Conclusion
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The Significance of Language and the Basic Axioms to Analyze Post-Communist Regimes

While the title of this book is “The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes,” it could have also been “A New Language for Post-Communist Regimes.” Indeed, much of this work centers on terminology, and we stress the importance of using the right language in describing the world we see. Biological metaphors help illustrate this: if we use the language developed for describing fish, such as “gills,” “scales” and “fins,” we cannot very well describe an elephant. Saying that it has no gills and fins does not say much about what the elephant substantively is, and recognizing it as a “defective,” special kind of fish that does not live in water also makes little sense. When differences are not just large but qualitative and they constitute a new species, the language we use should also acknowledge this. New concepts must be introduced to capture the sui generis features of the new type(s), carefully delimited from other types and their features. This is not to deny that different types might share some traits—both fish and elephants are vertebrate—but there are fundamental differences that separate them at their very bases—fish and elephants cannot have a viable offspring.¹

In the case of post-communist regimes, “fundamental differences” can also be called system-constituting differences, whereas the “very bases” are the features from which all the other (regime-specific) features can be derived in the post-communist environment. We started our exposition by identifying the key societal and rulership structures of unseparated spheres in Chapter 1. We used these structures in Chapter 2 to derive that (1) the distinctive forms of post-communist states run on the principle of elite interest, therefore we need to focus on concepts presuming that principle, and (2) the four aspects by which states can be typed are the nature of the ruling elite, action targeting power, action targeting property, and the legality of action. The next logical step was to define partial state types and combine them in a complete state type, that is, one that is defined from all four analytical angles. This ultimate combination of elite-interest based state definitions was the mafia state, which is also—by the definition of “state”—the center of power in a regime, which we termed patronal autocracy. This was then, in Part 2.4.6, contrasted with the constitutional state of liberal democracy, described along the same four aspects but with features conforming to the principle of societal interest. The “very bases” that separated the two states and regimes were, then, the dominant principles of state functioning, whereas their specific functioning manifested as we interpreted these principles along the aspects provided by the boundary conditions of post-communist stubborn structures. The rest of our discussion of regime-specific features in Chapters 3–6 also frequently referred to both the principles of state functioning and the basic phenomena of

¹ On biological taxonomy, see Richards, Biological Classification.
stubborn structures (informal networks, power&ownership, patronalism and patrimonialism), indicating the very bases along which the discussion of various political, economic and societal aspects of liberal democracy and patronal autocracy unfolded.² Including the preexisting Kornaian model of communist dictatorship, we identified three highly distinct “species,” the polar type regimes. And just as the elephant is not an illiberal fish, patronal autocracy is not “illiberal democracy” but a separate type that cannot be derived from the internal logic of other polar types like the Western-type (liberal) democracy.³

Liberal democracy, patronal autocracy and communist dictatorship are not just three regime types: they are language-forming poles. These are the regime types that require their own language, that is, 1–1 distinct set of concepts that reflects on the respective regime’s sui generis characteristics, or rather the fundamentally different context formed by these characteristics for the concepts. Indeed, being a language-forming pole was the main reason why these three regimes were chosen as polar types in the first place. In contrast, the intermediary types—patronal democracy, conservative autocracy, and market-exploiting dictatorship—can be captured by mixed languages, constructed from the primary languages of the language-forming poles. The logic is similar to that of a color wheel, which captures the relation between primary colors, which cannot be mixed from any other colors (red, yellow, blue), and secondary colors, which can be mixed from the primary colors (orange from red and yellow, purple from red and blue, and green from yellow and blue). Languages of the three polar type regimes are like primary colors: they cannot be mixed from any other one but constitute sui generis structures. The languages of the three intermediary types, however, are like the secondary colors, as they can be mixed from the primary languages of their neighboring polar types.⁴ For patronal democracy, we need to combine concepts mainly from liberal democracy (multi-pyramid power network) and patronal autocracy (informal patronalism); for conservative autocracy, we need to combine concepts mainly from liberal democracy (non-patronal economy) and communist dictatorship (bureaucratic patronalism); and for market-exploiting dictatorship, we need to combine concepts mainly from communist dictatorship (bureaucratic patronalism) and patronal autocracy (informal patronalism), although in this case concepts from private

² Indeed, the structure of our comparative conceptualizations followed mainly the structure of patronal autocracy. This was a deliberate choice, as it is patronal regimes that we found underconceptualized in the literature, lacking a coherent framework for regime and sub-regime elements, and we primarily wanted to fill this gap. Yet, in spite of discussing every regime (actors etc.) along the lines of patronal autocracy, we attempted to make clear that they are structured differently, and the phenomena that are conceptualized comparatively exist with different weight and in different relations to each other in different systems.

³ Some authors argue that Western-type democracy should be rejected as a root concept to acknowledge, precisely not autocracies but “non-Western democracies.” For a regime that is unlike the Western model still can be a democracy, even if the local circumstances and culture create certain “exotic” elements that make it a non-Western variant. (Youngs, “Exploring ‘Non-Western Democracy’”; Lakatos, “Nyugatos és nem nyugatos demokráciák” [Western and non-western democracies].) The answer to this view can be found in Chapter 1: on the level of regime-specific features, culture can result in patronalism, and whether the respective regime is democratic or autocratic really depends on other factors [→ 1.5.2]. But it is only patronal democracy that is non-Western democracy, because it features a multi-pyramid power network. Patronal autocracy, while really non-Western, is not a democracy because it features a single-pyramid power network.

⁴ We are indebted to Klára Sándor for this brilliant metaphor.
economy and regulated market-coordination need to be mixed into the language, too, to be able to reflect on all of its features.

**Being conscious about the use of language also grants a kind of freedom.** As Stephen Hawking explains in *The Grand Design*, co-written with the scientist Leonard Mlodinow, “there is no picture- or theory-independent concept of reality. Instead we will adopt a view that we will call model-dependent realism,” which means that “an independently verifiable model of reality does not exist. Consequently, a well-constructed model creates its own reality. […] Model-dependent realism applies not only to scientific models but also to the conscious and subconscious mental models we all create in order to interpret and understand the everyday world.” This is applicable in social sciences just as much as in natural sciences. If we take a look at something, it is given meaning by the cognitive processes of our mind. Without an adequate linguistic and conceptual framework, we will become captives of our own prejudices; **without consciously attempting to capture reality in proper conceptual terms, we will inevitably be stuck in our preexisting frame**, forcing us unconsciously to try and apply its assumptions everywhere. Like wearing invisible glasses that focus our perception in specific ways, not being aware of the implicit axioms carried by our words will ultimately distort both the interpretation and understanding of reality.

Being trapped in a language without completely realizing it is precisely what characterizes **mainstream hybridology**. While they did realize the presence of *sui generis* regimes and made indisputable progress in understanding the machinery of democratic façades (we did build on their findings in Chapter 4), hybridologists have not realized the presence of some **fundamental axioms** in their analyses—therefore denying, axiomatically, the existence of those phenomena that distinguish Western and post-communist regimes. **The gist of this book is to dissolve these axioms, taking control of the language instead of letting the language control us.**

The general axiom of mainstream hybridology is the **separation of spheres of social action**, treated as something that already exists in every society. This is expressed by using words like “politician” and “entrepreneur” in every regime, or recognizing such actors primarily by their formal titles to which informal titles and positions may be connected secondarily. A consequence of this axiom is the treatment of a great deal of phenomena as **deviances**, most importantly **informality and (informal) patronalism**. Even when hybridologists like Levitsky and Way highlight “the centrality of informal institutions” in competitive authoritarian regimes, they explain them as some creative inventions necessitated by the post-Cold War international environment “raising the cost of formal (e.g., single-party) authoritarian rule,” not as something that stems from historical and civilizational legacies and has been a definitive factor in democracies as well as autocracies.

Dissolving the general axiom, we realize that **the level of separation was treated as a constant, whereas it is actually variable.** This is how we started Chapter 1, embedding

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6 Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, 27–28. In an article written ten years after their seminal book, the authors still analyze the case of Hungary with a focus on formal institutions, and treat the party Fidesz as the central actor of the regime (although it is only a transmission belt to Orbán’s adopted political family, the actual—informal—central actor). Levitsky and Way, “The New Competitive Authoritarianism.”
the notion of level of separation in civilizational as well as historical analysis. As a result, we dissolved the consequential axioms, as well, that regard informality and patronalism as deviances. Doing away with the logic implied by the language of liberal democracy, we entertained the possibility that \textit{informality may become primary}, as well as that \textit{patronalism may be a constitutive element} of a regime. Creating the language for patronal regimes, these were the main points we always kept in mind, and without them, we would not have been able to structure all the political, economic and social phenomena of post-communism as coherently as we did.

By our intention, the concepts in this book constitute a strict logical order—a conceptual toolkit that is also a language, consisting of the languages of the language-forming poles. Its concepts correspond to real world phenomena, carefully documented in the plethora of empirical research we cited throughout the book. These phenomena of post-communism guided us in terms of which topics our framework needed to cover. However, constructing utopian \textit{ideal types} out of the phenomena actually observed—in the mold of Max Weber—we defined \textbf{building blocks, carefully delimited for the purpose of seamlessly putting them together in a single construct}. The blocks are joined up by politological, economical and sociological theories, which, however, were not chosen arbitrarily but disciplined by the need to create a coherent whole. Because of the high number of interrelations among concepts—indicated by the frequent use of link signs in the text—it is indeed the means of logic that provides the primary binder between phenomena like patronalism, mafia state, adopted political family, populism, relational economy and clientage society. Such concepts define an ideal type model (in this case, the model of patronal autocracy), which can be applied for real world regimes, processes and phenomena as a point of reference. Naturally, no country will perfectly fit—hence “ideal” type. But \textbf{countries where the respective features are dominant}, meaning the majority of cases and events do fit, can be described with the language the selected ideal type offers. And defining six models, that is, six ideal type regimes in a multi-dimensional analytical framework, a rich set of concepts for telling the stories of post-communist regimes emerges.

The framework is useful for future research also because \textbf{it defines the place of not just every phenomenon but the discussion} about it in the context of all the other phenomena. Thus, a detailed discussion of each element (something we had to avoid in this book) will automatically build on the framework as well. In other words, scholarly papers that can necessarily deal with only one aspect or regime-element may, by speaking our language, contribute both to the understanding of their subject and to our knowledge about the regime as a whole.

In the end, what we intended to do is not reproducing the colorful chaos of the literature but creating an edifice—for beginners to see, and for scholars to adopt or criticize.

\footnote{The languages of liberal democracy and communist dictatorship were mostly pre-existent, being situated on the two poles of the mainstream democracy-dictatorship axis. Yet we did structure them and delineated from patronal regimes, using concepts like public deliberation and substantive-rational legitimacy \(\rightarrow\) 4.2.}
Towards a Global Perspective: Dissolving Our Implicit Axioms for the Post-Communist Region

The main limitation of our framework is in scope: we focused on the post-communist region, from Central-Eastern Europe through the post-Soviet countries to China. This also means that our own framework had some—up to this point, implicit—axioms: factors we treated as constants because they are constants in the post-communist region, at least to the degree that they do not generate system-constituting differences. But this is not necessarily true in other regions. This implies the general logic to expand our framework on a global scale: as we dissolved the axioms of the Western civilization to expand our linguistic scope to be able to reflect on the reality of post-communism, the axioms of this region can be dissolved to expand our framework’s linguistic scope to be able to reflect on the reality of other regions.

Before we reveal the axioms we maintained for post-communist regimes, we should note that there are some countries outside the post-communist region which can be described by our toolkit, without dissolving its axioms. This was not completely intentional: we defined ideal types for the purposes of this region, and did not try to reflect on the peculiarities of other regions. Yet most liberal democracies can be found outside the post-communist region, particularly in the Western civilization. Countries like Australia, Sweden or the United States should well be approximated by the liberal-democracy ideal type, which is indeed implied in the book as we used, when developing the model, mainstream authors who analyzed democracy and its processes as Western-type liberal democracy. At the other end of the democracy-dictatorship axis, communist dictatorship now exists only outside the post-communist region, best exemplified by North Korea, which maintains a particularly oppressive, near ideal-typical communist regime. Market-exploiting dictatorship typically necessitates a communist past and therefore may exist in post-communist countries we did not consider, such as in Vietnam and Cambodia in South-East Asia. As far as patronal regimes are concerned, Hale suggests that a variety of single- and multi-pyramid patronal networks have existed in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, which also features numerous countries that experienced regime change from communist dictatorship in the 1990s (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia). Although the analysis of these countries in the present day requires dissolving some of our axioms (see below), the concepts for patronal competition and autocratic consolidation—or the lack thereof—may be applied with revelative force in these countries. A nation that is clearly a patronal democracy is Mongolia, whereas Singapore represents a curious case of single-pyramid power network with multi-party elections and non-patronal economy—somewhat akin to the model of conservative autocracy.

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9 Hale, Patronal Politics, 466–67; Drew, “Communism in Africa.”
10 Hale, Patronal Politics, 471–72.
Yet detailed analysis of countries outside the post-communist region is beyond our expertise, and we are convinced that **several phenomena that are peculiar to other regions cannot be understood in our framework**. Concretely, one must **dissolve some of our axioms**, or realize that factors that do not become system-differentiating in the post-communist region—and therefore have not been mentioned above—may well become such in other regions. We identified five axioms that may be particularly inadequate when analyzing non-post-communist hybrid regimes:11

- **Genesis axiom**: regime development starts from the collapse of the monopoly of public ownership. In the modelled trajectories of Chapter 7, every country we analyzed started from the same “Square One”: communist dictatorship. After this regime type was abandoned, monopoly of public ownership was abolished in every post-communist country, irrespective of their exact primary trajectory. In Chapter 5, we explained that ownership in the region developed hand in hand with political power as communist nationalization and regime-changing privatization constituted consecutive political reorganizations of the ownership structure. This was the genesis of these regimes, having long lasting effects on the character of ownership, its linked nature to power as well as the economic and political culture in the region. Yet there are many countries in the world with no past of monopoly of public ownership, and therefore no communist nationalization and regime-changing privatization either. We briefly dealt with Western-type property rights, but our conceptualization may not be adequate in regimes which had a different genesis, a different “Square One” and a different history of development of ownership. Post-colonial countries, for example, are cases in point.

- **Stateness axiom**: the center of the regime is the state as a stable entity, capable of maintaining the monopoly of legitimate use of violence. While our definition of regime contains only the expression “political power center,” we immediately pointed out that this refers to the state in the region. With the exception of oligarchic anarchy, which was a temporary situation of transition in some countries, we did not conceptualize regimes where state failure becomes a permanent condition. More generally, we did not deal with civil wars or countries where there is either (a) a state so weak that it ends being the political power center or (b) no state whatsoever but rather a number of armed groups and warlords, none of which are able to get into a dominant position to establish a state. The dimension of state strength does not appear in our triangular framework, therefore countries where this becomes the system-differentiating feature cannot be adequately reflected by our ideal type regimes.

- **Secularism axiom**: ruling elites are secular and the polity is dominated by secular power. In our framework, religion appears (1) in the context of civilizations, as a signifier of the separation of spheres of social action, and (2) as a communal phenomenon, represented by churches as communal actors. Even in Central Asia today, secular power dominates religious power, and ruling elites that control the

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11 Indeed, the scope of hybridology is way beyond the post-communist region, ambitioning to capture every (not purely democratic or dictatorial) regime in the world as some kind of hybrid. For examples, see Bosch, “Mapping Political Regime Typologies”; Ekman, “Political Participation and Regime Stability.”
state do not act as religious extremists but as secular actors. Treating religion as the integrating force of society, on the one hand, and the primary principle of the state, on the other hand, is beyond the scope of our framework now. This means that theocracies and other kind of regimes dominated by religious power open a new dimension of regime differentiation.

- **Party axiom: the highest formal positions are occupied by *de jure* politicians of political parties (not the military or a monarch).** In the post-communist region we consider, there are no military juntas or coups, but the military exists in a subordinate position to the holders of the highest formal positions. These positions are also not occupied by monarchs but *de jure* presidents, prime ministers or general party secretaries, who are *de jure* politicians of political parties. The dominance of such actors over the political sphere has been treated in the book as an axiom, while this indeed is just one possibility if we consider other countries in the world. Military dictatorships, as well as kingdoms and hereditary monarchies require concepts beyond those of our framework, including the conceptualization of the military or the aristocracy as specific forms of ruling elite.

- **Tutelage axiom: the strongest *de facto* political actor in the regime is a *de jure* political actor.** While *de facto* political actors in patronal regimes can be best understood by considering their informal, and not their formal, titles, there is always significant overlap between the formal and informal holders of political power. Particularly, the chief patron is typically the president or the prime minister, but even when he is not—like it was the case with Plahotniuc in Moldova—he still is a *de jure* political actor. However, hybridology knows so-called “tutelary regimes,” where *de jure* political actors become practically political front men to non-elected religious (e.g., Iran) or military (e.g., Pakistan) authorities without becoming explicit theocracies or juntas. Furthermore, we did not consider the regimes of militarily invaded or so-called puppet states either, where the *de jure* sovereign government is subordinated not to a domestic but to a foreign power.

Additionally, we treated civilizational belonging as a variable but on a limited scale. Huntington lists eight major civilizations in the world: Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American, and (possibly) African. From these, we dealt with only four civilizations, linking them to the level of separation of spheres of social action. This is the starting point of the stubborn-structures argument, as well as our general understanding of why certain countries develop certain regimes and how they can be interpreted. Thus, the level of separation of spheres of social action must be assessed in the Japanese, Hindu, Latin-American and African civilizations to develop proper regime types and analytical frameworks for their countries, delineating them from the post-communist region we considered.

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In the end, area experts need to decide whether (1) the axioms being dissolved to be variables and (2) belonging to another civilization constitute a need for independent-language formation. To us, this is an open question, and we would not attempt to give a definitive answer by partial knowledge. What we are sure about is that no regime in the world may be properly understood by focusing only on the political institutional setting, or presuming a priori that the spheres of social action are separated. An analysis that is not holistic but purely politological—or purely economic or sociological, for that matter—may also miss elements that make sense to the very dynamics of these regimes, or which are essential factors that the actors themselves, when making decisions, do consider.

Technology and Climate Change: Era-Specific Features and the Prospects for the Future

A key aspect of our conceptualization of the anatomy of post-communist regimes is the separation of regime-specific features from country-specific features. While often conflated in the literature, the analytical distinction of these two is a powerful organizing principle in cross-country comparisons. Two countries can be patronal autocracies, meaning they can maintain the same system of power with the same logic and basic principles of action while their boundary conditions for the regime are vastly different. At the end of Chapter 7, we expounded on a third group, the policy-specific features that are usually not used to define regimes but comprise a vast body of literature that deals with the social and economic effects of governmental policies. Similar to the previous point, rulers who share regime type and perhaps even country-specific features may apply different policies to achieve their goals, and the results of those policies may also differ on the basis of many factors. However, we have only hinted at the fourth group so far: the era-specific features, meaning phenomena that are specific to a certain age. Having outlined a summary of our viewpoint and the basics to step out of the post-communist region for other regions, we may finish by mentioning a few ideas to step out of the present for the future. In other words, we will try to explain how our framework may need an update if one is to use it for political regimes in the decades to come.

To some extent, everything is era-specific. For most of human history, none of the regime types we describe existed: there was no communist dictatorship prior the 20th century (and there are very few now),\textsuperscript{14} and liberal democracies that now are numerous did not exist even on the level of ideas before the Age of Enlightenment (18th century). Yet now we focus on two phenomena that are more strictly era-specific, meaning they develop over time and they can be quite clearly distinguished from the regime-, country- and policy-specific features we have described. These two are information technology and climate

\textsuperscript{14} It might strike some readers as odd that we devoted such great space in the book to the details of communist dictatorship, despite it is a virtually “extinct species.” Indeed, it was important to deal with it, for this regime type was needed to span the triangular space and model regime trajectories. It is through a detailed description of communist dictatorship that the novelties of patronal autocracy and market-exploiting dictatorship can be made clear vis-à-vis the classical model of dictatorship, also undercutting the frequent historical analogies with communism.
change. As of 2020, these phenomena have not produced system-constituting differences, and their role in regime functioning has also been subordinate to other features rather than becoming independent forces that define regime functioning as such. True, the internet has changed the character of the public deliberation process, offering—as we mentioned in Chapter 4—new spaces of communication, sources of information and opportunities for manipulation. Facebook, Twitter and other kinds of media have posed new challenges to autocrats and new opportunities for opposition movements and peoples. What we believe, however, is that with respect to the two above-mentioned features we are on the verge of a major turning point, whereby the look of post-communist regimes as we know it may fundamentally change in the next few decades.

Focusing on regimes and their ruling elites, what the development of IT does is changing the techniques of control and oppression. The best example is China, which some have already described as a “surveillance state” and a “digital totalitarian state”15 because of its newly developed, big data-based systems of internet control as well as the so-called social credit system. In a special issue of the *Journal of Democracy* entitled “The Road to Digital Unfreedom,” Xiao Qiang explains that the Chinese state “has set up a series of mechanisms aimed at asserting its dominance in cyberspace. It has also increasingly combined an extensive physical infrastructure of surveillance and coercion with cutting-edge digital technologies. […] By leveraging information and resource asymmetries, state agencies and the companies that cooperate with them can turn these innovative technologies into tools for manipulating ordinary citizens. Big data, for instance, is an invaluable resource for making predictions. Officials can draw on this capacity to anticipate protests and even major surges in online public opinion, enabling them to act preemptively to quash opposition. In another authoritarian application of big data, [Chinese] authorities are working to integrate information from a wide array of sources into a nationwide Social Credit System (SCS) that would assess the conduct of every person in the country, an innovation worthy of George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. As *Wired* magazine has put it, China’s new generation of surveillance operations is indeed where ‘big data meets Big Brother.’”16 While modern autocracies and dictatorships have already done away with the bloody methods of oppression, such efficiency of big data and IT offers completely new levels of discretional punishment on the road from direct violence to existential vulnerability.

In response to the potential of IT also to empower the people and undermine oppression,17 we can observe that authoritarian regimes with imperial ambitions have tried to achieve some sort of “digital autarky,” such as with the Great Firewall of China and intensifying internet regulations in Russia. In late 2019, the Russian regime successfully tested a country-wide alternative to the global internet, disconnecting the country from the world wide web,18 and Putin even proposed a ‘reliable’ Russian version of Wikipedia, replacing the user-edited site with the new Big Russian Encyclopaedia from 1.7 billion rubles of tax

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15 “China Invents the Digital Totalitarian State.”
16 Qiang, “President Xi’s Surveillance State,” 53–54. Also, see Botsman, “Big Data Meets Big Brother as China Moves to Rate Its Citizens.” Qiang further adds that, by the target date of 2020, the Chinese party state anticipated an entry of each Chinese citizen in the Social Credit System.
18 Wakefield, “Russia ‘Successfully Tests’ Its Unplugged Internet.”
money (ca. €24 million). The 21st century sees a global struggle over whether IT will serve liberty or oppression, and it is an open question which side will come out victorious. What we must assume is that, as autocrats learn from each other, the new technologies of oppression will spread in the future. This not only makes the struggle even more global but also changes what we assume about the capacity of autocratic rulers today overall.

The other era-specific phenomenon that may have fundamental effects on post-communist regimes in the future is climate change. It is different from other types of external challenges: economic crises may be occasional or cyclical, while climate change is a long term, permanent challenge; and events like the coronavirus epidemic, while might change the structure of globalization, do not change regimes per se (only amplify their most essential features), whereas climate change has regime undermining potential. It poses two types of problems for the world’s polities in general and post-communist authoritarians in particular. First, most scientists assert that climate change will require global solutions, that is, international cooperation, which may be hindered by the same factor that breaks the EU’s cohesion: regime heterogeneity. True, fighting climate change is a common cause of humanity, equally important to the peoples of liberal and patronal regimes. But that leaders will act on this assumes more public- than patronal-policy rationality, which chief patrons may not follow. In any case, not only regimes but also the relationships between regimes may radically change in the next few decades. Second, among the effects of climate change we can find desertification, rising sea levels and mass migration from less to more habitable areas. This creates enormous challenges: mass migration can potentially undermine political regimes in both sending and receiving countries, while the latter will also have to deal with large humanitarian and/or economic burdens, even if they are autocracies. In the end, the two era-specific features anticipate both challenges and opportunities for post-communist regimes’ self-sustaining capacity, which may start tertiary trajectories in hardly foreseeable directions.

While this book is perhaps the closest to, and partially modelled on, János Kornai’s seminal *The Socialist System*, there is a huge difference: by the time Kornai’s book was published in 1992, the Soviet empire had disappeared, while post-communist change is open-ended. The ideal types we presented are applicable to systems that have emerged in the last three decades, but they might be less adequate in the future as the region’s regimes continue to develop. This is in part due to era-specific features, which are exogenous factors, but endogenous factors can also play a role. As history has proved over and over again, the power of the people is the ultimate force against the enemies of freedom, from aspiring populists through autocratic attempts and breakthroughs to consolidated patronal autocracies and chief patrons. And while civilizations and the separation of spheres of social action change slowly, no cultural pattern is unchangeable. Provided we know what we look for, targeted action always carries the chance of path creation over path dependence.

After all, we have a piece of good news: history has not ended.

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20 Weyland, “Autocratic Diffusion and Cooperation.”
21 Cf. İçduygu and Şimşek, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey.”
22 This point was made by László Csaba in his review of the manuscript.