Bringing Society Back into Democratic Transition Theory after 1989: Pact Making and Regime Collapse

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Like echoes of the Philippine "people power" revolution of 1986, spontaneous mass protests reverberated through Eastern Europe in 1989. In Poland, a series of wildcat strikes led to semi-free elections by June. A crowd chanting "no more shall we be slaves" at the re-burial of martyred Communist reformer Imre Nagy pushed Hungarian democracy forward. Tens of thousands of refugees undermined East German leader Erich Honecker in October, and hundreds of thousands of demonstrators forced open the Berlin Wall overnight on November 9. Later that month, and undeterred by violent security force tactics, student protests on Prague's Wenceslas Square ousted an entire Communist party leadership in a few days. Following such unexpected occurrences, social scientists need to bring society back into the center of their theories about democratization.[1] The question is, how?

Whether the theoretical concentration on elites now prevailing should simply give way to a new concentration on masses is unclear because unprecedented collective action was not the whole story in 1989.[2] The East European experience also had regime and opposition elites attempting feverishly to negotiate transition pacts. Poland set the pace by negotiating a formal agreement by which the Communists allowed free elections for a new Senate in return for control of the presidency and restricted elections to the Sejm. When Hungarian leaders sat down at a square table with the Opposition Roundtable, they set

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1. Not to mention the questionable transitions to democracy after Romania's bloody revolution and in Bulgaria.
2. In spite of Andre Gunder Frank, "Revolution in Eastern Europe. Lessons for Democratic Social Movements (and Socialists?)," *Third World Quarterly* 12 (April 1990), pp. 36–53.

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in motion a "gigantic negotiating machine" of fifty delegates and five hundred experts who had to be organized into two committees and twelve subcommittees.[3] As the Czechoslovak and East German regimes disintegrated, even they went through the motions of "round table" negotiations. Just before resigning on December 4, Czechoslovak Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec met with Civic Forum representatives for two days in vain. The church-mediated East German round table began in early December, even before the largest opposition group could hold its founding congress. Rather than pure cases of spontaneous mass action, the Revolutions of 1989 were a complex "mixture of popular protest and elite negotiation."[4]

A striking pattern appeared, in which transitions seemed to be conducted by negotiation if the old regime was no longer unified and if organizations in society had begun to exert autonomy.[5] One way to account for this pattern is to link the simultaneous mass-level and elite-level processes in a model demonstrating whether a democratic transition is more likely to occur through negotiation or through regime collapse. The timing and historical legacies that help explain the content of specific pacts and collapses are left for others to explore.[6]

The Importance of Transition Paths

Whether a democratic transition is achieved through negotiation or collapse is important because new democracies are path dependent. In any country's political history, a transition is a founding moment the legacy of which helps to shape the new democratic regime for years. Two important legacies of the pact making path have appeared in Latin America and Southern Europe where pacts seem to have stabilized new democratic regimes and they have influenced socioeconomic policy in

3. László Bruszt, "Hungary's Negotiated Revolution," *Social Research* 57 (Summer 1990), p. 367.
4. Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: the Revolution of 1989* (New York, 1990), p. 20.
5. See Grzegorz Ekiert, "Democratization Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Consideration," *British Journal of Political Science* 21 (July 1991), p. 307; see also Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 7.
6. Timing has mattered since Portugal and Spain initiated what Samuel Huntington calls the "third wave" of democratization in the mid-1970s. Spain learned to avoid Portugal's revolutionary path. In Eastern Europe, Poland set the precedent, then the late-comers achieved faster, more complete transitions. Differing historical legacies, like Nazi occupation—which crushed Polish society, dismembered the Czechoslovak state, but did not reach Hungary until war's end—also had created varying traditions of resistance. See Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity* (New York, 1989).

the direction of the status quo. Negotiated transitions increased democratic stability by encouraging important interests to compromise on such basic issues as whether new democratic institutions should be parliamentary or presidential, when to schedule the first free elections, and whether to grant clemency to human rights abusers or attempt to "even the score."[7] Without compromises on such fundamental issues, powerful interests can have less incentive to cooperate with the new democratic regime.

One of the most common problems in some Latin parts of America and Europe has been a disgruntled military staging armed rebellions. Pacts have counteracted this regional tendency by promoting agreements between authoritarians and democrats. Argentina illustrates the potential costs of foregoing such agreements. Since the transition back to democracy in 1983, the military has rebelled in 1987, 1988, and 1990. Members of the three juntas that had ruled from 1976 to 1983, and had conducted a "dirty war" against domestic terrorism, tried to "amnesty" themselves after losing the Falklands/Malvinas War. But they turned over power in such disarray that the first democratic President, Raul Alfonsín, put them on trial for "disappearing" 10,000 people (los desaparecidos). Only a law granting soldiers an obediencia debida (due obedience) defense and a de facto amnesty for their leaders by Alfonsín's successor, Carlos Menem, defused the situation.[8] New democracies in Spain and Brazil have not been plagued by similarly bloody and repeated mutinies after their pacted transitions.

The same agreements that stabilize a new regime also seem to affect the agenda for socioeconomic change, as vested interests try to guarantee the economic status quo by restricting policy options. Scholars Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter conclude that pact making "serves, at least temporarily, to ratify the prevailing social and economic" order.[9] The military may seek to protect its budget, business to guarantee property rights, and parties to privilege partisan policies. In Portugal, property rights were not guaranteed by a pact

7. This choice may affect the stability of a fragile new democracy. See Juan J. Linz & A. Valenzuela, eds., *Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy?* (Baltimore, 1991). It may remain unresolved in the absence of a pact. In Czechoslovakia, indirectly elected President Vaclav Havel was still advocating a directly elected presidency into 1992.

8. See Charles Guy Gillespie, "Democratic Consolidation in the Southern Cone and Brazil," *Third World Quarterly* 11 (April 1989), pp. 92–113.

9. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions* (Baltimore, 1986), pp. 39, 44.

after the leftist mid-level officers' coup of 1974. The last in a series of provisional governments rushed to nationalize large sections of the economy just before the first free elections in 1975. These nationalizations were enshrined in a constitution that was imposed without negotiation, and the new democratic regime left them in place despite polls demonstrating their unpopularity. Only after a decisive 1987 election did "de-nationalization" begin.[10] In a rightist direction, Brazil's tacit pact protecting more conventional military interests helped to stymie a proposed constitutional provision on land reform.[11] The agenda restrictions created by pacts can serve the interests of both left and right.

To what extent these two specific effects will show up in the East European cases is open to question. Clearly the "conservative" socioeconomic effect of pacting has not been to preserve previously socialist economies, even though it sometimes did protect existing market relations in Latin America and Southern Europe. Even if the effect in Eastern Europe is limited to decelerating the pace of economic reform, though, it will be of more than passing interest.[12] The "praetorian" threat also seems to be lower in Eastern Europe than in Latin American and Southern Europe, perhaps because of the lower profile of the military under state socialism, even in Poland.[13] But other potential instabilities already have proven greater in Eastern Europe. The collapsed transitions in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) put the state itself at risk, in part because vested interests were not protected. The results were new boundaries.

In the GDR, regime and opposition groups participating in the belated round table at Berlin's Dietrich Bonhoeffer House from December 1989 to March 1990 could easily agree on their mutual interest in preserving an independent East German state, whatever the extent of

10. When the moderate Social Democratic Party (PSD) achieved the first of two consecutive absolute majorities Tom Gallagher, "Goodbye to the Revolution," *West European Politics* 11 (January 1988), p. 140. On the nationalizations, see Ben Pimlott, "Socialism in Portugal: Was it a Revolution?" *Government & Opposition* 12:3 (1977), pp. 332–50.

11. See Frances Hagopian, "Democracy by Undemocratic Means? Elites, Political Pacts, and Regime Transition in Brazil," *Comparative Political Studies* 23 (July 1990), pp. 147–70

12. Differences of pace are sufficient to justify separating many cases that Przeworski classifies together in spite of their different paths to democracy, *Democracy and the Market*, p 190.

13. See Dale R Herspring, "Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist Eastern Europe the Potential for Praetorianism," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 25 (June 1992), pp. 99–122.

political and economic reform.[14] The absence of a timely pact between a reformist regime and representative opposition organizations, however, may have opened the door to rapid German re-unification and disappearance of the state altogether. Similarly, a Czechoslovak transition agreement might well have guaranteed Slovak national autonomy more fully, perhaps preventing or postponing the "velvet divorce" of January 1, 1993. In the federal elections of June 1992, citizens never voted for separation.[15] A National Party (SNS) polled only 9.4 percent in the Slovak Republic. Nonetheless, after the break up of Civic Forum in the Czech Republic and its sister Slovak movement, Public Against Violence, the fragmented electoral results produced no working parliamentary majority. The caretaker grand coalition formed by Václav Klaus' Czech Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and Vladimir Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) could agree only on divorce. After his resignation as federal president in July, Václav Havel conceded making "a number of mistakes with regard to Slovakia."[16] But it is just as likely that new democratic institutions were overloaded by the immediate pressure to "harmonize the national with the democratic and civic dimensions" of the Velvet Revolution.[17]

As for socioeconomic policy in post-Communist Eastern Europe, David Stark has suggested that "differences in how the institutions fell apart will have consequences for how . . . economic institutions can be reconstructed."[18] One of those consequences after negotiated transitions has been to allow a number of former members of the nomenklatura to exploit their positions and insider connections and become well-endowed capitalists.[19] In addition, privatization programs after pacted transitions have tended to grant state-owned company managers or employees "positional resources" to invest in newly

14. See Uwe Thaysen's account of the talks, *Der Runde Tisch. Oder: Wo bleibt das Volk?* (Opladen, 1990)
15. And no referendum subsequently took place, even though a supporting petition was signed by 2.5 million.
16 Interview in Lidové Noviny (Oct. 27, 1992), reprinted in *East European Reporter* 5 (Nov – Dec 1992), p. 33.
17 As Martin Bútora, Zora Bútorová, and Tatiana Rosová had warned in "The Hard Birth of Democracy in Slovakia," *Journal of Communist Studies* 7 (Dec 1991), p. 447.
18. David Stark, "Path Dependence and Privatization Strategies in Eastern Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 6 (Winter 1992), p 20
19 Especially in Hungary, see President Józef Antall's interview, *The New Hungarian Quarterly* 117 (Spring 1990), p. 42.

privatized firms.[20] In Hungary, the early wave of "spontaneous" privatization deals initiated by Communist-era managers continues, in spite of the State Property Agency's mission to "privatize privatization." In Poland, employees receive 10 percent of all shares when the Ministry of Transformation privatizes a state-owned company. The pace also has been slower than expected. "We can no longer claim our economic reforms have gone the furthest," Finance Minister Jerzy Osiatynski declared in March 1993.[21] After regime collapse, neither the Czechoslovak nor the German privatization programs recognized non-market privileges. After German reunification, the 2500-man central Treuhand agency has dealt in more traditional, and mostly western German, financial resources. In 1992, Czechoslovak citizens had to pay a registration fee before actually using their universal investment coupons, although mutual-fund-like investment firms promised a quick return on their money. As Czechoslovakia sold its Škoda auto works to Volkswagen in March 1991, Hungary was exempting whole sectors of the economy from privatization and Poland was reducing the initial number of firms scheduled for sale from 400 to 230.

Differences in the extent to which the state apparatus, especially its internal security agencies, has been purged also reflect pacting or collapse.[22] The short-lived democratic East German government created a separate agency, the "Gauck Authority," to process the Staatssicherheitsdienst (Stasi) documents that had been secured in Bastille-like "stormings" by citizens' committees. The agency was recognized in the reunification treaty and tasked by a 1991 law with allowing access to their files for all victims of Stasi persecution. Most elected officials and many civil servants, including professors and teachers, are screened for past employment or collaboration with the secret police.[23] In October

20. Stark, ibid, p. 48.
21. After the Sejm initially rejected a mass privatization program granting all citizens coupons to invest in 600 companies without any registration fee, *Der Tagesspiegel*. Berlin, March 21, 1993, p. 5 Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka eventually got the bill approved but then lost a vote of confidence by one vote, forcing the summer elections.
22. The pattern does not hold for *external* security forces The military has been reformed more in Hungary and Poland than in Czechoslovakia See Herspring, "Praetorianism," pp. 110–16. Naturally, reunification dissolved the East German army.
23. A 1992 law also extended the statute of limitations by restarting the clock on Reunification Day, October 3, 1990. The Stasi had 97,000 full-time employees, a network of 500,000 paid informants, and owned 2,000 pieces of property, see David Gill & Ulrich Schroter, *Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit Anatomie des Mielke-Imperiums* (Berlin, 1991)

1991, Czechoslovakia adopted the Screening Act, under which former secret police (StB), militia, and party officials are automatically banned from public office for five years.[24] The scope of the German and Czechoslovak purges means that relatively few Communist apparatchiks have remained in a position to influence the pace of post-Communist reform. In contrast, both the Polish and Hungarian constitutional courts have thrown out legislative acts intended to begin similar purges. The Hungarian law, passed in 1991, would have lifted the statute of limitations on crimes committed under the Communist regime.[25] The Polish screening bill took the form of a resolution rather than a law. After it was ruled unconstitutional in 1992, and following a scandal over a mistake-filled list alleging 62 active politicians had been informants, the small Interior Ministry office charged with reviewing secret police records was closed.[26]

Keeping in mind these various possible legacies, the proposed model explains when a negotiated transition is most likely and, conversely, when a regime is more likely to collapse without a viable pact. After defining pact and transition, political society is distinguished from civil society. The common dynamic of mobilizing organizational resources is used to illustrate how opposition under authoritarian rule resembles a social movement. Then eight recent cases of democratic transition in Europe and Latin America are surveyed to test the model's plausibility.

Defining Transition and Pact

The elites who control regimes or lead opposition groups are the only ones who can negotiate transition pacts. They represent inherently organizational entities, not reified concepts like "the state" or "the masses." As a practical condition, the state elites must be able to locate

24. See Jan Kavan & Petr Janska, "The Screening Act: Anti-Communist or Anti-democratic?" *East European Reporter* 5 (Jan.–Feb. 1992), pp. 59–61. The Slovak Republic, at the insistence of Public Against Violence, put several Communist officials on trial in 1991, but after separation from the Czech Republic a former Communist was named Defense Minister in 1993.

25. Under a "tacit understanding," and in spite of the Hungarian Democratic Forums' campaign promise of "spring cleaning," the democratic regime also has respected Prime Minister Miklós Németh's November 1989 decision to close state archives for 30 years, Rudolf Tökés, 'Hungary: the Anatomy of a Party-State," *Journal of Communist Studies* 8 (Sept. 1992), p. 4.

26. *East European Reporter* 5 (Jan.–Feb. 1992), p. 38; and (July–Aug. 1992), pp. 6–10. Parliamentary proposals to put Jaruzelski and former Interior Minister Kiszack on trial may have contributed to Wałęsa's decision to dissolve Parliament in spring 1993.

negotiating partners in the politically active part of civil society. There is a seed of truth in the tyrant's insincere lament that he cannot negotiate with nobody. Yet, the regime also establishes a social context that either restricts or facilitates the opposition organizations required for potential negotiating partners to represent anyone besides themselves. In authoritarian regimes, the radical reform that could facilitate such organized negotiating partners tends to occur when ruling elites split into factions and one faction reaches out for a new base of support in society. Only then, when opposition organization is underway, can interaction between state and society grow into the dialectic of regime concession and opposition conquest that marks a negotiated transition. A specific hypothesis is that a transition will, therefore, tend to be pacted when the authoritarian regime is split over initiating radical reform and an opposition has had time to organize itself. Otherwise, it is likely to occur through regime collapse and the mass mobilization that then becomes possible.

"Transition" itself is simply a term for the process of going from one type of regime to another. "Democratization" is a possible result of that process. It implies that the previous regime was authoritarian, whether of the bureaucratic (military or civilian) or post-totalitarian variety.[27] In order to assess the model's "regime split" and "opposition organization" variables, one must know when a given transition began. Inconveniently enough, transitions have no single precipitating cause. Because of this multi-causality, it takes three major causes to cover the transitions in post-war Latin America, Southern Europe, and Eastern Europe: 1) hegemonic withdrawal; 2) defeat in war; and, 3) regime-initiated radical reform:

1) Hegemonic withdrawal: "The factor that determines the limits of possible evolution" is the Soviet military presence, Adam Michnik wrote about Poland in 1976.[28] Given the Brezhnev Doctrine of "limited sovereignty," a necessary if insufficient cause of transition in Eastern Europe was Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signaling that the Red Army no longer would block political reform.[29] Perhaps

27 On the Post-totalitarian Authoritarianism regime type, see Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Democratic Transitions and Consolidation* (forthcoming).

28. "A New Evolutionism" [1976] in *Letters From Prison*. (Berkeley, 1985), p. 143

29. As defined in R. Jones, *The Soviet Concept of Limited Sovereignty: From Lenin to Gorbachev* (London, 1989), pp. 54–8.

he had hoped to create a series of loyal reform Communist regimes. His spokesman did quip that the only difference between Perestroika/ Glasnost and the Prague Spring was a matter of years. Whatever his goal, Gorbachev withdrew the hegemonic prop upon which weakly legitimated regimes relied. (Similarly, the U.S. had helped spark the "people power" revolution in 1986 by ending its unconditional support for a sultanistic Philippine regime.)[30]

The Foreign Minister of "New Thinking," Eduard Shevardnadze, now claims that Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe had been ruled out as early as April 1985, but Gorbachev's first public signal may have been his denunciation of the Brezhnev Era two years later in Prague.[31] East German General Secretary Honecker realized about then that the "Common European Home" would come at his expense.[32] Shevardnadze declared a policy of "non-aggression, respect for sovereignty, and national independence" in July 1988.[33] The signals became unmistakable when Gorbachev promised the United Nations in December 1988 unilaterally to withdraw some troops from Bloc countries and then completed the withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989. Tolerating Communist party losses in the June 1989 Polish elections and explicitly renouncing the Brezhnev Doctrine in late October 1989 amounted to reiterations. Thus, even before 1989 the hegemonic withdrawl must have become clear to Warsaw Pact regimes and their populations. Therefore, regime splits and opposition organization will be assessed for Eastern Europe in mid-1988.

2) War: In Latin America and Southern Europe, however, some transitions began when regimes failed to win wars. Military failure so completely undermined the military regimes that they could no longer block re-democratization. Portugal's transition began on April 25, 1974, when Movimento das Forças Armadas junior officers deposed

30. Mark Thompson explains why personalism and corruption made Ferdinand Marcos' regime "sultanistic" in "Searching for a Strategy: the Traditional Opposition to Marcos and the Transition to Democracy in the Philippines" (Ph.D. diss, Yale, 1991), pp. 7–10. Ceaucescu's Romania shared some of the same characteristics.

31. *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (London, 1991), p. 122

32. Reinhold Andert and Wolfgang Herzberg, *Der Sturz: Honecker im Kreuzverhor* (Berlin, 1990), p. 21. As early as October 1986 he had complained to Gorbachev about signs of a new Soviet toleration for German reunification. Daniel Kuchenmeister, "Wann begann das Zerwurfnis zwischen Honecker und Gorbatschow?" *Deutschland Archiv* (January 1993), p. 39.

33. In his famous Foreign Ministry speech, as quoted by Jeffrey Gedmin, *The Hidden Hand* (Washington, D.C., 1992), p. 20

longtime dictator Antonio d'Oliveira Salazar's successor, Marcello Caetano, in a bloodless coup. Argentina's transition was well underway by the time the military junta had formally surrendered the Falkland/Malvinas Islands back to Great Britain in June 1982.

3) Reform: other Latin American and South European transitions began as a regime split so deeply that one of its factions initiated not just liberalization but such radical reform it had to reach out for new social allies. The Brazilian transition began in 1974, when military dictator Gen. Ernesto Geisel announced his policy of distensão (easing). Spain's transition began with the 1976 rise to power of reformer Adolfo Suárez, who had already announced his intentions to the corporative assembly.

The term pact may convey the false impression that a transition agreement must be written down on a piece of paper. That idea has sidetracked theorists into barren considerations about how "contract compliance" could possibly be enforced in the exceptional fluidity characteristic of a transition. A pact is actually an open-ended bargaining process rather than a formal contract. It is potentially unbounded in time and in participation and can only be defined by its result—transition to democracy or reversion to authoritarian rule. A pact is a mutual understanding between regime and opposition elites about how to reach free elections, "on the basis of mutual guarantees for the 'vital interests' of those entering into it."[34] It may take the form of a round table, secret consultations, or both.[35] In the past, formal or informal negotiations have taken anywhere from weeks to years. Simply holding a round table does not produce a pact in this sense. When sponsored by disintegrating regimes, some round tables have "simply coordinated the final details . . . where regimes had already collapsed."[36] Nor is a round table required for negotiating a transition pact. In Spain, a series of one-on-one consultations coordinated by the regime took the place that East Europeans had bestowed exclusively on the round table format in 1989. The "implicit, or explicit but secret" Brazilian pact followed public signaling supplemented by occasional meetings between the

34. O'Donnell et al., *Transitions*, p. 34.
35. The Polish pact emerged not just from a round table, but also from the "Magdalenka Group," i.e., the secret Wałęsa-Kiszczak side meetings; David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-politics* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 207.
36. David Stark and László Bruszt, "Negotiating the Institutions of Democracy," *Working Papers on Transitions From State Socialism* 8 (Ithaca, 1990), p. 20

military and one opposition leader, Tancredo Neves.[37] It entailed a de facto amnesty for former military regime members suspected of human rights abuses and a tacit agreement to put a former regime party member on the opposition ticket as vice president.[38]

The fact that the informal Brazilian pact survived Neves' sudden death, on the eve of his inauguration as the first democratically elected president, should mitigate the surprise that Polish and Hungarian pacts in 1989 could adapt to unexpected election and referendum results. In Poland, the Communist party conceded an early direct presidential election after it failed in June 1989 to win a single Senate seat and nearly failed to elect Wojciech Jaruzelski president indirectly. In Hungary the party postponed a snap presidential election and accepted a parliamentary system after two round table opposition groups refused to sign the final agreement, collected 100,000 petition signatures, and won a plebiscite in November 1989. Since the agreements were less formal in Spain and Brazil, the necessary adaptation simply occurred less publicly. In none of these cases of negotiated transitions did adaptation jeopardize the pact's ultimate goal, which was to reach free elections.[39]

Recent state-oriented democratization theories have helped explain how unexpected transitions could occur.[40] Although they acknowledge the roles of state and society, these theories have gone much further in analyzing the state, and its constituent factions and bureaucratic interests, than society. Society sometimes seems to be reified into an undifferentiated "mass." In addition, the mechanics and implications of state-society interaction are seldom spelled out. A more differentiated treatment of society and a more explicit theory of the interaction between state and society will help explain Eastern Europe's various transition paths.

Existing theory has shown that an authoritarian state may contain

37. Josep Colomer, "Transitions by Agreement: Modeling the Spanish Way," *American Political Science Review* 85 (December 1991), p. 1295.

38. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Challenges to Democratization in Brazil," *World Policy Journal* 2 (Spring, 1988), p. 286.

39. On the flexibility of transition pacts in general, see Guiseppe DiPalma, *To Craft Democracies. An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 130–33.

40. Classic examples of this literature include O'Donnell et al., *Transitions;* DiPalma, *To Craft Democracies;* Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, 1971); Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics* 3 (April 1970), pp. 337–63; and, Juan J. Linz, "Innovative Leadership in the Transition to Democracy and a New Democracy. the Case of Spain" in Dupas, ed., *A Transição que deu certo* (São Paulo, 1989).

soft- and hard-line factions that split a regime and drive forward the logic of negotiation. Assuming the regime can "somehow find and empower valid interlocutors outside the regime itself with whom to negotiate," it may be possible to negotiate a pact.[41] This logic held in 1989. In addition to the presence of fearless masses in the streets, the correlation between pact-making and regime splits continued to be strong. It mattered that the still-unified Czechoslovak regime of hard-liner Mikloš Jakeš continued to repress potential pact partners while the split Hungarian regime of radical reformer Imre Poszgay actively organized them. The regime splits most important to democratic transitions are those causing radical reform with the potential to change an authoritarian regime's fundamentally illiberal nature.[42] Radical reform is not just any hint of liberalization. Political amnesties, for example, have a tendency to be one-time or temporary measures to shore up teetering authoritarian regimes. Instead, radical reform should be thought of as multiple steps toward the institutions of procedural democracy, the most relevant of which for a transition are the most basic freedoms of speech, press, interest group association, and political party formation.[43] There is always room to improve on the institutions of democracy, but this minimal definition of democracy reflects the fact that transitions in 1989 from "real, existing socialism" were to real, existing democracy.

Disaggregating Society

With its nuanced treatment of the state, existing democratic transition theory can account for a unified regime that chooses not to negotiate its own demise or for a split regime that extricates itself through pacting, but it has difficulty explaining what happened in Czechoslovakia and the GDR in 1989. In those two cases, unified regimes tried to extricate themselves from power with pacts but failed, partly because political

41. O'Donnell & Schmitter, *Tentative Conclusions*, p. 39.

42. Robert Fishman distinguishes between government, regime, and state in "Rethinking State and Regime," *World Politics* 92 (April 1990), p. 429; see also Stephanie Lawson, "Conceptual Issues in the Comparative Study of Regime Change and Democratization," *Comparative Politics* 25 (January 1993), pp. 183–205.

43. Robert Dahl identifies these as: 1) elected officials, 2) free and fair elections, 3) inclusive suffrage, 4) the right to run for office, 5) freedom of expression, 6) alternative information (vice censorship), and 7) associational autonomy ("including political parties and interest groups"). See *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, 1989), p. 221.

actors in civil society were so unorganized. Unable to locate credible negotiating partners, precisely because they had repressed political society so thoroughly, these two state-socialist regimes "withered away" and surrendered power to comparatively unorganized oppositions. They collapsed without attempting either to implement radical reform or to defend themselves by all available means. To explain this regime collapse path, the presence of opposition actors cannot be taken for granted. The theories developed before 1989 naturally reflect the cases they were built to explain, concentrated in Latin America and Southern Europe, where the strength of political society tended to co-vary with regime splits. Splits among ruling elites there could serve as a surrogate for opposition strength. While this analytical shortcut contributed mightily to parsimonious theory, it was only possible because a certain amount of social autonomy could be taken for granted. For the state-socialist regimes of Eastern Europe, each of which aspired at some point to deny society all organizational autonomy, such a shortcut is misleading. Instead, social autonomy should be explained and measured since it may well vary independently of regime splits.

The proposed model facilitates analyzing the genesis of post-totalitarian oppositions by lifting them out of the undifferentiated abstraction "civil society" to a more concrete political society. One of the first theorists of regime collapse, Alexis de Tocqueville, also distinguished "political" from "civil" society.[44] More recently, Z. A. Pelczinski has described a "political society existing outside and in opposition to the state and made possible by the existence of a degree of social autonomy."[45] The strength of such a political society cannot be measured with precision, but the East European revolutions of 1989 suggest what not to measure. The East German and Czechoslovak transitions show that an opposition can fill the streets without being sufficiently organized to negotiate a viable pact, so political society cannot be measured by counting the number of marchers alone. Such bean-counting would lead to the false conclusion that political society was strong in the GDR in late 1989 because hundreds of thousands protested but weak in Poland in 1988–89 because no one marched.

44 Ekiert discusses Tocqueville and the need for a more precise distinction in his "Theoretical Consideration," p. 300.

45. Z. A. Pelszynski, "Solidarity and the Rebirth of Civil Society in Poland," in John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State* (London, 1988), pp 368, 379.

Instead, the interactive model defines opposition strength organizationally. Working on the early transitions, Alfred Stepan once proposed taking into account the "relative autonomy, strength, and number of organizations" in political society.[46] In Poland, Michnik described the creation of an "organized society."[47] The Polish strikes certainly had their element of spontaneity, especially in 1970 and 1988, but in the crucial year of 1980 they were consciously organized by networks of "interfactory strike committees." From an organizational perspective, the Solidarity movement demonstrates well the parallels between the high barriers to collective action faced by political oppositions under authoritarian regimes and those faced by social movements in general.

Research on social movements shows that unified and "formally structured movement organizations are . . . more effective at mobilizing resources and mounting sustained challenges than . . . informal movements."[48] With the unprecedented degree of independent organization it represented under state socialism, Solidarity's Gdansk Agreement in August 1980 fits this finding.[49] Social movement research also explains why it is more efficient for movements to incorporate preexisting institutional loyalties than to create entirely new ones. Such "group mobilization" accounts well for Solidarity's rapid growth. Isolated illegal unions, especially on the Baltic coast, intellectual groups led by the Committee for the Defense of Workers (KOR), and the Catholic church joined together in a "total movement" that combined their separate economic, political, and social demands to achieve the union's temporary legalization.[50] On the way, Solidarity incorporated

46. Stepan, "State Power in the Southern Cone of Latin America," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, & Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 317–43. A convenient working definition of political society may be found in Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics* (Princeton, 1988), p. 4.

47. Michnik, *Letters*, pp. 124, 129.

48. J. Craig Jenkins "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *American Review of Sociology* 9 (1983), p. 528. The additional findings of "resource mobilization" literature cited are in John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82 6 (1977), p. 1228, and, Michael Hechter, *The Principles of Group Solidarity* (Berkeley, 1987), p. 35.

49. Although it only became a national organization after a contentious convention in September 1980, and Wałęsa advocated a "decentralized structure" until the Congress of 1981, Solidarity had grown into a unified organization, partly in reaction to the failed, spontaneous strikes of 1970. See Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity. A Political Sociology of Poland's Working-Class Democratization* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 107–12.

50. Alain Touraine coined the phrase "total movement," but his trilogy of class, democratic, and national themes curiously downplayed religion's role. See *Solidarity. the Analysis of a Social Movement, Poland 1980–81* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 59–63.

groups like the Confederation for an Independent Poland and the Committees for Free Trade Unions. Finally, recent research reminds us that not only tangible resources, such as money, labor, or facilities, but also less tangible resources like time and completely intangible resources, such as nationalist or religious symbols and creeds, can be mobilized to form an organization. Solidarity tapped just such intangible resources by invoking Polish nationalism and Catholicism.

Although the focus in negotiating a transition must be on political society, civil society defines some of the tangible and intangible resources available to an opposition. Since it largely defines a citizen's private activities and identity, civil society became the natural target of neo-Stalinist totalitarian ambitions in Eastern Europe. However, variations in three dimensions of civil society affected the organizational strength of political society: economic system, the church, and nationalism. A "strong" civil society would be one enjoying more autonomy from the state in the economic and religious realms, and that was not riven by contending nationalist definitions of state boundaries.

Despite its fundamental contextual importance, democratic transition theory tends to assign society in general a short-lived and indirect role. While calling attention to the "resurrection of civil society" after an authoritarian regime begins to liberalize, one account describes an "angry society," which by exploding in a "popular upsurge" helps "frighten" moderates into negotiating, even as it inevitably runs out of steam.[51] But that describes mass defiance, not the social movement–like opposition organization required for pact making to succeed. And, the fear-driven pacts implied did not occur in the GDR or Czechoslovakia. Distinguishing political from civil society, then, is a first step toward bringing society back into theory.

Interaction and Unified Opposition

Developing a full-scale interactive theory of transitions is not possible here, but a comparison of the diagrams of existing and interactive models of transition highlights the proposed revision. Figure 1 represents existing state-oriented models. The alternative in Figure 2 preserves the regime splits causal arrow, but replaces civil with political

51. O Donnell et al., *Transitions*, pp. 48–56.

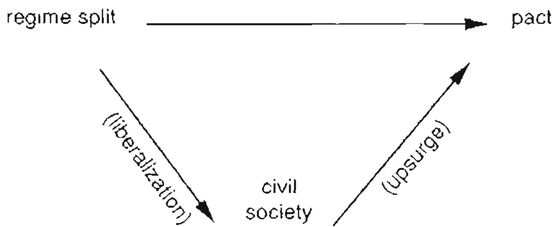

Figure 1. Existing Transition Theory

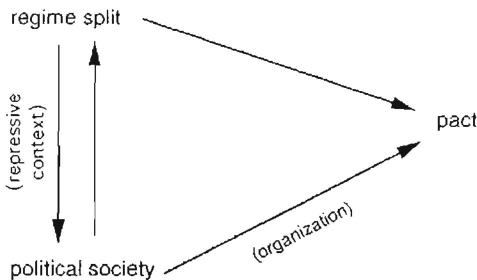

Figure 2. Proposed Interactive Model

society and upsurge with organization. At the same time it makes regime-opposition relations interactive. In lieu of a full theory, the promise of an interactive approach is shown by how it helps explain an unusually unified organization. Solidarity's success in overcoming the high post-totalitarian barriers to collective action is striking and paradoxical because such a unified movement organization never develops in a more conducive, liberalized context. The interactive model resolves this paradox by showing why the same organizational fragmentation that reflects the weakness of political society in a repressive situation may also reflect the strength of pluralism in a more liberalized context. The key is the state's role in setting the repressive or liberalized context in the first place.

Solidarity's experience shows that "political regimes are important contributors to the success or failure of social movements."[52] Their effect also varies by regime type. Authoritarian regimes constrain opportunities for movement organization but democratic regimes expand

52. Elizabeth Crighton, "Resource Mobilization and Solidarity," in Bronislaw Misztal, ed., *Poland After Solidarity* (Oxford, 1985), p. 128.

them.[53] Opposition organizations under authoritarian rule react to the regime-defined "collective contexts that give them the opportunity to protest."[54] The outbreaks of massive protest in Eastern Europe in 1989 were responses to new opportunities created by changes in the regimes (and in the Warsaw Pact). Yet, a regime's effect on opposition organization is not simple and linear, but rather complex and curvilinear.

The "unified opposition" graph illustrates this relationship (Figure 3). As the level of repression decreases, a point may come at which the regime-defined context may balance sufficient autonomy for an opposition to organize with sufficient repression to motivate it to unify. Thus, a unified opposition organization can be a logical defensive reaction. Because of this important state effect, the dynamics of unified formal organizations like Solidarity cannot be explained entirely through their own "internal lives."[55]

Further, it is logical to expect that sufficient state repression would close off all opportunities to mobilize resources for opposition organizations. This point on the curve in Figure 3 may well have been reached during each East European country's neo-Stalinist, totalitarian period. With the imposition of martial law on December 13, 1981, after a period of liberalization, Poland temporarily moved back toward this point. By arresting five thousand activists, the regime dismantled a ten-million-member union without firing a shot.[56] And the same logic operates in the other direction. Sufficient liberalization would remove the incentive for opposition organizations to unify. This curvilinear effect of regime-defined contexts on the opposition's opportunity to organize helps explain why, after the 1986 amnesty in Poland had initiated a slow liberalization, Solidarity did not so much rise phoenix-like from the ashes as begin to split into factions.[57] However unforeseen, this fragmentation was logical (see separate point in Figure 3).

It is possible that social autonomy was achieved in Hungary during

53. See Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Englewood Cliffs, 1978), especially chapter 4.

54. Sidney Tarrow, "Eastern European Social Movements: Globalization, Differentiation, and Political Opportunity?" (Paper presented at the First European Conference on Social Movements, Berlin, October 29–31, 1992)

55. Ibid.

56. Robert Zuzowski, "KOR after KOR: the Intelligentsia and Dissent, 1981–87," *The Polish Review* 33:2 (1988), pp. 178–80.

57. Ost, *Politics of Anti-politics*, pp. 207–10.

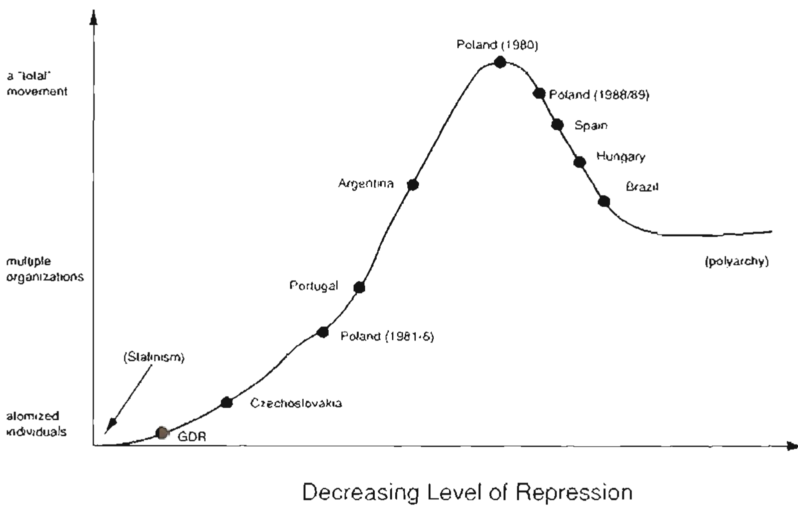

Figure 3. The Unification of Opposition Movements (by repressive context)

the late 1980s without the reversion to repression that might have forged a plural opposition into a single movement. Facing no "negative incentive", Hungary's opposition immediately began forming multiple legalized political parties and interest groups, in effect jumping over the graph's unified organization "hump" (see point in Figure 3). In no sense is such a vibrant political society "weaker" than one that defensively produces a more unified organization because it is under greater assault. One sign of an organizationally strong but plural political opposition would be its ability to unify into a single movement temporarily when confronted by a sufficient regime threat, perhaps the sudden suspension or revocation of the transition itself. Such temporarily unified opposition movements kept transitions on track in Hungary in 1989 and Brazil in 1983, illustrating the interactive model's causal arrow running from political society back to regime (Figure 2).

The shape of political society under authoritarian rule reflects the interaction between regimes setting repressive contexts and individuals in political society attempting to organize an opposition. A movement like Solidarity arose in part spontaneously from below, but also in part

because "the state generated its opponent."[58] Polish society was able to form a unified opposition movement like Solidarity not just because of its religious culture, national history, or organizational talents, but also due to the unusual balance of "repressive toleration" under Stanisław Kania from the 1970 strikes to the Gdansk Agreement of 1980.[59] Political society was not necessarily stronger in Poland than in Hungary in 1988–89 just because Solidarity had been so unified in 1980–81. Nor was *political* society automatically stronger in Portugal before 1974 than in Poland and Hungary in the late 1980s just because Portugese *civil* society enjoyed the potentially greater autonomy of a market economy. Comparisons should not make assumptions but rather answer empirical questions.

Evidence from Eight Cases

In that empirical spirit, the short case studies that follow test the plausibility of this hypothesis:

> Transitions tend to be pacted when the authoritarian regime is split over whether to initiate radical reform and an opposition has begun to organize.

The cases analyzed include an equal number from inside and outside Eastern Europe, an equal number from negotiated and regime collapse transition paths. Each case study reviews the evidence for regime splits, radical reform, political society's strength, and mobilize-able resources in civil society, then evaluates the resulting opportunities for autonomous opposition organization. Table 1 ranks all eight cases by organization in political society and by regime splits, the two variables in the model. The case studies are exploratory, the rankings provisional. Still, it is possible to "*post*-dict" the occurrence of pact-making in democratic transitions. Those transitions that ranked high on both variables tended to be negotiated, while those ranking lower tended to experience regime collapse instead. The case studies follow in order, from the most

58. Laba, *Roots of Solidarity*, p. 180. Jadwiga Staniszkis stated its "centralization" mirrored the party-state's, see *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton, 1984), p. 77. Laba points out some important elements of "decentralization," but he also documents how the state inadvertantly stimulated: 1) re-discovery of the sit-down-strike tactic, by blocking factory exits in 1970; 2) formal demands, to get workers off the streets in August 1980; and 3) a national organization, by imposing registration requirements
59. Staniszkis, *Self-Limiting Revolution*, p. 166.

Table I. *Eight Cases of Democratic Transition Ranked by Interactive Variables*

Rank	*Opposition organization*	*Regime splits*
1.	Brazil*	Hungary*
2.	Argentina	Poland*
3.	Spain*	Spain*
4.	Poland*	Brazil*
5.	Hungary*	Portugal
6.	Portugal	Czechoslovakia
7.	Czechoslovakia	Argentina
8.	East Germany	East Germany

(Note: asterisk indicates a negotiated transition)

to the least organized political society. (Points in Figure 3 also locate each case.)

Case 1: Brazil

In Brazil, the apparent absence of a regime split was superficial.[60] Twenty years of smooth leadership transitions from one general to another had masked a slow internal power shift. The military intelligence service (SNI), whose pervasive presence in civil society also reached all major economic firms, had begun to threaten the traditional military hierarchy. This split hidden inside the regime inspired Gen. Ernesto Geisel's initial reforms of 1974 and his successor's explicit commitment in 1980 to re-democratization. For all the regime's human rights abuses and casuísmos (manipulations of electoral law), it never had completely banned opposition parties or turned them into puppets like those in East European "national fronts."

Civil society was rooted in a national identity rejected only by a dwindling Amazonian Indian population. The large state-run sector of the economy did not prevent a booming private sector from providing shelter for autonomous organization. Independent unions began forming outside the corporatist structure of official unions. They even

60. On Brazil see. Alfred Stepan, ed., *Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation* (Oxford, 1989); Stepan, *Military Politics*, Bolívar Lamounier and Rachel Meneguello, *Partidos e Consolidação Democrática: o Caso Brasileiro* (São Paulo, 1986), and Frances Hagopian & Scott Mainwaring, "Democracy in Brazil: Problems and Prospects," *World Policy Journal* 3 (Summer, 1987), pp. 488–514.

spawned a Workers Party (PT) that would place second in the 1989 presidential election. Not all of the Church hierarchy supported the military regime. Friar Leonardo Boff's Liberation Theology movement could organize thousands of grass roots "ecclesiastical base communities". Clearly, the country was "changing from below as well as from above."[61] Political society was also remarkably well-organized. Traditionally free news media continued to probe the limits of censorship. Existing opposition parties attracted one million people to rallies in major cities during the unsuccessful Direitas Já (direct presidential election now) campaign of 1983. In reaction to the indirect presidential election of 1985, opposition parties forged a united front called the Aliança Democrática (Democratic Alliance), for which the regime had inadvertently laid the ground work by imposing an artificial two-party system. The regime miscalculated and lost control of the presidency even though the electoral college had been stacked in its favor. The Brazilian case shows that a highly variegated collection of organizations in a liberalized political society may be able to unify when a regime threatens to stop the transition process. It also illustrates how a regime faction, even one limited to the secret police, can inspire an authoritarian leader to negotiate a democratic transition.

Case 2: Argentina

From 1976 to 1982, the authoritarian regime in Argentina quarreled over economic reforms but never split on the issue of radical reform.[62] Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri, who had begun concentrating the military junta's power in his own hands after 1981, was able to consolidate civilian support for the regime as well by invading the Falkland/Malvinas Islands in April 1982, which inspired a spontaneous crowd of 250,000 supporters to gather at his presidential palace. If he had been able to win the war, he might have remained in power for years, but instead he surrendered the islands back to Great Britain in June.

Although the nationality of the islands was contested, no rival nationalism plagued Argentinian civil society. The autonomy represented

61. Margaret Keck, *The Workers' Party and Democratization in Brazil* (New Haven, 1992), p. 19.
62. On Argentina see: David Pion-Berlin, "Military Breakdown and Redemocratization in Argentina," in George Lopez and Michael Stohl, eds., *Liberalization & Redemocratization in Latin America* (Westport, 1987), pp. 209–30; Marcelo Cavarozzi, "Political Cycles in Argentina since 1955," in O'Donnell et al., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Latin America*, pp. 23–28, Torcuato di Tella, "Liberalization by Omission: Argentina after the War," *Government & Opposition* 17:4 (1982), p. 386.

by the large private sector was limited only by the parlous state of the economy. Especially due to the Peronist legacy in labor, the country had a long tradition of well-organized social actors. Its Catholic Church was the most conservative in Latin America, however, and never served as an umbrella for opposition activities. Even though parties had been banned, the Radical Party, which eventually won the first election in 1983, and the Peronist Justicialista political movement were able to maintain formal organizations. The Argentine case shows that a regime split over reform is not always required for political society to become well-organized. Its un-pacted transition also demonstrates that an authoritarian regime may occasionally collapse even if sufficiently organized opposition partners are available. Military defeat may suffice to render a negotiated transition unlikely.

Case 3: Spain

The regime split in Spain only occurred after founding dictator Francisco Franco died.[63] His initial successors undertook no radical changes until the restored monarch, Juan Carlos I, arranged for reformer Adolfo Suárez to be named as prime minister. Suárez re-legalized previous political parties, including the Communist party, and orchestrated a rapid transition to democracy. Opposed every step of the way by a hard line "bunker" faction, he caused a major regime split.

There had been a single official party, Franco's *Movimiento,* but it had never completely dominated political society. By the 1960s formal organizations were part of the "a-legal" opposition that was illegal but tolerated. Censorship eased temporarily and opposition leaders were even allowed to meet foreign diplomats by 1970. In civil society, the Catholic Church apologized for its role in helping Franco to power and began sheltering opposition activities. The private economy began to boom under the non-ideological policies of a group of Catholic technocrats, offering another stimulus for autonomous action. The comisiones obreras (workers' committees) independent unions also began to form. Nationalism was a contested political issue because of the Basque re-

63. On Spain see: Paul Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* (London, 1986); Jose Maria Maravall and Julian Santamaria, "Political Change in Spain and the Prospects for Democracy," in O'Donnell et al., *Transitions*, pp. 71–108; Juan J. Linz, "Opposition In and Under an Authoritarian Regime: the Case of Spain" In Robert Dahl, ed., *Regimes & Oppositions* (New Haven, 1973) pp. 171–259; Vicente Palacio Atard, *Juan Carlos I y el Advenimiento de la Democracia* (Madrid, 1989); and, Victor Pérez Diaz, *El retorno de la sociedad civil* (Madrid, 1987), pp. 233–49.

gion's separatist movement and its effective para-military arm (ETA), which had begun accelerating terrorist attacks as Franco's rule ended. Part of the eventual pacted transition included a deal to allow Basque and Catalan leaders to hold regional autonomy referendums, but only two years after the first democratic elections.[64]

In this liberalized context, opposition organizations rapidly began forming in political society. Even before Franco had died, the Socialist Party had reorganized itself, the Communist-led Junta Democrática had been formed, and the Democratic Convergence Platform had linked Socialists, Social Democrats, and Christian Democrats. The opposition presented Suarez with several well-organized negotiating partners. The subsequent transitions in which actors consciously modeled their behavior on the Spanish precedent, including Poland's, seldom heeded the lesson that neither a round table nor a piece of paper is necessary for negotiating a transition pact.[65] Suárez never gathered opposition leaders together in one room, but that did not prevent him from consulting them individually and piecing together the mutual understanding that made a peaceful transition possible despite serious threats from regime hard liners that culminated in a 1981 coup attempt.

Case 4: Poland

The Polish regime was split by the imposition of martial law in 1981, which transfered power from the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) to the Army.[66] General Jaruzelski already had been named Premier in February, then First Secretary in October. He displaced power institutionally from the Politburo to the Council of State.[67] With the lifting of the "state of war" in July 1983, Poland still experienced high levels of repression until the full amnesty in 1986. Soon afterwards, however, opposition groups began to organize once again. David Ost has compared the context from 1987–88 to that in late–Franco Era Spain.:

64. On October 25, 1979, at which point Juan Linz and Al Stepan date the end of Spain's democratic transition, because the issue posed such a threat. "Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Southern Europe." (Paper presented at the Conference on Problems of Democratic Consolidation, Madrid, July 6–8, 1990).

65. See Solidarity's Bronisław Geremek, as quoted in Kenneth Maxwell, "Spain's Transition to Democracy. a Lesson for Eastern Europe?" *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 38:1 (1991), p 47

66. Staniszkis describes a new "authoritarian-bureaucratic, non-ideological army-state based on . . . demobilization of the masses;" *Self-Limiting Revolution*. p 320

67. Moving the First Secretary's office to Belvedere Palace, the presidential residence, appointing five Generals to the cabinet, and deploying other officers in "operative groups" to oversee the party apparatus. George Sanford, *Military Rule in Poland: the Rebuilding of Communist Power* (London, 1986), pp. 198–208.

a de-ideologized ruling party formally running the state, extensive possibilities for independent social activities, tolerance of political opposition and an extremely critical press, a commitment to marketization without liberal democracy, and a deep popular distrust that made the situation inherently unstable.[68]

With the formation of a joint citizens-government council called the Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth (PRON) the Polish regime effectively gave up all lingering aspirations to completely dominate society.

Civil society also enjoyed the organizational umbrella of a tolerated Catholic Church that ran the only church-controlled university in Eastern Europe (at Lublin) and gained self-confidence from the naming of a Polish pope. The tradition of nationalism was deep and unified. Party control of the economy was incomplete because peasants had successfully resisted collectivization, leaving Poland with 85 percent of arable land in private hands and a much larger private sector than Communist reforms in Hungary would ever create.

In spite of this strong civil society and its previous organizational successes, Solidarity began to split up in the late eighties. By 1988, Solidarity faced such spin-off groups as Fighting Solidarity and the Working Group, as well as many recalcitrant local chapters. In fact, the 1988 wildcat strikes that led to the round table talks in 1989 began in defiance of Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa's cautious strategy of "self-limitation."[69]

In addition to illustrating the curvilinearity of the state's effect on opposition organizations, the Polish case also shows that a high degree of opposition unity is not required for negotiating a democratic transition. The militarization of a Communist regime confounded static conceptions of totalitarianism and raised possible parallels with the military authoritarian regimes in Latin America, which had perceived a corporate interest in preserving their role in a future democratic state.

Case 5: Hungary

As the Hungarian regime split over liberalization, Károly Grósz began sharing power in a four-man ruling committee dominated by reformers

68. See Ost, *Politics of Anti-politics*. p. 198.

69. Staniszkis, who had advised Solidarity, once warned that this strategy and "the fiction of its apolitical character" would prevent the "union" from realizing its full revolutionary potential. *Self-Limiting Revolution*. pp. 113–4.

in 1989.[70] The split had already led to attempts by one faction to find new allies in political society. One member of the reformist committee, Imre Poszgay, had begun calling publicly for liberalization as early as November 1986 and attending opposition meetings in 1987. His popularity fostered the regime's illusion, like Jaruzelski's in Poland and the military candidate's in Brazil, that he might be elected president democratically. Key state agencies advocated radical reform as well, including the Finance Ministry and the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences. After consultation with the USSR, hard-line leader János Kádár had resigned in May 1988.

Autonomous organizations were officially legalized under the 1989 Law on Associations, but opposition organization had begun even earlier. Kádár's strikingly non-totalitarian slogan had long been: "those who are not against us are with us." Multi-candidate internal party elections began in 1983. By 1988 the annual demonstration on March 15 to commemorate the failed democratic Revolution of 1848 was no longer being suppressed. In 1989 it would become an official event. Since Trianon, no rival nationalisms had divided civil society. Since the New Economic Mechanism in 1968, except for the interlude from 1974 to 1978, a nascent second economy had reinforced civil society autonomy. Three-fourths of all households earned some part of their income there. State control of religion was looser than in Czechoslovakia. In early 1988, the State Secretary for Church Affairs permitted an increase in the number of church-run schools, charitable services, and monastic orders. In this context of relative official toleration and a relatively strong civil society, political society began to organize actively in the late 1980s. A Democratic Club nominated candidates for internal party elections as early as 1985 and the journal *Demokrata* called openly for pluralism in 1986. With reformer Poszgay's encouragement, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) was founded in 1987. The Network of Free Initiatives was founded in March 1988 and the first independent unions appeared in May 1988. Soon interest groups more common to democratic regimes were formed and the historical parties were resurrected. As

70. On Hungary see: Stark and Bruszt, "Negotiating;" András Bozóki, "Democracy Across the Negotiating Table," *The New Hungarian Quarterly* 125 (Spring 1992), p. 69, George Schopflin, Rudolf Tökés, and Ivan Volgyes, "Leadership Change and Crisis in Hungary," *Problems of Communism* 37 (Sept.–Oct. 1988), pp. 23–46, and Robert Jenkins, "Movements into Parties: the Historical Formation of the Hungarian Opposition," *East Central European Working Papers* 25 (Cambridge, Mass., 1992).

post-dicted, the Hungarian transition was pacted. Eight opposition organizations at the round table initiated in March 1989 were able to forge a united front when the talks stalled and the regime sought to negotiate with them individually. Combined with the rapid growth of local-level "reform circles" inside the official Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSZMP), the temporarily unified opposition helped break the negotiating stalemate by June. Even though the opposition front broke down before a final agreement could be signed in September, it had served its purpose. Rather than the weak political society often portrayed, Hungary had a well-organized, plural opposition, even though it spawned no Solidarity-like movement.

Case 6: Portugal

In Portugal, the succession crisis in 1969 had created the possibility of radical reform, as regime founder Antonio Salazar was replaced by Caetano, who had once proposed ending the colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau.[71] But Caetano's "renovation with continuity" ended up mostly continuity as he backtracked on an initial round of liberalization. The small group of Liberals he recruited into the official National Action Party, and the handful of Catholic technocrats he brought into government, soon gave up waiting for reform and resigned.[72] What precipitated the Revolution of the Carnations in 1974 was not so much a split among regime leaders as junior officers' frustrations with the futile colonial wars.

In civil society, the Catholic Church was more thoroughly repressed than in Spain or Poland, but retained more autonomy than in Czechoslovakia or Hungary. The private economy provided a realm for autonomous organization, although it seldom took on explicitly political form and quickly succumbed to the massive nationalizations of 1975. Although European Portugal was a compact and unitary state, Salazar's definition of a greater Portugal required fighting distant guerilla wars to cling to the last European colonial empire in Africa. As the wars

71 On Portugal see: Kenneth Maxwell, "The Transition in Portugal," in O'Donnell, et al., *Transitions*, pp. 109–37; Antonio Rangel Bandeira, "The Portuguese MFA," *Politics and Society* 6.1 (1976), pp. 10–56; Norman Blume, "SEDES: an Example of Opposition in a Conservative Authoritarian State," *Government & Opposition* 12 (Summer 1977), pp. 35–66; Manuel de Lucena, "The Evolution of Portuguese Corporatism under Salazar & Caetano" in Lawrence & Makler, eds., *Contemporary Portugal* (Austin, 1979); and Philippe Schmitter, "The Impact and Meaning of Non-competitive, Non-free, and Insignificant Elections," in Guy Hermet & Richard Rose, eds., *Elections without Choice* (New York, 1978), pp. 145–68.

72. See Francisco Sá Carneiro, *Uma Tentativa de Participação Política* (Lisboa: (1971).

began to consume 40 percent of the state budget, his formulation of Portuguese nationalism became highly contested.

The civilian dictatorship had imposed stifling restrictions on opposition organizations from 1926 to 1974. All but official party-sponsored organizations were banned. The secret police (PIDE) grew to a size usually associated with post-totalitarian regimes. In a population of nine million, it maintained files on one million.[73] The registered electorate and election results were manipulated. Although political society was allowed to operate semi-freely for thirty days before each vote, the sanctioned opposition did not stay organized outside that period. A large Stalinist Communist Party (PCP) remained banned. Leaders of other parties were routinely exiled, including the Socialist Party's Mário Soares, who later became the first democratic Prime Minister. One pre-political Catholic association was formed under Caetano, but it was soon banned. *Sera Nova*, the only independent publication, was heavily censored. There was far more press freedom in Hungary in 1988–89.

The Portuguese case demonstrates the limited political relevance of liberties confined to civil society and the market economy. In spite of greater civil society autonomy than in the East European cases, Portugal's political society remained disorganized. The collapsed transition led to a series of revolutionary interim governments and coup attempts until the free elections in April 1974. The legacy of nationalizations endured much longer.

Case 7: Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia's "ossified oligarchy" never considered radical reforms before collapsing.[74] One-fifth of Communist Party membership had been purged after reformer Alexander Dubček's Prague Spring had failed to put a "human face" on Socialism. Hardliner Gustav Husák resigned in 1987 but was succeeded by fellow hardliner Jakeš, who had overseen the post-1968 party purge. The context for opposition organization he maintained was highly repressive. Dissidents were jailed for

73. José Freire Antunes, *Os Americanos e Portugal* (Lisboa, 1986), p. 166. In East Germany files were kept on 4 of 18 million residents.

74. Rothschild, *Diversity*, p. 210. On Czechoslovakia see: Sharon L. Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia in Transition* (London, 1991), pp. 42–46, 245–48; Nigel Swain, "Czechoslovakia," in Bogdan Szajkowski, ed., *New Political Parties in Eastern Europe* (Essex, 1991), p. 57; and Janusz Bugajski and Maxine Pollack, *East European Fault Lines: Dissident Opposition and Social Activism* (Boulder, 1989), pp. 152–53.

longer periods than in Poland, but forced emigration was not a specific tactic, as in the GDR. Only under the coalition government formed in December 1989 were opposition organizations tolerated.

Civil society was divided by rival Czech and Slovak nationalisms based on deep language, religious, and economic differences. The churches were directly administered by the State Office of Religious Affairs, which licensed priests, managed church property and finances, and strictly regulated education. If a 1988 Catholic candlelight vigil in Bratislava was the first unsanctioned demonstration since 1968, ten of thirteen bishoprics nonetheless remained vacant. The economic reforms initiated by Prime Minister L'ubomir Štrougal in 1987 were scheduled for full implementation only in 1991. Civil society autonomy increased less than in Poland or Hungary.

In this context, political society remained under-organized. After the regime had enacted the Helsinki human rights provisions into local law, 240 intellectuals formed Charter 77—a "pre-political" group in Havel's terms.[75] Eschewing the trappings of conventional organizations and refusing to invoke nationalism or religion, Charter 77 never developed a mass following. The first consciously political organizations began appearing in 1988, but by November 1989 political society was still weak.

In these conditions Communist Party (KSČ) leaders could negotiate no transition agreement before resigning en masse on November 24. Even after forming the coalition Government of National Understanding, hold-over Prime Minister Adamec's talks with the fledgling opposition groups failed to produce an agreement. The Federal Assembly went ahead and elected Dubček its chairman and Havel as the country's not-yet-democratic president in late December. A January 11, 1990, round table session did agree on a proportional representation electoral system for general elections in June 1990.

Even though it was founded in the midst of revolution, Obcanské forum (Civic Forum) was able to exploit group mobilization tactics to expand quickly. It incorporated older dissident groups like Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Accused (VONS), new groups like the Movement for Civil Liberties and reform-Communist Jiři Hájek's Obroda (later expelled), as well as academics from the

75. "The Power of the Powerless" [Oct 1978], in *Living in Truth* (London, 1987), p. 65

government's Institute for Forecasting and members of front parties like the Socialists.

Case 8: East Germany

In East Germany there had been no regime split since Erich Honecker had replaced Walter Ulbricht in 1971, and no consideration of radical liberalization at all.[76] As late as October 1989, it would still take a Gorbachev visit to produce a change of leadership.[77] Successor Egon Krenz, as the Politburo member in charge of internal security forces, had helped maintain the highly repressive context for opposition organization. One particularly effective tactic had been to "export" all potential opponents—from peace activists to novelists to cabaret singers—to West Germany.

What autonomy existed in civil society was nurtured under the organizational umbrella of the Protestant Evangelical Church, whose free television time, land ownership, and subsidies from the West made it more autonomous than the Czechoslovak or Hungarian churches but not as strong as the Polish and Latin American Catholic churches. An always problematic "socialist nationalism" kept civil society profoundly divided. The regime never succeeded in forging a tradition of East German nationalism, as vain attempts to appropriate the stature of historical figures like Frederick the Great and Martin Luther illustrate. By August 1989, regime ideologist Otto Reinhold was still defending the GDR's existence in negative terms as the only alternative to the capitalist Federal Republic of Germany. In this context of state repression and a weak political society, dissident intellectuals remained so isolated from the general public that most opposed the popular decision to open the Wall. In addition to being massively penetrated by secret police agents and informers, small peace, environment, and feminist movements lacked organized leadership. The broader Neues Forum (New Forum), which had only 2,000 members as late as September 1989, resembled Charter 77 in its resistance to hierarchy of any kind.

76. On the GDR see: Albert O. Hirschman, "Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the GDR: an Essay in Conceptual History," *World Politics* (Jan., 1993), pp. 173–202; Daniel V. Friedheim, "Regime Collapse in the Peaceful East German Revolution: the Role of Middle-Level Officials," *German Politics* (April 1993), pp. 97–112, Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft: zum Paradox von Stabilitat und Revolution in der DDR, 1945–1989* (Frankfurt, 1992); and Roger Woods, *Opposition in the GDR under Honecker, 1971–85* (London, 1986)

77. Gorbachev's actual warning to the Politburo on October 7 was less eloquent and direct than the apocryphal, "Life punishes those who react too late." See the transcript in Gunther Mittag, *Um jeden Preis: In Spannungsfeld zwei Systeme* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 358–84.

Rather than formal organization, informal conventions like the Monday night peace prayer at Leipzig's Church of St. Nicholas sufficed to fill the streets in November and December 1989.[78]

Since an unorganized political society and thoroughly repressed civil society had left East Germans with no option for voicing their dissatisfaction, many began voting with their feet instead. A million and a half East Germans had applied for exit visas and thousands took advantage of the first holes in the Iron Curtain when Hungary removed the barbed wire from its border with Austria in May 1989. By October 1, the East German regime itself was evacuating thousands of refugees from embassies in Warsaw and Prague to the West. The miscalculated decision to open the Berlin Wall was reached during a chaotic emergency Central Committee meeting on November 9th.[79] In this context, instead of negotiating a transition, the regime quickly collapsed, surrendering control of the streets, and even its Stasi archives, to peaceful demonstrators. First, local and middle-ranking party officials lost faith in their right to rule, then the entire Politburo resigned as the belated round table discussions got underway. The East German case is the clearest example of how weak opposition organization and a unified, hardline regime can generate a transition through collapse.

Conclusion

The eight cases show how the pattern combining a split regime with an organized political society helps account for when transitions to democracy were "pacted" in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Southern Europe. The pattern holds even though the Latin transitions did not share such East European complications as regimes imposed by an external hegemon; states plagued by rival nationalisms; and a simultaneous transition to a market economy. The existence of this common pattern in the face of such differences vindicates using a certain amount of abstraction to facilitate cross-regional comparison.

Existing democratic transition theory operates at a generalizable

78. Karl-Dieter Opp and Christiane Gern, "Dissident Groups, Personal Networks, and Spontaneous Cooperation. the East German Revolution in 1989." (Paper presented at the First European Conference on Social Movements, Berlin, October 29–31, 1992).

79. Krenz claims spokesman Günther Schabowski made a "mistake" when he announced the evening of Nov. 9 that travel restrictions would end "immediately." See Krenz, *Wenn Mauern Fallen* (Wien, 1990), pp. 176–83; Schabowski, *Der Absturz* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 302–10.

level of abstraction, but some conceptual problems rule out applying it to the East European transitions without modification. Although the insight that authoritarian regimes may split into hard- and soft-line factions, whose power struggles can help produce pacts, is still valid, the black box conception of civil society producing unpredictable "upsurges" is insufficient for the Eastern European cases. Nor can the organization of political society be taken for granted in transitions from state-socialism. A more explicitly differentiated analysis of society is necessary to explain the collapse of a regime willing to make a pact or the conditions that can produce a unified movement like Solidarity.

A promising alternative is to build on these state-oriented theories by dividing society conceptually into its civil and explicitly political sides, then analyze oppositions as organizations and allow for the complicated interaction between state and society. The case studies support one hypothesis generated by this alternative, and readily suggested by the East European transitions of 1989: pacted transitions are more likely when authoritarian regimes are internally split over whether to undertake radical reforms and opposition movements achieve enough autonomy to organize. Where those two conditions were met—in Spain, Brazil, Poland and Hungary—the path to democracy was indeed negotiated agreements between regime and opposition elites. Where regimes could not win a war—in Portugal and Argentina—and where repressed political societies produced insufficiently organized opposition negotiating partners—in Czechoslovakia and East Germany—unified regimes ended up collapsing. The cases surveyed suggest additional subtleties in these alternative paths of democratization.

A more interactive model of state-society relations during transitions accommodates the East European experiences better and helps bring society back into the center of democratization theory. Thinking of authoritarian regimes that define the context for organizing political society, and context-sensitive oppositions growing strong enough to negotiate, moves the debate beyond the crude question of which level—elite or mass, state or society—matters more in a transition. Both elites and masses, states and societies, matter. They affect each other in an inherently political context that leaves room for unexpected outcomes like the democratic transitions of 1989. If we bring society back into the picture this way, then the "peaceful revolutions" of 1989 will have as profound an effect on theory as they did on what used to be called Eastern Europe.