

Undergraduate Program in Central European Studies

CERGE-EI and the School of Humanities at Charles University

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1

The Politics and Sociology of Transition

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OUTLINE OF THE COURSE:

This course will focus on the transition to democracy and the market in the countries of the former Soviet bloc, with a special focus on the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. It will begin with a brief exploration into the very nature of the communist system, principal differences between socialism and capitalism, and factors that led to the fall of communism. Then we will learn about fundamental aspects of democracy and democratic politics. The main portion of the course will deal with the system that has replaced communism. The focus here will be on the *driving forces* of the system change (i.e., democratization, privatization, the growth of inequality, the role of various forms of capital and assets in the formation of elites, "life-chances," and the formation of social classes) and the *main actors* of the political transformation and democratic consolidation (i.e., the formation and role of elites and middle classes, and the winners and losers of the transformation). The course will also focus on the development of political attitudes, the formation of political spectrums and party systems, voting behavior, and the role of new institutions and policies in democratic stability and economic prosperity. The course will be built both on both theories of social change as well as empirical evidence from research projects and surveys carried out in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. Students will take away from this course detailed knowledge of the political economy of the region, social and political aspects of transitions, specific knowledge of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the ability to analyze political events more generally.

GRADING POLICY:

Classes and seminars: Each topic will be covered by a lecture and a seminar. Lectures will be based on presentations of individual topics by the one of the instructors. We will discuss the readings and other material relevant to the topic covered in each session. Seminar discussions will be led by one of the students chosen at the preceding lecture.

The **midterm test** will assess students' familiarity with key concepts and theories covered by lectures, seminars, and assigned readings preceding the midterm test. There will be no make-up midterm test. If a student misses the midterm test due to a documented illness or emergency, a new – and more difficult – test will be given one week before the final paper is assigned.

Topics for the **final paper** will be announced at the lecture on May 3 and will be due the last day of the final exam week (May 13). Students will have to choose one of the assigned topics and write a research paper based on the required and recommended readings, as well as other literature and sources of their choice. The paper should be about 6,000 words (10 pages), not counting tables, figures and references. Use standard rules for citations. All source materials must be listed in the bibliography and footnotes/endnotes. Ideas, hypotheses and conclusions must be well supported by literature, facts, and/or other forms of evidence (secondary analysis is sufficient, primary analysis is not required).

Criteria for evaluation: (1) The ability to link theory to facts and available evidence (25 %); (2) The structure of the paper, as well as the clarity of the questions asked and problems discussed (25 %); (3) The clarity and strength of arguments presented (25%); (4) The use of literature and other information sources (25%).

Grading: Class and seminar participation (10%), midterm test (40%), final paper (50%).

REQUIRED READING:

1. Elster, Jon, Offe, Claus & Preuss, Ulrich K.: *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies: Rebuilding the ship at sea*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998
2. Eyal, Gil, Szelenyi, Ivan & Townsley, Eleanor: *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists: The new ruling elites in eastern Europe*. Verso, London, New York, 1998.
3. Course Reader

TOPICS:

Week 1: Principal attributes of the socialist system.

Power. Ideology. Property. Coordination mechanisms. Coherence of the Classical System. (Kornai) Principal differences between modern Capitalism and Socialism (economy, society and politics) Why socialist systems in East Central Europe collapsed? (Offe, Ash, Dahrendorf). Seven (family) reasons of the easy collapse of the regime (Mozny's theory in "Why so Easy?").

Required readings:

Kornai, Janos: *The socialist system: the political economy of communism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992, chapter 3 (Power), 4 (Ideology), 5 (Property), 6 (Coordination), and 15 (The Coherence of the Classical System).

Ash, Timothy, Garton: *The Magic Lantern. The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague*. Random House, 1993

Recommended readings:

Aslund, Anders, *Building Capitalism: The Transformation of the Former Soviet Bloc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Chapter 1, pp. 20-38

Week 2: Transition or transformation? Principal theories of the post-communist transformation.

Transitions to democracy: universal and unique features. The second birth of capitalism and the dilemma of simultaneity. Privatization, implementation of the market, and building democracy. Path dependency. Compatibility or potential conflict between the transition to democracy and implementation of the market? Asymmetrical antagonism: what should get priority – the market or democracy? Political capitalism and the role of elites. Phases and dilemmas of the transition. (Offe, Stark, Dahrendorf, Sztompka). Transformation as a process of rebuilding (restoring) vital relationships maintaining and balancing social system.

Required readings:

Offe, Claus: "Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East Central Europe," *Social Research*, Vol. 58 (1991), No. 4 (Winter): 865-892.

Sztompka, Piotr: "*Dilemmas of the Great Transition*" *Sisyphus*, 1992, 2(VIII): 9-27.

Stark, David and László Bruszt: *Postsocialist Pathways. Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. ch. 1 (Remaking the political field), 2 (The privatization debate: from Plan Market of from Plan to Clan?) and 3 (Path Dependence and Privatization Strategies).

Recommended readings

Orenstein, Mitchell, A.: *Out of the Red: Building Capitalism and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2001. Chap. 1, 2 and 3 (Polish shock therapy and the Czech model of Social-Liberalism)

Orenstein, Mitchell, A.: *Out of the Red: Building Capitalism and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2001. Chap. 4 (Privatization)

Week 3: Circulation or reproduction of elites? Various forms of capital (Bourdieu) and their role in the formation of elites (Szelenyi). Main segments of the power elite and their relationships. The role of dissidents, economic technocrats (monetarists) and post-socialist managers in power elite formation. The role of banks in maintaining power during the first stage of the transformation. Managerialism, its spirit and ideology.

Required readings:

Bourdieu, Pierre.: "The Forms of Capital." Pp. 241 – 258 in G. Richardson: *Handbook of Theory and Research for Sociology of Education*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1986.

Eyal, Gil, Ivan Szelenyi and Eleanor Townsley: *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists. The New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe*. Verso, London, New York 1998, ch. 1 (Classes and Elites in the Changing Structures of the Twentieth-Century Central European Societies) and 2 (The Second Bildungsbürgertum. Intellectuals in the Transition from Socialism to Capitalism in Central Europe).

Recommended readings:

Eyal, Gil, Ivan Szelenyi and Eleanor Townsley: *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists. The*

New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe. Verso, London, New York 1998, Chap. 3 and 4.

Mikhalev, Vladimir: *Inequality and Social Structure during the Transition*. United Nations University, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003. ch. 4 (Winners of the Reform).

Week 4: What is democracy?

This session will focus on the basic questions from democratic theory which underlie any serious attempt to understand democracy and democratic political systems: What is democracy? Where did it come from? What are its main theoretical and empirical foundations? How is democracy different than “authoritarianism” or “totalitarianism”? Is democracy compatible with different histories, cultures and traditions? As we will see, understanding the collapse of communism and subsequent transitions to democracy in the former Marxist-Leninist states of Central and Eastern Europe, as well the structure and process of developed democratic systems, requires a firm grasp of the basic principles of democracy. Readings cover a broad range of national and regional experiences with democracy and political change. Please set aside enough time to read all of the assigned materials for this week. It is essential that you have a firm understanding of the topics we will cover during this session so you can get the most out of the rest of the course.

Required readings:

Dahl, Robert A., *On Democracy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 1-25, 35-61, 100-118, 145-179 (focus especially on historical background discussion).

Huntington, Samuel, *The Third Wave: Democratization In the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991) pp. 3-30.

Schmitter, Philippe and Terry Karl, “What Democracy Is...and Is Not,” in Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 49-62.

Recommended readings:

Dahl, Robert A., *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 1-16, 17-32.

Dahrendorf, Ralf, *Reflections on the Revolutions in Europe* (New York: Times Books, 1990), pp. 12-13.

Sen, Amartya, “Democracy as a Universal Value,” in Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 3-17.

Karatnycky, Adrian, “The 30th Anniversary Freedom House Survey: Liberty’s Advances in a Troubled World,” *Journal of Democracy* (January 2003).

Week 5: Democratic transition and consolidation: Enabling conditions; causes; transition paths and dilemmas; the challenge of consolidation.

In this session we will look closely at democratic change. How and why do authoritarian or “totalitarian” regimes become democratic? Why do some democracies breakdown? What “caused” the most recent transitions to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe? How have “paths” to democracy differed, both in historical terms during the various “waves” of democratization and after the collapse of communism? How do we know if and when a new

democracy has “consolidated” into a stable and durable political system? Does stable democracy correlate with certain socioeconomic conditions, or can democracy exist in isolation from socioeconomic factors?

Required readings:

Dahl, Robert A., *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 33-47, 62-80.

Huntington, Samuel, *The Third Wave*, ch. 2, pp. 31-46, 46-58 (skim), 59-72, 72-100 (skim); 100-108.

Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 3-15, 38-54, 55-65, 66-83.

Recommended readings:

Schedler, Andreas, “What Is Democratic Consolidation?,” in Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 149-162.

Rose, Richard, William Mishler and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and Its Alternatives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 44-67.

Przeworski, Adam, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, “What Makes Democracies Endure?,” in Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 167-181.

Week 6: Political institutions and institutional choice in democratic systems.

This session focuses on the bricks and mortar of democratic political systems. Deciding what “kind” of democracy is best for a given society is one of the key determinants of how stable and successful a democratic political system will be. Political institutions – including electoral systems, political parties and party systems, the structure of executive power, etc. – help shape the character, effectiveness and, ultimately, the legitimacy of democratic systems. Because of this they also play a critical role in the consolidation of democracy. We will focus in particular on the various dilemmas and tradeoffs of institutional choice and democratic design as they have affected former communist countries during and after transitions to democracy.

Required readings:

Diamond, Larry, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 93-112.

Diamond, Larry and Mark F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 108-177 (read all articles in the debate on designing democratic political systems; omit pp. 134-137).

Dahrendorf, Ralf, *Reflections on the Revolutions in Europe* (New York: Times Books, 1990), pp.85-92, 107-109.

Recommended readings:

Dahl, Robert, *On Democracy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 83-99, 119-141, 189-191 (optional).

Przeworski, Adam, et al, *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 40-52.

Przeworski Adam,, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 34-37.

Elster, Jon, Claus Offe and Ulrich Preuss (eds.), *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 109-130 (focus on Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic), 131-148.

Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 206-208, 273-283 (skim only); 283-287.

Week 7:

Spring Break – No Class Meeting

Week 8: Civil society and interest representation.

The aggregation and representation of individual and group interests through democratic political parties – the formal realm of competitive democratic politics – is a necessary condition for the functioning of modern democracy. But is it not a *sufficient* one. Group and individual interests must also be permitted expression through *informal* means, i.e., interest groups and civic associations, which are not entitled to hold public power (although they may hold quasi-public power in democracies with so-called corporatist systems of interest representation). In this session we will examine in detail both theoretical and empirical aspects of informal democratic interest representation, while keeping in mind the relationship between civil society, formal democratic institutions (i.e., parties and parliaments), and the state, in particular as they exist in societies in transition. We will also explore how key politicians in the Czech Republic – namely the two Vaclavs, Havel and Klaus – have espoused different visions of civil society and the role of organized interests in the democratic policy-making process.

Required readings:

Diamond, Larry, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 218-260.

Havel, Vaclav, Vaclav Klaus and Petr Pithart, “Civil Society After Communism: Rival Visions,” *Journal of Democracy* (January 1996).

Dahrendorf, Ralf, *Reflections on the Revolutions in Europe* (New York: Times Books, 1990), pp. 100-107.

Recommended readings:

Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 83-91.

Adam Przeworski et al, *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 34-39, 53-64, 107-112.

Robert Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 62-68, 69-80, 98-99.

Week 9: Class structure formation and the role of the middle classes

The formation of class structure and crystallization of socio-economic interests. Class-party de-alignment or re-alignment? The specific role of middle classes. The notion of a middle class majority (Aristotle). Middle classes and the stability of democracy. The disintegration of the middle classes during socialism. Objective obstacles to the formation of middle classes during transformation. Consistency of socio-economic status and middle class crystallization.

Middle class problems in subjective identification with middle class. Do middle classes show specific values and political attitudes?

Required readings:

Matějů, P. and B. Řeháková. Turning Left or Class Realignment. Analysis of the Changing Relationship Between Class and Party in the Czech Republic, 1992-1996. *East-European Politics and Societies* Vol. 11 (1997), No. 3, pp. 507-547.

Večerník, Jiří and Matějů, Petr (eds.) *Ten Years of Rebuilding Capitalism. Czech Society after 1989*. Praha, Academia 1999. ch. 9 (The Renewal of the Middle Class)

Mikhalev, Vladimir: *Inequality and Social Structure during the Transition*. United Nations University, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003. ch. 5 (Middle Classes in the Making)

Week 10: Democratic transition and consolidation: Enabling conditions; causes; transition paths and dilemmas; the challenge of consolidation.

In this session we will look closely at democratic change. How and why do authoritarian or “totalitarian” regimes become democratic? Why do some democracies breakdown? What “caused” the most recent transitions to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe? How have “paths” to democracy differed, both in historical terms during the various “waves” of democratization and after the collapse of communism? How do we know if and when a new democracy has “consolidated” into a stable and durable political system? Does stable democracy correlate with certain socioeconomic conditions, or can democracy exist in isolation from socioeconomic factors?

Required readings:

Dahl, Robert A., *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 33-47, 62-80.

Huntington, Samuel, *The Third Wave*, ch. 2, pp. 31-46, 46-58 (skim), 59-72, 72-100 (skim); 100-108.

Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 3-15, 38-54, 55-65, 66-83.

Recommended readings:

Schedler, Andreas, “What Is Democratic Consolidation?,” in Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 149-162.

Rose, Richard, William Mishler and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and Its Alternatives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 44-67.

Przeworski, Adam, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, “What Makes Democracies Endure?,” in Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 167-181.

Week 11: Economic reform and postcommunist transformation: Can capitalism be built without capitalists? How quickly should reforms be implemented? Who wins? Who loses?

In contrast with earlier transitions to democracy where prior to regime change authoritarian countries generally had market-based or “mixed” economies with both state and market control, post-communist transitions are “dual,” since they involve the creation of both democratic political systems *and* free-market economies from scratch. While focusing on the

many theoretical dilemmas inherent in building capitalism and democracy simultaneously, we will also pay attention to specific problems which have faced various countries, notably the Czech Republic and Poland, on the long and difficult journey to democracy and the market. Who, for example, is supposed to create capitalism where no capitalist class exists? Who should decide which economic policies to follow, when the priority of building democracy clashes with the imperative of creating free markets? Should popular participation and policy input be limited when deciding the course of economic reform, lest negatively affected interest groups block important changes which are necessary to build free markets?

Required readings:

Aslund, Anders, *Building Capitalism: The Transformation of the Former Soviet Bloc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 2-7, 70-87, 90-112, 255-267, 267-295 (skim), 295-303.

Balcerowicz, Leszek, "Understanding Postcommunist Transitions," in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (eds.), *Economic Reform and Democracy*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 86-99.

Eyal, Gil, Ivan Szelenyi and Eleanor Townsley, *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists: The New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 1-16, 46-47, 70-85, 114-158 (skim 118-151), 159-193 (skim 160-177).

Recommended readings:

Dahrendorf, Ralf, *Reflections on the Revolutions in Europe* (New York: Times Books, 1990), pp.77-85, 92-100 (skim from bottom of 94 to top of 99), 109-116.

Przeworski, Adam, et al, *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1995), pp. 67-90; 91-106.

Elster, Jon, Claus Offe and Ulrich Preuss (eds.), *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-34, 156-161, 176-183, 196-202.

Week 12: Ideologies, parties and voters

What motivates electoral choice among citizens in democratic societies? Are choices determined primarily by ideology, or by more "practical" concerns? How do the behavior of political parties and the structure of party systems reflect these factors? Is it still possible to speak of traditional ideologies and policy platforms associated with the "left" and "right"? How have notions of the traditional postwar political spectrum been challenged and altered in postcommunist settings? Why do so many scholars speak of a "decline of political parties"? If a genuine decline has indeed taken place, do parties matter? How should we interpret the widely observed phenomenon of declining voter turnout and increasingly pessimistic views concerning parties and parliaments? What does declining confidence augur for the future of democracy?

Required readings:

Diamond, Larry, and Richard Gunther, eds., *Political Parties and Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. ix-xvi, 7-9.

Schmitter, Philippe C., "Parties Are Not What They Once Were," in Diamond and Gunther, *Political Parties and Democracy*, pp. 67-89.

Diamond, Larry, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp.

Pharr, Susan J., Robert D. Putman, and Russell J. Dalton, "A Quarter Century of Declining Confidence," in Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies*

(Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp.291-309.

Terra, Jonathan, *Influence, Assets and Democracy: Who Got What After the Fall of Communism In East Central Europe?* Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Stanford University (2002), excerpts from chapter six.

Recommended readings:

Terra, Jonathan, "Political Parties, Party Systems and Economic Reform: Testing Hypotheses Against Evidence From Postcommunist Countries," *Czech Sociological Review*, vol. 38, no. 3 (Summer 2002).

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