

TRANSITIONS FROM AUTHORITARIAN RULE: AN ITERATIVE MODEL

To capture this situation (i.e. transition from authoritarian rule), we propose the metaphor of a multi-layered chess game. In such a game, to the already great complexity of normal chess are added the almost infinite combinations and permutations resulting from each players' ability on any move to shift from one level of the board to another. Anyone who has played such a game will have experienced the frustration of not knowing until near the end who is going to win, or for what reasons, and with what piece. Victories and defeats frequently happen in ways unexpected by either player.

*-- Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter,
Transitions From Authoritarian Rule¹*

Linear or sequential models of states undergoing transitions from authoritarian rule have been largely unsuccessful at explaining or predicting the complex dance of factions, alliances and interest groups that accompany these socio-political upheavals. The best of them only serve to identify actions or factors that were relevant in a modest subset of all of the instances of transition from authoritarian rule.² This failure is due to two key elements. In the first place, these models are overwhelmingly goal rather than process oriented. The question being asked is almost always, "Why do some societies make the transition to democracy successfully while others do not?" instead of the more general "What is happening here?" Second, there is mounting evidence that complex problems involving multiple variables will not succumb to linear analysis. In fact, linear analysis may, with respect to some problems, tell us nothing useful at all.³

There is an alternative, however. Iterative modeling (the type used in most simulations), can be an effective way of describing the complex interactions between the various actors in a transition process. What might such a model look like? O'Donnell and Schmitter, in the quote above, have some idea of what the process might feel like. Chess, even three-dimensional chess, operates with relatively simple rules. The fact that the game exhibits far more complexity than a simple examination of its rules would predict attests to the power of iterative models. Rustow, in his groundbreaking 1970 work, also identifies "a two-way flow of causality, or some form of

circular interaction, between politics on the one hand and economic and social conditions on the other."⁴

In this paper I start by assuming that these intuitions are correct. Then, after some additional assumptions and definitions, I will outline each phase of a model iterative process that seeks to describe transitions from authoritarian rule generally. The process itself is iterative, thus, in order to understand an entire transition in the light of this model it will be necessary to execute these phases a number of times. Only under these circumstances is it possible to comprehend the entire transition.

The Model

Assumptions and Definitions

First, a transition is the interval between one political system and another.⁵ It has a specific beginning and ending (which will be defined and discussed later) and usually results in the replacement of those currently in power. Transitions from authoritarian rule are particularly interesting in that they provide a "living laboratory" for a political scientist interested in studying the unrefined political process at work.

The first assumption inherent in this model of transition is that the outcome is not important⁶. To study transitions from authoritarian rule based on the outcome seems to be as useful as studying chess games in which white is the winner. In order to understand the process by which these transitions take place it is just as important to study situations in which democracy does not replace the authoritarian rule as situations in which it does. A complete model of the transition from authoritarian rule must allow for any possible outcome.

The second assumption is that the main goal of groups involved in the transition process is to increase their political power relative to the other groups involved in the process and to use this power to forward their agenda. Political power is further defined as the ability of one group or individual to impose its desires on other groups or individuals. While each group involved in the transition process certainly has its own agenda, it is not possible to achieve that agenda without political empowerment.

The third assumption deals with violence. The model I will develop will not account for transitions whose sole basis of legitimacy is the use of force. While these are interesting events, I believe that they are so radically different in character from internally generated transitions that they cannot be compared. In short, I am assuming that installing a prince to rule over some medieval fief is fundamentally different than the transitions of the late 20th Century.

The fourth, and final, assumption is that the transitions from authoritarian rule of the South American and Eastern European states are typical of all transitions. I will draw largely from the experiences of the South American and Eastern European states to validate many aspects of my

model. Thus, I need to assume that these most recent experiences are representative of the whole.

On its face, this is my most questionable assumption. There is no obvious reason why these transitions should be any more or less typical than others. I will defend it on two grounds. The first is that these experiences run the gamut from the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia to the bloody transition in Romania. This alone guarantees a wide variety of data that can be used to justify, but must also be incorporated into, any model of transitions from authoritarian rule.

Secondly, I am not trying to say something about a specific outcome but about the process itself. For example, if I were to say, based solely on the Eastern European experience, that the Roman Catholic Church helped the transition from authoritarian rule towards democracy I would be correct (particularly in the case of Poland).⁷ This would also fly in the face of previous studies concerning Latin America.⁸ Since the context for my analysis is process instead of goal, I feel that I can avoid this problem altogether and legitimately make this assumption.

By way of definition, I use the term regime and party as collective nouns. Oftentimes, people think of an authoritarian regime or party as represented by the individual who heads it (such as Saddam Hussein in Iraq). In this paper, I always mean the group of people who not only lead a party or regime, but also the people who provide direct and indirect support for it.

Pre-Transition

Before the process of transition from authoritarian rule takes place, there must be some defining event or set of events that begins the process. This event or events can be the result of the authoritarian regime attempting to legitimize itself in the eyes of the governed⁹ or it could be the result of a breakdown of the authoritarian state altogether. In either of these scenarios, the different orientations towards political order of hard-line and soft-line elements within the authoritarian regime cause the policies of the government, in some way, to foment dissent.¹⁰

Under Stalin, for example, there were no different orientations within the government (or what few that did exist were quickly squashed). Upon his death in 1953, a struggle between hard-liners and soft-liners broke out that put Khrushchev in charge. His visible softening at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party was shortly followed by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. It was put down, of course, but sets the stage for the eventual transitions in both Hungary and the Soviet Union.¹¹ It is these types of events that characterize the pre-transition phase.

Transition

Dissent leads to opposition. The difference between the two is in level of organization. Whereas dissent is the grumbling of the man on the street, the organization of that dissent is what characterizes opposition. For me, what initiates the process of transition is the onset of opposition.¹²

The process of transition consists of eight distinct phases ("Phases" is an inaccurate word to describe the eight elements I see at play here. As a word, it implies sequence and a certain degree of order. These phases overlap each other, subsume each other, and provide context for each other. Despite this, a distinct set of actions takes place in each phase. For this reason, and lack of a better alternative, I use the word "phase").

In addition, the process becomes iterative and, to a lesser extent, non-sequential.¹³ By this I mean that the next eight phases repeat themselves until the transition is complete (I will define what I mean by "complete" later). The process is somewhat non-sequential in that not all phases are always executed in each cycle and in that, under certain circumstances, a cycle may be involuntarily abbreviated.¹⁴

The following chart graphically displays the interrelationships between the eight phases. It is not designed to be understood at a glance. Instead it is a tool to help put the pieces together as I discuss them. In short, it may appear complex and obscure at first but should become understandable, even helpful, as I discuss each phase.

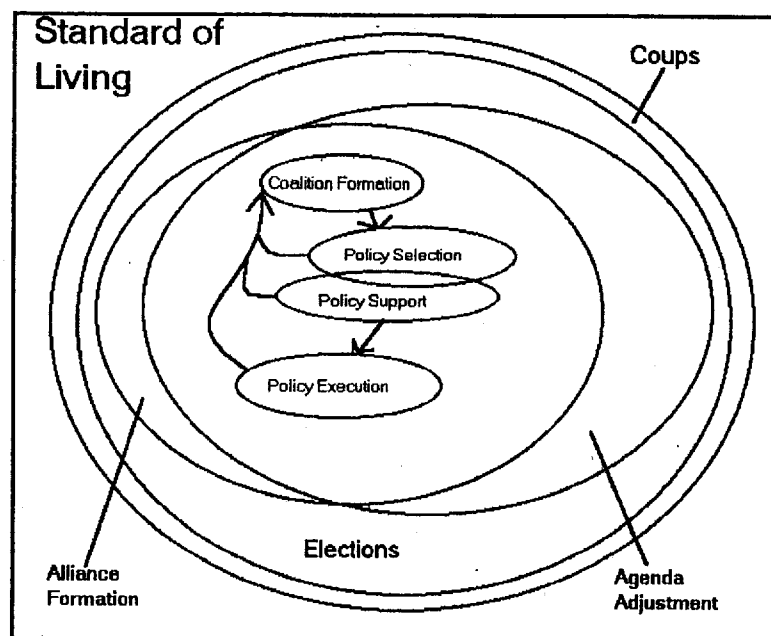


Fig. 1. Phase Relationships

Phase 1 - Agenda Formation and Adjustment

Opposition to an authoritarian regime usually forms around one or more core issues. It is, in fact, these core issues which allow the organization of dissent in the first place. I believe there

are five core issues. While I have not adopted directly the "issue dimensions"¹⁵ of other writers, these five represent a synthesis of the works of the authors cited below. They are:

a. Participation - The degree to which a regime "permits opposition, public contestation, or public competition".¹⁶ In other words, participation represents the types of people allowed to hold office. In one-party systems, as in Eastern Europe until recently, membership in the party was the primary credential for holding office.¹⁷ Educational, racial, religious and economic credentials might also be used to limit participation in the political process.

b. Inclusion - the "proportion of the population entitled to participate in a more or less equal plane in controlling and contesting the conduct of government".¹⁸ This is, quite simply, the number of people who can vote coupled with the degree to which their vote counts (i.e. systems that give one man less than one vote, such as the old South African system, or systems that give multiple votes to the people, such the Hungarian system of the early 90's¹⁹).

c. Civil Rights - the degree to which the government can control the actions of the individual.²⁰ If constitutional rights are not enforceable, either due to the power of unelected officials or external manipulation, then the degree of participation and inclusion are not important.²¹ In most of the Eastern European states, constitutions routinely established individual rights that were not enforceable.

d. Foreign Policy - the way the state appears to other states.²² In other words, it is the degree to which a state has interventionist or non-interventionist policies. Whether a government seeks a defensive or offensive posture in relation to other states seems to be significant issue during the transition. One of the major problems during the transition process lies in dealing with old quarrels.²³ Many of these quarrels are border disputes that were, temporarily at least, resolved during the period of authoritarian rule, such as Russia and Moldova over the Trans-Dniestr; Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria over Macedonia; and Rumania and Hungary over Transylvania. Their re-emergence indicates the degree to which foreign policy is a core issue during transition.

e. Economy - the degree to which the government controls the planning and execution of economic functions.²⁴ The inability of authoritarian economies, whether command or market based, to maintain pace with non-authoritarian economies is well documented.²⁵ In addition, the desire to achieve a western standard of living (realizable, as the conventional wisdom supposes, through a market economy) was one of the defining issues of the transition from authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe.²⁶ Finally, the degree to which a government permits or participates in illegal activities (drug-smuggling, money laundering, etc) is yet another example of government control (albeit without a philosophical basis as cover).

Each of these core issues provides a spectrum of advocacy. In other words, a person or party or nation can be thought to be strongly in favor of a command economy - the left-hand side of the spectrum, so to speak. Another could be in favor of a market-based economy - the right hand side of the economy issue. The same person might be on the left-hand side of the foreign policy

scale, i.e. strongly pro-interventionist.

It is now a small step to go from using these five scales in a general sense to using them in a specific sense. It is theoretically possible to make a scale, say, from one to ten, and assign specific numbers on that scale to represent where the opposition believes the country as a whole should be regarding that particular issue. In addition, it should be possible to determine where the country as a whole is, currently, regarding a specific issue. In other words, this set of scales would identify where the country's current set of policies and practices places it on each of the five scales. Obviously, this is largely the result of previous governments.

Thus it is possible to define the opposition's agenda as the difference between where the country is on the five core issue scales and where the opposition group wants the country to be. An example might be useful. Assume a country with a low level of participation, a high level of inclusion, a command economy, few enforceable civil rights and a moderately interventionist foreign policy. On a scale from one to ten participation might be a three, inclusion a ten, economy and civil rights both threes and foreign policy a five. Compare this to the opposition which wants a high level of participation as well as inclusion (say, a ten), a market economy (eight or higher), enforceable civil rights (nine or higher), and a non-interventionist foreign policy (eight or higher). While each of the issues appears to be weighted equally, the system allows the opposition group's position to be defined in terms that would effectively indicate weighting.²⁷ For example, an opposition group that did not care about a country's foreign policy position might be represented quantitatively with any number higher than two but less than nine.

The advantage is parsimony. It is immediately obvious from such a system where lie the strongest disagreements as well as the areas of possible compromise between opposition and government. In addition, policies of a government and pronouncements by both the opposition groups and the government could be seen as movement to the left or right on the scales.

The problem with the system is coding. It would seem impossible to determine with any degree of precision where a government or opposition group would lie on such a scale. This would be particularly difficult in the area of civil rights. Imagine a country that was relatively libertarian if you belonged to the "correct" racial or religious group, but repressive otherwise. The countries of the former Yugoslavia are a good example of this; South Africa is another. The country's position is clearly not a one (completely repressive) or a ten (extremely libertarian). Other than that, arguments could be made for almost any position in between.

There are two counterarguments to this. The first is technical. In recent years, mathematicians have developed a system called "fuzzy logic". The purpose of this system is to reproduce analysis based on best-guesses. It works like this: An analyst gives his best guess at where a certain variable lies on a scale as well as a high possible and a low possible value. A normal distribution of possible values is established between the two centered on the best guess. Mathematical functions then operate, not on the best guess, but on the probability curve in order to determine outcome. The result is that bad guesses are "smoothed out" of the system, producing a

better overall result at the end.

The second counterargument is that coding problems are inherent in all social science models. To eliminate an otherwise useful model because of coding problems seems counterproductive. The issue is to what extent can coding errors be eliminated and to what extent can error propagation be reduced.²⁸

Up until now I have discussed the two-tier system of government and opposition. This is clearly incomplete. There may, in fact, be several opposition groups, each with their own agenda (i.e. set of positions on the scales of each of the five core issues). The government may or may not be divided on its own agenda. The only thing that can be determined with any certainty seems to be where the country's policies and programs put it now on the five scales, and this is subject to change.

This does not invalidate the model but requires the introduction of several new concepts - interest groups, parties and political power. Interest groups are groups of people united by a common set of priorities, desires and expectations.²⁹ Nationalists, feminists, warlords, ecologists, and the army are all examples of interest groups.

I have talked briefly about parties before, but in the specific sense that I use them in this model, parties represent the political interests of interest groups and individuals on a national scale.³⁰ This is the difference, for example, between Serbian nationalists and the party of Slobodan Milosevic that is the political instrument of those nationalists. Parties do not have to be legal to exist, nor do they have to have any place in the government. The interwar experience with the outlawed communist parties in Eastern Europe as well as the more recent experience with revolutionary parties such as Solidarity and Dobrislav Paraga's ultra-nationalist party in Croatia justify this broad definition.³¹ In politically simpler countries, such as Afghanistan, making a transition from authoritarian rule, "faction" would likely be a better word to describe what I mean by the term "party".

Government and opposition are composed of parties as I have defined them here. Each party thus has its own agenda and attempts to fulfill that agenda through the use of political power. A party's political power is defined as the quantitative and qualitative value of the party's people, leadership and ideas.

Political power is a relative concept. It is only valuable to the extent that it exceeds the political power of one's opponent's political power. That there are different levels of power is obvious. In theory, the level of political power of each party should be measurable.³² An authoritarian government may have so much political power (as in the case of the communists in Albania under Enver Hoxa³³) that other parties have, effectively, no power at all.

Just as with the use of scales for the core issues discussed above, so should political power be subject to quantification. It requires the same kind of best guesses as discussed before and is

subject to the same arguments and counterarguments. I would like to add that this quantitative type of thinking seems to be prevalent among those actively involved in party politics. Politicians often talk of increases and decreases of political power due to a change in leadership or circumstances. Some rudimentary notion of how successful a certain position is or can be seems implicit in any political campaign. This notion of where one stands given one's political views would seem to be even more important in an authoritarian state since the consequences of failure are so much higher.

The final option in pursuit of political power, of course, is to change the agenda of a party. There is nothing inviolable about a party's agenda. Given that it represents fundamental beliefs of a group of people, I am forced to hypothesize that changing an agenda would be the last thing a party would want to do. Gorbachev tried to maintain the Communist party agenda while executing socioeconomic change in the period from 1985-1990, thus exposing the party's weaknesses and ultimately contributing to its loss of power.³⁴ Parties can also change their agendas so much that they become indistinguishable from other parties. A good example of this is the six post-world War II parties of Czechoslovakia who rapidly became indistinguishable from the Communist Party itself.³⁵

Thus, the first phase establishes the political status quo for the remainder of the cycle. Under this model, each party knows basically where the state is on each of the five core issues and to what degree it will have to change the policies of the state in order to fulfill its agenda.

Phase 2 - Alliance Formation

Alliances are formed between parties and interest groups. In some cases, the tie is so tight that the two are essentially inseparable. Solidarity in its early days might be an example of such a connection.³⁶

The main reasons for these alliances are, for the interest group, to get access to the political power of the party and, for the party, to build its constituency which, in its turn, adds to its political power.³⁷ This is exactly the kind of pact that O'Donnell and Schmitter describe:

*"An explicit, but not always publicly explicated or justified, agreement among a select set of actors which seeks to define (or, better, to redefine) rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the "vital interests" of those entering into it"*³⁸

Interest groups provide an efficient way to bring people into a party. By allying oneself with an interest group, a party can effectively co-opt the group's constituency as its own. The only other way to build a constituency is to go directly to the people. This is less efficient and can incur the wrath of the interest groups that have been ignored. Parties also provide an equally efficient means for interest groups to get access to the political system.³⁹

Since people normally fit into one or more interest groups, and the affiliation with one group may be stronger than the other, the party cannot expect to co-opt the entire group. It can, however, expect the interest group to deliver some portion of its constituency when the party needs it (e.g. elections, coups, etc.).

Interest groups must be wooed and won by parties. Certain interest groups, however, can be seen leaning toward certain parties from the outset. The army, for example, normally sides with the government, while the intelligentsia normally sides with an opposition party.⁴⁰ Thus, the process of incorporating them into some kind of party can happen so quickly that it is hard to determine which came first, the party or the interest group.

Other groups are approached later or not at all. These groups either do not add substantially to the party or they require extreme changes in the party's agenda to incorporate them. While it is not from Eastern Europe, the best example I can think of is the Ku Klux Klan. Though not actively approached these groups still lean towards one party or another. Because they are marginalized intentionally, their contribution is considerably less than those interest groups that are actively pursued.

Important interest groups are likely to be approached by a number of parties and it is not unlikely to see an interest group change its affiliation. One of the best examples of this is the Catholic Church's change of position towards authoritarian regimes. It had a tremendous influence in the recent Latin American transitions from authoritarian rule as well as in Poland.⁴¹

This is clearly an on-going activity for parties and interest groups. For purposes of this model I place it second only for the sake of logic. It and the first phase clearly provide the context, the backdrop, if you will for the remaining phases.

Phase 3 – Coalition

Parties now make their second pact. This pact is a coalition that forms a government. In states that are just beginning the transition from authoritarian rule, the party that represents the authoritarian interests is very likely to have sufficient political power to control the government for a considerable length of time. A good example of this is Poland. It began its transition in 1980 but did not begin to openly share power with Solidarity until 1988.⁴²

As time goes on and levels of political power change, coalition governments can emerge. These governments can be open coalitions as was the power sharing between Solidarity and the government in the last years of the eighties or covert coalitions as was the power sharing between Solidarity and the government in the middle eighties.⁴³

Parties that are not in the government are in the opposition. These parties, while clearly not representing a majority of the political power available, can also work together to bring about the downfall of either the government or key governmental policies.

Because this is a pact, it is subject to dissolution. Upon dissolution, a new pact, a new coalition, must be formed in the context of constantly changing alliances and, to a lesser extent, agendas. Since nothing has been accomplished, the only thing lost has been time.

Time is not normally on the side of a state making the transition from authoritarian rule. Usually, in fact, the state is in an economic mess.⁴⁴ When parties waste time forming and reforming coalitions instead of going about the business of governing (as happened in pre-war Yugoslavia⁴⁵), the standard of living begins to decline. As the standard of living begins to decline, people lose faith in the governmental process. Parties active in the process lose political power and may become marginalized.⁴⁶ Pre-war Yugoslavia and Germany are good examples of this.⁴⁷

Thus, this process is not played out in a vacuum but against a populace that demands a better standard of living. Standard of living, in this model, represents the overwhelming non-political concern of parties. Certainly, the populace is willing to give governments some time to straighten out affairs - the experience in virtually all of the Eastern European countries shows this - but they will not give forever.⁴⁸ In short, parties must use their political power to form alliances and coalitions that will not only allow them to fulfill their agendas but also allow them to raise the standard of living (or, at least, not let it drop too low.)

Phase 4 - Policy Selection

Governments use policies to fulfill their agendas and to raise the standard of living. The nature of the policies depends on the country. Land reform, privatization and disarmament are all policies that have been pursued, to one degree or another during the transition from authoritarian rule in the Eastern European states.⁴⁹ While the choice of policies is terribly important to a great number of people, it is only important in this model to the extent that it changes the standard of living and that it allows the parties in the government to fulfill their agendas.

The choice of specific policies is yet another pact that is executed internally among the members of the government and, to a lesser extent, externally with the opposition.⁵⁰ As such, their choice represents a compromise that revolves around three concepts from this model: The effect that the policy will have on the standard of living, the degree of change that the policy will entail and the degree to which the policy will allow one or more parties to fulfill their agendas.⁵¹

Problems arising from policy selection may cause coalitions to dissolve. In Poland, Czechoslovakia and other Eastern European states, parties like Solidarity and Civic Forum can be viewed largely as anticommunist coalitions that splintered once the political power of the Communist Party was reduced enough to no longer be a threat.⁵² The dissolution of governmental coalitions over policy selection without accomplishing anything - again pre-war Yugoslavia comes to mind - forces parties back into the context of agenda modification and alliance formation. The process begins again with only the loss of time and the possible reduction in the standard of living as a result.

Phase 5 - Policy Support

During this phase, parties use political power to either support or oppose specific policies. This phase overlaps the previous phase to a considerable extent. Despite this, I view support for a policy as a separate action from selection. There are several ramifications arising from this view.

First, small parties can use all of their political power to defeat or significantly modify specific, highly objectionable policies. Second, not all policies will get implemented. Parties may be so busy defending high priority policies that others are simply ignored. Finally, coalitions may dissolve over promised support that does not materialize.⁵³ The results of coalition dissolution are identical to the results in the last two phases.

Phase 6 - Policy Implementation

During this phase policies that were supported in the last phase are implemented. The success or failure of these policies depends on many things including, among others, the pre-authoritarian legacy with similar policies, the will of the people to execute the policies, the skill with which the policies are drafted, etc.

Three things can be said, in general, about policy implementation. The first is that only the probability of success or failure of a given policy can be assessed prior to implementation. Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign was designed to increase productivity by decreasing drunkenness on the job. It failed due to public backlash. The second is that the more radical the change in policy direction, the more that is at stake for the policy makers. It is probable that the failure of the radical economic change in Poland (initiated in January of 1991) to bring about equally radical change in the standard of living for the Polish people contributed significantly to the collapse of Poland's first post-communist government. The third is that, like the previous phases, policy implementation can result in the dissolution of a coalition. In this case something was accomplished (although the results were probably negative since the coalition is dissolving) and the parties find themselves, once more, back in the context of alliance formation and agenda adjustment.

The government can announce elections at any time. It is convenient to discuss them here because a logical time for a government to call for elections is after successful implementation of governmental policies.

Elections are held in a number of different ways. It can be highly inclusive with positions opened to everyone who cares to run. It can also be an instrument of repression in that it excludes certain minorities or parties from the process or in that it limits access to political positions. Elections can be one-party, two-party or multiple party. Political positions can be filled through a plurality system or a proportional system. The drawing of district lines can effectively isolate an interest group or party. In a state that is in transition, all of these considerations are subject to manipulation by the government that calls for elections.⁵⁴ In addition, all of these considerations

can be subjugated to two core issues - participation and inclusion.

Participation and inclusion form a matrix that includes all possible forms of government.⁵⁵ Authoritarian regimes have low or little participation or inclusion, while more democratic regimes have higher levels of both. "Polyarchies" have virtually unattainable levels of participation and inclusion.⁵⁶

Since any form of government can be graphed onto this matrix, it is possible, theoretically, to resolve all the process related issues of an election into these two variables. As with all the variables in this model, the problem comes in determining them precisely enough to be of some use. Also, as before, utilizing fuzzy logic techniques and best guesses should provide some useful information.

Thus, rather than worrying about the exact rules of the election, this model focuses on how those rules make the system more or less participatory and inclusive.⁵⁷ The importance of this is, while the analyst will have to factor in all of the election variables into his conclusion, he will only have to come up with numerical values for two variables, participation and inclusion.

Elections are tools for the re-distribution of political power. Furthermore, the amount of power up for grabs depends upon how inclusive and participatory the elections are.⁵⁸ The sham elections of the communist Eastern European states are perfect examples of this. Although suffrage was general, important positions were given to party members, usually hand-picked by some committee. No real political power was redistributed as a result of these elections. On the other hand, many scholars have noted the effect of the first free elections - the founding elections - in a country. Redistribution of power can be immediate and overwhelming.⁵⁹

Phase 7 - Coup / Military Action Phase

Coups or military action are means by which parties or individuals that currently do not have power or are in a risk of losing what they do have can seize power.⁶⁰ Like elections, coups can take place at any time. Logically, they would take place because of some expectation or event, such as the expectation of defeat in elections or successful policy implementation by another party.

Coups and military actions are normally quite risky and quite unlikely to succeed unless the groundwork has been carefully laid. In order to increase the probability of success, there seem to be certain key interest groups that can alter the outcome. The army is certainly the most important and neutralizing or, preferably, having the army on your side is extremely important for a successful coup.⁶¹ Other interest groups such as the media, bureaucrats, students, and the intelligentsia are important but have correspondingly less influence on the ability to successfully execute a coup.⁶²

Thus the coup provides the context for the political portion of the transition just as standard of living provides context for the entire transition process. In fact, the primary indicator that the

transition process is nearing an end is when the chance for a coup nears zero.⁶³

Phase 8 – Elections

Elections are the peaceful way to redistribute political power within a regime. While the announcement of elections is an activity that comes sometime earlier (I placed it in Phase Six for the sake of logic), the election itself normally occurs some time after its announcement.

The importance of the election depends, as I have stated, on the degree to which they are participatory and inclusive. In elections that are neither participatory nor inclusive, the stakes are small and the winners will be determined by the rules established by the government. In highly participatory and inclusive elections, typically called founding elections, the winners are more likely to be determined by the skill with which alliances were formed and people recruited prior to the elections. Founding elections, however, are highly unpredictable by their nature and no amount of politicking can guarantee the result.⁶⁴

Thus, elections, while they exist within the context of the coup, provide the context for the other phases. Given the iterative nature of this model, everything political leads both to and away from elections.

Completion

The transition process is complete when the country achieves a stable form of government. This could be a democracy or another authoritarian regime, based on religious or ethnic ideas, perhaps. A government is stable when the risk of coup nears zero. Since coups override the rest of the political process, their elimination signals that peaceful, procedural redistribution of political power has won out over more violent means.⁶⁵

In conclusion, the model I have described is a simple, iterative political process complicated by the diverse positions among the parties on core issues, dramatically unequal amounts of political power among those parties, and all of the parties living under the specter of coups. It can serve as the basis for the simulation of situations as similar – and as different – as Hungary in 1993 and Afghanistan in 2002.

Endnotes

¹ Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillippe C. Schmitter, Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1986), 66.

² Wheaton, Kristan J., Modeling and Simulating Transitions From Authoritarian Rule, Florida State University (Tallahassee, Florida), 1993, p. 4-20.

³ Wheaton, Kristan J., "Evolution, Ethnicity and Propaganda: Why Negotiating With the Innocent Makes Sense", Evolutionary Theory and Ethnic Conflict (James and Goetz, eds.), Praeger Press (Westport, Connecticut) 2001, p 138-141.

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- ⁴ Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model", Comparative Politics, April 1970, 344.
- ⁵ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, p. 6.
- ⁶ This is not a common assumption. See the models discussed in David Collier and Deborah Norden, "Strategic Choice Models of Political Change in Latin America," Comparative Politics (January, 1992), 229-243 and Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, 109-163 for examples of models that do not assume this. Despite this, it is often recognized. See Yossi Shain and Juan Linz, "The Role of Interim Governments," Journal of Democracy (January, 1992), 75 and O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 3.
- ⁷ Joseph Held, The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 269.
- ⁸ Huntington, The Third Wave, 75.
- ⁹ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 15; Yossi and Linz, "Interim Governments", 75 and Klaus Von Beyme, "Transition to Democracy or Anschluss? The Two Germanies and Europe," Government and Opposition 25 (Spring, 1990), 172.
- ¹⁰ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 17.
- ¹¹ Held, History of Eastern Europe, pp. xxxiv-xxxv and pp. 219-222.
- ¹² Vladimir Tismaneanu, Reinventing Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 138-142. Compare with O'Donnell/Schmitter, 6 and 26; and Gregorz Ekiert, "Democratization Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration," British Journal of Political Science 21 (July, 1991), 286-287 and 312.
- ¹³ Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model", Comparative Politics, April 1970, 337-363. The idea that transitions from authoritarian rule occur in phases is not new as evidenced by this article. The idea that these phases are iterative is.
- ¹⁴ Herbert Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems In East Central Europe," Politics and Society 20 (March, 1992), 11.
- ¹⁵ Arend Lijphart, Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-one Countries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 128.
- ¹⁶ Robert Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 4. What Dahl calls "Liberalization", I refer to as "Participation", since the primary liberalizing attribute is the ability for more and more people to participate as candidates for elected office.
- ¹⁷ Held, History of Eastern Europe, 11-15 and S.N. Sangmpam, "The Overpoliticized State and Democratization: A Theoretical Model," Comparative Politics 24 (July, 1992), 413.
- ¹⁸ Dahl, Polyarchy, p. 4.
- ¹⁹ Huntington, The Third Wave, 7 and John Hibbing and Samuel Patterson, "A Democratic Legislature in the Making: The Historic Hungarian Elections of 1990," Comparative Politics 24 (January, 1992), 433.
- ²⁰ Schmitter, Philippe and Karl, Terry. "What Democracy is...and is not," Journal of Democracy 2 (Summer, 1991), p. 81-82 and Kitschelt, p. 13.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Lijphart, Democracies, 138-139.
- ²³ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 28-32 and Huntington, The Third Wave, 169.
- ²⁴ Lijphart, Democracies, 129-132; O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 45-47 and Huntington, The Third Wave, 59-72 and Valerie Bunce, "The Struggle for Liberal Democracy in Eastern Europe," World Policy Journal (Summer, 1990), 405-406.
- ²⁵ David Lake, "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War," American Political Science Review 86 (March, 1992), 24-35.
- ²⁶ Atlas of Eastern Europe (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1990), 35-37 and Tismaneanu, Reinventing Politics, 244.

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- ²⁷ Lijphart, Democracies, p. 144.
- ²⁸ For a general discussion of coding problems in the social sciences see Earl Babbie, The Practice of Social Research (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1989).
- ²⁹ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 58; Lijphart, Democracies 141-143 and Tismaneanu, Reinventing Politics, 177.
- ³⁰ Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Systems", 2 and O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 58.
- ³¹ Tismaneanu, Reinventing Politics, 177; Held, History of Eastern Europe, 3-9 and 260 and Sabrina Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 203-204.
- ³² Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Systems," 28 and Figs. 4-7. Kitschelt tried, in a rudimentary way, to define the political power of a party. I am talking about a much more specific measure.
- ³³ Held, History of Eastern Europe, 34-53.
- ³⁴ Tismaneanu, Reinventing Politics, 179-191.
- ³⁵ Held, History of Eastern Europe, 129.
- ³⁶ Ibid, 260.
- ³⁷ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 58.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 37.
- ³⁹ Ibid, 58.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, 39-40 and 49-50.
- ⁴¹ Huntington, The Third Wave, 75.
- ⁴² Held, p. 263-264.
- ⁴³ Ibid, 263-264 and 274.
- ⁴⁴ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 46.
- ⁴⁵ Held, History of Eastern Europe, 318-319.
- ⁴⁶ Benjamin Franklin may have been thinking about this process when he said, "Gentlemen, we must all hang together or, certainly, we will all hang separately."
- ⁴⁷ Held, History of Eastern Europe, 349.
- ⁴⁸ Huntington, The Third Wave, 292-294.
- ⁴⁹ Held, History of Eastern Europe, p. liv-lxix.
- ⁵⁰ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 38 and John Sloan, "The Policy Implications of Democratic Regimes in Latin America," Latin American Research Review, Vol. 24, No. 1, 116.
- ⁵¹ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 38 and Huntington, The Third Wave, 169-171 and Sloan, "Policy Implications", 124.
- ⁵² Held, History of Eastern Europe, 146 and 275-276.
- ⁵³ Huntington, The Third Wave, 290-292.
- ⁵⁴ Lijphart, Democracies, 150-168.
- ⁵⁵ Dahl, Polyarchy, 6.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Systems", 9.
- ⁵⁸ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 57-59.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, 61-64 and Huntington, The Third Wave, 174-178.
- ⁶⁰ Gregor Ferguson, Coup D'Etat: A Practical Manual (New York: Sterling Publishing Company, 1987), 13.
- ⁶¹ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 25.
- ⁶² Ferguson, Coup D'Etat, 20.
- ⁶³ O'Donnell and Schmitter, Transitions, 25.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid, 62.
- ⁶⁵ Rustow, "Transitions," 358-360. Although Rustow is talking about transitions to democracy, I find that the idea compelling that some general, minimal level of satisfaction is the signal that the process is complete.

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