

The Determinants of Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe and the Former USSR

Deniz Dolun and Dr. Renat Shaykhutdinov

Florida Atlantic University

Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters

How does transition period affect democratic consolidation? What effect do oligarchs have on Post-Communist democratization?

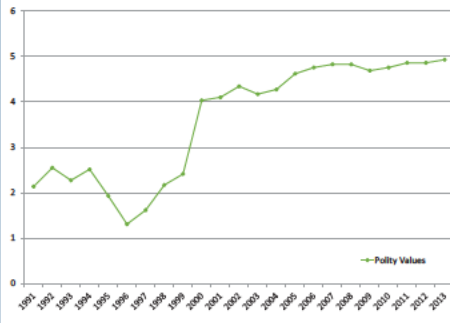
Introduction

- Almost two decades following the dissolution of the USSR and her satellite states, the process of democratization still remains an ongoing process in the majority of the former-communist republics.
- Only eight of twenty-eight transitioning states have been able to fully democratize. Several of these anocratic states are today characterized by routine human rights violations, state repressions of civil society, and incarcerations of political opposition.
- This study into the conditions of Post-Communist societies and their efforts at providing stability seeks to determine the key factors that account for their overall levels of democracy. Our first hypothesis (H1) is that a quick succession to democracy following 1991 resulted in a higher rate of democratic consolidation. Our second hypothesis (H2) is that the formation of oligarchs limited the level of democratization.

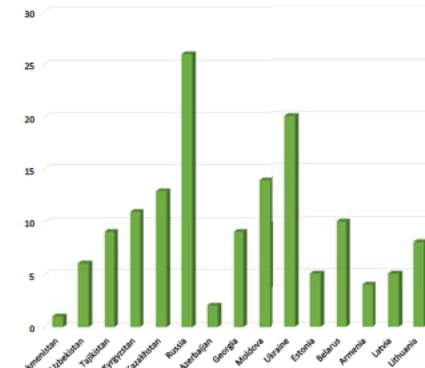
Method

- We tested H1 by inserting data collected from Polity IV first into linear regression tests consisting of a 'one shot' approach between values from 1991-1992, and then a year-to-year panel study (1991-2013). After this, we also conducted a survival analysis test in search of hazard ratios, examining 29 Post-Communist states over a 23-year period from 1991 to 2013.
- H2 was tested through similar linear regression tests, this time utilizing the previous Polity IV data as well as a dataset on the frequency of oligarchs within each of the 15 former Soviet states.

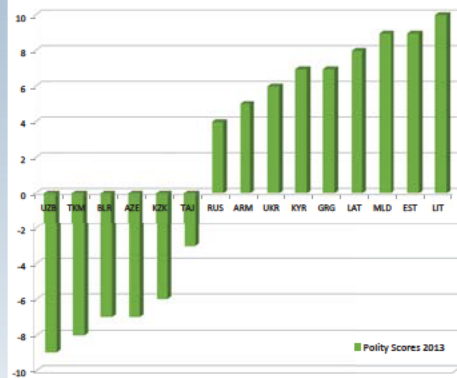
Average Polity Values of Post-Communist States (1991-2013)



Frequency of Oligarchs



Polity Scores 2013



Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum Value	Average value	Maximum Value	Stat. Significance	R ²	Units of measurement
GDP per Capita	29	\$1037	\$9280	\$23 289	.101	.096	USD
Length of EU Borders	29	0 Km	719 Km	2480 Km	.055	.129	Km
Geographic Landmass	29	10 908 Km ²	809854 Km ²	1 7098 242 Km ²	.612	.010	Km ²
Literacy Rate	29	91.90%	1	99.80%	.268	.045	% of the total population
Armed Conflict	29	0	0	1	.780	.003	0 = no armed/civil conflict 1 = armed/civil conflict present between 1991 and 2013

Results

- The ordinary least-squares linear regression testing H1 provided an inverse correlation of .638 (suggesting that a short transition period results in lower polity scores in n=29 states)
- The panel study used on H1 included n=634 cases, and produced a weak correlation of .214, that proved to be statistically significant (.004).
- The survival analysis calculation on H1 concluded that there is a hazard ratio of 1.58. This means that if a country undergoing transition democratizes by one unit, then its odds of becoming a democracy (polity score 7 or more) increase by 58%.
- Multiple linear regression tests on H2 have produced statistically insignificant results, confirming that a correlation is non-existent.

Discussion

- All three tests on H1 have pointed towards an inverse relationship between transition time and polity scores. This means that the longer the time it takes for democratization, the lower the resulting polity score. Thus, the shorter the democratic transition, the higher the probability of a successful democratic transition. Therefore, the factor of transition time has been found to have a significant correlation with current levels of democratization throughout Eastern Europe.
- The results of the tests conducted on H2 exhibited weak correlations that were mostly positive, and overall statistically insignificant. Thus it is safe to say that oligarchic presence does not have an effect on state polity score. Therefore, the hypothesis H2 is unfortunately disproven.

References

Contact ddolun@fau.edu to request for references