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Area and International Studies: Development in Eastern Europe

The very designation 'Eastern' Europe is itself controversial, and closely connected to the broader issue of the under-development of the area. Uneven economic growth on the European continent produced a neatly regressive pattern of political, social, and cultural development running from the north-west to the south and east, and that was already apparent to observers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Dobrogeanu-Gherea 1910) By the end of the nineteenth century, 'East' generally referred to those areas lying east of the River Elbe and within the Danubian basin. Such a description, of course, tended to be a self-fulfilling prophesy in that the newly independent countries that emerged from the collapse of the German, Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg monarchies after World War I were treated within the international community as being backward. The collapse of the successor states into dictatorship in the 1930s, and their absorption into the communist orbit after World War II tended to reinforce the image of the region as somehow a world apart from the rest of Europe. After World War II, the study of the region in the English-speaking world took place under the aegis of area studies centers funded for the purpose of understanding communist countries, and therefore requiring specialized knowledge and methods that were not easily transferable to other areas of the world. These factors, historical and political, all conspired to create the region that by the 1960s came to be known in common parlance as Eastern Europe. The countries that fell under this rubric at the height of the Cold War were Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia, as well as the European areas of the Soviet Union.

1. Debating the Term 'Eastern Europe'

As the communist world slowly unraveled in the 1980s, some students of the region began deconstructing the notion of a unified 'Eastern Europe.' The idea of Mitteleuropa or Central Europe was revived, and analysts debated which countries exactly belonged in this intermediate category. The revival of Mitteleuropa was a project of both East European dissidents, who wanted Western assistance in challenging Soviet hegemony in the region, and British and American social scientists, who genuinely believed in the existence of an alternative political geography of the European continent. The most influential arguments identified the lands of the former Habsburg and German empires—Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland—as genuinely Central European, having more in common with Germany and Austria than with Bulgaria or Russia. Others maintained that even Soviet Ukraine and the Baltic Republics were properly Central European, leaving eventually Russia as the self-affirming 'other,' the sole East European nation. For both political and analytical reasons, after the Cold War many scholars wanted to eliminate the term 'Eastern Europe' altogether.

Eliminating the designation 'Eastern Europe' would indeed make sense if there were no common problems specific to the area. This is not the case, however. Over the twentieth century, scholars both within and outside

Eastern Europe have identified consistently two interrelated features of the region that define it as an object of analysis. The first is the problem of creating a stable institutional order in economically backward countries (a problem of much of the developing world). The second is the problem of importing institutional models developed in different social settings (Gerschenkron 1962). During the twentieth century, Eastern Europe was an ideological and institutional laboratory for every major ideology and institutional order. In roughly chronological order, the countries of the region experienced liberal democracy (1900–30), right-wing or fascist dictatorship (1930–45), Soviet-style communism (1945–89), and once again liberal democracy (1989–the present). Of course, such a periodization is problematic, and misses some important variations within the region. It nevertheless captures much of the reality. With the exception of the present period, the outcome of which is not yet known, scholars have maintained that each of these orders failed due to the relative backwardness of the region, and the corruption of the original institutional design in the face of local resistance or circumstance.

2. *The First Liberal Period*

Even before the collapse of the imperial orders, liberal institutions had been adopted throughout much of Eastern Europe. After World War I, the new post-imperial states (except those in the Soviet Union after 1922) implemented broad constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and assembly, parliamentary government, near universal male suffrage, and judicial independence. Economic backwardness would be overcome through integrating the economies of these new countries into the broader markets of Western Europe and North America. The rights of ethnic minorities, arguably the most thorny issue in the region, would be guaranteed through a series of treaties and documents drawn up by the League of Nations.

The problem with this institutional design was that liberalism was not home grown. Instead, it had been adopted in order to emulate the West rather than as a response to industrialization and the growth of capitalism. National bureaucracies, for example, developed in anticipation of rather, than in reaction to, increased economic complexity and industrialization. They tended to be overstaffed, inefficient, and corrupt. Although in the Czech lands, due to the particularities of Habsburg economic policy, a native middle class had developed, in most of the other countries of the region, entrepreneurial activity was dominated by ethnic minorities. Even as this situation began to change during the 1920s, as native entrepreneurs grew in numbers, an ethnic division of labor remained in place, and political careers and state employment remained the preserve of the dominant national groups (Janos 1982).

Even more important than the differences in the composition of the middle classes between East and West, however, was the differences in the lower classes, in particular the peasantry. Bloated East European states could only be sustained, and development policies pursued, by extracting resources from an already poor peasantry. Slow industrial development, caused by the economic chaos in Germany after World War I, and disrupted trade after the collapse of the imperial orders, meant that cities could not possibly absorb the huge numbers of landless peasants. Land reform, the initial answer to rural poverty, was largely abandoned, or watered down, in Poland and Hungary in the 1920s, and even where implemented, as in Romania, it tended to create unproductive subsistence holdings whose inhabitants continued to live in squalor (Berend 1996).

Such difficult economic and social circumstances conspired to make liberal democracy an extraordinarily precarious project throughout Eastern Europe. Impoverished peasants, marginalized ethnic minorities, and industrial workers could easily be mobilized into radical, antiliberal politics. Political control and 'democracy' could therefore only be maintained through electoral corruption, 'managed' elections in which certain parties were not allowed to compete, or quasi-military dictatorships (as in Poland after 1926). Liberal political and economic institutions in Eastern Europe were thus corrupted by the circumstances in which they developed.

Even if corrupted, however, liberalism was not abandoned altogether. Elections were fixed in some districts, but they continued to be competitive in others. The police and other state officials sometimes violated rights to free speech and even property, but courts frequently reversed such acts of arbitrariness. Public discourse was often impolite but it continued to exist, and the press remained lively. Not until the rise of the Nazi dictatorship and the presentation of an ideological and institutional alternative did the elites of the region become completely unhitched from their liberal moorings. Even here, however, there are crucial differences among the countries. Czechs, and to a lesser degree Poles, resisted right-wing radicalism because their territory was the immediate object of German revisionist claims. Hungary, Romania, and the Slovak lands, on the other hand, all succumbed to fascist dictatorships, hoping to benefit from Nazi power or at least be spared the more unbearable forms of discrimination that were starting to take shape in the 'new European order' (Polonsky 1975).

3. *Fascism*

There is very little agreement among scholars about the causes or social roots of fascism. Some argue that

it is a form of psychological escape into irrationalism that is inherent in modernity. Others argue that it is the revenge of the middle and lower middle classes on the radical left, a sort of Marxism for idiots (Lipset 1963). Still others maintain that it is in fact a radical form of developmental dictatorship which appears quite regularly in late industrializing societies. Neither East European scholars nor British and North American specialists have been able to resolve the core disagreements on this question. Similarly, regarding fascism's impact on Eastern Europe, economic historians continue to debate whether or not the German economic and trade offensive in Eastern Europe in the 1930s was a net gain or loss for Eastern Europe. In the short run, it appeared to have a positive effect, or at least was perceived to have had one among the East European elites. The design was a simple one and in some ways resembled the arrangements that the Soviets later instituted in the region. East European agricultural goods and raw materials would supply the German military industrial buildup. In return, the countries of the region received credits against which they could buy German industrial goods. Of course, in the long run these credits were all but worthless, and the onset of the war in the east ensured that the Nazis would never repay the debts they incurred in the 1930s. Yet the modest recovery of the East European economies during the early Nazi years could not help but to draw these countries more firmly into the Nazi sphere of influence.

The hope of many regional elites was that Germany and Italy would accept their Eastern neighbors as junior partners as long as their institutional and legal orders mirrored those of the masters. Thus, in Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Estonia, local Hitlers and Mussolinis came to power in the 1930s, and even where they did not come to power they waited in the wings for the day when German or Italian armies would install them at the top of the political pyramid. Of course, the ideological design of the right and its subsequent institutional expressions were far less elaborate or well articulated than the liberal one. This was so not only because it was much newer, but also because most ideologies of the right were explicitly antiprocedural and antiorganizational in nature. The 'little dictators' of Eastern Europe did not, for the most part, share Hitler's racial fantasies, since Nazi ideology had little good to say about the non-Germanic peoples of the area, but they did use the opportunity to free themselves from parliamentary and other liberal restraints in pursuit of economic development and regional power. As in the earlier liberal era, political elites corrupted the pure German or Italian model in an attempt to turn it to their own purposes. Nevertheless, the conflict between the fascist right, which favored a party dictatorship, and the technocratic right which favored a nonpolitical dictatorship was never fully resolved in any country of the region until the onset of the war in the east in 1939.

With the onset of World War II, the scales tilted in favor of the fascist right. An important indicator of these differences can be seen in minorities policies, especially with regard to the Jews. Anti-Jewish laws had been on the books in several countries of the region since the mid-1930s, and in some cases even earlier. By the late 1930s, often under German pressure, but sometimes voluntarily and with a good deal of enthusiasm, they were implemented in full force. It is nevertheless important to distinguish between the institutionalized discrimination of the 1930s and the historical 'revenge' against the Jews that was exacted in horrific form by the Germans and their East European helpers on the fascist right during World War II. From the standpoint of 'development,' the organized massacre of Jews that took place in the region during World War II marks clearly the difference between the corrupted developmentalist model of the East European right during the 1930s, and the antidevelopmentalist bacchanalia of the 1940s. Whereas interwar liberalism had failed in Eastern Europe because it could neither overcome the backwardness of the region nor adapt its institutional order to the problems of scarcity, the fascist order failed because it did not really have an institutional response to backwardness at all. Instead, it retreated into the psychological appeal of glory inherent in war, the pleasure of feeling superior to one's 'inferiors,' or the negative empathy inherent in exacting revenge on one's historical enemies. Although it probably did not appear as such to most East European elites in the early 1930s, by the end of the war it must have been clear that the fascist order ultimately had little to do with development at all.

4. *The Communist Experience*

Although Western scholarly debates on the nature of communism were often influenced by the seminal dissident works of Djilas, Havel, Konrad and Szelenyi, and Solzhenytsin, the political restrictions of Soviet rule in the region meant that the study of Eastern Europe was done mostly from abroad. Two schools of thought dominated the analysis of communism: Totalitarianism and modernization theory.

The totalitarian school was inspired by the writings of Hannah Arendt and Carl Friedrich (Arendt 1966, Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956). Its adherents argued that despite the doctrinal differences between Nazi Germany and communist Russia, they had so much in common that it made sense to group the two dictatorships together as essentially the same. For one thing, both professed an ideology of earthly salvation and were prepared to cast aside conventional moral restraints in order to attain their goals. For another, both destroyed existing civic and personal attachments for the purposes of creating a single locus of devotion. And while the Nazis stressed the importance of the

leader, and the communists the importance of the party, in practice both devolved into personal dictatorships. The Nazis believed in hierarchy, and the communists in equality, but in practice these ideological differences exercised a small impact on political, or even social, organization. Most important, however, these theorists told us, the unprecedented capacity for social control inherent in modern political technologies and bureaucratic organizations render totalitarian orders exceedingly difficult to change. Students of Eastern Europe during the 1950s had little difficulty finding proof of totalitarian parties with instrumental views of their own societies. Private property was expropriated and liberal freedoms were either never restored after the liberation from Nazi Germany or were abolished in steps that culminated with the onset of the Cold War in 1948. Under careful Soviet tutelage, East European secret police forces thoroughly intimidated entire societies. Similar to the Soviet Union of the 1930s, the 'little Stalins' of Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia staged trials of 'traitors' from among the highest ranks of the party, all of whom confessed under duress to having worked for Western intelligence agencies throughout their long careers as revolutionaries.

Although not questioning the characterization of communist politics as essentially antiliberal, scholars inspired by modernization theory in the 1960s began to challenge the totalitarian school's interpretation of the *dynamics* of communism, that is, how it would change over time. The essence of modernization theory is its assertion that, even accounting for broad ideological differences, all societies that industrialize, urbanize, and educate their populations face the same kinds of pressures and will most likely have similar kinds of politics. Furthermore, over time, the functional prerequisites of modern societies produce a convergence of cognitive orientations toward power, politics, and justice. Again, studying the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe after Stalin's death in 1953, and the subsequent critique leveled against Stalin by Khrushchev in 1956, scholars had little trouble finding proof of what they were seeking. The Soviet leadership and its East European counterparts appeared to espouse a more pragmatic, less 'ideological' approach to the problems of their own societies (Hough 1977). No longer were shortcomings the result of 'wreckers' and 'saboteurs,' but rather problems to be dealt with and overcome through the 'scientific technical revolution.' Marxism–Leninism, the official ideology of communist East Europe would not be cast aside completely, but in such highly industrialized countries as East Germany or Czechoslovakia the clash between a mobilizational dictatorship and the prerequisites of industrial modernity would most likely be resolved in favor of the latter.

As it turns out, both schools were wrong. Contrary to the expectation of the totalitarian school, the communist world did change, but it did not change in a direction predicted by modernization theory. Rather than a leadership increasingly infused by rational–technical and pragmatic orientations that would yield policies that worked regardless of ideology, Soviet-style institutions throughout the region produced economic stagnation and widespread corruption. Concerning economic dynamism, the key error of the modernization theorists was to confuse Soviet-style industrialization with capitalist economic development. No Soviet or East European economic theorist was ever able to articulate a nonmarket and postmobilizational model of economic growth. In fact, the post-Stalinist economists in both Poland, and especially Hungary, articulated quite convincing work which demonstrated just why it was impossible to generate growth based on greater allocative efficiency in a Soviet-type economy. On the question of corruption, in the absence of some mechanism for ensuring the circulation of elites, the end of Stalinist police terror simply turned public offices into private sinecures. Such a possibility was laid out in the early work of Barrington Moore on the Soviet Union and developed into a full-blown Weberian model of 'neotraditionalism' by Ken Jowitt at the beginning of the 1980s (Moore 1954, Jowitt 1992). Jowitt explained the decay of communist rule by the inability of communist leaders to articulate a new, postmobilizational 'combat task' that would have provided a yardstick against which to judge bureaucratic rectitude. Others, mainly Western but also East European economists, began to build related models based on the organizational, as opposed to the ideological, features of the Soviet political economy, which they argued was in essence one giant rent-seeking machine (Kornai 1992).

The Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe underwent significant changes in its 40-year history. As in the interwar liberal and then the fascist periods, local conditions conspired to alter the original institutional design. Communism in the region after World War II began essentially as a classical colonial operation in which local elites were controlled by Soviet supervisors, political direction stemming from of the Soviet embassy, and resources extracted through trade agreements that favored the Soviets. After 1953, however, the various states began to move in their own directions. The essential dilemma for both Soviet and East European elites was that, in order to gain some measure of local legitimacy, policy had to be dictated by local circumstances. These local variations of communism, however, always threatened to go beyond the bounds of what the Soviets wanted in order to maintain a cohesive empire. In 1953 in East Germany, 1956 in Hungary, 1968 in Czechoslovakia, and 1980 in Poland, local communist leaders made concessions to local sentiment by making significant institutional changes. Each time, the logic of these changes led to a weakening of party control, a threat to Soviet hegemony in the country, and, ultimately, a

military crackdown and restoration of communist party rule. During the 1970s and 1980s, the relationship of exploitation between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was reversed, with the former subsidizing the latter and shielding it from the full effect of the dramatic increase in world oil prices after 1973.

The growth within Eastern Europe of dissident and antipolitical groupings throughout the 1970s and 1980s, especially the emergence of the revolutionary trade union Solidarity in Poland in 1980–1, unleashed a plethora of interpretations. Some modernization theorists maintained the rise of civil society was the fruit of Soviet-type modernization. After decades of repression, an educated, urbanized, industrialized society had emerged to demand more say in how its affairs were being run (Lewin 1988). Others argued that this really had nothing to do with modernization, but with poor economic performance caused by high level of military spending and dysfunctional economic policy making.

The disagreement was never really settled among academics before the entire system in Eastern Europe began to collapse in 1989. The causes of 1989 continue to be debated. Most scholars point to the importance of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his attempt to salvage the Soviet empire by remobilizing society through ersatz democratic structures. Others point to deeper causes: changes in military technologies in the 1980s that effectively bankrupted the Soviet state, the drop in oil prices at the end of the 1980s that depleted hard currency revenues, and the rising cost of empire. Whatever the ultimate reason (or combination of reasons), between 1989 and 1991 European communism disintegrated completely and the states of the region found themselves once again trying to adapt institutions imported from abroad—this time, once again, liberal democracy—to the particular postcommunist conditions of their countries.

5. *Postcommunist Democracy*

Between 1989 and 1991, 27 independent states emerged from the collapse of the Soviet empire and Yugoslavia. A decade later, some of these states had established capitalist economies and meaningful institutions of democratic representation. Others made little progress or quickly slid back into a form of semiauthoritarian democracy. What accounts for the huge differences in outcomes? Some have argued that initial institutional choices shape outcomes in decisive ways. In particular, the choice of strong presidentialism appears to undermine the development of representative programmatic parties, parliamentary responsibility, and civic organization (Fish 1998). Others argue that long-term cultural and bureaucratic legacies affect how willing states are to defend economic and political rights (Kitschelt et al. 1998). Still others maintain that geopolitical position is the main driving factor, especially the capacity of selected countries of the postcommunist world to join the economic and security structures of the West embodied in the institutions of NATO and the EU (Kopstein and Reilly 2000). These highly intrusive institutions have permitted Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic to suppress internal disagreements in pursuit of the larger goal of entry to the West. The prospect of being admitted to the West also helped Slovakia and Croatian democrats to overthrow dictatorial postcommunist regimes. East European scholars, now free to contribute to the scientific debates about their own countries, tended to point to a combination of internal and external conditions that determined the initial variation in postcommunist outcomes.

Is history repeating itself? In some ways it is. Once again, the countries of Eastern Europe are attempting to plant the institutions of liberal democracy in unfamiliar soil. Once again, the countries of the region are bit players in the game of international capitalism, trying to 'catch up' with the already developed countries in the West. Yet there are important differences, both internal and external, to Eastern Europe. For the first time in history a select group of East European countries really is now thought of as Western and is being admitted to the economic and security structures of the West. Contrary to the rhetoric of the 1980s, even Poland and Hungary in the pre-World War II era were not really considered fully Western. This has now changed, not only within Europe as a whole but, perhaps more importantly, within these countries themselves. No one doubts any more where these countries are ''located''. Furthermore, no matter how difficult the transition has been, even for countries such Romania and Bulgaria, there does not appear to be any viable ideological or institutional alternative to liberal democracy. Of course, both of these conditions are subject to change. East and West are not only objective categories but also social constructs. The EU and NATO may close their doors to further membership, or new antiliberal ideological challengers might appear on the new eastern periphery of Europe. If this occurs, one can expect the subversion of liberalism in the region once again.

See also: Communism; Democratic Transitions; East Asian Studies: Politics; East Asian Studies: Society; Eastern European Studies: Culture; Eastern European Studies: Economics; Eastern European Studies: History; National Socialism and Fascism; Revolutions of 1989–90 in Eastern Central Europe; Social Evolution, Sociology of; Socialist Societies: Anthropological Aspects

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Area and International Studies: Development in Europe

The field of International studies in Europe today raises the question of boundaries: geographical, territorial boundaries, and disciplinary boundaries. As a matter of fact, the construction of Europe as a new political space introduces *de facto* a fluidity of frontiers, and a multiplicity of approaches which have led to the reconstruction of the social sciences in which all sorts of boundaries are blurred (Bigo 1996).

International studies has a broader scope than international relations since it refers not only to relationships that a state maintains with other states, but also to relationships between states and other societies, other groups and communities that have emerged and have been organized in other political and cultural contexts than its own. It includes studies on migration, on minorities and ethnicity, and the emergence of transnational communities. It refers also to interactions among actors—individuals and/or institutions—each carrying different national identities to be negotiated on a transnational level (Kastoryano 1997, 1998).

In this perspective, Europe constitutes a specific historical and political setting for the analysis of international studies and its development. It is, indeed, in the eighteenth century that the nation-state, defined as a cultural, territorial, and political unity was born (Rokkan, Tilly 1976). The same nation-state is questioned today as a universal political structure and major actor in international studies. It is again in Europe that, because of the project of a new political unit, called the European Union, concepts such as citizenship, nationality, public space (Habermas 1996, 2000), and cosmopolitanism (Held et al. 1999, Linklater 1998), need to be redefined. Furthermore, cultural, sociological, and political plurality within Europe provides empirical evidence for the development of international studies and more specifically for the analysis of the switch from a realist perspective based on the rationality of the state (Weber) to a liberal one where increasing interdependence among states leads to an analysis in terms of integration, both regional and European.

Such a development leads to a methodological confusion and to an obvious interdisciplinarity. History, sociology, anthropology, political science, and juridical studies contribute altogether to the knowledge and understanding of the political structure, the institutions, and the social organization in a comparative perspective, and of course, of Europe as a new political space. Moreover, the increasing complexity of social and political reality and an inevitable interdependence of internal and external political decisions require a combination of various theories and intellectual frameworks of interpretation, methods, and approaches, as well as conceptual tools of analysis.

1. Europe of Nation-states

War and peace during the twentieth century have not only changed the political geography within Europe but have also stimulated an interest in international studies. Born as a reaction to World War I, international studies has focused on the relationship among states on the line of the treaties of Westphalia (1648), declaring a territorial sovereignty of all states of the Empire and their right of concluding alliances with one another and with foreign powers. This perspective developed by the 'realist' theory of international relations relies on concepts such as sovereignty, territoriality, and security. In addition to the Weberian definition of the state—a collectivity that within the limits of a given geographical space claims for its own interest the monopoly of a legitimate violence—the 'realists' have considered the state as a homogeneous unit on the international scene. Its action is qualified as 'rational.'

Following the path of positivism in social sciences, the 'realist' approach expressed for the first time by E. H. Carr in 1939, and formalized by H. J.