

Chapter 1

Legitimacy, the Demonstration Effect, and the Collapse of the Warsaw Pact

The East-West divide in Europe that persisted from the end of World War II until 1989 was both a cause and consequence of the Cold War. Having liberated most of Eastern Europe from the Nazis, the Soviet Red Army stayed, and with it Soviet control.¹ The Western allies had agreed that new governments in the East European states should be “democratic and friendly” to the Soviet Union, but by 1950 it was clear that these governments would be ruled by communist and socialist parties backed by, and beholden to, Moscow. The consolidation of the Soviet bloc was further confirmed by the creation of the Warsaw Pact, a political-military alliance, in 1955; ostensibly this was a response to NATO’s (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) inclusion of West Germany, but it further hardened the dividing line in Europe.²

1. Through much of the Cold War, the term “Eastern Europe” was used to describe the states of the Warsaw Pact, and sometimes Yugoslavia and Albania as well. With the collapse of the East-West divide in Europe, many states in this region rejected the term, and distinctions between Central Europe and South Eastern Europe have become common. Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 led to the depiction of former Soviet republics such as Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic States as “Eastern Europe.” For the sake of brevity and simplicity, and because it was the accepted term during the period I study, I use Eastern Europe to refer to those states that were part of the Warsaw Pact: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany (the German Democratic Republic), Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

2. The Council of Economic Mutual Assistance, established in 1949, became a mechanism for coordinating planning and trade among the socialist countries. For more on the establishment of these alliances, see Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*, rev. and enl. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 456–463.

Though there was some initial popular support for socialism in Eastern Europe, bolstered by promises of land reform and greater equality, this dissipated as communist control in the region emulated the Stalinist model, with its premium on repression and violence. Though communist rule became more relaxed after Stalin's death, throughout the Cold War Moscow faced the challenge of balancing its desire for bloc cohesion against the need for viable regimes in Eastern Europe. Cohesion favored the adoption of uniform policies, while viability meant giving the regimes more latitude as they strove to achieve a modicum of popular acceptance, if not approval. This tension was evident in the periodic crises in the bloc, most prominently the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Prague Spring and Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland in 1980, which led to the declaration of martial law by the Polish regime in December 1981. All of these crises were rooted in the conflict between popular aspirations for greater freedom and Moscow's desire for control. By the 1980s, the conventional wisdom was that Moscow would tolerate limited political and economic flexibility deemed necessary to keep the population quiescent, while the East European states' membership in the Eastern bloc was not open to question.

Moscow's insistence on continued loyalty to the Soviet Union was made most explicit in the Brezhnev Doctrine, enunciated in November 1968 after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union claimed for itself the right to interfere if socialism was threatened anywhere in Eastern Europe.³ The presence of Soviet troops in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland underscored Moscow's intent to preserve Soviet control in the region, and ensured its ability to do so. The paralysis of the East-West divide created by Soviet and NATO troops facing each other in Europe sustained the conviction that this division was both resilient and critical to Europe's continued stability during the Cold War.

When Mikhail S. Gorbachev assumed power as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in March 1985, neither East nor West anticipated any change in this arrangement—certainly not without war. Yet Gorbachev dramatically changed the relationship between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union over the next five years, as the Cold War decayed. Gorbachev initiated a sweeping series of reforms

3. Leonid Brezhnev, "Speech to the Fifth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party (November 12, 1968)," as reprinted in Gale Stokes, ed., *From Stalinism to Pluralism: A Documentary History of Eastern Europe since 1945*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 132–134.

in the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1980s, and invited his East European allies to follow suit. Few substantial changes had appeared in Eastern Europe by mid-1988. Poland had just begun to explore negotiations with limited aims between the regime and opposition groups, and the governing socialist party in Hungary had begun to revamp its leadership, elevating more reform-minded leaders.⁴ But by the end of 1989, less than five years after Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union, the communist-led regimes in all the East European member states of the Warsaw Pact had either crumbled or conceded the need for free elections, to be held over the next few months.

What happened? Why had only two states in the Eastern bloc moved to introduce even limited reforms at the beginning of 1989? And what led to the collapse of the communist regimes throughout the bloc by the end of that year?

I argue that a combination of international and domestic factors explain the changes in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. Once the Soviet Union invited reform, those regimes that recognized the urgency of reform, or that calculated that they could hold on to power during a reform process, cautiously moved toward political liberalization in order to have the chance to mend their economies. The introduction of reforms in these states, Poland and Hungary, changed political calculations in the rest of the bloc. Populations became more ready to demand change, and some within the other East European regimes became convinced that the previous system was no longer viable as they watched the reform processes in these two states—and the Soviet Union's acceptance of their changes.

This explanation highlights the role of individuals' perception, which mattered in several ways. It was not enough that the Soviet Union declare a policy of noninterference and "freedom of choice"; leaders and populations had to believe this. It was not enough for people to want greater freedoms; they must throw off their apathy and demand them.

Finally, leaders' perceptions of their own standing influenced their attitudes toward risk-taking and the prospect of change. Few political science theories examine the mechanisms by which large political changes

4. I use the term "reform" throughout this book as a shorthand for the initiation of a very complex process that included the introduction of a democratic form of government and the transition from a centrally planned economy to a capitalist, market-based economy. While this is not an entirely satisfactory term, I know of no precise words to depict the initiation of reform. It could be argued that the closest such word is revolution, but this has other meanings and connotations that do not coincide with the issue here. In this book, "reform" is used both to refer to early efforts to introduce economic or political reforms, and to the larger process of political change that occurred in 1989. The distinction should be clear from the context.

outside a country affect the behavior of individuals within it. This chapter constructs an explanation of the events of 1989 that does so. This is not a “theory” per se. Rather, the events of 1989, a critical episode in twentieth-century history, merit an effort to comprehend in greater depth the processes that shaped the collapse of the Warsaw Pact. I first look at the prevailing explanations for the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, each of which describes a necessary but insufficient cause for the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. I then focus on the factors that led to early reform or its rejection, and the factors that finally led those states holding out against reform to concede the need for reforms, or to crumble.

Domestic and International Explanations

Three basic arguments have been proposed to explain the Warsaw Pact’s collapse. Some observers maintain that Western influence was critical to the collapse of Eastern Europe’s communist regimes since the West presented an alternative to the socialist system imposed on the Eastern bloc, and constrained the Soviet Union to change its foreign policies; these influences grew stronger starting in the 1970s as a result of the Helsinki process. Many observers contend that the process of change in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s impelled the collapse of the communist-run regimes in Eastern Europe. This theory is an extension of the argument that the socialist system created by the Soviet Union and exported to its allies was doomed to collapse, and also reflects the conviction that without Soviet dominance the Eastern Europeans would spontaneously reject communism and embrace democracy. Finally, some see the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in the Warsaw Pact as a classic transition to democracy, and essentially the same as democratic transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America.

Each of these explanations clarifies some facets of the process, but none can explain adequately why the collapse of the Warsaw Pact took place as it did, and when it did. Indeed, intermingled internal and external factors catalyzed the process of change in Eastern Europe. As Peter Gourevitch argues, “international relations and domestic politics are therefore so interrelated that they should be analyzed simultaneously, as wholes.”⁵ The international system alone is indeterminate; a state’s environment may exert strong pulls on it, but the state always has some

5. Peter Gourevitch, “The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Autumn 1978), pp. 881–912.

choice in responding to external events. To understand the choice we must look both within and outside the state. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact presents a unique opportunity to examine the interrelationship of domestic and international variables, because it is one in which a significant external change affected all of these states, yet internal responses to this change varied widely within the Warsaw Pact.

THE IMPACT OF THE WEST

Some argue that the West can take credit for inducing the transformation of Eastern Europe, and of the Soviet Union. Western influence was clearly important as a model, an ideal, and in some cases a succor to dissent in Eastern Europe during the Cold War. Yet the West played a largely passive role in the changes in Eastern Europe in 1989; it did not cause them.

Arguments about the role of the West can be separated into three main strands. First, East-West competition during the Cold War compelled change in the Soviet Union, a necessary precursor to changes in Eastern Europe. The Western military build-up led the Soviet Union to conclude that it could not sustain the military confrontation with the West. Therefore, Gorbachev instituted reforms in the Soviet Union, which led to the collapse of its control in Eastern Europe and eventually the destruction of the Soviet Union itself.⁶

A second interpretation is that the apparent success of the Western economic and political system presented a critical challenge to the socialist system. It provided a constant refutation of Marxist-Leninist claims that the capitalist system was fatally flawed, and doomed to collapse under the weight of its "internal contradictions." The health of the West magnified the poverty of the socialist system in the East, and also height-

6. The logic of this argument is similar to claims that change in the Soviet Union was sufficient to induce the changes that occurred in Eastern Europe. See Pipes, *Survival is Not Enough: Soviet Realities and America's Future* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984); see also John Lewis Gaddis, "Hanging Tough Paid Off," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 45 (January–February 1989), pp. 11–14; Richard Perle, "Military Power and the Passing Cold War," in Charles W. Kegley, Jr., and Kenneth L. Schwab, eds., *After the Cold War: Questioning the Morality of Nuclear Deterrence* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991); Caspar Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace* (New York: Warner Books, 1990); and Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy that Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994). For more theoretical analyses of external influences on the Soviet Union, see Jack Snyder, "International Leverage on Soviet Domestic Change," *World Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (October 1989), pp. 1–30; and Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "The International Sources of Soviet Change," *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Winter 1991/92), pp. 74–118.

ened resentment among Eastern Europe's inhabitants, many of whom felt that they belonged with the West by virtue of their history and culture.⁷

Third, some believe that the expansion in East-West ties that developed out of the "Helsinki process" catalyzed the process of democratization in the East. The Helsinki process grew out of efforts to improve East-West relations in the early 1970s, when a relaxation between the United States and the Soviet Union made progress in arms control and détente possible. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) culminated in the signing of the "Final Act" in Helsinki in August 1975, which provided for increased East-West ties and agreed definitions of human rights that each side would respect. Though originally this conference was promoted by the Soviet Union, the Helsinki process enabled the West to insist that Moscow live up to its human rights commitments, and to advocate greater freedom of movement and East-West exchanges.⁸ Thus, it helped catalyze change by expanding cross-border contacts and exchanges of ideas across the Cold War divide. The Western peace movement also argues that its efforts to sustain ties with dissidents in Eastern Europe during the 1980s, efforts given sanction by the Helsinki process, induced the process of change in Eastern Europe.⁹

7. For some discussions of East European attitudes toward the West prior to the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, see J.F. Brown, "Eastern Europe's Western Connection," in Lincoln Gordon, ed., *Eroding Empire: Western Relations with Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987); Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Stephen R. Graubard, ed., *Eastern Europe . . . Central Europe . . . Europe* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991).

8. See Vojtech Mastny, *Helsinki, Human Rights, and European Security* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986); see also J.F. Brown, *Surge to Freedom: The End of Communist Rule in Eastern Europe* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991), chap. 1; and John J. Maresca, *To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973–75* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1985).

9. For an example of the kind of exchange that grew out of the Helsinki process, and some discussions of the influence of Western concepts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see Mary Kaldor, ed., *Europe from Below: An East-West Dialogue* (London: Verso, 1991); an earlier example is Timothy Garton Ash, *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (New York: Vintage, 1990). See also Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Did 'Peace Through Strength' End the Cold War? Lessons from INF," *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Summer 1991), pp. 162–188; Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 185–214; Mary Kaldor, "Cold War Europe: Taking the Democratic Way," *The Nation*, April 22, 1991, pp. 514–519; and Mary Kaldor, "Who Killed the Cold War?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (July/August 1995), pp. 57–60.

While Western influences were clearly significant, they did not induce the changes that occurred in 1989. The impact of the West did not change significantly during the period immediately prior to the collapse of the Warsaw Pact. The East-West confrontation had been static since the 1950s, and the Carter-Reagan arms build-up was notable in its size, but Soviet experts discount this as a factor in the introduction of perestroika.¹⁰ The Western model challenged the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but this challenge was more or less constant. Similarly, influences stemming from the CSCE process and the peace movement were present since the mid-1970s. That the Western alternative was an important aspiration in Eastern Europe can be seen in the adoption of “western” values and institutions since 1989, but it is unlikely that the attraction of the West alone could have impelled the collapse of the Warsaw Pact.

THE SOVIET UNION AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Another compelling argument is that once the Soviet Union began to introduce substantial political and economic reforms, change in Eastern Europe was inevitable.¹¹ At its most stark, this mirrors the argument that the socialist system created by the CPSU was doomed to collapse.¹² Some an-

10. Most assessments of the causes for Gorbachev's new thinking point to a reassessment of Soviet aims with regard to the West, but not to a reevaluation in light of its inability to “keep up,” as is sometimes claimed in the West. Gorbachev's change in policy had more to do with Soviet domestic difficulties, and the realization that Soviet foreign policy had worked against its own interests. See Chapter 2.

11. As Jack F. Matlock, Jr., points out, this was the “glib” response of many who viewed the Soviet Union through conservative lenses and considered the collapse of the Soviet Union itself as inevitable. See Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 7, and chaps. 8 and 11; for this viewpoint see also Michael Waller, *The End of the Communist Power Monopoly* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

12. The most famous such assertion was made by U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who prematurely relegated communism to “the ash-heap of history.” Among scholars making this argument, one of the most vehement was Richard Pipes, who also argued that the United States could hasten the Soviet Union's collapse. More reasoned analyses of the socialist system's problems have been offered by scholars such as Seweryn Bialer, who pointed out the inherent weaknesses of the Soviet economic and political structure, while at the same time cautioning that the system had sufficient resources to muddle along for decades. See Z, “To the Stalin Mausoleum,” in Graubard, ed., *Eastern Europe . . . Central Europe . . . Europe* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991), pp. 283–339; Pipes, *Survival is Not Enough*; and Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline* (New York: Knopf, 1986). For analyses of U.S.-Soviet relations during the 1980s, see Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945–1990*, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), pp. 310–316; Matthew Evangelista, “Sources of Moderation

alysts considered the Soviet socialist system to be unreformable, and doomed to crumble under its own weight. The East European states shared the defects of the Soviet-imposed socialist economic system, with the added liability that communism was imposed in these states, in the face of varying degrees of resistance.¹³ Once Soviet control was removed, therefore, change in Eastern Europe was inevitable.

While the alterations in the Soviet Union's foreign and domestic policy in the second half of the 1980s resulted in a revision of Moscow's policies toward Eastern Europe, and these changes were necessary to the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, Soviet actions and policy alone cannot account for the timing of events, or the way reforms resonated throughout the bloc. Nor can they explain the variations in the reform processes in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the argument that change in the Soviet Union was sufficient to cause the collapse of the Warsaw Pact does not correspond with what people in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, or the West believed at the time.

Soviet "encouragement" of reform did not result in a uniform response in the Warsaw Pact, as would be expected if change in the Soviet Union were sufficient to induce change. Moreover, while he favored reform in Eastern Europe as well as in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev does not appear to have anticipated change of the sort that transpired in Eastern Europe. It is reasonable to conclude that neither the East European population nor its leaders could be confident of the range of options open to them in 1989, and this ambiguity fundamentally influenced the nature and pace of change in Eastern Europe. Chapter 2 examines how Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe changed, and analyzes in more detail Moscow's impact on developments within the Warsaw Pact.

in Soviet Security Policy," in Philip E. Tetlock, Jo L. Husbands, Robert Jervis, Paul C. Stern, and Charles Tilly, eds. *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 254-354; George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, eds., *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991); and Alexander L. George, Philip J. Farley, and Alexander Dallin, eds., *U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

13. I use the term "communist" here as short-hand to refer to the socialist and communist parties that claimed to represent the "leading role in society" in the states of Eastern Europe. These parties had a variety of names, and implemented a variety of policies that were intended to move their states toward the goal of Soviet-style communism. On the Soviet Union's imposition and manifestations of control in Eastern Europe, see Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*; William E. Griffith, ed., *Communism in Europe: Continuity, Change, and the Sino-Soviet Dispute* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965); and Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, chap. 3.

TRANSITIONS TO DEMOCRACY AND REFORM IN EASTERN EUROPE

Finally, a substantial literature exists on transitions to democracy. Prior to 1989, the transitions literature focused on cases in Southern Europe and Latin America; in recent years East European cases have been incorporated into new studies, to refine our current understanding of transition processes.¹⁴ This literature offers important clues that can help explain the process of transition in Eastern Europe. Scholarship on authoritarian decline also indicates that there were clear parallels between the crumbling political structures in Eastern Europe and in certain similarly crumbling authoritarian regimes elsewhere.¹⁵

At the same time, there are important differences between Eastern Europe and other cases of democratic transition.¹⁶ Many authoritarian regimes, for example, do not rely on a particular ideology, as did the East

14. Some recent works in this vein include Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); George W. Breslauer, ed., *Dilemmas of Transition in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California at Berkeley, 1991); Doh Chull Shin, "On the Third Wave of Democratization," *World Politics*, Vol. 46 (October 1994), pp. 135–170; Luiz Carlos Bresser, Jose Maria Marvall, and Adam Przeworski, eds., *Economic Reforms in New Democracies: A Social-Democratic Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Philippe C. Schmitter, *Some Propositions about Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy* (Vienna: Institut fur Hohere Studien, 1993); *The Transition to Democracy: Proceedings of a Workshop* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1991); Juan J. Linz, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

15. However, there has been disagreement about how the causes of authoritarian decline affect the transition process. Dankwart Rustow has argued that while factors influencing the decline of a regime are important preconditions of the transition process, this does not tell us anything useful about the transition itself, and the way it will progress. Other scholars, such as Samuel Huntington, have countered this claim by arguing that some factors that may be important as preconditions can also shape the nature of the transition, and therefore are important to the process of transition. Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (April 1970), pp. 337–363; and Samuel P. Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 99, No. 2 (Summer 1984), pp. 23–41.

16. The question of comparability between Eastern Europe and other cases of democratic transition has been the subject of vigorous debate. For representative examples, see Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists: How Far to the East Should They Attempt to Go?" *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 173–185; and Valerie Bunce, "Should Transitologists Be Grounded?" *Slavic Review*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 111–127.

European regimes.¹⁷ Even upon first seizing power, other authoritarian regimes have often declared their intent to rule as “caretaker” governments until democracy can be established or reestablished, as the case may be. In other cases, democratic values may be promoted as a means to secure support, at least temporarily, for a given leadership. Liberalization can hold out the promise of partial democratization or pluralism in the future. None of these options are open to an avowedly communist regime. Democratization would require, at a minimum, acceptance of the need for greater pluralism. Yet only by maintaining the leading role of the party and guiding society toward the future could the goals of socialism, the aim of the ruling parties in Eastern Europe, be reached.¹⁸

The transitions literature can provide useful insights into the process by which states with authoritarian regimes shift to more democratic systems, but it cannot explain the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, for two reasons. First, the transitions literature focuses on the details of how transitions progress, rather than explaining why they begin in the first place. It cannot explain the timing of transitions, why they took the initial form that they took. Second, and more important, the transitions literature is primarily process-oriented, and concentrates on domestic processes. Few scholars in this area consider the impact that external actors or events may have had in shaping either the climate leading to a transition,

17. There is general agreement in the democratization literature on what constitutes an authoritarian government. Simply put, political systems in which “significant procedural proscriptions on political contestation or inclusiveness” exist can be defined as authoritarian. In other words, a regime would be considered authoritarian if the choice of the state’s government is not determined by a competitive process, either because there are no means for elections or these are substantially restricted in their scope. Donald Share, “Transitions to Democracy and Transition through Transaction,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (January 1987), p. 527. A more exhaustive description catalogs the following sorts of regimes as authoritarian: “political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.” Juan J. Linz, “Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,” in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, vol. 3 (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975), p. 264. See also Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1971), esp. chap. 1.

18. On communist succession problems in the past, see Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist Systems* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970); and Myron Rush, *How Communist States Change their Rulers* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974).

or the nature of the transition itself.¹⁹ Just as we cannot argue that change in the Soviet Union *caused* the collapse of these regimes, we also cannot claim that only domestic factors determined the upheavals that occurred.

This chapter examines the interaction of international and domestic variables by looking at how actions at the level of the individual were affected by international developments. It includes elements of a two-level game, taking into account the fact that individuals and regimes respond not only to external influences but also, and critically in these cases, to domestic-level factors in making calculations about what policies to follow. State leaders cannot take action internationally without considering the domestic implications of their decisions. Robert Putnam has discussed how international pressures can “reverberate” and change domestic calculations about international negotiating positions; in the East European states in 1989, international reverberations changed domestic calculations about acceptable domestic policies as well.²⁰ I examine this interaction below.

Early Reform: Domestic Factors and Regime Perceptions

Why did the introduction of reform vary from country to country in Eastern Europe? Overall, the process took two forms. First, in some states (Poland and Hungary) reforms emerged early and cautiously, in response to the Soviet Union’s changed policies, while in East European states whose regimes rejected the option of change, reform was provoked late in 1989. These were East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Second, in some countries (Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria), reform was introduced from above, by the regime in power at the time; in others (East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and to some degree Romania), reform was compelled from below, by mounting popular pressure. In this section I examine the two factors that appear to have influenced a regime’s choice of whether or not to introduce reforms early: these are the regime’s comprehension of the need for substantial changes in governance, and its judgment of its ability to survive in a more open political environment.

19. A notable exception, and one likely significantly to influence future research, is Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp. 85–99.

20. Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 427–461.

THE URGENCY OF REFORM

I seek to explain the East European regimes' decisions to introduce significant *political* reforms. Yet this choice cannot be understood without acknowledging the relationship between political and economic reforms within the socialist camp, because centralized control in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and some other communist-ruled countries encompassed both political governance and the state's control of the economy.

The socialist system that developed in the Soviet Union and was exported to Eastern Europe was based on the goal of cultivating the state's productive forces in order to create the abundance that would be necessary if a true communist system, based on Marxist principles, was to be realized.²¹ To ensure that industrialization received sufficient priority, the Soviet Union developed a centralized planning system that coordinated all aspects of the economy, from supplies to outputs. This meant that the regime had extremely broad control over the functioning of the state; it also required the development of a massive bureaucratic infrastructure to plan all the economic activities of the state's industries to the lowest levels. Since planners determined both the types and quantities of goods produced, as well as their prices, this centralization virtually precluded the functioning of market mechanisms in the economy. This centralization has important implications for change in the system, because the degree of transformation of the economy that would need to accompany any change in the governance of the state is extremely large. Rather than simply exchanging one set of officials for another set, a new government in a post-totalitarian state must decide whether it wishes to revamp the entire centralized structure of the state and how to go about doing so, in the face of unknown obstacles and the certainty of societal upheavals. Moreover, central control discourages entrepreneurship or innovation by industrial managers, making the introduction of capitalism more problematic.²²

In spite of satisfactory economic growth in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe until well into the 1960s, regimes within the socialist camp made a variety of attempts to tinker with elements of the socialist economic system during the postwar period. These efforts generally involved modifications meant to improve the performance of the socialist

21. The most important such principle was "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." For a good overview of the Soviet economic system, see Alec Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*, 2nd ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980).

22. Juan J. Linz, "Transitions to Democracy," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Summer 1990), p. 156.

system, such as changing the price structure, or allowing enterprises somewhat greater autonomy, rather than efforts to replace it, which was not an option.²³ Yet these “refinements” were evidence that even when working comparatively well, the centralized economic system was not performing to the satisfaction of its proponents.²⁴

In spite of their rhetorical support for the socialist model, some East European leaders recognized that the socialist economic system needed repair. In 1968, however, it became clear that states could pursue only limited economic reform without venturing into political quicksand. The reforms associated with the “Prague Spring” in Czechoslovakia in 1968 were a bid to improve both the state’s economic and political mechanisms, but when the Czechoslovakian regime, led by Alexander Dubček, began to allow the expansion of political modifications intended to improve relations with society and, by extension, to help improve economic conditions, political reforms spiraled out of control. The consequence, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent repression, was to make political reforms taboo in Eastern Europe for nearly twenty years.²⁵

Until the mid-1970s, the East European regimes were able to run their economies without substantial reforms, partly because they received fuel at well below world market prices from the Soviet Union.²⁶ The start of the Helsinki process in the early 1970s also made a partial opening to the

23. See Jan Adam, *Why Did the Socialist System Collapse in Central and Eastern European Countries? The Case of Poland, the Former Czechoslovakia and Hungary* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1996), chap. 7; Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986), pp. 156–159. On the socialist economic system, see also Iván T. Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944–1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chaps. 5 and 6; János Kornai, *Overcentralization in Economic Administration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959); and Kornai, *Economics of Shortage* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Press, 1980).

24. George W. Breslauer, “Is the Soviet System Transformable? The Perennial Question,” in Breslauer, ed., *Dilemmas of Transition in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California at Berkeley, 1991), pp. 1–14; and J.F. Brown, *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), especially chap. 4.

25. For detailed accounts of the Prague Spring, see Gordon H. Skilling, *Czechoslovakia’s Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Jiri Valenta, *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); and Zdeněk Mlynar, *Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism* (New York: Karz, 1980).

26. On Soviet fuel pricing and its implicit subsidies to Eastern Europe, see Paul Marer, “The Political Economy of Soviet Relations with Eastern Europe,” and John P. Hardt, “Soviet Energy Policy in Eastern Europe,” both in Sarah Meiklejohn Terry, ed., *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984).

West possible, which gave these regimes access to cheap Western credits.²⁷ Finally, many of these regimes did not hit the limits of their growth potential under the existing system until the mid-1970s. So long as they had sufficient manpower to continue expanding even in very inefficient, labor-intensive modes of production, economic growth was still possible.²⁸

By the early 1980s, however, the need for substantial economic changes was clearly recognized in some East European states, such as Hungary and Poland. The East European economies stagnated by the end of the 1970s for a variety of reasons: all lost their access to cheap fuel; most had high levels of accumulated debt in most of the Warsaw Pact states, due to bad management of the credits they had received from the West; and all had reached or were reaching the natural limits of labor-intensive growth.²⁹ This led to adverse terms of trade both within the Soviet-dominated Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and with Western trading partners. In combination with the rise of Solidarity in 1980, a clear indication of popular discontent, there was a growing comprehension in some of these states that tinkering would not work; only substantial modifications of the economic system would solve the system's problems.

Thus, when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union in 1985, some leaders were aware of the need for substantial economic reform—but more regimes should have comprehended the problems they faced. Many regimes in the Eastern bloc faced economic conditions that should have led their leaders to consider at a minimum significant economic reforms, if not political changes as well; by 1985, previous economic reforms without political modifications had clearly failed. Moreover, while economic conditions in some states were far worse than in

27. The CSCE made possible expanded economic ties, which in the long run weakened the East European states because of the debt they compiled. See Mastny, *Helsinki, Human Rights, and European Security*; and Brown, *Surge to Freedom*, chap. 1.

28. Adam, *Why Did the Socialist System Collapse in Central and Eastern European Countries?* pp. 138–142.

29. The Soviet Union introduced a system of price averaging in the mid-1970s in response to the rapid rise in prices and the inability of its allies to pay world prices. When the international oil market collapsed at the end of the decade, this left the East European states paying prices substantially more than the new world market prices. See Adam, *Why Did the Socialist System Collapse in Central and Eastern Europe?* chap. 8; on energy inefficiency in the Eastern bloc see also Jacek Rostowski, “Economic Structure and Material and Energy Intensity in Eastern Europe,” in Reiner Weichhardt, ed., *The Economies of Eastern Europe under Gorbachev's Influence* (Brussels: NATO, 1988), pp. 53–79.

others, none of the East European economies were actually healthy. But the early 1980s economic problems were not always enough to make a regime recognize the need for economic reforms, let alone political changes.

This is partly explained by the fact that introducing significant economic reforms would clearly impinge on political issues.³⁰ To introduce elements of a market economic system was to reject the Marxist-Leninist ideology that was the basis for rule in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.³¹ Yet by the mid-1980s some East European leaders appeared to have understood that even major economic changes, in the absence of political changes, would not resolve their problems.³² The acceptance of major economic reforms therefore implied a changed attitude toward political orthodoxy as well.

What factors would lead a regime to recognize the need for political reforms?³³ First, clearly, a regime must see the need for significant *eco-*

30. Hungary's cautious efforts to reform in the 1960s and 1970s are a case in point; having begun economic liberalizations in the mid-1960s, the Hungarian government faced pressure and suspicion from the Soviet leadership about the aims of these reforms, and after the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, the second half of the planned reforms was postponed and eventually dropped. Some aspects of the original reform program survived, however, and generated a rise in prosperity in Hungary. See Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944–1993*, pp. 146–152. See also Chapter 3.

31. Indeed, his own devotion to socialism notwithstanding, Gorbachev faced substantial opposition within the Soviet Union because of the consequences of his reforms for the state's core ideological beliefs. For a particularly famous criticism, see Nina Andreyeva, "I Cannot Forgo My Principles," in Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus, eds., *The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse*, rev. ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 288–296. See also E.K. Ligachev, *Zagadka Gorbacheva* [The mystery of Gorbachev] (Novosibirsk: Interbook, 1992).

32. This was especially apparent in Poland, where the already struggling economy had been thrown into chaos by the strikes Solidarity organized in 1980–1981. See Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New York: Scribner's, 1983).

33. By "regime" I mean what some in Eastern Europe referred to during the transition as "the powers that be." In the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact (as well as in most other putatively socialist states), a distinction was made between the "government" and the "party." In theory, government officials were responsible for directing state business, but in practice the party, "the leading force in society," dictated and largely oversaw policymaking. The ruling parties in Eastern Europe also had a variety of names ranging from the "Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party" to the "Communist Party of Czechoslovakia." To avoid confusion, I will refer to the "regime" or the "Communist Party" throughout, unless I am discussing individual leaders. For an overview of differences in governance and party practices during the Cold War, see Richard F. Staar, *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, 5th ed. (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1988).

nomic reforms, beyond earlier endeavors to tinker with the system. This awareness could be caused by an economic crisis or economic stagnation. In the absence of such recognition, an East European regime would not be likely to accept the need for political reforms. Or a regime might understand the linkages between economic and political reforms—that economic reforms alone would not succeed in solving the state’s problems. Such regimes would be in agreement with the ideas being promoted by Gorbachev from 1985 on. Finally, a regime would likely recognize the need for political changes if it were aware that it faced serious problems in its relations with society, and that these were only likely to be solved by introducing political as well as economic reforms.

I measure regime awareness of the urgency of reform with four indicators. First, I examine the nature of reform efforts prior to 1985 for evidence of the regime’s attitude toward economic reform. If earlier reforms were limited to changes at the margins of the system, the regime was unlikely to see the need for political reform. If it had begun to introduce market elements, the regime would be more likely to perceive that political reforms were crucial as well.

The second indicator is the degree of “orthodoxy” of a state’s economic and political structure. By orthodoxy, I mean the degree to which the state adhered to the Soviet model and Marxism-Leninism. If a regime’s commitment to socialist ideals had begun to erode by the 1980s, for whatever reason, then it would be more likely to acknowledge problems with the existing system. Unshaken faith in the correctness of Marxist-Leninist values, if only as a justification for the regime’s continuance in power, should make a regime more hostile to political changes.

Another way to measure a regime’s orthodoxy is through its ties with Moscow. Links with the Soviet leadership played a critical role in the survival of East European leaders from the late 1940s on. Under Stalin, absolute conformity to Soviet positions came to be required—particularly after the dispute between the Yugoslavian leader Josip Broz Tito and Stalin in the late 1940s.³⁴ During Khrushchev’s and Brezhnev’s tenure, patronage by the right members of the Soviet leadership could determine the political survival or success of an East European leader, depending on which factions held sway in Moscow. Similarly, changes in a leader’s orientation—toward more reformist or conservative views—could influence

34. On the split between Stalin and Tito, see Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*, pp. 185–209; Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962); and Adam B. Ulam, *Titoism and the Cominform* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952).

Moscow's decision to support particular factions within an East European regime, especially during periods of instability.³⁵

After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union in 1985, reform-minded elements in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union gained authority in the Soviet leadership.³⁶ The make-up and inclination of many of the East European regimes, however, did not mirror this shift. If an East European regime sided with more reformist elements in the Soviet leadership, then one would expect the regime would be open to political reforms, even if its ultimate goal was not democratization. Conversely, an East European regime that maintained strong ties to the hard-line elements in the Soviet leadership would be less likely to initiate reforms. The degree of commitment by the regime to socialist ideals would probably coincide with its alignment with reformers or hard-liners in Moscow.

A third indicator that a regime saw the need for political as well as economic reforms is the magnitude of the problems facing its state. If the state faced a serious economic crisis, it should be less likely to sustain its faith in its ability to rule without reforms. The party leadership should be aware that the socialist economic model was not working; indeed, a protracted economic crisis could erode a regime's commitment to Marxism-Leninism. A regime might see that it must modify its political strategies and look for new solutions if it hoped to preserve its position.³⁷

35. On the relationship between the Soviet leadership and the regimes in Eastern Europe, particularly during crises, see, among others, Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*; and Valenta, *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia*, 1968.

36. However, they were neither the majority nor totally in control. For some discussions of differences within the Politburo during the late 1980s, see Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*; Seweryn Bialer, *Politics, Society, and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989), chaps. 3–7; Michael Tatu, "The 19th Party Conference," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 37, Nos. 3–4 (May–August 1988), pp. 1–15; and John B. Dunlop and Henry S. Rowen, "Gorbachev versus Ligachev, The Kremlin Divided," *The National Interest* (Spring 1988), pp. 18–29. See also Chapter 2.

37. Pressure for change has also arisen from economic growth, which can create strains within rigid societies. Rapid industrialization, with its requirement for skilled or semi-skilled workers, may help labor organizations gain members and bargaining power. Expanding job opportunities and rising living standards can also change popular impressions of individual rights and willingness to accept rigid limits to these freedoms. As a result, economic growth could lead to increased pressures on a regime for liberalizations, or for democratization. For example, economic growth created new pressures on the government in Spain in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In much of Eastern Europe, rapid industrialization from the 1950s on led to the creation of an urban, industrialized workforce, but the centralized planning system made it impossible

Moreover, the economy would also affect popular attitudes toward the regime. If the economy was in relatively good condition and capable of meeting popular expectations, then the population should be more pliable; while if the economy was in poor condition, then the population should be more restive, or even open in its disapproval of the regime.

Of course, determining the magnitude of the economic problems facing a state can be difficult. A regime that was unwilling drastically to change its economic system for ideological reasons might overstate its economic successes as proof that reforms were unnecessary, as in Romania. Or if the state's economy was not in crisis, or if the regime successfully contended that it was not, as in East Germany, then the regime would be less likely to acknowledge that reforms might be potentially beneficial. Some of the East European economies were in far worse condition in 1989 than was believed at the time. Since I seek to measure a regime's cognizance of the need for reform, I use the interpretations generally accepted by the regime and outside observers during the late 1980s, not newer evidence, which sometimes tells a less sanguine story.³⁸

The fourth indicator is a regime's willingness to use the opportunity presented by Gorbachev to expand its reform efforts. A regime's response can be measured by examining any attempts it made to change the system between 1985 and 1988, during the initial period of reform in the Soviet Union. The statements of party leaders during this period should also demonstrate their attitude toward reform. East European leaders who supported the changes in Moscow with enthusiasm should favor political reforms; those who made neutral or negative comments about

to continue the pace of growth that the workers were led to expect. This was a major cause of many of the crises in Poland, in particular, and led to the formation in 1980 of Solidarity, the first independent trade union in the Eastern bloc—a direct threat to the Communist-controlled system. On the situation in Spain, see Kenneth Maxwell, "The Emergence of Democracy in Spain and Portugal," *Orbis*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring 1983), pp. 151–184. For some discussions of the role of modernization on transitions, see Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics*, Vol. 49 (January 1997), pp. 155–183; Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp. 59–71; and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

38. Sometimes outside observers and the ruling regime had very different interpretations of the economy's condition. This is particularly evident in the case of Romania. However, since Ceaușescu's continued belief in the rightness of his policies, regardless of the suffering they caused the Romanian population, was central to his attitude toward reform in Eastern Europe, it is easy to conclude that Ceaușescu was not cognizant of the need for reform. See Chapter 7.

Soviet and other East European reforms probably dismissed the need for political reforms.³⁹

POLITICAL SURVIVAL AND LEGITIMACY

A regime's outlook on reform was not the only factor influencing whether it introduced reforms between 1985 and 1988. A regime's calculation of its ability to survive in a more open political climate also played a critical role. A regime might be able to control the reform process, and perhaps its pace, if it began a process of liberalization or took steps toward more democratic governance, particularly if there was little or no popular pressure for such changes.⁴⁰ Yet a regime would only be likely to take this risk if it presumed that it had a reasonable chance to continue exercising power in a freer political environment. If the regime felt that this was unlikely, then in the absence of other stresses it would not be expected to risk its control by expanding political competition. How would a regime make this calculation?

First, the regime's perception of its own *legitimacy* was critical to whether it would be willing to risk introducing political reforms. Discussing legitimacy as it pertains to Eastern Europe is difficult, at best. How one defines legitimacy, however, is important. Seymour Martin Lipset points to the ability of the regime to sustain the belief among the population that "the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society."⁴¹ In terms of compatibility of institutions and values, clearly the East European regimes failed to gain legitimacy during much of the Cold War. Alternatively, what is critical about legitimacy as a factor in political life may be that it reflects the degree to which those who seek to rule are accepted by those they rule; thus, legitimacy is an impor-

39. There were three types of response to Gorbachev's relaxation of control in the Warsaw Pact and his calls for reform in 1987–88: enthusiastic but cautious efforts to introduce reforms; pro-forma attempts to keep pace with change in the Soviet Union; and outright rejection of the need to follow Moscow's lead. Poland and Hungary fall in the first category; Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria in the second; and East Germany and Romania in the third.

40. Initiating a process of liberalization has enabled other authoritarian regimes to maintain at least partial authority during and after a transition toward democracy. See, for example, Adam Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of Transition to Democracy," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) part III, pp. 51–53; and O'Donnell and Schmitter, "Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies," in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part IV, p. 7.

41. Lipset, *Political Man*, p. 64.

tant measure of the relationship between rulers and ruled.⁴² Governments are confronted with the need to answer the question “who are you that I should obey you?”⁴³ Legitimacy is thus an ongoing process. As Robert Jackman has pointed out, legitimacy is not something that either exists or does not; it is more appropriate to think of it as a spectrum. Sustaining legitimacy requires constant attention.⁴⁴ Recognizing that legitimacy is something that they must constantly work on, regimes can resort to different tactics to try to enhance their legitimacy.⁴⁵

Moreover, the lack of legitimacy, or the loss of it, need not mean regime collapse. Loss of legitimacy can ensue when the state “fails consistently to cope with existing tasks, or proves unable to cope with new tasks suddenly thrust upon it by crisis circumstances.” Nonetheless, the state may be able to preserve its stability, particularly if it retains effective means of coercion.⁴⁶ Similarly, illegitimate regimes are perfectly capable of perpetuating their rule indefinitely—if no alternative to their rule is available.⁴⁷

Legitimacy in Eastern Europe thus must be examined in the context of Soviet control. This had negative consequences for regime legitimacy in two ways. First, the imposition of communist-led governments by the Soviet Union hurt the latent appeal that communist principles might have held for the local population. Second, continued Soviet control diminished a regime’s ability to augment its legitimacy in the eyes of the people it ruled. Dependence on Soviet patronage meant that any at-

42. Robert W. Jackman, *Power Without Force: The Political Capacity of Nation-States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 95.

43. Clifford Geertz, “The Judging of Nations: Some Comments on the Assessment of Regimes in the New States,” *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 245–261, as cited in Jackman, *Power Without Force*, p. 98.

44. Jackman, *Power without Force*, p. 95.

45. The loss of legitimacy may reduce the regime’s effectiveness in governing, which in the long run could lead to increased pressures on the regime for change. For a discussion of the relationship between legitimacy and effectiveness, see Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Developments and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (March 1959), pp. 69–105; see also Lipset, *Political Man*, pp. 64–70; and Jackman, *Power Without Force*, pp. 98–99.

46. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 32.

47. Adam Przeworski cites Weber on this point: “People may submit from individual weakness and helplessness because there is no acceptable alternative.” Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 1 (New York: Bedminster, 1968), p. 213; in Przeworski, “Some Problems in the Study of Transition to Democracy,” p. 51.

tempts by the East European regimes to modify the means by which they ruled, both politically and economically, were subject to veto from Moscow. This hindered efforts to reshape policies so as to gain greater support from the population.⁴⁸

Yet Soviet backing also meant that the East European communist regimes could not be toppled by domestic threats so long as Moscow supported their continuation in power. This applied to the ruling regimes, but not necessarily to individual leaders, who could lose their positions if they disagreed with Moscow.⁴⁹

East European leaders were clearly constrained in the range of policy options open to them, and this had important implications for legitimacy within the Warsaw Pact. First, the events of 1956, 1968, and 1980–81 meant that the inhabitants of Eastern Europe knew that both they and the regimes that ruled them had limited freedom to act. Therefore populations were likely to acquiesce in an East European regime's continued rule. People tend to tolerate unpopular rulers, particularly if they perceive that the alternative is likely to be worse.⁵⁰ Second, an East European regime could not hope to achieve widespread popular support, due to popular hostility toward Soviet influence. Nonetheless, by improving the standard of living, being perceived to be responsive to the needs of the population, and appearing to defend the country's interests as far as was possible within the bounds of Soviet control, an East European regime could gain some degree of approbation from the population. There was

48. Charles Gati has pointed out that the Soviet Union, in considering what policies it would allow its East European allies to adopt, faced the dilemma of choosing between demanding conformity with Moscow's own practices or allowing variation that might enhance the domestic viability of these regimes. See Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*, chap. 9. See also Zvi Gitelman, "Power and Authority in Eastern Europe," in Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist Systems* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970), p. 243; and Sarah Meiklejohn Terry, "Theories of Socialist Development in Soviet-East European Relations," in Terry, ed., *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 221–254.

49. The most obvious example of this is the demise of Walter Ulbricht, who was replaced as party leader in the German Democratic Republic because of his opposition to Moscow's new relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany. See David Childs, *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), pp. 80–87; and Robert Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968–1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 94–95.

50. Similarly, the lack of an alternative will keep the population quiescent, as Przeworski has pointed out. Giuseppe di Palma, "Legitimation From the Top to Civil Society: Politico-Cultural Change in Eastern Europe," *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (October 1991), pp. 49–80.

certainly variation in the level of legitimacy within Eastern Europe, both over time, and from country to country.⁵¹ Given this diversity, the *relative* legitimacy of an East European regime is a valid factor to consider.

I argue that if a regime perceived that its rule was considered relatively legitimate in the eyes of the state's population, then it should feel that it could survive in a more open political climate. For the East European states, this assumes that membership in the Warsaw Pact, friendship with the Soviet Union, and a government that could be considered at least nominally "socialist" in nature, if not still controlled by the Moscow-backed communist party, continued.⁵² That is, a regime's assessment of its legitimacy assumed that the basic parameters of the system would remain. The removal of these parameters was critical to the eventual spread of reform, but these parameters seemed stable when the process began. Similarly, a regime that did not feel that its rule was perceived to be legitimate would not take the risk of introducing domestic political reforms, in the absence of other stimuli.

How can we measure a regime's perception of its legitimacy? Economic factors are not practical measures of this variable, because most governments strive to improve economic performance and to satisfy popular expectations. Efforts by an East European regime to shield the country from complete adherence to the Soviet model might indicate earlier endeavors to improve its standing with the population. But this could also reflect particular aspects of the state's internal structure, or the impulses of a particular leader.⁵³

51. In Poland, for example, Wladislaw Gomulka enjoyed widespread support after he stood up to the Soviets in 1956; but within ten years he was widely unpopular, since he had failed to address the country's economic problems and satisfy popular needs. Conversely, Hungary's János Kádár went from revilement for his presumed complicity in the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, to having higher approval than most leaders in Eastern Europe due to his efforts to strengthen Hungary's economy and the overall moderation of his rule. See J.F. Brown, *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule*; Andrzej Korbonski, "Poland," in Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Communism in Eastern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 50–85; Jane L. Curry and Luba Fajfer, eds., *Poland's Permanent Revolution: People versus Elites, 1956 to the Present* (Washington, D.C.: American University Press, 1996); and Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*.

52. A third parameter was that the Soviet Union did not want to see "communists" being hung from lamp-posts, as they had been during the Hungarian revolution in 1956. Based on author's interviews in Eastern Europe, 1988–89.

53. For example, agriculture in Poland was never collectivized, despite Stalin's desire to see the East European satellite regimes imitate the Soviet economic model. But this step was not taken because it would clearly lead to more civil unrest at a time when

One way to measure legitimacy may be to examine the extent of repression of society. A low level or lack of repression could mean that the regime perceived that its rule would not be imperiled by the presence of opposing views, albeit on a minimal scale. The outer limits of dissent in Eastern Europe were set by Moscow, at least prior to 1985, and a low level of repression would mean allowing a broader range of publications, greater access to information about the outside world, and travel to the West.

A high level of repression—a lack of tolerance for divergent views, and a refusal to trust the population with access to information or travel—could indicate that the regime doubted its own legitimacy. But it could also imply that the regime believed in its own legitimacy, and thus its right to use coercive means to sustain its rule.⁵⁴ Therefore the use of repression alone is indeterminate as an indicator of the regime's faith in its own legitimacy. However, when the motives behind a regime's use of repressive means are apparent from private comments by the leadership to Soviet or other East European elites, it should be possible to distinguish what the use of repression implies about a regime's perception of its legitimacy.

Finally, the failure of repression to curb dissent reveals a regime's low legitimacy. If a regime could not prevent dissent, it might eventually condone relatively open opposition out of concern that regime-society relations would only be worse if it tried to quell such dissent. Moreover, toleration in a climate of low legitimacy could indicate that the regime wanted to improve its popular status.

the communist regime's hold over the country was extremely fragile. Other examples are somewhat less troubling. In Hungary, for example, Party Secretary János Kádár managed to gain grudging popular support over time by tolerating passive opposition to the regime and not demanding active support for the system; improving the quality of life through minor economic revisions; and importantly, by making clear his lack of enthusiasm for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This gave the impression that he was allowing as much variation as the parameters of the socialist system would tolerate at the time, and even pushing the limits. As a result, by the early 1980s the population in Hungary seemed to accept that given the alternatives within the Soviet-dominated parameters, Kádár's rule was relatively benign. Romania's leader Nicolae Ceaușescu openly defied the Soviet Union and condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia, a move that made him widely popular in Romania at the time. Nonetheless, his utter myopia about popular needs and his megalomania destroyed all vestiges of popular support for his rule by the late 1980s—though not his perception of his legitimacy.

54. Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 16–17.

INTRA-REGIME CONFLICT

The introduction of political reforms can also be affected by conflict within a regime, which might induce different factions within it to initiate political changes. Conflicts within regimes about policy choices are common, particularly during transitions.⁵⁵ If a regime did not face significant external pressures for change, then we should find elements within the regime compelling the initiation of reforms, if they occurred. A common cause of internal conflict within a regime is the succession problem that authoritarian regimes confront. Succession problems are especially likely when the way a regime came to power, or the personalized nature of rule by a single figure, means that no regularized means of transferring authority from one individual or group to another exists.

Power struggles within the ruling group may focus on the issue of succession, or factions may use very different issues as a pretext for conflict. For example, the leadership in an authoritarian state may disagree among itself about what policies it ought to follow; this would hinder its ability to govern effectively. Such power struggles could leave the regime paralyzed, or some group within the leadership might choose to look outside the current ruling structure for allies, and attempt to coopt previously excluded groups within society into supporting its views; this could lead to the initiation of reforms of the type seen in some Eastern European states.⁵⁶ Regime-initiated reform of this sort could involve a negotiated settlement with opposition groups or the closest equivalents, and an agreement on a political settlement that would allow the previous rulers to continue to participate in some way in governing the state.⁵⁷

55. Some scholars have argued that divisions within regimes are present in all cases of authoritarian decline, which suggests that regime conflict is a necessary condition for decline. This coincides with a general assumption about the nature of transitions to democracy; O'Donnell and Schmitter cite the examples of recent transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe to make this point. See O'Donnell and Schmitter, "Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies," p. 18.

56. Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of Transition to Democracy," p. 56.

57. Samuel Huntington argues that almost all transitions involve some negotiations between government and opposition groups. He lays out a typology of three broad types of transition processes: transformations, in which elites in power take the lead in bringing about democratization; replacements, in which authoritarian regimes collapse or are overthrown and opposition groups take the lead in promoting democratization; and transplacements, in which government and opposition groups work together to establish democracy. Negotiations are particularly important in this last category. See Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp. 109–163; see also Schmitter and O'Donnell, "Negotiating Pacts," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Phillippe C. Schmitter, and

In Eastern Europe, a group within a regime's leadership might also find political allies outside the state. Communist party officials could generate political resources abroad as well as at home—in the other countries in the Eastern bloc, and most notably in the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ By the late 1980s there were clearly differences of opinion within most of the ruling communist parties in Eastern Europe, despite the surface unity most of them retained for public consumption.⁵⁹ Different groups involved in intraparty conflicts could try to coopt *external* support for their positions in the internal conflicts underway from like-minded groups in other states, especially the Soviet Union. The degree to which this was happening could have been critical to the shape that the process of change took from country to country, depending on the strength of various contingents in gaining external as well as internal support.⁶⁰

Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), part IV.

58. Ellen Commisso uses this term to describe this relationship in "Introduction: State Structures, Political Processes, and Collective Choice in CMEA States," *International Organization*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Spring 1986), pp. 195–238. She discusses the question of recruiting cross-border support primarily with regard to economic issues in the CMEA, but the same logic applies in political decision-making in other areas of state policy. This awareness of cross-border ties is certainly not new; Condoleezza Rice extensively analyzed the nature of cross-border party-military ties in *Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army, 1948–1983* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), as did Christopher D. Jones in *Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe: Political Autonomy and the Warsaw Pact* (New York: Praeger, 1981).

59. However, the factionalism that existed in Eastern Europe was not new in the 1980s; intraparty strife has played a role in the majority of leadership changes throughout the region. Due to the nature of the hegemonic system in Eastern Europe, and its roots in Soviet communism, open factionalism was proscribed in these states, which meant that differences over policy could not be played out publicly, as they are in Western political systems. Instead, "if coalitions form, they tend to be within the party rather than between party groups and social forces or institutions outside it." See Commisso, "Introduction: State Structures, Political Processes, and Collective Choice in CMEA States," pp. 211–213.

60. Steven R. David's refinement of alliance formation theory in third world cases, "omnibalancing," also helps explain why some regimes in Eastern Europe allied with the conservatives in the Soviet Union against domestic pressures for change, while others risked the introduction of reforms. David argues that to understand alliance formation in the third world, we must look not only at the external threats that confront a regime, but also at its domestic opposition; regimes are likely to bandwagon with an external threat if they perceive a *greater* threat to their continued rule from an internal opponent. Similarly, I argue that a regime was unlikely to initiate reforms if it believed that its domestic political survival was at stake. See David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43 (January 1991), pp. 233–256.

SUMMARY

Given the two variables—a regime’s awareness of the need for reforms, and its perception of its own ability to survive, as well as the possibility of intra-regime conflicts—how would we expect different regimes to respond to the prospect presented to them by Gorbachev’s reforms? Four variations are possible. First, if the regime rated its ability to survive as good, and recognized the need for reforms, then the regime would be likely to respond to the changes in the Soviet Union by introducing reforms. This is represented by Box A in Table 1. In this case, reforms should emerge from above, initiated by the regime in the absence of substantial domestic opposition to its rule. Hungary fits this model.

Second, a state whose regime was confident of its ability to survive but did not acknowledge the need for reforms would not be expected to change its policies in response to Soviet reforms. Rather, it might applaud Soviet policies, but it would be unlikely substantially to revise its own economic or political policies in a similar fashion. This is represented by Box B. Bulgaria fits in this category, as does Romania.⁶¹

What of a state whose regime did not feel that it was likely to survive in a more open political environment but recognized the need for reforms? In this third case, Box C, one would expect the regime to experiment with some economic reforms in the hope of improving its circumstances. Substantial political reform, however, would be unlikely in the absence of popular domestic pressure on the regime. If such domestic pressure existed the regime might feel compelled to respond by trying to introduce at least some political changes intended to broaden its base of support, once the Soviet Union made clear that it would tolerate wider attempts to revise the socialist system. This model best describes the reform process in Poland.

Finally, in a state where the regime was not confident of its ability to survive in a more open political climate, and which did not believe that its system needed reform, little response to Gorbachev’s reforms would be expected. This is Box D of Table 1. In this case, the regime might ignore the reforms underway in the Soviet Union, or reject them as irrelevant to its circumstances, by arguing that its own system was functioning satisfactorily. East Germany and Czechoslovakia both fit this model.

Thus, reforms beginning prior to 1989, as a response to change in the Soviet Union alone, would be expected in the cases of A and C. In B and

61. Keep in mind that this table shows only the distinction between states that chose to reform *early* and those that did not; once early reforms had begun, the demonstration effect began to operate in the *late* reforming states (which indicate no reforms in this table), dramatically changing political developments there.

Table 1. The Regime's Relationship to Society and the Introduction of Reform in the Late 1980s.

| | | Regime's Initial Awareness of Need for Political Reform | |
|---|-----|--|------------------|
| | | YES | NO |
| Regime's Perceived Ability to Survive in a More Open Political Climate | YES | A: Reforms likely | B: No Reforms |
| | NO | C: Reforms unlikely without domestic pressure | D: No Reforms |

D, no significant reforms would be anticipated. They might pay lip service to reforms, given the Warsaw Pact's legacy of imitating Soviet policies at home. Yet we would not expect substantial changes to the system to emerge in these states absent other pressures.

Late Reform: Cognitive Processes and the Demonstration Effect

In the states where reform was *not* the choice of the regime when Gorbachev inaugurated perestroika, what caused reforms to ensue? In three states reform was initiated from below, but in one state it was initiated from above. These variations raise several questions. What made some populations protest, when they had been quiescent before? What changed a regime's perceptions about its circumstances, and how did this affect the outcome of events? And what role did external influences play in catalyzing or shaping this process?

We need to look at two elements to understand the nature of change in these states: the cognitive processes by which people interpret the world and events; and the diffusion of ideas from *outside* particular states, which changed the environment within which both regime and population were operating.

Both the regimes and populations in the later reforming states were affected by changes in the political climate. The introduction of reforms in the Soviet Union, and then the beginning of cautious reforms in Poland and Hungary, which "tested the waters" of Soviet tolerance, demonstrated that Soviet tolerance had radically changed. As a result, the modifications introduced within some states, and then by each successive East European state adopting reforms, expanded the limits of the possi-

ble.⁶² Equally critical to the process was the *cognition* of this change, by both leaders and private citizens, which helps explain what people believed was possible. This section examines how cognitive process and the diffusion of ideas affected Eastern Europe in 1989.

COGNITIVE PROCESSES AND EASTERN EUROPE

People interpret information with a variety of cognitive tools. Humans' cognitive capacities are limited, and given the vast amounts of information they confront every day, it would be impossible for people to process all this information as totally new data, without reference to some context by which to recognize objects or events. Therefore, humans use a variety of simplifying "knowledge structures" to help interpret the information they receive.⁶³

Among the most common cognitive tools are schema, the "building blocks of cognition."⁶⁴ Deborah Welch Larson characterizes a schema as "a generic concept stored in memory, referring to objects, situations, events, or people."⁶⁵ It is not a specific picture of an object or situation, but rather a collection of ideas or attributes that are stored as a generic image of an object or situation. When a person thinks of a dog, for example, the image of a Weimaraner probably does not come to mind (unless the person is a fan of William Wegman), but rather a more common dog

62. Such a demonstration effect is not unique to the East European cases, but has occurred among other states with similar characteristics. See Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 414; Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," p. 348; and Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp. 100–105.

63. The use of psychological theories to examine political decision-making has been promoted most prominently by Robert Jervis. For some notable examples of work in this vein, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996). See also Ernest May, "Lessons" of the Past: *The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); and Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: Free Press, 1976).

64. David Rumelhart, "Schemata: The Building Blocks of Cognition," in Rand Spiro, Bertram Bruce, and William Brewer, eds., *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980), pp. 33–34, as cited in Khong, *Analogies at War*, p. 27, fn.23.

65. Larson, *Origins of Containment*, p. 51.

without the distinctive features associated with a particular breed.⁶⁶ Analogies may be the most obvious example of schemas in our daily lives, and as elements of political decision-making. The appeasement of Hitler at Munich in 1938 is perhaps the best known political analogy, and has been used by a variety of leaders to justify standing firm (rather than negotiating) to avoid the danger of greater conflicts later.

Five facets of the way people use analogies and apply them to their experiences are pertinent.⁶⁷ First, analogies play a role because they come to represent the “lessons” people learn from their personal experiences and key events in their lives, and then use in making future judgements. People tend to call on analogies to interpret new situations they face, and by reference to the analogy, they draw lessons about what behavior is appropriate in the new situation. Second, the analogies that people draw on the most tend to be instilled by dramatic events in their lives. Moreover, people learn the most from first-hand experiences, and from incidents that happen early in their adult lives, when their beliefs are being molded. Thus, dramatic events, particularly those with which an individual had personal experience at a young age, tend to shape their later views of their environment.⁶⁸ Munich’s “failure” to prevent World War II shaped the thinking of a generation of political leaders, for example. Third, people tend to choose analogies on the basis of superficial similarities. This is known as the “availability heuristic”; rather than looking for the best fit between new information and the range of available schema in one’s repertoire, people tend to assume that the analogies that come to mind first are the most appropriate, though surface similarities can be misleading.⁶⁹ Yet regardless of the fit, people tend to “fill in” information that they have not actually received but which concurs with their expectations of what should be happening, given the analogy with which they are working. For example, U.S. leaders assumed that Ho Chi Minh and his Chinese allies had ambitions reaching beyond Vietnam, because they used the analogy of Hitler’s territorial demands after Munich. Fourth,

66. See Richard Nisbett and Lee Ross, *Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 32–33.

67. I provide only an abbreviated description of the processes by which individuals process information. For a broader discussion, see Nisbett and Ross, *Human Inference*, pp. 17–42, and for a discussion of the implications for political decision-makers, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, esp. pp. 217–282.

68. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, pp. 227–252.

69. Nisbett and Ross, *Human Inference*, pp. 18–19; and Khong, *Analogies at War*, pp. 35–36.

people are more sensitive to information that confirms their beliefs or schemas; this is called “top-down processing.” And fifth, peoples’ beliefs persevere. Once an analogy or script has been chosen, it becomes difficult to dislodge. Just as they notice new data that confirms their beliefs, people will also tend to ignore or discount information that does not fit the schema that has been chosen.⁷⁰

Can we use a knowledge of how analogies and other schema operate to explain leadership decisions and the rise of mass protests in Eastern Europe in 1989? Not conclusively. We cannot be certain what East European leaders were thinking during this period, nor can we completely trust their recollections, or those of their aides. As with most former rulers, those in the Warsaw Pact want to justify their behavior, and to shape, to the degree possible, the way they will be remembered for posterity. The communist rulers in Eastern Europe were deposed, and most were thoroughly discredited. Some, as a result, are embittered and unwilling to explain past events from their perspective. Other former leaders may see their memoirs as their only chance to rewrite the record and try to portray their roles in a more favorable light. This gives them incentive to distort the truth. For similar reasons, those further down the chain of command have an incentive to paint their superiors as worse than they were, to absolve themselves of guilt for the evils of the system. In the absence of satisfactory memoirs or diaries, and because similar problems reduce the value of interviews, we are forced to rely on the documentary record at the time. This does not allow substantial insights into the private thoughts of these leaders.

Can a cognitive evaluation be useful, given these difficulties? I believe it can, so long as it is estimated within its constraints. We know that humans share similar patterns in their cognitive responses, so it is not rash to assume that cognitive processes would have effects on the Warsaw Pact leaders that are comparable to their effects on Western leaders, for whom a better record of their thoughts or experiences at a particular time may be available. Moreover, while it would not be practical to try to analyze the formative experiences of the central figures in the East European leadership, the historical record provides us ample evidence of the major events they experienced, particularly the shared events of the Cold War period. Additionally, having already drawn distinctions between the East European leaders by evaluating which favored and which rejected reform, it is reasonable to speculate about the likely reactions

70. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, p. 274. See also Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), p. 529.

these leaders who did not favor reform would have had to the events unfolding around them in 1989. Finally, this cognitive deliberation is intended to supplement the larger argument I make here, rather than to be its sole support; it adds nuance to the larger analysis of events.

How might analogies have affected leaders' perceptions in Eastern Europe? In the previous section, I hypothesized that the leadership in these states should have had more conservative ideologies and strong ties with the conservative members of the leadership in Moscow. These leaders were likely to be older than the reform-minded leaders. Indeed, with the exception of Polish leader Wojciech Jaruzelski, no Communist Party leader in the Warsaw Pact had been in power for *less* than fifteen years in 1985.⁷¹

It seems reasonable to assume that the series of dramatic crises and interventions that accented Soviet–East European relations during the Cold War would be the basis for some widely shared schemas within the Warsaw Pact. The Soviet Union invaded Hungary in October 1956 to quell an incipient revolution and Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact; it intervened in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 at the "request" of local party officials to ensure the continuation of socialism and communist party rule in Czechoslovakia; and in December 1981, it pressured the Polish government to declare martial law to prevent Solidarity, the independent trade union, from gaining greater strength and threatening the cohesion of the bloc. These events had in common popular involvement or protest in an effort to reform the existing system, and leaderships that either initiated changes or made concessions to popular demands along the way. Moscow tolerated these modifications up to a point, though its concern about the direction of change was evident in the pressure it placed on each of the regimes to address Soviet concerns about the aims of these liberalizing processes. Finally, in each case, the Soviet Union acted to prevent an attempt at liberalization, reform, or protest from threatening communist party control.

It is reasonable to argue that some lessons would be widely shared within the Warsaw Pact as a result of these experiences.⁷² I suggest that

71. Significantly, political reforms in Hungary did not begin until the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party had replaced János Kádár, who had been in power since 1956, with Károly Grósz in the summer of 1988. Yet there was internal conflict in virtually all the East European regimes.

72. Western analysts drew analogies from events such as the Prague Spring and the subsequent enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, to conclude that the Soviet Union was unwilling to allow its control over Eastern Europe to come into question, and this judgment did not change easily in the late 1980s. This shaped Western policy toward Eastern Europe during the Cold War period, even as late as 1989. Indeed, Michael R.

three broad lessons were shared by leaders and populations in Eastern Europe. First, liberalization was dangerous and difficult to control. From the regimes' perspective, liberalization would not solve the problems it was meant to address, but might make the situation worse.⁷³ Second, Soviet toleration for reform was clearly limited. Third, in the final analysis, the Soviet leadership would be unwilling to countenance the introduction of a more pluralist system, moves too far away from "socialism," or withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. In other words, Moscow would draw the line at any fundamental challenge to its authority within the Pact.

To the degree that one can speculate about the attitudes of the East European leadership, how does our understanding of cognitive processes lead us to expect them to respond to the changes around them in 1989? The analogies of Soviet interventions and their consequences would be particularly strong.⁷⁴ This could color a regime or leader's interpretation of Gorbachev's introduction of reforms in important ways. This history would be expected to induce a skeptical attitude toward Moscow's sincerity in encouraging substantial reform. The arguments within the Soviet leadership about the nature and pace of reforms in Russia should reinforce doubts among East European leaders about the durability of this round of reforms. Most critical for our purposes, the history of Soviet intervention would probably influence the degree to which an East European leader believed that Moscow would support him. Well into 1989—indeed, until it was proven otherwise—there was a widespread belief throughout much of Eastern Europe that the Soviet Union would not accept the overthrow of one of its allies in the Warsaw Pact. This may help explain why the East European leaders who opposed reform seemed un-

Beschloss and Strobe Talbott maintain that in January 1989 Henry Kissinger, acting as President Bush's emissary, proposed a deal to Gorbachev, whereby the Soviet Union would promise not to use force, while the United States would promise not to exploit developments in Eastern Europe to hurt "legitimate" Soviet security interests. Though this came to naught, it was an indication that Western leaders still perceived the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in the same mold that had existed during the Cold War. See Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), pp. 13–21.

73. Both the Prague Spring and the rise of Solidarity in 1980 had their roots in efforts to improve the country's economic conditions; yet neither solved any problems, and instead left the country worse off than it had been before.

74. Given the age of particular leaders, the experience of the Soviet imposition of control over Eastern Europe after World War II probably had a strong impact, particularly for a leader who had been active in the nascent communist party at the time. This could have created an even more rigid impression that the Soviet Union would not let go of Eastern Europe. See Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*, chaps. 1–7; and Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence* (New York: Praeger, 1968), chaps. 8 and 10.

able to recognize growing evidence suggesting that Soviet tolerance was changing. Indeed, this may also explain why no one predicted the events of 1989; these changes were difficult to comprehend in the West as well.⁷⁵

In retrospect, the evidence of greater Soviet toleration for variation in Eastern Europe seems obvious; its acceptance of Polish Round Table negotiations, the dropping of the socialist party's "leading role" in Hungary, the defeat of Poland's ruling party, as well as Gorbachev's enunciation that no state should intervene in another's affairs, are clearly very different from the pattern of previous periods of reform and unrest within the Warsaw Pact. But an East European regime could easily focus on the limits that remained in place—such as the Soviet troops remaining in Eastern Europe—which suggested that Moscow could easily act to quell reforms if it chose to do so. Moreover, Poland and Hungary remained very cautious about the reforms that they were implementing well into 1989; neither directly threatened continued rule by the socialist party in power until August 1989, and even then the Polish regime and Solidarity negotiated a coalition government.⁷⁶ Moreover, the Polish Communist Party made it plain that it had cleared its consent to this move with Moscow. Clearly, there was a great deal of confusion throughout Eastern Europe about what the Soviet reaction would be—it remained possible to presume that some Soviet-imposed constraints remained. It should not be surprising, therefore, that virtually none of the nonreforming East European leaders took advantage of the model presented by Poland and Hungary and attempted to introduce power-sharing agreements in their own countries.⁷⁷ Nor is it surprising that popular pressure for reform remained low well into 1989, since the populace had learned the same lessons that leaders had from earlier Soviet efforts to sustain its control in Eastern Europe.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES, DIFFUSION, AND THE DEMONSTRATION EFFECT

Cognitive factors help explain the political paralysis in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania in early 1989; what then led to the changes that eventually occurred? I argue that the interaction of external influences and the diffusion of ideas created a demonstration

75. U.S. President George Bush's caution about Gorbachev's sincerity through much of 1989 is one such reminder. See Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*.

76. Indeed, the Romanian leader Nicolae Ceaușescu advocated an invasion of Poland to prevent this event. He clearly did not recognize that Moscow would not stop this process. See Chapter 3.

77. The Bulgarian regime did introduce reforms from above, but only after ousting its top leader, Todor Zhivkov. See Chapter 6.

effect, primarily at the popular level in Eastern Europe, which played a decisive role in inducing change. What led thousands of citizens in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and later Romania to break their earlier lethargy and demonstrate against the ruling regime?⁷⁸

Timur Kuran, in examining how tiny opposition movements can mushroom so quickly into substantial protest, discusses how preference falsification can affect an individual's willingness to take the risks involved in protest. An individual who is considering protest must weigh the balance between the rewards of being true to one's convictions and the risks of possible punishment for making one's objections known, against the psychological cost of not protesting. Kuran calls this preference falsification: "the suppression of one's wants entails a loss of personal autonomy, a sacrifice of personal integrity. It thus generates lasting discomfort, the more so the greater the lie."⁷⁹ Each individual has a threshold at which he or she can no longer accept the internal costs of pretense and tacit acceptance of an illegitimate regime's continued rule. For most citizens of states that repress dissent, this threshold is relatively high.

Kuran argues that changes in a superpower's actions will not necessarily lead to widespread changes elsewhere (in this case meaning Eastern Europe) because individuals will not necessarily be moved to react to the superpower's actions, which seem distant from their lives. The key, he argues, is when a few individuals, or a few more than previously, become willing to risk punishment to display their dissatisfaction with the regime: "A single person's reaction to an event of global importance may make all the difference between a massive uprising and a *latent bandwagon* that never takes off."⁸⁰ As individuals react even in quite small

78. Some recent works have discussed the importance of changing popular attitudes to the transformation that occurred in Eastern Europe, including Albert O. Hirschman, "Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History," *World Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (October 1992), pp. 173–202; Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No.1 (October 1991), pp. 7–48; Susanne Lohmann, "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–91," *World Politics*, Vol. 47 (October 1994), pp. 42–101; Norman M. Naimark, "Ich will hier raus': Emigration and the Collapse of the German Democratic Republic," and Tony R. Judt, "Metamorphosis: The Democratic Revolution in Czechoslovakia," both in Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 72–116; and Peter Cipkowski, *Revolution in Eastern Europe: Understanding the Collapse of Communism in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Soviet Union* (New York: John Wiley, 1991).

79. Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never," p. 18.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 22. Emphasis in the original.

numbers, the threshold of toleration for increasing numbers of individuals can rapidly be lowered, and thus widespread protests can result.⁸¹

In Kuran's view, the key lies in an individual's need to be true to him or herself. But what is the catalyst? What makes the first few people change their views about what they can tolerate? How is this initial threshold changed?

The demonstration effect, or suggestive effect, is a concept that has been developed in sociological studies that examine why an individual switches from one choice of action to another.⁸² These studies have

81. Susanne Lohmann expands on Kuran's threshold concept by arguing that both the surprise and inevitability of the revolution in East Germany in 1989 can be explained by the dispersed nature of information about East Germany's situation. She contends that East Germans were discontented, but there was no outlet for this, and insufficient knowledge that this discontent was shared. Lohmann sees the demonstrations that began in Leipzig in September 1989 as an "informational cascade" that played a critical role in expanding the information available to the population about the country's situation. This is helpful, but it does not explain what beyond knowledge impels change, leaving questions about how much information is necessary to be credible and to change peoples' preferences. It is also not entirely accurate to argue that the East Germans or other East Europeans did not know that their discontent was shared; this was, I believe, widely known, but the limits of what was believed to be politically tenable were not clear. See Lohmann, "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades," pp. 42–101.

82. Sociologists have also studied the role that diffusion and contagion play in shaping events or policies. The diffusion/contagion literature clearly supports the argument that external ideas can both shape and trigger behavior across borders. Yet it leaves unanswered the question of why an individual would change his or her beliefs and actions. These hypotheses have been used in studies of domestic politics, such as the diffusion of ideas or innovations among the American states. In the study of international relations, diffusion and contagion hypotheses have been used to examine coups, the spread of war, and the influence of international economic forces. Diffusion is "the spread of a particular type of behavior through time and space as the result of the cumulative impact of a set of statistically independent events." Diffusion occurs when events or ideas build on each other to produce a response. Contagion occurs when a response is sparked without the cumulation of cues; the spread of ideas is considered contagious when a single example of some behavior either encourages similar behavior, or reduces an observer's inhibitions about taking similar actions. See Manus Midlarsky, "Analyzing Diffusion and Contagion Effects: The Urban Disorders of the 1960's," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 1978), p. 1006; on statistical tests, see also Richard P.Y. Li and William R. Thompson, "The 'Coups Contagion' Hypothesis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March 1975), pp. 63–88; and Benjamin Most and Harvey Starr, "Theoretical and Logical Issues in the Study of International Diffusion," *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1990), pp. 391–412. For applications, see Jack L. Walker, "The Diffusion of Innovations Among the American States," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (September 1969), pp. 880–899; Virginia Gray, "Innovation in the States: A Diffusion Study," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December 1973), pp. 1174–1193. On the diffusion of

shown that imitation and suggestion may help shift an individual's choice to a different alternative. For example, individuals tend to adopt decision-theoretical approaches when choosing among alternatives if this is the strategy followed by people that they consider to be role models, such as teachers or parents. But individuals also tend to rely on more impulsive, nontheoretical decision-making if such strategies are displayed by the media; media images can be an important link in the process of change. For example, publicized suicides (such as that of Marilyn Monroe) lead to a significant statistical rise in the number of single vehicle fatalities that can be deemed suicides. Similarly, there is a jump in the homicide rate following televised and highly publicized prize fights within the region to which the fights were broadcast, but not elsewhere in the country.⁸³ Further, when the effects of television reports of violence are compared with laboratory experiments testing the effect that behaviors presented on the media may have, it seems clear that the violent behavior patterns seen on television serve as "mediating mechanisms" that can affect peoples' behavior and induce them to switch from one choice of action to another.⁸⁴

The demonstration effect induced change in Eastern Europe in four ways. First, the demonstration effect changed the "shadow of the past" in Eastern Europe. One of the crucial obstacles to change in Eastern Europe was the strong perception that basic, fundamental change in the system was simply not an option. This was the obvious conclusion drawn from Eastern Europe's painful experience with efforts to reform the socialist system, which resulted in dramatic crises in 1956, 1968, and 1980–81. This lesson was one of the obstacles that Gorbachev confronted when he tried to encourage reform in Eastern Europe; indeed, it is no accident that con-

innovations, see Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1983).

83. The regional effect also applies in the suicide examples; local but highly publicized suicides lead to rises in the fatality rate within the region that received news reports about these events. The methodology in both cases indicates delays of a few days after each of these events, but with consistent rises in the rates of fatalities and homicides. See David P. Phillips, "Suicide, Motor Vehicle Fatalities, and the Mass Media: Evidence Toward a Theory of Suggestion," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (1979), pp. 1150–1171; Phillips, "The Impact of Mass Media Violence on U.S. Homicides," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 48 (August 1983), pp. 560–568; and Kenneth A. Bollen and David P. Phillips, "Imitative Suicides: A National Study of the Effects of Television News Stories," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 47 (December 1982), pp. 802–809.

84. Laboratory studies examined changes in the level of violent behavior by children after watching such behavior acted out on television. Phillips, "Suicide, Motor Vehicle Fatalities, and the Mass Media," p. 1169.

cern over whether the “Brezhnev Doctrine” still applied persisted in Eastern Europe well into 1989, or that Gorbachev was queried on this issue until he finally disavowed it that year.⁸⁵

How people use analogies helps to explain how the demonstration effect changed peoples’ attitudes and behavior in Eastern Europe in 1989. That so little had changed in Eastern Europe prior to 1989 is an indication of the power of long-held cognitive beliefs; the drama of Soviet interventions in earlier years was not easily overridden by the creeping changes of détente and perestroika as they affected Eastern Europe before 1989.⁸⁶ By late 1988 and early 1989, however, people in Eastern Europe were restive, unsettled by the spread of change in the Soviet Union and in its relations with the West. But most were not prepared to change their own behavior in ways that would indicate their willingness to reject continued socialist rule in the region.⁸⁷ External changes to this point had not triggered a change in individual attitudes.⁸⁸ What remained necessary was some indication or *proof* that change was possible, and a suggestion—or model—to follow to introduce change.

This is where the demonstration effect operated to shift attitudes sufficiently to induce change. By the fall of 1989, the Eastern Europeans had new prototypes of behavior to counter the old—the Soviet acceptance of a Solidarity activist as prime minister in Poland and the Hungarian government’s decision to allow thousands of East Germans to flee to the West.

85. Notably, in spite of Gorbachev’s evident acceptance and even encouragement of massive change in the Eastern bloc early in 1989, it was not until December 1989 that the Soviet leadership flatly repudiated the Brezhnev Doctrine and the invasion of Czechoslovakia. See “Statement on 1968 Invasion of Czechoslovakia,” TASS, December 4, 1989, in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts: Soviet Union*, December 6, 1989. See Chapter 2.

86. This is not to suggest that perestroika was moving slowly before 1989. But its impact on Eastern Europe was limited, while Gorbachev and his reform-minded allies focused on other issues, and many East European leaders fence-sat, waiting to see if this policy would survive.

87. The exception is Poland. However, popular protest was far more common a response in Poland than in many other states in the Eastern bloc throughout the Cold War, so mass protests in Poland do not represent a switch in behavior that indicates the impact of a demonstration effect.

88. The thirtieth anniversary of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1988 illustrated this point. More people than in previous years (and especially more young people) were willing to risk open protest by marking this anniversary. But the regime was fully prepared to crush indications of protest, which left little hope that change was possible there as long as force remained an option. The contrast with November 1989 is all the more striking as a result.

The demonstration effect primarily affected populations in the late reforming states. In some states, the level of open resistance to the regime leapt practically overnight, and continued to grow as the communist regimes' impotence without Soviet backing became clear. In East Germany and Czechoslovakia, the population realized that an alternative to the existing system was feasible, and began to protest against the continuation of the status quo, provoking the collapse of the communist regimes.

Second, the progression of changes from country to country provided a model for the successive states both of ways to mediate change, and of ways to reject the existing regime. The progressive opening of "Round Table" negotiations in successive East European states is the most visible example of this modeling.⁸⁹

Third, and coincident with the appearance of a model, the demonstration effect showed the rulers in these states that the old methods were no longer viable. Some regimes—or groups within them—were convinced by the dramatic changes in neighboring states that continued rule by the previous methods was not a good survival strategy. This led some regimes to adopt what might be called a "finger to the wind" strategy; regimes that previously had been resistant to reform opted to risk initiating some changes, to avoid being swept away by popular reaction and discontent. In Bulgaria, for example, members of the leadership read the signs of change elsewhere and the nascent stirrings of protest at home, and chose to change their attitudes toward reform, remove the party's preeminent leader, and introduce at least moderate reforms.

The alternative reaction by the regime was paralysis. Regimes with some legitimacy could choose to risk introducing reforms; regimes with

89. That diffusion of this sort would create such a model is not unique to Eastern Europe. Elbaki Hermassi has pointed out that throughout world history, revolutions have introduced new political ideals and principles of legitimacy that can exert strong effects beyond the boundaries of the country in which they originate, with the potential for triggering waves of revolution and counterrevolution. In this respect, one should note that time matters; the ideas available to an actor or state are determined by the events that have happened earlier. Gershenkron noted this in his analysis of the differences in opportunity open to states attempting economic modernization at different times. "Late" modernizers can skip some of the trial-and-error stages that the "early" modernizers went through, and can progress directly toward later, better technology. Theda Skocpol looked more specifically at the effects of social revolutions; previous revolutions may shape the choices made by later revolutionaries, who have more models available to them than did the revolutionaries who preceded them. See Elbaki Hermassi, "Toward a Comparative Study of Revolutions," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (April 1976), esp. p. 214; Gershenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); and Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*.

no hope of gaining popular support did not have this option. Their only choices would be to resort to force, or to stall. The use of force, however, would imply that the regime perceived such action to be justified, regardless of whether its rule was considered to be legitimate by the population. Yet by the end of 1989, it no longer appeared to be true that a regime with little or no legitimacy could sustain its rule so long as it was willing to resort to force.⁹⁰ What is particularly noteworthy about this is that *external* developments seem to have tipped this calculation. It would appear that so long as they believed that the Soviet Union would not let them fall, the hard-line regimes in Eastern Europe were willing to contemplate and even order the use of force, notwithstanding their lack of domestic legitimacy.⁹¹ In addition to the effect that ideology had as a legitimating factor in Eastern Europe, even if it was no longer believed, it allowed rulers to deceive even themselves about their right to continue in power—but only for so long.⁹² This is why cognitive processes matter. Because they continued to believe that they had Soviet backing, these regimes rejected change. But once they comprehended that this support was truly gone, they had no alternative means of gaining support, because they could not contemplate alternative strategies. Thus, they remained paralyzed while popular protests against their rule multiplied.

Fourth, the demonstration effect caused the process of reform to accelerate in ensuing cases. One of the remarkable features of the East European cases is the rapidity with which the impact of early efforts at reform began to resonate through the bloc. As the process continued, peoples' thresholds of toleration changed more rapidly, signaling a faster reaction to external events. Moreover, due to the demonstration effect, the new political model of choice was endorsed throughout much of Eastern Europe with little argument or stalling. Thus, the struggle to overthrow communist rule that took ten years in Poland took perhaps two months in East Germany, weeks in Czechoslovakia, and a matter of days in Romania.

90. This accords with Reinhard Bendix's observation that the pursuit of power is one of the elements that helps legitimacy develop: "wherever a mandate to rule is to sway the minds and hearts of men, it requires the exercise of force or the *awareness* that those who rule are able, and will not hesitate, to use force if that is needed to assert their will." Bendix, *Kings or People*, pp. 16–17. See also Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp. 32–33; and Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of Transition to Democracy," p. 51.

91. In some cases, Soviet support seems to have made these regimes perceive themselves as legitimate; being legitimate in the eyes of their patrons was sufficient.

92. Timothy Garton Ash, *We the People: The Revolution of '89* (Cambridge: Granta Books, 1990), p. 137.

Thus, while it was necessary that Gorbachev declared the “freedom of choice” of his allies in December 1988, it was also necessary that some state prove that significant changes were possible, and that Moscow would accept them. Just as publicized violence sparks a rash of mimicry, the cumulative effect of tentative steps to change the political systems in the early reforming states in Eastern Europe sparked a rash of imitation across the bloc. Changes in Eastern Europe had an especially powerful effect within the bloc because this region had strong shared experiences under communist control; reforms in the Soviet Union itself did not resonate in the same way because the points of reference between the Soviet Union and the East European states were much weaker.⁹³

The demonstration effect that arose in Eastern Europe affected the Soviet Union as well, as was seen in efforts by the Baltic communist parties to declare their independence from Moscow’s central control in late 1989, and in the rise of nationalism and independence movements in regions as diverse as Georgia and Estonia.⁹⁴ In addition, Nicaragua’s socialist government mimicked this example and called for elections in the aftermath of Eastern Europe’s shift—and lost dramatically, as did most East European communist parties. Nonetheless, the fact that Nicaragua’s leadership was persuaded to call elections in a way that mirrored the process in Eastern Europe points to the power of example as a catalyst for change in the international arena.⁹⁵

Though the diffusion of external influences is difficult to measure, certain behaviors should offer proof that external change affected the political climate in different countries. If citizens in a state could receive foreign sources of information, particularly television but also radio broadcasts or newspapers, this indicates that information about outside events was available. Similarly, if coverage of events in neighboring countries by the state’s official press was available, its tone and objectivity—or lack thereof—should give clues about the regime’s view of processes underway elsewhere. Information about contacts between opposition groups in neighboring countries also points to the influence of external forces.

But the most convincing proof of the demonstration effect is mimicry. If opposition leaders adopted demands or appeals similar to those in

93. Li and Thompson, “The ‘Coups Contagion’ Hypothesis,” p. 66; and Midlarsky, “Analyzing Diffusion and Contagion Effects.”

94. See Mark Kramer, “The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussion within the Soviet Union,” forthcoming in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Summer 2003).

95. The Sandinistas’ gamble on elections suggests that their calculation of legitimacy versus risk differed from that of the late reformers in Eastern Europe.

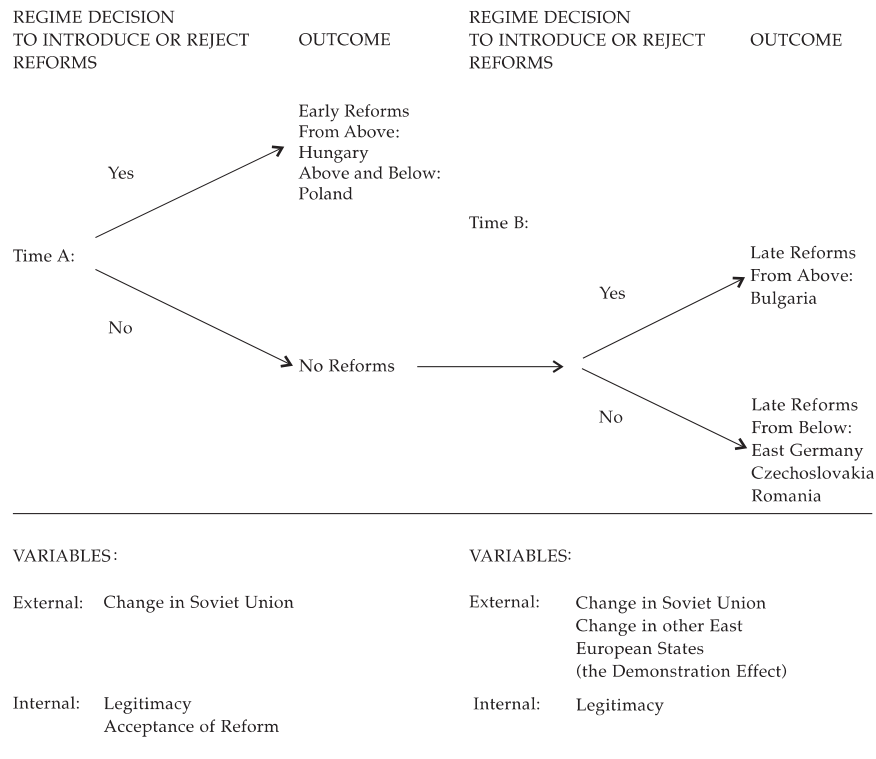
other reforming states, or if the population made appeals to foreign governments or other external groups to aid their reform efforts, this suggests both that these domestic groups were aware of what was going on elsewhere, and that their own goals were changing as a result of this knowledge. Similarly, if a regime moved to adopt the types of policies underway elsewhere, such as constitutional revisions or Round Table negotiations, this demonstrates that external factors were shaping the internal political domain. Figure 1 lays out the alternative paths to reform in Eastern Europe.

THE CASE STUDIES

I offer three central propositions to explain the process of reform that unfolded in Eastern Europe. First, change of the nature that was seen throughout the region could not have occurred in the absence of the changes in the Soviet Union; external change in the Soviet Union was necessary but not sufficient to the transition that ensued. Second, the relationship between regime and society can help explain whether a regime was likely to risk its ruling position, and thus the way that reforms emerged in different states in the region. The regime's choice was shaped by its evaluation of the need for significant political changes and its judgment of its ability to survive in a more open political climate. Third, change within Eastern Europe itself was a necessary catalyst to change, and created a demonstration effect that resonated through the Warsaw Pact. Both the cognitive process by which people interpret events, and the diffusion of ideas from state to state in Eastern Europe, help explain why a demonstration effect occurred.

Chapter 2 examines Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe. I use Chapters 3 through 7 to determine how well the three hypotheses explain the collapse of the Warsaw Pact by measuring the variables laid out here: the regime's recognition of the need to reform; its perception of its legitimacy, or lack thereof; cognitive attitudes of the main actors in each state; and the demonstration effect. Table 2 classifies the six East European cases with regard to the propositions presented here.

If the regime's perception of its relationship with society was truly significant, then one would expect to see reform introduced early only in those states where the regime had a predisposition toward significant change of its domestic system, or where opposition to the regime was sufficiently strong to induce change. Even in cases of early reform, there should be weak indications of a demonstration effect. Both regimes and populations were aware of the changes underway in the Soviet Union, where perestroika began; and they would have paid attention to changes in other early reforming states. Similarly, one would expect early reforms

Figure 1. Alternative Paths to Reform.

to be introduced cautiously, with due attention to the response of the Soviet Union, given previous experiences with political reforms in the Warsaw Pact.

Conservative regimes that doubted their ability to survive would have little inducement to initiate change at all. Moreover, they would be expected to perceive reforms elsewhere in the bloc not only as a violation of socialist principles, but also as a threat to their own positions, and to the Warsaw Pact's integrity.

If the external influences from within Eastern Europe played a decisive role in changing peoples' attitudes toward their current governments in the late reforming states, then evidence of a demonstration effect should be strong in the later reforming states. One would expect to find coincidences in the progression of events from country to country, as the

Table 2. Classifications of the Six East European Cases.

| | | Regime's Initial Awareness of Need for Political Reform | |
|---|-----|--|--|
| | | YES | NO |
| Regime's Perceived Ability to Survive in a More Open Political Climate | YES | A: Early reforms from above Hungary | B: Late reforms from above Bulgaria |
| | NO | C: Early reforms from below Poland | D: Late reforms from below East Germany Czechoslovakia Romania |

political climate changed in response to the diffusion of ideas from countries that initiated reforms early in the process. Similarly, if a demonstration effect occurred, there should be a correlation between the level of information about external events that was available in a particular country, and the speed and intensity of emulation.

