

NEGOTIATED OR STOLEN? METHODS OF TRANSITION AND PATTERNS OF
OPPOSITION-REGIME INTERACTION IN COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

**KATRINA NOWAK DUSEK: Negotiated or Stolen? Methods of Transition and
Patterns of Opposition-Regime Interaction in Communist Eastern Europe
(Under the direction of Dr. Milada Vachudova)**

During the 1989-1990 transitions from communism in Eastern Europe, what propelled some communist regimes to negotiate with opposition groups, and what allowed others to dictate the terms of regime change? I argue that the variation in pre-transition interaction between opposition and regime affected the timing and method of transition from communist rule. Specifically, I develop a model for pre-transition interaction which I call the “mobilization-liberalization” cycle. Five case studies demonstrate that in countries with mild regime atmospheres, patterns of interaction developed that resulted in mature oppositions. These countries experienced negotiated transitions with democratic trajectories. Conversely, this thesis shows that in countries with severe regime atmospheres, such patterns did not develop and consequently no mature opposition existed. In these cases, the regimes were able to dictate the terms of transition, and the path to democratic consolidation was compromised.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCP:	Bulgarian Communist Party
EKA:	Opposition Roundtable (Hungary)
MDF:	Hungarian Democratic Forum
MSZMP:	Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
MSZP:	Hungarian Socialist Party
NSF:	National Salvation Front (Romania)
PRON:	Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth (Poland)
RCP:	Romanian Communist Party
SZDSZ:	Alliance of Free Democrats (Hungary)
UDF:	United Democratic Forces (Bulgaria)
VONS:	Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted (Czechoslovakia)

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe took the world by surprise. While the political environment of the region had long been the subject of intense study, analysis and prediction, scholars were caught unaware by the events of 1989. The transitions were surprising in three major ways: they were mostly peaceful, they occurred in rapid succession and, although they were interdependent, each was a consequence of the dynamic interaction between regimes and oppositions.

The characteristics of each pre-transition phase set individual countries on different trajectories. Some would quickly progress toward consolidated democracies; others would embark on indirect paths to forming a stabilized government. The circumstances that brought a country to the point of transition very much affected the outcome of the transition. For this reason, an investigation into the developments that influenced the timing and method of each country's transition becomes important in making sense of the divergent paths they would subsequently follow. What drove some regimes to negotiate with opposition forces while others could dictate the terms of transition?

Scholars have identified international and domestic factors that help explain variation in the timing and method of transition away from communist rule. The international scene is an obvious place to search for factors that can explain the different characteristics and outcomes of regime change. However, external influence from both the East and West was similar for each transition country. In April of 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev changed the course

of Soviet history by publicly acknowledging a new brand of foreign policy that would later become known as the “Sinatra Doctrine” for suggesting that each country could make independent choices:

First and foremost we proceed from the premise that the entire system of the socialist countries’ political relation can and must be built on the basis of equality and mutual responsibility. No one has the right to claim special status in the socialist world. We consider the independence of every party, its responsibility to the people of its own country, and its right to decide the question of the country’s development to be unconditional principles¹.

This policy effectively rendered obsolete the Brezhnev Doctrine, which the Soviet Union had previously used to maintain influence on its East European satellites. The impact of the Brezhnev Doctrine never left the collective memory of the Eastern bloc population and affected their behavior toward the regime: “But it was only that: the constraint, a dam placed against pressing waters...The change in the Soviet Union did not propel transformations... what it did was remove the crucial factor that had been blocking them”². Once the international constraint of Soviet foreign policy had been eliminated, the communist regimes across Eastern Europe were weakened, and opposition movements were potentially given more space in which to grow.

As influences from the East affected each transition country in a similar way, Western influences also cannot explain variation in domestic outcomes. While the West supported regime change, the various oppositions received no assurances of aid from Western governments. The pressures seen from the outside have a similar effect on all of the countries in question. This similarity cannot solve the question of variation.

¹ As quoted in: Gedmin, J. 1992, *The Hidden Hand: Gorbachev and the Collapse of East Germany*, AEI Press, Washington, DC. (20)

² Przeworski, A. 1991, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge University Press, New York. (5)

What domestic factors then, can account for the variation that is seen in the timing and method of a transition? I argue that oppositions and regimes interacted differently in East and East Central European countries and these dynamics account for the characteristics of each transition. The effectiveness of pre-transition interaction to the opposition influenced the variation in timing and method. Pre-transition interaction is defined as the ways in which opposition groups respond to regime weakening and the ways in which regimes respond to mobilization.

The effectiveness of pre-transition interaction refers to whether or not the interaction between the regime and the opposition made the opposition stronger. I propose a “mobilization-liberalization cycle” that models opposition reaction to regime destabilization and the resulting counter-responses. The catalyst for a mobilization-liberalization cycle is a destabilizing event that weakens the unity and/or legitimacy of the regime³. This cycle of interaction models a process of strategic response, where the opposition perceives that the regime has become destabilized and *may* choose to respond through mobilization. The chosen response of the opposition group is a strategic decision based on their experience of previous regime response and the perceived capability of the regime to counter-respond to mobilization with repression at that moment in time.

Should an opposition opt to mobilize in response to regime destabilization, the regime is faced with the need to counter-respond. If the regime decides that the cost to repress the movement is too high, it may choose to offer concessions through a liberalizing act in order to acquiesce to the demands of the opposition. The consequence of this action to the regime

³ I define the components of stability as unity and legitimacy (see pages 21-22). A regime is destabilized when it loses unity, through events such as regime splitting, or legitimacy, through failures in policy or ideological contradictions. Often, losses of legitimacy and unity are related. The individual case studies will show a variety of paths to regime destabilization.

is a further increase in the cost of repression because the example has been set that the response to this level of mobilization is concession. However, the regime has calculated that a liberalizing response is the best strategy to stay in power.

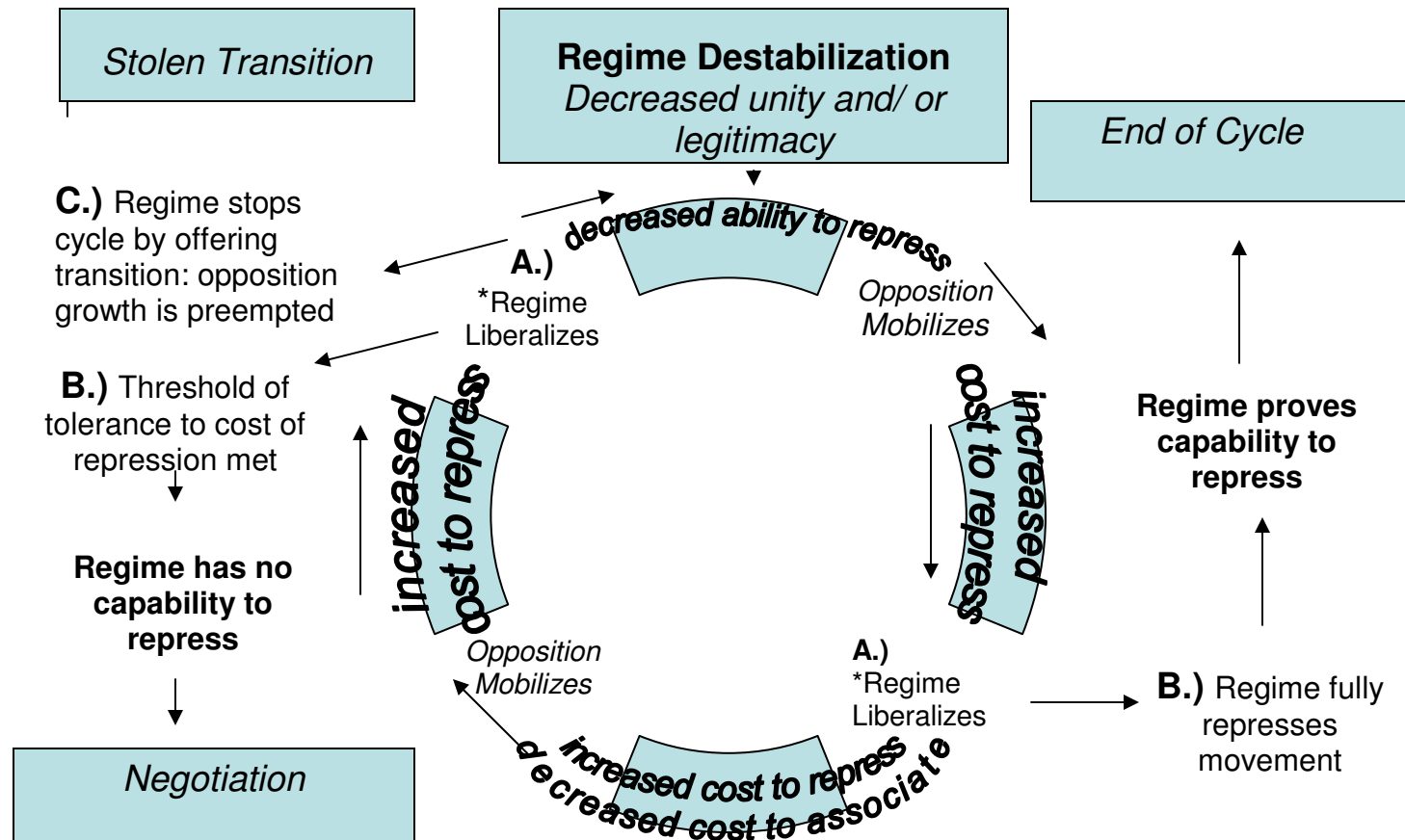
In this scenario, the opposition achieves a success that contributes to its legitimacy and its unity. Because the regime chose to respond with no repression, the cost to associate with the opposition has been lowered, and the opposition movement will gain momentum through increased membership. Legitimacy is gained because the opposition has challenged the regime and gained concessions. If the regime does not respond to the mobilization event, the resultant effect is similar to an act of concession. The regime has demonstrated that it will not repress, indicating that the cost of repression is too high.

If at any point in the cycle the regime has demonstrated that the cost of repression is within tolerable limits, it will repress the mobilization. The cycle of mobilization-liberalization is ended when the regime demonstrates that it can successfully repress the mobilization event. A new catalyst of regime destabilization is needed to re-initiate the mobilization-liberalization cycle. An example of this scenario is the repression of the Solidarity movement in Poland. By declaring martial law, the Polish regime ended the ongoing mobilization-liberalization cycle and demonstrated its ability to repress the opposition.

While the purpose of this thesis is not to explain *why* regimes offer concessions, but rather to investigate the *effects* of these concessions, some discussion of regime choice is warranted. The strategy of the regime is to opt for the response that best preserves their position of power. When the regime becomes destabilized, the opposition strategically chooses whether or not to challenge this instability. The regime also recognizes its instability

and may opt to provide concessions as a way to maintain their position of power. The regime calculates that the concession offered will assuage the opposition and that they will end their mobilization. The best strategy for the regime is one that pacifies the opposition during times of regime instability. The optimal strategy for the opposition is one that challenges the regime during times of instability and weakness. The history of opposition-regime interaction and the regime atmosphere for each transition country affects the strategy and level of risk each side is willing to undertake.

Figure I-1: Mobilization-Liberalization Cycle Model



* The regime may offer a liberalizing concession, or in a variation of this model, may incompletely repress the movement. If the movement is not completely repressed, the opposition may opt to continue mobilization.

Oppositions that experienced mild regime atmospheres or oppositions that were not habitually and completely repressed were able to challenge regimes more successfully over the course of a mobilization-liberalization cycle. I define regime atmosphere as the accumulation of the effects of previous regime actions. The timing of transition is correlated with the strength of the opposition: transitions in countries with comparatively mild regime atmospheres occurred earlier. A mild regime atmosphere created a scenario where an opposition could gain enough strength to challenge the ability of the regime to maintain power. These transitions provided an example for other regional opposition groups, but it will be seen that the severe regime atmospheres in these countries inhibited the development of a mobilization-liberalization cycle, and therefore the growth of cohesive oppositions.

Transitions in countries with the most severe regime atmospheres therefore, occurred later. Oppositions were generally weak and immature, and the regime was able to preempt transitions that favored the opposition and a democratic trajectory. The international demonstration effect influenced both oppositions and regimes, and cannot be ignored in cases of later transition. The nascent opposition groups in the later transition cases desired change and were inspired by other regional transitions, but lacked the strength and organized structure to topple a regime. Furthermore, they lacked the legitimacy traditionally acquired through repeated interaction with the regime, and were unprepared to participate in government. The elites, well aware of the fate of their neighboring regimes, were able to maintain power under the guise of democratization, and effectively “steal” the transition from adolescent oppositions.

While understanding the relationship between regime atmosphere and variance in timing is important, it is only part of the greater causal puzzle. Delving further into the

relationship between regime atmosphere and opposition capability, it becomes obvious that the timing of the initial regime change is only a symptom of an underlying process. The goal of any authoritarian regime is to maintain its monopoly of power such that any rising opposition can be systematically eliminated, thus maintaining the status quo and maximizing the duration of the regime⁴. If we accept that the goal of the regime is to maintain its power, then there must be some explanation that illuminates why some East European communist regimes willingly negotiated a transition with opposition groups, and knowingly accepted a loss of power. The ability of opposition groups to develop and challenge the regime through mobilization plays heavily into the decision to transfer power, and answers the question of why some regimes were able to thwart opposition attempts to challenge power. The puzzle therefore is not solely explaining variation in timing, but more importantly to investigate the recent history of regime-opposition interaction to explain the *method* of transition. Why in some cases were the elites forced to negotiate and why in others were they able to “steal” the transition from the opposition and embark on a pseudo-democratic trajectory?

Negotiating a transfer of power serves a strategic purpose for the regime. An opposition group whose perceived strength approaches that of the regime's, poses a career-ending threat to the regime. If the regime calculates that it does not have the capability to assume the cost of fully repressing a threatening opposition, it may strategically choose to negotiate a transition of power. Under these circumstances, the regime may view a negotiated transition as its best method of maintaining some semblance of authority in the ensuing government. A regime therefore, may opt to negotiate a transfer of power when it a

⁴ Swaminathan, S. 1999, “Time, Power, and Democratic Transitions”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 43, no 2, pp. 178-191. (179)

faces an opposition whose increasing strength threatens the ability of the regime to maintain power.

A negotiation may not always have a positive result for the opposition. A regime may opt to bargain as a method to preempt the mature growth of the opposition. In such a transaction, the regime stands to retain a large portion of its power. Because of this, the post-transition trajectory is often undemocratic. In the case of Eastern Europe, opposition groups learned about the power of independent movements through the international demonstration effect. The example of other transitions however, also demonstrated to the regimes the consequences of negotiating with a mature opposition. This led some regimes in later transitions to strategically preempt the completing of a mobilization-liberalization cycle by offering to transition away from communism. In these cases, the regime maintained an overwhelming majority of its power because the immature oppositions were not unified and were unprepared to successfully negotiate to achieve democratic change. Because in these cases the opposition was marginalized, it is not a true negotiation. Even though the regime may have termed the transition process as a “roundtable”, the opposition had little or no sway in determining the outcome. For this reason, while some scholars will term such transitions as “negotiated transitions”, I will refer to them as “stolen transitions”.

For each country, the ability of an opposition to mature is a function of the pattern of interaction that I call the mobilization-liberalization cycle. The continuation of the cycle favors the opposition groups because it increases the cost to the regime to repress. I propose that the variation seen in the results of each transition are a product of the nature of the liberalization-mobilization cycles in each country. I argue that cycles which start earlier and gain momentum slowly over an extended period of time are more likely to result in a

transition where the opposition forces the regime to negotiate a transfer of power. This is because over the course of prolonged interaction, the opposition group gains unity and legitimacy for achieving concessions in successive confrontations with the regime.

Protracted cycles are usually seen in countries with relatively mild regime atmospheres.

This thesis will also demonstrate that in some cases, an opposition can gain maturity through variations of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. In this example, the opposition continues to mobilize despite consistent repression. It is able to do so because the regime incompletely or inconsistently represses mobilization. Because the movement is not fully repressed, the opposition continues to confront the regime and is consequently matured through this modified mobilization-liberalization cycle. The model stipulates that the cost of repression must be met in order to end the cycle. Regimes that did not meet the costs to fully repress contributed to the maturing of the opposition by allowing for their continued activity.

I will also show that cycles which are initiated later and gain momentum most quickly are more likely to result in stolen transitions which favor the regime. In cases where short-lived mobilization-liberalization cycles succeeded in overwhelming the communist regime, the undeveloped opposition could not effectively elicit a favorable transition from the regime. In these cases, mobilization momentum is gained through unorganized mass demonstration, and is not orchestrated by an opposition with coherent goals. Due to the regime atmosphere in these countries, the elites are in a better position to enact repression throughout the pre-transition period, which contributes to the inability of an opposition to gain strength. Countries which adopt this cycle of interaction are countries with comparatively severe regime atmospheres with a high tolerance for the cost of repression.

The lack of strength of the opposition in these cases leads to examples of stolen transitions, where the regime is able to dictate the conditions of change. The cycle of mobilization-liberalization is prematurely halted by the pretense of a liberalizing act. In these cases, the undeveloped opposition is marginalized and they must wait for the destabilization of the new regime in order to begin a new mobilization-liberalization cycle.

The following section will describe several key concepts that I have introduced, and provide a review of key arguments in the literature on transitions. After providing this background, I will present five case studies. I will use event data from the European Protest and Coercion Event Data⁵ dataset to illustrate the existence or absence of complete mobilization-liberalization cycles in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. I then will discuss how the variation in patterns of interaction led to differences in post-transition trajectory.

Explaining Concepts and Theory

Why did communist elites choose to negotiate with oppositions in some countries, but not in others? In order to explain different opposition-regime interactions, I must first define key terms associated with my model. The first is the concept of *regime atmosphere*, which I use to represent a regime's historical record of responding to internal confrontation. Regime atmosphere is the accumulation of the effects of previous actions, and I use it purposefully to measure levels of repression within a society from the time the major internal processes toward transition begin to occur through the time of the roundtable negotiations. A regime atmosphere also encompasses the constraints placed on society such as censorship, the ability

⁵ Francisco, R.A. *European Protest and Coercion Data*. (<http://www.web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>)

to travel, and other civil liberties. As much as regime atmosphere affects the ability of society to maneuver, it also affects the outlook of the regime. Comparatively mild regime atmospheres were overseen by comparatively liberal regimes, as the affects of liberties and modernization extended to the regime as well as the population. I use Freedom House scores combined with a rating from the Political Terror Scale⁶ to provide a numeric assessment of regime atmosphere. This combined scoring method allows me to classify the severity of regime atmosphere within each of my case studies.

Charles Tilly uses a similar term, *regime environment*, to define mechanisms that generate alterations in public politics, inequality, and networks of trust⁷. Although using a comparable term, I am attempting solely to define the accumulation of effects on a population based on its experience under a regime, and how these effects in turn influence aspects of opposition and regime interaction. I do not apply this term to future alterations of the relationship, but to the situation during the pre-transition phase. I define this phase from 1987 to 1989, because all mobilization-liberalization cycles begin during this time. In defining the term as such, I relegate it to one specific moment in time, thus allowing it to encompass the entire status quo for a chronological point of reference. In addition, the broadness of the term allows me to encompass several other relevant factors.

The way in which a regime has historically responded to internal confrontation has a monumental effect on the ability of an opposition to grow. In cases of severe regime atmosphere where repression does not allow for the growth of opposition movements, the

⁶ The Political Terror Scale is a yearly measure of political violence and terror. The scale is based on a 5-point “terror scale” developed by Freedom House. The data for the current scale is compiled from the Amnesty International annual country reports and the U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Gibney, M., Cornett, L. and Wood, R. <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org>.

⁷ Tilly, C. 2000, “Processes and Mechanisms of Democratization”, *Sociological Theory*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 1-16.

interaction between opposition and regime is going to be less intense and less frequent (but not less significant to the greater story). Conversely, a comparatively mild regime atmosphere may allow for political space in which an opposition can mobilize. This scenario creates the opportunity for increasingly effective regime-opposition interaction. The differences in regime atmosphere thus are key elements to explaining the variance seen in East European transitions.

Regime atmosphere also encompasses the concept of “strength”, which is a term I use to describe the combined effect of legitimacy and unity of both regime and opposition groups. The Gurr-Lichbach component “organizational strength” provides a definition of strength that represents the size, cohesiveness, and coercive capability of each group. Their model also stipulates that the organizational strength of challenging groups is determined relative to the strength of opponents, and cannot be independently assessed⁸. My use of the term strength will follow the guidelines specified in the Gurr-Lichbach model⁹, with an emphasis on the unity and legitimacy of the opposition and the regime. To determine the increasing strength of an opposition, I will present the size of opposition movements as a ratio of number of participants to total population.

I also will frequently use the term “stability” to describe the state of the opposition or the regime, a term which is related to, but not interchangeable with strength. Stability refers to the degree of legitimacy or unity. Unity is simply a measure of a group’s cohesiveness. High degrees of unity and legitimacy correspond with a more stable entity. Obviously,

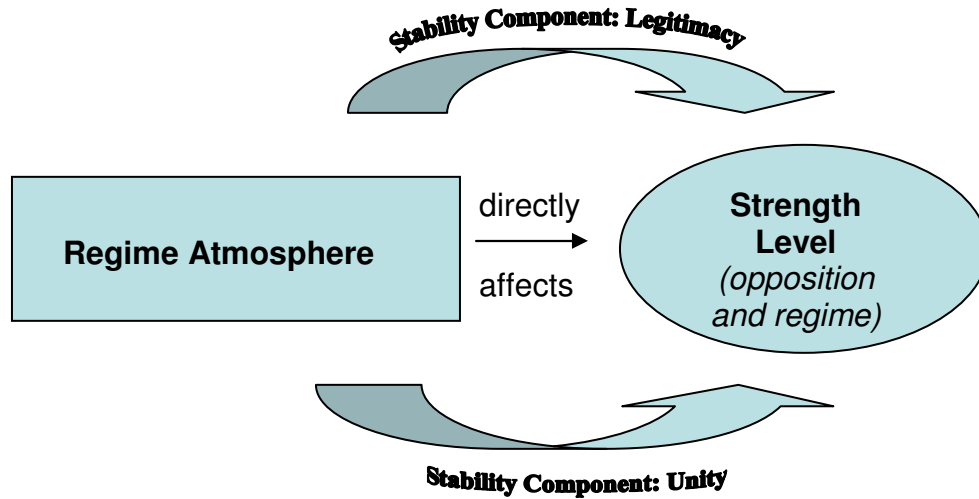
⁸ As stated in Francisco, R.A. 1993, “Theories of Protest and the Revolutions of 1989”, *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 663-680. (669-670)

⁹ The Gurr-Lichbach model is explained thoroughly in: Gurr, T.R. & Lichbach, M.I. 1979, “Forecasting Domestic and Political Conflict” in *To Augur Well: Early Warning Indicators in World Politics*, eds. J.D. Singer and M. Wallace, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, pp. 153-194.

declining legitimacy negatively affects the strength of a regime or opposition, because it indicates instability.

For the purposes of this thesis, legitimacy is identified by historical record. In the case of the opposition, legitimacy is determined by its previous record of gaining concessions or achieving a response of incomplete repression. These responses add to a record of legitimacy because they show the ability of the opposition to elicit responses that reveal the inability or unwillingness of the regime to fully repress a mobilization. They therefore demonstrate the opposition's strength because the regime perceives the cost to repress the opposition to be high. The ability of an opposition to gain legitimacy is again closely related to regime atmosphere: in cases of sustained and severe regime atmospheres, the opposition had difficulty gaining legitimacy as it lacks a recent record on which to base its legitimate existence. The regime also uses its historical record to justify its legitimate claim to power. Much of its legitimacy is based on the willingness of the population to "accept" the ideologies upon which the regime is based. In using the term "accept", I am referring to the opposition's level of reluctance to challenge the ideology, which is again a function of the severity of the regime atmosphere.

FIGURE I-2: *Regime Strength*



The second major concept I use is *cost of repression*, which is taken from Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson's *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*¹⁰. I use it in the same terms as they present it: the cost to the elite to engage in repression¹¹. The cost of repression is based on the ability of the elite to repress and the subsequent strength of the opposition. A regime that is weakened due to loss of unity or legitimacy experiences a higher cost of repression, and likewise a regime that faces a stronger opposition also has a higher cost to repress this movement. I will argue that the effects of decreasing strength lead to increasing opposition capability, and therefore produce a cumulative effect in the increasing cost of repression to the regime.

The last concepts I will describe are *perceived power*, which I use to describe the state of the regime or the opposition and *perceived capability* which I use to depict the capacity of one group to response to the other. These concepts are important because they

¹⁰ Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J.A. 2006, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

¹¹ Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J.A. (2006: 118-133)

relate the likelihood of both a regime's decision to repress and an opposition's decision to challenge. The decision for an opposition to mobilize is based on prior regime atmosphere (and thus the likelihood of a repressive response) and temporal perception of their own capabilities and of the power of the regime. The opposition will act at a time when it weighs its capabilities against to the perceived power of the regime, and judges a likely chance for achieving a concession in the form of a liberalizing act. In addition, the regime will choose its response based on its perception of opposition power.

This thesis investigates the characteristics of opposition-regime interaction in East European communist countries to understand the relationship between the pre-transition phase and post-transition trajectories. The elements that make up the pre-transition environment directly affect the method of transition, and therefore the characteristics of the resulting government. I am primarily investigating the variation in pre-transition factors that drove some communist regimes to negotiate with opposition groups and others to dictate the terms of transition.

The following case studies will show that countries with comparatively mild regime atmospheres are most likely to support the mechanisms of the mobilization-liberalization cycle, because the regime has a record of offering liberalizing concessions, of failing to fully suppress mobilization, or of neglecting to respond to mobilization. These responses increase the cost of repression. An opposition that experiences a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle is better prepared to achieve a negotiated transition with a democratic trajectory. The method of transition is influenced by the combination of regime atmosphere, development of a mobilization-liberalization cycle, opposition maturity and regime strategy for maintaining power. These influences are all intricately related.

Countries with severe regime atmospheres did not provide the setting for completed mobilization-liberalization cycles. Oppositions that did not benefit from protracted mobilization-liberalization cycles were at a disadvantage in eliciting favorable transitions, because the opposition movement lacked maturity and legitimacy, and the cost to repress remained low. Countries with these pre-transition characteristics were more likely to experience stolen transitions. The ensuing government was comprised of many elements of the former regime, and led the country on an indirect trajectory to consolidated democracy. The characteristics of pre-transition interaction between oppositions and communist regimes affect the likelihood of democratic trajectories. Therefore, investigating the variation in pre-transition interaction is fundamental to understanding the subsequent political paths of each country.

Case Studies, Data Analysis, Roadmap

In this thesis I will present five case studies: Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Together these cases will illustrate the different outcomes that have been generated through variations of the mobilization-liberalization cycle described above. My cases will show countries with a wide range of regime atmosphere scores, as derived from a combination of Freedom House Political Rights and Civil Liberties ratings and the Political Terror Scale. The chart below illustrates the range in case study regime atmosphere and the respective post-transition trajectory rating.

TABLE I-1: Regime Atmosphere and Tier Rating

	Pre-Transition Regime Atmosphere Score 1987-1989¹²					Post-Transition Trajectory Rating
	Freedom House¹³		Political Terror Scale¹⁴		Average Score	
	<i>PR¹⁵</i>	<i>CL¹⁶</i>	<i>AI¹⁷</i>	<i>State¹⁸</i>		
Hungary	4.67	3.67	1.67	1.67	11.67	Tier 1
Poland	4.67	4.33	2.33	2.33	13.67	Tier 1
Czechoslovakia	6.67	6.00	2.67	3.00	18.33	Tier 2
Bulgaria	7.00	7.00	3.00	3.00	20.00	Tier 3
Romania	7.00	7.00	3.00	3.33	20.33	Tier 3

The trajectory rating is a score from Tier 1 to Tier 3, based on the immediate post-transition outlook for each country. A score of “1” indicates that the regime negotiated with a mature

¹² Each number reported under “Freedom House” and the “Political Terror Scale” is the average score from 1987-1989. The number reported under “Average Score” is the average of the Freedom House scores and the Political Terror scores from 1987-1989.

¹³ Freedom House: www.freedomhouse.org

¹⁴ IBID

¹⁵ Political Rights: “...the freedoms to develop views, institutions, and personal autonomy apart from the state” *Freedom in the World Country Ratings: the Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1986-1987*. New York, Freedom House.

¹⁶ Civil Liberties: “Allow for the freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state” Freedom House: www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=265#7

¹⁷ Amnesty International Score of the Political Terror Scale is derived from annual Amnesty International country reports. Gibney, M., Cornett, L. and Wood, R. <http://www.politicalterrorsscale.org>.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State Score of the Political Terror Scale is derived from the U.S. Department of State Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Gibney, M., Cornett, L. and Wood, R. <http://www.politicalterrorsscale.org>.

opposition. The trajectory for these countries is toward a consolidated democracy. A score of “3” indicates that the transition was stolen from an immature opposition during the course of the roundtable sessions and elections. The chart shows that these countries had the most severe regime atmospheres in the pre-transition phase. The immediate trajectory for these countries is a renewed authoritarian regime. A score of 2 indicates that the country shares characteristics from countries with a score of 1, but also shares elements with a country that earned a rating of 3. Czechoslovakia is a 2nd tier country because its immediate post-transition trajectory is toward a consolidated democracy. The severity of its pre-transition regime atmosphere, however, indicates that consolidated democracy is not a likely outcome. The Czechoslovakia case study summary will show that a modified mobilization-liberalization cycle produced a mature opposition despite the severity of regime atmosphere.

Since the fall of these regimes, an abundance of research has been devoted to describing these transitions, and I will use the findings of this research to support my concept of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. The main purpose of this literature to my thesis is to provide an accurate account of regime atmosphere and opposition capability during the pre-transition years. After providing relevant background information for each country, I will use empirical data from Dr. Ronald A. Francisco’s European Protest and Coercion¹⁹ database to illustrate the processes of interaction taking place in each of my case studies. This dataset is a compilation of worldwide news sources that report events of protest and coercion from 1980 to 1995, and thus provide an excellent source of opposition-regime interaction. While this dataset can by no means provide a completely accurate account of

¹⁹ Francisco, R. (<http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>)

each and every event of mobilization or coercion, I believe that it shows the necessary trends from which I can conclude that patterns of mobilization-liberalization are in fact taking place.

Many different factors affect the robustness of news source event data. As will be seen in the case studies, the amount of reported events from each country varies. This is due, in part, to the regime atmosphere of each country. The political restrictions present in each country affected the flow of information and the ability of foreign media to make reports. In addition, because the media is driven by interest, countries which attracted more international attention were more likely to have a higher incidence of protest and coercion events. Despite these shortcomings, event data which is compiled under consistent methodology is still considered to be an important and viable source of protest and coercion events²⁰.

The data is vital to representing the patterns of interaction that transpired in each country. I have assembled all pertinent events²¹ within the dataset and re-coded them according to their role in the pre-transition phase of each country. In the case of the oppositions, I compiled all pertinent events of mobilization and divided them into cases of opposition mobilization and opposition de-mobilization. I applied similar logic to the cases of regime action, coding each elite event as either an act of concession or an act of repression. By organizing the events in this manner, I was able to discern patterns of interaction that developed between the opposition and the regime prior to transition. In case studies with

²⁰ For further discussion on the robustness of protest event data, see Rucht, D. et al, 1999. *Acts of Dissent: New Developments in the Study of Protest*, Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, New York.

²¹ In selecting appropriate events for this study, I have consciously eliminated all events of mobilization and repression that are the direct result of ethnic nationalist conflict. In selecting the data events as such, I am isolating mobilization that is directed at the regime and repression that is a response to this type of mobilization. The motivations for ethnic nationalist mobilization are distinctly different from motivations that lead to protest against the regime. Because ethnic nationalism is prominent in some of my case studies and notably absent in other cases, using data events that are directly associated with ethnic nationalism distorts the dataset and conceals the patterns of mobilization related to the mobilization-liberalization cycle. Please see the Appendix for a complete explanation of the process of compiling pertinent events.

favorable democratic trajectories, variations of mobilization-liberalization cycles developed, and could be traced back to one main catalyst event. Conversely, the case studies that revealed short and incomplete cycles developed more divergent trajectories toward a democratic government.

Much of this thesis will focus on transition theory. Therefore it is essential to provide a brief review of the existing prominent transition theory in order to highlight how the mobilization-liberalization cycle of interaction can contribute to understanding the timing and method of negotiated transitions from communism. After providing this review, I will examine each of my case studies in order of their regime atmosphere ranking. It will be seen that mild regime atmospheres were present in early cases of transition. These countries developed protracted mobilization-liberalization cycles, mature oppositions, and resulted in transitions that favored democratic trajectories.

CHAPTER 1: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The existing literature on transitions from authoritarian regimes is vast and includes decades of analysis on the ways in which regimes interact with rising opposition groups. These analyses attempt to identify and correlate variation in the pre-transition, transition, and trajectory characteristics among countries that have transitioned from authoritarian regimes. The main bodies of literature that exist on transitology stem from three basic approaches to explaining transitional change: sweeping overviews that cast recent transition as a global trend toward democratization, transitology comparisons which create links between the transitions of Latin America and Southern Europe to communist Europe, and works focusing on comparing pre and post-communist societies to understand why these regimes collapsed²². This thesis falls into the third category of comparison, as I am attempting to identify patterns in pre-transition interaction that affect the method and trajectory of transition.

However, because there is such an immense body of prominent literature that discusses this same topic, I must properly insert my research into this ever-growing body so that it can be understood in the greater context. The focus of my study is on the pre-transition period in Eastern Europe. This stage of transition encompasses several of the topics that are relevant to the mobilization-liberalization model: regime atmosphere, regime destabilization, and mobilization. I will devote the first section of this review to discussing

²² Tokes, R. L. 1999, "Transitology: Global Dreams and Post-Communist Realities", *Central Europe Review*, [Online], vol. 2, no. 10. (1)

these factors as pre-transition elements, and evaluate my ideas against the conclusions of prominent scholars.

While the parameters of this thesis do not explicitly extend into the trajectory phase of transition, trajectory is an underlying theme because the characteristics of pre-transition dictate trajectory²³. Understanding the dynamics of pre-transition allows for the interpretation of the events that take place after transition, and this is the main contribution of this work. Two main topics must be delineated as they relate to the trajectory phase of transition: power and duration of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. The second section of this review will discuss these topics as they pertain to trajectory.

Pre-Transition

The main reason for studying the pre-transition stage is to understand the path that each country followed after the change in power. The mobilization-liberalization cycle shows how the dynamics of pre-transition interaction dictate later events. This relationship is widely accepted among transitology scholars: "...historical factors are critical in shaping the resources and especially the preferences of elites during the transition, as well as, more generally, transition trajectories"²⁴. Many scholars differ in their opinions of what had the greatest impact: historical factors or processes. M. Steven Fish asserts that the processes outweigh historical factors: "Political struggles, actions and choices that took place during and after the onset of transition...are more important than legacies for determining variation

²³ For more information on the post-communist trajectories for each case study, consult Vachudova, M. A. 2005, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*, Oxford University Press, NY.

²⁴ Bunce, V. 2003, "Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from the Postcommunist Experience", *World Politics*, vol. 55, pp. 167-193. (178)

in trajectories of democratization”²⁵. In my model these two factors are inexplicable. While the process (the mobilization-liberalization cycle) is the main factor that ultimately has the greatest effect on transition method and trajectory, the historical regime atmosphere dictates the characteristics of the cycle. For this reason, I cannot separate the concepts of history and mechanism.

The historical factor that I heavily emphasize is regime atmosphere. This pre-transition factor is surprisingly user-friendly in the East European case studies, as compared to Latin American and South European cases. The events in Eastern Europe in 1989 were unique to other periods of transition from authoritarian rule because the legitimacy and methods of rule for each regime was founded in communist ideology. This is an important similarity because a common scale of regime atmosphere can be developed and universally applied to Eastern European case studies. This is a unique tool of analysis that allows a direct comparison between a calibrated regime severity and pre-transition mobilization characteristics.

The first mechanism of the mobilization-liberalization cycle is the catalyst: destabilization. The most common form of destabilization is a regime split. Many transitology scholars agree that the splitting of the elite is almost always the main underlying cause for regime change²⁶. Many factors are incorporated into why a regime becomes disconnected. This is not a theme that I directly engage in my case studies, so I will take a

²⁵ Fish, S. M. 1999, “Postcommunist Subversion: Social Science and Democratization in East Europe and Eurasia”, *Slavic Review*, vol. 58, no.4, pp. 794-823. (799)

²⁶ Haggard, S. and Kaufman, R. R. 1997, “The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions”, *Comparative Politics*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 263-283. (268)

few moments here to provide insight on regime splitting from the existing transitory literature.

Grzegorz Ekiert identifies many processes that are incorporated into what he identifies as a “transitory phase”²⁷, three of which describe events that caused destabilization in Eastern Europe. The first is the deterioration of ideology, which created an identity crisis within the communist parties. As the foundation of rule and legitimacy crumbled, the parties became less unified. The second is the failure of the centrally planned economies. Economic crisis was a fundamental reason for regime split across Eastern Europe, as will be seen in the case studies. Lastly, the disappearance of international restraints played a large role in regime splitting. The reforms of the Soviet Union contributed largely to the delegitimization of East European communist regimes. Without the foundation provided by the ideology and the Soviet support that had historically bolstered weakening regimes, the communist parties of Eastern Europe were vulnerable to softliner politicians who actively sought reform.

As was illustrated above, the conditions that caused the fragmentation of the elite challenged regime legitimacy. Adam Przeworski provides a pertinent explanation of legitimacy that articulates its relationship to regime collapse. He asserts that legitimacy is not the “source of the dynamic of regime change”²⁸. In essence, legitimacy is not necessarily required for a regime to maintain its authority. If no other options for governance are available then legitimacy is negligible, because there is no realistic alternative to the status

²⁷ Ekiert, G. 1991, “Democratization Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration”, *British Journal of Political Processes*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 285-313. (286-7)

²⁸ Przeworski, A. 1986, “Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy” in *Transitions from Authoritarian rule*, eds. G.A. O’Donnell, P.C. Schmitter & L. Whitehead, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. (51)

quo²⁹. However, legitimacy *is* intricately related to the story of East European transitions, because the destabilization caused by a lack of legitimacy created new opportunities and new possibilities in the eyes of the population. Once a destabilizing catalyst initiated the mobilization-liberalization cycle, the alternatives to the status quo became apparent and an opposition grew and aggressively sought a new alternative. I quote a passage from Russell Bova to illustrate this point:

Unpopular regimes can maintain their domination of society through repression that makes the cost of opposition very high, thus making the possibility of significant change seem remote...With the onset of liberalization, however, not only do the costs and risks of opposition begin to fall but alternatives to the status quo ante that once seemed impossible now appear to be in the realm of possibility³⁰

Stability offered through legitimacy was essential to the survival of communist regimes. The advent of reforms in the wake of the loss of legitimacy created an opening that was quickly infiltrated by organization from below.

Reform is always a dangerous undertaking for authoritarian regimes, because reforms create the opportunity for political alternatives. The mobilization-liberalization cycle clearly illustrates this trend. Any form of increased liberalization decreases the regime's concentration of power. The inherent danger in the mobilization-liberalization cycle is that as regimes opt to liberalize, the cost of repression increases. This means that the cost to associate with the opposition is decreased. Even more precarious to the regime is when the

²⁹ Przeworski, A. (1986:52)

³⁰ Bova, R. 1996, "Political Dynamics of the Post-Communist Transition: A Comparative Perspective" in *Liberalization and Democratization: Change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, ed. N. Bermeo, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. (123)

forces of mobilization are strong enough that the concessions offered have a de jure existence, and thus are legally official and binding for the future³¹.

Mobilization in response to political opening is made possible through civil society. The discussion on civil society could logically end here, except that the existence of a civil society is fundamentally at odds with communist ideology. A major unforeseen event in East European transitions was that the overwhelming force and the main actor in transitions from communism was the opposition³².

This creates a tricky point: how were regimes toppled by a movement from within society if no autonomous civil organization was permitted? This is where the effects of regime atmosphere and the subsequent likelihood of opposition development logically meet. The mobilization-liberalization cycle is perpetuated in countries with comparatively more lenient regime atmospheres. This means that the constraints on civil society are weaker. Oppositions emerge more readily in these situations and successfully drive the mobilization-liberalization cycle. The outcome of such cycles of interaction was more favorable to the opposition. The support for this conclusion is well documented: “A striking pattern appeared, in which transitions seemed to be conducted by negotiation if the old regime was no longer unified and if organizations in society had begun to exert autonomy”³³, although a comparable pattern of opposition-regime interaction has yet to be added to the literature on elements of the pre-transition phase.

³¹ Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J. (2006:131-71)

³² di Palma, G. 1996, “Legitimation from the Top to Civil Society: Politico-Cultural Change in Eastern Europe” in *Liberalization and Democratization: Change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, ed. N. Bermeo, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

³³ Friedham, D. V. 1993, “Bringing Society Back into Democratic Transition Theory after 1989: Pact Making and Regime Collapse”, *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 482-512. (483)

Trajectory

Understanding the trajectories of post-communist transitions is vital to understanding the dynamics in the region today. The two concepts that I discuss in this thesis that are associated with trajectory are power and the duration of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. These concepts are the legacy of pre-transition interaction. The degree and direction of power differentiation at the point of transition has an enormous effect on the subsequent trajectory. The duration of the mobilization-liberalization cycle dictates the extent of power held by either the opposition or the regime, and therefore I am discussing duration as part of the trajectory and not as part of the pre-transition phase. Each case study country included in this thesis experienced a roundtable session. Because each country experienced a roundtable, I refer to the transitions as negotiations. Obviously, the utility of these negotiations largely varies and is a product of pre-transition factors.

My model of interaction shows that transitions that were negotiated in favor of the opposition groups occurred in situations where the opposition held the more powerful position. This conclusion is not supported by traditional transition literature based on the Latin American experiences. Scholars have argued that in the Latin American cases, transitions that resulted in democratic trajectories were negotiated when parity existed between the opposition and the regime. As the negotiations went forward, the oppositions mobilized in response to its perceived gains, and the regime negotiated to forestall the event of mobilization³⁴.

The literature on Latin American cases cannot be universally applied to East European cases. While it is true that in many East European cases the opposition continued

³⁴ Swaminathan, S. (1999:178-191)

to gain strength and capability during the negotiations, the event of negotiation was the culmination of challenges already mounted by the opposition. East European literature follows the theory outlined by my model. Negotiations are most likely to lead to democracy when a power differentiation existed that favored the opposition: "...it was situations of *unequal* distribution of power that produced the quickest and most stable transitions from communist rule. In countries with asymmetrical balances of power, it was the ideological orientation of the more powerful party that largely determined the type of regime to emerge"³⁵. This scenario is depicted by the mobilization-liberalization model. In cases where the communists held the greater position of power, regimes emerged that resembled new authoritarian regimes, whereas in cases where the opposition held the upper hand, democratic ideals were more likely to prevail.

It logically follows that the discussion of power is intricately related to the duration of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. In a protracted cycle, the opposition has the luxury of consolidating ideas over time and coalescing around defined ideals. In cases of protracted cycles of interaction, the opposition groups had the most favorable transition because they held the greatest position of power. Therefore, their trajectories should result in democracy at a higher rate than rapid mass mobilization, and the ideals of such oppositions should play a large role in determining the characteristics of the resulting government. This indeed will be seen to be the case.

But what of cases where the mobilization-liberalization cycle is not clearly developed and has a short lifespan? These are the cases I refer to as stolen transitions. In these cases, the opposition mobilizes rapidly and is not coalesced under a defined set of goals to achieve

³⁵ McFaul, M. 2002, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World", *World Politics*, vol. 54, pp. 212-244. (212-214)

through mobilization. In addition, the regime quickly dissolves and while some leaders are ousted, lesser ranking officials from the communist party often fill their shoes. The new leaders stop the full development of the mobilization-liberalization cycle and assume leadership under the guise of reform. While the new leaders hold de facto power, they are inherently weak. Cases from Latin American and Southern Europe also model this trend: “These studies clearly suggest that a rapid decomposition of state power...is hardly conducive to the establishment of viable democratic regimes”³⁶. The Tier 3 cases presented in this thesis show a similar tendency for non-democratic trajectories.

Just as a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle proved to be effective for the opposition, it also had benefits for members of the regime who embraced reform. Communists who initiated reforms over time in the pre-transition period were better prepared for the advent of transition³⁷. When transitions occurred quickly and without a period of preparation (accomplished through the mobilization-liberalization cycle), a void of political power was created: “...the swift disintegration of one-party states has left a dangerous political vacuum, setting in motion an often chaotic process of political change”³⁸. Former communists filled these voids, but had little legitimacy under which to claim them.

Until now I have neglected the forces of ethnic nationalism in my discussion of East European transitions. Nationalism is a prevalent force that guided the trajectories of many East European countries, most notably those who lacked a defined pre-transition mobilization-liberalization cycle, and therefore had neither a regime nor an opposition that

³⁶ Ekiert, G. (1991: 288)

³⁷ Snyder, T. and Vachudova, M. 1996, “Are Transitions Transitory? Two Types of Political Change in Eastern Europe Since 1989”, *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 1-35. (13)

³⁸ Ekiert (1991:312)

was prepared to assume leadership. The void of political legitimacy was filled in many cases by former communists “who were able to use ethnic nationalism to forge new political identity and thereby convince electorates that they were legitimate participants in the new democratic party”³⁹. The discussion of ethnic nationalism is crucial to understanding how the trajectories of each country were forged. However, while the forces of nationalism were undoubtedly present in the pre-transition phase, it is largely a discussion for post-transition scholars, and will not play a major role in the development of various mobilization-liberalization cycles.

Because nationalist forces were prominent in many of my case studies, but were noticeably absent in others, I have removed all mobilization and repression events that were generated by ethnic nationalism. I did this in order to isolate mobilization against the regime from mobilization (and potential regime reaction) that was motivated by ethnic tensions. The purpose of my study is to show mobilization against the regime and subsequent regime reaction. By removing ethnic nationalism events, I eliminate potential mobilizations and reactions that are not representative of the dynamics encompassed in the mobilization-liberalization cycle. Studying ethnic nationalism is vital to understanding East European post-communist trajectories, but because it distorts the nature of the statistical data of mobilization and repression, I will not include of nationalism in the pre-transition discussions of my case studies.

The importance of power and duration of the mobilization-liberalization cycle are clearly seen in the trajectory phase of transition. This section summarized prominent literature relating to the phases of transition, and allowed me to incorporate my model into the existing transitology scholarship. The following sections will present five case studies

³⁹ Snyder, T. and Vachudova, M. (1996:3)

and discuss the pre-transition factors that contributed to the development of a unique mobilization-liberalization cycle.

CHAPTER 2: HUNGARY, NEGOTIATION AND THE STORY OF THE ELITE

The case of Hungary shows a mild regime atmosphere that permitted the development of a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle. The consequences of such a cycle were a mature opposition, a negotiated transition, and a democratic trajectory. The lenient regime atmosphere that predominated in the 1980s developed due to an unstable regime. Failed economic policy and a declining standard of living led to tensions within the regime and resulted in hardliner and reform factions. As a result of this weakening, the regime offered concessions as a strategy to maintain power. The strategy ultimately failed, as such liberalizing acts allowed political space for opposition groups. While opposition activity occurred throughout the 1980s, a cohesive movement developed late in Hungary. The largest spike in activity occurred after the resignation of János Kádár, which signaled the instability of the regime and triggered the mobilization-liberalization cycle. Without an aggressive Soviet foreign policy to reinforce the Hungarian regime, the communists were ultimately forced to negotiate a transition with the opposition as a final strategy to maintain influence.

Table 2-1 depicts the regime atmosphere in Hungary prior to transition. The regime atmosphere score of 11.67 is an average score derived from Freedom House and the Political Terror Scale. Of the five case studies investigated in this thesis, Hungary has the mildest regime atmosphere in the pre-transition phase⁴⁰. Hungary's roundtable sessions were held

⁴⁰ The pre-transition phase is defined as 1987-1989. The mobilization-liberalization cycles identified in each case study begin during this time period.

from 13 June 1989 to 18 Sept 1989⁴¹, and were chronologically the second of such negotiations to take place.

TABLE 2-1: *Regime Atmosphere Rating, Hungary*⁴²

	Freedom House		Political Terror Scale		
	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Amnesty International	U.S. Dept of State	Total Score
1987	5	4	2	2	13
1988	5	4	2	2	13
1989	4	3	1	1	9
				Average 3-Year Score:	11.67

The Regime

Long before an opposition movement capable of negotiating a transfer of power developed, changes within the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) began to reduce the strength of the party. The deterioration of the economy was a major source of friction within the MSZMP, and over time served to divide the regime. In an attempt to assuage the developing economic crisis, MSZMP General Secretary János Kádár introduced a policy of “speeding up” the economy between 1985 and 1987, the result of which was

⁴¹ Welsh, H. A. 1994, “Political Processes in Central and Eastern Europe”, *Comparative Politics*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 379-394. (385)

⁴² This table was derived from Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org) and Political Terror Scale (www.politicalterrorsscale.org) scores for the given country from 1987 to 1989. The 3-Year average is a calculation of the average score in each category over the given time period. This score is used to provide a regime atmosphere rating.

increased foreign debt and chaos among the divided leadership⁴³. The dire situation of the economy was a major factor in polarizing the party into hardliner and reformed-communist factions. The political softliners desired a semi-constitutional system that would in turn improve the living conditions of Hungarians while still affording the MSZMP substantial political influence⁴⁴. Many of the reformed communists would eventually support the opposition movement, and would propel the post-transition trajectory toward a consolidated democracy.

The disunity of the elite destabilized the authoritarian regime and directly affected its legitimacy. After the 1956 Revolution, János Kádár had come to power under what has been termed a “surrogate” legitimacy⁴⁵, based on his ability to restore government function. Kádár’s inability to normalize the economic crisis led to his replacement in 1988 by Karoly Grosz⁴⁶. As a result of this change of leadership, any legitimacy associated with the Kádár regime was now in jeopardy.

As will be shown in the event data analysis, there is a sharp increase in mobilization following the resignation of Kádár. The regime’s lack of ability to repress this mobilization led to liberalizing concessions and thus set the mobilization-liberalization cycle into motion. While this event can clearly be seen as the catalyst to the cycle, the preconditions to this event are also significant in determining the utility of the cycle to the opposition.

⁴³ Lach, J. 2006, “The Political Economy in Hungary through Transition” in *The Political Economy of Transition in Eurasia: Democratization and Economic Liberalization in a Global Economy*, eds. N. Graham & F. Lindahl, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing. (199)

⁴⁴ Lach, J. (2006:199)

⁴⁵ Kis, J. 1995, “Between Reform and Revolution: Three Hypotheses About the Nature of the Regime Change” in *Lawful Revolution in Hungary, 1989-94*, eds. B.K. Kiraly & A. Bozoki, Atlantic Research and Publications, Highland Lakes, New Jersey, pp. 33-60. (44)

⁴⁶ Lach, J. (2006:199)

Two main events in the 1980s exposed the declining legitimacy of the MSZMP and simultaneously revealed the growing strength of organized opposition to the regime. In 1987 and 1988 there began outbreaks of protest over the Bos-Nagymaros hydroelectric dam project⁴⁷, a “late Stalinist ‘gigantomaniac’ investment venture”⁴⁸, with harmful environmental consequences. The government of Hungary was unable to quell public discussion or repress movements against the dam, and eventually brought the question to the parliament. The parliament voted largely in favor to continue the dam, revealing that although previous legislative reform authorized semi-competitive elections, the parliament was still not the voice of the people, but the voice of the MSZMP⁴⁹.

The second major event that solidified the end of legitimacy for the MSZMP was the rehabilitation of historical figures from the 1956 Revolution. In the summer of 1988, a liberalizing act known as the Freedom of the Press Movement⁵⁰ allowed for public discussion of events such as the 1956 uprising. Because the official version of the uprising was so closely associated with the legitimacy of the MSZMP, allowing debate threatened the stability of the regime. The reburial of Imre Nagy and his associates was a large momentum swing in the favor of the opposition, because it offered political legitimacy to the movement of the 1950s, and allowed new opposition groups to claim authority based on their connection to this historic movement.

⁴⁷ Bozoki, A. 1993, “Hungary’s Road to Systemic Change: The Opposition Roundtable”, *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 7, pp. 276-308. (277)

⁴⁸ Kis, J.(1995:43)

⁴⁹ Kis, J. (1995:43)

⁵⁰ Lach, J. (2006:200)

The legitimacy of the opposition was intensified through a comment released by regime softliner and politburo member, Imre Pozsgay, who stated that the 1956 Revolution was a “popular uprising”. This directly contrasted the official government term for the event: “counter-revolution”⁵¹. It provided the opposition with a legacy that they could inherit to reinforce their own legitimacy.

By January of 1989, it became clear that the MSZMP as a single party could no longer control the growing forces that challenged its hold on power. It had no plan for continuance and no social legitimacy. The reform wing of the MSZMP gained strength and overpowered hardliners within the party. In addition, “reform circles” of disillusioned party members began forming across the country. Irreconcilable ideological splits within the regime led to the eventual decision to proceed with a multiparty democracy, the terms of which would be reached through negotiations with the opposition and their Roundtable⁵². Negotiations commenced at a time where the power differentiation between the opposition and the regime largely favored the opposition.

Table 2-2 depicts major concessions offered by the MSZMP in the 1980s. Early concessions were offered in response to crises that revealed weaknesses within the regime. In order to protect themselves against the declining economy and standard of living, the regime offered superficial liberalization such as amendments to the Electoral Law. While this amendment changed the composition of the Transitory Parliament, events such as the 1988 vote on the Bos-Nagymaros dam project revealed that the parliament was still just an extension of the MSZMP. Later concessions were the result of a growing opposition that

⁵¹ Bozoki, A. (1993:280)

⁵² IBID

began to challenge the regime. After Kádár's resignation, the opposition activity dramatically increased and the mobilization-liberalization cycle began.

TABLE 2-2: Timeline of Major Liberalizing Concessions granted by MSZMP⁵³

Concession	Consequences
Amendment to Electoral Law, 1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral competition became compulsory; • Transitory Parliament is elected; • By 1985, more than 10% elected on “oppositional” tickets in 1985; • Transitory Parliament is able to pass legislation pointed at systematic change including the facilitation of a market economy and a Western-based legal system⁵⁴
Amendment to Electoral Law, 1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed for independent candidates to seek election; • Candidates not endorsed by the MSZMP are elected to Parliament; • Opened political space for opposition to the government⁵⁵
Freedom of Press Movement, 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed for the public vetting of government offenses; • Served to further de-legitimize Soviet ideology • Opened political space for future opposition⁵⁶
Social Rehabilitation of Revolutionary Figures, 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave legitimacy to the 1956 uprising, and categorized it as a popular uprising versus a counter-revolution; • Gave legitimacy to the opposition, increasing its stability bargaining power⁵⁷
Act on Free Association, January 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave opposition movements a de jure existence (legitimacy) • Set a liberalizing precedent in response to confrontation; • Increased opposition stability; • Roundtable is organized within two months of the passage of this act⁵⁸
MSZMP Central Committee agrees to accept the idea of a multiparty democracy, 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSZMP no longer held enough power over the opposition to continue its existence as an authoritarian elite

⁵³ This table was compiled using a variety of sources: Agh, A. 1998, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans*, Edward Elgar, Northampton, MA. ; Kis, J. (1995); Lach, J. (1995); and Bozoki, A. (1993).

⁵⁴ Agh, A. (1998:76)

⁵⁵ Kis, J. (1995:42)

⁵⁶ Lach, J. (2006:200)

⁵⁷ Bozoki, A. (1993:280)

⁵⁸ Agh, A. (1998:77)

The Opposition

The growth of the Hungarian opposition was aided by two main factors, the greatest of which was the ever increasing liberalized environment in Hungary. Throughout the decade of the 1980s, the regime offered political concessions in response to the economic decay and the deterioration of the standard of living. These crises illuminated the ideological differences among the MSZMP. As a result of the disunity and therefore instability, the capability of the regime to repress was diminished. The regime offered concessions to assuage the population and prevent uprising during periods of instability. While this strategy for staying in power worked in the immediate short-term, the long term effects of liberalization was the growth of an opposition.

These concessions provided opposition groups a political space, solidified the legitimacy of the opposition movements, and provided the precedent for further concessions by the regime in response to challenges. Political institutions that appeared during the pre-transition period served to the benefit of the opposition and the deterioration of regime strength. As government concessions became protected by a de jure existence, a venue for political contestation was created and soon occupied by the growing opposition. The increased liberalization led to non-violent mass demonstrations and a general increase in civil society participation, which weakened the ideologically-based institutional structures⁵⁹.

The opposition grew immensely in the year prior to transition. The rate of growth increased rapidly up until the point of negotiation, when the cost to associate with the mobilization was lowest due to the ever-increasing cost to the regime to repress. From the early to mid-1980s, the opposition movement has existed mainly through clandestine

⁵⁹Agh, A. (1998:78)

organizations. In stark contrast from countries such as Poland, it was absent from the public stage and did not have a large or cohesive following. It made its first public appearance in the form of writers seeking populist and nationalist change⁶⁰. It wasn't until 1987 and 1988 that the first oppositional "proto-parties" emerged⁶¹. The growing cohesiveness and breadth of the opposition in response to increased liberalization increased the capabilities of the oppositional groups.

In September of 1987, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) formed, following the model of Solidarity, although it did not represent the working class⁶². Its goal was to mediate a dialogue between the forming opposition groups and the Communist Party⁶³. The MDF monopolized the oppositional movement until 1988, when more parties were formed. It is important to note that up until the Act on Free Association in January of 1989, the opposition movement was still nascent. The two largest parties, the MDF and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) had only 10,000 and 1,500 members, respectively⁶⁴.

Transition: Leading up to the Roundtable

The Opposition Roundtable (EKA) was formed in March of 1989⁶⁵ during a time when there was a vacuum of political legitimacy⁶⁶. Because the opposition was maturing, it

⁶⁰ Bozoki, A. (1993: 276)

⁶¹ Agh, A. (1998: 77)

⁶² IBID

⁶³ Lach, J. (2006:199)

⁶⁴ IBID

⁶⁵ Lach, J (2006:201)

⁶⁶ Kis, J. (1995:42)

was able to take advantage of the inability of the regime to occupy this void. The mobilization-liberalization cycle, up to this point, had provided the opposition with the experience and unity it needed to successfully challenge the regime. Had no such cycle taken place, the opposition would not have been prepared for such an undertaking and the results of the transition and trajectory may not have been as beneficial to the opposition.

The EKA was able to capitalize on the vacuum of legitimacy that was left in the wake of the deteriorating regime. The EKA combined nine different opposition parties under one umbrella group, united by the common principle of consensus. This provided a very stable opposition front, unified under the concept that they would only proceed under unanimity. This meant that extremists were by definition excluded from the negotiations. This basic principle gave the EKA the upper hand in defining the terms of the negotiations, and protected them from the MSZMP, who desired to negotiate with opposition parties on an individual basis in order to divide the Roundtable⁶⁷. The EKA refused to accept a coalition government with the MSZMP, and the government conceded that they did not have the capacity to force the opposition into this agreement. They were now completely void of political legitimacy⁶⁸. MSZMP membership dropped from 700,000 to 20,000 members during the negotiated transition, and most former members failed to pledge support to the successor to the MSZMP, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ Bozoki, A. (1993:283-4)

⁶⁸ Kis, J. (1995:42-5)

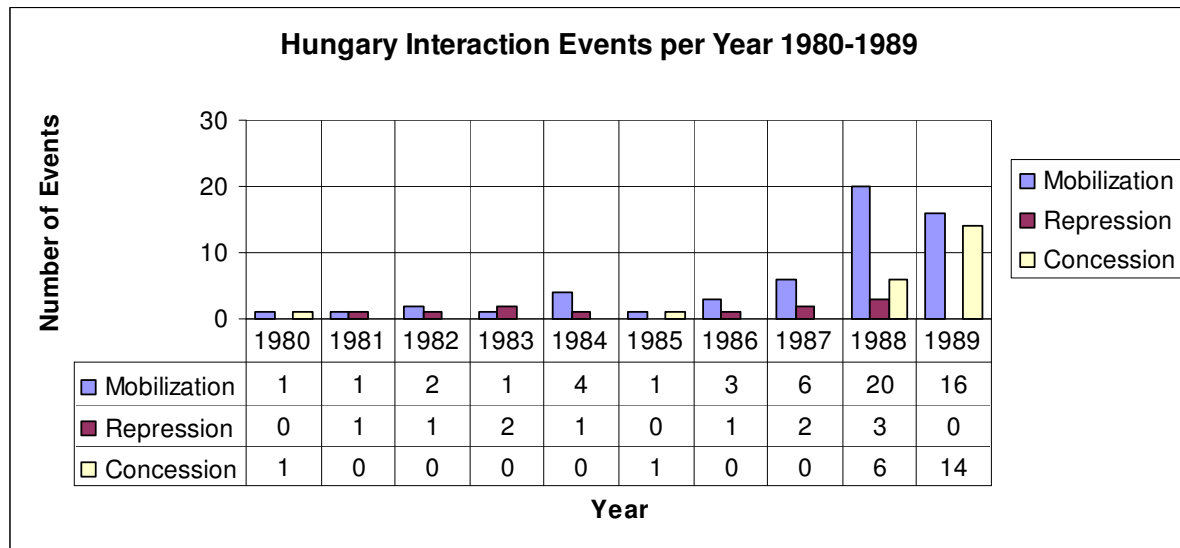
⁶⁹ Lach, J. (2006:203)

Event Data Analysis

The event data clearly shows the progressive momentum of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. The criterion for a catalyst is an indicator event that reveals the decreasing capacity of the regime. This event materializes as government destabilization, which decreased the ability of the government to enact repression. The major destabilizing catalyst identified in the data set is the resignation of János Kádár as General Secretary. Immediately following this event, mobilization increases, and the response of the government to this mobilization is increasingly liberal. The catalyst event clearly indicates the end of a pattern of repression and the beginning of a pattern of concession.

The resignation of Kádár did not happen in isolation. The lack of party unity was apparent in the data set earlier, with an increased number of mobilization events occurring in 1986 and 1987. In these cases of mobilization, the government was in many situations still willing to meet the cost to repress the small opposition movement. The graph below depicts the level of mobilization and repression represented in the data set from 1980 through 1989.

FIGURE 2-1: Hungary: Events of Interaction per Year, 1980-1989⁷⁰



As the figure above shows, repression accompanied mobilization at a high rate until 1988. In 1988, when evidence supporting the presence of a mobilization-liberalization cycle is obvious, the number of repressive events per mobilization event is much smaller. The consequences of this scenario allowed for the increased cost to repress, increased mobilization participation, and increased liberalization.

This trend can be further analyzed to show how the increasing cost of repression decreased the cost of association for the mobilizing population. Table 2-3 below shows the growth in mobilization, which was critical to driving the momentum of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. This table reveals the immense growth in opposition activity in 1988. More mobilization events were recorded in this year than in the previous eight years. The spike in mobilization events was coupled with intense growth in participation.

By the year 1989, the average number of participants in each mobilization event was 152,086.10. The total estimated population in Hungary in 1989 is 10,381,959⁷¹. This means

⁷⁰ The source of the data for Figure 2-1 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization, concession, and repression in tabular form.

that, on average 1.46% of the population participated in each mobilization event. This is an increase from .021% of the total population participating in each event in 1987. The drastic increase in mobilization represents the decreasing cost to associate, which is directly influenced by the regime's inability or unwillingness to engage in repression.

TABLE 2-3: Mobilization Growth 1980-1989, Hungary⁷²

Year	Total Mobilization Events	Total Repressive Events	Percent of Repression compared to Mobilization	Average Number of Participants per Mobilization Event
1980	1	0	0.0%	8.0
1981	1	1	100.0%	25.5
1982	2	1	50.0%	39.3
1983	1	2	200.0%	60.3
1984	4	1	25.0%	428.6
1985	1	0	0.0%	2.0
1986	3	1	33.3%	2727.0
1987	6	2	33.3%	2209.0
1988	20	3	15.3%	10,241.1
1989 ⁷³	16	0	0.0%	152,086.1

While the European Protest and Coercion Event Data set cannot be considered a complete compilation of all such events, it shows an obvious correlation between the percent of mobilization events resulting in repression to the average number of participants per mobilization event. In the early 1980s, the level of repression was high, and the average number of participants per event remained relatively low.

⁷¹ Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Population Census 2001 (<http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/06/00/tabeng>)

⁷² The event data for Table 2-3 was taken from Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization, concession, and repression in tabular form.

⁷³ The data for 1989 includes only up until October 9, when the MSZMP surrendered the government.

We know from the historical literature that in 1986 the MSZMP was internally splitting due in part to conflict with the ongoing economic policies of János Kádár. The rate of repression from the data set shows one repression event for every three mobilization events, with the rate of participation increasing drastically. This indicates the perception of regime weakening and the decreasing ability of the regime to meet the rising cost of repression. The inability to repress is evidenced by the increase of participation, which indicates that the cost of association is decreasing. The table shows that in 1988 and 1989, the average number of participants per mobilization events was 10,241.1 and 152,086.1, respectively, a 15-fold increase. Finally, the legitimacy of the opposition movement is also increasing as more concessions are gained over time, creating a history of success for the opposition.

The mobilization-liberalization cycle in Hungary was initiated in 1988. The catalyst event, as stated above, is the resignation of Kádár, a move which was prompted through elite splitting, and represented to the population the diminishing legitimacy of the communist regime. The following timeline shows relevant events from the event data set that reveal the mobilization-liberalization cycle

TIMELINE 2-1: *Mobilization-Liberalization Cycle in Hungary, 1988-1989*⁷⁴

CYCLE OPENS

CATALYST: JANOS KADAR RESIGNS May 22, 1988

→ May 27: Demonstration against dam construction

→ June 7: Farmer demonstration

→ June 16: Dissidents bring flowers to Nagy grave, are rebuffed

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: July 9: Freedom to Assemble

→ July 19-July 26: Mobilization for travel to the West

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: July 25: Stock Exchange opens

⁷⁴ The event data for Timeline 2-1 was taken from Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This timeline shows all re-coded events of mobilization, repression, and concession from May 22, 1988 to October 9, 1989.

→ August 23: Coal miner strike for better wages
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: August 25: Pay demands met for strikers
 → August 29: Printer strike
 → August 30-31: Optics workers strike
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: September 1: Strikers demands met
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: September 9: Amnesty to 1956 Revolutionaries
 → September 12: Mobilization against dam
 → September 28: Mobilization strike for freedom for lecturers
 → September 29: Mobilization against dam
 → October 3: Mobilization against dam
 → October 4: Mobilization to free conscientious objectors
 → October 22: Mobilization strike for freedom for lecturers
 → October 23: Mobilization against dam
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: January 11, 1989: Allow non-communist parties; Right to Strike and Assemble
 → January 12: Mobilization against prices
 → February 27: Mobilization against dam
 → March 3: Mobilization against dam
 → March 6: Mobilization against dam
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: March 22: Allow workers to strike for Solidarity
 → April 27: Mobilization against light sentences for police brutality
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: April 28: Government hands over Imre Nagy files
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: May 6: Tear down part of barbed wire on Austrian border
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: May 10: Publish names of 277 executed in 1956
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: May 14: Agree to halt dam project
 → May 26: Mobilization to demand final decision on dam project
 → June 15: Mobilization to rebury Imre Nagy
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: July 6: Imre Nagy ruled innocent
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: July 22: Free by-elections
 → July 27: Prison suicide attempts and strike over prison conditions
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: July 31: Restore old street names
 → August 18: Mobilization against rising prices
 → August 30: Reformers seek a post of Presidency
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: September 10: Open the border with Austria
 → September 29: Mobilization: demand dissolution of Workers' Militia
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: October 9: MSZMP dissolved; Create law for multi-party system; release Workers' Militia to the new government; communists surrender government

This timeline shows the catalyst event, and the subsequent data events present in the data set. Increasingly, the regime's response to mobilization is to liberalize. Each concession represents a change in power differentiation and the increasing cost of repression. The quick succession of events is vital to the continuation of the cycle. Whereas in previous years, the data shows intermittent mobilization, often disassociated from concessions or repressive acts, 1988 represents a turning point because the opposition quickly mobilized in response to government concessions, and pressured the regime for continued response. The

regime's diminished capacity to repress, and therefore to preserve its concentration of power is shown by the events in the timeline.

The regime atmosphere in Hungary made it comparatively easy for a mobilization-liberalization cycle to gain momentum. Whereas other countries experienced much more repressive regimes, the Hungarian regime had already developed a history of intermittently responding to confrontation with concessions, as evidenced in Figure 2-1. The comparatively low risk to mobilize, combined with the presence of a softliner faction allowed the cycle to gain momentum. This resulted in the continual increase in the cost of repression. Within a year and a half of the main catalyst event, the regime had agreed to a negotiated transition with a mature opposition movement.

Summary

Hungary is designated as a Tier 1 country, as it experienced a mild pre-transition regime atmosphere, a prolonged mobilization-liberalization cycle, and a post-transition democratic trajectory. The mobilization-liberalization cycle in Hungary lasted for 17 months, showing a protracted cycle of interaction. The government increasingly responded to pressure from the opposition with concessions, which increased the cost to repress to a point where the regime no longer has the capability to repress mobilization. This 17-month process allowed the opposition to mature and to unite under common principles. They were prepared to fill the vacuum of legitimacy left by the MSZMP. Other case studies will show mobilization-liberalization cycles that act over a much shorter period of time and do not allow the opposition to grow in such a way that it is capable of filling this political void.

Hungary's case is one of comparatively lenient regime atmosphere, which eased the constraints on the population to form a legitimate opposition. This history of comparatively mild rule helped to promote an effective cycle of interaction. The consequence of a cycle that was of utility to the opposition was a political trajectory that moved toward a consolidated democracy.

CHAPTER 3: POLAND: NEGOTIATION AND THE STORY OF THE OPPOSITION

Poland is a case where a tradition of a mild regime atmosphere created a favorable environment for the opposition. The 1980-1981 Solidarity experience served to mature the opposition, such that the duration of the 1988-1989 mobilization-liberalization cycle was not a major factor in preparing the opposition for transition. The timing of the 1988-1989 cycle was however, crucial. In 1981 the constraints imposed by Soviet foreign policy overpowered the opposition's ability to challenge the Polish regime. In 1989 however, the international constraints no longer existed. The opposition movement again surfaced and after a brief mobilization-liberalization cycle, was able to force the regime to negotiate. The regime's decision to negotiate with Solidarity in 1989 indicated that they could not meet the cost to repress the opposition movement, but by enfranchising the group they believed they could maintain power in the future government. Furthermore, the regime *needed* to embrace Solidarity in order to solve the economic crisis.

TABLE 3-1: Regime Atmosphere Rating, Poland⁷⁵

	Freedom House		Political Terror Scale		Total Score
	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Amnesty International	U.S. Dept of State	
1987	5	5	3	3	16
1988	5	5	2	2	14
1989	4	3	2	2	11
				Average 3-Year Score:	13.67

Poland's regime atmosphere average from 1987 to 1989 is 13.67. This score indicates that the regime atmosphere was comparatively mild. Along with a mild regime atmosphere, Poland had a highly developed opposition and a transition that favored democratic consolidation. For these reasons, Poland is designated as a Tier 1 country.

The Regime

Poland's experience with socialism was markedly different from the other countries in this study. In the words of Krzysztof Pomian, Poland was the only Soviet bloc country where "authorities were afraid of the working class, not the other way around"⁷⁶. The

⁷⁵ This table was derived from Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org) and Political Terror Scale (www.politicalterror scale.org) scores for the given country from 1987 to 1989. The 3-Year average is a calculation of the average score in each category over the given time period. This score is used to provide a regime atmosphere rating.

⁷⁶ Ekiert, G. 1997, "Rebellious Poles: Political Crisis and Popular Protest Under State Socialism, 1945-89", *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 11, pp. 299-338. (311)

inconsistent application of political terror combined with the unfinished Stalinization project⁷⁷ resulted in a workers' revolt in June of 1956. The fallout from this crisis changed the political trajectory in Poland. The forced collectivization policy was ended, new leadership was elected, and most importantly to the future of Polish opposition, "The structure of reforms created a dialectic whereby the growth of resources for potential opponents saw a widening repertoire of contention, which in turn weakened the repressive structures still further"⁷⁸. These changes created a different socialist experience for the people of Poland. The environment created by the leadership allowed for the development of prolonged cycles of interaction between opposition groups and the regime.

The lessons learned from the 1956 events changed the course of interaction between the regime and the opposition: "Polish experiences in 1956 produced, on the one hand, the belief in the power of society (the regime can be forced to make concessions). On the other hand, they produced self-assurance among the power elite (masses can be relatively easily pacified if one can wait long enough for political energy to burn down)"⁷⁹. These lessons would determine the future strategies for opposition and regime interaction.

The events of 1956 destabilized the Polish regime. Ekiert (1996) argues that Poland was the most unstable country in the Soviet bloc, and the consequences of repeated economic and political failures were waves of collective protest⁸⁰. The various opposition movements

⁷⁷ Sanford, G. 1994, "Communism's Weakest Link- Democratic Capitalism's Greatest Challenge: Poland" in *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratisation in Eastern Europe*, ed. Pridham, G. et al, St. Martin's Press, New York, pp. 188-217. (190)

⁷⁸ Sharman, J.C. 2003, *Repression and Resistance in Communist Europe*, Routledge Curzon, New York. (118)

⁷⁹ As quoted in Ekiert, G.(1997:315)

⁸⁰ Ekiert, G. 1996, *The State Against Society: Political Crises and their Aftermath in East Central Europe*, Princeton University Press, Princeton. (217)

established links between various echelons of society⁸¹, and created connections that would enhance the stability of the opposition. The weakness of the Polish state as a socialist regime stemmed from its improper indoctrination to Soviet socialist values. Because rank and file party members did not fully embrace the ideology, they were not supportive of communist leadership during periods of crisis⁸².

The leaders of the Polish regime between 1956 and 1989 desired to maintain a certain level of autonomy from Moscow. In order to achieve a relative independence, they pioneered methods of handling crises, which included compromising with various elements of society and therefore abandoning critical elements of socialist values. These techniques of rule precluded Poland from achieving totalitarian rule, and promoted the growth of an opposition. The lack of adhesion to socialist values naturally led to instability, because the regime could not claim legitimacy based on ideology⁸³.

The mild nature of the Polish regime set it apart from other Eastern bloc countries. The systematic oppression experienced across other satellites did not exist in Poland. The Roman Catholic Church and intellectuals enjoyed a level of political freedom that was prohibited by the ideology-based policies of other regional communist regimes⁸⁴. By 1980, Polish society had developed into a well-educated and dynamic population. The traditional values of Polish culture were much more predominant than communist ideology⁸⁵. The

⁸¹ Ekiert, G. (1997:311)

⁸² Sanford, G. (1994:190)

⁸³ Sanford, G. (1994:190-1)

⁸⁴ Ekiert (1996:217)

⁸⁵ Sanford, (1994:191)

instability of the regime combined with the comparatively mild political environment left it open to challenge by an opposition, the most threatening of which was the Solidarity movement of 1980-1981.

The strikes of July and August 1980 were in response to the many perceived failures of the regime: “remoteness, exclusiveness, arbitrariness, unaccountability, incompetence, repressiveness, and illegitimacy....their contempt for social justice and their corruption, careerism, arrogance, frivolity and mediocrity”⁸⁶. The primary complaint was the economic situation. The Polish government had increased its outstanding external debt from \$7.4 billion to over \$21 billion in just five years. The regime was forced to raise the prices of meat for the third time, without warning to the public: “This decision seemed so perversely suicidal that some observers believed it to be a deliberate provocation, intended to elicit protests and disorders that could then be conveniently crushed, thereby facilitating a reversion to a comprehensively repressive system”⁸⁷. The response was loud and clear, in the form of a mass popular uprising that used its fierce adherence to group unity as its greatest weapon. The instability of the government due to low legitimacy and political incompetence did not allow the movement to be immediately repressed.

The level of participation in the Solidarity movement was unprecedented. Approximately 11.8 million people or one third of the country had membership in Solidarity. When the movement was finally suppressed in 1981, one out of every five Polish citizens had participated in at least one collective protest⁸⁸. The declaration of martial law in Poland on

⁸⁶ Rothschild, J. and Wingfield, N. M. 2000, *Return to Diversity: a Political History of East Central Europe since World War II*, 3rd edn, Oxford University Press. (199)

⁸⁷ Rothschild, J. and Wingfield, N. M (2000:198)

⁸⁸ Ekiert, G. (1997:329)

December 13, 1981 was the most extensive domestic military operation that the region had seen since the introduction of state-socialism⁸⁹. It demonstrated the regime's ability to repress an opposition movement, although in order to do so, it "abdicate[d] political power in favor of organized forces of repression"⁹⁰. The declaration of martial law resulted in the arrest of the opposition leaders, the prohibition of independent meetings and opposition participation in public politics, the state-inflicted deaths of striking miners, and military and police surveillance. Although General Jaruzelski claimed that the declaration was necessary to avoid a Soviet invasion, it has since been suggested that the Soviets had previously decided against this action⁹¹.

The regime attempted to create new venues for political discussion after Solidarity was outlawed. In July of 1983, a constitutional amendment created PRON⁹², which was to be an official organization that united the citizens and the government. It was an important precedent because the government effectively gave up any attempt for complete domination of the public⁹³. In creating this organization, the government explicitly forbade the participation of Solidarity⁹⁴, which meant that up to a third of the population was barred from participating in this joint council. Needless to say, PRON did not gain substantial support. In 1986, the regime again made an attempt to incorporate public opinion into its policy, by initiating the Social Consultative Council, which was to be an organization that allowed for

⁸⁹ Ekiert, G. (1997:331)

⁹⁰ Przeworski, A, (1991:4)

⁹¹ Glenn III, J.K. 2001, *Framing Democracy: Civil Society and Civic Movements in Eastern Europe*, Stanford University Press, Stanford. (42)

⁹² Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth

⁹³ Friedham, D. V. (1993:505)

⁹⁴ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:40)

the exchange of views between the population and the state. This effort was also snubbed by the public, as most intellectuals and members of Solidarity refused to participate⁹⁵.

Between 1982 and 1989, certain aspects of marital law became incorporated into “normal” law. The penal code was adapted to become harsher, although government politics became noticeably more liberal, “as if the state wanted to have at its disposal a variety of legal weapons against society without actually taking recourse to them”⁹⁶. The regime never engaged in consistent repression following the martial-law period. The experience of martial law, while repressing the opposition movement, did not solve the economic problems of country, nor did it provide the government with the tools needed to confront the increasingly critical economic situation⁹⁷. While the declaration of martial law can be superficially compared to the cases in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), the result of the repression in Poland did not break the political stalemate between the opposition and the regime⁹⁸. The opposition in Poland experienced more than a year of liberalization, which would not be forgotten with the installation of a brief period of repression.

Throughout the course of the 1980s, the already tenuous legitimacy of the regime further waned as repeated attempts to control the impending economic crisis failed. This destabilization was not unnoticed by the general population as new waves of strikes began in 1988. The Solidarity movement in the early 1980s marked the beginning of the end for the Polish communist regime. The imposition of martial law extended the reign, but did not

⁹⁵ IBID

⁹⁶ Osiatynski, W. 1996, “The Roundtable Talks in Poland” in *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism*, ed. J. Elster, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 21-68. (23)

⁹⁷ Ekiert, G. (1997:333)

⁹⁸ Ekiert (1997:331)

solve the inherent and increasing problems for the regime. In late 1988, the regime was forced to admit that it could no go on without the popular support that could be gained from a compromise with Solidarity:

In the spring of 1989, the Polish party, humiliated by the Solidarność experience, held in contempt by the army officers who had been forced to rescue it, and shorn of anything resembling programmatic cohesion, sat on the sidelines as General Jaruzelski sanctioned a high level national “Round Table” to restructure the government and invited Solidarność in from the cold to bring legitimacy to the initiative⁹⁹.

The Opposition

The effects of the Solidarity movement forever changed the relationship between the opposition and the regime, and although the movement was suppressed, the experience of Solidarity marked the beginning of the end of communism in Poland, and in Eastern Europe:

...too much had happened in Poland—specifically too much lived democratic experience—for social life to return to the status quo ante. Solidarność continued—in a thousand underground publications, in nationwide networks of cooperating activists and in new civic habits tested in struggle. With the party bereft of any capacity for serious structural innovation, the economic crisis deepened with each passing year”¹⁰⁰.

The repressive fallout from martial law lasted until 1986, when the regime granted a full amnesty for members of Solidarity¹⁰¹.

Solidarity was forced underground in 1981 but never lost its influence and was never completely repressed. With the help of the Roman Catholic Church, it maintained activity illegally, and published over 1300 periodicals to counter the ongoing distribution of state

⁹⁹ Goodwyn, L. 1991, *Breaking Down the Barrier: the Rise of Solidarity in Poland*, Oxford University Press, New York. (339)

¹⁰⁰ Goodwyn, L. (1991:338)

¹⁰¹ Friedham, D. V. (1993:504)

propaganda¹⁰². As the level of political repression was eased, groups began to gradually reappear and test the government's limits of their activities¹⁰³. The presence of opposition had always been a feature of Polish society, and this tradition was not lost during the brief period of intense repression.

The events of protest that took place in Poland were a direct result of the mild regime atmosphere and the inherent instability of the regime. Furthermore, the regime's inability and unwillingness to consistently repress popular mobilization created a long history of opposition-regime interaction. At several points in Poland's socialist history, mobilization-liberalization cycles were initiated. Arguably, the cycle that led to the formation of Solidarity was the strongest example of a mobilization-liberalization cycle in the history of communist Eastern Europe. This cycle was not, however, successful in bringing down the regime. This is because of the effect of the international community in the early 1980s. In the pre-Gorbachev era, opposition activity was limited by precedents such as the 1956 Revolution in Hungary and the 1968 Prague Spring.

The effects of Solidarity however, had lasting consequences on both the opposition movement and the regime. The opposition realized that the movement was unrealistic given the international constraints¹⁰⁴ of the time. A movement of the same breadth and momentum never again surfaced in Poland, although after the advent of the perestroika reforms, a much less stable opposition was able to topple the regime as the regime itself lost stability with the new Soviet foreign policy.

¹⁰² Ekiert, G. (1996:23-4)

¹⁰³ Ekiert, G. (1997:332)

¹⁰⁴ Osiatunski, W. (1996:24)

The major events that sparked new mobilization in Poland were the worsening condition of the economy, and the advent of Gorbachev's perestroika reforms, which removed the Soviet constraints that prevented major change in 1981. During the military rule, the government attempted to implement an economic model that followed Kádár's example in Hungary. The purpose was to improve the economy dramatically so that popular support could be won¹⁰⁵. This program was just as ineffective in Poland as it was in Hungary. The dire lack of popular support for the regime led to destabilization.

In 1987, the regime initiated a new economic program that shifted the concentration of trade away from the Soviet Union and allowed small private firms to be established with a limited number of employees. The government realigned prices by increasing the cost of energy and certain food products. Where the level of inflation had steadily held around 20% in 1987, it increased to 60% in 1988, and 150% in the first six months of 1989. The external debt was a catastrophic 55% of the country's GDP. By the late 1980s, the economic situation was on the verge of crisis¹⁰⁶. The regime's inability to successfully deal with the economy weakened its political position. The regime found itself in a precarious situation: having no popular support it actually needed the leadership of the illegal Solidarity movement to rally the population behind the government.

In 1987 the regime announced that it would hold a referendum on economic reform in order to create public support for new policies. Solidarity responded by advising that citizens ignore the referendum. As a consequence, the government did not achieve the 50% vote required to proceed with economic reform. This outcome "shaped the perception that the

¹⁰⁵ Osiatynski, W. (1996:23)

¹⁰⁶ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:41)

government would no longer even pretend to have the support of the public for its economic policies”¹⁰⁷.

The effects of perestroika enhanced the situation of the opposition. The regime tried to maintain the ability to enact political and economic reform through a policy of “consultative democracy”¹⁰⁸, where citizens would be consulted in the making of policy. This plan backfired when the population, still influenced significantly by the leaders of the underground Solidarity, refused to participate in what they saw as futile reforms. This maneuvering made the regime realize that they needed the influence of Solidarity on their side in order to save themselves from imminent collapse. The regime initiated the contact with the opposition that was necessary to begin unofficial negotiations.

When Solidarity increased its activity in 1987 and 1988, it was not the powerful union that it had once been. It lacked both unity and breadth of movement, and therefore was much weaker than it had been during 1980 and 1981. The new waves of strikes in Poland were poorly orchestrated and lacked the character of the early Solidarity movement: “Bridging the social boundaries became difficult. Strikes sharpened existing divisions and were not supported by any of the country’s social elite. Finally, they did not produce new organizational structures and identities”¹⁰⁹. By the time negotiations began, Solidarity itself was suffering from disunity and factions, the effect of which intensified over time and affected their electoral success in the coming years.

¹⁰⁷ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:42)

¹⁰⁸ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:39-40)

¹⁰⁹ Ekiert, G. (1997:333-4)

Transition

With the suppression of the Solidarity movement in 1981, the regime was able to temporarily control the opposition. This situation changed over time however, and as the demobilization process occurred, the political environment again became more liberal and opposition activity increased. By 1988, a stalemate existed between the regime and the opposition, with neither group holding enough power to gain mass support. The development of a mobilization-liberalization cycle was affected by the lessons learned by both sides during 1980 and 1981. The opposition had learned that it could challenge the regime to its breaking point, and the regime had learned that it could enlist the threat of Soviet involvement to quell the opposition. In 1989 however, the dynamics of interaction had changed. The Soviet Union could no longer be used to bolster the position of the Polish regime, and the successive failed economic reforms had disillusioned the public to the extent that the regime no longer held any popular legitimacy.

A mobilization-liberalization cycle had existed in Poland in 1980 and 1981¹¹⁰. The regime atmosphere had allowed for the development of a cycle and the consequence of continued interaction with the regime was a matured opposition. This makes the Polish case unique: a mature opposition existed in the recent memory of the population. Had the international constraints been absent in 1981, the possibility for an earlier transition would have been more likely. However, with the imposition of martial law in 1981 the opposition became dormant, until the regime's economic crisis caused destabilization, and strikes again disrupted political life. The dormant opposition became active when it perceived that the

¹¹⁰ See Appendix for a discussion of event data pertaining to the Solidarity movement in 1980-81.

regime had become destabilized, and thus triggered a new mobilization-liberalization cycle which forced the regime to negotiate a transition.

In the spring of 1988, a series of strikes began in factories and universities. By May, independent street demonstrations were underway and the strikes had spread to the Lenin Shipyard, where the Solidarity movement had begun eight years earlier¹¹¹. In addition to increased wages and benefits, the demonstrators demanded the restoration of the Solidarity union and the reinstitution of Solidarity activists¹¹². The strikes did not have the same effect as in 1980, however, as they failed to gain mass support across the different regions of the country. In the summer of 1988, a new wave of strikes broke out, this time gaining enough notoriety to be seen as a threat to the government. The regime understood that a new crisis was breaking out, and the leaders agreed to meet with opposition representatives¹¹³.

The idea of an “anticrisis pact” began circulating among the leaders of opposition and the regime. The theory behind such a pact was that the stalemate would be resolved through an agreement where Solidarity would support the government’s reforms in exchange for their legalization and limited access to parliament¹¹⁴. Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa engineered the end to the strikes, in return for the government’s commitment to negotiate. In doing this, he was able to gain incredible concessions from the government that led to transition:

By ending the unplanned strikes in the name of an honorable compromise in August 1988, Solidarity leaders set limits to the political agenda for an agreement with the regime; further, by excluding from the roundtable negotiations the possibility that the Leninist regime could lose elections,

¹¹¹ Ekiert, G. (1997:333)

¹¹² IBID

¹¹³ Ekiert, G. (1997: 334)

¹¹⁴ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:70)

Solidarity transformed the negotiations from an attempt at co-optation into an opportunity for political competition¹¹⁵.

The roundtable in Poland set the example for other transitions in the region. It was not merely a session for the discussion of new economic policy, but an actual agreement by the regime to discuss plans for a new government. This was an unprecedented result for the opposition.

The events in Poland set the stage for transitions across Eastern Europe. The roundtable negotiations proved that the Brezhnev Doctrine was dead. The negotiations in Poland were not democratic negotiations, however: the participants in the sessions were limited to certain groups within the population, and the guidelines for the first election guaranteed that a communist majority would be elected. While not ideal, they set an important model for oppositions across the region to follow.

In the Polish scenario, neither the opposition nor the regime had the capability of gaining enough popular support to proceed alone. This scenario is very different from the situation seen in Hungary, where the disparity in power allowed the Hungarian opposition to control the negotiations. In Poland, any disparity was much smaller. The opposition was not able to gain the same caliber of concessions as the Hungarian opposition. The outcome of the negotiations produced a new coalition government where the percentages of representation had been decided prior to elections. This guaranteed that communist leaders would maintain influence. The regime opted to negotiate before the opposition reached a level of strength where they may have been able to preclude communists from future leadership.

¹¹⁵ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:70-71).

In the case of Poland, the opposition was already mature in the pre-transition phase¹¹⁶. A long history of mild regime atmosphere led to a tradition of constant opposition activity. In November of 1988, a mobilization-liberalization cycle began and rapidly developed. The government acknowledged that it needed the help of the opposition to proceed with economic and political reforms, and this perception of instability triggered the opening of the cycle.

The timeline below depicts the development of the cycle. Whereas the model stipulates that oppositions benefit most from prolonged mobilization-liberalization cycles, the Polish opposition was able to orchestrate a favorable transition after a short cycle due to its historical maturity. The events of 1980 and 1981 show a mobilization-liberalization cycle that matured the opposition. Because of the international constraints, the regime calculated that it could meet the cost of repression by imposing martial law and maintain complete control over the population, whereas in a negotiation they risked losing power. With the advent of perestroika, East European regimes could no longer meet the costs of repressing mature oppositions, and the best option to maintain power was through negotiation.

TIMELINE 3-1: *Mobilization-Liberalization Cycle in Poland, 1988*¹¹⁷

CYCLE OPENS

- CATALYST → 31 AUGUST 1988: STATE AGREES TO CONSIDER SOLIDARITY
RECOGNITION; WAŁESA ASKS STRIKERS TO STOP
03 SEPTEMBER 1988: WAŁESA PERSUADES COAL MINERS TO END STRIKE
→ September 6: Petition, Steel workers file complaint of police brutality
→ September 6: Repression, State refuses to recognize Solidarity in its present form

¹¹⁶ See Appendix for a discussion of event data pertaining to the Solidarity movement in 1980-81.

¹¹⁷ The event data for Timeline 3-1 was taken from Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This timeline shows all re-coded events of mobilization, repression, and concession from August 31, 1988 to January 27, 1989.

→ September 11: Rally, Strike leaders and intellectuals rally for Solidarity recognition
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: September 15-16: Wałesa has talks with the Interior Minister
 → September 15: Demonstration, Protest of foundry that pollutes water
 → September 16: Repression, Prosecutor detains seven mine strike leaders
 → September 18: Rally, Wałesa tells rally that Solidarity will soon be recognized
 → September 19: Rally, International PEN holds first meeting, asks for democracy
 → September 24: Repression, Police raid flat where students meet, arrest them
 → September 26: Demonstration, Students demand release of leaders: march past Communist Party building
 → October 4: Rally, Rector of Warsaw University asks for legalization of NZS and Solidarity
 → October 6: Repression, new PM says that Solidarity will never be legalized
 → October 7: Symbolic, Street theater group makes fun of secret police
 → October 7: Demonstration, Former striking workers protest their firing
 → October 11: Rally, Students rally in more than six cities for recognition
 → October 14: Repression, Government asks removal of dissidents on roundtable
 → October 16: Demonstration, Youths march against PM Rokowski, police attack
 → October 17: Repression, State delays the start of roundtable talks; blames Solidarity
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: October 18, Court releases dissident held 18 months without trial
 → October 21: Demonstration, Protest against housing shortage
 → October 25: Boycott, Wałesa rejects request for meeting to delete two people from Solidarity on roundtable
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: October 26: Cardinal Glemp and Jaruzelski meet to discuss roundtable
 → October 27: Demonstration, Protest to reinstate fired striking workers
 → October 28: Demonstration, Students demonstrate for housing
 → October 31: Petition, Solidarity says the decision to close Lenin Shipyards in political
 → November 1: Rally, Mass to prevent Lenin Shipyard's close
 → November 1: Demonstration, Flowers placed on strike monument
 → November 2: Rally, OPZZ unions join Solidarity in rally to prevent closing
 → November 3-4: Rally, Margaret Thatcher and Lech Wałesa lay wreaths in huge rally
 → November 6-7, Symbolic, Street theaters "celebrates" Bolshevik Revolution anniversary
 → November 6: Rally, Wałesa tells rally he will call a strike alert
 → November 8: Strike, Young workers defy Wałesa and strike
 → November 11: Demonstration, Protestors clash with police in Polish independence anniversary
 → November 11: Demonstration, March for Polish independence
 → November 11: Demonstration, Police block young people from Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
 → November 11: Demonstration, Police drive van into demonstration
 → November 11: Demonstration, Marchers demand PM Rokowski's resignation
 → November 11: Symbolic, Dissidents throw leaflets down into military parade
 → November 11: Demonstration, Call for free elections
 → November 12-15: Hunger strike, Protest police violence
 → November 15: Repression, Police arrest three leaders in advance of Ursus rally
 → November 15: Rally, Workers rally at Ursus plant to rehire strike workers
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 15, Wałesa accepts offer to debate OPZZ leader on TV
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 1, Hunger strike ends as state reinstates workers
 → November 16: Petition, Church attacks state for sabotaging roundtable talks
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 17-18, Wałesa meets with Interior Minister
 → November 20: Demonstration, Teenagers march on Communist Party building
 → November 25: Demonstration, Students protest curriculum
 → November 27: Rally, Wałesa leads an anti-Socialist rally
 → November 30: Rally, Jubilant supporters throng Wałesa
 → December 1: Rally, Supporters welcome Wałesa back to Gdansk
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: December 3, State approves Wałesa's request for a passport
 → December 4: Demonstration, Supports Solidarity legalization
 → December 8: Repression, Six indicted for bus/tram strikes in August/September
 → December 9: Repression, KPN leader arrested and warned no more protesting
 → December 9: Rally, Supporters rally as Wałesa leaves for France
 → December 11: Riot, Teenagers break police station windows
 → December 12: Rally, Wałesa mobbed as he returns from France

- December 12: Repression, PM Rakowski rules out legalization of Solidarity
- December 12: Strike, Three departments strike against inflation in Nowa Huta
- December 13: Riot, Youths throw percussion grenades, tear gas and stones at police
- December 13: Demonstration, 7th anniversary of martial law, many cities across Poland
- December 13: Strike, 100 workers shut production line at Ursus factory
- December 16-17: Rally, Anniversary of bread riots, many cities across Poland
- December 16: Rally, Mass for victims of bread riots
- December 16: Demonstration: protest
- December 18: Rally, Intellectuals gather to advise Wałęsa on roundtable talks
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: December 21, Six hardliners purged; eight reformers brought into Politburo*
- December 22: Repression, Wałęsa says Party refuses Solidarity demands for roundtable
- December 26-29: Hunger Strike, to release three pacifists arrested earlier in December
- December 30: Demonstration, Climb to top of Communist Party building, unfurl banner
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: December 30, State frees last political prisoner, a dissident policeman*
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: December 30, Wałęsa meets PM in Sejm, discusses reforms*
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: January 1, 1989, Jaruzelski promises a more democratic electoral system*
- January 4: Rally, Fighting Solidarity leader talks about striking in Lenin Shipyard
- January 6: Strike, Transport workers ask for wage increases
- January 6-7: Strike, Two steel plants strike for wage increases
- January 6-7: Strike, Salespersons strike for wage increases
- January 7: Strike, Transport workers ask for wage increases
- January 8: Rally, Wałęsa criticizes Fighting Solidarity at rally
- January 10: Repression, State refuses to register independent press association
- January 10: Demonstration, March against construction of nuclear power plant
- January 12: Wałęsa asks for unity, end of violent street protest
- January 13: Demonstration, Protest for recognition of Solidarity, police attack
- January 13-20: Strike, Textile workers strike for higher pay and recognition
- January 15: Repression, Police stop KPN press conference, say it's illegal
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: January 17, PM Rakowski offers to register Solidarity if it cooperates*
- January 17: Demonstration, Dissident toss leaflets asking for Jaruzelski's resignation
- January 17: Demonstration, Students ask for Jaruzelski's resignation
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: January 18, Central Committee of the Party agrees to legalize Solidarity, gradually*
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, January 19, State lifts ban on forming new unions*
- January 19: Demonstration, Students demonstrate, KPN campaigns
- January 19: Demonstration, Students march to Communist Party headquarters
- January 20: Strike, Transport workers strike, then management agrees
- January 20: Strike, Miners stage a warning strike over conditions and pay
- January 21: Rally, Wałęsa recommends acceptance of state offer of talks
- January 21: Repression, Priest murdered by police
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: January 22, State offers talks, Solidarity accepts*
- January 22: Demonstration, riot police block celebratory demonstration
- January 26: Rally, Funeral of slain priest attracts thousands
- January 26: Demonstration, March to Popieluszko's grave
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: January 27, Solidarity and state agree to start talks on February 6, 1989*

Prior to the 1988-1989 mobilization-liberalization cycle, the Polish opposition and regime were in a stalemated situation. The opposition was gradually gaining strength, although it was not the powerful organization that it had once been. The regime had become very unstable due to internal conflict: some party members advocated a hardliner stance,

while others were pushing for reform. The regime would have been incapable of adopting a hardliner stance, as throughout the late 1980s they had made half-hearted attempts at “consultative democracy”. Regardless of the ideological position of the regime, they were powerless to initiate any reforms because they lacked popular legitimacy. This was clearly shown in the 1987 boycotted referendum.

Table 3-2 shows the change in mobilization in the year preceding the roundtable negotiations. February 1988 marks the beginning of a wave of spring strikes, which peaked in May. Another wave of summer strikes peaked in August 1988. In September of 1988, Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa demonstrated his influence by encouraging workers to end their strikes. At this point in time, Solidarity became actively involved in government talks. The government’s choice to speak with opposition leaders demonstrated the weakness of the regime. Accordingly, November of 1988 shows another spike in mobilization, signifying the continued growth of the movement in response to perceived regime instability. The roundtable talks began in February of 1989.

TABLE 3-2: Mobilization Growth February 1988- January 1989, Poland¹¹⁸

Date	Total Mobilization Events	Total Repressive Events	Percent of Repression compared to Mobilization	Average Number of Participants per Mobilization Event
February 1988	9	9	100.0%	2949.4
March 1988	19	8	42.0%	1466.4
April 1988	20	6	30.0%	3963.1
May 1988	32	21	65.6%	3766.4
June 1988 ¹¹⁹	12	1	8.3%	462.6
July 1988	5	4	80.0%	1145.0
August 1988	28	8	28.6%	3374.6
September 1988	12	6	50.0%	5500.0
October 1988	10	3	30.0%	1013.2
November 1988	27	1	3.7%	3601.4
December 1988	22	4	18%	980.2
January 1989 ¹²⁰	20	3	15%	867.9

The Polish statistics are noteworthy because they show a very small percentage¹²¹ of opposition mobilization. In the months prior to negotiation less than one thousand people participated in each mobilization event. This number is minute compared to the mobilization seen in 1980 and 1981¹²². The events in the data set depict the stalemate that existed between the opposition and the regime. However, analyzing the events of specific months help to

¹¹⁸ The event data for Table 3-2 was taken from Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/> . This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization, concession, and repression in tabular form.

¹¹⁹ I purposefully left out one event in June of 1988 as it distorts the data and is not a measure of political mobilization. The lowest election turnout in the history of communist Poland occurred in June of 1988. The event data lists this occurrence as having 11,118,000 participants, or the number of citizens who did not vote on that day. Even though the vote was boycotted by Solidarity, I do not believe that is the only factor keeping 11,118,000 people from voting. Because of the distortion, this event is excluded from the analysis.

¹²⁰ This includes all events through January 27, 1990.

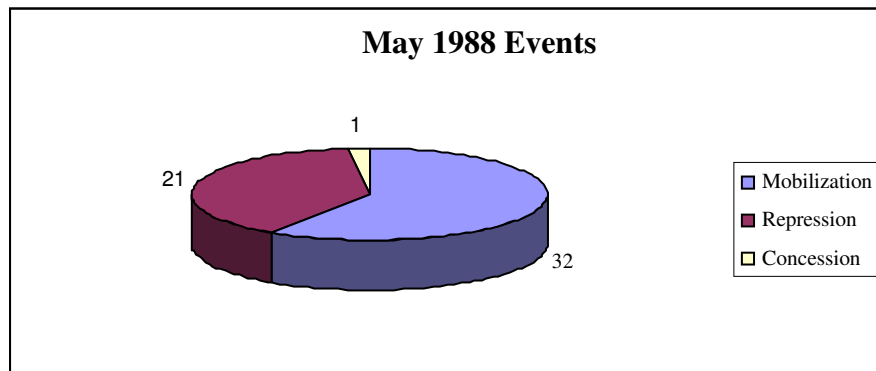
¹²¹ The population of Poland in 1989 is estimated to be 37,988,000 (Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych: http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/PUBL_PUBL_Demographic_yearbook_of_Poland_2007.pdf)

¹²² See the appendix to compare participation in mobilization in 1980 and 1981 to participation in mobilization in 1988 and 1989.

show how this stalemate was resolved over the course of 1988. Increased mobilization is seen in three months: May, August and November of 1988. In May and August, coordinated workers' strikes began. This is evident in both the number of mobilization events and the increase in participation that occurred during these months. The strikes in the spring of 1988 were met with increased levels of repression. By August, the number of repression events remained low compared to the level of mobilization, and in November, only one repressive event took place compared to 27 events of mobilization. The following graphs will further explore these relationships by taking into incorporating events of government concession.

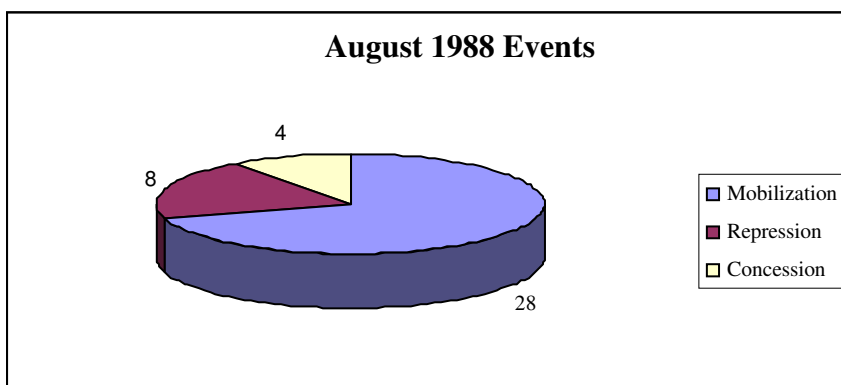
Figures 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 outline the relative proportions of events in the months of May, August, and November. The spring strikes peaked in May of 1988, and the graph below shows a stalemated situation. There were 21 events of repression compared to 32 mobilization events in May. The percentage of repression events is 65.4% of all mobilization events. Only one incident of concession is reported: the percentage of concessions therefore is only 3.13% of all mobilization events. This represents a stalemated situation, where mobilization continues even though repression is high. The regime lacked legitimacy and could not meet the cost of repression, nor were they willing to meet the demands of the opposition. The opposition, in turn, was unable to muster the support it needed to drive the regime to negotiate. The stalemate would only be resolved through a further loss of regime strength, and/or an increase of opposition strength.

FIGURE 3-1: May 1998 Events, Poland¹²³



The events of August 1988 show the evolution of the stalemated condition. The summer strikes peaked in August, and while the number of mobilization events remained high, the number of repression events decreased. The percentage of repression is only 28.6 % of all mobilization events. This is a marked decreased from May of 1988. Furthermore, the number of concessions per mobilization event rose dramatically in August, as the number of concession represents 14.3% of all mobilization events.

FIGURE 3-2: August 1988 Events, Poland¹²⁴



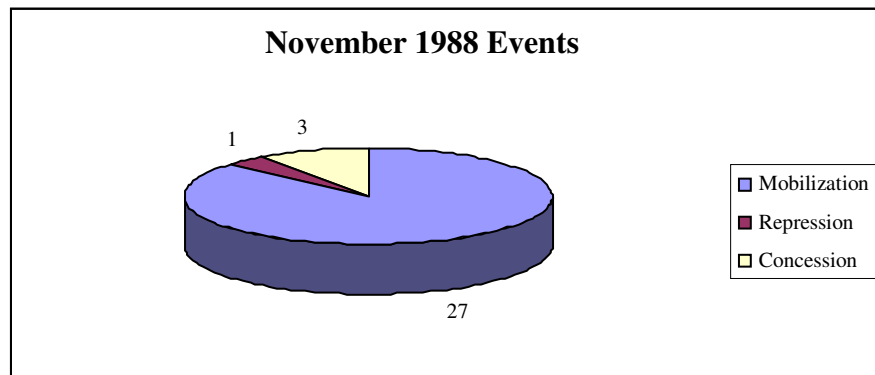
¹²³ The source of the event data for Figure 3-1 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data> .

¹²⁴ The source of the event data for Figure 3-2 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data>

Two very important events happen between September and November of 1988. First, in September of 1988, Lech Wałęsa successfully ended the strikes, demonstrating to the regime his influence over the population. Second, in return for this gesture, the government began active conversation with the leaders of Solidarity, which effectively granted the organization de facto legality because the government officially recognized their existence. By invited Wałęsa to talks, the regime revealed the weakness of its position. It was unable to continue without the support of Solidarity. This display of weakness broke the stalemate.

The perception of weakness touched off a short mobilization-liberalization cycle in which the already mature opposition quickly brought the regime to the point of negotiation. The graph below shows the events of November 1988, and the dramatic increase of government concessions per mobilization event.

FIGURE 3-3: November 1988 Events, Poland¹²⁵



In November of 1988, events of repression represent a mere 3.7% percent of all mobilization events, while the number of concessions is similar to the August percentages: 11.1% of all mobilization events. This numerically indicates the beginning of the mobilization-liberalization cycle.

¹²⁵ The source of the event data for Figure 3-1 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data>.

The stalemate was broken as the regime began to respond to mobilization with concession. It is important to note that while the cycle began in September, the level of mobilization did not increase from previous months, nor did the average number of participants per event. This is because the regime's weakened position indicated that it was incapable of meeting the cost of repression. By inviting the illegal opposition group to talks, the regime demonstrated its inability to repress the current level of opposition mobilization. This was the display of weakness necessary to break the stalemate and therefore an increase in mobilization was not required to gain concessions.

Summary

In the case of Poland, the opposition was matured through the Solidarity movement of 1980-1981, but the international constraints precluded them from reaching negotiations with the regime. With the onset of martial law, the opposition went underground, but reappeared (though in a less powerful form) in the late 1980s. The economic crisis in Poland awakened the opposition movement. The regime realized that it needed the support of the people to enact economic reform, but was unable to gather the required support. It was forced to appeal to the outlawed Solidarity in order to solve the political and economic crises, and maintain future influence.

When the regime enlisted the help of Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa, it revealed its vulnerability and the opposition again became very actively involved in public life. This event sparked the beginning of a mobilization-liberalization cycle in which the opposition rapidly gained concessions until the regime agreed to negotiations. Because the opposition was already matured, the duration of the 1988-1989 mobilization-liberalization cycle did not

affect its ability to achieve a favorable transition. Poland is ranked as a Tier 1 country due to its mild regime atmosphere, which allowed for a mature opposition and the development of a mobilization-liberalization cycle, and its post-transition democratic trajectory.

CHAPTER 4: CZECHOSLOVAKIA, NEITHER NEGOTIATED NOR STOLEN

Czechoslovakia experienced a severe regime atmosphere, with a pre-transition score of 18.33. The importance of including Czechoslovakia in this case study is that it shows characteristics of a democratic trajectory, but also of a rushed and incomplete mobilization-liberalization cycle. This questions the premise for this thesis: a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle is more likely to lead to a post-transition democratic trajectory. How then, was Czechoslovakia able to move quickly toward a consolidated democracy without having benefited from enduring this pattern of interaction?

TABLE 4-1: *Regime Atmosphere Rating, Czechoslovakia*¹²⁶

	Freedom House		Political Terror Scale		
	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Amnesty International	U.S. Dept of State	Total Score
1987	7	6	3	3	19
1988	7	6	2	3	18
1989	6	6	3	3	18
				Average 3-Year Score:	18.33

¹²⁶ This table was derived from Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org) and Political Terror Scale (www.politicalterror scale.org) scores for the given country from 1987 to 1989. The 3-Year average is a calculation of the average score in each category over the given time period. This score is used to provide a regime atmosphere rating.

The theory of the mobilization-liberalization cycle asserts that these patterns of interaction are most likely to take place in countries with milder regime atmospheres. Czechoslovakia scored a high Freedom House-Political Terror Scale average, indicating a severe regime atmosphere. The severity of the regime led to a variant mobilization-liberalization cycle that produced a mature opposition through an altered pattern of interaction. This particular case study will show that, while the proposed mobilization-liberalization cycle did not develop in Czechoslovakia, a mature opposition was created nonetheless.

The hypothesis states that countries which experienced a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle developed mature oppositions. The model of the cycle shows that an opposition perceives that a regime has become unstable, and mobilizes in response. In the model, a regime can respond to an event of mobilization through repression or concession. The case of Czechoslovakia shows incomplete or failed response to opposition mobilization. While the regime routinely repressed movements, it did not completely eliminate the movement. In some cases, evidence exists that the regime neglected to respond at all to mobilization. These responses elicit a similar effect to concession, because the cost of repression is increased.

When a regime fails to fully suppress a mobilization event, it sets a precedent for the level of repression that it uses in response to mobilization. The opposition learns that mobilization is met with some repression, but not total repression, and therefore continues to mobilize. The consequences of incomplete repression or failure to respond to mobilization are an increase in the cost to repress. The opposition will continue to mobilize until their challenges result in a higher level of repression. This pattern of interaction is seen in the

event data from Czechoslovakia. The opposition actively mobilized throughout the decade prior to transition, because their actions were met with inconsistent and incomplete repression. This pattern of interaction is a variant of the mobilization-liberalization cycle: liberalization is not achieved, but the cost of repression is nonetheless increased, and the result is a mature opposition.

A human rights demonstration in 1987 shows an example of an incomplete repression in response to mobilization. The demonstration was held to celebrate the end of Karel Srp's¹²⁷ political imprisonment:

It was small and peaceful, and the police though equipped with riotshields and other equipment did not bother to disperse it...A few rioters were arrested and detained by the armed police, but it was no more remarkable than that—just another demonstration...Nonetheless, it was of great political significance because it was publicized by the West¹²⁸.

This mobilization event is an important example because it did not elicit a response that suppressed the demonstration. In addition, this response strategy set a precedent that the regime was not willing to meet the costs to repress the movement entirely. Through events such as this, the opposition learned that a certain level of mobilization would be tolerated. This precedent provided the opposition with a strategy for mobilization: small mobilization events have little cost to the opposition and are not met with full repression.

¹²⁷ Karel Srp was the head of the Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians Union. When the union was disbanded by the government, Srp continued the activity of the Jazz Section. He was imprisoned in 1986 for his involvement.

¹²⁸ Bradley, J. F. N. 1992, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution: a Political Analysis*, East European Monographs, Boulder. (40)

The Regime After 1968

The year 1968 marked a major change in the political course of Czechoslovakia. The hopes of leadership that would rule by Alexander Dubček's reformed brand of communism, 'socialism with a human face', were dashed upon the invasion of Warsaw Pact forces and the violent repression of the reform movement. The years that followed the Prague Spring brought an increasingly repressive neo-Stalinist regime, including party purges, political imprisonments, and the repression of public dissent: "Restructured and controlled by Moscow, the political elite systematically reintroduced the strongest possible totalitarian and bureaucratic control of the political, economic and cultural institutions and associations..."¹²⁹. The new regime introduced a policy of "normalization", under which approximately one third of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia quit or was purged, in what was possibly the largest party purge in East European history¹³⁰.

The new leadership under Gustáv Husák used the then-healthy Czechoslovak economy to encourage the public to acquiesce to the new, ultra-conservative regime. As long as the population benefited from the economy, Husák believed that the events of the Prague Spring and the ongoing occupation could be ignored¹³¹. Interestingly, despite the change in leadership philosophy resulting from the events of 1968, much of the top leadership under Husák had previously supported Dubček's reform¹³². This is apparent in Husák's justification for the continued normalization policy: "...the remainder, including the Party

¹²⁹ Krejci, J. and Machonin, P. 1996, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-93: a Laboratory for Social Change*, St. Martin's Press, New York. (196)

¹³⁰ Linz, J. and Stepan, A. 1996, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. (318)

¹³¹ Bradley, J. F.N. (1992:17)

¹³² Krejci, J. and Machonin, P. (1996:193)

rank and file, were not expected to actively toe the ideological line, but were expected to knuckle down to work”¹³³. The internal conflict over ideological rule weakened the stability of Husàk’s regime.

Even while presiding over one of the most repressive regimes in the East European bloc, Husàk’s legitimacy was tenuous. During the party purges and political trials that followed the Prague Spring, it is notable that Husàk’s regime did not try Dubček, the leader of the pre-1968 reform¹³⁴. Instead, many “second echelon communists” were tried and sent to jail¹³⁵. At the height of normalization, an estimated 200,000 political prisoners were jailed in Czechoslovakia. This number was public knowledge and challenged the legitimacy of the regime after the Helsinki Agreement on Human Rights was signed by the Czechoslovak government in 1975¹³⁶.

The repressive nature of the regime affected all areas of public life. The universities suffered from the conservative policies, which were especially repressive to the social sciences. University life in Czechoslovakia was markedly less active than in neighboring countries¹³⁷ with comparatively milder regimes. The conservative policy left no room for reform, a stance which stunted the growth of an opposition.

Changes that did take place within the regime were inspired by the effects of the repeal of the Brezhnev Doctrine and Gorbachev’s perestroika reforms. In December of 1987,

¹³³ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:17)

¹³⁴ Bradley notes on page 20 that Husàk didn’t *dare* to try Dubček, indicating his tenuous position as First Secretary.

¹³⁵ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:20)

¹³⁶ IBID

¹³⁷ Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1996:318)

Husàk resigned as Party Secretary (although he maintained his Presidency) and was replaced by Miloš Jakeš. In the case of Hungary, the replacement of the Party Secretary caused perceivable regime destabilization. In Czechoslovakia, however, the change in leaders did not have the same effect. Jakeš was also a hardliner, and had overseen the party purges that took place under Husàk's policy of normalization. The elections after Jakeš's appointment resulted in an almost complete sweep for hardliners. The new party secretary was able to pass reforms, but like Husàk was unwilling to implement them¹³⁸.

The Opposition

Despite the severity of the regime atmosphere, the opposition benefited from two major events of regime destabilization. The first was the regime's decision to sign the Helsinki Final Act on Human Rights in 1975. This agreement bound all signatories to agree to the international monitoring of human rights¹³⁹. In acknowledging a standard for human rights, the regime gave dissidents a viable platform upon which to launch an opposition movement. Indeed, the majority of mobilization that took place from 1975 to 1989 was inspired by the regime's blatant neglect of human rights: "Groups like Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted [VONS] continued to function, despite regular jailings, more or less continuously from 1977-78 until the Velvet Revolution"¹⁴⁰. The second major event that brought imminent destabilization was the declining economy. Since Husàk based much of the legitimacy of his regime on the strength of the economy, he

¹³⁸ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:32-3)

¹³⁹ Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1996:318-9)

¹⁴⁰ Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1996:319)

could expect to meet a much less acquiescent public once the economic benefits of his reign were lost.

In 1976, a group of Czechoslovak dissidents drafted a declaration that called for the international respect of human rights, in response to the regime's superficial acknowledgement of the Helsinki Final Act. This document became known as Charter 77, and was signed by 248 citizens upon its release on January 1, 1977¹⁴¹. The fallout from the document resulted in the arrest of the founders of the movement, the expulsion of two professors, the loss of 14 jobs, the physical abuse of many women associated with the movement, and the harassment of the friends and family of those involved¹⁴². While the repression was swift and severe, the movement continued. The events following the release of Charter 77 were made public through Radio Free Europe. Within 14 months of Charter 77, a second Human Rights group focused on defending those who were unjustly imprisoned¹⁴³, VONS¹⁴⁴ was founded.

After 1978, the same small group of dissidents comprised the majority of opposition actors:

Though courageous and even heroic, Charter 77 and VONS were small and elitist...In theory, the dissidents' problem was clear: how to achieve "Polish-style" trust and mutual support among students, intelligentsia, workers, and the underground youth culture. In practice, the solution proved immensely difficult and was not achieved until November 1989...¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:20-1)

¹⁴² Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:21)

¹⁴³ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:22)

¹⁴⁴ VONS stands for "Committee for the Protection of the Unjustly Persecuted"

¹⁴⁵ Rothschild, J. and Wingfield, N. M. (2000:237)

The tactics of the opposition mainly included small and peaceful demonstrations. This strategy for mobilization did not immediately inspire the general population, but over time the members of Charter 77 and VONS gained notoriety throughout Czechoslovakia. Although members of these organizations experienced frequent imprisonment¹⁴⁶, their constant activity was never fully suppressed by the regime. The contribution of these groups was large in comparison to membership: at the time of its ten-year anniversary, VONS had publicized approximately 1,000 cases of political prisoners both domestically and abroad¹⁴⁷. Their experience in mobilizing and confronting the regime provided them with legitimacy and experience, even though Czechoslovakia never developed an enduring mobilization-liberalization cycle.

As the economic conditions declined in the late 1980s, the activity of dissident groups increased. Although these groups were small and comprised mainly of intelligentsia and youth groups, the increased activity directly influenced the collapse of the communist system¹⁴⁸. The regime's ability to effectively interact with this small opposition group was limited. Demonstrations increased drastically in 1988, and the opposition learned from their encounters with the regime. In 1988, Jan Srp was released from prison after serving a two-year sentence for leading an illegal organization. Upon his release, Srp announced that he felt the regime was impotent. A concert was held on his behalf, despite regime disapproval: "The concert demonstrated another point, namely that outside the main urban centers the

¹⁴⁶ Linz, J. and Stepan, A (1996:319)

¹⁴⁷ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:40-1)

¹⁴⁸ Krejčí, J. and Machonin, P. (1996:199)

communist writ was a dead letter”¹⁴⁹. This event showed that the regime was incapable or unwilling to repress all forms mobilization.

The condition of the opposition in Czechoslovakia is unique from the other case studies. Although a mobilization-liberalization cycle never fully developed in Czechoslovakia, due to frequent dissident activity a small opposition matured in the decade prior to transition. The mass mobilization event that contributed to the fall of the communist regime created the opening needed by the dissident group to enter into talks with the regime. Even though neighboring countries experienced similar regime collapses, the Czechoslovak citizens were taken by surprise by the events in their own country. In the cases of Bulgaria and Romania, spontaneous mass mobilization resulted in stolen transitions where the regime dictated the terms of transition. The case of Czechoslovakia is different because while the mass mobilization was indeed spontaneous, a small opposition group was prepared to undertake negotiations. The weakened regime was forced to capitulate as the masses united behind the mature opposition.

Revolution and Transition

The fallout of the repeal of the Brezhnev Doctrine took the Czechoslovak leadership by surprise, although the effects might have been expected, especially after regional communist regimes began to collapse. Even after the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, President Husàk believed that the fate of his neighbors would not be realized in Czechoslovakia. He maintained the belief that the Soviet Union would ultimately come to

¹⁴⁹ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:40)

the aid of his country should similar trends begin to occur¹⁵⁰. The effects of Gorbachev's reforms were very apparent in Czechoslovakia, and the changes taking place within the Soviet Union closely mirrored the changes that Dubček had attempted to initiate in 1968. Since the political legitimacy of the regime was largely based on the conservative policy enacted after the Prague Spring, the advent of perestroika challenged the regime's claim to power¹⁵¹.

On November 17, 1989, a group of students participating in a legal demonstration to honor the memory of a student killed during the Nazi occupation were violently repressed by the police. The demonstration grew into a mass mobilization against the repressive policies of the regime and inspired a national movement unified in the desire for change. This mass mobilization revealed the inability of the regime to fully suppress challenged mounted by opposition. The next morning, there was a call for a general strike to take place across Czechoslovakia¹⁵².

During this week, many changes took place that directly affected the ability of the opposition to effect change. Václav Havel and other dissidents that participated in Charter 77 and VONS formed a new organization, Civic Forum. A similar group, Public Against Violence was formed in Bratislava¹⁵³. The general strike took place on November 27, and was a major success for the new organization: "Civic Forum demonstrated its capacity to disrupt the political order and thereby established itself as the legitimate spokesperson for the

¹⁵⁰ Saxonberg, S. 2001, *The Fall: a Comparative Study of the End of Communism in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland*, Harwood Academic, Amsterdam. (321)

¹⁵¹ Bradley, J. F. N. (1992:29)

¹⁵² Symynkywicz, J. B. 1996, *1989: the Year the World Changed*, 1st edn, Dillon Press, Parsippany, NJ. (91)

¹⁵³ Symynkywicz, J. B. (1996:91-3)

“nation” in negotiations with the state”¹⁵⁴. Civic Forum was organized as an apolitical group: one that represented citizens against an illegitimate state¹⁵⁵. In this way, the organization was able to gain the support of the public. The members of Civic Forum declared themselves immediately prepared to negotiate with the government, offering not only the promise of reform but also a mechanism by which to enact change¹⁵⁶.

Transition from communist rule in Czechoslovakia was neither an example of negotiation nor of a stolen transition: it is best described as regime collapse. In the end, the regime had no ability or reason to negotiate: the opposition was the “overwhelming relational power”¹⁵⁷. Linz and Stepan define regime collapse as: “...the result of rigidity, ossification, and loss of responsiveness of elites that does not allow them to make timely decisions anticipating crises and change”¹⁵⁸. This accurately describes the condition of the Czechoslovak regime prior to transition.

During the height of mass mobilization, when regime collapse was imminent, Party Secretary Jakeš announced that the Communist Party had underestimated the activity of its enemies, but that he was nonetheless “convinced that is it....solvable, but under the conditions that the party go on the offensive”¹⁵⁹. The regime’s inability to grasp the seriousness of their current situation, or to recognize that their lack of action had already

¹⁵⁴ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:134-5)

¹⁵⁵ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:143)

¹⁵⁶ Glenn III, J. K. (2001:145)

¹⁵⁷ Linz, J. and Stepan, A (1996:322)

¹⁵⁸ IBID

¹⁵⁹ As cited in Glenn III, J. K. (2001:134)

sealed their fate indicates how removed the leadership was from reality. At this point, the regime no longer held the capability to repress the mobilized masses.

Within days, the communist leadership had resigned, and Civic Forum was invited to negotiations. Václav Havel, whom days before the regime had refused to allow into negotiations, was nominated as a presidential candidate¹⁶⁰. Despite the absence of a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle, the opposition was able to effectively negotiate a transition with a subsequent democratic trajectory. Even though Czechoslovaks experienced a comparatively severe regime atmosphere, a small yet mature opposition developed in the decade preceding transition through frequent interaction with the regime. The regime's inability or unwillingness to completely repress mobilization led to the increased cost of repression, and the ability of the opposition to continue activity.

Event Data Analysis

The data provided in the European Protest and Coercion Event Data set reveals that the opposition was extremely active throughout the decade of the 1980s. The events describe a prolonged series of opposition mobilization and government repression. Why did the opposition continue to mobilize despite constant repression? In this case study, the regime was unable or unwilling to completely suppress the movement and while the regime's continued repressive response to mobilization slowed the growth of the opposition, the movement was never eradicated.

While not conforming precisely to the model, the case of Czechoslovakia shows a variation of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. A pattern developed where the opposition mobilized and the regime responded with repression, but the movement was never entirely

¹⁶⁰ Symynkywicz, J. B. (1996:100)

extinguished. Therefore, the opposition was able to continue its activity, and through frequent mobilization, increased the cost of repression and gained respect as a legitimate popular movement. When the population finally mobilized in November of 1989, a mature, legitimate, and coalesced opposition was prepared to assume an effective role in transition.

Table 4-2 shows the level of mobilization and repression from 1980 to 1989. A major increase in mobilization is seen in 1988 and 1989, corresponding to the weakening of communist regimes across the region. In 1988, opposition groups outside of Charter 77 became more politically active in response to the perceived weakening of the government. In 1989 the repression level dropped to below 60% of mobilization for the first time in several years, which indicates the inability or unwillingness of the regime to meet the costs of repression. The dramatic increase in mobilization participation in 1988 and 1989 is the result of a weakened government and inconsistent repression.

TABLE 4-2: Mobilization Growth 1980-1989, Czechoslovakia¹⁶¹

Year	Total Mobilization Events	Total Repressive Events	Percent of Repression compared to Mobilization	Average Number of Participants per Mobilization Event
1980	2	11	550.0%	2.0
1981	4	9	225.0%	19.0
1982	14	4	26.7%	47.6
1983	23	16	69.5%	366.2
1984	18	15	83.3%	566.9
1985 ¹⁶²	6	5	71.4%	11.2
1986	11	9	81.8%	12.6
1987	12	9	75.0%	107.8
1988	21	19	90.5%	67674.6
1989 ¹⁶³	92	54	58.7%	94500.4

An investigation into the events provided in the data set reveals the unique relationship between the opposition and the regime, but nonetheless supports the existence of a clear pattern of interaction. Figure 4-1 shows the level of mobilization activity that is specific to the Charter 77 group. It is important to monitor the growth of movements independent of Charter 77 because as independent activity increased, the regime's attention was never diverted from the dissident group. The government's pre-occupation with suppressing Charter 77 allowed space for independent opposition groups to operate.

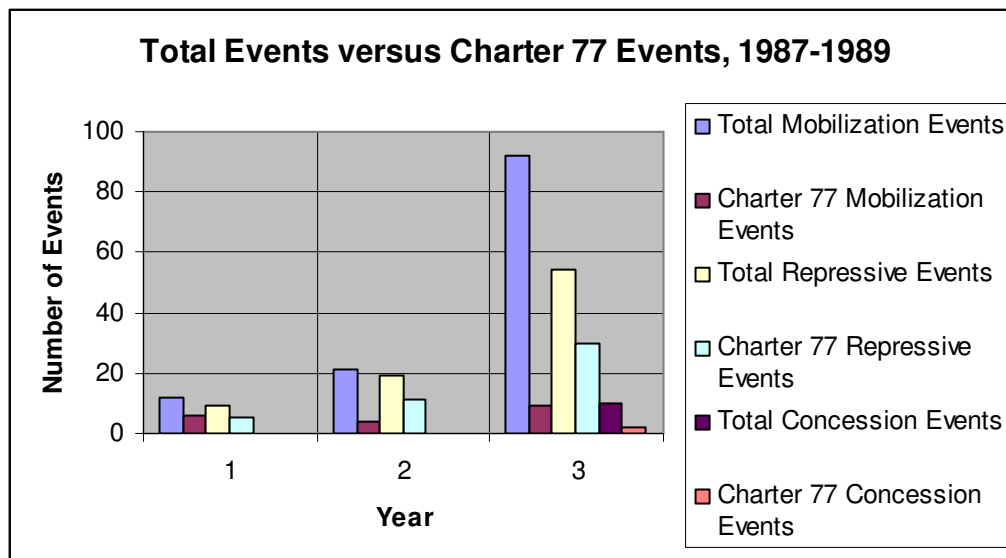
¹⁶¹ The source of the event data for Table 4-2 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization and repression in tabular form and includes a calculated average number of participants per mobilization event within the corresponding timeframe. In addition, a ratio of repression to mobilization is included.

¹⁶² The average participation per mobilization event is distorted due to the size of demonstrations during Pope John Paul II's visit in 1985. If data from the visit is included, there are seven mobilization events with an average participation of 21,438.1 per event. I did not include this event in my interpretation of the data in order to more accurately portray the level of political mobilization.

¹⁶³ The data for 1989 includes all events through December 9, 1989, when President Husàk resigned from office.

Figure 4-2 shows the increase in the number of mobilization events from 1987 to December of 1989. The graph shows events that are specific to Charter 77 mobilization and events that are independent of Charter 77 activity. As the level of mobilization increases, a higher percentage of events occur that are independent of Charter 77 actions. This shows that the greater population is becoming more politically active.

FIGURE 4-1: Total Events and Charter 77 Events 1987-1989¹⁶⁴

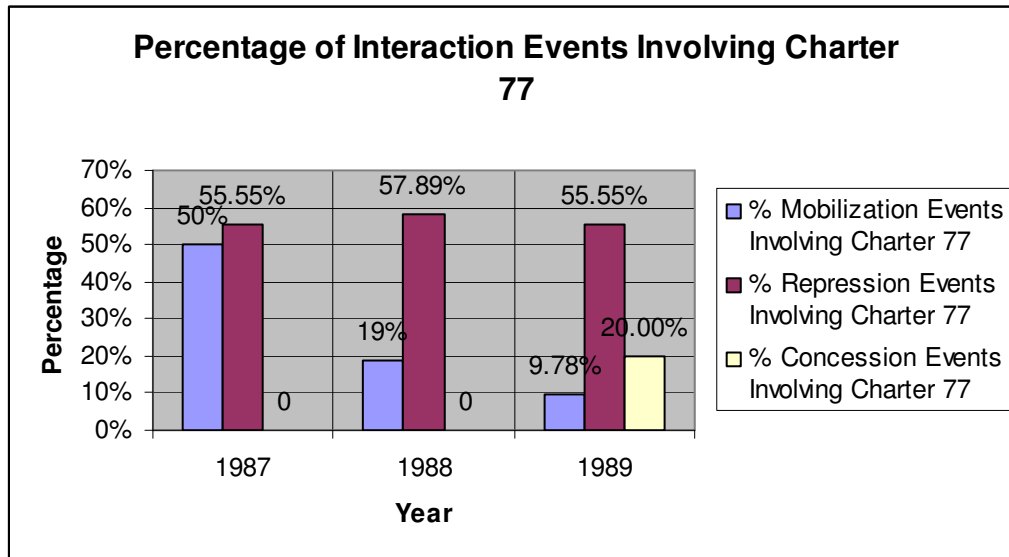


In 1987, half of all mobilization events were the results of actions taken by Charter 77. This percentage falls over the next two years: in 1988 only 19% of all mobilization events are sponsored by Charter 77, and in 1989, a mere 9.8% are the responsibility of this dissident group. This shows a trend of increasing involvement of other opposition groups as the country approaches transition. Also of interest are the statistics involving the repressive events. From 1987 to 1989, the percentage of repressive events aimed directly at Charter 77

¹⁶⁴ The source of the event data for Figure 4-1 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. The figure represents the re-coded mobilization and repression events that pertained to the Charter 77 dissident group. This data is compared against all re-coded mobilization and repression events in order to isolate the government's specific response to Charter 77 and the level of non-Charter 77 mobilization for the specified timeframe.

remained at just over 50%. As more dissidents become politically active, the regime still focused most of its attention on Charter 77 activities. This shows that many of the activities of non-Charter 77 members are not directly inciting repression.

FIGURE 4-2: *Interaction Events Involving Charter 77*¹⁶⁵

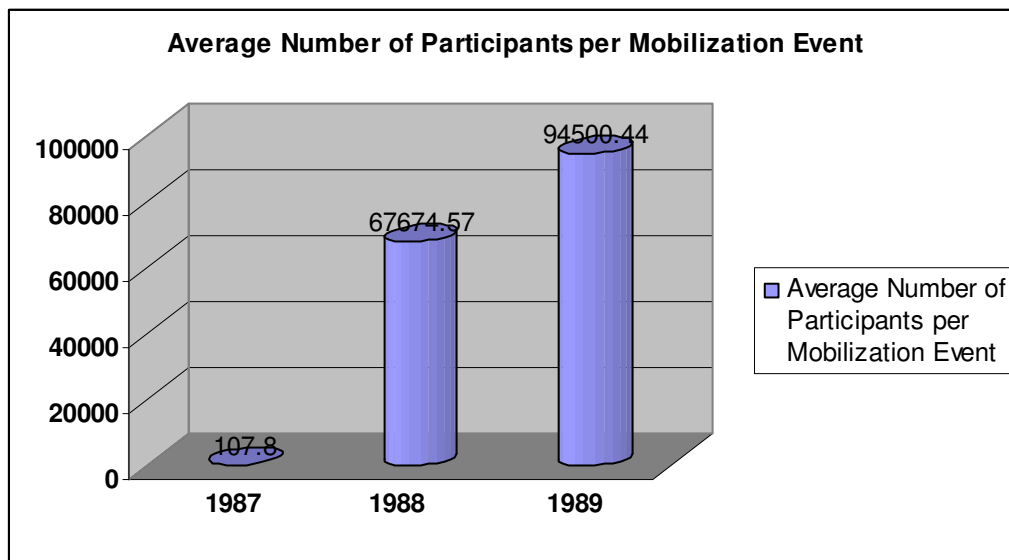


A government's choice to *not* respond to mobilization has a similar effect to that of liberalization. When the public is not repressed for mobilization, the cost of repression is increased, because a precedent has been set that a certain degree of mobilization is accepted and does not incite repression. By focusing a higher percentage of attention on the actions of Charter 77, the government allowed the political activity of other opposition groups to increase.

¹⁶⁵ The source of the event data for Figure 4-2 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. The figure represents the re-coded mobilization and repression events that pertained to the Charter 77 dissident group. This data is compared against all re-coded mobilization and repression events in order to isolate the government's specific response to Charter 77 and the level of non-Charter 77 mobilization for the specified timeframe.

As the number of mobilization events increased, the number of participants per mobilization event also rises. In 1987, an average of 107.8 citizens were participating in each reported mobilization. In only two years, this number had increased to an average of 94,500.4 participants per event. This represents .60% of the population¹⁶⁶. Even though Czechoslovaks experienced a severe regime atmosphere, the absence of total repression of mobilization allowed for the cost of repression to increase and the cost to associate with the opposition to decrease.

FIGURE 4-3: *Average Number of Participants per Mobilization Events, Czechoslovakia, 1987-1989*¹⁶⁷



Patterns of interaction between opposition and regime are apparent throughout the 1980s in Czechoslovakia. This variant type of mobilization-liberalization cycle shows

¹⁶⁶ The population in Czechoslovakia in 1989 is estimated at 15,658,079. This statistic was taken from the CIA World Factbook 1989, and was cited by “Czechoslovakia People- 1989” http://www.theodora.com/wfb1989/czechoslovakia/czechoslovakia_people.html .

¹⁶⁷ The source of the event data for Figure 4-1 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. The figure represents the re-coded mobilization events within the data set and the corresponding number of participants per event. The average number of participants was calculated for each timeframe.

regular opposition mobilization and subsequent government repression. There are two explanations for why mobilization continues even though the regime responds with repression. First, there is the possibility that the repression enacted by the regime was incomplete: the movement was not fully extinguished. Evidence for this exists through the interaction seen between the Charter 77 dissident group and the regime. Charter 77 regularly participated in mobilization events that were met with repressive responses. Because the group continued to mobilize throughout the 1980s, it is evident that the government was not assuming the cost for complete repression. The other explanation for why mobilization continued in the face of repression is that the regime did not develop habitual patterns of repression. If the regime failed to respond to acts of mobilization, they inadvertently increased the cost to repress movements by setting a precedent that not all mobilization elicits a repressive response.

The mobilization-liberalization cycle appears in its modeled form in late 1989. The following timeline depicts the development of a short, incomplete pattern. I use the term incomplete to describe this cycle because by itself, this brevity of this cycle would not result in a mature opposition. Because of the unique history of interaction through a variant cycle that existed in Czechoslovakia, a mature opposition is present and forces the destabilizing regime to negotiate a transfer of power.

The Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989, and soon after the Czechoslovak government began issuing small concessions, indicating that they understood their own precarious position. This display of instability triggered the mobilization-liberalization cycle. The first concession came in the form of an agreement to open talks on the condition of the environment, an issue that had been the source of ongoing protest, with increasing levels of

demonstrations occurring since November 12. The timeline below shows the subsequent sequence of events.

TIMELINE 4-1: Mobilization-Liberalization Cycle in Czechoslovakia¹⁶⁸

CYCLE OPENS

- CATALYST→ 9 NOVEMBER 1989: FALL OF BERLIN WALL
- November 12-15: Mobilization, demonstration against air pollution
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 15: State agrees to open environmental talks*
- November 15: Repression, dissident sentenced for August activity
- November 16: Mobilization, protest against environmental damage
- November 17-19: Mobilization, march for political reform
- November 17: Mobilization, orchestra protests blacklisting of musicians who signed petitions
- November 18: Mobilization, march for freedom and human rights
- November 18: Mobilization, announce 1-week general strike against state violence
- November 19: Repression, Charter 77 member arrested for falsely reporting the death of a demonstrator
- November 20-21: Mobilization, dissident call for end of communist rule, demonstrations spread
- November 20: Mobilization, students hold indoor rally
- November 20: Mobilization, schools and colleges begin a week long sit-in
- November 20: Mobilization, pro-democracy demonstration
- November 21: Mobilization, demonstrators demand resignation of Jakes
- November 21: Mobilization, miners strike in support of democratic movement
- November 21: Mobilization, protestors demand government change
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 21: Prime Minister meets with Civic Forum to discuss reform*
- November 22: Mobilization, demonstrators demand the end to communist rule
- November 22: Mobilization, crowd chants for release of dissident, Carnogursky
- November 22: Mobilization, candlelight vigil in Wenceslas Square
- November 22: Mobilization, youth pro-democracy rally
- November 22: Mobilization, students stage rally, make 12 demands
- November 22: Mobilization, gathering to discuss environmental issues
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 22: Prime Minister meets with Civic Forum to discuss reform*
- November 22: Mobilization, democracy demonstrations
- November 22: Mobilization, Alexander Dubček addresses crowd
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 23: Jakeš and top leaders resign*
- November 24: Mobilization, demonstration to celebrate resignation
- November 24: Mobilization, Alexander Dubček addresses crowd
- November 24: Mobilization, demonstrations for democracy
- November 24: Mobilization, exiled singer returns
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 25: President Husàk pardons eight dissidents*
- November 26: Mobilization, large demonstrations in 12 cities
- November 26: Mobilization, rally
- November 27: Mobilization, workers engage in general 2-hour strike
- November 27: Mobilization: march during strike
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 28: Prime Minister asks to abolish Communist Party's leading role in government*
- LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: November 28: Government agrees to separation of Church and State*
- November 30: Mobilization, students vote to continue to strike until December 2 unless demands are met

¹⁶⁸ The event data for Timeline 2-1 was taken from Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This timeline shows all re-coded events of mobilization, repression, and concession from November 9, 1989 to December 9, 1989.

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: December 3: Government brings in non-communists for first time in 20 years
→ December 4: Mobilization, protest communist domination of new government
→ December 4: Mobilization, students vote to continue to strike unless demands are met
→ December 4: Mobilization, students build wall of paper boxes around government offices
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION: December 9: President Husàk resigns upon the formation of a new government

The above time-line shows a very brief mobilization-liberalization cycle that begins with the agreement to discuss environmental issues, and ends a few weeks later with the resignation of the president. The events that unfolded in this short amount of time were unprecedented. The ability of the opposition to control the transition is not fully explained by the mobilization-liberalization model, which asserts that a prolonged cycle of interaction is most likely to produce a democratic trajectory. Czechoslovakia was able to successfully move toward a consolidated democracy due to a variant cycle of interaction that served to provide the opposition with the experience and legitimacy required to take on the regime.

Summary

Exactly one month after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the harshest neo-Stalinist government in East Central Europe also capitulated. While the resignation of Husàk cannot be seen as completely independent from the events throughout the region, the historical pattern of interaction between the Czechoslovak regime and opposition groups hastened his demise. The two previous case studies have exemplified protracted mobilization-liberalization cycles that served to mature the opposition groups such that they could effectively negotiate a change of regime. The following two cases of Bulgaria and Romania show examples of increasingly harsh regime atmospheres that did not allow for the formation of a mobilization-liberalization cycle. The result in these cases was a stolen transition, where the opposition had no power to dictate the terms of regime change.

Czechoslovakia represents a unique case, where a variant cycle of interaction developed in the pre-transition phase due to the regime's inability to completely eradicate mobilization, as well as its inconsistent response to mobilization. Incomplete repression enabled the opposition to continue mobilizing in the pre-transition phase. But, why was a government with a history of a severe regime atmosphere unable to completely repress a relatively small opposition?

While a satisfactory answer to this question lies outside the scope of this thesis, some discussion is appropriate. The nature of the opposition, which is directly related to the legacy of civil society and modernization, created a more developed society. This structured society was better equipped to function despite the repressive nature of the regime. For this reason, the opposition was incompletely and inconsistently repressed throughout the course of the 1980s.

The severity of the regime atmosphere, incomplete repression of the opposition, and the unprecedented democratic trajectory place Czechoslovakia into a category I term as "Tier 2". Czechoslovakia experienced a harsh regime atmosphere, and did not undergo a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle. However, despite these pre-transition characteristics, Czechoslovakia still embarked on a post-transition democratic trajectory that was facilitated by a mature opposition. These results can be explained through the experience of the variant mobilization-liberalization cycle. Under this pattern of interaction, a small opposition grew to maturity because the regime failed to consistently and completely suppress mobilization. When the regime became destabilized, this group was experienced and united, and was thus able to negotiate a favorable transition scenario.

CHAPTER 5: BULGARIA, THE STOLEN TRANSITION

Bulgaria is a case where the severity of the regime atmosphere prevented the development of a significant opposition movement. The Bulgarian population had watched the success of other regional oppositions and strategically mobilized upon perceiving the destabilization of their own regime. The international demonstration effect also influenced the regime, which moved to obstruct opposition growth by offering terms of reform and transition, and prematurely ended the mobilization-liberalization cycle. After less than two months of patterned opposition-regime interaction, members of the Bulgarian communist regime effectively “stole” the transition by promising a new and reformed government. The superficiality of the reforms contributed to a post-communist authoritarian regime.

In the years prior to 1989, Bulgaria consistently rated a “3” on the Political Terror Scale¹⁶⁹, which indicates use of extensive political imprisonment, execution, murder of brutality for political purposes, and unlimited detention (with or without a trial) for political views¹⁷⁰. In addition, the Freedom House Rating for Bulgaria during the same time period indicated a consistent score of “7” for both civil liberties and political rights¹⁷¹. Countries

¹⁶⁹ Gibney, M., Cornett, L., & Wood, R. (<http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/>)

¹⁷⁰ IBID

¹⁷¹ www.freedomhouse.org

that warrant a score of “7” are defined as countries with “virtually no freedom”¹⁷². Based on these indicators, Bulgaria has the second most severe regime atmosphere of the countries in this study. The level of repression present in the pre-transition phase did not allow for the development of a mobilization-liberalization cycle or a transition that favored the opposition or a democratic trajectory. Bulgaria is therefore classified as a Tier 3 country.

TABLE 5-1: Regime Atmosphere Rating, Bulgaria¹⁷³

	Freedom House		Political Terror Scale		
	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Amnesty International	U.S. Dept of State	Total Score
1987	7	7	3	3	20
1988	7	7	3	3	20
1989	7	7	3	3	20
				Average 3-Year Score:	20.00

The Regime

The communist rise to power in Bulgaria was solidified in 1947, beginning a decades-long regime that effectively crushed political opposition, the influence of a middle class, and

¹⁷² As cited in Davenport, C. 2007, *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Process*, Cambridge University Press, New York. (552)

¹⁷³ This table was derived from Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org) and Political Terror Scale (www.politicalterrorsscale.org) scores for the given country from 1987 to 1989. The 3-Year average is a calculation of the average score in each category over the given time period. This score is used to provide a regime atmosphere rating.

created a state virtually isolated from western influence¹⁷⁴. In 1954, Todor Zhivkov rose to First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP)¹⁷⁵, a position he would hold until party members organized to usurp power in 1989. Zhivkov created a highly repression regime atmosphere, which did not allow for significant opposition growth.

The Bulgarian leadership experienced greater stability in comparison to other East European communist regimes, which can be attributed to the BCP's consistent historical response to dissent and the high levels of repression used to prevent mobilization. The combination of these two factors created no political space for opposition movements to form or grow. When the socialist regime was established in Bulgaria in the 1940s, there were massive purges of non-communist elite which resulted in 2,730 politicians being sentenced to death in 1944 and 1945. An estimated 200,000 citizens were executed without trial within two months in 1944¹⁷⁶. This set a very clear precedent that alternatives to socialism would not be tolerated in Bulgaria.

In addition, the Bulgarian communist regime was closely associated with Bolshevik ideology. This style of rule created a situation where dissidents “were more like the Soviet type of individual intellectuals exercising “single-man protest” than the Polish or Czech examples of organized action”¹⁷⁷. Zhivkov achieved regime stability by correlating his

¹⁷⁴ Melone, A. P. 1994, “Bulgaria’s National Roundtable talks and the Politics of Accommodation”, *International Political Science Review*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 257-273. (258)

¹⁷⁵ Agh, A. (1998:233)

¹⁷⁶ Kolarova, R. and Dimitrov, D. 1996, “The Roundtable Talks in Bulgaria”, in *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism*, ed. J. Elster, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. (181)

¹⁷⁷ Kolarova, R. and Dimitrov, D. (1996:182)

regime as closely as possible to his Soviet counterparts¹⁷⁸. He enhanced this stability by “heaping rewards and honors on compliant intellectuals”¹⁷⁹ in order to prevent organized dissent. These characteristics of rule contributed to the severity of the regime atmosphere and the improbability that a prolonged mobilization-liberalization cycle would develop.

While Zhivkov’s steadfast support of the Soviet Union bolstered his power during the Brezhnev era, the reform that swept over the USSR as a result of Gorbachev’s perestroika reforms weakened the stability of his regime. Because Zhivkov had been so adamant about following the leadership in Moscow, he was unable to distance himself entirely from Gorbachev’s reforms. In 1987, Zhivkov was pressured into introducing perestroika-inspired reforms in Bulgaria. These new policies became known as the “July Concept”, and incorporated change in the forms of administrative and economic reorganization, greater freedom for the press, and experimentation with multi-candidate elections. In short, these reforms were aimed at introducing elements of political democracy¹⁸⁰. The ideas of media independence and partially democratic elections were soon recanted, but the experiment damaged the stability of the regime.

Circles of dissent within Bulgaria, especially Sofia, became more prominent and Zhivkov was forced to employ historical methods to prevent the organization of a substantial opposition movement. However, the declining stability of the regime had opened new opportunities for an opposition: “members of the Bulgarian intelligentsia dared to launch

¹⁷⁸ Symynkywicz, J. B. (1996:83)

¹⁷⁹ Bell, J. D. 1997, “Democratization and Political Participation in ‘Postcommunist’ Bulgaria” in *Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe*, eds. K. Dawisha & B. Parrot, Cambridge University Press, New York. (357)

¹⁸⁰ Bell, J. D. (1997:357-8)

initiatives that would have been unthinkable a few years earlier”¹⁸¹. The effects of perestroika robbed the regime of legitimacy.

Other events were simultaneously weakening the ability of the regime to enact repression. As with Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria was a signatory to the 1975 Helsinki Agreements and was bound by international law to protect human rights¹⁸². As the opposition became emboldened through the decreasing stability of the regime, human rights emerged as a point of contention.

Bulgarians were also very aware of regional instability and the successes of the demonstrations across Eastern Europe. For the regime, these changes prompted splitting within the elite as a strategy to maintain power by promising reform and new leadership. On November 10, 1987, the day after the Berlin Wall fell, Zhivkov “resigned” from his position as President of Bulgaria. This event revealed the instability of the regime to the awakening opposition, and touched off a mobilization-liberalization cycle. Zhivkov’s resignation was soon revealed as an involuntary act. Several days later, his son became the center of a corruption investigation, and friends and relatives were purged from the party¹⁸³. The effects of the regional changes weighed heavily on the Bulgarian regime. The BCP ousted Zhivkov in order to maintain legitimacy and prospects for controlling the inevitable transition.

The international events also affected the opposition, giving them hope that they too could achieve change. Unfortunately for Bulgarian citizens, the severity of the regime atmosphere prior to transition had not allowed for the maturation of an opposition capable of negotiating a favorable transition. The mobilization-liberalization cycle in Bulgaria

¹⁸¹ Bell, J. D. (1997:358)

¹⁸² IBID

¹⁸³ Bell, J. D. (1997:360)

developed late and never came to fruition. Instead, the “reformed” elites negotiated a change of leadership that re-installed many members of the old regime and successfully halted the developing mobilization-liberalization cycle. Bulgaria represents a case where the elites stole the transition opportunity from an adolescent opposition.

The Opposition

The development of opposition groups in Bulgaria closely followed the three major social issues that plagued the region in the 1980s: workers’ unrest, environmental concern, and ethnic conflict. Due to the severity of the regime atmosphere in Bulgaria, opposition movements were largely unorganized until the late 1980s, and were heavily influenced by the international demonstration effect.

The main voice of discontent in Bulgaria was the intelligentsia, who sparked movements that promoted basic human rights and the health of the environment¹⁸⁴. It wasn’t until early 1989 that the first Balkan independent trade union was established. *Podkrepa*, or “Support” was modeled after Solidarity and became the first mass movement¹⁸⁵ in Bulgaria¹⁸⁶. Another influential opposition movement devoted to improving environmental conditions emerged in Bulgaria in the late 1980s. *Ekoglastnost* became the first opposition group within Bulgaria to coordinate public protests¹⁸⁷. These groups never gained widespread influence over the population. The political atmosphere was so limiting, that

¹⁸⁴ Kolarova, R. and Dimitrov, D. (1996:183)

¹⁸⁵ Note that cohesive opposition organization did not begin in Bulgaria until 1989.

¹⁸⁶ Agh, A. (1998:235)

¹⁸⁷ Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1998:336)

even up until Zhikov's resignation the leaders of the opposition groups were doubtful that the movement would remain in existence¹⁸⁸.

The late-forming opposition movements in Bulgaria were a result of the severe regime atmosphere and proved to be a hindrance to a post-transition democratic trajectory. The lack of opposition development in Bulgaria was a legacy of its communist past. Any social power that had existed within the stratifications of Bulgarian society prior to 1944 was completely wiped out when the communists consolidated power in 1947¹⁸⁹. Bulgaria was effectively cut off from more modern influences and existed in isolation until the late 1980s. Compared with other transitioning countries in the region, Bulgaria experienced significantly fewer mobilization events in 1989: "Since power is always relational, this weakness of the democratic opposition enhanced the capacity of the non-democratic regime"¹⁹⁰. With the advent of perestroika, new opportunities emerged for opposition groups, but the methods of mobilization were unorganized and sporadic.

The group that ultimately represented the opposition at the roundtable talks was organized only in December of 1989, a month after the resignation of Zhivkov and a month prior to the beginning of the roundtable. United Democratic Forces (UDF) developed quickly as an umbrella organization, combining approximately 50 small organizations¹⁹¹ into a coalition¹⁹². Fourteen of these groups were incorporated into the roundtable talks, but the lack of maturity of the delegation was obvious: "In civic culture terms...these opposition

¹⁸⁸ IBID

¹⁸⁹ Melone, A. P. (1994:258)

¹⁹⁰ Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1998:337)

¹⁹¹ Bell, J. D. (1990:420)

¹⁹² Melone A. P. (1994:260)

groups hardly qualify as interest groups or political parties within a pluralist society. During the forty years of communist party domination, dissention groups were repressed. Intellectuals and other individual dissidents...had an impact, but that was very different from organized opposition”¹⁹³. Because the opposition forces had been so stunted during communist rule, the UDF was unable to gain widespread support during its short existence. It had little legitimacy and no renown. In order to bolster its position, the UDF resorted to organizing mass demonstrations during the roundtable talks¹⁹⁴.

The timing of the Bulgarian transition favored the regime, which had been able to set the stage for “negotiations”. The opposition gained impressive momentum in their short existence, but were unable to gain the legitimacy, experience or support required to effectively negotiate a transition to democracy. The UDF was weak and fragmented during the roundtables, and lost what little power they had through increasing disunity. They lost both the 1990 and 1994 elections, but the opposition movement nevertheless survived¹⁹⁵. Civil society continued to gain strength as the transition unfolded: “The most intense explosion of opposition in civil society occurred *after*, not before, the election, and for a while the streets seemed to displace the parliament as the center of politics”¹⁹⁶. The opening of society allowed for the growth and maturity of an opposition. In the years to come, civil society would become much more effective in demanding democratic change.

¹⁹³ IBID

¹⁹⁴ Melone, A. P. (1994:261)

¹⁹⁵ Agh, A. (1998:242)

¹⁹⁶ Linz, J. and Stepan, A (1996:340)

Transition

The catalyst that began the mobilization-liberalization cycle was the forced resignation of Zhivkov, which indicated that the elites were split and that the president had lost political legitimacy and the support of his party. At this point in time the regime already had a plan for transition, and it did not include incorporating the materializing demands of the citizens of Bulgaria. The uprisings that were taking place across Eastern Europe gave the Bulgarian elites the luxury of preparation. It was obvious that the event changes taking place across the Eastern bloc could potentially spill over into Bulgaria. The elites preempted any attempt by the opposition to control the terms of negotiation by opting to reform before being forced out of power.

The Foreign Minister, Petar Mladenov relayed to Zhivkov that he had no choice but to resign, as the BCP was prepared to vote for his removal¹⁹⁷. Although Zhivkov and some of his closest associates were removed from office, the majority of the leadership remained intact¹⁹⁸. Mladenov was chosen to replace Zhivkov, and moved quickly to enact reform that the public would accept. The elections were scheduled one month later, giving the opposition no time to prepare. The changes that the opposition had hoped for did not occur. Mladenov remained a communist dedicated to the ideology of the party¹⁹⁹.

The regime change in Bulgaria was effectively a coup initiated by members of the BCP. The party leaders wanted reform, and knew that economic troubles combined with the regional events were jeopardizing their ability to stay in power. They “preferred reform and

¹⁹⁷ Symynkywicz, J. B. (1996:89)

¹⁹⁸ Melone, A. P (1994:259)

¹⁹⁹ Symynkywicz, J. B. (1996:90)

self-preservation to confrontation and possible defeat and banishment from politics altogether”²⁰⁰, and therefore initiated change from within. This illusion of reform “bought time” for the regime, but ultimately failed as a method of maintaining power. The nascent opposition grew as a result of these reforms and later developed the capabilities to confront the illegitimate regime.

The roundtable talks lasted from January 22 to May 14, 1990²⁰¹. The opposition used what little leverage they had to achieve small demands such as the publication of their own newspaper, a building in which to conduct business, and access to radio and television media. Their largest achievement was the incorporation of a bill of rights²⁰². In addition, the opposition was able to secure the Grand National Election Act, which allowed for universal suffrage and secret ballots, and the right to join a political party without penalty or privilege²⁰³. Despite these gains, the regime was the ultimate beneficiary of the negotiation process. The communists successfully negotiated terms that guaranteed their return to power and prolonged the road to democracy.

Event Data Analysis

The event data for Bulgaria depicts an irregular pattern of interaction throughout the early and mid 1980s. While there is evidence of opposition mobilization, the movements were small and isolated, and did not gain momentum or national attention. As was described earlier, no large and organized opposition group existed within Bulgaria prior to 1989, a

²⁰⁰ As quoted in Melone, A. P. (1994:259)

²⁰¹ Welsh, H. A. (1994:385)

²⁰² Bell, J. D. (1997:364)

²⁰³ Bell, J. D. (1997:364-5)

characteristic which is supported by the event data. The consequences for mobilization kept the cost to associate with the opposition high and the cost to repress low. This resulted in an unchanging political environment for the majority of the decade preceding transition.

TABLE 5-2: Mobilization Growth 1980-1989, Bulgaria²⁰⁴

Year	Total Mobilization Events	Total Repressive Events	Percent of Repression compared to Mobilization	Average Number of Participants per Mobilization Event
1980	0	0	0.0%	0.0
1981	0	0	0.0%	0.0
1982	0	0	0.0%	0.0
1983	1	0	0.0%	0.0
1984	2	1	50.0%	31.0
1985	0	0	0.0%	0.0
1986	0	0	0.0%	0.0
1987	1	0	0.0%	12.0
1988	1	4	400.0%	31.0
1989	37	6	16.2%	11,522.4

Table 5-2 shows the number of reported events that transpired in each year from 1980 to 1989. The intensity of these cases varies, from bombings in protest to communism and strikes demanding better wages to political demonstrations and hunger strikes. In 1989, the increase in mobilization is notable, with demonstrations growing in number throughout the year. In the years before 1989, the number of mobilization participants is negligible. In 1989, however, the average size of each reported event is 11,522.4 participants. This number

²⁰⁴ The source of the event data for Table 5-2 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization and repression in tabular form and includes a calculated average number of participants per event within the corresponding timeframe. In addition, a ratio of repression to mobilization is included.

represents .13% of the total estimated population²⁰⁵ for Bulgaria at the time²⁰⁶. This shows that even at its peak, the pre-transition opposition force was comparatively small²⁰⁷.

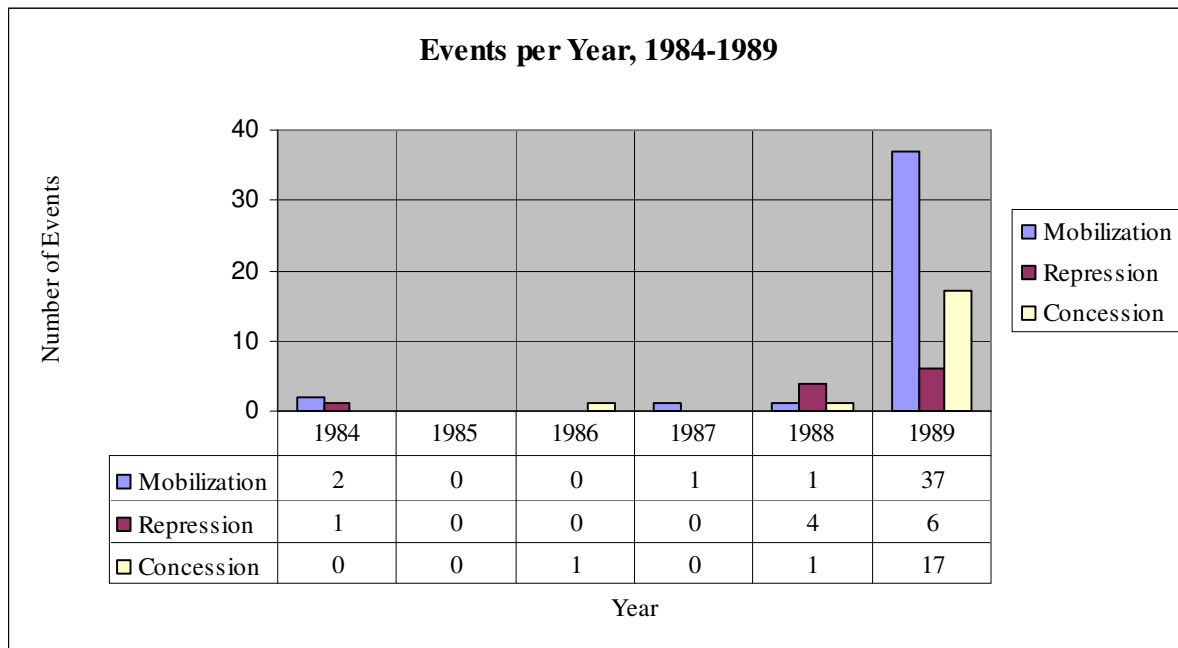
Figure 5-1 shows the number of reported concessions in addition to the number of mobilization and repression events. Most noteworthy is the number of political concessions that are offered by the regime in 1989. An unprecedented 17 examples of concession are provided, compared with only two from the previous four years. Each one of these concessions took place after September 5, 1989. This illustrates the brevity of the mobilization-liberalization cycle in Bulgaria and the immaturity of the opposition, both which are direct consequences of the severity of the regime atmosphere.

²⁰⁵ The estimated population for 1985 is 8,948,649.

²⁰⁶ Bulgaria National Statistic Institute, Republic of Bulgaria. (http://www.nsi.bg/Census_e/SrTables.htm)

²⁰⁷ Compare the .13% participation for Bulgaria to the .60% participation for Czechoslovakia. This shows the comparative weakness of the Bulgarian opposition.

FIGURE 5-1: Bulgaria: Events per Year, 1984-1989²⁰⁸



Timeline 5-1 depicts the mobilization-liberalization cycle in Bulgaria. The cycle is triggered upon the forced resignation of Zhivkov, which indicated to the public that the regime was destabilizing. The cycle is prematurely halted in January of 1990, when the regime agrees to negotiate with a weak opposition in order to ensure that the communists maintain power after transition.

TIMELINE 5-1: Mobilization-Liberalization Cycle in Bulgaria, 1989-1990²⁰⁹

Cycle Opens

CATALYST: ZHIVKOV RESIGNS AS PRESIDENT OF BULGARIA November 10, 1989
 LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, November 13: State prosecutor sends ban law of protest groups back to Supreme Court
 LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, November 16: Ekoglasnost is legalized; dissident members of BCP are reinstated
 LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, November 17: Hardliners are purged from Politburo and Secretariat

²⁰⁸ The source of the events data for Figure 5-1 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data>. This figure represents the re-coded events of mobilization, repression, and concession.

²⁰⁹ The event data for Timeline 5-1 was taken from Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This timeline shows all re-coded events of mobilization, repression, and concession from November 10, 1989 to January 3, 1990.

→ November 17, Rally: youths tear up pictures of Zhivkov; demand end to police state
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, November 17: Parliament decriminalizes protests and grants full amnesty to political prisoners

→ November 18-19, Demonstration: Citizens seek democracy, reform, and punishment of Zhivkov
LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, November 21: BCP promises a Central Committee meeting to investigate Zhivkov's corruption

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, November 26: State disbands the secret police and decriminalizes protest

→ November 29- December 1, Strike: Prisoners occupy mines, refuse to work

→ December 4, Demonstration: Dissidents demand end to BCP's monopoly control of the state

→ December 7, Demonstration and Petition: Religious groups seek religious holidays and religious schools

→ December 7, Mobilization: Formation meeting of Union of Democratic Forces

→ December 9, Demonstration: UDF demands democratic reform

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, December 9: UDF ousts Zhivkov from Central Committee of BCP

→ December 10, Demonstration: UDF demands end to BCP's monopoly control of the state

→ December 10, Demonstration: UDF demands free speech and the right to assemble

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, December 11: BCP promises free elections and end to monopoly control

→ December 11-12, Demonstration: UDF holds candlelight march for democratic reform

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, December 11: Ekoglasnost is certified as an organization

→ December 14, Demonstration: UDF calls for democracy now; end BCP monopoly control

→ December 14, Demonstration: Students gather on steps of legislature demanding reform

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, December 15: President asks for June elections

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, December 15: BCP promises to end its monopoly in one month

→ December 15, Demonstration: UDF marches to TV station to protest coverage of a rally as extremist

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, December 15: State agrees to roundtable talks

→ December 16, Demonstration: UDF demands the right to go on TV

→ December 24, Demonstration: UDF demands speed of reform and democracy

→ December 25, Demonstration: Christmas mass held for democratic reform

→ December 27, Strike: UDF sponsors a warning strike to start reform talks

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, December 27: BCP agrees to immediate reform talks in response to the warning strike

→ December 31, Rally: Mass for democratic reform

LIBERALIZING CONCESSION, January 3, 1990: Roundtable talks begin between BCP and UDF

The event data shows a period of fifty-four days of a discernable mobilization-liberalization cycle. This brief period of opposition activity was in response to the resignation of Zhivkov and sparked an intense period of mobilization. The regime's response to the mobilization was to offer liberalizing concessions. The cost to repress the movement increased rapidly throughout the months of November and December. In order to prevent the opposition from gaining strength, the regime agreed to begin negotiations in order to ensure that they would maintain power. This strategy was in response to what the elites had learned from the examples of their neighbors: it was imperative to negotiate before the opposition posed an insurmountable threat.

The case of Bulgaria is different from other East Central European cases that have been discussed due to the severity of the regime atmosphere. Because the opposition was not able to form a cohesive movement until late 1989, and then only in response to the effects of the opposition movements throughout the Eastern bloc region, the length of the mobilization-liberalization cycle was short and ineffective to the opposition.

The opposition had neither the experience nor a cohesive plan with which to assume active leadership following the transition. Remnants of the former regime were able to steal the transition by enacting superficial reform that was not conducive to a post-transition democratic trajectory. Whereas a mature opposition would have had better capability to negotiate a transition that served its needs, the UDF was yet undeveloped and incapable of using the roundtable to their full advantage.

Summary

Bulgaria is rated as a Tier 3 country because the severity of its regime atmosphere precluded the development of a complete mobilization-liberalization cycle and a mature opposition. The severity of the regime atmosphere in the pre-transition phase precluded the development of an opposition. Small opposition groups only began forming in the late 1980s. In Tier 1 and 2 countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, mature oppositions contributed to the country's democratic trajectory. In Bulgaria however, the UDF formed in a matter of weeks in late 1989, and although it encompassed the major opposition groups it was extremely limited in its ability to function as a legitimate negotiating body. Furthermore, the change of regime had already taken place by the time "negotiations" were initiated.

The reforms that were implemented were the result of the internal coup: “...the early post-totalitarian regime in Bulgaria *initiated* and *never lost control* of the transition and...the leaders of that regime emerged from the first free elections not only with a plurality of the vote but with a newly reconstituted claim to power”,²¹⁰. The differentiation in power between the regime and nascent opposition did not allow for a democratic trajectory. The severity of the regime atmosphere and the pre-transition pattern of interaction led to ineffective “negotiations” and compromised the path to democratic consolidation.

Although Bulgaria did experience a distinct mobilization-liberalization cycle, its progress was halted by the strategic moves of the elite. The regime agreed to negotiations within fifty-four days of the resignation of Zhivkov, not allowing enough time for the opposition to mature into an organized and coalesced force. The regime benefited immediately from the negotiation, but the opening of civil society as a result of increased opposition-regime interaction allowed the opposition movement to strengthen and eventually achieve democratic reform.

²¹⁰ Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1998:334-5)

CHAPTER 6: ROMANIA, THE STOLEN REVOLUTION

Romania is designated as a Tier 3 country because its severe regime atmosphere precluded the development of a complete mobilization-liberalization cycle, and therefore of a mature opposition. Romania experienced the most severe regime atmosphere of all the countries in this study. The regime atmosphere score of 20.33 is an average score derived from Freedom House and the Political Terror Scale. Romania consistently scored a “7” in Political Rights and Civil Liberties, indicating that throughout the pre-transition phase political rights were nonexistent due to the severe repression the population experienced under the regime²¹¹. Romania’s roundtable sessions were held from 27 January 1990 to 1 February 1990²¹². They were the last roundtable sessions to begin and spanned a mere six days²¹³.

Like Bulgaria, Romania’s transition is an example of a stolen transition, where the immature opposition did not benefit from the experience of a prolonged mobilization-liberalization cycle. Members of the ancien regime were able to quickly fill the political void left after the removal and execution of President Nicolae Ceaușescu. These “reformed” communists convinced the nascent opposition that they would embark on a new democratic course. The trajectory for Romania was instead a prolonged path to democracy.

²¹¹ Freedom House Methodology
(www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=351&ana_page=333&year=2007)

²¹² Welsh, H. A. (1994:385).

²¹³ The average length for roundtable sessions among the other four case studies is 84 ¼ days.

TABLE 6-1: Regime Atmosphere Rating, Romania²¹⁴

	Freedom House		Political Terror Scale		Total Score
	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Amnesty International	U.S. Dept of State	
1987	7	7	3	3	20
1988	7	7	2	3	19
1989	7	7	4	4	22
				Average 3-Year Score:	20.33

The Regime and Political Decay

In the case of Romania, the “regime” is defined by the ruler, and not by the communist party. Nicolae Ceaușescu (r. 1964-1989) held the ultimate authority in Romania throughout his reign. He created a neo-Stalinist type government, complete with a personality cult and intermittent party purges, highly reminiscent of the infamous dictator. This style of dictatorship had consequences for the elite and the population. Ceaușescu met any challenges to the regime with harsh repression, and did not allow an environment where an opposition capable of forcing the regime to negotiate could successfully mobilize. Whereas in some previous cases, the waning legitimacy of a regime opened itself to challenge by opposition movements, the case of Romania is starkly different. No opposition

²¹⁴ This table was derived from Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org) and Political Terror Scale (www.politicalterror scale.org) scores for the given country from 1987 to 1989. The 3-Year average is a calculation of the average score in each category over the given time period. This score is used to provide a regime atmosphere rating.

group would overcome the regime's threshold of tolerance for the cost of repressions, even though the regime clearly lacked popular support and political legitimacy.

Two elements distinguish the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu. The first main characteristic of his leadership is the inequality that existed between the elite and the population (and eventually between Ceaușescu and the elite), which allowed him to maintain a monopoly of power. The relationship between the low cost of repression and the high levels of inequality led to a scenario where Ceaușescu could safely engage in repression over a long period of time without the threat of overt challenges from the population to his regime.

The second is the weakness of political institution, which allowed him to rule over the masses directly, without the legitimate institutions characteristic of *de jure* governance. The absence of concrete political institutions helped Ceaușescu climb to his position of authority, but ultimately contributed to his demise because his regime lacked the legitimacy that is traditionally provided by institutions. Weak political institutions relegated the population to a “ ‘parochial’, passive, and ignorant” existence²¹⁵, stunting their ability to mobilize. Unlike the case of Czechoslovakia, where the legacy of modernization allowed critical aspects of civil society to survive severe repression, the lack of Westernization in Romania inhibited the survival of independent elements of society.

In order to fully understand the position of power held by Nicolae Ceaușescu by the 1980s and the subsequent lack of opposition development, it is necessary to understand the major events that defined his leadership. Ceaușescu set several liberalizing precedents in the early days of his dictatorship including the encouragement of de-Stalinization policies, which in effect lessened the repressive nature of the *Securitate*. He soon became acutely aware that such liberalizing policy would serve to destabilize the regime, and responded with repression

²¹⁵ Agh, A. (1998:260)

in order to stabilize the position of the elite and to crush any moves to consolidate dissident activity²¹⁶. Ceaușescu revealed his strength as General Secretary by responding to challenges with increased repression, to include enhancing the rituals surrounding his cult leadership, and purging members of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP)²¹⁷. Ceaușescu refused to allow any sort of dissent, even from within the ranks of the party, and thus isolated the political elite and divided the party.

The power of a dictatorship is based on the support it receives from security forces, and whether or not those forces are available to respond to a challenge²¹⁸. In 1974 Ceaușescu created the office of the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, a move that eliminated the post of the office of President of the State Council. Since the President of the State Council had previously controlled the Romanian Army, this move effectively placed the role of Commander in Chief of the Romanian Army under the new office of the President. After appointing himself President, Ceaușescu now controlled the armed forces of Romania, and consolidated his monopoly of power²¹⁹. As long as the security forces and the military continued to support him, Ceaușescu would maintain complete authority.

Ceaușescu adopted a Stalinist approach to the management of both the economy and society. In doing this, he further alienated the leadership of the RCP. In addition to weakening his party, Ceaușescu destroyed the economy, causing extreme pressure on the

²¹⁶ Tismaneanu, V. 1989, "Personal Power and Political Crisis in Romania", *Government and Opposition*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 17-198. (181-2)

²¹⁷ Tismaneanu, V. (1989:185)

²¹⁸ Kiraly, B.K. 1995, "Soft Dictatorship, Lawful Revolution and the Socialists' Return to Power" in *Lawful Revolution in Hungary, 1989-94*, eds. B.K. Kiraly and A. Bozoki, Atlantic Research and Publications, Highland Lakes, New Jersey. (3)

²¹⁹ Tismaneanu, V. (1989: 182)

population. As other East European economies slowly began to integrate, Romania's became increasingly isolated²²⁰. Ceaușescu wanted Romania to become completely self-sufficient and thus focused much of his economic attention on eliminating foreign debt, which drove the population into mass poverty: "This absurd economic approach, along with the pursuit of large-scale projects...caused extreme economic strain on the population..."²²¹. The culmination of these stresses and then increasing inequality led to insurrection in 1989.

The economic situation was exacerbated by Ceaușescu's political legacy. While early on in his career he gained the respect of the Western world for refusing to be a puppet of Moscow, he later lost this position of prestige: "Until the early 1980s and especially until the beginning of perestroika in the USSR, Ceaușescu was able to use his "exceptionalism" as an argument in favor of his political option. Political decay in the late 1980s and the intensification of international pressures on Romania contributed to the weakening of Ceaușescu's power"²²². In consolidating his own position as supreme leader, Ceaușescu disenfranchised the party apparatus that afforded him his position of power.

His cult leadership greatly weakened the RCP, to the point on incompetence²²³. Appointments were made based on loyalty and not on qualifications. In the end, the party which Ceaușescu would rely upon to save his life crumbled beneath him as it was based on coercion and not legitimacy. The party apparatus was increasingly subjected to threats by the

²²⁰ Maniu, M. 2006, "Why is Romania Different? A Perspective in the Economic Transition" in *The Political Economy of Transition in Eurasia*, eds. N. Graham & F. Lindahl, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing. (242)

²²¹ Maniu, M. (2006:243)

²²² Tismaneanu, V. 1993, "The Quasi-Revolution and its Discontents: Emerging Political Pluralism in Post-Ceausescu Romania", *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 309-348. (321)

²²³ Tismaneanu, V. (1989:177)

Securitate as a measure to eliminate dissention. This style of leadership led to a stability crisis as economic conditions deteriorated, and the party became ideologically factioned.

Popular Resistance

Just as the elite suffered from the lack of government structure in the form of political institution, the population was unable to organize itself in protest for the same reasons. There was no way for the population to participate in any sort of political activity because the opportunity for such activity did not exist²²⁴. The absence of viable political institution prolonged Ceaușescu's tenure in office, but also contributed to his violent demise.

Any popular movements that appeared during the Ceausescu regime were met with extreme repressive retaliation. In 1977, Jiu Valley miners participated in a spontaneous working class movement that gained attention and concession from the government. What could have been a landmark victory for the masses became another failure, as the concessions granted were immediately repealed after the miners returned to work. Harsh repression ensued to guarantee that such an uprising would not again occur²²⁵. As political institution generally was absent in Romania, the concessions granted by the government held no promise of future policy and therefore were meaningless²²⁶. The lack of de jure existence made it unlikely that concessions in response to this movement would hold any future sway. The strike did, however, temporarily increase the cost of repression for the Ceaușescu regime, and it responded with concessions. However, because the concessions never gained a de jure

²²⁴ Agh, A. (1998:260-1)

²²⁵ Tismaneanu, V. (1989:190)

²²⁶ Acemoglu, D and Robinson, J. A. (2006)

existence, once the pressure was removed from the government, the cost of repressions again decreased and the concessions gained were eliminated and new waves of repression were introduced.

The following table depicts historical examples of oppositional challenges to the regime. Very few examples of such challenges exist, justifying the lack of development of a mobilization-liberalization cycle in Romania.

TABLE 6-2: Challenges to the Romanian Regime²²⁷

Challenge	Consequences
1977 Jiu Valley Miner Movement	- Miners temporarily gain concessions; - Lack of a de jure system gives the concessions no future existence - Once pressure to the regime is relieved (miners return to work) severe repression ensues ²²⁸
November 1987 Braşov Demonstration March 1989, Letter of the Six	-Thousands protest, images of Ceauşescu burned ²²⁹ -Six party members write letter to Ceauşescu , express discontent - Authors placed under house arrest - Repressive policy increases ²³⁰
December 1989, Tişamoara	-Thousands protest in solidarity with Lazlo Tökes - Government responds with armed violence, approximately 2000 civilians are killed ²³¹

The other major event of mobilization came from within the echelons of the RCP. In November of 1987, six party members (including two previous General Secretaries) authored a letter to Ceauşescu: “denouncing his excesses, his erratic economic policies, and the

²²⁷ This table was compiled from several sources: Tismaneanu, V. (1989); Tismaneanu, V. (1993); and Symynkywicz, J. (1996).

²²⁸ Tismaneanu, V. (1989:190)

²²⁹ Tismaneanu, V. (1989:194)

²³⁰ Tismaneanu, V. (1993:324)

²³¹ Symynkywicz, J. (1996:110)

general deterioration of Romania's international image"²³². The six party members were placed under house arrest, but refused to withdraw their statements. This event shows the high level of internal discontent over Ceaușescu's leadership, but also his declining capabilities. He was powerless to make the party members retract their statements, but he also was unable or unwilling to enact a harsh punishment.

Revolution

The eventual consequence of the growing instability of the Ceaușescu regime, which included a void of legitimacy and widening divisions between Ceaușescu and the RCP, was a spontaneous insurrection initiated by the population and stolen by the party elite. A popular mobilization that began as a protest in Timișoara was countered with government violence that resulted in the deaths of 2000 civilians. This unrest extended into mass protest in Bucharest that led to the violent overtaking of the Central Committee building and the subsequent flight of Ceaușescu.

The president summoned his defense minister and ordered the army to counter with deadly force. The defense minister refused to comply, and was immediately shot dead by a *Securitate* agent²³³. This act marked the end of the army's allegiance to Ceaușescu, and thus the end of his reign. Within days the army leadership was calling on loyalists to surrender, and began arresting members of the *Securitate*. Without the protection of the security forces, Ceaușescu's regime no longer carried any sway. The president and his wife were captured, given an illegal trial, and immediately executed by members of his own party²³⁴.

²³² Tismaneanu, V. (1993:324)

²³³ This event is reported in December of 1989 in the European Protest and Coercion event data set as a suicide.

²³⁴ Symynkywicz, J. (1996:109-23)

The party elite were able to obtain control over the revolution because opposition only existed in a nascent state, and were not capable of organizing to assume leadership. Posing as a surrogate government, the party elite under the National Salvation Front (NSF) usurped power and began rule as a new authoritarian regime. But just as its predecessor had lacked legitimacy as an authoritarian government, the NSF also lacked such legitimacy and eventually fell to the mature opposition in the watershed elections of 1996.

Event Data Analysis

The severe regime atmosphere in the pre-transition phase greatly inhibited the ability of the Romanian public to develop an opposition. A mobilization-liberalization cycle may develop in repressed societies when the population perceives that the regime has become destabilized. In the case of Romania, the regime was unstable, but the society was repressed to the extent that no overt opposition was capable of mobilization. The major mobilization events that led to the fall of Ceaușescu occurred in December of 1989, just days before the regime toppled.

Evidence of a mobilization-liberalization cycle is not explicitly present. The following timeline depicts the events of December 1989:

TIMELINE 6-1: *Timeline of Events in Romania, December 1989*²³⁵

17 December, Mobilization: Demonstration against the eviction of a Priest
17 December, Mobilization: Riot after protest
→ GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: December 17: Security forces murder protestors, 16 dead
→ GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: December 17: State seals all national borders
18 December, Mobilization: Riot

²³⁵ The event data for Timeline 5-1 was taken from Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This timeline shows all re-coded events of mobilization, repression, and concession from November 10, 1989 to January 3, 1990.

→ *GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: December 18: State blocks off Timișoara with armored vehicles*
 19 December, Mobilization: Riot
 → *GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: December 19: State deploys army to prevent dissident action*
 20 December, Mobilization: Riot and clash with police
 20 December, Mobilization: March for the return of the dead bodies
 20 December, Mobilization: Dissidents occupy chemical plant, threaten to blow it up
 → *GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: State of emergency declared in Timis district, curfew enforced*
 Defection, 20 December Army units stop repressing, some join opposition movement
 21 December, Mobilization: Riot and clash with police
 Defection: 21 December: Army clashes with security forces
 21 December, Mobilization: Dissidents occupy factories
 21 December, Mobilization: Issue ultimatum, threaten to blow up chemical factory
 21 December, Mobilization: Heckle Ceaușescu at pro-government televised speech
 → *GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: Security forces shoot at protestors, 50 killed*
 21 December, Mobilization: Students and dissidents demonstrate across the country (Bucharest, Sibiu, Arad)
 → *GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: Security forces use tanks and tear gas against protestors*
 → *GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: Security forces fire at protestors in Cluj and Tirgu Mures, 40 killed*
 Defense Minister Commits Suicide²³⁶: December 21
 22 December, Mobilization: Bucharest workers strike against the regime
 → *GOVERNMENT REPRESSION: Politburo declares national state of emergency*
 22 December, Mobilization: Dissidents demonstrate against the regime
 Defection: 22 December, Army fights loyalist security forces
 Defection: 22 December, Ceaușescu is deposed, NSF assumes leadership

The remaining days of December 1989 are characterized by chaotic interaction between loyalist forces and elements of defected military and party members. Opposition forces from within the population ended their weeklong effort of mobilization on December 23. Within three days of being ousted, Ceaușescu and his wife were tried and executed by the National Salvation Front.

²³⁶ The suicide event is reported by Reuters on 30 January 1990. It is now understood that Defense Minister Milea was shot by the Securitate after refusing to order the army to use deadly force against civilians.

TABLE 6-3: Mobilization Growth 1980-1989, Romania²³⁷

Year	Total Mobilization Events	Total Repressive Events	Percent of Repression compared to Mobilization	Average Number of Participants per Mobilization Event
1980	0	0	0.0%	0.0
1981	8	0	0.0%	267.3
1982	2	0	0.0%	3.0
1983	0	0	0.0%	0.0
1984	1	0	0.0%	1.0
1985	1	0	0.0%	1.0
1986	1	2	200.0%	200.0
1987	3	3	100.0%	36,678.3
1988	1	1	100.0%	22.0
1989 ²³⁸	16	28	175.0%	22,808.6

The evidence from the data event set shows no sign of the development of a mobilization-liberalization cycle of interaction. In fact, throughout the ten year period of 1980 to 1990, only two events of concession are reported²³⁹. Both took place in December of 1987, when the government increased wages and meat rations. Every other reported event of government response is in the form of repression. As Table 6-2 shows, the number of events of repression outnumbered mobilization events from 1986 through 1989, indicating the tremendous cost of association and the willingness of the regime to meet the cost of repression. The Romanian regime is arguably unstable throughout the late 1980s, due to the

²³⁷ The source of the event data for Table 6-2 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization and repression in tabular form and includes a calculated average number of participants per mobilization event within the corresponding timeframe. In addition, a ratio of repression to mobilization is included.

²³⁸ The data for 1989 includes all events through December 22.

²³⁹ Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>

lack of political infrastructure, declining economy, and the polarized RCP. Why then, were opposition forces unable to capitalize on perceived events of instability?

This question is partially answered through considering the lack of modernization and structure of society within Romania. These conditions allowed the Romanian government to completely repress the population, whereas countries which experienced elements of modernization showed scenarios where the government could not completely repress oppositions. The severity of the regime atmosphere in Romania led to an extreme power differentiation that favored the regime. No organized opposition ever surfaced that could effectively confront the instable regime. At the peak of the mass uprising in December of 1989, the average demonstration size was 10,868.6 participants, or only .04% of the population²⁴⁰. Not only was the movement completely unorganized and without defined goals, but it was also small compared to the size of the greater population.

A mobilization-liberalization cycle never developed in Romania. I argue that this is due to the severity of the regime atmosphere in the pre-transition phase, and is not a reflection of the stability of the government. The unstable government was able to maintain a position of power because the level of inequality remained high and the cost to repress remained low. The ability of Ceaușescu to control the Romanian Army up until the point of insurrection allowed the costs of repression to remain low. The army and the *Securitate* forces served as a visible deterrent to organization and mobilization. The accumulation of repressive responses to disobedience kept any opposition in a dormant and undeveloped state.

²⁴⁰ This number was calculated by averaging the reported number of participants for each mobilization event in the month of December, as compared to the total population as reported by: *Institutul National de Statistica 1998-2007*, "Romanian Statistical Yearbook"; <http://www.INSSE.ro/cms/files/pdf/ro/cap2.pdf>

Summary

The events of December 1989 revealed the instability of the regime, and possibly could have sparked the beginning of a mobilization-liberalization cycle. Romania is a unique case from others in this study because the splitting of the RCP had a very different effect on the outcome of the insurrection. In countries such as Hungary, the reformed factions of the MSZMP sided with a mature opposition during the transition phase. In Romania, those who called themselves reformers usurped power without any cooptation of the opposition. This happened for two reasons. First, the regime had already toppled, and there was no need for the “reformers” to co-opt the opposition. Realistically, there was no organized or mature opposition to speak of, and certainly not one that held any popular legitimacy or political sway. Second, history shows us that the National Salvation Front can hardly be called a group of reformers. The previously disenfranchised RCP members saw their chance for a real opportunity to gain power. The result was a new authoritarian regime that was stolen from the hands of the population. The intense mobilization of December 1989 revealed the instability of the regime, and the NSF used the unrest fueled by a discontented population to its advantage. Had the regime atmosphere allowed for the maturation of the opposition through a mobilization-liberalization cycle, the ability of the NSF to claim authority would have been diminished. Romania is classified as a Tier 3 country: the lack of such a cycle of interaction set Romania on divergent trajectory toward a stabilized government, and prolonged democratic consolidation.

CONCLUSIONS

The mobilization-liberalization cycle models pre-transition opposition-regime interaction. The case studies have shown that in countries where a comparatively mild regime atmosphere existed, protracted mobilization-liberalization cycles developed that served to mature an opposition. Mature oppositions were best prepared to negotiate a transition agreement with the communist regime.

Several factors affected the stages of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. Each cycle was triggered by a perceived event of regime destabilization. This instability created an opportunity for increased opposition activity because the regime's ability to repress decreased. If the opposition decided that the risks associated with mobilization outweighed the potential risk of repression, they may have opted to mobilize. The regime, in turn, was forced to choose a response to the mobilization event.

If the regime determined that it was capable of fully repressing the movement and was willing to assume the costs associated with repression, they may have opted to repress. However, in the case that the regime incompletely repressed the mobilization, neglected to respond to the mobilization, or offered a liberalizing concession in response to the mobilization, the cost to repress increased. By opting to liberalize, the regime calculated that it could not assume the cost of repression at that moment in time. The choice to liberalize showed that the regime attempted to relieve the pressure from the opposition by meeting

some of the demands. The consequence of the successive liberalizing concessions that took place during a mobilization-liberalization cycle was an increasingly liberal environment and a mature opposition.

My examples of Tier 1 countries are Hungary and Poland. These two countries showed comparatively mild regime atmospheres, the presence of mobilization-liberalization cycles, and democratic trajectories. The longest mobilization-liberalization cycle of this investigation occurred in Hungary, where the opposition developed over the course of 17 months. During this time, mobilization was consistently met with liberalizing concessions, and the growing opposition achieved effective negotiations that resulted in a democratic trajectory. The leniency of the regime atmosphere was in part due to the presence of elite factions. This instability ultimately provided the catalyst for the mobilization-liberalization cycle.

In the case of Poland, the opposition was matured through a previous cycle of interaction, but the movement was interrupted by the imposition of martial law. Once the international constraints were removed, the opposition was able to drive the regime to negotiate even though it lacked its pre-martial law strength and cohesion. The instability of the Polish regime was evident through its lack of commitment to communist ideology and its inability to effectively manage the country's economy policy. A brief mobilization-liberalization cycle developed, and the opposition was quickly able to bring the regime to negotiate.

The only Tier 2 case in this investigation is Czechoslovakia, which encompasses characteristics of both Tier 1 and Tier 3 countries. Czechoslovakia's post-transition democratic trajectory suggests the presence of a mild regime atmosphere in the pre-transition

phase. However, the regime atmosphere score for Czechoslovakia indicates that it was in fact severe. The event data analysis shows that because of incomplete repression, the opposition movement consistently interacted with the regime, and was matured through this process. In addition, as Czechoslovakia approached transition, it focused the majority of its repressive actions on a small number of opposition events. Czechoslovakia's transition was neither negotiated nor stolen, but is instead described as regime collapse. The government believed up until the very end that it would be able to repress the increasing opposition activity. By the time it realized that it could not, the power differentiation between the opposition and the regime was so great that the regime was unable to even negotiate. This resulted in a complete loss of power for the regime.

The Tier 3 cases presented in this study are Bulgaria and Romania, both of which experienced severe regime atmospheres and indirect paths to democracy. In the case of Bulgaria, the international demonstration effect set both the opposition and the regime into action. The opposition recognized the success of other regional popular mobilizations and subsequently responded to the destabilization of their own regime through mobilization. The regime however, also learned from the experiences of other East European transitions. Instead of allowing the Bulgarian opposition to mature through the process of a completed mobilization-liberalization cycle, the regime made superficial changes to demobilize the opposition. Instead of a negotiated transition, the regime stole the transition from the opposition and installed a new authoritarian order.

Romania represents the only case of violent insurrection. The extreme regime severity of regime atmosphere did not allow for opposition mobilization. Any such act was completely repressed. In the case of Romania, the regime is conceptualized as one person:

Nicolae Ceaușescu. His style of dictatorship alienated the party, such that when instability occurred, they moved to usurp power. The opposition was subsequently mobilized, but so unprepared that the members of the RCP easily assumed leadership under the guise of reform, in what has been termed a stolen revolution. Due to the atmosphere of the pre-transition phase, Romania never developed a discernable pattern of opposition-regime interaction and its resulting path to democracy was indirect.

These case studies illuminate the relationship between regime atmosphere, the development and characteristics of a mobilization-liberalization cycle, and the maturity of the opposition. The extent to which a mature opposition develops dictates the method of transition. Countries that produced mature oppositions were most likely to experience a negotiated transition, and a democratic trajectory. Conversely, in countries where the pre-transition characteristics did not produce such an opposition, transitions were often stolen by the elites and an authoritarian trajectory followed.

I have shown that certain circumstances drive regimes to negotiate. When the cost to repress an opposition exceeds the tolerable limits, a regime may opt to negotiate. An opposition can gain the strength to meet this threshold of tolerance through a variant of the mobilization-liberalization cycle. If their movement is incompletely repressed, or is responded to with liberalization, the opposition succeeds in increasing the cost of repression. A regime chooses to negotiate if it calculates that a compromise is its best chance at maintaining elements of power. The cases of Hungary and Poland show this scenario. Both countries negotiated with a strong opposition, but were able to maintain influence in the ensuing government. The case of Czechoslovakia shows a situation where the regime

gambled that it could still control the opposition. It refused to negotiate, and in doing so lost all of its power.

I have also shown that regimes that face immature oppositions are not driven to negotiate. A viable opposition never materialized because the regime atmosphere was so severe in these countries. Due to immature oppositions, transitions occurred later in these countries and were influenced by regional events. The regimes effectively preempted the completion of a mobilization-liberalization cycle and made strategic moves to secure their own power. Even though “roundtables” existed in these countries, the transition process does not provide evidence of a true negotiation and therefore these countries are examples of stolen transitions.

Despite the regional and chronological constraints of this investigation, my conclusions are relevant to present day world events, such as the case of Burma. I have concluded that oppositions grow under mild regime atmospheres and mature through the mobilization-liberalization cycle of interaction. This scenario often leads to a democratic trajectory for a given country. This conclusion has potential foreign policy implications. An opposition movement may be provided with political room to grow if an authoritarian regime is appropriately dissuaded from completely repressing acts of mobilization. The ability of an opposition to mature through the process of regime interaction creates a higher probability of achieving democratic reform. Therefore, a foreign policy that effectively discouraged complete repression subsequently provides political space for opposition movements.

This thesis contributes to the body of literature on transition theory by identifying the underlying conditions that drive a regime to negotiate. These factors are important not just to understanding why a regime chooses to negotiate, but also to understanding why some East

European countries transitioned to democracies and others remained authoritarian. The same factors that contribute to negotiation are also related to trajectory. While solving this puzzle was not my purpose, it nonetheless is intriguing and an investigation into this topic is naturally a next step in understanding transitions from communism.

APPENDIX A: COMPARISON OF MOBILIZATION AND REPRESSION EVENTS

Table A-1 offers a comparison of mobilization and repression events across all case studies from 1987 to 1989.

TABLE A-1: *Mobilization and Repression Events across Five Case Studies*²⁴¹

Country	1987		1988		1989	
	Mob. Events	Rep. Events	Mob. Events	Rep. Events	Mob. Events	Rep. Events
Hungary	6	2	20	3	16	0
	Repression: 33.3%		Repression: 15.0%		Repression: 0.00%	
Poland ²⁴²	144	60	205	80	20	3
	Repression: 41.6%		Repression: 39.0%		Repression: 15.0%	
Czecho- slovakia ²⁴³	12	9	21	19	92	54
	Repression: 75.0%		Repression: 90.4%		Repression: 58.7%	
Bulgaria	1	0	1	4	37	6
	Repression: 0.00%		Repression: 400%		Repression: 16.2%	
Romania	3	3	1	1	16	28
	Repression: 100%		Repression: 100%		Repression: 175%	

²⁴¹ The source of the event data for Table A-1 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data>. This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization and repression in tabular form.

²⁴² Two categories of events are excluded from the analysis of Poland. These include events relating to Pope John Paul II's 1987 visit to Poland and the 1988 election boycott.

²⁴³ Events associated with the 1985 visit by Pope John Paul II are excluded from the analysis of Czechoslovakia.

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

PROCESS OF ORGANIZING EVENT DATA AND MULTIPLE-DATE ENTRIES

For each event listed in the European Protest and Coercion Data set²⁴⁴, the following information is included: event date, day of week, action, protestor, target, agent, event, country, location, issue, linked date, time, number of protestors, arrests, injuries, number of protestors killed, property damage, number of state participants, number of state injured, number of state killed, organizational strength to dissident strength, organizational strength to regime, source, and date of story.

In deciding which events to include, I used the entries under the following categories: event date, action, protestor, target, agent, event, country, location, and number of protestors. I first considered the date of the event. Many dates had multiple reports of events. I consulted the action, protestor, target, agent, event, and location in order to decide whether to include multiple events that occurred on the same date. If I could extrapolate from the remaining categories that each event was unique, it was included as a pertinent event.

Events that lasted multiple days were counted as one event, *unless* 1.) The event description changed; 2.) The location of the event changed; or, 3.) The number of participants in the event changed. If either of these three situations occurred, the event counted as more than one event. When determining events per month, if the duration of one event continued into the next month, the event was only counted in the first month of its duration. Events with the same action, protestor, target, event description, and location reported on nonconsecutive dates were counted as multiple events.

²⁴⁴ Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>

APPENDIX C: METHODOLOGY

PROCESS OF RE-CODING EVENT DATA

Each event listed in the European Protest and Coercion Database²⁴⁵ is coded by action. The list of possible actions is available through the database website. In re-coding the events, I considered only four possible labels for each event: 1.) Opposition Mobilization; 2.) Opposition Demobilization; 3.) Regime Concession; 4.) Regime Repression. Using the codebook descriptions provided with the dataset, I categorized each possible action as one of these four actions. Each event was then re-coded according to this method. Not all events listed in the event data set were relevant to the new system of coding. Non-pertinent events were not included in the tabulation of events or in the calculations or analyses involving events.

²⁴⁵ Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>

APPENDIX D: METHODOLOGY

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING EVENT DATA TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS THESIS

Certain events within the European Protest and Coercion Database²⁴⁶ were considered non-pertinent events and were excluded from tabulation, calculation and analysis. I systematically eliminated events that did not meet the following criteria: 1.) For each event, the actor must have been a resident of the country in question; 2.) For each mobilization event, the target must have been the state in question; 3.) For each mobilization event, the agent must have been incorporated as part of the country in question²⁴⁷; 4.) Any event which was motivated by ethnic nationalism was automatically excluded; 5.) Any event which was motivated by extremism²⁴⁸, and was not considered an oppositional mobilization was automatically excluded; 6.) Any repressive action had to affect the citizens of the country in question; and, 7.) All events must have taken place within the country in question .

²⁴⁶ Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>

²⁴⁷ For example, if the agent of protest was the USSR, the event was not included in the tabulation, calculation, or analysis of events.

²⁴⁸ For example, extremist events such as airplane hijacking were excluded, regardless of actor or target, if it could be concluded from the event description that the event was an isolated occurrence and did not represent the same motivations as other opposition activity.

APPENDIX E: POLISH STATISTICS 1980-1981

Table A-2 depicts the mobilization statistics for Poland in 1980 and 1981. This table should be used in comparison with the events of 1988 and 1989.

TABLE A-2: *Mobilization, Repression and Concession in Poland, 1980-1981*²⁴⁹

Year	Mobilization Events	Repression Events	Concession Events	Average Participation per Mobilization Event
1980	131 ²⁵⁰	14	16	10,330.7
First six months of 1981	120 ²⁵¹	9	9	165,387.9
Last six months of 1981 ²⁵²	274 ²⁵³	120	18	94,979.4

This table shows the increasing number of mobilization in 1980 and 1981. Through the first six months of 1981, the regime did little to repress the movement. In the last half of the year, however, repression increased until martial law was declared. This effectively ended the period of mobilization. The Polish opposition never again resurfaced as such a powerful force. The peak average participation occurred during the first six months of 1981, with an average of 165,387 participants per event. This is equivalent to .45 % of the

²⁴⁹ The source of the event data for Table A-2 is Francisco, R. <http://web.ku.edu/ronfran/data/>. This table represents the re-coded events of mobilization, repression, and concession in tabular form and includes a calculated average of participants per mobilization event.

²⁵⁰ Forty of these events represent two or more days of mobilization.

²⁵¹ Thirty-two of these events represent two or more days of mobilization.

²⁵² This table includes events through the declaration of martial law on December 13, 1981.

²⁵³ Seventy-eight of these events represent two or more days of mobilization.

APPENDIX E, CONTINUED: POLISH STATISTICS 1980-1981

population, which is estimated at 36,062,309 in 1981²⁵⁴. The table reveals that a pattern of interaction existed in 1980 and 1981 which served to mature the opposition. For this reason, a protracted mobilization-liberalization cycle was not required in 1988 and 1989.

²⁵⁴ Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych,
http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/PUBL_PUBL_Demographic_yearbook_of_Poland_2007.pdf

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