rooted in regime typologies limit our ability to understand intermediate cases[24] or variation within categories. Dividing authoritarian regimes into personalistic, military, and single-party states[25] and assuming that a given type of actor in a given type of state must have given interests and constraints prevent us from recognizing what may be a wider range of collective action problems.

To understand the latter, and especially to develop a more dynamic account of regime durability and collapse, we investigate variation within formal institutional designs. Specifically, we consider institutions of horizontal and vertical accountability, the composition and meaning of which we describe later. Such institutions, as Dimitrov argues, are necessary for stabilizing communist regimes in the long run.[26] The obvious benefit of comparing them in Vietnam and China is clear. Rather than trying to explain the durability of these two regimes in terms of cultural exchange,[27] political interactions,[28] a shared Confucian heritage

[23] Other work explicitly sets out to illustrate differences across these cases. For a discussion of historical differences in the treatment of private economic activity in pre–market reform era Vietnam and China, see Regina M. Abrami, "Self-Making, Class Struggle and Labor Autarky: The Political Origins of Private Entrepreneurship in Vietnam and China," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2002. Discussion of differences in each country's labor regime can be found in Anita Chan and Irene Norlund, "Vietnamese and Chinese Labour Regimes: On the Road to Divergence," *China Journal*, no. 40 (1998), 173–197 and Anita Chan and Hong-zen Wang, "The Impact of the State on Workers' Conditions: Comparing Taiwanese Factories in China and Vietnam," *Pacific Affairs* 77:4 (2004/2005), 629–646.

[24] Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, "Mapping Political Regimes: How the Concepts We Use and the Way We Measure Them Shape the World We See," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 2004.

[25] Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?"

[26] Chap. 1 and Chap. 10 in this volume.

[27] Alexander Woodside, *Lost Modernities: China, Vietnam, Korea, and the Hazards of World History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Keith Weller Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[28] Christopher E. Goscha, "Courting Diplomatic Disaster? The Difficult Integration of Vietnam into the Internationalist Communist Movement (1945–1950)," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1:1/2 (2006), 59–103; Priscilla Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam and the World Beyond Asia* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Brantley Womack, *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Cheng Ang Guan, *Vietnamese Communists' Relations with China and the Second Indochina Conflict, 1956–1962* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 1997); Alexander Barton Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model: A Comparative Study of Vietnamese and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

culture,[29] or each regime's nationalist rural revolutionary origins, we can hold these factors in check. Our point here is not to exclude any role for historical legacies, but rather to insist that such legacies be shown causally to persist.[30]

Assessing Institutions of Accountability

Following O'Donnell,[31] we study variation in accountability along two dimensions. First, we assess *horizontal accountability* – the responsiveness of an executive to other state institutions. Horizontal accountability can be thought of as institutional constraints on the power of the leadership.[32] Others have described the same concept as separation of powers, checks and balances, or veto points.[33] The basic notion is that one official or body of government is answerable to another in a lateral manner, rather than through a "command and obey" relationship.[34] As we later show, the Chinese and Vietnamese systems vary considerably in terms of the veto powers of the CC and government bodies regarding the doctrines of the communist party.

Second, we assess *vertical accountability* – the extent to which leaders are answerable to their constituencies for specific actions and policies.[35] In multiparty democracies, the most common form of political accountability is competitive elections.[36] Regularized elections are an important form of political activity in communist regimes as well, although there are other important

[29] Liam C. Kelley, "'Confucianism' in Vietnam: A State of the Field Essay," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1:1 (Fall 2006), 314–371.

[30] Herbert Kitschelt, "Accounting for Post-Communist Regime Diversity: What Counts as a Good Cause?" in Grezgorz Ekiert and Stephen Hanson, eds., *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe: Assessing the Legacy of Communist Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 49–88.

[31] Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5:1 (1994), 55–69; Guillermo O'Donnell, "Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies," in Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 31–52.

[32] Witold J. Henisz, "The Institutional Environment for Economic Growth," *Economics and Politics* 12:1(2000), 1–31.

[33] George Tsebelis, *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[34] Diamond and Morlino, "Quality of Democracy."

[35] O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy"; Joy Marie Moncrieffe, "Reconceptualizing Political Accountability," *International Political Science Review* 19:4 (1998), 387–406.

[36] Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, "Presidentialism and Parliamentarism in Comparative Perspective," in Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 119–133; John Healey and William Tordoff, *Votes and Budgets: Comparative Studies in Accountable Governance in the South* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

systems of vertical accountability, such as the citizen complaints documented by Dimitrov in Chapter 10 of this volume.

In both China and Vietnam, elections imply *vertical accountability* only to the selectorate – the subset of the population with a say in policy.[37] But there are important differences in the sizes of those selectorates, as well as in the competitiveness of related elections. We operationalize the latter in terms of the number of candidates and the openness of nominations. On the government side, however, both countries hold popular elections, with the selectorate theoretically comprising the entire adult population. China also allows for popular elections at the village level, while Vietnam uses them for both the local People's Council and the Parliament (National Assembly). Thus, here too, we find variation in competitiveness and openness.

Before elaborating further, a word of caution is needed. Single-party regimes – Vietnam and China in particular – are not "accountable" in the ordinary sense of the term. The political leadership of both countries continues to hold considerable control over the legal system, over access to information, and over the basic freedoms of citizens, including rights of free organization and religion. It is not easy, therefore, to identify the degree and forms of institutional checks and balances and to know where veto powers influence elite political dynamics and where competition for power exists. Moreover, using the term "accountability" as a broad rubric for veto points and political competition reminds us that we are seeking some understanding not only of how a political system functions, but also of where future political transformations may lead.

Horizontal Accountability in Vietnam and China

In this section, we examine horizontal accountability along three dimensions, showing that checks on executive decision making operate in multiple ways. First, we look at veto points within the single-party system. Specifically, we analyze the relationship between the executive organ of the party (the Politburo) and its elected "legislature" (the Central Committee). Second, we study veto points between party and government, paying careful attention both to the powers of top government executives and to the party's influence on government decision making. Finally, we study veto points imposed by the nationally elected legislature on the executive in the government apparatus.

Comparison along these dimensions reveals that (a) the scope of the governing coalition is broader in Vietnam, (b) the communist party has more control over the government in China, and (c) the legislature imposes more constraints

[37] Susan L. Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

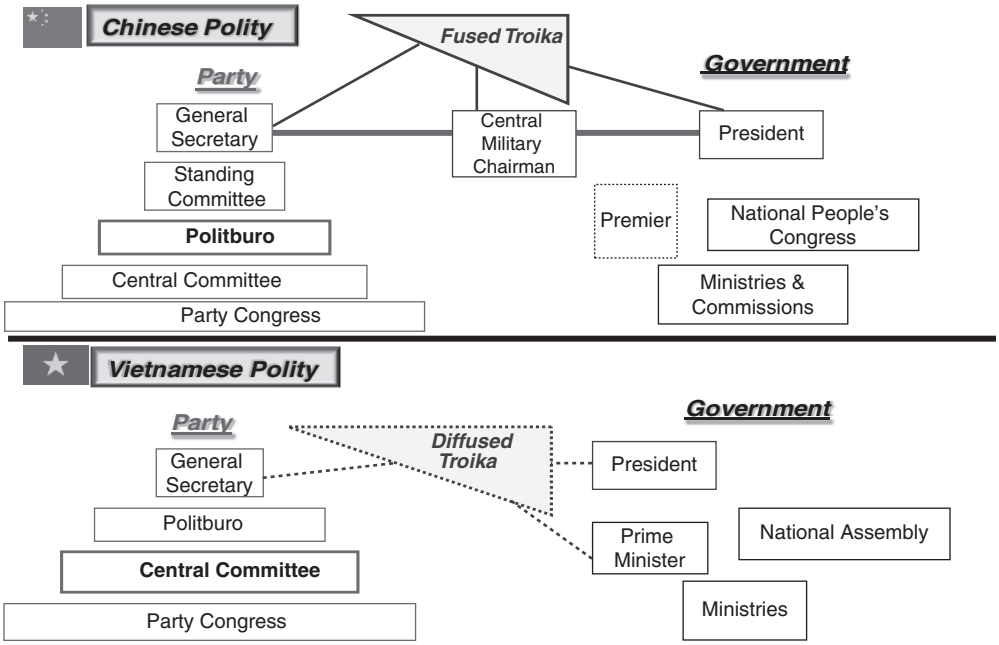

FIGURE 9.1. Comparison of Communist Party and Government Structure in China and Vietnam.

on the government apparatus in Vietnam. In effect, government and party leaders in Vietnam face more checks in policymaking than do their Chinese counterparts.

Figure 9.1 illustrates the entire political system in both China and Vietnam. On the left side of each diagram is the communist party structure, including the National Party Congress, Central Committee, and Politburo. The right side shows the government or administrative apparatus. China and Vietnam each have an elected legislature (called the National People's Congress and the National Assembly, respectively) and an executive (called the premier and the prime minister, respectively) who is nominally approved by the legislature and presides over the government ministries. One difference, however, is that the president of China not only is head of state but also holds the top party position, that of general secretary, while the president of Vietnam is head of state but not head of the party. Another leader holds the top party position.

In both countries, institutions at the provincial level are designed to mirror central government and party institutions. Each province has a party secretary, an elected legislature (the Chinese People's Congress is indirectly elected and the Vietnamese People's Council is directly elected), an executive nominally elected by the provincial legislature (called governor and People's Committee (PCOM), respectively), and departments of the central line ministries that report directly to

both the provincial executive and the central ministries – a process called *dual subordination*.

At a glance, these government and party organizations might seem rather similar, but as we describe the formal rules under which they operate, we will see important differences in their influence on the relative power of state and party actors.

Top Policymaking Institution. The first major difference to note is the top policymaking institution in each country. In Vietnam, the Politburo is the official executive organ of the party, including top officials from the party apparatus, government, and military. The number of officials (presently fourteen) on the Politburo is set by the CC at its first plenum after a party congress. In China, on the other hand, the twenty-four-member Politburo is actually superseded by another institution called the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), which has had seven members since the Eighteenth Party Congress in 2012. The powerful PBSC was initially created at the Eighth Party Congress in 1956 to take on policymaking work, which had been assumed by the party Secretariat during the Sino-Japanese War and the early years of the PRC. The PBSC subsequently assumed primary decision-making responsibility, while the Politburo was relegated to a "back bench" role for official endorsement of Mao's and the PBSC's decisions.

After Hu Jintao took his position in 2002, however, the Politburo began to meet more frequently – there were fifty-six reported meetings during the five-year term of the Sixteenth Party Congress between 2002 and 2007 – possibly reflecting a greater need for the younger-generation leaders to forge consensus. Each PBSC member has one vote, and any proposal has to be approved by majority vote before it is turned over to the Politburo and CC for official approval. If the PBSC deadlocks, the general secretary can summon enlarged PBSC meetings and invite some or even all of the Politburo members to vote again. These procedures suggest that the CCP is increasingly emphasizing a more institutionalized process of collective policymaking. At the same time, the PBSC remains the highest decision-making body in China.[38]

Vietnam experimented with a PBSC at the Eighth Party Congress in 1996 but had disbanded it by the Ninth Party Congress, because of the leadership splits discussed later. In place of a PBSC, Vietnam has a Secretariat, which is responsible for managing the VCP's finances and bureaucracy. The Secretariat is made up of party officials who generally do not hold government positions.[39] In fact, if

[38] Alice Miller, "Institutionalization and the Changing Dynamics of Chinese Leadership Politics," in Cheng Li, *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 61–79.

[39] In 2010, only two government figures served on the Secretariat, Truong Vinh Trong, deputy prime minister, and Le Van Dung, three-star general and head of the General Office of Politics in the Ministry of Defense. Trong, however, was the exception that proves the rule, as he has had primarily a party-based career, most recently serving as chairman of the Party Central Committee on Internal Affairs and party secretary of Dong Thap province.

we take the order of the announcement of party officials as an indication of their relative party rank, only three of the top ten Politburo members hold concurrent positions on the Secretariat.[40] In other words, the Secretariat in 2010 should not be viewed as a Vietnamese version of China's PBSC. The distinction is critical because meetings of the top party leadership in Vietnam need not be – and are not – as regularized as they are in China, where the PBSC is tasked with day-to-day decisions on major issues.

Indeed, the rapid rise and fall of Vietnam's PBSC offers us a window into key institutional differences between the Vietnamese and Chinese regimes. The story begins in January 1996. The VCP had released a draft version of party statutes to replace the Secretariat with a five-member PBSC as the "highest leading nucleus" of the VCP.[41] Consisting of the general secretary, prime minister, and president as well as two younger protégés, the proposed PBSC seemed to mirror China's PBSC. Specifically, it was supposed to assume the administrative duties of the Secretariat and to take greater direct responsibility for defense and security, economic development, foreign policy, and party building.[42] The PBSC was also to assume control over the VCP's Military Commission.[43]

The benign interpretation of the proposed PBSC was that it provided a bridge between generations in the leadership, serving as a forum for older party members to stay involved while bureaucratic positions went to the younger generation.[44] This innocuous interpretation was well received at first. The draft statutes had, after all, indicated that the PBSC, much like Vietnam's Politburo, was going to be selected by the CC of the VCP. At the Eighth Party Congress in June 1996, however, some slight changes that were presented drew the ire of one of the twelve hundred delegates. In the new proposal, the Politburo was presented as solely charged with selecting members of the PBSC.[45] The PBSC also was granted the right to make decisions on behalf of the Politburo, effectively annexing much of its power.[46]

The delegate Tran Trong Tan brazenly argued that these proposals, if implemented, would violate the VCP's institution of democratic centralism. Because the PBSC was not an organ elected by the CC, Tan advocated a return to the Politburo as the highest VCP executive body. When VCP leaders challenged

[40] Which is a common strategy employed by political analysts to ascertain rank when they are not announced in alphabetical order.

[41] Gabriel Kolko, *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Peace* (London: Routledge, 1997), 147; Zachary Abuza, "Leadership Transition in Vietnam since the Eighth Party Congress: The Unfinished Congress," *Asian Survey* 38:12 (1998), 1105–1121.

[42] Lewis Stern, "Vietnam's Eighth Party Congress: Renovated Organizations, Revised Statutes, Evolving Processes," *Asian Survey* 37:5 (1997), 470–480.

[43] Kolko, *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Peace*, 147.

[44] Stern, "Vietnam's Eighth Party Congress"; Abuza, "Leadership Transition in Vietnam since the Eighth Party Congress."

[45] Abuza, "Leadership Transition in Vietnam since the 8th Party Congress."

[46] Kolko, *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Peace*.

Tan's claims by arguing that the PBSC's specific mandate would be from the Politburo, he dramatically read off a list of nineteen major responsibilities that the proposed reform would transfer directly to the PBSC.[47] He therefore advised that the PBSC not be granted authority distinct from the Politburo. The incoming CC accepted his arguments and, in turn, diminished the power of the PBSC, taking away its ability to decide critical issues unilaterally. As before, all important policy choices would be referred to the entire Politburo, and by the time of the Ninth Party Congress, the PBSC had been extinguished, having lasted only a few years and with little real power.[48]

Relationship between the Central Committee and the Politburo. The Vietnamese Politburo's lack of a permanent institutional presence on the political scene points to a second difference in the institutional architecture of the two countries – the differing roles of the CC in the party apparatus. The Chinese CC, which presently has 205 members, has functioned only symbolically throughout CCP history.[49] As Susan Shirk notes,[50] the complicated relationship between the Politburo and CC in China appears more to be a case of *reciprocal accountability* wherein

> the Central Committee has the authority to choose the party leaders, and the Central Committee consists of party, government, and military officials appointed by party leaders. . . . Officials hold their positions at the pleasure of party leadership, but party leaders hold their positions at the pleasure of officials in the selectorate [the CC].

As Shirk further notes,[51] weak institutionalization in China has also meant that top party leaders have had control over the composition and even the number of CC members. For the most part, then, the CC is important only when the national leadership is not unified on a particular policy path or leadership transition.[52] In such cases, the CC becomes the bargaining arena for various blocs or factions.[53]

[47] Ibid., 147.

[48] Carlyle A. Thayer, "Vietnam in 2001: The Ninth Party Congress and After," *Asian Survey* 42:1 (2002), 81–89.

[49] Lowell Dittmer, "The Changing Form and Dynamics of Power Politics," in Jonathan Unger, ed., *The Nature of Chinese Politics: From Mao to Jiang* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 217–238; Cheng Li, *China's Leaders: The New Generation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Michel Oksenberg, "China's Political System: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century," in Unger, ed., *The Nature of Chinese Politics*, 193–208; Frederick C. Teiwes, "The Paradoxical Post-Mao Transition: From Obeying the Leader to 'Normal Politics,'" in Unger, ed., *The Nature of Chinese Politics*, 58–97.

[50] Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*, 83.

[51] Susan L. Shirk, "The Delayed Institutionalization of Leadership Politics," in Unger, ed., *Nature of Chinese Politics*, 297–312.

[52] Shirk, *Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*.

[53] Victor C. Shih, *Factions and Finance in China: Elite Conflict and Inflation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Before the 1975 unification of Vietnam, the relationship between the Politburo and CC was very similar to that in China. A group of notable elders who had played important roles in Vietnam's independence movement held top positions on the Politburo. Plenums of the CC were quite irregular, as the primary role of the body – with only forty-seven full members – had been to rubber-stamp the party leadership's decisions. But beginning in the early 1980s, an economic crisis weakened the power of conservative party elements.[54] The moral authority of the founding members, and the institution of the Politburo itself, had come into question.[55] Two high-ranking modernizers within the Politburo, Nguyen Van Linh and Vo Van Kiet, seized this opportunity to push through a series of incremental reforms, all meant to empower the CC vis-à-vis the Politburo.[56]

First, the reformers maneuvered to have provincial leaders from all provinces (not just the two major cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) elected to the CC as alternate members at the Sixth Party Congress in 1986. This change effectively allowed more local voices to influence policy reforms.[57] Then at the Seventh Party Congress in 1991, Kiet successfully argued that provincial delegates should be considered full members of the congress, not just alternate members.[58] Finally, through a clever process of gerrymandering, Linh and Kiet expanded the number of provinces by 60 percent, thereby increasing the number of provincial voters[59] – particularly the number of reform-oriented voters.[60]

The diversity of interests represented on the CC and the resulting need to achieve consensus as a condition of operation meant that vetoing Politburo recommendations might be not only possible, but also necessary. Within a

[54] Lewis Stern, *Renovating the Vietnamese Communist Party* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

[55] Vu Quang Viet, "Chuyển biến trong lãnh đạo và hệ thống lãnh đạo Đảng và Nhà nước Việt Nam từ sau 1945: Khả năng cải cách thể chế quyền lực để chống tham nhũng" (The Evolution within the Leadership and Leadership System of the Party and State of Vietnam from 1945: The Probability of Reforming Institutions of Power to Stop Corruption), *Thời Đại Mới* (New Era), no. 9 (2006), 1–33.

[56] Their ally and aegis at the beginning of this endeavor was Truong Chinh, the former general secretary of the VCP, who served as interim general secretary after the death of Le Duan from July 14, 1986, to December 18, 1986, and used the opportunity to direct a redraft of the congress political report that officially sanctioned the reform era of Vietnam. James Riedel and William S. Turley, "The Politics and Economics of Transition to an Open Market Economy in Viet Nam," OECD Working Paper No. 152, 1999.

[57] Vu Quang Viet, "Chuyển biến trong lãnh đạo và hệ thống lãnh đạo Đảng và Nhà nước Việt Nam từ sau 1945."

[58] Carlyle A. Thayer, "Mono-Organizational Socialism and the State," in Benedict J. Kerkvliet and Doug J. Porter, eds., *Vietnam's Rural Transformation* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 39–64.

[59] Zachary Abuza, "The Lessons of Le Kha Phieu: Changing Rules in Vietnamese Politics," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24:1 (2002), 121–145; Viet Anh, "Tất cả đại biểu sẽ được đề cử chức Tổng bí thư" (All Delegates Are Allowed the Power to Choose the General Secretary), *VNExpress*, April 17, 2006.

[60] Edmund Malesky, "Gerrymandering – Vietnamese Style: Escaping the Partial Reform Equilibrium in a Nondemocratic Regime," *Journal of Politics* 71:1 (2009), 132–159.

decade, the CC had shown that it would no longer rubber-stamp orders from above. In 2001, the CC managed to push out a standing general secretary of the communist party, Le Kha Phieu, by rejecting the Politburo's recommendation that Phieu continue in this role. Interestingly, the CC instead recommended the standing president of the National Assembly, perhaps as a nod to the committee's interest in greater oversight of higher levels.[61]

The Kiet-Linh strategy reveals a preference in Vietnamese politics for orchestrating change in ways that further consolidate formal institutions. The modernizers did not scheme to overthrow the existing regime at its weakest moment. Rather, they worked within the constitutional statutes of the communist party[62] and strengthened the CC by expanding its constituency.

The relative importance of the CC in China and Vietnam can best be summarized by a simple indicator – the annual number of meetings or full plenums. China's CC convenes plenums once a year. Vietnam's CC is obligated by party statutes to meet at least twice a year (Article 16), and, in fact, it meets more regularly than that. On the basis of the issues taken up, it appears to do so in order to forge the party's response to various crises and to allow the top party leadership to ensure that there is a consensus for its preferred policy positions.

Table 9.2 summarizes the number of party plenums held by each country between 1982 (the year Deng Xiaoping began a process to reinvigorate and better institutionalize the party's structure and operations in China) and 2010.[63] In that time, the CC in Vietnam has met sixty-one times, while the CC in China has met only thirty-six times.

Two further examples illustrate the degree to which there seems to be a greater need for inner-party consensus building in Vietnam than in China. In 1997, there was a special CC session to elect a new general secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party as a result of Do Muoi's early retirement. In contrast, the CCP's replacement of Hu Yaobang in 1987 and Zhao Ziyang in 1989 took place at emergency sessions of the Politburo with no involvement by the CC.[64] The Vietnamese CC has also called for special sessions to address urgent economic issues,[65] whereas the CCP has yet to call for a special CC session to address similar matters, such as the soundness of stimulus packages.

[61] Abuza, "The Lessons of Le Kha Phieu." Other Politburo members have lost their positions at party congresses, particularly Nguyen Ha Phan (1996) and Tran Xuan Bach (1991), but it is not clear whether they were rejected by the same sort of majority vote that ended Phieu's term or whether their names were never proposed for a vote in the first place. Martin Gainsborough, "From Patronage Politics to 'Outcomes': Vietnam's Communist Party Congress Reconsidered," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 2:1 (2007), 3–26.

[62] *Dieu Le Dang Cong San Viet Nam* (Statutes of the Vietnamese Communist Party) (Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Chinh Tri Quoc Gia [National Political Publishing House], 2001).

[63] Miller, "Institutionalization and the Changing Dynamics"; Teiwes, "Paradoxical Post-Mao Transition," 239–257.

[64] Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[65] "Vietnam Targets 6 Percent Growth in 1998," Reuters, October 16, 1998.

TABLE 9.2. *Indicators of Central Committee Power*

	China				Vietnam			
Year	Party Congress	Central Committee Plenums	Total Legal Normative Documents Promulgated by Government Institutions	Percentage Citing Central Committee Legislation	Party Congress	Central Committee Plenums	Total Legal Normative Documents Promulgated by Government Institutions	Percentage Citing Central Committee Legislation
1982	12th	1st	285	7.72%	5th	1st, 2nd, & 3rd	237	21.52%
1983		2nd	444	9.68%		4th	165	26.06%
1984		3rd	483	6.42%		5th, 6th, & 7th	203	25.62%
1985		4th & 5th	613	6.53%		8th & 9th	249	26.91%
1986		6th	952	7.04%	6th	10th & 1st	247	13.77%
1987	13th	7th & 1st	1,057	6.62%		2nd, 3rd & 4th	249	20.88%
1988		2nd & 3rd	1,093	3.84%		5th	253	26.88%
1989		4th & 5th	1,354	5.02%		6th, 7th, 8th	261	27.59%
1990		6th & 7th	1,495	4.55%		9th & 10th	284	26.76%
1991		8th	1,677	5.13%	7th	11th & 1st & 2nd	383	25.33%
1992	14th	9th & 1st	1,892	6.87%		3rd	440	23.86%
1993		2nd & 3rd	1,949	6.46%		4th & 5th	428	27.80%
1994		4th	2,586	5.14%		6th & 7th	493	22.31%
1995		5th	2,682	3.91%		8th & 9th	633	21.33%
1996		6th	3,030	4.85%	8th	1st & 2nd	761	26.02%
1997	15th	7th & 1st	2,817	5.01%		3rd & 4th*	1,017	21.73%
1998		2nd & 3rd	3,203	5.53%		5th & 6th (A&B)	963	24.82%
1999		4th	3,877	6.94%		7th & 8th	1,184	20.35%
2000		5th	3,330	7.42%		9th & 10th	1,175	19.32%
2001		6th	4,217	5.36%	9th	11th, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd	1,384	17.92%

2002	16th	7th & 1st	4,073	4.49%		4th, 5th, & 6th	1,312	18.06%
2003		2nd & 3rd	5,116	3.67%		7th & 8th	1,485	22.96%
2004		4th	5,426	4.44%		9th & 10th	1,207	22.78%
2005		5th	5,260	4.37%		11th & 12th	1,841	23.57%
2006		6th	8,341	3.74%	10th	1st, 2nd, & 3rd	1,803	22.68%
2007	17th	7th & 1st	8,815	2.47%		4th & 5th	951	23.24%
2008		2nd				6th & 7th		
Total	**6**	**36**	**67,252**	**5.51%**	**6**	**61**	**18,657**	**23.08%**
Number Per Congress	**1**	**6.00**	**11,208.67**			**10.17**	**3,109.5**	

* Party Secretary Do Muoi was replaced by Le Kha Phieu in a special session; (A&B): Hardship caused by the aftermath of the Asian Financial crisis caused party officials to divide the plenum into two sessions. Session A focused on economic responses to the crisis; session B focused on party building.
Sources: Data on Chinese Congresses and Plenum from Miller "Institutionalization and the Changing Dynamics," and http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2003-01/21/content_698625.htm; data on Chinese legislation from Peking University Law Information Database, http://www.chinalawinfo.com (accessed January 15, 2013); data on Vietnam from the official Web site of the Vietnamese Communist Party – Party Official Documents, http://www.cpv.org.vn/tiengviet/tulieuvankien/tulieuvedang/?topic=168&subtopic=9&leader_topic=551 (accessed January 15, 2013); data on Vietnamese Legislation from National Legal Database at Vietnamese Ministry of Justice, http://vbqppl2.moj.gov.vn/law/vi/lawdocument_search_form (accessed January 15, 2013).

We can also assess the institutional strength of the Vietnamese and Chinese CCs in terms of their overt influence on government legislation. Legislation in both countries includes a preamble that makes reference to specific party documents, a practice that allows us to gauge the relative importance and power of a given party institution. Table 9.2 shows the number of times CC legislation (political reports, resolutions, and decisions) is cited in the legal documents of government bodies. By this indicator, the Vietnamese CC appears to be the legitimate representative of the VCP, whereas very few documents in China acknowledge the influence of the CC. Most party resolutions in China refer only to the Chinese Communist Party Center (*Zhongyang*) without attribution to the specific party institution that authored them, an approach mandated by Article 23 of the Chinese Party Constitution. As a result, the same term is the only reference to the party in the government documents. Although perhaps not intended, such opaque referencing shields the Politburo, the PBSC, and the general secretary from any true inner-party accountability. Lower levels, after all, can never truly know (except by rumor) which party agent pushed a given policy agenda or by which means.

Relationship between the Party Leadership and the State Leadership: Diffused Troika versus Fused Troika. China and Vietnam also differ in the relationship between the party leadership and the state leadership. Of concern is the degree to which each may act as a check on the other. We find that the Vietnamese leadership structure is better equipped for such checking, as a result of important differences in the appointment of the general secretary, president, and prime minister.

Vietnam's leadership structure consists of a triangle of cross-checking central positions – the general secretary of the VCP, the president, and the prime minister (see Figure 9.1). Vietnam scholars refer to this as the *troika*. The positions are distinguished by separate constitutional powers and patronage channels that provide formal and informal checks on executive power both within the party and between the party and the state.

Formerly, China also had three separate positions. Since 1993, however, the president has also held the positions of general secretary of the communist party and head of the Central Military Commission. This arrangement began when Jiang Zemin was appointed general secretary after the removal of Zhao Ziyang from office but lacked credibility as a political heavyweight. Concerned about a potential power struggle within the party, Deng Xiaoping quickly confirmed his informal support for Jiang, suggesting that "everybody will consider Comrade Jiang Zemin as the core of the Party and unite together."[66] He conferred upon Jiang the positions of head of the Central Military Commission (1989) and

[66] Sheryl WuDunn, "Deng Is Reported to Name His Heir, the Party Chief," *New York Times*, September 18, 1989.

president (1993), creating a considerable concentration of power known as a "fused troika," an arrangement not found in Vietnam.[67]

Jiang Zemin delivered a speech at the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992, stating that "the Party's life lies in its unity," identifying himself as the core of the leadership, and declaring that factions would not be allowed. Party unity was frequently mentioned before, during, and after the congress.[68] Later, the Fourth Plenum of the Fourteenth Party Congress (1994) adopted a decision that emphasized the subordination of lower levels to higher levels, the part to the whole, and everything to the CCP center: "There must be a firm central leading body . . . and there must be a leading core in this leadership."[69] Hu Jintao's selection as general secretary and president in 2002 indicates that this centralization of power within a single leader has now become institutionalized in China.

As a result, the premier and president do not have the same level of authority. Although appointed by the National People's Congress (NPC), the Chinese premier is actually selected through party channels and only with the support of its highest-ranking member. The premier's authority, however, is by no means trivial. The premier has the authority to administer China's bureaucracy, including the various ministries and commissions. As the head of the State Council, the premier also has a major role in economic and foreign policymaking, particularly with regard to routine issues.

Before the Seventh Party Congress in 1991, Vietnam's organizational structure was very similar to China's. The general secretary was the predominant center of authority, with a chairman of the Council of Ministers administering the bureaucracy and a chairman of the State Council primarily engaged in ceremonial responsibilities. The general secretary was also the head of the Central Military Commission by way of appointment as head of its party committee.[70] Barring continuity in this dual appointment, the leadership architecture of Vietnam was significantly changed as part of a compromise obtained during the 1991 Seventh Party Congress.[71]

In advance of this meeting, three distinct groups were forming within the Vietnamese CC. Among them were a group of conservatives interested in maintaining the power of the state-owned sector. They counted on Do Muoi to

[67] The position of president in China was abolished during the Cultural Revolution and was reinstated in 1982.

[68] Tony Saich, "The Fourteenth Party Congress: A Program for Authoritarian Rule," *China Quarterly*, no. 132 (1992), 1136–1160.

[69] Joseph Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[70] Similar to China, the minister of defense is typically appointed as the deputy secretary of the Central Military Commission's party committee. In both countries, the Ministry of Defense does not have command authority of the military, as that responsibility falls to the Central Military Commissions of the party and the state.

[71] Dang Phong and Melanie Beresford, *Authority Relations and Economic Decision-Making in Vietnam: An Historical Perspective* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1998).

represent them. An opposing group of modernizers sought greater economic liberalization.[72] The modernizers and conservatives differed vociferously on whether the term "socialist orientation" implied strict central planning or might allow less orthodox means – including foreign investment and private entrepreneurship – by which to improve living standards.[73] In 1990, a third voice entered the fray when the official journal of the Vietnamese military published a widely read letter by Le Duc Anh, commander of Vietnamese forces in Cambodia.[74] The letter reminded all parties of the military's critical role in Vietnam's liberalization and nation-building efforts, more or less asserting its continued place in these negotiations. The result of all this was a compromise, embodied in the revised 1992 Vietnamese Constitution, which ensured cross-cutting powers.

Article 4 of the revised constitution enshrined the role of the communist party in Vietnam as "the leading force in the State and society." The general secretary, as head of the party, therefore has ultimate authority on the overall direction of state policy. But the constitution grants him no legislative or executive role in the government apparatus. The primary legislative influence of the party is through its congresses and plenums. That is, resolutions of the Party National Congress create the framework for national policy goals, which eventually take legal form through National Assembly laws, prime ministerial decrees, and government implementing documents, which must be passed within government bodies.[75] The CC rarely immerses itself in the nitty-gritty details of future legislation.

According to chapter 7 of the 1992 constitution, the president's powers go beyond simply representing Vietnam "internally and externally" as the head of state. The president serves as commander in chief of Vietnamese military forces, has the power to appoint ambassadors and sign international treaties, and can introduce legislation before the National Assembly, including resolutions calling for the appointment or dismissal of cabinet officials. In short, the president of

[72] Alexander L. Vuving, "Strategy and Evolution of Vietnam's China Policy: A Changing Mixture of Pathways," *Asian Survey* 46:6 (2006), 805–824; Thayer, "Mono-Organizational Socialism and the State."

[73] Thaveeporn Vaskavul, "Sectoral Politics for State and Party Building," in Adam Fforde, ed., *Doi Moi: Ten Years after the 1986 Party Congress* (Canberra: Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1997), 80–136; Riedel and Turley, "Politics and Economics of Transition to an Open Market Economy in Viet Nam."

[74] Carlyle A. Thayer, "The Regularization of Politics Revisited: Continuity and Change in the Party's Central Committee, 1976–96," a paper presented to the panel "Vietnamese Politics in Transition: New Conceptions and Inter-Disciplinary Approaches, Part 2," at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, 1997; Kent Bolton, "Domestic Sources of Vietnam's Foreign Policy: Normalizing Relations with the United States," in Carlyle A. Thayer and Ramses Amer, eds., *Vietnamese Foreign Policy in Transition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 170–201.

[75] Ibid.

Vietnam possesses important executive and legislative powers and, through the threat of dismissal, is an effective veto point in policymaking processes.

Regarding the role of the prime minister, Article 109 states that "the Government is the executive organ of the National Assembly, the highest organ of state administration of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam." This body is charged with maintaining "the effectiveness of the State apparatus from the center to the grassroots," understood as "respect for and implementation of the Constitution and the law." The government is granted legislative power, including the ability to present draft laws and decrees for vote in the National Assembly. Article 114 also affirms that the prime minister has executive power over all government institutions, including the legislative power to introduce laws and decrees and to contravene resolutions from subnational governments.

Although membership in the communist party is still very important for achieving high-level positions in Vietnam, the Office of Government has powers distinct from those of the VCP, which through its Central Personnel Board has appointment power over VCP positions but little direct control over civil servants. Government appointment powers in Vietnam have also been strengthened. In the wake of corruption scandals in 2006, the prime minister obtained the ability to dismiss Provincial People's Committee chairmen and ministers through the National Assembly.[76] This power further distinguishes Vietnam from China, where the strong influence of the CCP cadre promotion system continues to influence government decision making.[77] The Vietnamese Constitution also carefully defines distinct responsibilities, insisting that "the Prime Minister is *accountable* to the National Assembly and shall make reports to the National Assembly, its Standing Committee, and the country's President."[78]

Skeptics may argue that all authoritarian systems have some sort of constitution and that they are rarely meaningful. Nevertheless, the division of powers in the Vietnamese Constitution does not merely exist on paper. Vietnam's top three leaders (the "troika") have worked to ensure that their distinct powers are protected in two important ways.

[76] Vietnamnet, "Corruption Committee Can Suspend Ministers," May 30, 2006, at www.veitnamnet.com.vn; Vietnamnet, "PM Empowered to Suspend Provincial Chairperson," September 7, 2006, at www.veitnamnet.com.vn (both accessed October 22, 2010).

[77] Yasheng Huang, *Inflation and Investment Controls in China: The Political Economy of Central-Local Relations during the Reform Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Yumin Sheng, "Global Market Integration and Central Political Control: Foreign Trade and Intergovernmental Relations in China," *Comparative Political Studies* 40:4 (2007), 405–434; Susan H. Whiting, *Power and Wealth in Rural China: The Political Economy of Institutional Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[78] Article 109. Emphasis added. A recent example includes the assembly's hostility toward a high-speed railway project. See Kim N. B. Ninh, "National Assembly Votes on Contested High Speed Rail Project," *InAsia*, July 7, 2010, http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2010/07/07/vietnams-national-assemblyvotes-on-contested-high-speed-rail-project/ (accessed August 25, 2010).

TABLE 9.3. *Party Rank of Top Officials in Vietnam and China*

Vietnam	**1981**	**1986**	**1991**	**1996**	**2001**	**2006**
General Secretary	1	1	1	1	1	1
Prime minister*	2	2	3	3	3	3
President**	3	3	2	2	2	4
China	**1982**	**1987**	**1992**	**1997**	**2002**	**2007**
General Secretary	1	1	1	1	1	1
Premier	3	4	2	3	3	3

Notes: * Before 1991 called chairman of the Council of Ministers.
** Before 1991 called chairman of the State Council.

First, their constitutional compromise gives each of them a top-ranking position in the VCP. This arrangement requires them to forge consensus positions on policy issues, which ultimately eliminate the extreme shifts from left to right that have distinguished Chinese elite politics. Table 9.3 compares the relative party ranks of Vietnamese and Chinese government officials.

Second, the different constitutional powers of these three officials allow for patronage politics and the cultivation of a loyal following. Muoi had control of the VCP and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Kiet had control of the bureaucracy. Anh had power over the military and its sizable business sector, with nearly seventy thousand soldiers (12 percent of the standing army) employed full-time in more than one hundred military-owned commercial enterprises.[79] As Gainsborough shows, many key policy outcomes can be explained in terms of these key patronage channels.[80]

Muoi, Anh, and Kiet continued in their roles through the Eighth Party Congress (1996), and then, in a carefully orchestrated maneuver, each removed his name from the National Assembly ballots in 1997. In turn, a special Fourth Plenum of the CC was called to hold a vote on successors. The handpicked successors of Kiet and Muoi were strongly supported, but the proposed new president, Tran Duc Luong, was not from the military.[81] Le Kha Phieu, a military man himself and Do Muoi's successor as general secretary, attempted, in a Jiang-like maneuver, to take advantage of this weakness and claim the mantle of president.[82] He was quickly rebuffed. His overt effort to accumulate such power led to his remaining in power only until the next party congress, when the CC summarily opposed the Politburo's recommendation and rejected him, as mentioned earlier.

[79] Abuza, "The Lessons of Le Kha Phieu"; Carlyle A. Thayer, *The Vietnam People's Army under Doi Moi* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994).
[80] Gainsborough, "From Patronage Politics to 'Outcomes.'"
[81] Phan Van Khai replaced Kiet, Phieu replaced Muoi, and Tran Duc Luong replaced Anh.
[82] Abuza, "Leadership Transition in Vietnam since the Eighth Party Congress."

The troika's constitutional compromise survives to this day. In a sense, the arrangement passes a version of Huntington's famous two-turnover test for electoral democracies, having now survived three successive leadership transitions.[83] In this regard, the troika arrangement is a consolidated element of Vietnam's political institutional architecture, just as Hu Jintao's elevation as "paramount leader" established the institutional continuity of a fused troika in China's political architecture.

Relationship between Government and Party. A further look at Figure 9.1 reveals two other important differences between Vietnam and China, both related to the relationship between the government and the party. First, China has the "leading small groups" (LSGs) (*lingdao xiaozu*), a bureaucratic layer between the party hierarchy and the government apparatus. These do not exist in Vietnam, at least not in any formal way. The five original LSGs – finance and economics, political and legal, foreign affairs, science, and culture and education – were created in 1958 to ensure coordination and implementation of party guidelines and were subordinate to the Politburo and the PBSC. They drew together individuals from the CCP, government, and army who were relevant to each policy area.[84] Formally under the CCP, LSGs straddle party and government structures, but each group is housed within the institution of its top-ranking official, be it the premier, a minister, or even the general secretary.[85]

The fundamental goal of LSGs has been to ensure CCP oversight of the premier and the government ministries. Indeed, although LSGs are not standing decision-making institutions, their policy preferences and recommendations are crucial for final policy outcomes as they reflect cross-ministerial interests and party will.[86] The distinction made in the Chinese literature is that the CCP sets *fangzhen* (guiding principles), enforcing them through the LSGs, whereas the government maintains authority over *zhengce* (policies).[87] In practice, such a division is hard to delineate as the CCP has not only maintained control over the government, but also occasionally substituted for the government as policymaker. For example, China's finance and economics LSG consists of five to seven top leaders who make most of the important economic policy decisions.[88] (Swaine also documents the important

[83] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 267.

[84] David M. Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform 1978–2000* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[85] Shirk, *Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*.

[86] Lampton, ed., *Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*.

[87] Jing Huang, *Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[88] Carol Lee Hamrin, *China and the Challenge of the Future: Changing Political Patterns* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990); Kenneth G. Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988). The normal membership of an LSG includes (a) the group head, (b) usually one deputy or even two, (c) statutory members (defined by regulations) who sit on the LSG because of formally assigned

policymaking role of the Taiwan LSG.)[89] Though the original mandate for the LSGs is documented in a CC memorandum, the creation of the individual groups tends to be ad hoc without any codification in the party constitution.[90]

The principle of anchoring the party to the government (*jiandang yuzheng*) continues to guide party-government relations in China.[91] In government agencies at all levels, the party groups (*dangzu)* explicitly act as the *core* leadership; rather than sitting above the government structure, they are sitting directly in government agencies.

Since the political unrest of 1989, the *dangzu* system has played an even more important role in helping the party control government policymaking. Article 46 of the CCP Constitution, first mentioned in the 1945 version, describes the *dangzu*'s role as follows:

> The *dangzu* plays the role of the core of leadership. Its main tasks are: to see to it that the Party's line, principles and policies are implemented, to discuss and decide on matters of major importance in its unit, to do well in managing affairs concerning cadres, to unite with the non-Party cadres and the masses in fulfilling the tasks assigned by the Party and the state and to guide the work of the Party organization of the unit and those directly under it.

Most recently, the report of the Sixteenth Party Congress (2002) went so far as to describe a *dangzu* as the core of any state organ, thus having authority to make significant decisions and to insist that the state ultimately remain subordinate to the party.

The second way in which China and Vietnam differ in the relationship between the government and the party involves the role of party cells in government organs and the differences in their official authority. Organizationally, Vietnam seems to share a structure similar to that of China. Under VCP statutes (Article 24), each government agency with three or more active party members must form a party chapter *(co so dang uy)*.[92] If an agency has a large number of VCP members, it can subdivide its chapter into party cells. VCP cells do not,

functional duties in the bureaucracy, and (d) discretionary members such as advisers, who are often outgoing retirees, or a secretary general chosen personally by the leader. An LSG typically combines all the senior officials with responsibility for different aspects of a comprehensive functional arena. See Carol Lee Hamrin, "The Party Leadership System," in Kenneth Lieberthal and David M. Lampton, eds., *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 116.

[89] Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Decision-Making Regarding Taiwan, 1979–2000," in Lampton, ed., *Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, 289–336.

[90] Miller, "Institutionalization and the Changing Dynamics."

[91] Gang Lin, "Leadership Transition, Intra-Party Democracy, and Institution Building in China," *Asian Survey* 44:2 (2004), 255–275.

[92] Foreign researchers in Vietnam sometimes translate this as "cell," which is technically incorrect. A cell (*to dang)* is actually a subunit of a chapter (Article 4, Clause 1).

however, have a different mandate than their overseeing party chapters, and thus they differ significantly from the *dangzu* in China.

In Vietnam, the primary responsibility of a party chapter is the education and oversight of its own members, thus allowing at best for indirect coercion in government affairs.[93] A chapter is obligated to meet at least once a month and to convene an annual congress. Unlike a *dangzu* in China, a party chapter in Vietnam has no authority over the organization in which it is housed. As the former party General Secretary Do Muoi once admitted, the 1992 constitution specifically "put an end to the practice of party committees and party organization boards conducting all business related to personnel [and] in lieu of the state apparatus."[94] A party chapter has no direct power to overrule the decisions of the government's organizational leadership.

To summarize, Vietnam and China have important differences in the relation between the party and the state. In China, the CCP has designed mechanisms that create a purely delegative relationship from the party to the government. This does not exist in Vietnam, where the prime minister has clear policymaking power independent of party oversight. This power cannot be overruled by VCP units at lower levels. Rather, it is reinforced by the prime minister's rank within the party and by way of independently cultivated patronage channels. Further, whereas CC party plenums set political and economic goals in both countries, there is no day-to-day VCP authority in Vietnam to ensure the compliance of the prime minister and government, as occurs in China through the LSGs.

The Parliament and the Ministries. A final element of horizontal accountability is the role of the national legislature. At issue is the extent to which this state body is able to veto the activities of the government executive apparatus and, to some extent, the party. In both Vietnam and China, analysts have documented the increasing assertiveness of the legislature, a development that contrasts sharply with earlier depictions of the body as a "rubber stamp" or mere "voting machine." China's NPC and Vietnam's National Assembly (NA) have increased their political activity by (a) strengthening their legislative roles, (b) holding a greater number of public votes on officials to express dissent, and (c) opening up their activities to the media. We elaborate on each of these features in the following.

First, both bodies have become active and visible in the legislative process. As Tanner argues, China's lawmaking system is no longer a unified, top-down policymaking system, but rather a "multi-stage, multi-arena" process.[95]

[93] This is also clear in Article 10, Clause 6, of the Party Statutes. Party organizations determine jurisdictional issues that do not conflict with the principles, lines, and policies of the party; the state law; and the resolutions of higher echelons.

[94] Do Muoi, *Vietnam: New Challenges and New Opportunities* (Hanoi: Gioi, 1995), 177.

[95] Murray Scot Tanner, "How a Bill Becomes a Law in China: Stages and Processes in Lawmaking," *China Quarterly*, no. 141 (March 1995), 39–64.

Between 1998 and 2002, for example, the Ninth NPC reviewed and debated eighty-seven draft laws, most of which originated with the State Council and its ministries. Seventy-four passed, ten were postponed, one was incorporated into other laws, and only two were rejected. Yet this was the first time the NPC had flatly voted down any legislative proposal introduced by the State Council.[96] Even with enacted laws, the NPC has repeatedly tabled them and urged reconsideration. The full NPC consists of almost three thousand delegates, yet they only meet once a year. As a result, most decisions are made by a 160-member Standing Committee, which normally meets once every two months.[97]

Vietnam's 1992 constitution clearly provides its 498-member National Assembly with critical powers in the policymaking process, specifically, the legislative power to amend the constitution, make laws, decide the state budget, veto prime ministerial decrees, and dismiss (by a two-thirds vote) all top government officials, including the president, prime minister, cabinet ministers, and members of the Supreme Court (Article 84). Each delegate on the National Assembly also has the right to query[98] all top members of the government apparatus (Article 89).

Vietnam's National Assembly, like China's, played an increasingly major role in the revision and rejection of draft laws initiated by the government. In 2001, for example, the NA rejected proposed changes in the penal code that allowed district courts to decide on administrative penalties of up to fifteen years, rather than the existing seven-year limit.[99] The NA also seeks public comment on draft and ordinance laws. In the course of writing the 1995 Civil Code, for example, the government published various drafts for public comment and the NA collected more than twenty thousand responses from around the country.[100] While earlier relying on meetings and newspapers,[101] this process now occurs through an interactive Web site. On the basis of such feedback, the NA will send draft laws back to ministerial drafting committees for revision. The Competition Law, for example, went through more than ten drafts before it was passed.[102] China,

[96] The two rejected draft laws were "the law for a high-technology industrial development zone" and "the regulations on the people's jury system." The high-tech zone law was reviewed twice, in 1997 and 1999. Then it was tabled for three years before it was eventually voted down in 2002.

[97] "China's Top Legislature to Improve Supervision over Stimulus Plan," http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/09/content_10974378.htm (accessed August 21, 2009).

[98] Sometimes translated in official documents as "interpallate."

[99] Economist Intelligence Unit, "National Assembly Rejects Changes in Penal Code," *Country Report Vietnam*, July 2001.

[100] Mark Sidel, "Vietnam in 1998: Reform Confronts the Regional Crisis," *Asian Survey* 39:1 (1998), 89–98.

[101] Hoang The Lien, "On the Legal System of Vietnam," *Vietnam Law and Legal Forum* 1:1 (1994), 33–35.

[102] Pierre Anglès d'Auriac and Huong Lan, "Analysis: A Good Dose of Competition," *Vietnam Investment Review: Timeout*, June 2005. (The prime minister also has a card to play during the revision process by threatening to withdraw the law until certain revisions are accepted, a process

however, has only begun to experiment with soliciting public opinion on draft laws, most notably during the recent revision of the Labor Law.

Second, both legislatures have begun to use their power of approving cabinet appointments as a way to demonstrate disapproval of the behavior and activities of certain officials. In 1992, for example, 30 percent of Chinese NPC delegates either voted "no" or abstained on the vote to build the Three Gorges Dam. Similarly, one-tenth of the NPC delegates in March 2003 voted against Jiang Zemin's staying on as chair of the state Central Military Commission after his retirement as head of the CCP.[103] Though rare, such dissent signals an important mechanism by which the elites hold each other in check.

In Vietnam, too, the role of the NA as a forum for dissent has become stronger. Although it remains incredibly rare for an official to be formally rejected by the NA, delegates are willing to demonstrate significant disapproval. As Table 9.4 shows, three cabinet-level nominees received less than 60 percent of the vote in the formation of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's first government administration.[104] Those ministers were ultimately approved, but only after public exposure of the NA's dissatisfaction. In 2010, the NA outright rejected the prime minister's proposal to build a high-speed railway, effectively killing the project by sending it back to the Ministry of Finance for evaluation.[105]

In the past few years, Vietnam's NA also has begun to explore its constitutional power to hold a vote of no confidence on a sitting minister. In 2004, a group of NA members sent a request to the Standing Committee for a no-confidence vote on four ministers.[106] While the signatories to the proposal did not constitute the 20 percent threshold to trigger an automatic no-confidence vote, as a result of the move the four ministers apologized for their actions in front of the NA.[107] In 2010, after news of financial mismanagement in one of

most recently employed in the debate over the Common Investment Law ["New Investment Law Overview," *Saigon Times Daily*, December 10, 2005, 2].)

[103] Merle Goldman, *From Comrade to Citizen: The Struggle for Political Rights in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[104] It is quite common for the NA to sack sitting officials, such as Minister of Agriculture Le Huy Ngo in 2004 and Minister of Communications and Transport Dao Dinh Binh, Chief Governmental Inspector Quach Le Thanh, and Minister of Education and Training Nguyen Minh Hien in 2006. Nevertheless, all of these votes were initiated by a proposal from the prime minister.

[105] Edmund Malesky, Paul Schuler, and Anh Tran, "Vietnam in 2010: Familiar Patterns and New Developments ahead of the 11th Party Congress," *Southeast Asian Affairs*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (2011), 339–363.

[106] Including Minister of Post and Telematics Do Trung Ta, Minister of Health Tran Thi Trung Chien, Minister of Education and Training Nguyen Minh Hien, and Chairman of the National Sports Committee Nguyen Danh Thai. Tu Giang, "Assembly Takes on Greater Role: More Powerful and Independent," *Vietnam Investment Review*, May 31, 2004, 1.

[107] Tu Giang, "Assembly Takes on Greater Role: More Powerful and Independent," *Vietnam Investment Review*, May 31, 2004, 1.

TABLE 9.4. *National Assembly Votes for Top Vietnamese Officials in 2006*

Name	Position	Percentage of Votes in Favor
Nguyen Minh Triet	President	94.12
Nguyen Tan Dung	Prime Minster	92.08
Ngueyn Phu Trong	National Assembly Chairman	84.85
Pham Gia Khiem	Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister of Foreign Affairs	88.24
Truong Vinh Trong	Deputy Prime Minister	66.73
Nguyen Sinh Hung	Deputy Prime Minister	58.21
Phung Quang Thanh	Minister of Defense	94.12
Vuong Dinh Hue	Deputy State Auditor	88.84
Vu Nan Ninh	Minister of Finance	87.42
Nguyen Thien Nhan	Minister of Education	86.21
Tran Van Truyen	Chief of Government Office	77.28
Le Doan Hop	Minister of Culture & Info.	58.82
Ho Nghia Dung	Minister of Transport	57.81

Sources: "Vietnam Elected President, PM, and National Assembly Chairman," *Voice of Vietnam News*, June 29, 2006; Hoang Ly and Xuan Toan, "Vietnam House Ratifies Cabinet Members," *Thanh Nien Daily*, June 29, 2006.

Vietnam's largest conglomerates, an even bolder proposal for a vote of no confidence against the prime minister was raised.[108]

A third expansion of political activity by the legislatures of Vietnam and China – and an important realm of horizontal accountability in both countries – has been to make legislative activities increasingly open to media scrutiny. In China, journalists were invited to report on the NPC session in 2003 and annual press conferences have been broadcast live since 1998.[109] In Vietnam, journalists also report on NA meetings. There are differences, however. Since the early 1990s, the Vietnamese NA has conducted a fascinating biannual televised exercise of holding officials publicly accountable to their nominal constituents.

[108] "No Confidence in Vietnam's PM," *Straits Times*, November 1, 2010, http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/SEAsia/Story/STIStory_597903.html (accessed May 29, 2011).

[109] "NPC Plenum Discusses Two Draft Laws," Xinhua, March 15, 2007.

Recently, the NA sessions grilled the minister of fisheries on his commitment to public safety, the minister of trade for failure to crack down on corruption in his office, and the minister of construction about the abuse of state-provided housing for public officials.[110] There is empirical evidence that, at these sessions, locally nominated full-time delegates are likely to ask questions in response to the particular concerns of their constituencies.[111]

We can learn much by observing how each country's legislature reacted to the 2008 global economic crisis. The governments of China and Vietnam each launched a stimulus package. In November 2008, the Chinese government announced a 4 trillion RMB (approximately $600 billion) stimulus spending package, accounting for roughly 16 percent of GDP. The plan, although aggressive and swift, was criticized for its lack of transparency and weak supervision requirements,[112] largely because the CCP Politburo had rushed out the initial package without approval from the NPC. He Keng, an NPC Standing Committee member, argued that it was not necessary for the NPC to approve the stimulus plan because the central government, not the legislature, had the authority to implement it.[113] But the NPC, facing increasing public pressure, did review and approve an updated plan during its annual meeting in March 2009.

Vietnam revealed its stimulus plan in December 2008. Although the initial plan was only $1 billion, equivalent to 1.2 percent of GDP, it was immediately queried by NA delegates with regard to its procedural appropriateness. The government had in fact failed to consult the NA before making the package public. Vietnam's minister of planning and investment argued that it would have been too late to wait for NA approval, as the NA only convenes twice a year.[114]

[110] Vietnam News Association (VNA), "National Assembly Probes Ministries' Mismanagement," December 3, 2004; "Heated Debate over State Houses for the Boys," *Thanh Nien* (Young Person), November 28, 2006, 1.

[111] Edmund Malesky and Paul Schuler, "Nodding or Needling: Analyzing Delegate Responsiveness in an Authoritarian Parliament," *American Political Science Review* 104:3 (August 2010), 482–502. In May 2007, the number of permanent delegates increased to 30 percent, with full-time deputies representing each province and city nationwide, except for two representing Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, and the populous central provinces of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An, http://www.thanhniennews.com/print.php?catid=1&newsid=14796 (accessed September 24, 2009).

[112] Jonathan Ansfield, "Party Elders Press for Checks on China's Stimulus Plan," *New York Times*, March 4, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/04/world/asia/04china.html (accessed August 21, 2009).

[113] "Renda changwei He Keng: Quanguo lianghui bu shenyi 4 wanyi touzi" (NPC Standing Committee Member He Kang: NPC Will Not Review the 4 Trillion Stimulus Package), *Nanfang dushi bao* (Southern Metropolitan News), March 2, 2009, http://news.southcn.com/china/china05/2009qglh/4wy/content/2009-03/02/content_4951550.htm (accessed August 21, 2009).

[114] Phuong Loan, "Planning and Investment Minister Speaks of Stimulus," March 23, 2009, http://english.vietnamnet.vn/politics/2009/03/837777/ (accessed August 21, 2009).

In May, however, the government unveiled a complete stimulus package of $8 billion. To be sure, we cannot draw a concrete conclusion from these cases, but at the very least they suggest that the Vietnamese legislature not only exerted more scrutiny on the executive than the Chinese legislature did, but assumed itself entitled to do so.

To recap, both Vietnam and China have horizontal accountability or veto points. We find, however, that the party exerts more control over the legislature in China than it does in Vietnam. We propose that this difference is partly related to the difference between Vietnam's "rule by troika" and the very different institution of "paramount leader" that remains operative in China, particularly in the form of party dominance over state institutions. "Rule by troika," institutionalized in Vietnam's 1992 constitution, has empowered the government apparatus vis-à-vis the party in ways still not found in China. Moreover, it forces into being a broader governing coalition, which, in turn, must find the middle ground on leading policy issues, such as economic redistribution.[115]

VERTICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Underpinning the preceding differences is vertical accountability – the degree to which political leaders are subject to the will of their constituencies. In Chapter 10, Dimitrov argues that responsiveness to citizen complaints is essential to popular accountability under communist regimes. In this chapter, we focus on a different mode of vertical accountability: competitive elections in which a selectorate or electorate can vote leaders out of office.

In Vietnam and China, there are two types of elections – those for the ruling clique (party members) and those for the national legislature. In both cases, as we will show, there is stronger vertical accountability in Vietnam than in China.

Election of the Central Committee. In principle, the most authoritative body in both Vietnam and China is the party congress, which meets every five years to set a new direction for the party and to elect a new CC. Delegates to a party congress (2,000 in China; 1,176 in Vietnam) are chosen through elections at the provincial level and among central institutions of the party, military, government apparatus, and state-owned enterprises. In both countries, delegates from the previous CC are also included as delegates.[116]

But, as Table 9.5 shows, the two countries have parted ways in recent years in the level of competition allowed in the selection of the CC. In China, the Politburo of the outgoing CC recommends a list of candidates. The list is then voted on by the delegates at the party congress, who choose both the full and

[115] Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng, "Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes."

[116] Viet Anh and Anh Tu, "207 người vào danh sách bầu Ủy viên trung ương chính thức" (207 People Enter the List of Candidates for the Central Committee), *VNExpress*, April 23, 2006, http://vnexpress.net/Vietnam/Xa-hoi/2006/04/3B9E90F6/ (accessed June 13, 2009).

TABLE 9.5. *Electoral Institutions in the Central Committee as of 2010*

Institution	China XVII	Vietnam X
Nomination Procedures		
Outgoing CC Nominees	Yes	Yes
Delegates Nominated at Congress	No	Yes
Self-Nomination	No	Yes
Competition		
Number of Full Seats	204	160
Number of Full Nominees	221	207
Rejection Rate (Full)	8.3%	22.7%
Number of Alternate Seats	167	21
Number of Alternate Nominees	183	46
Rejection Rate (Alternate)	9.6%	54.3%
Representation of Subnational Officials		
Full Delegates	65 (32.8%)	68 (42.5%)
Alternate Delegates	89 (56.3%)	15 (71.4%)

Sources: Data on CCP Central Committee from http://www.caijing.com.cn/20071021/34486.shtml (accessed January 15, 2013); Cheng Li, "A Pivotal Stepping-Stone: Local Leaders' Representation on the 17th Central Committee," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 23 (2008). Data on VCP Central Committee from Việt Anh and Anh Tu, "207 người"; Việt Anh, "Tất cả đại"; and *VNExpress*, "Danh sách Ban chấp hành trung ương X [List of Central Committee 10]", April 25, 2006.

alternate members of the CC. In the Seventeenth Party Congress, only 8.3 percent of candidates failed to become full members.[117]

In Vietnam, however, both the nomination procedure and the voting allow for more competition and agency on the part of the candidates. For example, Vietnam's outgoing Ninth CC in 2006 prepared a list of 175 candidates for full membership and 30 candidates for alternate membership in the Tenth Party Congress. One candidate simply withdrew his name, thereby reducing the competition slowly through individual choice.[118] In addition, newly elected delegates at the party congress are allowed to propose candidates from within their own ranks. In total, 328 candidates were either nominated or self-nominated in 2006. After the collection of nominations, a vetting process whittled down the candidates to exclude first-time nominees above the age of fifty-five and incumbents above the age of sixty. This vetting process resulted in 207 candidates for full positions, of whom 33 were nominated by delegates at

[117] Historically, about 95 percent of nominees have been elected CC full members (see Sheng, "Global Market Integration"). "Birth of New Central Committee and Central Commission for Discipline Inspection" (Xin zhongyang weiyuanhui he zhongyang jiwei dansheng ji), http://www.caijing.com.cn/2007-10-21/100034486.html (accessed September 18, 2009).

[118] It was Mai Ai Truc, the retiring minister of the environment.

the Tenth Party Congress, 2 were self-nominated,[119] and 46 were proposed as alternates. From this list, the Tenth Party Congress elected 160 full members and 25 alternates, rejecting 23 percent and 54 percent of the candidates, respectively.[120] The CC election at the Eleventh Party Congress in 2011 was similarly competitive: 20 percent of candidates for full membership (43 of 218) and 60 percent of candidates for alternate membership (36 of 61) were rejected.[121] As illustrated, the electoral institutions in place for Vietnam's CC allow for more choice and competition than those for the Chinese CC.[122] Even so, electoral competition in Vietnam can be undermined by an incumbency advantage and by the previous CC's seal of approval. In fact, not a single self-nominated or floor-nominated candidate has been elected in Vietnam. Moreover, the votes have not even been close. Votes for the winning delegates ranged from 63.4 percent up to 90 percent. As a result, Vietnam ended up with roughly the same outcome as China: 92 percent of the delegates of the outgoing CC were reelected.

Selection of the Politburo. A second type of vertical accountability is the selection of top communist party officials. According to each country's party constitution, the general secretary is selected along with the Politburo at the First Plenum of the CC, convened immediately after the party congress. Traditionally, the outgoing Politburo produced a nominee for the position of general secretary, who would then receive an up or down vote from the CC. China maintains this system, but Vietnam has moved away from it in recent years.

As previously mentioned, the first major shift occurred at the Ninth Party Congress in 2001, when the Vietnamese CC rejected the Politburo's renomination of the incumbent general secretary, Le Kha Phieu. In 2006, the Tenth VCP Congress experimented with a straw poll of all 1,176 delegates. The incumbent candidate for general secretary received 900 votes, a considerable lead over the runner-up, the party secretary of Ho Chi Minh City, who received only 200 votes.[123] There were more than a dozen other candidates. The entire list was sent

[119] Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Phu Binh and National University Professor Xuan Han, respectively.

[120] Viet Anh, "Tất cả đại biểu sẽ được đề cử chức Tổng bí thư" (All Delegates Are Allowed the Power to Choose the General Secretary), *VNExpress*, April 17, 2006.

[121] "Vietnam Party Conference Elects New Central Committee Members," Xinhua News Agency, January 18, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-01/18/c_13696361.htm (accessed August 21, 2012).

[122] "Danh sách Ban chấp hành trung ương X" (List of Central Committee 10), *VNExpress*, April 25, 2006.

[123] "Vietnamese Party Election Poses New Features," Xinhua, April 25, 2006; Gerhard Will, "A Golden Chance for the Party: 10th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam," *SWP Comments* 22 (August 2006), http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/comments2006_22_wll_ks.pdf (accessed August 24, 2009); Hy V. Luong, "Vietnam in 2006: Stronger Global Integration and Resolve for Better Governance," *Asian Survey* 47:1 (2007), 168–174.

to the CC for a final vote. All but the incumbent party secretary subsequently withdrew their nominations at the CC's First Plenum. Subsequently, however, it was the second- and third-ranked candidates who were then given the positions of president and prime minister, in effect, allowing the popular consensus to stand.

Government Elections: Parliament and Local People's Councils

Direct versus Indirect. There is a critical difference between parliamentary elections in Vietnam and China. In Vietnam, the National Assembly is popularly elected through universal adult suffrage.[124] In China, the National People's Congress is indirectly elected; NPC delegates are elected by the provincial people's congresses, which are in turn elected by lower-level congresses, and so on, down through a series of layers to the lowest people's congresses, which are popularly elected. This process of layered indirect elections ensures that the CCP maintains effective control over the process of delegate selection.[125] In China, a delegate without party approval can be elected at the lowest level of the pyramid, but it is virtually impossible for a delegate to climb all the rungs without the consent of party higher-ups.[126] All challenges to this practice thus far have been rebuked. For example, Yao Lifa, an independent candidate elected to the people's congress in Qianjiang City, Hubei province, was arrested for mobilizing more people to run in local elections as a way to challenge the party's dominance over the outcome of those elections.[127]

Nominations. There are also important differences in how candidates may be nominated in China and Vietnam. In China, the CCP applies representation principles to ensure the dominance of party members at every level. Toward this end, China's Election Law has been revised four times since it was implemented in 1979, with greater restrictions introduced after the 1989 Tiananmen protests. In 1979, for instance, the support of three citizens was sufficient to submit the name of an independent candidate.[128] Now, ten are necessary.[129] Election

[124] Edwin Shanks et al., *Understanding Pro-Poor Political Change: The Policy Process – Vietnam* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2004).

[125] Zhao Xiaoli, "Xianxiang renda daibiao zhijie xuanju zhong de yuxian chengxu" (The Primary Procedure in the Direct Election for Delegates at the County Level), May 19, 2006, http://www.fatianxia.com/paper_list.asp?id=3565 (accessed June 12, 2009). In Vietnam, separate popular elections are held for the Provincial People's Councils. These are not held concurrently with the NA elections, usually taking place two years after the national plebiscite.

[126] "Beijing Fears Independent Candidates, Arrests Democracy Campaigner," *South China Morning Post*, July 27, 2006, http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=6812 (accessed August 21, 2009).

[127] Ibid.

[128] National People's Congress, *Electoral Law of the People's Republic of China on the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses* (1979).

[129] National People's Congress, *Electoral Law of the People's Republic of China on the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses* (2004 revision).

campaigning was also allowed in 1979 but has since been abandoned. In the 1980s, one-third of the total seats in the NPC were reserved for nonparty members. The proportion of CCP members in the NPC reached 71.5 percent by 1998 and has since remained above 70 percent.[130]

There has been little research documenting the differing election success in China of candidates nominated in different ways. A case study of Beijing, however, reveals significant advantages for officially nominated candidates over popularly nominated competitors. One advantage that officially supported candidates enjoy stems from the definition of a candidate's constituency in terms of employment rather than residence. As a result, official candidates have an easier time convincing coworkers or employees to vote for them. Rural candidates also face discrimination in the election law; each deputy from the countryside must represent four times as many constituents in the county people's congresses, five times as many in the provincial people's congresses, and eight times as many in the NPC, more or less ensuring their ineffectiveness.[131]

In Vietnam, on the other hand, candidates can be endorsed by a central agency (party, government, mass organization, or the army), by a provincial election committee in the candidate's geographically defined constituency (ten to fifteen of the leading government figures in the province), or by self-nomination.[132] Although central nomination procedures remain an easy conduit for high-level officials such as the prime minister and president to get on the ballot, allowing them to bypass local election committees,[133] self-nomination has become more popular at other levels in recent years. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese government retains considerable control over the nomination process through provincial election committees chaired by the Fatherland Front, a mass organization subordinate to the VCP. In a process referred to as the "three consultations,"[134] these election committees first rule out candidates whose files

[130] Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "More Power to the People's Congresses? Parliaments and Parliamentarianism in the People's Republic of China," *ASIEN*, no. 99 (April 2006), 42–69.

[131] Kevin O'Brien, "Villagers, Elections, and Citizenship in Contemporary China," *Modern China* 27:4 (2001), 407–435.

[132] Martin Gainsborough, "Party Control: Electoral Campaigning in Vietnam in the Run-up to the May 2002 National Assembly Elections," *Pacific Affairs* 78:1 (2005), 57–75.

[133] Interestingly, there appears to be some electioneering involved in the placement of centrally nominated candidates, who may be proposed for constituencies where they have the strongest chance of being elected. In 2001, President Tran Duc Luong was nominated for Hai Phong municipality, even though he is from Quang Ngai province. In 2007, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who is from the southernmost province of Ca Mau, ran in the northern city of Hai Phong. President Nguyen Minh Triet, who is from Binh Duong province, ran in Ho Chi Minh City, where he served a highly successful tour as party secretary.

[134] According to the Law on the National Assembly, self-nominated candidates who are also members of the VCP need approval from their local party chapter in order to run. This little-known rule caused several well-known candidates to be excluded from the final round, as they were deemed "too busy" with party responsibilities. Nguyen Van Yeu, "On-Line Chat with Voters by the Vice President of the National Assembly about Preparations for NA Elections,"

are incomplete or are submitted late.[135] The committee then assesses the candidates on the basis of their educational background (a college degree is the minimum), residency (for locally nominated candidates), virtue (criminal background), talent, and ability. In the third consultation, candidates are rejected if they do not have the "confidence of voters."[136] How would the committee know that *before* the election? The electoral commissions organize town hall meetings at the precinct level, where candidates are invited to state their case for entering the election. At the end of these sparsely attended meetings, voters fill out an anonymous ballot indicating which candidates they support. In an analysis of self-nominees in Ho Chi Minh City, Malesky and Schuler found that the main selection mechanism of voters appeared to be a candidate's number of years in the VCP.[137]

Candidate-to-Seat Ratio. Another indicator of vertical accountability is the candidate-to-seat ratio, which offers a clearer picture of the amount of choice actually available to the constituents. A ratio of 1, for example, indicates that voters have very little ability to choose their representatives and consequently very little ability to hold those representatives accountable for their policies or actions. Higher ratios imply more choice and therefore more voter authority.

On the basis of the Chinese Election Law (2004), the candidate-to-seat ratio has become more strictly delineated, resulting in a narrower choice of candidates at the national and provincial levels. In 2004, the number of candidates was required to be 20–50 percent larger than the number of available seats. In 1979, that number had been 33–100 percent larger than the number of available seats.[138] The ratios increase as we move down the subnational ladder, implying more choice and consequently greater vertical accountability over positions of progressively decreasing power. At the county level, for which deputies are directly elected, there are no more than two candidates for each seat. Only at the village level is there no limit on the number of candidates per seat.

In Vietnam, the "three consultations" process has had a critical effect on the candidate-to-seat ratio. In 2007, the process reduced the number of total candidates considerably (from 1,324 to 876), leaving Ha Tinh province, for example, with just five candidates for three seats. This vetting process affects self-

Vietbao.vn, May 2, 2007, http://vietbao.vn/Xa-hoi/Pho-Chu-tich-QH-Nguyen-Van-Yeu-Dai-bieu-QH-phai-khong-tham-nhung/70084596/157/ (accessed June 13, 2008).

[135] Gainsborough, "Party Control: Electoral Campaigning in Vietnam."

[136] "Preparations Run Smoothly for National Assembly Vote," Vietnam News Service (VNS), May 3, 2007; Nguyen, "On-Line Chat with Voters."

[137] Edmund Malesky and Paul Schuler, "Paint-by-Numbers Democracy: The Stakes, Structure, Results, and Implications of the 2007 Vietnamese National Assembly Election," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 4:1 (2009), 1–48; Edmund Malesky and Paul Schuler, "Why Do Single-Party Regimes Hold Elections? An Analysis of Candidate Data in Vietnam's 2007 National Assembly Contest," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, 2008.

[138] Cabestan, "More Power to the People's Congresses?"

nominated candidates most severely. Of 236 self-nominated candidates for the National Assembly, only 30 made it through the "three consultations."

In light of the preceding, it is no longer correct to depict the legislature of either country as a mere "rubber stamp." The ruling communist parties have opened up their procedures considerably, while also maintaining control in divergent ways. The CCP maintains effective control over elections through its tiered election process and by limiting the number of candidates. The VCP allows for direct elections and has no formal restrictions on the number of candidates or their party orientation but uses the "three consultations" process and local electoral commissions to eliminate unfavorable choices. Both procedures are far from truly democratic. Nevertheless, Vietnam does have greater vertical accountability, as all candidates must return to their constituencies for reelection. The clearest impact of greater accountability in Vietnam appeared in 2006, when 12 of the 160 centrally nominated candidates were defeated. These defeats occurred primarily in wealthy provinces, which for a variety of reasons were unhappy with the central leadership.[139] It also remains the case that Vietnam's broader system of vertical accountability – particularly that of delegates to their constituents – has its roots in the VCP's historical need to forge consensus among elites, leading it to use electoral institutions as a means of adaptation. Nothing precludes the CCP from heading in the same direction to accommodate an increasingly diverse and powerful party base.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we demonstrated that regime type is too rough a cut to understand political dynamics in Vietnam and China and found instead an opportunity to explore the elements that seem to be critical to each regime's resilience. We turned to political institutions of vertical and horizontal accountability, particularly as they operate at the elite level, hoping to understand better what has sustained these regimes in contrast to the single-party regimes that have collapsed (examined elsewhere in this volume).

Our discussion of political accountability is far from a comprehensive review of all related institutions. We intentionally bracketed the court system and other administrative channels for addressing citizen grievances,[140] including the increasingly important party inspection committees. We did so to accommodate our in-depth comparative exploration of political accountability at the very peak that defines this authoritarian regime subtype – the single-party regime – and that now distinguishes China and Vietnam from their formerly communist peers.

[139] Malesky and Schuler, "Why Do Single-Party Regimes Hold Elections?"

[140] Pierre F. Landry, "Does the Communist Party Help Strengthen China's Legal Reform?" *China Review* 9:1 (2009), 45–71.

We found a good deal of institutional variation between these two countries. There is greater horizontal and vertical accountability in Vietnamese elite political institutions. We found greater horizontal accountability in the power of Vietnam's CC over its Politburo; in the lower level of party infiltration into the government apparatus, especially with respect to civil service appointments and economic policy; and in a slightly more prominent role for the Vietnamese parliament to query government ministers on television. All the same, Chinese and Vietnamese parliaments do not vary much in their ability to veto government-initiated legislation or ministerial appointments.

We found greater vertical accountability in the selection of Vietnam's top party leadership. New mechanisms for self-nomination and floor nomination, along with straw polls that allow party congress delegates to select the general secretary, extend VCP decision making down to the lowest possible level. Similarly, the popular election of Vietnamese NA delegates, even with vetting, allows for more vertical accountability than China's tiered nomination system appears to do.

The Chinese Communist Party, however, should not be viewed as a passive witness to its own political future. Official accommodation of divergent elite views has emerged rather self-consciously as a device to ensure continued power.[141] Formal representation of divergent views, as Vietnam's political leadership well knows, means a diminishing role for arbitrary decision making and results in more consensus-based policy outcomes.[142] The Vietnamese Communist Party also looks to its northern neighbor with appreciation for its orderly infrastructural transformation and for the strong hand it takes against incompetent officials.

The Vietnamese government, in turn, has accepted new institutional mechanisms to hold government bureaucrats accountable for satisfactorily implementing national development goals, as the Chinese political leadership has done for years through its yardstick of GDP growth indicators. Specifically, the Vietnamese have embraced their Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI), a measure of economic governance across Vietnam's sixty-four provinces.[143]

Such cross-fertilization between China and Vietnam is not surprising, but its origins in homegrown perceptions of institutional weakness deserve more attention, especially from those seeking a broader understanding of regime resilience.

Considering our two cases and others in this volume, it becomes clear that institutions of accountability are often deployed in an attempt to keep a regime

[141] Li Cheng, "China's Team of Rivals," Brookings Institution. Electronic Newsletter, March 2009, http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2009/03_china_li.aspx (accessed September 1, 2009).

[142] Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng, "Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes."

[143] Edmund Malesky, "The Vietnam Provincial Competitiveness Index: Measuring Economic Governance for Private Sector Development, 2008 Final Report," Vietnamese Competitiveness Initiative Policy Paper No. 13, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and United States Agency for International Development's Vietnam Competitiveness Initiative, Hanoi.

alive.[144] Adaptability in response to changing political conditions can be found in all cases. The question is, Why is it that deepening the checks and balances of power at the elite level and extending greater oversight to citizens through voting rights and legislative query sessions have helped keep the regimes in power in China and Vietnam but may have helped bring down seemingly similar regimes in other countries?

At first glance, positive economic performance in Vietnam and China might seem to be the critical variable in favor of regime resilience. It bears remembering, however, that both regimes have maintained their power not only in good times, but also in the face of famine, high inflation, unemployment among youth and former state-subsidized employees, and inner-party tensions. Neither economic growth nor economic decline is enough to explain regime resilience or collapse.

More relevant perhaps is an understanding of why an opposition may coalesce and consolidate its power effectively in some cases, but not in others. Kramer's Chapter 6, for example, shows that a communist party's ability to survive political and economic upheaval rests largely on its willingness to repress potential challengers – violently, if need be. This chapter and others in the volume show that institutional adaptation, too, may be a way to maintain political control. Even so, there are cases in which such adaptation has failed to prevent opposition from emerging.

Here, the cases of Vietnam and China have something to offer. We showed that formal institutions of vertical accountability, such as rules for vetting political candidates, can prevent a true opposition from attaining power. The practice of elections in single-party regimes can easily be a mechanism for maintaining control, weeding out the wavering, and ensuring that only party allies attain office above a certain level.

Add the ongoing efforts in both Vietnam and China to co-opt potential opponents through invitations to communist party membership, the consultative meetings to incorporate new elites and their opinions, and the public recognition of government shortcomings, and the political leaderships of these two countries appear rather more accommodative than their true opponents feel they are.

At present, opponents have little recourse beyond anonymous Internet posts or exodus. Indeed, in the run-up to each country's party congress, there have been renewed cycles of silencing the opposition. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the existing institutional order in Vietnam and China is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that their shared ability to transform accountability into a means of deepening their own control has served them well.

[144] Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Thomas F. Remington, *The Russian Parliament: Institutional Evolution in a Transitional Regime, 1989–1999* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); Philip G. Roeder, *Red Sunset: The Failure of Soviet Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Beyond these Asian single-party regimes, it bears noting that the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union lost control prior to their actual collapse. As Bernstein's Chapter 2 in this volume shows, when the communist party lost political control in the Soviet Union in 1988–1990, it was in no small measure the result of existing institutions of horizontal and vertical accountability, which allowed opposition groups to coalesce both within the party *and outside it*. In this case, institutions of accountability helped bring down the regime rather than keeping it alive. Similar attempts in Vietnam and China were quickly squashed, as the fates of the Bloc 8406 and Charter '08 movements attest.

In sum, various types of adaptation in Vietnam and China exist alongside strong vertically ordered political institutions of command and control. As a result, upward mobility within these political systems requires a demonstrated allegiance to the continuation of communist party power. Creeping pluralism thus exists only by way of rules that insist on consensus building as the means to political development and change, and by which order and stability can be maintained.

10

Vertical Accountability in Communist Regimes

The Role of Citizen Complaints in Bulgaria and China

Martin K. Dimitrov

The chapters in this volume aim to identify the institutional foundations of the resilience of communist regimes. This task is complicated by the fact that some communist regimes collapsed in 1989–1991, whereas others survived this watershed period. The contributors to the volume approach the question of collapse in different ways. Some emphasize differences by presenting theoretical arguments about the presence of certain variables in the countries that collapsed and their absence in countries that survived. For example, Bernstein (Chapter 2) discusses political liberalization in the Soviet Union and its absence in China, whereas Bunce and Wolchik (Chapter 5) and Kramer (Chapter 6) highlight the susceptibility of the Eastern Bloc to contagion and the ability of the East Asian communist regimes to avoid contagion. In a similar vein, Tismaneanu (Chapter 3) discusses ideological erosion in Eastern Europe and the reinvigoration of ideology in China and North Korea. Ideological erosion in Europe also provides the background against which Charles Armstrong (Chapter 4) discusses the essential role of ideology for the maintenance of the North Korean regime. In turn, Gallagher and Hanson (Chapter 7) argue that the absence of both carrots and sticks explains Soviet collapse, whereas the survival of communist regimes after 1989 is based on varying combinations of carrots and sticks. Other chapters take a different approach by focusing only on resilient regimes. Examples are provided by Tsai (Chapter 8), who discusses the contribution of private entrepreneurs to regime resilience in China and Vietnam, and by Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng (Chapter 9), who explore variation in the institutions of vertical and horizontal accountability in China and Vietnam. These two chapters allow us to investigate in depth the causal mechanisms that link a certain variable to the outcome of regime resilience.

This chapter presents a third approach for assessing the impact of individual variables on regime resilience. It tracks how changes in the same variable (erosion in vertical accountability) had the same short-term effect (instability

due to decreasing popular loyalty) in both Bulgaria and in China prior to 1989. Despite this shared instability, one regime collapsed whereas the other survived through the use of force. This chapter therefore allows us to distinguish between regime decay and regime collapse: although both Bulgaria and China experienced decay prior to 1989, only one of the two regimes collapsed. The chapter also investigates China's ongoing efforts to strengthen accountability after 1989, thus highlighting the contribution of institutions of accountability to regime resilience.

The specific focus of this chapter is on citizen complaints. The citizens of communist countries lodge complaints by writing letters or by personally visiting party branches, government offices, and media outlets. Complaining was so widespread that in 1984 one in ten adults in Bulgaria wrote a letter of complaint to the authorities.[1] In China, the number of complaints in the 2000s stood at well above 10 million per year.[2] Citizens complained about a wide range of problems, from housing and land allocation to labor dispute resolution and official corruption; many complaints concerned endemic consumer-goods shortages and the poor quality of services. Strikingly, communist regimes *encouraged* people to complain, because complaints fulfilled the dual purpose of providing information about local-level corruption and, more importantly, of allowing citizens to feel that the government was being responsive to their demands. Therefore, citizen complaints functioned as a fundamental mechanism of vertical accountability in communist regimes. This chapter thus complements the analysis of institutions of accountability in Vietnam and China presented in the chapter by Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng in this volume.

The leaders of communist countries took complaints very seriously and were often personally involved in responding to them.[3] For example, in 1981 the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) discussed shortages of table salt in Soviet stores. In another instance, in 1987 Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang called a special government meeting to address the shortages of fertilizer and diesel oil needed for agricultural production. What these two events have in common is that they were responses to letters of complaint that ordinary people had addressed to the top leadership. The Soviet Central Committee was alarmed by the growing number of signals that stampedes would occur whenever salt appeared in stores and that kindergartners were going from door to door begging for a pinch of salt. In China, Zhao Ziyang had received a desperate plea for help from a peasant living in Henan province. In both countries, the government responded by

[1] Tsentralen durzhaven arkhiv (Central State Archive in Sofia, or TsDA), f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 943, 8.

[2] Author's dataset on complaints in China.

[3] On Mao Zedong, see Xiao Guan, "Mao Zedong tongzhi chuli renmin laixin pianduan" (Episodes from Comrade Mao Zedong's Handling of People's Letters), *Renmin xinfang*, no. 2 (1985), 2–3; on Erich Honecker, see Monika Deutz-Schroeder and Jochen Staadt, eds., *Teurer Genosse! Briefe an Erich Honecker* (Dear Comrade: Letters to Erich Honecker) (Berlin: Transit, 1994).

taking emergency measures to alleviate the shortages.[4] This responsiveness is essential for complaints to serve as a mechanism of accountability under communism.

The Soviet and Chinese leaders focused on the daily concerns of citizens simply because they could not afford to ignore them. In communist societies citizens and government are bound by an implicit social contract.[5] Under the terms of this contract, the government meets specific policy commitments to provide material goods and services, and in exchange citizens respond with loyalty and quiescence. Citizen complaints provided information to the government concerning public perceptions about deficiencies in the fulfillment of the social contract. Citizens registered their discontent and demanded swift government action to address the problems. Failure to act would send signals to the people that the government had broken its commitments under the social contract. In turn, such a crisis of accountability would give citizens license to organize and protest against the government. As long as it could be construed as part of the social contract, no issue was too small for the government to address. Poland provides us with a key example of how riots over meat shortages and meat-price increases could be transformed into system-destabilizing large-scale protests.[6] A stable supply of meat at low prices was part of the Polish social contract, and breach of this contract by the government gave citizens license to engage in antigovernment protests.

Citizen complaints, which involve citizens writing letters or making personal visits to government offices to identify deficiencies in the fulfillment of the social contract, are essential for the operation of the social contract. These complaints provide the regime with indicators of the volume and nature of discontent in the system. They also allow the central government to enforce the social contract by selectively intervening to satisfy citizen demands or to punish unresponsive local officials. Such interventions create a system of *proxy accountability*, in which the central government acts as the proxy of the masses vis-à-vis local officials. This chapter argues that a well-functioning system of proxy accountability can directly contribute to regime stability by allowing the central government to present itself as the guarantor of the social contract. However, when government

[4] For the Soviet case, see Archives of the Communist Party and the Soviet State (TsKhSD), f. 89 per. 46 d. 84. For the Chinese case, see Yvonne Yee Foon Chan, "The Letters and Visits System as a Means of Redress of Grievances in the People's Republic of China," L.L.M. thesis, Harvard Law School, 1989, 26–27.

[5] Linda J. Cook, *The Soviet Social Contract and Why It Failed: Welfare Policy and Workers' Politics from Brezhnev to Yeltsin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[6] See Jerzy Kochanowky, "'... jesteśmy już przywyczajeni': Prolegomena do społeczno-modernizacyinych kulis 'problemu mięsnego' v PRL" ("We've Become Accustomed": Prolegomena to the Socio-modernization Backdrop of the "Meat Problem" in the People's Republic of Poland), *Przegląd historyczny* 96:4 (2005), 587–605; Peter Hübner and Christa Hübner, *Sozialismus als soziale Frage: Sozialpolitik in der DDR und Polen 1968–1976* (Socialism as a Social Question: Social Policy in the GDR and Poland, 1968–1976) (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), esp. 133–141, 321–325, and 441–445.

officials fail to respond to complaints and are thus perceived to be unaccountable and even to be reneging on their commitments under the social contract, the stock of popular loyalty decreases. At that point, regimes that have experienced smaller erosions of loyalty may be able to survive through repression, whereas regimes that have experienced large drops of loyalty will be unable to stifle dissent and thus will be more vulnerable to collapse.

The theoretical argument developed in this chapter is illustrated through one case where the single-party communist system collapsed in 1989 (Bulgaria) and one case where, despite a near-collapse in 1989, the system nevertheless survives to the current day (China). Counterintuitively, there was a *drop* in complaints in both pre-1989 Bulgaria and pre-1989 China, despite a palpable deterioration of economic conditions (economic decline in Bulgaria and high inflation in China). This drop in complaints was accompanied by an increase in mass protests. The leadership interpreted the drop in complaints and the rise in protests as a clear signal that the system for regularized voluntary transmission of information to the regime through bureaucratic channels had broken down. In Bulgaria, where both urban and rural residents were dissatisfied with the regime, the dictator was unable to wield repression and was promptly deposed. In contrast, discontent in China in 1989 was limited to urban residents, who constituted only one-fifth of the population, thus making it possible for the regime to survive through the use of massive repression targeting urbanites.

The 1989 experience raises questions about contemporary China, where since 2004 there has been again a decline in the number of complaints accompanied by a steady increase in the number of mass protests. This would suggest that China is heading for collapse, but at present the regime remains resilient. The key difference is that mass unrest in Eastern Europe and in pre-1989 China was directed against the central government. At that time, the communist regimes in both Eastern Europe and China tried to renege on the socialist social contract, which meant that the central government itself was perceived by citizens as unaccountable and became the target of public discontent. In China today, the overwhelming majority of mass protests are directed against local, subnational governments. In post-1989 China, the central government has been the guarantor of a new market social contract that was gradually unveiled in the 1990s and 2000s. Because local governments often failed to implement the contract to the satisfaction of the citizenry, the number of mass protests grew rapidly. Further declines in citizen complaints coupled with increases in local-level mass protests can threaten regime stability because they may undermine the faith of citizens in the ability of higher levels of government to enforce the market social contract by punishing unresponsive local leaders.

This chapter is based on formerly classified documents gathered at two Bulgarian archives (the State Security Archive in Sofia and the Central State Archive in Sofia, respectively AMVR and TsDA), as well as on previously unavailable or unexplored Chinese archival documents and internal circulation (*neibu*) materials. The corpus of documents reveals some striking similarities in

terms of how these two communist regimes collected and responded to information about citizen preferences as revealed through the system of citizen complaints. The chapter is organized as follows. It begins by presenting an argument about complaints and accountability in communist regimes. It then moves to a discussion of how a decline in citizen complaints signaled a crisis of accountability and thus foreshadowed regime collapse in Bulgaria. The next two sections contrast pre-1989 and post-1989 China, showing how China learned from the near-collapse it experienced in 1989 and gradually introduced a new social contract that has allowed the central government to maintain regime stability so far. The last section presents some conclusions.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS AND PROXY ACCOUNTABILITY IN COMMUNIST REGIMES

The most puzzling aspect of complaints in dictatorships is that they occur at all. In a communist society, citizens have powerful *disincentives* to complain. We can illustrate this by a simple three-actor game. The actors in this game are the citizens, the central government, and the local government.[7] These three actors have divergent preferences with regard to complaints. The central government is interested in a steady flow of complaints because analysis of the complaints allows it to ascertain the preferences of the population. In contrast, the local government is interested in suppressing complaints because they typically contain information about malfeasance or inaction by local government employees when faced with citizen requests for supply of goods, provision of services, or protection of legal rights. Citizens would like to complain, but they are inclined not to do so because of fear of retaliation by the local government. Given these disincentives, it is surprising that citizens of communist societies complain with such great frequency. This raises the question of why citizens find it worthwhile to complain despite the possibility of retaliation.

What makes lodging complaints possible is trust. Because rational citizens do not trust the integrity of the local government, their trust resides with higher levels of government, and ultimately with the central government. Opinion poll data indicate that low trust in the local government and high trust in the central government can be found across dictatorships as diverse as current-day China, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, and Russia under Putin.[8] However, the

[7] In practice there are multiple levels of government. In China, for example, there are five levels: central, provincial, prefectural, county, and township/town. All levels below the central level are designated "local" in this chapter.

[8] On China, see 2002 and 2008 Asian Barometer survey results at http://www.asianbarometer.org/ (accessed September 16, 2012). On the Soviet Union, see VTsIOM, *Obshchestvennoe mnenie v tsifrakh*, no. 8 (15) (April 1990), 15. On Russia, see the results of a Levada Center poll reported in "Russians Trust President and Church Most," March 25, 2004, http://english.pravda.ru/news/russia/25-03-2004/56195-0/ (accessed September 16, 2012).

central government cannot take popular trust for granted. Rather, it has to work actively to build and maintain it. In a communist dictatorship, the central government can build trust through a system of *proxy accountability*. In such a system, the central government acts as the proxy of citizens, holding local officials accountable on their behalf. If local officials fail to respond to citizen complaints, higher levels of government can instruct lower levels of government to resolve the problems referred to in the complaint. In more egregious cases, higher levels of government may also punish unresponsive local officials by unleashing corruption investigations or by deducting points from their annual performance reviews.[9] In the end, local officials are more likely to respond to citizen complaints when higher levels of government are involved. This chapter argues that as long as the public trusts the central government to intervene on its behalf, it will continue to provide information through citizen complaints. Thus, proxy accountability undergirds the effective operation of the citizen complaints system.

But how does proxy accountability differ from a more familiar type of vertical accountability, which involves citizens holding officials accountable through the ballot box? To answer this question, we first need to agree on what we mean by accountability. I argue that accountability rests on two pillars: responsiveness and sanctioning.[10] Responsiveness refers to the requirement that officials provide an explanation or a justification for their behavior, as for example why they have authorized the construction of a heavily polluting chemical plant in dangerous proximity to people's homes. Sanctioning refers to the ability of citizens to punish officials for being unresponsive or corrupt. Typically, responsiveness and sanctioning have been understood to operate in a democratic context, whether in the contemporary United States or in ancient Athens, where citizens rewarded officials with reappointment to office or punished them with removal from office, fine, imprisonment, or even death.[11] This has led to a general assumption that accountability is democratic, direct, and electoral.[12]

But scholars have identified a wide range of institutions of accountability that operate beyond the realm of direct democratic electoral accountability. Some of these are direct and electoral but are not democratic, such as the semicompetitive elections in authoritarian settings as diverse as Russia under Putin, Egypt under

[9] On performance reviews in China, see Susan Whiting, "The Cadre Evaluation System at the Grass Roots: The Paradox of Party Rule," in Barry Naughton and Dali Yang, eds., *Holding China Together: Diversity and National Integration in the Post-Deng Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101–119.

[10] This is a minimal definition that would be acceptable even to critics of the concept of accountability. See Edward Rubin, "The Myth of Accountability," *Michigan Law Review* 103:8 (August 2005), 2073–2136 and Mark Philp, "Delimiting Democratic Accountability," *Political Studies* 57:1 (2009), 28–53.

[11] Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, *Accountability in Athenian Government* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), esp. 14–29.

[12] For a critique of this assumption, see Philp, "Delimiting Democratic Accountability."

Mubarak, and contemporary rural China. Other institutions of accountability may be nondemocratic, indirect, and nonelectoral, such as when unelected politicians hold unelected bureaucrats accountable for their behavior[13] or when dictators are accountable to a selectorate, an ombudsman, an anticorruption agency, or a constitutional court.[14] Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng in this volume analyze the operation of several electoral and nonelectoral institutions of accountability in China and Vietnam. This chapter complements the findings of the previous chapter by incorporating citizen complaints within the range of institutions of accountability in communist regimes.

Proxy accountability is one example of a nondemocratic, indirect, and nonelectoral institution of vertical accountability: it exists in communist autocracies where the involvement of unelected higher-level officials is necessary to incentivize local-level officials to be responsive to citizen demands. Although proxy accountability operates in a nondemocratic context, it shares two important similarities with democratic accountability. The first is that responsiveness and sanctioning exist under both types of accountability. The second is that both types of accountability involve bottom-up (vertical) accountability, where officials are accountable to ordinary citizens.

It would be unreasonable for citizens in an autocracy to expect that the government would be willing to hear all types of complaints. This raises the question of how citizens know the scope of permissible claims. In a communist state, the range of acceptable demands is determined by what scholars have called "the social compact" or "the social contract."[15] Although citizens do not enter into this contract voluntarily, there are nevertheless expectations of how the two parties to the contract should behave: namely, citizens will remain quiescent as long as the regime supplies material benefits and safeguards their legal rights. Existing scholarship has not provided an explanation as to how the social contract is enforced. But this chapter argues that proxy accountability creates an enforcement mechanism; this mechanism existed under the socialist social contract (in Bulgaria and China prior to 1989) as well as under the market social contract in post-1989 China.

Before we proceed with the discussion of Bulgaria and China, we should briefly review the role of citizen complaints in other communist regimes and explain the choice of Bulgaria and China as case studies in this chapter. We

[13] On this process in China, see Pierre F. Landry, *Decentralized Authoritarianism in China: The Communist Party's Control of Local Elites in the Post-Mao Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Of course, indirect accountability also exists in democracies, where elected politicians hold unelected bureaucrats accountable through periodic oversight. See Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," *American Journal of Political Science* 28:1 (1984), 165–179.

[14] Scott Mainwaring and Christopher Welna, eds., *Democratic Accountability in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[15] The social contract in a communist society is not a Rousseauian contract into which citizens enter voluntarily. See Cook, *Soviet Social Contract*.

should start by noting that the constitutions in all communist regimes explicitly protected the right to complain.[16] The question, of course, is whether these constitutional guarantees were meaningfully enforced. As this is fundamentally an empirical puzzle, it cannot be answered in the absence of access to archival materials or to a developed secondary literature on the volume and handling of complaints. Research on complaints has been hampered by archival shortcomings, which in turn have produced a modest secondary literature on complaints in mature communist regimes. Students of citizen complaints in Eastern Europe have focused on one case, namely, the Soviet Union during the Stalinist period; Sheila Fitzpatrick's work on complaints and denunciations has produced especially valuable insights.[17] But limited access to archival materials dealing with the post-Stalinist period has made it difficult for scholars systematically to study leadership response to complaints when the Soviet Union exited Stalinism and became a mature communist system. This is a serious limitation, as the importance of obtaining information about citizen preferences by analyzing complaints becomes apparent only when regimes move past the stage when they rule through the habitual use of terror. In the case of China, scholarly access to central-level archival sources on complaints remains impossible for the entire post-1949 period. In principle, one could carry out research on complaints in China by relying on other types of sources, for instance, internal circulation publications or subnational archival material, but such research must be guided by an explicit theory of citizen complaints that cannot be developed unless one has access to the relevant archival materials from another communist regime, ideally one where the system worked but then malfunctioned. Bulgaria, where complete access to the pre-1989 communist party and state security archives exists, presents just such a case. Furthermore, there is nothing distinctive about Bulgaria: any other East European country where access to archival documents on citizen complaints is feasible could have been used instead. Likewise, any of the other remaining communist regimes where archival access to materials on complaints is possible could have been substituted for China. Therefore, this paired comparison of Bulgaria and China is a first step; future studies can expand it by conducting archival work on additional pairs of countries from Eastern Europe and Asia.

[16] Such provisions existed in the constitutions of the USSR (Article 49 of the 1977 Constitution), Bulgaria (Article 55 of the 1971 Constitution), Czechoslovakia (Article 29), the GDR (Articles 104–105), Hungary (Article 68.2), Poland (Article 73), and Romania (Article 34). See also Article 41 of the 1999 Chinese Constitution, Articles 53 and 74 of the 2001 Vietnamese Constitution, Article 27 of the 1991 Lao People's Democratic Republic Constitution, Article 63 of the 1992 Cuban Constitution, and Article 69 of the 1998 North Korean Constitution (for more details on petitions in North Korea, see Yonhap News Agency [Seoul], *North Korea Handbook* [Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2003], 153).

[17] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). See also Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 378–408.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS IN A MATURE COMMUNIST REGIME: THE CASE OF BULGARIA

This section relies on archival materials from Bulgaria to answer three questions about citizen complaints in a communist state in Eastern Europe.[18] First, what did citizens complain about? Answering this question gives us leverage over the scope of the social contract. Second, was the regime responsive to the demands made in citizen complaints? Third, how did citizens react when they felt that the regime was reneging on its social contract obligations? The latter two questions provide us with insights into the operation of proxy accountability.

The Bulgarian archives lead to a major discovery: in 1970 the regime established a special research institute to monitor citizen complaints. The existing literature has already reported on the existence of youth research institutes, but not on a citizen complaints institute per se.[19] Called the "Information-Sociological Center" and located within the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party,[20] the center had a mandate to track public opinion and produce regular classified reports for the top leadership.[21] These reports, produced weekly, monthly, and yearly, were based on the monitoring of rumors, jokes, and citizen complaints. They were closely read and regularly discussed at Politburo meetings because they provided unusually detailed information on public opinion.

The reports of the Information-Sociological Center demonstrate that complaints in Bulgaria frequently centered on problems with the fulfillment of the socialist social contract, with citizens writing about inadequate housing allocations, undesirable job assignments, the poor quality of public services, and shortages of consumer goods. These types of complaints are consistent with a standard understanding of the socialist social contract, whereby citizens reward the regime with compliance provided that the state can supply employment, generous benefits, and consumer goods at subsidized prices.[22] But the reports of

[18] For a detailed treatment of citizen complaints in Bulgaria, see Martin K. Dimitrov, "Zhalbite na grazhdanite v komunisticheska Bulgariia" (Citizen Complaints in Communist Bulgaria), in Ivailo Znepolski, ed., *Da poznaem komunizma* (Getting to Know Communism) (Sofia: Ciela, 2012), 167–225.

[19] Walter Friedrich, Peter Förster, and Kurt Starke, eds., *Das Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung Leipzig, 1966–1990: Geschichte, Methoden, Erkenntnisse* (Central Institute for Youth Research in Leipzig, 1966–1990: History, Methods, Findings) (Berlin: Edition Ost, 1999).

[20] TsDA f. 1B op. 55, *Istoricheska spravka*.

[21] These reports had a maximal print run of 160 and were distributed to members of the Politburo, cabinet ministers, provincial party secretaries, provincial governors, and the editors in chief of the major periodical publications (see TsDA, f. 1b op. 55 a. e. 945, 4–7). There were also single-copy reports meant for the leader's eyes only.

[22] Alex Pravda, "East-West Interdependence and the Social Compact in Eastern Europe," in Morris Bornstein, Zvi Gitelman, and William Zimmerman, eds., *East-West Relations and the Future of Eastern Europe: Politics and Economics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 162–187.

the Information-Sociological Center reveal that the socialist social contract was more expansive than previously believed, because it also extended to the protection of property rights. Most complaints about property rights dealt with the supplementary plots of land that, beginning in the mid-1960s, were distributed to urban and rural residents for long-term private use. Peasants used these plots for sideline agricultural production, and urbanites relied on them both for the construction of countryside residences and for agricultural production. Dissatisfaction centered around three questions. One concerned the system for distributing the plots. Another was the granting of construction permits for urbanites to build countryside residences. Finally, rural residents faced difficulties selling the produce from these plots on the free market.[23] Thus complaints under the socialist social contract centered not only on entitlements but also on the protection of certain rudimentary property rights.

Complaints also frequently targeted corruption, providing information about illegal behavior of officials who handled citizen requests for the provision of social benefits or for the distribution of supplementary plots of land. A specific breakdown of complaints in Bulgaria in 1984 is provided in Table 10.1. Most complaints fell under the category of "others," which included items like health care, maternal and child subsidies, and access to educational facilities, all of which were part of the social contract. In addition, the category of "others" included "inner-party questions," a code word for corruption among party members. These concerns remained relatively constant during the entire period for which the archives contain disaggregated statistics on the content of complaints (1975–1988).

A key issue is how to assess the extent to which citizen complaints served to institute a system of proxy accountability in Bulgaria. The archives are helpful for generating hypotheses, since they reveal two important related pieces of information. The first is that complaints would generally follow the denial of an initial request for the provision of some benefit. The second is that citizens would virtually never approach the level of government that initially denied their request but rather would send their complaint one or two levels above in the power hierarchy, expecting to receive the assistance of a higher level of government in their dealings with the local government. We can therefore reasonably assume that any case in which citizen complaints were positively resolved involved a higher level of government applying pressure on a lower level of government. Similarly, cases where citizen complaints resulted in the punishment of lower-level bureaucrats by higher levels of government also provide evidence of proxy accountability. Logically, a higher level of positive resolution of complaints and a higher level of punishment of corrupt officials indicate stronger proxy accountability.

The regime in Bulgaria took several steps to increase the rate of favorable resolution of complaints and the prosecution of corrupt officials. In 1977 the

[23] TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 517, *Zlobodnevni problemi* (Problems of the Day), no. 2 (1983).

TABLE 10.1. *Issues Raised in Citizen Complaints in Bulgaria in 1984*

Issue	Percentage of Complaints
Negative interactions with the authorities (including corruption)	13.9
Housing	13.8
Land and construction disputes	12.9
Social insurance (pensions)	6.6
Labor disputes	6.2
Retail trade and services	4.7
Agriculture	3.5
Judicial appeals	3.2
Transportation and communication	3.1
Tax and finance	3.0
Others (including official corruption)	29.0

Source: TsDA, f. 1b op. 55 a. e. 943, at 16.

Politburo issued a decision, distributed to all party and government offices, on improving the handling of citizen complaints, and in 1980 the special Law on Suggestions, Signals, Complaints, and Requests was promulgated.[24] The reports of the Information-Sociological Center indicate that these initiatives were successful in increasing the proportion of favorably resolved cases from 20–30 percent in the mid-1970s to as high as 45 percent in the early 1980s.[25] In terms of punishing corrupt officials, by the early 1980s as many as one in two corruption complaints resulted in the punishment of officials by the Central Control and Audit Commission, the anticorruption branch of the communist party.[26] There is no baseline to determine whether these rates were high or low. But internal government reports reveal that the government regarded the continuous increases in the volume of citizen complaints as an indicator that the rate of responsiveness was sufficiently high to provide incentives for participation in the system of citizen complaints.[27] The same logic explains why the regime reacted with alarm when two trends became apparent in the mid-1980s: first, a decline in the level of positive resolution of complaints and in the prosecution of corrupt officials and, second, a decline in the volume of complaints. By 1988 as few as 14.5 percent of all complaints received a favorable resolution, a

[24] See TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 933 and *State Gazette*, no. 52 (July 4, 1980). Prior to the promulgation of the 1980 law, the handling of complaints was based on the Decree on Complaints, Signals, and Suggestions.

[25] See TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 934 and TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 937, at 19.

[26] Calculated from TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 942 and TsDA f. 224 op. 2 a. e. 686, at 78.

[27] TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 937.

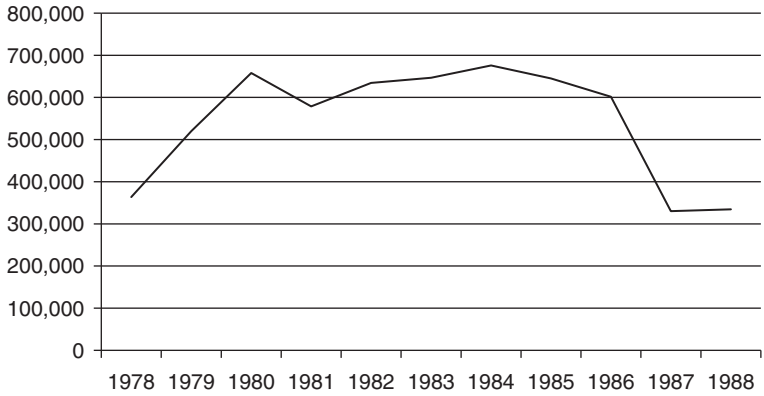

FIGURE 10.1. Volume of Citizen Complaints in Bulgaria, 1978–1988.
Sources: 1978: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 935, 6; 1979: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 936, 5; 1980: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 937, 6; 1981: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 938, 5; 1982: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 940, 5; 1983: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 942, 26; 1984: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 943, 8; 1985: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 944, 31; 1986: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 949, 30; 1987: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 951, 21; 1988: TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 953, 3.

threefold decline from the early 1980s.[28] A similar reduction occurred in the number of individuals punished for corruption.[29] The effect of this erosion of the system of proxy accountability is not surprising: the volume of citizen complaints declined by 50 percent between 1984 and 1988 (see Figure 10.1).[30] This was a dramatic change.

The implications of this trend were clear for the leadership. An anecdote that the Bulgarian communist leader Todor Zhivkov shared with his chief of staff in 1989 encapsulates how he understood the decline in complaints:

> I was told a story about a provincial leader. During his day for receiving the public, not a single person came to complain. He wondered what could explain this, and then he said to an aide: "We have either solved all problems that people have, *or else they no longer believe in us*, and so they do not come to us to complain and to look for help."[31]

Zhivkov was a shrewd politician who grasped better than anyone the importance of complaining: as long as people complain through officially approved channels, they are showing their willingness to participate in the system.[32] Two

[28] Calculated from TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 953, at 19–20.
[29] TsDA f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 196.
[30] The last complete year for which we have information on the number of complaints is 1988. Data for January–October 1989 indicate that the decline continued in 1989 (see TsDA f. 1B op. 11, vr. a. e. 10).
[31] As reported in Georgi Chukrin, *Zapiski ot totalitarnoto vreme: Kraiat* (Notes from the Totalitarian Period: The End) (Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2007), 85. Emphasis added.
[32] TsDA, f. 1b op. 83 a. e. 38, 20.

additional pieces of information that reached the top leadership underscored the depth of the crisis of confidence in the regime that was unfolding in the second half of the 1980s. First, opinion polls documented a precipitous decline in the citizens' positive assessments of their personal well-being in 1985–1988, which is hardly surprising given the severe shortages of consumer goods and the imposition of regular electricity blackouts.[33] Second, the Information-Sociological Center reported that a growing proportion of citizens were expressing discontent about the prevalence of corruption among party cadres, who seemed to enjoy effective immunity from prosecution.[34] These two pieces of information meant that from the public's perspective, the regime was failing to deliver on its social contract commitments. By withdrawing from the system, citizens signaled their perception that the regime had reneged on the contract.

Faced with its inability to deliver on the existing socialist social contract, the regime unfolded a new social contract in 1987–1988. This new social contract featured massive economic and political liberalization, similar to perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union (see Chapter 2 in this volume for more details). Economically, the role of planning in industry and in agriculture was drastically reduced, special economic zones were established, the monobank was replaced with a system of seven commercial banks, and private firms were legalized.[35] Although there was no wholesale privatization or price liberalization, these changes nevertheless explicitly laid the groundwork for a gradual shift from the plan to a market economy. The political changes were no less sweeping. The regime allowed for the establishment of nongovernmental organizations, eliminated compulsory mass rallies and demonstrations, introduced semicompetitive local elections, ended the jamming of foreign radio broadcasts, liberalized the domestic media, and allowed freedom of travel outside Bulgaria.[36]

But these reforms did not have the intended effect. The economic changes created uncertainty: citizens neither understood nor believed in the reforms aimed at establishing private economic activity.[37] Furthermore, as the reform initiatives did not specify how the losers from the reforms would be protected, both rural and urban residents suffered grave anxiety about the potential for unemployment once the market was introduced.[38] Instead of increasing support

[33] TsDA f. 1b op. 55 a. e. 722, 8.

[34] TsDA, f. 1b op. 55 a. e. 651 and f. 1B op. 55 a. e. 623.

[35] Gospodinka Nikova, "Zhivkovata ikonomicheska reforma, perestroikata i startut na skritata privatizatsiia v Bulgariia" (Zhivkov's Economic Reforms, Perestroika, and the Beginning of Hidden Privatization in Bulgaria), *Istoricheski Pregled*, no. 5–6 (2003), 92–125.

[36] Iskra Baeva, *Iztochna Evropa prez XX vek: Idei, konflikti, mitove* (Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century: Ideas, Conflicts, Myths) (Sofia: Paradigma, 2010), 462–493.

[37] Martin Ivanov, *Reformatorstvo bez reformi* (Reform-Mindedness without Reforms) (Sofia: Ciela, 2008).

[38] F. 1b op. 55 a. e. 853, "Obshtestvenoto mnenie po niakoi osnovni problemi na preustroistvoto v nashata strana" (Public Opinion on Some Basic Questions of Perestroika in Our Country), December 1988, 24.

for the regime, the political changes betrayed its weakness, since citizens believed that a strong regime would not make such major concessions. With the emergence of various NGOs in 1987–1988, such as Ecoglasnost, the perestroika support club, and about a dozen human rights organizations,[39] anti-regime protests, a rare event in the past, began to occur with increasing regularity. This showed that, having witnessed the failure of the regime to deliver on the socialist social contract and being unwilling to accept the new social contract that was unrolled to supplant it, previously loyal citizens simply exited the system of citizen complaints and instead became opponents of the regime. Because the leadership was reading the secret reports of the Information-Sociological Center, it had full knowledge of these changes in popular sentiment.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a theory of the process of regime collapse. Convincing arguments have been made that regime collapse is fundamentally a stochastic process.[40] Nevertheless, scholars have produced abundant research on the proximate causes of regime collapse in the Eastern Bloc. The emphasis has been on identifying the causal mechanisms through which external factors such as contagion and Soviet unwillingness to use force created conditions whereby the opposition and the incumbents took decisions that allowed this stochastic process to unfold.[41] Taking its inspiration from studies that differentiate between regime decay and regime breakdown,[42] this chapter presents a theory of how the malfunctioning of the system of proxy accountability in communist Bulgaria made regime collapse more likely. By focusing on the long-term factors that impact the ability of communist regimes to survive, the chapter offers a theory of resilience rather than a theory of collapse. This theory is probabilistic, since the collapse of communism in Europe was not inevitable. There is no better illustration of this point than the case of China, where the same long-term factors led to a near-collapse in 1989, but the regime nevertheless survived, in no small measure because it maintained control over the use of force.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS IN PRE-1989 CHINA

This section on pre-1989 China focuses on the same three questions discussed in the previous section on Bulgaria: What did people complain about? How

[39] Dimitur Ivanov, *Politicheskoto protivopostaviane v Bulgariia 1956–1989* (Political Opposition in Bulgaria, 1956–1989) (Sofia: Ares Press, 1994).

[40] Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44:1 (1991), 7–48; Susanne Lohmann, "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–91," *World Politics* 47:1 (1994), 42–101.

[41] Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5:4 (2003), 178–256; 6:4 (2004), 3–64; and 7:1 (2005), 3–96. Also, see chapters by Bernstein, Kramer, and Bunce and Wolchik in this volume.

[42] Stathis Kalyvas, "The Decay and Breakdown of Communist One-Party Systems," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2:1 (1999), 323–343.

responsive was the regime to citizen complaints? And how did citizens react when they felt that the regime had reneged on its commitments under the socialist social contract? The literature on pre-1989 China has noted the importance of complaints as a means of political participation,[43] but it has not addressed the questions raised in this chapter. The answers to these questions allow us to establish that communist Bulgaria and pre-1989 China experienced similar problems with the fulfillment of the socialist social contract, resulting in similar types of crisis in the system of proxy accountability.

One obstacle in analyzing citizen complaints in China is the limited scope of accessible Chinese archival documents. In contrast to Bulgaria, the central communist party and state security archives in China remain closed to researchers. Nevertheless, other sources have become available. In particular, provincial archives have declassified party and government files up to the early 1980s. This section draws on materials on citizen complaints gathered at the Shanghai Municipal Archive (SMA). In addition, classified internal circulation (*neibu*) materials and non-*neibu* publications such as provincial yearbooks, scholarly works, and media reports containing information on citizen complaints have been used.

The available materials reveal that over time, changes in the content of complaints reflected the turbulent events in China's post-1949 political development. Political denunciations were frequent throughout the 1950s and during the radical phase of the Cultural Revolution, presenting a parallel to the Soviet Union under Stalin.[44] Throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, tens of millions of complaints were received about rectifying the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.[45] However, throughout the entire 1949–1989 period complaints also focused on problems with the fulfillment of the socialist social contract: job assignment difficulties, the provision of housing, poor living conditions, and the system for the rationing of staples.[46] In Shanghai, complaints about the social contract constituted almost half of the letters and visits handled by the district-level offices of the municipal government from 1973 to 1976.[47] Nationally, complaints about the socialist social contract began to dominate after 1982, when rectification of the errors of the Cultural Revolution was officially declared to be complete.[48]

[43] James R. Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 177–179; Tianjian Shi, *Political Participation in Beijing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), esp. 60–66.

[44] On the Soviet case, see Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*

[45] For a sample of such complaints, see *Chunfeng huayu ji* (Annals of Spring Breezes and Rain) (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1981).

[46] Diao Jiecheng, *Renmin xinfang shilüe, 1949–1995* (History of People's Letters and Visits, 1949–1995) (Beijing: Beijing jingji xueyuan chubanshe, 1996).

[47] Shanghai Municipal Archive (SMA) B61–2–108.

[48] The share of rectification complaints dropped from 80 percent to 30 percent of all complaints between 1982 and 1986. See Isabelle Thireau and Hua Linshan, *Les Ruses de la démocratie:*

The available data make it very difficult to assess responsiveness to citizen complaints in China prior to 1989. Citizen complaints were handled primarily by the Letters and Visits Offices (*xinfang ban*), which were established at the national and subnational levels within the party, within various government agencies, and within enterprises. No source contains provincial- or national-level data on the proportion of citizen complaints that received positive resolution either in a single year or over time. However, the case of Bulgaria suggests how trends in citizen complaints can reveal changes in responsiveness: namely, a drop in the number of complaints indicates a declining rate of positive resolution. The data that I have compiled from *Renmin xinfang*, an internal-reference journal that began publication for letters-and-visits personnel in 1985, demonstrate that a sizable drop in the number of complaints occurred between 1984 and 1989 (see Figure 10.2). This drop is surprising, when we consider the rapid advances in standards of living that were taking place in the Chinese countryside during this period. But in sharp contrast to Bulgaria, prior to 1989 letters and visits in China were overwhelmingly an urban phenomenon,[49] because the socialist social contract did not extend to rural residents.[50] There was widespread discontent among China's urban residents in the second half of the 1980s. On the one hand, they were distressed by newly announced policies that meant that they would no longer be entitled to lifetime employment and generous benefits, known as the "iron rice bowl" (*tie fan wan*).[51] In addition, urban workers were concerned about the rising double-digit inflation. As in Bulgaria, the regime had reneged on the socialist social contract, and urbanites signaled their discontent by complaining less often.

The Chinese regime reacted with alarm to the drop in the number of complaints. Numerous articles in *Renmin xinfang* stressed that government responsiveness to complaints is important for maintaining communist rule because complaints provide a channel for maintaining a dialogue with the masses and for retaining citizen loyalty.[52] These exhortations did not buck the trend: complaints continued to decline and citizens began to engage in practices such as repeat complaining and collective petitioning, both of which signaled their

Protester en Chine (The Tricks of Democracy: Protesting in China) (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2010), 192.

[49] Bivariate OLS regressions based on 1986 data on provincial-level complaints gathered by the author indicate that the strongest predictor of the volume of complaints across Chinese provinces is population density ($t = 4.59$, r-squared = 0.44 in a bivariate regression model), which is a proxy for the level of urbanization.

[50] Andrew G. Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[51] See the 1986 Law on Enterprise Bankruptcy. Also see the 1988 Law on Industrial Enterprises Owned by the Whole People (adopted April 13, 1988 and effective August 1, 1988), which stipulated that state-owned enterprises could be abolished through dissolution or bankruptcy (Article 19).

[52] *Renmin xinfang*, no. 22 (1985), 2–3; no. 7 (1986), 2–8, 19; and no. 4 (1987), 3–4.

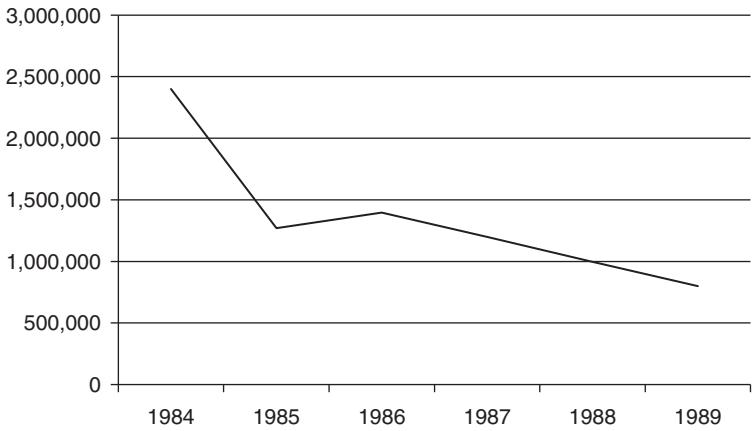

FIGURE 10.2. Complaints in China, 1984–1989.
Source: *Renmin xinfang*, various years.

frustration with the system.[53] Urban discontent erupted in spring 1989, when workers joined students in anti-regime protests. The workers were protesting massive government corruption, inflation, and the prospect of rising unemployment after the restructuring of urban work units (*danwei*).[54] Because the central government was responsible for these problems, discontent was directed not at the local government, but at the central government itself.

We should note here that the reasons for the outbreak of the Tiananmen protests were complex, and this chapter in no way argues that reneging on the social contract was the main reason for popular mobilization. Student protesters were the leaders of the movement. They raised demands about improved transparency and accountability of the communist party, which were different from the demands of workers who protested the dismantling of the social contract. However, urban workers were an important part of the movement, and they were motivated to flood into the streets by their growing job insecurity and the increased cost of living.

Therefore, reneging on the social contract contributed to the instability that nearly toppled the Chinese communist regime in 1989. Many factors explain the Chinese success in using repression to avoid collapse, but a key difference from Eastern Europe is that proponents of political reform were a minority within the Chinese leadership and they had not managed to co-opt the armed forces to their side.[55] This meant that the army would abide by the orders of the leadership to disperse the protesters through the use of force. Although repression helped

[53] *Renmin xinfang*, no. 1 (1988), 15–17 and no. 2 (1989), 38–40.
[54] Andrew G. Walder, "Workers, Managers, and the State: The Reform Era and the Political Crisis of 1989," *The China Quarterly*, no. 127 (1991), 467–492.
[55] See Zhao Liang, comp., *The Tiananmen Papers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).

stave off collapse, the regime still had to implement thoroughgoing reforms in order to ensure its long-term survival. One of the most urgent tasks in the immediate aftermath of the suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests was to regain the trust of the masses. Because the leadership saw citizen complaints as the ultimate marker of this trust,[56] it took steps to improve the way in which these complaints were handled.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS IN CHINA AFTER TIANANMEN

Between June and September 1989, Shanghai Mayor Zhu Rongji, General Secretary Jiang Zemin, Politburo Standing Committee member Qiao Shi, and Premier Li Peng each made a separate statement about the importance of providing prompt and detailed responses to citizen complaints.[57] In August 1989 the top leadership convened a meeting in Beijing of ten directors of provincial-level letters-and-visits bureaus,[58] and in September 1989 the Central Bureau of Letters and Visits sent out a notice to all provincial-level party and government offices regarding strengthening letters-and-visits work.[59] The system of citizen complaints had never before received as much sustained attention from the top leadership as it did in the summer of 1989. This attention is not surprising, considering that the leadership wanted to regain the trust of the masses through increased responsiveness to complaints. The leadership also thought that greater responsiveness would maintain stability by preventing the escalation of individual complaints into group complaints or into visits to Beijing.

The importance of complaints only increased when Deng Xiaoping's 1992 Southern Tour signaled the leadership's commitment to deepen the market reforms that had been stalled by the Tiananmen unrest. The transition from plan to market could not be accomplished without economic decentralization. However, because decentralization forced the center gradually to relinquish control over the economy, the center was increasingly less able to monitor grassroots governance. The danger was that faced with low responsiveness, citizens would begin to doubt the effectiveness of proxy accountability and might eventually completely exit the system of citizen complaints. Therefore, at its most extreme, decentralization could lead to a perception of reneging on the social contract. This explains why since 1989 the center has directed considerable attention to increasing local-level responsiveness to complaints, thereby improving its access to information and maintaining stability.

[56] See Li Peng's letter to the Central Letters and Visits Bureau, September 10, 1989, *Renmin xinfang*, no. 11 (1989), 2.

[57] *Renmin xinfang*, no. 10 (1989), 2; *Renmin xinfang*, no. 11 (1989), 2–4.

[58] *Renmin xinfang*, no. 10 (1989), 3–8.

[59] *Renmin xinfang*, no. 2 (1990), 2–3.

Focusing on complaints allows us to approach the question of institutional continuity between pre-Tiananmen and post-Tiananmen China. Some institutions deemed essential for communist governance gradually became extinct after 1989. Examples include the planned economy and the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Yet other institutions survived the watershed of 1989. One example of such an institution is the system of citizen complaints. Despite calls from prominent academics to abolish the system of citizen complaints (because of the nonfinality of judgments, in contrast to those by courts),[60] the leadership has staunchly preserved this Maoist institution, reflecting its centrality to communist rule. Although it now operates in a market economy, the system displays remarkable continuity. The most important aspect of this continuity concerns the mechanism for the enforcement of the social contract. Both the socialist and market social contracts are enforced through an identical mechanism of proxy accountability. As during the Mao period, complaints in China today are directed against local governments, with the higher levels of government acting as allies of complainants by raising the likelihood of positive resolution of their demands or by punishing unresponsive officials.

Despite these continuities in the mechanism for enforcing the social contract, the transition from plan to market brought about important changes in the types of complaints citizens make and in the responsiveness of local governments. In attempting to adapt the system of citizen complaints to the change from plan to market, a key concern of the center has been to maintain responsiveness in order to preclude perceptions of reneging on the social contract. The remainder of this section analyzes the three stages during which the postsocialist social contract was unrolled: 1989–1997, 1998–2004, and 2005 to the present. The discussion is based on *neibu* material, as well as on a unique provincial-level dataset of citizen complaints.[61] My argument supplements the existing literature, which has focused on the rapid increase in protests after 1989 rather than on complaints.[62] To the extent that complaints are treated in the literature, the

[60] See Yu Jianrong's views as reflected in Raymond Zhou, "Ear to the Ground," *China Daily USA*, July 15, 2011, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2011-07/15/content_12908218.htm (accessed September 16, 2012).

[61] I compiled this dataset by extracting data on complaints in each Chinese province for the entire period for which a provincial yearbook was published. Generally, most provinces began to publish such yearbooks in the 1980s. The data include complaints handled at the county, prefectural, and provincial levels within each province.

[62] Key works include Elizabeth J. Perry, *Challenging the Mandate of Heaven: Social Protest and State Power in China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001); Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Peter Lombard Lorentzen, "Regularized Rioting," in "Essays on Institutions and Development," Ph.D. diss., Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, 2007; Yongshun Cai, *Collective Resistance in China: Why Popular Protests Succeed or Fail* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); and Xi Chen, *Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

assumption is that they are subject to the same dynamics as protests.[63] This chapter argues that the regime's reaction to protests is different from its reaction to complaints: although the regime welcomes a decline in the number of protests, a decline in the number of complaints is interpreted as a worrisome signal of citizen unwillingness to participate in the letters-and-visits system.

To ensure continuity with the pre-1989 period, the social contract during the first post-Tiananmen decade provided urban workers with protection from market forces. Instead of restructuring inefficient state-owned enterprises, the center supplied them with sufficient funds to maintain and even to expand their pre-1989 workforce; the number of individuals employed in state-owned units (*guoyou danwei*) increased from 103 million in 1989 to 112 million in 1994.[64] This meant that urban workers were able to keep their "iron rice bowl" until 1998, when urban industrial restructuring began under the policy of "grasping the large and letting go of the small" (*zhuada fangxiao*). By delaying urban industrial reform, the center was able to prevent another Tiananmen-like eruption of worker discontent. This allowed the center to turn its attention to the countryside, where decentralization had existed since the early 1980s and had accelerated after 1989. In an attempt to improve the monitoring of local cadres, in the early 1990s the center undertook a vertical expansion of the complaints network to the township level and eventually to the villages.[65] These policies led to an increase in the number of complaints, which meant that citizens were becoming reintegrated into the system (see Figure 10.3). My provincial-level complaints dataset indicates that in marked contrast to the pre-Tiananmen period when urban complaints dominated, complaints after 1989 were primarily from rural residents, who expressed dissatisfaction with excessive taxation, high compulsory procurement quotas, cadre malfeasance, and corrupt implementation of village elections. However, in addition to this increase in the number of complaints, the regime saw an increase in the number of individuals who escalated their complaining by visiting Beijing to petition in person and by organizing mass protests.[66] This indicated to the center that the simple presence of complaints offices in the countryside did not produce a marked improvement in local-level responsiveness to complaints. A new approach was necessary. In the mid-1990s the center began to use the annual performance evaluations as an opportunity to punish officials who failed to resolve grievances locally and who allowed complaining to escalate to higher levels.[67] These performance contracts remain a feature of Chinese political life to the current day.

[63] For an exception, see Lianjiang Li, Mingxing Liu, and Kevin O'Brien, "Petitioning Beijing: The High Tide of 2003–2006," *China Quarterly*, no. 210 (June 2012), 313–334.

[64] See *Zhongguo tongji nianjian 2010* (China Statistical Yearbook 2010) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 2010), 118.

[65] On this process in Zouping county (Shandong province), see *Zouping nianjian 1986–1995* (Zouping Yearbook 1986–1995) (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1997), 83–84.

[66] *Renmin xinfang*, no. 12 (1998), 11–13.

[67] *Zouping nianjian 1986–1995*, 83–84.

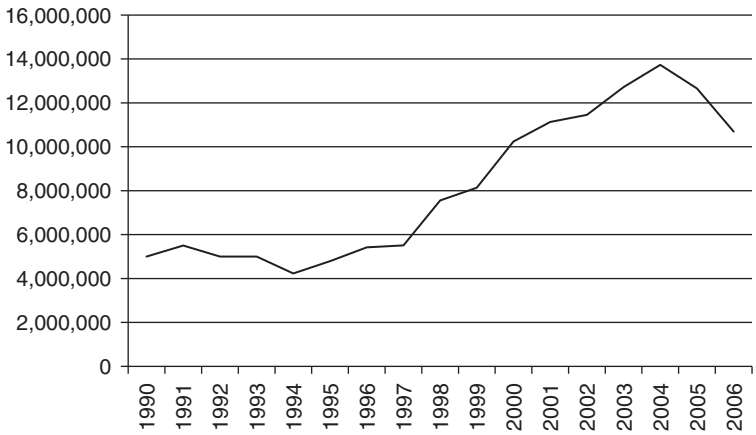

FIGURE 10.3. Citizen Complaints in China, 1990–2006.
Sources: *Renmin xinfang* (1990–2002 data); *21 Shiji* (2003–2004 data); *Zhongyang guojia bumen niandu gongzuo baogao* (Annual Work Reports of Central Government Departments) (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang guojia jiguan gongzuo weiyuanhui yanjiushi, 2006–2007) (2005–2006 data). *Note*: The 1984–1989 data series (Figure 10.2) includes only provincial-level data. The 1990–2006 data series (Figure 10.3) includes county-, prefectural-, and provincial-level data. Therefore, the two data series are presented in separate figures.

The second stage in the implementation of the market social contract featured massive layoffs of urban workers and a transition from a cellular enterprise-centered model of social insurance toward a universalistic risk-sharing model, at least as far as the nonagricultural population was concerned.[68] To mitigate the negative impact of market reforms, the center allowed workers to purchase at submarket rates the housing they had been assigned by their work units. However, local variation in the implementation of centrally mandated laws and regulations on unemployment and reemployment led to significant worker discontent.[69] In rural areas, excessive taxation continued to be a problem in the late 1990s and early 2000s.[70] Unsurprisingly, my dataset on complaints in each of China's thirty-one provinces reveals that although rural problems continued during this period, most complaints were from unemployed urban workers, who

[68] Elisabeth J. Croll, "Social Welfare Reform: Trends and Tensions," *China Quarterly*, no. 159 (1999), 684–699; Jane Duckett, "State, Collectivism, and Worker Privilege: A Study of Urban Health Insurance Reform," *China Quarterly*, no. 177 (2004), 155–173.

[69] Ching Kwan Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); William Hurst, *The Chinese Worker after Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[70] Thomas P. Bernstein and Xiaobo Lü, *Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

were expressing their dissatisfaction with enterprise restructuring and were demanding social welfare payments and poverty relief. The volume of complaints increased very rapidly, and by 2004, their number stood at 13.7 million, more than double the 5.5 million complaints received in 1997 (see Figure 10.3). But it was the increasing number of mass incidents that the regime found most worrisome: between 1997 and 2004, their number quintupled from fifteen thousand to seventy-four thousand.[71] Maintaining social stability, a concern since Tiananmen, had suddenly acquired a new urgency by 2004, as the completion of urban industrial restructuring and the promulgation of regulations on the abolition of the agricultural tax marked the end of the second stage of implementing the market social contract.[72]

The period since 2005 has presented the leadership with multiple challenges. Policies aimed at reducing and eliminating illegal rural taxation led to a decline in complaints about taxation.[73] However, local governments counteracted these policies by engaging in illegal land grabs. Thus, rural complaints during this stage have primarily focused on land grabs, poverty relief, and cadre corruption.[74] In urban areas, complaints have mostly resulted from poor labor conditions and the displacement of homeowners to make room for expensive commercial real estate projects. A multivariate OLS regression model using the 2005 data from my provincial-level complaints dataset indicates that a strong predictor of complaints across Chinese provinces is the level of unemployment (t-value of 2.17). However, the strongest predictor is gross provincial product per capita (t-value of 8.4); this suggests that in richer provinces the greater scarcity and higher value of both rural and urban land contribute to a higher volume of complaints (see Table 10.2).

The major challenge for the center during this period has been the low responsiveness of local governments to complaints. There are two indicators of low responsiveness in post-1989 China. One is the low rate of positive resolution of complaints.[75] Another is the constantly increasing volume of mass incidents.

[71] Andrew Wedeman, "Enemies of the State: Mass Incidents and Subversion in China," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, September 2009.

[72] Urban employment by state-owned enterprises has remained constant since 2005. See *Zhongguo tongji nianjian 2010*, 118–119.

[73] Hiroki Takeuchi, "The Institutional Origins of Tax Reform in Rural China," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, March 2009.

[74] See the results of two surveys conducted in 2007 in Lintong (a rural district of Xi'an) as reported in Zhang Yonghe and Zhang Wei, *Lintong xinfang: Zhongguo jiceng xinfang wenti yanjiu baogao* (Letters and Visits in Lintong: Research Report on Grassroots Letters and Visits in China) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2009).

[75] There is some ambiguity as to exactly how low the rate of positive resolution of citizen complaints is. The Chinese sociologist Yu Jianrong suggests in a newspaper interview that as few as 0.2 percent of complaints are resolved in favor of the complainant (see Zhao Ling, "Xinfang gaige yinfa zhengyi" [Reform of Letters and Visits System Gives Rise to Controversy], *Nanfang zhoumo*, November 18, 2004). My provincial-level dataset indicates that as many as 25 percent

TABLE 10.2. *OLS Regression Model of Citizen Complaints in China (dependent variable = number of letters and visits per million people in 2005; n = 31)*

Independent Variables	Coefficient
2005 gross regional product per capita	.796***
	(.0947875)
2004 total court cases	–.024***
	(.0088589)
2005 percentage illiterate population	–188.3*
	(128.3004)
2005 percentage urban population unemployed	3203.2**
	(1474.489)
Constant	–09398.02*
	(7170.699)

Notes: R-squared= 0.78.
Standard errors listed in parentheses. Significance levels: * = 0.1; ** = 0.05; *** = 0.01.
Source: Author's dataset on citizen complaints.

Scholars estimate that 60 percent of the mass incidents stem from unsatisfactory resolution of citizen complaints.[76] The center has tried to increase the responsiveness of local governments through the familiar tool of performance contracts, which punish local leaders who allow complaints to escalate to higher levels in the political system.[77] But instead of improving responsiveness, these policies, which did not have a counterpart in communist Bulgaria, raised the stakes for local-level government officials, who began to send retrievers (*jiefang*) to Beijing to intercept any petitioners from their localities trying to lodge a complaint. Intercepted petitioners were then held at illegal detention centers ("black jails") prior to being forcibly returned to their hometowns.[78] By helping

of the complaints received in Jilin province in 2007 were satisfactorily resolved (calculated from information in *2008 Jilin nianjian* [2008 Jilin Yearbook] [Changchun: Jilin nianjian bianji bu, 2008], 46). However, even this high estimate is lower than the rate of positive resolution in Bulgaria in the 1970s and the early 1980s (the system for handling citizen complaints subsequently experienced a crisis in the second half of the 1980s and the rate of positive resolution began to decline).

[76] Lin Weiye and Liu Hanmin, *Gong'an jiguan yingdui quntixing shijian shiwu yu celüe* (Practical Affairs and Strategy of the Response of the Public Security Organs to Mass Incidents) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin gong'an daxue chubanshe, 2008), 3.

[77] See "2007 nian xianzhi jiguan fanfu changlian jianshe he qinzheng xiaoneng jianshe zonghe kaohe xize" (2007 Detailed Rules on the Comprehensive Evaluation of Organs Directly under the County Government in the Areas of Building Up Anticorruption and Advocacy of Honesty as well as Building Up Diligent Government Capacity), Zouping county government document on file with the author.

[78] *China Human Rights Yearbook 2007–2008* ([N.P.]: Chinese Human Rights Defenders, 2008), 4–10, 40–77.

local governments avoid a negative performance review, this practice undermines the very foundations of proxy accountability, as it presents obstacles to citizens who want to appeal to higher levels of government for investigation and resolution of their complaints. This explains why in 2010 the center began closing down the more than five thousand liaison offices of the various subnational governments in Beijing that formerly had been used as "black jails" and why in early 2013 ten interceptors from Henan province were sentenced by a Beijing court.[79] These policies represent a new attempt on the part of the central government to increase local-level responsiveness to complaints and to restore the faith of citizens in the complaints system.

What is the future of the complaints system in China? The general trend since 2005 has been a decline in citizen complaints and an increase in mass incidents (some of these incidents, such as the one in the Guangdong village of Wukan in December 2011, when protesters deposed a corrupt party secretary and installed their own representative, can lead to spectacular crises of local governance).[80] Both the decline in complaints and the rise in mass incidents are indicators of serious deficiencies in the system of proxy accountability. In communist Bulgaria and in pre-1989 China it was precisely such a combination that signaled the erosion of trust in the regime. But the dynamics in post-Tiananmen China are different. Thus far, Beijing has managed to ensure that the anger of the participants in mass incidents is aimed at the local governments rather than at the center and that mass incidents do not cross county or provincial lines; the center attempts to appear as an ally of the protesters, creating institutions to help the unenfranchised through redistributive spending (see Gallagher and Hanson's chapter) and interceding on their behalf to discipline local officials. As a result, protests, even when they do turn violent, thus far have not endangered regime stability.[81] In fact, when favorably resolved, these protests serve to bolster proxy accountability. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that the center will be able to continue to manage protests effectively in the future. A crisis of accountability could easily occur, especially if the center is unable to intervene sufficiently often on behalf of complainants in order to guarantee proxy accountability. However, we should not forget that China has a resource that was not available to the East European regimes in the 1980s: it can use some of the funds generated by economic growth to engage in a rational strategy of fiscal appeasement of petitioners.

[79] Wang Jingqiong, "Beijing to Close Down Thousands of Liaison Offices," *China Daily*, January 25, 2010; "Shi ming feifa jujin laijing shangfang renyuanzhe bei panxing" (Ten Personnel Who Illegally Detained Petitioners Who Came to Beijing Have Been Sentenced), February 5, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2013-02/05/c_114619493.htm (accessed February 15, 2013).

[80] On the Wukan case, see Willy Lam, "The Grim Future of the Wukan Model for Managing Dissent," *China Brief* 12:1 (January 6, 2012), 3–5.

[81] For more on this point, see O'Brien and Li, *Rightful Resistance*.

CONCLUSION

This study argues that communist regimes encourage citizens to complain about local governance problems. The scope of the issues about which citizens may complain is limited by a social contract. Under the terms of the contract, citizens are expected to remain quiescent as long as the regime engages in redistributive spending and protects their property rights. By complaining, citizens provide information to the regime about deficiencies in the fulfillment of the social contract, which have to be addressed for citizens to continue to complain. The social contract is enforced through a system of proxy accountability, where higher levels of government supervise the fulfillment of the contract by lower levels of government. In equilibrium, citizens complain because the system of proxy accountability provides a sufficiently high level of positive resolution of their complaints.

This study specifies the conditions under which the social contract breaks down. There are two ways the regime may renege on the social contract. The first is by failing to enforce it through proxy accountability. This occurred in the second half of the 1980s in both Bulgaria and China, when the respective regimes were no longer able to provide what the people wanted. When citizens perceived that the regime had breached the social contract, they no longer felt compelled to fulfill their obligations under the contract and thus exited the complaints system. As citizens were exiting the complaints system, the Bulgarian and the Chinese regime each reneged on the contract in a second way: by abrogating the socialist social contract altogether and announcing a new market social contract. This contributed to systemic instability, as citizens who felt doubly betrayed by the regime engaged in antigovernment protests. The collapse of communism in Europe and the 1989 Tiananmen protests taught China that maintaining responsiveness to complaints is essential for winning the trust of the citizenry and for ensuring stability. Since 1989, despite decentralization, the center has tried to maintain such responsiveness through proxy accountability. The comparison of China with Bulgaria highlights the contingent nature of reform and the uncertainty of its eventual outcome: it is possible that China could have experienced regime breakdown in 1989, as did Eastern Europe. This highlights a common theme in this volume: contingent leadership choices are important for preserving systemic stability when formal institutions malfunction. In the case of China, the choice was to use force in 1989. This brutal act of violence preserved the integrity of the political system and allowed for adaptive change to resume after 1989.

This chapter echoes some of the conclusions of other chapters in the volume. For example, Tsai (Chapter 8) concludes her discussion of the regime-sustaining role of private entrepreneurs in China and Vietnam by referring to the regime-destabilizing impact of private entrepreneurs in the Soviet Union. Similarly, Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng (Chapter 9) note that although institutions of accountability have served to promote resilience in China and Vietnam, similar

institutions of accountability ushered in instability in the Soviet Union in 1988–1990. The authors of these two chapters suggest that weak political control in the Soviet Union during perestroika created an environment in which institutions that are currently having regime-stabilizing effects in the Asian context had the opposite regime-destabilizing effects in the Soviet context. This chapter discusses how the malfunctioning of the same institution of vertical accountability (citizen complaints) led to instability in both Bulgaria and China prior to 1989, but this instability ultimately had two different effects: regime collapse in Bulgaria and regime survival in China. Weak political control in Bulgaria (the communist party relaxed its hold on power as instability occurred) and strong political control in China are relevant for understanding these divergent outcomes.

One implication of this study goes beyond citizen complaints and concerns the nature of the regime in China today. Is China still communist? We need to take a nuanced view when answering this question and, instead of solely looking at the rapid economic transformation, examine the mechanisms of rule in reform-era China. This study highlights the centrality of the complaints system to communist rule under both the plan and the market economy. The institutions for handling complaints were preserved after 1989 because they are essential for communist governance, not only because they bind citizens to the state and prevent the emergence of systemic instability, but also because they create important continuities with earlier stages in China's post-1949 political development. The preservation of the complaints system is especially important now, as mass incidents throughout China seem to be spiraling out of control. This explains why former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao is known to have visited complaints offices and to have met with complainants regularly.[82] China is still communist in part because core communist institutions of accountability such as citizen complaints survive despite the transition from plan to market. There are also vestiges of the socialist social contract, for example, in the institutions that have been created to protect the unenfranchised "losers" from the transition to the market.

Another implication of this study concerns the mechanisms of governance in noncommunist authoritarian regimes. One obvious extension of this research would be to the group of noncommunist single-party authoritarian regimes, for instance, Mexico under the PRI or Taiwan under the KMT. These autocracies enjoyed remarkable longevity, but communist regimes nevertheless had an average life span that was considerably longer than that of noncommunist single-party regimes. What explains this? Many factors are at play, but it is worth noting that although noncommunist single-party regimes had systems for handling citizen complaints, these systems remained underdeveloped by

[82] On one such visit, see "Wen Jiabao dao guojia xinfangju jiu zhengfu gongzuo tingqu laifang qunzhong yijian" (Wen Jiabao Listens to Citizen Opinions Regarding the Work of the Government at the State Letters and Visits Office), Zhongguo Jiangsu Wang, January 25, 2011, http://news.xinmin.cn/shehui/2011/01/25/9076123.html (accessed September 16, 2012).

comparison with their counterparts in the communist regimes.[83] Instead of prioritizing complaints, noncommunist regimes attempted to prolong their longevity through the strategic manipulation of electorally based vertical accountability. But recent events in the Middle East suggest that electorally based authoritarianism may not be as robust as it seemed prior to the Arab Spring of 2011. Meanwhile, communist regimes remain the most resilient type of nondemocratic regime. Thus, an important question for future research would be to examine the complementarities between electoral and nonelectoral nondemocratic institutions of accountability and their respective contributions to autocratic regime resilience.

[83] On citizen complaints in Taiwan, see Chen Deyu, *Renmin chenqing an diwei zhi yanjiu* (Research on Citizen Petitions) (Taipei: Xingzhengyuan yanjiu fazhan kaohe weiyuanhui, 1983).

11

Conclusion

Whither Communist Regime Resilience?

Martin K. Dimitrov

This volume addresses the puzzling resilience of communist regimes, which are the longest-lasting type of authoritarian polity to emerge since World War I. The individual chapters provide two types of explanations for this resilience. The first focuses on structural factors that increase longevity by limiting mass discontent and, correspondingly, by boosting legitimacy. At a general level, most chapters highlight how the careful management of economic performance and the strategic use of limited political reform facilitate resilience by limiting popular discontent. The chapters also examine how specific variables can promote resilience. Some focus on the use of ideology to create and maintain regime legitimacy. Others stress that longevity requires that regimes limit their susceptibility to revolutionary contagion. Still others argue that strategies of inclusion (admission to the communist party for private entrepreneurs and redistributive policies for the unenfranchised) limit the potential for the emergence of challengers to the regime. Finally, some chapters focus on the use of vertical and horizontal accountability to enhance the responsiveness of leaders to popular input and thus increase satisfaction with the regime. Although individually none of these arguments can explain resilience, taken collectively they identify some of the key domestic political variables that are conducive to the survival of communist regimes.

The second type of explanation focuses on how contingency contributed to both the collapse of communism and its survival. In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's commitment to genuine political pluralism led to divisions within the communist party and accelerated regime collapse. In China, Deng Xiaoping's decision to respond with the use of force to calls for a more consultative type of socialism helped avert collapse in 1989. Two points should be stressed here. To begin with, contingent leadership choices do not emerge randomly. Rather, they reflect structural constraints. For example, in the Soviet Union, economic stagnation, ideological erosion, an increasing

susceptibility to contagion in the form of demonstration effects, the failure of inclusion, and a growing crisis of accountability all necessitated profound political change. Gorbachev could have postponed liberalization, but the structural preconditions for liberalization were already in place. In contrast, although China was confronted by economic fluctuations and ideological decay in the 1980s, the benefit of hindsight reveals that the regime experienced more limited structural difficulties than the Soviet Union and consequently had more room for maneuver. This helps explain why Deng resorted to the use of force to resist political liberalization. The second point is that, as China's experience since 1989 demonstrates, although leadership choices may help avert collapse, over the long term, resilience is predicated on sustained experimentation in the economic and ideological realms, as well as on efforts to increase inclusion and to create meaningful institutions of accountability.

This volume focuses on theorizing the mechanisms that have allowed communist regimes to persist over long periods. This applies both to the regimes that eventually collapsed and to those that still survive. However, a question emerges with regard to the five regimes that are still ruled by communist parties today: how long will they survive? The contributors to this volume are not forecasters. Faulty assessments of the staying power of the Soviet Union or of authoritarian stability in the Middle East provide telling examples of the difficulty of making precise forecasts.[1] With these caveats, it is possible to outline how the malfunctioning of the pillars of regime resilience, especially when paired with contingent leadership choices, may precipitate regime collapse in countries that are still ruled by communist parties. This concluding chapter first examines some plausible scenarios for the malfunctioning of the structural pillars of resilience and then turns to a discussion of how leadership choices may impact regime stability. The chapter ends by addressing the question of whether the insights generated by this volume may apply to a broader group of autocracies beyond those ruled by communist parties.

Structural Constraints to Regime Resilience

Economic Slowdown. Of the various pillars of regime resilience, strong economic performance is essential, especially in China, Vietnam, and Laos. However, as the examples of the other surviving communist regimes demonstrate, GDP growth per se may not be decisive: witness North Korea and Cuba, which have persisted despite negative growth. In contrast, there is an expectation of high growth in China, which is even enshrined in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan.

[1] On the Soviet Union, see the literature overview in Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44:1 (1991), 7–48. On Egypt, see F. Gregory Gause III, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 90:4 (2011), 81–90.

Expectations of growth in China, Vietnam, and Laos mean that an economic slowdown may have serious political consequences. The effects may be indirect, but nonetheless real. In the case of China, a slowdown in growth may lead to higher unemployment, thus increasing the likelihood of labor unrest. We can already observe this trend in Guangdong, the province that suffered the most from falling demand for Chinese exports in the wake of the global financial crisis.[2] A slowdown may also increase popular discontent by exerting downward pressures on wages. As such a wage reduction would occur under worsening conditions of inequality (historically this has been a serious problem in China, but it has also gradually become a concern in Vietnam and Laos), we might expect the rise of collective action. Because of its essential contribution to maintaining social stability, the promotion of economic growth is a top priority for the leadership in these three countries. At the same time, high levels of growth may also have negative effects, such as high inflation. Communist regimes are especially careful about managing the price of staples: for example, the government regularly intervenes to lower the price of pork in China despite liberalization of virtually all other prices.[3] Examples of the effects of meat-price increases on popular mobilization are plentiful, including the Berlin Uprising in 1953, the Novocherkassk riots in the Soviet Union in 1962, protests sparked by the recurring "meat problem" in Poland in the 1960s and 1970s, and, of course, urban discontent in China on the eve of Tiananmen.[4] Thus, China, Vietnam, and Laos aim to produce high growth while keeping inflation under control.

Until recently Cuba eschewed thorough economic reform and seemed to diverge from the model of China, Vietnam, and Laos. Prior to 2006, the Chinese experience was labeled a "proto-capitalist deviation," despite the introduction of some cautious economic reforms.[5] Since Fidel Castro became incapacitated in 2006, there has been a gradual adaptation of the Chinese model to Cuban conditions, culminating in the unveiling of a major reform agenda at the Sixth Party Congress in 2011. The key decisions involved the laying off of 1 million workers; the elimination of the system of rationing; the legalization of nonagricultural cooperatives; an expansion of the size of agricultural land that

[2] Gordon Chang, "China's 'Conflict Handbags,'" *Forbes*, June 26, 2011, http://www.forbes.com/sites/gordonchang/2011/06/26/chinas-conflict-handbags/ (accessed September 5, 2012).

[3] "Premier Wen Pledges Further Price Regulation Measures," Xinhua, September 17, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-09/17/c_131143250.htm (accessed September 5, 2012).

[4] On the Novocherkassk food riots in the Soviet Union in 1962, see TsKhSD, Archives of the Communist Party and the Soviet State, F. 89 per. 6 d. 11–19 and d. 23–25. On East Germany and Poland, see Peter Hübner and Christa Hübner, *Sozialismus als soziale Frage: Sozialpolitik in der DDR und Polen 1968–1976* (Socialism as a Social Question: Social Policy in the GDR and Poland, 1968–1976) (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), esp. 133–141, 321–325, and 441–445.

[5] Bert Hoffmann, "The International Dimensions of Authoritarian Legitimation: The Impact of Regime Evolution," German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) Working Paper No. 182 (December 2011), 15.

can be leased; and an extension of the lease term for agricultural land.[6] Where these reforms will lead is, of course, hard to predict. Large-scale layoffs from state-owned enterprises could result in high unemployment, which would fuel discontent if the private sector proves incapable of reemploying laid-off workers. Elimination of the system of rationing may spur inflation. Finally, the creation of nonagricultural collectives and the emergence of large leaseholders of land could produce rapid increases in inequality, which may be unpalatable to a populace that has become accustomed to very low levels of inequality. Reforms therefore hold both promise and peril for Cuba. To the extent that China, Vietnam, and Laos provide a useful reference, successful economic reforms will enhance the staying power of the Cuban regime. Yet, as Bernstein's chapter argues, poorly executed economic reforms were one of the factors that contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union; the leaders of Cuba will surely want to avoid such a fate.

North Korea currently faces a dilemma similar to that previously experienced by Cuba: on the one hand, economic reform is sorely needed; on the other hand, massive reforms may have potentially destabilizing political effects. Thus far, the regime has refused to adopt market reforms. Urban markets are tolerated but not officially encouraged. The same is true of the growing number of *nouveaux riches*, who have profited from smuggling, black market activity, and fledgling capitalist ventures.[7] There are also reports of the emergence of private agriculture (*sot'ochi* farming) in North Hamgyong province.[8] In addition, although their future is currently uncertain, the special economic zones might attract FDI and create employment, while also serving as a source of economic growth. That said, there is not, as yet, any unambiguous indication of an acceptance of a Chinese-style market-oriented reform. Three factors explain this resistance to reform. First, should North Korea encounter a new economic debacle, it has a policy tool that is not so readily available to the other communist countries: massive repression. Although all five remaining regimes resort to repression, as a proportion of the population, the North Korean gulag is the largest of any communist regime.[9] Repression is also facilitated by the high status of the armed forces (on Military-First Politics, see Armstrong's chapter). Second, North Korea receives more substantial external support than does Cuba. In particular, the backing of China, South Korea, and Russia is essential for regime survival: China is North Korea's largest trading partner; South Korea is a close

[6] "Informe Central presentado por el compañero Raúl" (Central Report Presented by Comrade Raúl), April 17, 2011, http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/secciones/6to-congreso-pcc/artic-04.html (accessed September 5, 2012).

[7] "Rumblings From Below," *The Economist*, February 9, 2013, 24–26.

[8] Andrei Lankov, Seok Hyang Kim, and Inok Kwak, "Relying on One's Strength: The Growth of the Private Agriculture in Borderline Areas of North Korea," *Comparative Korean Studies* 19:2 (2011), 325–358.

[9] "The Gulag behind the Goose-Steps," *Economist*, April 21, 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/21553090 (accessed September 5, 2012).

second; and Russia has forgiven $11 billion in Soviet-era loans in order to signal its interest in having a stronger economic presence.[10] Such external support may limit pressure to undertake economic reforms because it provides North Korea with a lifeline. Third, North Korea has nuclear weapons that can be used to extract additional concessions from the West (most recently, a nuclear test was conducted in February 2013).

Although North Korea has thus far managed to survive without implementing reforms, a new famine or another economic catastrophe may lead to levels of discontent that are sufficiently high to bring about political liberalization. Surprisingly, Kim Jong Un has adopted a rhetoric that contains hints of populism. At the 2012 conference of the Workers' Party of Korea he said: "Let our people who are the best in the world . . . not tighten their belts again and enjoy the wealth and prosperity of socialism as much as they like."[11] One question that emerges in light of this populist statement is how the people would react to the unmet promise to turn North Korea into a "great and prosperous nation" (*kangsong taeguk*) by 2012, which echoes Khrushchev's promise of building socialism in the Soviet Union by 1980. The Soviet example suggests that even in North Korea economic reforms may not be postponed indefinitely. But the necessity of reform does not obviate the authoritarian dilemma that arises from the fact that a lack of reforms and poorly executed reforms can each produce instability.

Incomplete Inclusion. Prominent scholars have argued that although communist regimes initially govern through mobilization, they eventually move to the stage of governance through inclusion.[12] A threat to resilience is presented by the emergence of groups that are not subject to inclusion and that successfully organize against the regime. Although the problem of incomplete inclusion exists in all of the remaining communist regimes, there are both common patterns as well as variations across countries in terms of the groups that pose the greatest danger. One group that may present a problem to the regime is businesspeople. In China, Vietnam, and Laos, this group has been successfully incorporated. In Cuba, it remains to be seen whether the newly emerging entrepreneurs will cooperate with the communist party or whether they will develop their own distinct identity, which might eventually challenge the party. Another closely watched group is religious believers. They have been successfully incorporated in some of the surviving regimes (Catholics in Cuba), but not in others (Catholics in Vietnam and Catholics, Uighurs,

[10] Economist Intelligence Unit, "North Korea Economy: Quick View – Russia to Waive Debt," June 26, 2012.

[11] Economist Intelligence Unit, *North Korea Country Report* (London: EIU, 2012), 19.

[12] Kenneth Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 77. See also Barbara Geddes, "Stages of Development in Authoritarian Regimes," in Vladimir Tismaneanu, Marc Morjé Howard, and Rudra Sil, eds., *World Order after Leninism* (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, University of Washington, 2006), 149–170.

Tibetans, Mongols, and Falun Gong followers in China). Worker discontent must also be monitored, especially in countries with high levels of income inequality such as China, Vietnam, and Laos (in China, the Xi Jinping–Li Keqiang leadership team in early 2013 publicly declared its resolve to tackle this problem). Finally, land seizures in China, and also in Vietnam and Laos, have produced alienation from the regime within at least some segments of the peasant population. We should note that on its own the incomplete inclusion of social groups does not present an immediate threat. But regime stability is undermined when these groups coalesce and find broad social support, as revealed by the examples of Solidarity in Poland and of Falun Gong in China. For this reason, communist autocracies vigilantly monitor the success of inclusion policies and, when they appear to be failing, do not hesitate to use repression against any groups that might be successful in mounting an organized challenge to the regime.

Insufficient Accountability. Communist regimes create multiple institutions of accountability, ranging from elections and investigative reporting to citizen complaints and microblogging. When these institutions operate effectively, they can help create "tacit minimal consensus" for the regime.[13] In contrast, malfunctioning institutions of accountability can increase the level of popular discontent and thus lead to regime instability. From the regime's perspective, two questions present themselves with regard to such institutions of accountability. First, what are the signs of crisis? And, second, what is the appropriate regime response when a malfunction is detected? Although answering these questions is not easy, having answers to them is essential if the regime wants to keep popular discontent within a manageable level. With regard to the former, different accountability channels present different indicators of crisis. To take citizen complaints as an example, declining use of this formal channel (demonstrated by a falling rate of complaints), when coupled with an increasing rate of escalation of grievances outside the formal channel (revealed by more frequent protests), is a signal of crisis (see Dimitrov's Chapter 10 in this volume). What should the regime do when crisis is detected? One response would be to ignore the problem. Another would be to engage in repression. A third would be to attempt to reform the shortcomings of the institution. With regard to citizen complaints, one needed reform is increased responsiveness that will encourage citizens to use this channel more frequently. This is precisely what occurred in Cuba when *Granma* started a rubric on citizen complaints in 2008, thus signaling leadership attention to this issue and providing a highly visible cue to citizens that the channel exists and that they are encouraged to use it.[14] One of the most powerful examples of the effects of malfunctioning institutions of accountability

[13] Thomas Lindenberger, "Tacit Minimal Consensus: The Always Precarious East German Dictatorship," in Paul Corner, ed., *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 208–222.

[14] See "Cartas a la Dirección, un año después" (Letters to the Editor, One Year On), *Granma*, March 13, 2009, 10.

on regime resilience is provided by East Germany, where widespread falsification of election results served as one of the triggers for anti-regime mobilization in 1989.[15] These historical precedents highlight the importance of monitoring all channels of accountability and of acting quickly to resolve problems detected in their operation. The Internet makes this task especially challenging, as illustrated by the case of China, where the government is interested in accountability (and therefore allows online criticism), but the goal of promoting accountability conflicts with the goal of maintaining stability, so we observe the censoring of blogs that are conducive to the emergence of protests.[16] Continuous efforts to provide a degree of accountability that is sufficient to keep public discontent at manageable levels are essential for maintaining stability.

Ideological Stasis. Several chapters in this volume highlight the role that ideological erosion played in alienating citizens from the regimes in Eastern Europe. The surviving regimes are making sustained efforts to promote nationalism, which serves as the main ideological justification for their rule, now that the utopian goals of communism have been definitively abandoned and the redistributive commitments of the state have been reduced. Erosion of nationalism currently seems unlikely in any of the surviving regimes. For as long as U.S. sanctions against Cuba and North Korea are in place, defensive nationalism will remain credible.[17] Sino-Vietnamese rivalries in the South China Sea have also fueled defensive anti-Chinese nationalism in Vietnam. In Laos, strong anti-Chinese sentiments have arisen because of recent large-scale land sales to Chinese entrepreneurs. The waning of Chinese nationalism also seems unlikely. Economic success, especially during the ongoing global economic crisis, is a source of national pride. In addition, the growing territorial assertiveness of China serves to fuel offensive nationalism. A possible challenge to the ideological foundations of the remaining communist regimes might be presented if nationalism escalates beyond pure rhetoric and thus places pressures on the regime to deliver on its nationalist claims or risk losing credibility with the masses.

Summing Up. The contributors to this volume have advanced a structural explanation for the resilience of communist regimes. By extension, changes in the structural conditions that facilitate resilience will make regime collapse more likely. An economic slowdown, a failure of inclusion, malfunctioning institutions of accountability, and ideological stasis are the main structural changes that can weaken the remaining regimes and make their collapse more likely. However, collapse will not occur simply because the structural foundations of

[15] Hans Michael Kloth, *Vom "Zettelfalten" bis zum freien Wählen: Die Demokratisierung der DDR 1989/90 und die "Wahlfrage"* (From "Folded Slips of Paper" to Free Elections: The Democratization of the GDR and the "Elections Problem") (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2000).

[16] Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margeret E. Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression," *American Political Science Review* 107:2 (May 2013), 326–343.

[17] On defensive nationalism in Cuba, see Hoffmann, "The International Dimensions of Authoritarian Legitimation."

resilience are weakened; certain contingent leadership choices have to be made as well.

Leadership Choices and Regime Stability

Although we cannot predict the precise contingent leadership choices that may increase the likelihood of collapse, the East European experience suggests a plausible scenario, which the incumbent leaders in the remaining regimes would want to avoid if they are to maintain regime stability. In the Soviet Union, three related decisions by Gorbachev proved, in hindsight, to have a negative impact on the prospects for preserving the system. These decisions showed the weakness of the communist party by publicly exposing leadership divisions and shattering the façade of elite cohesion.[18] The first was to allow pluralism within the party. This led to the emergence of highly visible opposition to Gorbachev's reformist policies by the conservative camp. The second was Yeltsin's expulsion from the party, which meant that Gorbachev also had to deal with opposition outside the party. And the third was the decision to eliminate the communist party's constitutional monopoly on power, thus legalizing opposition groups. These decisions made it impossible for the party to hold on to power and paved the way for the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The remaining regimes have expended considerable energy to demonstrate unanimity and elite cohesion publicly, thus discouraging the emergence of organized opposition outside the party. Thus far, no communist party currently in power has legalized opposition parties. However, divisions between liberals and conservatives are known to exist at least in China and Vietnam, and probably in Laos and Cuba as well. Even more importantly, a charismatic challenger with a potential impact similar to that of Yeltsin appeared in China. Bo Xilai made no secret of his political ambitions, but instead of the consensus personality that China needs, he represented a divisive figure. Had he been promoted to the Standing Committee of the Politburo, he could have wreaked havoc on party unity. Although we do not yet have a complete understanding of the events that resulted in the scandal that led to Bo's ouster from the leadership, his presumed impact on elite cohesion must have played a decisive role in suspending him from the Politburo in February 2012 and in launching an investigation into his violations of party discipline. With good reason, maintaining consensus is seen as essential for preserving the monopoly on power of the communist party.

In light of the findings of this volume, collapse of the remaining communist regimes will become more likely when and if the structural pillars of their

[18] On the importance of demonstrating elite cohesion, see Andreas Schedler and Bert Hoffmann, "The Dramaturgy of Authoritarian Elite Cohesion," paper presented at the Second Annual General Conference of the European Political Science Association (EPSA), Berlin, June 21–23, 2012.

resilience are weakened and when and if leadership choices to encourage political pluralism lead to the emergence of opposition to the incumbent leader both within the party and outside it. With these factors in place, a communist regime will no longer be able to use repression to ensure its survival and may implode either as a result of purely domestic reasons or because it cannot resist the external pressures for change to which it was previously immune.

Generalizability of the Argument

One question that emerges with regard to this volume is whether the arguments developed in it are limited to the subset of autocracies that are ruled by communist parties or whether they may have broader applicability to the entire universe of autocracies. The central finding of the volume is that in addition to repression, communist autocracies rely on economic reform, inclusion, accountability, and ideology to survive. One could extend this argument to all autocracies. This suggests that scholars may not need to focus on communist regimes per se, but rather may have to analyze all autocracies as a group.[19] If one adopts this approach, the specific characteristics of each subtype of autocracy (personalist, military, single-party, or monarchy) are less important than the common features of all regimes that belong to the umbrella category of autocracies. However, important differences between subtypes within the group of autocracies suggest that the mix of factors needed to ensure regime survival would vary from subtype to subtype. For example, economic reform is not essential for the survival of the oil-rich absolute monarchies; institutions of accountability are unlikely to develop in personalist regimes; and inclusion would be limited primarily to members of the security apparatus in military regimes.

Given these differences across subtypes of autocracies, one should perhaps focus on the generalizability of the argument only to the subtype of single-party autocracies. But here as well, there are important within-subtype differences between electoral authoritarian regimes and single-party regimes that proscribe opposition parties. Let us take Russia and China as examples. One similarity between the two is the recognition of the importance of economic reform for preserving the dominance of the party. In addition, because China is still ruled by a communist party and Russia has the memory of communist rule, there is a shared concern for mitigating some of the negative effects that economic growth may have on vulnerable social groups by enacting social protection policies. Despite these similarities, however, there are significant differences between the two regimes in the area of inclusion. United Russia does not aim to incorporate all social groups. Opposition parties exist and they contest the elections. In contrast, the Chinese Communist Party is committed to maintaining its constitutional monopoly on power through sophisticated strategies of inclusion. There

[19] An example of this approach is provided by Milan W. Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

are also differences in the area of accountability, with Russia having contested elections, greater Internet freedom, and a considerably less constrained press than China. When it comes to ideology, although both Russia and China are nationalistic, the credibility of nationalism in China is greater than it is in Russia. Finally, China under Hu and Wen was undoubtedly more repressive than Russia under Putin. This suggests that the differences between electoral authoritarian and single-party authoritarian regimes may present a problem for the generalizability of the argument.

A more promising line of inquiry may involve generalizing the findings of this volume about the sources of communist regime resilience to the wider group of nonelectoral single-party authoritarian regimes, which would include countries such as Iraq under the Ba'th regime, Syria under the Ba'th, and Taiwan under the KMT. Scholars have identified similarities between the Leninist parties in Taiwan and mainland China,[20] though no systematic research has been done on specific similarities and differences in terms of economic reform, inclusion, accountability, or ideology. Ongoing research on Eastern Europe under communism and on Iraq under the Ba'th suggests that there are important parallels between the two types of regimes in terms of the use of repression.[21] Additional studies are needed to clarify whether these similarities also extend to the institutions of accountability, the strategies of inclusion, and the use of ideology for regime legitimation. Nevertheless, the initial probes on the similarities between China and Taiwan and between the East European and the Middle Eastern single-party autocracies highlight important parallels. Therefore, the arguments in this volume may be used to generate a new research program on the complex mechanisms undergirding the resilience of nonelectoral single-party autocracies.

[20] Bruce J. Dickson, *Democratization in China and Taiwan: The Adaptability of Leninist Parties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[21] Martin K. Dimitrov and Joseph Sassoon, "State Security, Information, and Repression: A Comparison of Communist Bulgaria and Ba'thist Iraq," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, forthcoming.

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