

Impediments to democratization and human rights implementation in post-Soviet states

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Abstract

Almost a quarter of a century after the dissolution of the Soviet Union none of the twelve non-Baltic post-Soviet states fully meets the criteria of a Western democratic state. With authoritarian rule and disregard for civil liberties Eurasia represents a particular segment within the majority of sovereign nations which are non-democratic. A shift from optimism driven democratization theories to research of factors impeding democratization seems therefore logical. Eurasia's lack of proper historical experience with democracy before 1991, the geographic isolation, especially of Central Asia, and a wide-spread cultural acceptance of strong leadership and patronalism have to be accounted for. Western policymakers who draw respective conclusions for a longterm approach with a realistic assessment of limited possibilities of short-term change face challenges within their constituencies. Some recommendations on general foreign-policy attitudes towards Eurasia conclude the essay.

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¹ The opinions expressed in this paper are exclusively those of the author unless otherwise quoted and do not

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Introduction

Anniversaries are broadly appreciated and opportune moments for stock-taking: 2014 marks not only the centenary of the outbreak of World War I and 75 years since the attack of Nazi Germany on Poland at the start of World War II, but also the fall of the Berlin Wall a quarter of a century ago and of the accession of ten formerly communist/socialist Central and Eastern European states to the European Union in 2004. Lastly, it is exactly a decade after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, an EU Eastern partnership country where since November 2013 revolution-like incidents have led to the deposition of President Yanukovich, the loss of Crimea and a hostile relationship with Russia. All these historical events connect amply with

the issue before us of obvious difficulties with democratization and human rights implementation in post-Soviet states.

When in the evening of 9th November 1989 the barriers on the East-Berlin side of the border crossing at Bornholmer Straße were raised and East Germans poured into the streets of West Berlin, the West i. e. democracies around the globe rejoiced that the ideological division along the Iron Curtain would finally be overcome, that the conflict between capitalist and socialist systems would end. And indeed, the dissolution process of the entire Soviet world accelerated, coming to a formal conclusion only two years later. On 25th February 1991 in Budapest, a meeting of foreign and defense ministers of member states formally dissolved the Warsaw Pact, on 26th December 1991 the Soviet Union was officially dissolved and its member states gained sovereignty. The overwhelming optimism by onlookers from the academic sidelines in the West is probably best reflected in Sam Huntington's *The Third Wave* of 1991 and Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* of 1992.

23 years after the end of the Soviet Union, the conflict between the West and Eurasia is no longer about capitalism versus socialism. Most Eurasian economies are capitalistic in nature. Put simply, the new conflict is between values of liberalism versus values of tradition. As Russia felt and behaved traditionally like the lead nation of the region, the physical disintegration of the Soviet Union and the ensuing ideological vacuum was especially painful for the Russian people. The filling of this vacuum, the renewed emphasis on Russian greatness accelerated with Putin's first presidency in 2000. It can be seen as a belated backlash against NATO and EU expansion and Western value projection into the vacuum. Today, with the clear exception of the three Baltic States (which have in the meantime become members of the European Union), Western hopes that the group of former Soviet states would adopt liberal values and seriously embark on a trajectory towards democratization have largely been frustrated. Instead, one has had to find terms like "competitive authoritarianism" or "full-blown authoritarian regime" to best describe the form of government encountered there². "After initial experiments with competitive elections in the early 1990s, post-Soviet states have established regimes that hold unfree elections and govern with limited regard to the rule of law. In successor states from Belarus to Uzbekistan leaders

² Levitsky, S. and Way, L (2002), 'The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, 13/2: 51-65

have succeeded in converting a regime that tried semi-free elections into a fully undemocratic state."³

The twelve states under examination are, in alphabetical order: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. The geographic term commonly applied to them is Eurasia⁴. Notwithstanding their ethnic and cultural heterogeneity stemming from strong historical European influences in the Western parts (Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine), a special mix of identities in the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and very different *sui generis* preconditions altogether in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) reasons connected with their common experience in the Tsarist epoch and later as Soviet republics until 1991 are probably more relevant for explaining their democratic deficits. Generally one can hardly overstate: Whereas the two World Wars changed the landscape especially in Europe and decolonization in the 1960s produced new global alignments, the exterior borders of the Eurasian neighbors of Russia and their relationship with Moscow remained very much the same and their development possibilities and integration into world markets were restricted due to lack of sovereignty until the demise of the Soviet Union.

I am aware that the scope of my topic is quite large for an essay. But I believe the following can be achieved in the available space:

In the first chapter I illustrate the prevailing view in the West, especially that of mainstream political science, about the unsatisfactory state of democracy and human rights in Eurasia. While agreeing overall with respective monitoring institutions like Center for Systemic Peace (Polity IV project), Freedom House, Bertelsmann Foundation and the Economist Intelligence Unit in their negative judgment about democratization and the implementation of human rights in post-Soviet states, I will critique their findings, especially the cacophony of country rankings.

In the second chapter I approach possible causes for the unsatisfactory state of democracy and human rights. I talk about Russian influence and reflect above all on the common Eurasian characteristic of patronalism, elaborated recently in a most comprehensive and convincing

³ Rose, R 'Democratic and Undemocratic States', in: Haerpfer C W, Bernhagen P, Inglehart R F, Wetzel C 2009, *Democratization*, Oxford University Press p. 19

⁴ The commonalities are well-recognized in the scientific literature by the existence of reviews like *Demokratizatsiya - The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* or *Post-Soviet Affairs* and are reflected in books like *Eurasia's New Frontiers* by Simons, T W (2008)

way by Henry E Hale⁵, as one of the most relevant impediments to adopting democratic norms and a culture of civil liberties. Patronalism has a deeply engrained tradition in post-Soviet societies. It should therefore be viewed as a fully functioning alternative system in its own right and not as a flawed aberration of anything else. Oligarchical elites cling to political power, because they know that their status hinges on this and otherwise their business can be easily taken away by their successors. We can expect sustainable change starting from the top only when elites begin to believe that in the end their own interests might be better served by rule of law. Further impediments I identify are the aftereffects of a nondemocratic past, geography, a culture of strong leadership and, due to an underdeveloped middle-class, for the time being at least, possibly modernization itself - quite contrary to common wisdom.

In the third chapter, stating that the dismal situation in Eurasia is only one example of how more than half of United Nations member states disregard the intentions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, I look at the challenges this poses for Western foreign policy. I assume that all Western democracies are genuinely interested in Eurasia becoming more democratic and free market orientated and respecting civil liberties. But there are notable differences between Western states in the public intensity of projecting such goals in the region and of the capacity to implement them, with the US leading in both respects. There is consensus that promotion of values and pursuit of interests are quite often in conflict - with an on-going debate over which of the two weighs heavier. In open societies the question of how they are reconciled and where compromise is struck is not decided by the government alone. Civil society, in particular various pressure groups from human rights to trade and industry influence the outcome. My focus here is not on differences among Western states, but I will speculate in a general way on the options Western policy has towards Eurasia and conclude with some recommendations for policymakers.

Chapter 1

The situation of democracy and human rights in Eurasia

1. Synopsis

In 1948 the world community adopted the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But, instead of unifying the currently 193 UN member states, it divided them over the

⁵ Hale H E 2014, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*, New York: Cambridge University Press, in press

issue of human rights. To quote German Federal President Joachim Gauck: "One danger of big ideas is their abstraction. The implementation of universal human rights is a demand we hear almost every day and nonetheless, for many it remains intangible and remote."⁶ In fact, if we accept the findings of Freedom House, in 2012 there were 105 countries "not free" or "partly free" and only a large minority of 90 countries termed "free" (these are the 3 categories used in the Freedom House Index). For 2013 the number of "free" countries has decreased even further. With regard to Eurasia, Freedom House judges that no Eurasian country is "free". The rating for 7 countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) is "not free", the remaining 5 (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine) are "partly free".

Political rights and civil liberties have to be seen in conjunction as essential elements of democracy if one defines democracy as meaning more than procedural electoral requirements (the minimalist/Schumpeterian way). In liberal democracies with influential human rights lobby groups, respect for civil liberties in a foreign country plays a major role in the bilateral relationship with that country. Any institution monitoring political rights and civil liberties in the world and publishing the findings, possibly with country rankings, bears a huge responsibility to produce reliable, comprehensive and accurate findings. Even if they are, named and shamed authoritarian states will hardly ever accept the outcome and furthermore accuse the monitoring institution if not the government of the home country of bias or even conspiracy. As the will to implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is underdeveloped, the general defense line taken by FH in citing the UDHR as its point of reference⁷ is well intended, but insufficient to placate regimes not accustomed to open opposition.

This is the awkward reality we face also with regard to post-Soviet states: On the one hand the principle of sovereignty grants each and every member state of the United Nations the

⁶ Preface to *Working for Human Rights*, a 2014 desk calendar published by the German Federal Foreign Office

⁷ "The survey does not rate governments or government performance per se, but rather the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals. Thus, while Freedom House considers the presence of legal rights, it places a greater emphasis on whether these rights are implemented in practice. Furthermore, freedoms can be affected by government officials, as well as by nonstate actors, including insurgents and other armed groups. Freedom House does not maintain a culture-bound view of freedom. The methodology of the survey is grounded in basic standards of political rights and civil liberties, derived in large measure from relevant portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These standards apply to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographical location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development. The survey operates from the assumption that freedom for all peoples is best achieved in liberal democratic societies." (FH Report Navigation, 2012)

same status. Hidden behind their sovereignty, authoritarian regimes constantly and systematically violate human rights. On the other hand, so-called non-governmental democracy watchdogs or human rights monitoring institutions of global relevance whose headquarters are mostly in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Germany⁸ make this dividing line between democratic and autocratic states visible. I will compare especially the following four institutions: Freedom House, based in the US and dating back to WW II, has already been mentioned. The Center for Systemic Peace Polity IV project is based in the US. Bertelsmann Stiftung (Foundation) is German and the Economist Intelligence Unit is English. For reasons of convenience I will refer to these 4 institutions throughout the text as "the monitors". The comparison is done for the year 2012. For the purpose of this essay a timeline seemed unnecessary. Various studies have shown certain country fluctuations over the years and a trend reversal towards authoritarianism in the late 90's and this fact needed no reiteration.

I will show that United Nations human rights bodies are involved in human rights monitoring, but lack the descriptive language of the monitors and cannot, due to the paramount principle of sovereignty, categorize and rank countries on the basis of their political rights or civil liberties performance. I will briefly look at how non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Reporters without Borders contribute to the overall picture. This will be complemented with my own experiences in the South Caucasus. Offering a detailed account of the methodology for measuring political rights and civil liberties by Freedom House (FH) I will conclude that the monitors agree about a generally rather bad situation in most Eurasian countries, but do not - above all due to different ranking orders - communicate a clear picture about which country is better or worse. Concerning 8 out of 12, i. e. two thirds of the Eurasian countries the monitors differ significantly. The only consensus they have is about the worst performer Uzbekistan.

This result is unsatisfactory. It also causes diplomatic problems as the monitors are - rightly or wrongly - often connotated with official foreign policy views of their countries of residence. The moral justification for promoting political rights and civil liberties is beyond doubt and

⁸ compare the conclusion "Most international human rights NGOs are based in Western Europe and North America" in: Smith J, Pagnucco R, Lopez G A 1998, 'Globalizing Human Rights: The Work of Transnational Human Rights NGOs in the 1990s', *Human Rights Quarterly* vol. 20 No. 2 p. 386

these goals must have a central place in Western foreign policy and diplomacy, but policymakers and diplomats should take the findings of the monitors with a grain of salt and have a wider reference base. In general, they may want to confront the broader question of whether an agenda based on Western expectations of political rights and civil liberties is reasonable and effective with regard to Eurasia.

2. How do Freedom House, Polity IV, Bertelsmann Foundation and the Economist Intelligence Unit assess democracy and human rights in Eurasia?

The formal dissolution of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in 1991 marked the end of the post World War II period: The USSR had been the main antagonist of the West both as main pillar of the Warsaw Pact and as one collective body of states across 11 time zones from the Baltic to the Pacific. Central and Eastern European states which had been former Warsaw Pact members affiliated themselves with the European Union and NATO. Russia and the other 14 Union members became sovereign states, many with clear democratic aspirations as reflected in constitutions based on Western models⁹. Following this, optimistic expectations that the model of liberal democracy was on an unstoppable march around the globe were the mood of the day (compare especially Sam Huntington's *The Third Wave* of 1991 and Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* of 1992).

a) No Eurasian country can be considered a democracy...

Twenty-three years on we see, with the exception of the three Baltic States (which as early as 2004 joined the European Union), a frustration of Western optimism by the group of former Soviet countries/Eurasia. It is consensus in the West that none of the twelve states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) can be considered a democracy. Rather they oscillate between various forms of authoritarianism.

The annexed table 1 illustrates the ranking of Eurasian countries for the year 2012 by Freedom House (FH), both with its global and its "Nations in Transit" (NIT) index, by Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), Economist Democracy Index (EDI) and the Polity IV score, which is not so well-known in public, but is the scientifically accepted index (in the West) for measuring the political situation of a given country. I selected FH as the reference institution and tried to identify a maximum of other institutes engaged in similar work as FH.

⁹ Actually, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, whose constitutions date from 2010 resp, 2008, all constitutions were adopted in the first few years after independence (www.constituteproject.org)

As to political rights, the most frequently cited instrument is Polity IV (with its various predecessors producing an impressive timeline as far back as the 19th century) under the aegis of the Center for Systemic Peace (founded in 1997 and funded by the CIA). Renowned political scientists (for example Jan Teorell) systematically combine FH and Polity for their purposes. Polity IV does, however, NOT "include coded data on civil liberties" (User's Manual, p. 90) and I share the criticism voiced by Cameron and Orenstein¹⁰ and Norris¹¹. Since 2003 Bertelsmann Foundation has published bi-annually its Transformation Index (BTI)¹², and since 2007 the Economist Intelligence Unit has published annually its Democracy Index (EDI). As stipulated under I.1 I will label these four institutions with their five indices/products "the monitors".

According to FHI 2012, no Eurasian country is "free" (FHI uses 3 categories: free, partly free, not free). The status definition for 7 countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) is "not free", the remaining 5 (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine) are "partly free". The more recent, conceptually somewhat different NIT reports by FH categorize countries in 5 groups. Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan are "consolidated autocracies" and as such in the first i.e. the lowest/worst level group, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are "semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes" (second worst group) and 3 countries (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) are "transition governments/hybrid regimes" (third/middle group).¹³ No Eurasian country meets the criteria of "consolidated" or "semi-consolidated democracies", the two remaining categories.

Both, BTI and EDI use similar, but not identical categorizations to those used by NIT:

EDI distinguishes 4 groups. It calls the worst performers "authoritarian regimes". This group happens to contain the same 7 states (namely Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia,

¹⁰ "While the Polity IV measures are widely used and valuable for some purposes, they are, we believe, imperfect measures of democracy for the post-Soviet and post-communist states. While they do take into account guarantees of civil liberties, they give considerable weight to institutional features of the executive branch..and understate attributes pertaining to the extent to which elections are free and fair, rule of law is established, and political rights and civil liberties are widely distributed and well-protected." Cameron, D and Orenstein, M 'Post-Soviet Authoritarianism: The Influence of Russia in its "Near Abroad"', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 28/1, 2012, p. 16

¹¹ Norris, P 2008 *Driving Democracy, Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?* Cambridge University Press, p.57

¹² It seems noteworthy that the English Wikipedia site completely ignores BTI

¹³ The actual state of affairs in all countries is in stark contrast to their post-independence constitutions which claim in their respective preambles to be democratic and which contain comprehensive and explicit individual/civil freedom rights catalogues

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) that FH calls "not free" (FHI) or "consolidated autocracies" (NIT index). EDI differentiates the five "partly free" (FHI terminology) countries as "flawed democracy" (Moldova) and "hybrid regimes" (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine). No country fulfills the criteria for the fourth group "full democracy".

BTI has 5 categories, just like the NIT index, with the Eurasian region ranging from the lowest ranking group of "hard line autocracies" (Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), over "moderate autocracies" (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan) and "highly defective democracies" (Kyrgyzstan, Russia) to the second best group of "defective democracies" (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine). "Democracies in consolidation" is the best group, to which no Eurasian country belongs.

Polity IV, using four different categories, puts Belarus, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan in the most autocratic group, marked as "AUT". Tajikistan is in the next, less rigid autocratic group "aut". Armenia and Russia enjoy the marker "dem" whereas Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine are in the top group "DEM". It has to be reiterated here that Polity IV does not measure civil liberties, but only indicators related to political rights (compare the critical remark in footnote 5).

b) ...but how reliable is the ranking

From the above statements it follows that the monitors are in broad consensus as to Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine being among the best performers. They do, however, rank them differently. Only FHI puts Georgia at the very top, the other three rank Georgia 3rd and Moldova 1st. Moldova is ranked 2nd by FHI. Ukraine is ranked 3rd by FHI and 2nd by the other three. This means that FH has a minority opinion concerning the ranking of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The deviation may be accidental, but could also be interpreted as an indicator of relatively less reliability of FH.

The fewer categories used the fewer nuances possible: FHI applies 2 (of 3) categories to Eurasia, NIT index 3 (of 5), EDI 3 (of 4) and BTI 4 (of 5). FH with its FHI obviously opts for parsimony over precision and must therefore logically be less nuanced than the other monitors in its reporting. Azerbaijan and Tajikistan are the countries in the sample for which the rankings show a particularly wide difference of 4 and 5 positions respectively on the scale of 1 (best) and 12 (worst) which I apply in the annexed table (Table 1). Tajikistan is a big

outlier: Whereas FH and Polity rank Tajikistan 7th, BTI ranks it 11th and EDI 10th. A personally known expert who visited Tajikistan during recent elections questions the FHI/Polity ranking as "far too positive". This fact could again point to less reliability of FHI (compare footnote 5). Azerbaijan is interesting in that it is the only country of the sample, on which every institute has a different opinion. These findings and especially the relatively positive ranking of Russia merit a separate further research effort. For the time being it seems sufficient to indicate the obviously high degree of subjectivity of country rankings by the monitors.

3. How does the work of FH, Polity IV, BTI and EDI in assessing human rights in Eurasia compare with that of other non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and multilateral organizations?

In addition to FH, Polity IV, BTI and EDI there are other non-governmental organizations with a Western base that assess the political rights and civil liberties situation in Eurasia. I think mainly of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Reporters without Borders. Of these only the latter with its limited scope of press freedom does, however, attempt to systematically compare characteristics among countries and rank the performance. The other two produce rather a compilation of observations on selective civil liberties. None of them pays wider attention to political rights questions which are an important element in the reports of the monitors.

Foremost among the globally known human rights NGOs is Amnesty International (AI). AI originated from a single act of protest in 1961 by a British journalist and considers itself today as a global "movement". In its 2013 global report it dedicates an average of about one page to every Eurasian country. The random character of its country reports compared to Freedom House, Bertelsmann Foundation, The Economist Intelligence Unit and Polity becomes obvious by the following: In only four Eurasian countries does AI assess the freedom of assembly situation (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Russia). Notwithstanding this, the AI country reports corroborate overall the respective findings of the monitors. A more in-depth qualitative analysis of observations by AI e. g. about freedom of the press would certainly make an interesting separate study.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is probably just as well-known as AI. Established in 1978 in Washington as a non-profit organization with reference to the Helsinki process, its support

base appears today, however, less global than that of AI. Its 2014 global report covers 90 countries and territories, far less than AI. HRW explains its selectiveness with a shortage of financial and personnel resources. The report has chapters on all Eurasian countries except for Moldova. As to the 11 Eurasian countries covered it shares the negative assessment of the monitors. HRW speaks of widespread "abusive majoritarianism"¹⁴.

Finally, the Reporters without Borders (RwB) report 2013 is relevant due to its assessment of press freedom as one of the civil liberties. RwB offers a global country ranking based on the performance in this field. While attesting broad media pluralism and a low level of state ownership to Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan (in this order from position 55 down to 106), the more problematic countries are Tajikistan, Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan (in this order from pos. 123 down to 177). The RwB result shows a strong correlation with the monitors concerning the 3 overall worst performers Belarus, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and concerning two of the undisputed "best" from our top group above, i. e. Georgia and Moldova.

Summing up the findings of AI, HRW, RwB, and the monitors: They show consensus only for the lowest ranked state: Uzbekistan. They agree on the grouping of the highest ranked three states Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, yet FHI has a uniquely different ranking order. The FHI and Polity IV rankings of Tajikistan appear too positive. The widest disagreement exists about Azerbaijan. For the other countries all institutes show minor, but distinct gradations and therefore a different ranking order.

Reviewing the work of UN bodies and their instruments, in particular the Universal Periodic Review implemented by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, we realize that there is no qualitative language as to the degree of democracy or autocracy, let alone a ranking effort. It is obvious that the sovereignty and peer principles prevent this. There is a great deal of material on the situation of democracy and human rights to be found in the documentation by governments and NGOs for the Universal Periodic Review.¹⁵ This

¹⁴ "Democracy has three essential components: periodic elections, the rule of law, and respect for the human rights of all. Many dictatorships fear allowing anything like free and fair elections. But authoritarian governments have also learned that it is possible to adopt the form but not the substance of democracy, permitting elections, often controlled, but nothing more. This feigned democracy rejects basic principles, such as that governments must be accountable under the rule of the law, limited by the human rights that protect minorities, and committed to allowing free and continuous public debate." HRW report 2013 p. 6

¹⁵ The following is a typical example of the euphemistic language in country reports by the UPR: Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Sixteenth session Geneva, 22 April – 3 May 2013,

information is, however, not processed in any way similar to that of the monitors. The same observations can be made about the monitoring work performed by the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (of which all 12 Eurasian countries are members) with its clear mandate for the "human dimension" and of the Council of Europe (6 Eurasian countries are members)¹⁶. The EU progress reports on the Eurasian countries with whom the European Union has agreements under the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership contain valuable observations on the state of affairs, but offer no comparative systematic reflection of political rights and civil liberties of the states in the region.¹⁷ As with United Nations bodies, one would have to scrutinize protocols of reports, meetings, review sessions etc. concerning single countries to find value judgments. And, if at all, they are phrased in a guarded diplomatic language. Similar restrictions apply to other bodies that I reviewed¹⁸. The annual US Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices¹⁹, based on information provided by US embassies abroad, are more outspoken. They are also globally unique - no other country publishes anything similar - underlining the particular importance the US attributes to the issue of human rights. Against this background, the concentration of the monitors with their claim to academic standards and of major human rights NGOs in the US gains a special foreign policy relevance. Connecting this with the discussion in the UN on humanitarian intervention and r2p since the early 2000s and what has become of these initiatives and decisions, the dividing line along values which I mentioned above becomes even more obvious.²⁰

4. How do the above findings compare with my regionally limited own experience?

Based on three years of field experience in Baku, Azerbaijan (from mid 2010 until mid 2013), with occasional visits to Georgia and Armenia, I believe that the relative ranking of political rights and civil liberties by the monitors and other NGOs for these three countries is accurate.

http://www.upr-info.org/IMG/pdf/a_hrc_wg.6_16_tkm_1_turkmenistan_e.pdf. Then compare this with the HRW submission: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/19/universal-periodic-review-joint-hrw-submission-turkmenistan-freedom-now-and-turkmen>

¹⁶ A typical example are election reports, see: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/116015>

¹⁷ EU progress reports available from: <http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm>

¹⁸ I refrain from listing all the potential institutions that have been examined as to their comparative capacity, but mention only those that I have found to be of relevance for the paper.

¹⁹ Cingranelli/Richards (CIRI) combine the results from this report with ai findings to come to their own conclusions

²⁰ see esp. Graubart, J 2013: 'R2P and Pragmatic Liberal Interventionism: Values in the Service of Interests' Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 35, 1, February 2013, pp. 69-90

I fully agree with the ranking concerning freedom of assembly, of expression and freedom from torture. As to freedom of assembly, the OSCE office in Baku has for many years tried to convince the government of Azerbaijan that it should permit protest demonstrations in the city center of Baku. With unconvincing explanations such demonstrations have not been granted permission since 2006. This contrasts distinctly with greater freedom in Tblisi and Yerevan, where opposition groups have enjoyed many opportunities to engage in protest action in the very heart of the capitals for the past few years. In downtown Baku I have witnessed on various occasions the use of police force against unarmed citizens (numbering less than 100) simply for peacefully shouting "azadliq" (freedom). The protest act was always "illegal", because the request to allow the action had been denied. These restrictions on the constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of assembly in Azerbaijan correctly lead to a worse ranking in this category than Georgia and Armenia, at least since 2012.

Freedom of expression is also clearly restricted and seems in a worse state than in Armenia and Georgia. Especially Rwb confirms this. Admittedly, there is no pre-censorship in Azerbaijan and apart from the majority of government funded newspapers, there is even some press with small circulation controlled by opposition parties. But truly independent, non-party related outlets for the public expression of political views exist only in the form of internet blogs with the limitations outlined below. With the exception of ANS-TV all other television and radio are either openly or indirectly government-controlled. And the owner of ANS who has a special status because his brother is a martyr of the war over Nagorny Karabakh, knows very well his limits after various temporary forced closures in the past. Opposition journalists and bloggers are not neutralized outright but are being clearly intimidated. Continued assurances by the President of Azerbaijan that the internet is "absolutely free", given for instance during the Internet Governance Forum in Baku in 2012, do not mean that dissidents go unpunished if they use the web for personal criticism of the President and his family or simply asking questions about where his wealth or that of the other oligarchs originates. Reliable foreign individuals who visit the three Caucasus states on a regular basis have communicated their impression that freedom of expression is farther developed in Georgia and Armenia than in Azerbaijan. Some Azeri media workers have requested and been granted preliminary political asylum in Europe.

And finally, torture is not a grave problem in Azerbaijan, but it happens, especially in police detention. This is what the head of the country's NGO dealing with the issue, has confirmed in

numerous cases. The ombudsman does not completely ignore the problem, but seems rather lenient or too weak to tackle it with true rigor. Public consciousness and the will to improve the situation appears to be higher in Georgia and Armenia. Torture was one of the topics raised during the Universal Periodic Review of Azerbaijan in 2013.²¹

As far as democratization is concerned, let me share the following anecdote indicative of the respective shortcomings. In 2010 I attended as observer the final debate on the state budget in Milli Mejlis, the parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The desks of the 125 deputies are equipped with computers for electronic voting. When voting came up for the different single budgets, the number of votes cast was always in the region between 115 and 120 votes, although I had counted only 96 deputies. Asking myself how this could be, I watched for movements on the floor and indeed, in the 15 seconds or so when voting was open, deputies walked freely between desks and voted on several computers. When later trying to get clarification of the rules of procedure, I was assured after several weeks of renewed queries that proxy voting is not permitted! Parliamentarians and government officials with whom I discussed this only shrugged their shoulders.

5. What methodology is employed, especially by FH?

Questionnaires compiled by country experts are crucial for the drafting of country studies. The questionnaires are completed with the help of NGO correspondence partners in the respective country. Sometimes additional random interviews on the ground are arranged. The monitors lay great emphasis on a fully transparent methodology. This should not surprise us given their scientific claims. Let me outline this for FH: FH describes in a detailed manner how it sources its data (see under report navigation > methodology > year). The questionnaire is posted on the web. The regularly consulted media are named in an annually updated list. The main country analysts and advisors are listed by name. They play a central role and are allegedly free to use any source of relevance they deem helpful or necessary, including citizens of the country. It is their task to draft the first version of the country assessment which is then presented to a panel for cross-checking and review. The decision on the actual score is taken by this panel and may deviate from the recommendation of the author.

²¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Highlights30April2013pm.aspx>

Notwithstanding the precise description of the process and the extensive data collected, one must, however, point to the fact that it remains unclear how the pieces of information are weighted, especially to what extent the views of consultants on the ground in the country under review enter into the equation. Their contribution is not quantified. Is their impact percentage-wise the same for all the countries? Both, in an oppressive or a "free" political environment personal grievances may impact heavily the assessment of the general situation. The "human factor" of the consultant on the ground remains an unknown variable. Its effect on the overall result, especially the ranking of the country, is therefore also unknown. I assume these effects are somehow accounted for, but the otherwise detailed FH report navigation does not say a word about it. There is furthermore the possibility that the monitors and other NGOs use the same consultants. The likelihood of this is probably higher in countries where the development level of an independent civil society is low, repression is high and therefore fewer people are ready to cooperate with Western NGOs on critical topics like human rights. If there is a common set of consultants, the human factor at that end would be less of an explanation for the differences in country rankings than in the case of multiple, unrelated consultants.

The FHI questionnaire itself gives reason for cautious criticism: Why is the qualifier "freely elected" under Political Rights C.1 included? If one denied under A.1 that there was a free election of the chief national authority, the adjective might be unnecessarily confusing. Some questions, e. g. under F.2 are grouped together, but not quite related. One can reply affirmatively to the first and negatively to the second. This makes the answer for the respondent difficult and possibly distorts the result. Despite these critical observations, I attest overall scientific seriousness to FH.²²

Political rights and civil liberties²³ are rather wide definitions. I stated above that comprehensiveness, accuracy and reliability are crucial for the work of institutions that formulate value judgements on foreign countries. Can we judge in absolute terms whether these requirements are met concerning the assessment of human rights in Eurasia? I argue that this is possible for the criterion of comprehensiveness if you take the catalogue of human rights in the UDHR as a globally adopted measure. It is relevant in this context to point out

²² For a similar critique compare Norris *ibid.* chapter 3

²³ Apart from adopting the content catalogue for both in the score card of FH, "civil liberties" is understood in the sense of individual rights as listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and "political rights" as all forms of taking part in the conduct of public affairs (see various similar definitions in *mirriam-webster*, *Lincoln University*, or *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*)

that all the above-mentioned NGOs and among the monitors especially FH lay a clear emphasis on civil liberties. FH categorizes classical civil liberties like freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom from torture²⁴ together with various other more closely defined and related rights under subsections D "Freedom of Expression and Belief", E "Association and Organizational Rights" and F "Rule of Law" of the FHI standard questionnaire. In contrast one will hardly find an examination of the "right to social security" (Art. 22), the "right to work" (Art. 23) or the "right to education" (Art. 26) of the UDHR, just to cite a few examples. With this limitation I confirm that the list of civil liberties by FH is comprehensive. I will return to this observation and possible consequences for foreign policy options in chapter 3.

Whether the accuracy criterion is met is more complicated to measure in absolute terms. Despite the transparency effort in explaining the methodology some questions remain open. But this does not imply inaccuracy. Accuracy as I understand it is measured by sticking to the scope of examination and by factual correctness. I was satisfied that FH remained within its defined context and lacked factual errors.

Reliability can, however, only be approximated by comparison, either with other monitors doing more or less the same or on a timeline. I have demonstrated the differences in country rankings among the monitors and determined this as a crucial factor hinting at unreliability. One could, of course, interject that this conclusion is unfair, because every monitor is following its own systematics and logic and is not measuring absolutely the same criteria. I do not totally deny that this may be possible, but accepting it would leave us with no answer at all to the question of reliability. Whether FH is more unreliable than the others does not matter here. If in addition there are shifts in rank or even across category borders from year to year for a country this would be a further indicator of unreliability, unless the shifts can be explained by exogenous shocks. I will return to this in chapter 2 when discussing H. Hale.

6. Conclusion

An attempt has been made to comparatively reflect the qualitative assessment of democracy and human rights in Eurasia by Western monitoring institutions, above all FH, BTI, EDI and Polity IV (the monitors). Their perception has been complemented by that of AI, HRW and RxB and personal impressions from a three-year stay in the Southern Caucasus. The

²⁴ They are stipulated both in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

methodology of FH has been examined in greater detail as a typical example of how value judgements about the situation in a particular country are reached. I have given a differentiated answer to the question whether the monitors measure political rights and civil liberties in Eurasia in a reliable, comprehensive, and accurate way. The accuracy of their work can be confirmed, the comprehensiveness also. The monitors focus on measuring civil liberties according to the UDHR catalogue in their totality, but largely ignore social rights. The most obvious weak spot is, however, the inadequacy of the ranking effort, which makes the monitors unreliable in this respect. The unfortunate result is a cacophony of opinions which causes diplomatic problems.

Freedom House, Polity IV, Bertelsmann and The Economist - two being US-American, one German with strong American ties, one British - are the only non-governmental institutions in the world dedicated to a global systematic comparative research of political rights and civil liberties with a ranking purpose.²⁵ The only state that systematically compiles data on human rights and publishes them annually is the United States of America with its US Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. No international or multinational/regional body (United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) - although they all have the issue of human rights on their agenda - makes any similar attempt. Diplomatic forms of criticizing the democratic and human rights situations in member countries can, however, be found hidden in protocols of hearings or single country reports.

The undisputed general view of the situation of political rights and civil liberties in Eurasia - disregarding the problem of individual country rankings - is that of authoritarianism and disrespect for civil liberties. No country is on the same level as an average Western democracy. As all 12 states are member states of the UN, have signed the UDHR and have democratic constitutions, they show a large gap between claim and reality. The monitors agree that there are Eurasian countries which are performing relatively better in terms of political rights and civil liberties like Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan whereas others are at the moment lagging far behind like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Belarus. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia form the middle group. The monitors jointly see Uzbekistan as the worst performer. FHI, EDI and Polity IV agree on

²⁵ A recent critique of the situation with regard to measuring civil rights globally can be found in the attempt by a Canadian centred multi-state project "Towards a Worldwide Index of Human Freedom" (2012), which is, however hardly of value for our research project as the only country from Eurasia included is Russia.

Turkmenistan as second worst. For BTI it is Tajikistan. Belarus ranks third worst for FHI and Polity IV, fourth last for BTI and fifth last for EDI. The two labels that so far - before introducing a new terminology in chapter 2 - best describe the forms of government in post-Soviet states are "competitive authoritarianism" or "full-blown authoritarian regime"²⁶. Maybe with momentary credit cautiously granted to Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, I join those who argue that after initial gains, liberal democracy is at best stagnating, at worst on the way out again in the region²⁷.

As BTI, EDI, Polity IV and FH are in consensus only on the worst performer Uzbekistan and differ for two thirds of the countries by 2 or more places in their ranking, this high degree of subjectivity raises serious questions about their reliability. If the results are due to the human factor (the role consultants play in the data collection) which is comparable for all institutes except Polity IV (which does not measure civil liberties), one would have to strongly urge a review of the methodology. Whether FHI is indeed less reliable than the other monitors as I have indicated or the others are less reliable than FHI is difficult to assess. I believe that my assumption would need to be tested on a broader basis in order to be granted significant status. I merely reiterate that especially with regard to the ranking of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, FHI is isolated and its ranking of Tajikistan seems flawed.

When analyzing the terminology used by the monitors, a certain confusion prevails. It is quite obvious, that BTI applies the term "democracy" more generously than FH with its NIT index. The category language of FH seems somewhat more rigid than that of the other monitors and judgements appear somewhat harsher. Whereas not a single Eurasian country scores higher than the third/middle rank in the NIT index, BTI puts Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine in the second best of its five categories. The most striking difference can be found in the case of Russia between BTI ("highly defective democracy") and Polity IV ("dem") on the one hand and NIT index ("consolidated autocracy") and EDI ("authoritarian regime") on the other. The language suggests a bigger difference than the numerical difference between the BTI ranking of Russia (4th best of the 12 countries) and the EDI/NIT ranking (6th best of 12 countries). Similar observations can be made in the case of Kyrgyzstan: EDI calls Kyrgyzstan a "flawed democracy", which sounds quite positive and ranks it 4th best of the 12 countries. The NIT index, however, labels Kyrgyzstan as "semi-consolidated authoritarian regime", which has

²⁶ Levitsky, S and Way, L (2002), *ibid*.

²⁷ "...the general political trend across Eurasia's eleven time zones has been away from democratic hopes toward more authoritarian, more presidential realities." Simons p. 3 (see footnote 2)

less of a positive connotation, ranking it nevertheless 5th best of the 12 countries. For BTI Kyrgyzstan is a "highly defective democracy". Part of this confusion is certainly due to the fact that "democracy" and "autocracy" are difficult to define in the first place.

Chapter 2

Some important impediments to democratization

1. Synopsis

Eurasia's development has been dependent on and largely determined by Russia for three centuries. Russian predominance in the region is still being felt today as current events in Ukraine, especially the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 show once again. It follows, therefore, to first look at Russia's democratization process and human rights practice after 1991 and to assume that this would have predetermined analogous developments in her neighboring countries. Yet, although there are certain indications to this effect, it remains far from clear that the assumption is valid.²⁸ What seems valid, on the other hand, is a reverse application of Ziblatt's emphasis on the pitfalls of studying democratization without history²⁹: The historical development as highly dependent states in Russia's periphery is doubtless one of the crucial factors in explaining the endurance of autocratic patterns. In other words, historical dependence on a focalpoint which itself used to be autocratic or dictatorial impedes democratization. Especially in the case of Central Asia, the geographical isolation is an additional impediment.

I am sympathetic to the view that the policy of de-democratization³⁰ we have witnessed since the first presidency of V. Putin in 2000, has played an important role in preventing any further advance of Western-style democracy in the region. But I see this more as copycat behavior by post-Soviet states than as taking direct orders from Moscow. The simultaneity of adopting similar repressive legislation by Azerbaijan in 2012 would make an interesting separate case

²⁸ Cameron and Orenstein, *ibid.* p. 38

²⁹ Cappocia, G and Ziblatt, D 2010 'The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for Europe and Beyond' *Comparative Political Studies* 2010 43: 931

³⁰ Tilly, C 2007 *Democracy* Cambridge University Press

study³¹. The culture of strong leaders and their self-interest in maintenance of the status quo are thus another important impediment to democratization.

I question the arguments in the European Bank's for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Transition Report 2013³² based on Lipset's modernization theory³³ and posit that the state of affairs in Eurasia rather shows the weakness of Lipset's original assumptions.³⁴ Despite major, sometimes dramatic gains of industry and services over the agricultural sector as share of the GDP and impressive growth rates, most Eurasian countries show no notable progress towards democracy so far. There is some indication then that modernization in countries without a developed middle-class might even have a reverse effect on democratization in that it gives the leaders both, new access to wealth and new manipulative tools. It seems premature on this highly speculative assumption to call modernization by itself an impediment to democratization, but the Eurasian countries offer certain indications to this effect which merit further examination.

The largest component of this chapter is dedicated to Henry E. Hale's most recent book *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*, in which he continues to develop his earlier ideas on the dynamics of patronalism as the common regime characteristic in Eurasia³⁵. His logic of informal networks of leaders and expectations about their continued leadership being the determinant factor of Eurasian regimes circumscribes the most general impediment to political rights and civil liberties: The power structure and interest of the leadership simply do not allow them.

2. The role of Russia in Eurasia

Eurasia's development has been dependent on and largely determined by Russia for three centuries. Russia was the major player in the Soviet Union and determined to a large extent the course of the Union's economic, domestic and foreign policies. One might even say that

³¹ The Azeri Parliament (Milli Mejlis), at the informally communicated behest of the presidential office, adopted several bills prohibiting the publication of ownership information on certain types of enterprises, drastically increasing penalties for participating in unauthorized protest and regulating the activities of foreign NGOs. The similarity with previously passed legislation in Russia is striking.

³² European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, available at:

<http://www.ebrd.com/pages/research/publications/flagships/transition.shtml>

³³ Lipset, M S. 1959, 'Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy' *American Political Science Review* 53: 69 - 105

³⁴ compare also Norris, *ibid.* p 80 ff

³⁵ Hale, H E 2012, 'Two Decades of Post-Soviet Regime Dynamics', *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 71-77,

due to her weight and Moscow's position at the center of the SU, Russia was de facto the only Eurasian state with the potential of a sovereign development of economic, domestic and foreign policies, executed of course mostly as SU policy. Power vacuum effects during the early stage of the 1917 Russian Revolution permitted some countries to enjoy brief interludes of independence from Moscow. But by and large, while the map of Europe was redrawn twice after the two World Wars, the borders of Eurasia hardly changed and Russia continued to shape the fate of her Eurasian neighbors formally until 1991 and is still today the main actor in the region. The current events in Ukraine prove this as much as the position Moscow takes in territorial disputes over South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transnistria. Concerning Nagorny Karabakh it seems safe to say that Russia prefers to keep the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia unresolved. This gives her continued leverage over developments in both countries and the South Caucasus as a whole. A settlement would permit the region to thrive and possibly drift away from Moscow. As to the landlocked Central Asian states, their centuries-old dependence on Russia and geographic isolation are essential parameters when trying to explain their backwardness in democratization and human rights implementation.

At the same time, it is probably safe to refute an often voiced opinion that alludes to a relationship between colonialism and imperialism: Russia has during the Tsarist Empire and in the Soviet Union until the end of WW II never been a colonial power like other European nations. Rather like the United States in the 19th century (Monroe Doctrine), she kept her expansionist ambitions to her periphery. Since the Peace Treaty of Turkmenchai between Saint Petersburg and Teheran of 1828 the southern border of Eurasia has remained largely unchanged. And even the period from 1945 until 1991, when the Soviet Union controlled large parts of Central Europe and the Balkans and communist ideology had followers from Cuba to Mozambique, is - not least due to the ideological antagonism between capitalism and communism - different from traditional colonialism and shorter lived. This argument is probably not too difficult to follow, if you look at the armed conflicts over Afghanistan between the Russian and British empires in the 19th century: Whereas Great Britain wanted to keep Russia away from her distant colony, India, Russia wanted to keep Britain out of her immediate vicinity.

After the atrocious acts of terrorism of 9/11/2001, the US, supported by other Western forces has intervened militarily in Afghanistan. For the execution of its war on terrorism there it has had to rely on the cooperation of Central Asian countries and Russia. The reduction of US

military presence or full withdrawal will lead to a complete review of US relations with Central Asia which appear to have been basically a function of the Afghan war over the last decade. This plus developments driven by the energy hunger of China and especially Turkmenistan's options to deliver gas eastwards pose new challenges for Moscow.

Cameron and Orenstein examine in an exploratory way the impact Russia has had on developments in the region after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and why "...the balance of competitive and authoritarian elements has changed over the past decade not only in Russia but in most of the other non-Baltic post-Soviet states as well."³⁶

They state:

"...in Russia and most of the other non-Baltic states formed out of the Soviet Union after its demise in 1991, despite the existence of recurring contested elections, multiple parties, and even occasional alternation of control of government, the polities retain elements of authoritarian politics - most notably, in the propensity to tilt the playing field on which elections are contested steeply in favor of the incumbents, the existence of a powerful and unchecked executive and absence of a strong and independent parliament, limits on political rights and civil liberties, and the harassment and occasionally the use of violence against opponents of the incumbents."³⁷

With regard to Central Asia Cameron/Orenstein claim: "It is not obvious that Russia needed to exert any leverage to thwart democratic ambitions in most of those states; the national leaders did that themselves—and, indeed, in most instances did so before the Russian leaders did."³⁸

Cameron/Orenstein investigate three types of linkage between Russia and her neighbors which they consider most consequential: cultural — specifically, the presence of significant numbers of persons of Russian heritage in several states; economic—specifically, the linkages created by high levels of trade openness, interdependence, and energy dependence; and international institutional — specifically, the linkages created by shared membership in international security and economic organizations.³⁹ In my opinion, the relevance of these linkages seems most striking against the backdrop of Ukraine today.

In their conclusion Cameron/Orenstein suggest:

"given the changed balance of democratic and authoritarian elements in the Russian

³⁶ Cameron and Orenstein, *ibid.* p 4

³⁷ Cameron and Orenstein, *ibid.* p 2

³⁸ Cameron and Orenstein, *ibid.* p 23

³⁹ Cameron and Orenstein, *ibid.* p 7

polity over the past two decades, the asymmetries in size and power that exist between it and the other non-Baltic post-Soviet states, the extensive historical, cultural, and economic linkages that exist between it and those states, and the new international economic and security linkages that have come into being over the past decade, if one is to understand the persistence of authoritarian or hybrid polities in the non-Baltic post-Soviet space, the reluctance of most leaders in those states to strengthen the democratic elements in their polities, and the great difficulty experienced by the few who did try to strengthen those elements, one must examine the exercise and impact of Russian leverage in its near abroad."⁴⁰

Thus, although Cameron/Orenstein modestly deny having scientifically proven causality, they have clearly given many examples of striking similarities in behavior and reasons to assume a close connection between regime processes in Russia and her periphery. These examples are persuasive in their own right. They should not be taken as conspiracy narratives, which are on the rise, as Sakwa showed in his essay on the Russo-Georgian war of 2008⁴¹. I found them, on the contrary, extremely helpful to diffuse any potential conspiracy theories.

3. No democracy despite economic growth and industrial modernization

The assumption that economic development as measured in terms of GDP per capita plays a role in driving democracy is an essential element of the EBRD transition report⁴². It sees main exceptions in "countries with large natural resource endowments, where state authorities can monopolise resource rents so as to avoid reliance on a system of broad taxation of the population - and therefore face less pressure to accept accountable representation. In addition, democratisation is less likely in the context of high inequality." The report finds evidence of this for countries in the transition region. "Those with higher levels of per capita income are more likely to democratise and less likely to experience reversals in the process. Large resource endowments are found to impede, or at least slow down, democratisation."⁴³ For Eurasia the situation is quite different, if not contrary to the basic, modernization-theory led assumption. It is even disputable that resource-rich countries are significantly less democratic than countries with few natural resources.

I have tried to illustrate my criticism with some data comparing GDP development in Eurasia for the years 1992, 2002 and 2012 with the most recent assessment by the monitors (see Table 2). I did not consider it necessary to show a timeline also for the monitor assessments in those

⁴⁰ Cameron and Orenstein, *ibid.* p 40

⁴¹ Sakwa R 2012, 'Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the 2008 Russo-Georgian War' *Russian Review* 71 Oct 2012, p 581-609

⁴² <http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/research/transition/tr13.pdf>

⁴³ EBRD Transition Report 2013, Executive Summary 2

years, because the point I want to make is simply the following: In agreement with the overwhelming literature, the encouraging initial experiments with democratization in the region since 1991 faded after the first decade of independence and gave way to renewed authoritarianism around the turn of the century. But, whereas GDP for the period 1992 until 2002 is almost stagnant and shows only some changes for a few countries, GDP between 2002 and 2012 improved dramatically across the board and the reduction of GDP percentage share of agriculture, growth of the industrial or service sectors produce typical indices of modernized economies. In short, we have per capita growth, which is the typical measure of modernization, but without democratization. As we know from other indices, to a large extent, the expansion of services represents a reinforced state bureaucracy and the little you have of an emerging middle-class is highly connected with such internal economic shifts. I am not denying that modernization has happened to some extent, but it seems to benefit mostly the elites and it gives them new powers of control to their advantage rather than strengthen democratic development.

In general, the following Eurasian states are counted as resource-rich: Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. So, they should be at the bottom of any list measuring democracy and human rights development. If you compare this conclusion, however, with the respective rankings by the monitors (see chapter 1 and the annexed table), there are at least some surprises. Uzbekistan is there, as expected and so is Turkmenistan. But resource-poor countries like Belarus and Tajikistan are worse performers than Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. And Russia, the oil and gas giant with the greatest spoils potential of our country sample is even in the middle field. So, the common wisdom about the significance of natural resources for maintaining authoritarian forms of rule does not unrestrictedly hold in Eurasia. Certainly, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are still largely command economies. But, the causality between this and their resource wealth is unclear. Resource wealth is certainly not by itself a distinctive impediment to democratization.

EBRD transition countries encompass a larger group than the post-Soviet space. They include altogether 34 countries, in addition to our sample, Central European and some southern and eastern Mediterranean states. The verdict on these is: "Many countries in the transition region have since become consolidated democracies, while others have at least made significant strides towards building robust democratic institutions, lending support to Fukuyama's assertions. However, the experience of transition in some countries has been more erratic,

with reforms stagnating or even going into reverse."⁴⁴ 12 Eurasian countries represent slightly under 30% of all transition countries. If one agrees that the democratic record of countries like Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan is also rather problematic, the number of problematic cases reaches 16 or just under half of the 34 countries the EBRD assesses. The quote above combined with this figure is very euphemistic. I think it shows that the EBRD is under the same pressure to use diplomatic language that we noted for the UN, the EU, OSCE etc.. Anyway, this optimistic view on the advance of democracy culminates in the sentence: "Between 1960 and 1990 the proportion of the world's countries that had democratic institutions fluctuated between 30 and 40 per cent. In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the figure rose to more than 60 per cent by the beginning of the 21st century, and by 2012 it exceeded 70 per cent." Applying the Polity IV score in an uncritical manner, the EBRD report transmits still today an idealistic message about democratization in Eurasia. I support Hale and others who demand that the time for a realistic assessment of the state of affairs in Eurasia has come.

4. Patronalism as overwhelming regime feature

Henry E. Hale's introductory sentence "Elections are civil war fought by nonviolent means"⁴⁵ in *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* and the allusion to America's political past hint at the important historical insight that democracy has not been achieved overnight in the West. I fully agree: We tend to ignore the logical conclusion deriving from this: Democracy might need just as much time to develop elsewhere. And we easily forget that countries in Eurasia only began experimenting with democracy one generation ago. Let me mainly give an overview of Hale's idea with intermittent commentaries of my own.

Taking elections as one of the crucial constituent components defining a body politic as "democratic", and arguing that problems with universal suffrage were only overcome in the US after the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, Hale cautions against idealism with regard to Eurasia: "...the focus on the ideal has come at the expense of understanding and anticipating the real, especially when it comes to countries newly emerging from autocratic rule. Nowhere is this more clear than with the demise of the USSR's totalitarian system, an event that arguably freed more states from dictatorship than any other of the 20th century."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ EBRD Transition Report 2013 p 2

⁴⁵ Hale, 2014 2, NB: all quotes are from a pre-draft of the still unpublished book which may have been re-edited

⁴⁶ Hale p 2

The renewed optimism in democratic progress after the color revolutions in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia was shortlived. The fluctuation in assessments suggests "to reconsider the basic assumptions and models that we use, consciously or unconsciously, to interpret and anticipate political events in Eurasia."⁴⁷

Relying for country rankings primarily on Freedom House (despite similar questions voiced in chapter 1), Hale argues that the most interesting cases in Eurasia are not Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan (fully-blown authoritarian regimes, in the terminology of Levitsky and Way) but the other 10 hybrid sovereign states⁴⁸. Concerning these countries the "initial observers were right in expecting American democracy to take root following the demise of the USSR. They just got the American democracy of Boss Tweed rather than that of the New England town meeting."⁴⁹ Stating a high degree of dynamism in the 12 non-Baltic post-Soviet states except for the Turkmen and Uzbek autocracies, Hale calls for new interpretative approaches rejecting traditional textbook descriptions and explanations of democracy. "...the real stuff of politics in countries like Russia, Georgia, or Kazakhstan is not truly captured by topics like 'participation', 'parties and elections', 'the judiciary', or 'constitutional design'..."⁵⁰ Furthermore, Hale suggests to replace assumptions based on the traditional snapshot look at annual country rankings with attempts to understand the systemic nature of dynamic patterns of moving back and forth between various stages of democratic development in the post-Soviet space. The informal "*patronalistic* dimension of politics"⁵¹ as a relationship between patron and client determined more than anything else the direction of politics, Hale opines. It has taken the shape of "hierarchical *networks* through which resources are distributed and coercion applied."⁵² More than anything else, the function of constitutions is to signal the "most likely to be patron-in-chief and to provide other focal points that help structure the way all these networks arrange and rearrange themselves...The most important distinction among patronalistic polities is whether these patronal networks are arranged in a single pyramid or multiple, usually competing pyramids."⁵³ Rallying behind the leader is natural for elites in such systems. Expectations in the leader's distributive capacity work like a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy and keep the main parameters of power unchanged. This insight should, Hale suggests, shift the focus "from the organization and instruments of authoritarian or

⁴⁷ Hale 2014 *ibid.* p. 5

⁴⁸ I consciously disregard in this essay the Baltic states and disputed territories that Hale includes

⁴⁹ Hale *ibid.* p. 5

⁵⁰ Hale *ibid.* p 7

⁵¹ Hale *ibid.* 9

⁵² Hale *ibid.* 9

⁵³ Hal *ibid.* 10

hybrid regime rule to the crucial role of expectations in driving regime coherence and breakdown...Dictators and hybrid regime presidents become vulnerable when the elites they rely upon to carry out their orders start expecting them to fall and therefore begin preparing for a future without these presidents..." and lead us to develop "a social science of expectations, a systematic study of the kind of factors that influence mass and elite expectations as to whether and when specific regime leaderships and entire political systems are likely to end."⁵⁴ Or a few pages later: "...understanding the sources of patrons' and clients' expectations, we gain predictive power and uncover dynamics and patterns of what may appear to be "autocratization," "democratization," and "revolution" that are not fully understood through more conventional approaches, including theories of democratization, autocratization, and revolution as such."⁵⁵

In line with the findings of many other scholars but adapting them to his theory, Hale makes a most relevant statement on the origins of political and economic might in Eurasia: "So what changed in 1989? Not resources or organization. The state retained a nearly complete monopoly on resource distribution while the highly refined and brutally repressive apparatus remained essentially unchanged."⁵⁶ Hale accepts that patronalism is not unique to Eurasia, but convinced that societies there show the phenomenon "in much greater measure than others".⁵⁷ I can well imagine this to be the case.

Doubting traditional theories about the function of elections and constitutions, Hale explains that they "can have major effects in highly patronalistic societies by shaping the ways in which the formalities of these very same formal institutions are *disregarded, violated, and manipulated*."⁵⁸ Despite the static appearance of the system, Hale identifies four sources of dynamism, which can be summarized as: exogenous/beyond the patron's control, endogenous/self-initiation of change by the patron, accidental miscalculation by the patron and lastly intentional risk-taking "as part of a tradeoff that would get them something else they desire more than they fear uncertainty."⁵⁹ Focusing on how constitutions and elections relate with these dynamics, Hale proposes to look at the benefits patrons get "from allowing some genuine competition"⁶⁰ in that patrons can actually prove their power through

⁵⁴ Hale 2014 *ibid.* 13

⁵⁵ Hale *ibid.* 18

⁵⁶ Hale *ibid.* 29

⁵⁷ Hale *ibid.* 32

⁵⁸ Hale *ibid.* 53

⁵⁹ Hale *ibid.* 52

⁶⁰ Hale *ibid.* 55

controlled results.

These observations on the manipulative potential of democratic institutions and instruments make a lot of sense to me and are very intriguing. They point to what I consider a trap set for Western promoters of democracy: Political science used to believe that elections in hybrid regimes were signs of weakening authoritarianism and transition to democracy, but has shifted course and lately expanded research of the hypothesis that possibly the contrary might be true, just as Hale observes here. Western policymakers have not yet realized the flipside of the coin. They continue to be driven by optimistic assessments of elections as a step in the right direction. Therefore they tend to support foreign election observer missions in genuinely non-democratic states, not realizing that for the authoritarian regimes they are just another calculated risk. The regime has all the tools to repackage the observation exercise for its domestic audience as reassurance of its leadership - the threat to its authority emanating from a minor part of the population that can read between the lines of the diplomatically worded final assessment by the observers is negligible. To the outside world observer missions are also more a signal of legitimacy than anything else. The common political wisdom that for example an OSCE election observation works as a driver of change is, therefore, highly debatable. It may sound paradoxical, but given the inherent regime dynamics, the more authoritarian a regime is, the less foreign observation makes sense. A good point on this can be made concerning the parliamentary elections in Turkmenistan 2013. If one follows Hale's argument to its logical conclusion, election observation in highly patronalistic regimes can be considered generally counterproductive in that it strengthens the incumbent elites.

Patrons are presidents or prime ministers, governors or other regional leaders, businessmen or other influential people who have been able to build up powerful informal networks. Eurasian patrons secured their political or economic influence or both together and one through the other mostly during the demise of the Soviet Union. The nuances are less important than the commonalities - most "...oligarchs rose through the private sector..."⁶¹ Nevertheless, Hale distinguishes some group characteristics.

Even in Hale's account, the two countries at the bottom of the monitors' ranking (chapter1), are grouped together as most problematic: "A subset of post-Soviet regimes cannot be called hybrid and instead must be classified as full dictatorships for the whole period since at least

⁶¹ Hale 2014 *ibid.* 80

the mid-1990s: Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan."⁶² Hale points to two particularities:

- Communist Party structure was not fundamentally disrupted during transition to independence.⁶³
- they were also "quickest and furthest" in establishing single-pyramid system.⁶⁴

"A second set of patronal presidential cases includes those that continued to allow at least some genuine opposition to exist and even compete in presidential elections, but experienced no significant competing-pyramid phase after the establishment of patronal presidential institutions and their initial single-pyramid systems in the mid-late 1990s. The leaders of these territories, including Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, have one important trait in common: They have never encountered the lame duck syndrome since their patronal presidential systems were firmly established."⁶⁵

The third group are countries with "patronal presidential networks that have survived moments of succession since the late 1990s through 2012"⁶⁶, namely Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

A fourth group are Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan where Hale sees a very similar development up to a certain point for most of the period since sovereignty.

"Georgia represents the sole country where it is plausible to argue that an exertion of patronal leadership went at least part of the way to reducing the degree to which patronalistic relations dominated the nexus of state, society, and economy."⁶⁷

Moldova is the only country with a "lone parliamentarist constitution"⁶⁸ and was the first to be accepted into the Council of Europe, as early as 1995. It was a single-pyramid system during the 2000s that had developed fairly substantially but this was disrupted by events in 2009 and the ouster of Voronin. Today it has no single-pyramid system.

Hale denies that there is only one explanation for single pyramid systems, because they exist in impoverished, hydro-carbon rich, ethnically homogeneous, heterogeneous, unified or

⁶² Hale 2014 *ibid.* 192

⁶³ Hale *ibid.* 102

⁶⁴ Hale *ibid.* 134

⁶⁵ Hale *ibid.* 195

⁶⁶ Hale *ibid.* 211

⁶⁷ Hale *ibid.* 251

⁶⁸ Hale *ibid.* 102

fractious political elites cultures. What, however is undeniable is that "leadership skill mattered a great deal in the first post-Soviet power struggles."⁶⁹ At the same time, patronal systems are not just "Soviet rule in new guise".

Let me conclude this summary of what I consider the most important findings in Hale's book with a few evaluative remarks. What Hale calls dynamism does not instill hope. He presents a rather bleak outlook of de facto stagnation. Even when change of personae and institutions occurs, the underlying structure remains. There are only two hopes ("short-term avenues" is a term Hale used in a direct communication with the author): a) the emergence of a true democratic leader or b) a replacement of the presidentialist constitution by a divided executive one. He sees none of them as very likely to materialize, with slightly better chances for the latter. This outlook will probably not demotivate human rights promoters of all camps. For politicians who consider the risk of a longterm view on developments it is very discouraging. Progress will probably not happen in their lifetime. And, as normally only foresters think in such timespans, this poses a great challenge for politicians. We will see in chapter 3 whether nevertheless some suggestions for new approaches can be made.

While being impressed with the comprehensive compilation of compelling facts, agreeing with Hale's findings in general and the logic of the demand for developing a theory of expectations I see difficulties in its implementation. I ask myself what the observable elements of the forecast and the framework might be that Hale's theory suggests. Two come to mind right away. More will still have to be developed:

- Looking at how/by whom in the patronal network (repressive) legislation is introduced, adopted and implemented might provide us with answers. Parliaments are part of the democratic theater, but should be taken as important parts of the stage performance for the same reasons Hale gives concerning elections and constitutions.
- Monitoring closely the state media and media of contesting elites seems promising as well. In Soviet times they were also considered an indicator of potential change. Dissident media are less relevant in societies with strong leaders and underdeveloped civil society.

There remains the question of how one concretizes the variables and fits them in a matrix to achieve the objective of predicting change. But this apparent difficulty should not discourage one from trying. And what Hale has already achieved with his theory is the following: It

⁶⁹ Hale 2014 *ibid.* 144

comes closer to describing the underlying and essential regime characteristics in Eurasia than different shades of authoritarianism disguised with ever-changing adjectives that do not really communicate a clear picture. It will be interesting to see how the inevitable competition between these two different descriptive approaches in political science will develop over the next years.

5. Conclusion

Democracy has huge difficulties to take roots in Eurasia. Russia's own problems with granting her citizens political rights on the scale of Western democracies and permitting civil liberties combined with the continuing influence she exerts in her periphery are among the essential impediments to democratization and human rights implementation in the region. Current events in Ukraine attest to this as much as other examples of regional Russian interventionism after 2000. The assertion that all the countries might be more prone to democracy in a different neighborhood (if they had a common border with a consolidated democracy) is safe but futile: No country can choose its neighbors or make its own history undone. In addition to the geographical element there is the overwhelming characteristic of patrimonial regime tendencies that impedes democratization. As Hale makes convincingly clear it is a fully functional system, deeply embedded in regional traditions and cultures and therefore hard to overcome. Its dynamics are there to stay for a longer time than democratization promoters would wish. Modernization theory does somehow not apply to Eurasia, neither is the assertion convincing that resource-rich countries are more resilient to democratization than countries without natural wealth. Causalities remain an unresolved mystery in both areas.

Chapter 3

The burden of values and how to deal with it

1. Synopsis

This chapter builds on the two previous ones - chapter 1 showing that most Eurasian governments neither implement democratic norms nor grant civil liberties, chapter 2 explaining some essential impediments - and links them with political ethics and challenges for the Western policymaker to find an effective approach to the region. I assume that Western foreign policy towards Eurasia is driven by a genuine interest to help it improve the

shortcomings mentioned above. The notable differences between Western states in public intensity of projecting democracy and human rights goals in the region and of the capacity to implement them, with the US leading in both respects, are not in my focus. Rather, I want to discuss in a speculative way the question how, given the conditions in Eurasia, the promotion of values by the West can realistically be reconciled with the pursuit of interests. Civil society groups articulating human rights or trade and business concerns are active players and governments do not decide alone. Some possible concerns in this context are: Can Western policymakers take the long view on change in Eurasian countries if their constituencies expect fast results? Is promotion of rule of law less value-loaded and therefore less antagonistic than an emphasis on civil liberties?

2. The risks of the question

Some may misunderstand the questions asked in this chapter as inopportune value relativism. Such criticism can be expected from people with different backgrounds, for ideational or ideological reasons or because they do not recognize the dimension of the time factor for democratic development in Eurasia. In order to be absolutely clear: I do not suggest to sacrifice our enlightened Western values. Quite on the contrary, I want to contribute to their universal acceptance. But, this implies continuous criticism of the West by the West. If we lose that quality, we lose the moral highground. This process includes asking questions as provocative as the following: Is patronism/authoritarianism in Eurasia a threat to the West? Does anything that emanates from Russia or the other Eurasian states claim the same global relevance as the Western value system? Does humanitarian interventionism help to promote values? It was in 2005, with "r2p" high on the agenda at the UN, when the winner of the Peace Nobel Prize, Shirin Ebadi, stated: "You can certainly not bring human rights to the people by dropping bombs on them....Democracy and human rights can only be implemented with and by the will of the people, not against them."⁷⁰

3. Western hegemony over values and impatience with democratization

Let us consider for a moment current global dividing lines along political regimes and human rights in terms of political ethics. The German philosopher Otfried Höffe warns of the danger that "civilizing hegemony violates the self-esteem of other cultures"⁷¹ and that "the

⁷⁰ Ebadi, Shirin: fifth speech in the world ethos series *Der Beitrag des Islam zu einem Weltethos*, 20th Oct 2005, Tübingen, *weltethos.org* translated by the author

⁷¹ Höffe, O 2004, *Wirtschaftsbürger, Staatsbürger, Weltbürger: Politische Ethik im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*, CH Beck 174 "zivilisatorische Hegemonie die Selbstachtung der anderen Kulturen verletzt" this and the following quotes translated by the author

developing civilizing framework does not consist of 'pure modernity' in the normative sense. Instead of owning science, economics and democracy in their pure shape, we find them mixed with interests of the language and cultural space, the national economy, perhaps with certain business interests only. Globalization is, however, legitimate only in the purest form: a Europe, which is preceded by de-Europeanization, respectively a West preceded by de-Westernization."⁷² At a later point in his text, Höffe further sharpens his argument: Modernization must avoid becoming subtle colonialization and therefore rid its civilizing framework from particular Western elements.

Some may find this too abstract, even be offended and oppose the thought, but I am convinced the observation points to a core element of the West's relationship - not only - with Eurasia. It is for example undeniable that the West, above all the US has invested huge sums in democracy promotion in post-Soviet states. Recipients of this material support with the goal of strengthening civil society groups as a vocal element against established elites were mainly NGOs of all kinds. From a participatory background this is perfectly legitimate. It is also peaceful. But it runs against prevailing power structures and threatens traditional interests in those countries. It should therefore not have come as a surprise that the funding was perceived as a foreign threat and eventually met with the reaction we see today in legislation restraining activities of "foreign agents" from Russia to Azerbaijan. Given the logic and mechanism of Eurasian regimes it is only surprising that the reaction took so long.

Another observation by Höffe, helpful for the argument I am trying to make and supporting what Hale, Simons and others have claimed, concerns the time factor: "Not last, one has to give other cultures time for their (normative) modernization. What the West learned in the course of many centuries, must not be expected from others over night. One may, however, expect that they, nautically spoken, set the right course and stay it, even under difficult circumstances."⁷³

⁷² Höffe, *ibid.* 175 "...., daß der sich entwickelnde Zivilisationsrahmen nicht aus einer im normativen Sinn <<reinen Modernität>> besteht. Statt die Wissenschaft, die Wirtschaft und die Demokratie in Reinform zu besitzen, finden wir sie durch Interessen eines Sprach- und Kulturraums, durch die einer <<nationalen>> Volkswirtschaft, vielleicht sogar bloß durch die Interessen gewisser Unternehmen durchmischt. Globalisierungslegitim ist aber lediglich die Reinform: ein Europa, dem eine Enteuropäisierung bzw. ein Westen, dem eine Entwestlichung vorangeht."

⁷³ Höffe, *ibid.* 175 "Nicht zuletzt muß man anderen Kulturen für ihre (normative) Modernisierung Zeit lassen. Was der Westen im Verlauf vieler Jahrhunderte gelernt hat, darf man von anderen nicht von heute auf morgen erwarten. Verlangen darf man freilich, daß sie, nautisch gesprochen, den richtigen Kurs einschlagen und ihn auch unter schwierigen Bedingungen halten."

We can nicely combine the first part of this latter remark with the thoughts on "Ungleichzeitigkeit" (non-synchronism of the material/physical and immaterial/mental development of a people) about which Ernst Bloch theorized in the 1930's. Applied to international relations, "Ungleichzeitigkeit" as I see it circumscribes a situation arising from co-existence in the present of peoples whose value systems are either in the present or the past - according to Western norms! Citizens of a Eurasian country may well wear all the insignia of modernity and Western civilization, but their political and historical understanding may still be more determined by the 19th century. This situation can become conflictive, if expectations concerning the others and their behavior are based exclusively on one's own background and completely disregard the others' cultural framework. It can become conflictive as an interstate (West vs. Eurasia) and as an intrastate (within the Western country) issue. Both aspects are relevant for speculations on policymakers' options. Eurasian governments will probably be pleasantly surprised, if civil liberties demands are suddenly toned down. The Western government taking this step, will, on the other hand, face flak from human rights pressure groups. These, like other special interest groups, tend to raise demands characterized more by their idealism than by their realism. They normally expect short-term change and have little understanding of long-term restraints. If I interpret Hale's reasoning correctly, he criticizes political science as well as policymakers for unrealistic assumptions as to the basic trajectory and the speed of developments in Eurasia. Being over-ambitious may actually be harmful.

As to the emphasis of the monitors on civil liberties over social rights, one side effect is the alienation of potential allies for reconciling the global rift over the issue of human rights. If the West were more receptive to discussing social rights or if it tried to identify more issues of common concern this might possibly lead to improvements in the West - Rest relationship. Germany which is currently (period 2013 - 2015) a member of the UN Human Rights Council, decided to focus attention on three key areas: access to safe drinking water and sanitation, the right to adequate housing and the fight against human trafficking. One will have to wait and see how far this gets us.

Chapter 1 has shown how differently the monitors rank countries. The West might argue that this is only indicative of lively pluralism of institutions and opinions democracies with a self-conscious civil society can be proud of. The countries at the receiving end do not understand this reasoning. For them it is simply annoying and furthermore provides them with

ammunition to defame the entire exercise. If the West fails to apply to Eurasia the laws of time and geography which have played a crucial role in the development of its own democracies, this borders on hypocrisy. Let us not forget the paradox that the United States of America as predominant occupation power of Germany after WW II oversaw the drafting of the German basic law and its human rights catalogue with the prohibition of racial discrimination more than a decade before the civil rights legislation entered into force in the US. Only then was one of the minimum requirements of a democracy according to Schumpeter, universal suffrage, fully realized in the US. Another interesting example can be found in the German penal code: It took democratic Germany 45 years until 1994 to abolish article 175 which made sexual acts between consenting adult males a punishable offense. Against this backdrop, it seems ridiculous to demand from a state with an Islamic orientation like Azerbaijan to permit a Gay Parade during the Eurovision Song Contest in 2012.

4. Seven recommendations to the policymaker

In Eurasia, the Western policymaker is confronted with an informal power network headed by patrons working pro forma on the basis of constitutional norms, but de facto outside of them. As Hale has demonstrated, for most of the countries in the region there is no likelihood of substantial change in the foreseeable future. Höffe would probably conclude that they are not on the right course. Unsuccessful democratization and the dismal human rights situation in most post-Soviet states force the policymaker into a confrontational point of departure of dealing with their governments simply because this is a natural reflex in Western genes and society expects it. Besides vocal human rights organizations there are, of course, other groups in Western states trying to influence the course of foreign policy, the most important among them being organized business. Its representatives tend to propose a docile, more accommodating course towards authoritarian regimes assuming this allows them better market entry or, if they are already represented, helps them maximize their profits. This attitude is easier to understand concerning foreign direct investments than concerning exports, because the risks are higher. I would argue that a prestigious product sells even if the manufacturer is not overly friendly towards the buyer. Oligarchs love status symbols like cars and watches. As for investors, I have noticed that they are quite open to the argument that human rights and business interests are not incompatible. It is actually easy to convince them that a system based on rule of law would serve them as foreign investors just as well. In Germany at least, this understanding seems to be growing. The situation is, of course, different from country to country what explains why you have foreign policy nuances among

the 28 EU-members that need to be mitigated and which very often lead to a policy of the least common denominator.

The cacophonous country rankings confuse the policymaker more than give him guidance. If Hale's suggestions find followers and his terminology is eventually applied to replace current country characterizations, this cacophony might fade. But, in general, how can the West set the tone for dealing with Eurasian countries? Human rights interest groups expect Western officials to be publicly chiding or even sanctioning the regimes for their violations of civil liberties. If officials don't give in to this pressure, are they betraying aspirations of nascent civil society? Does this mean they are too cozy with business?

Based on the findings in this essay, I conclude with seven recommendations that outline a potential middle path:

1. Always think Russia! The sovereignty of states in Russia's periphery is de facto limited. Sustainable relations with the Eurasian neighbors of Russia can only be shaped with her, not against her. This cautious attitude is at odds with a principled stance on state independence, but serves the interests of the countries better.
2. Get your bearings right! There are some Eurasian countries where democratization looks a little bit more promising (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan) which seem to "stay course" in Höffe's terms. But, you are still basically dealing with patrons who have a very different understanding of and relationship with the formal state institutions that are the norm in your own country. Analyze your opportunities on the basis of their logic not yours.
3. Respect the leaders and work with them! They are ruling their countries without the legitimacy that you can claim, but they represent sovereign member states of the UN just like yourself. If they pretend to be democratic, be honest that you don't believe them, but reassure them it does not affect your respect. If they deny human rights abuses, be courageous to show them your misgivings, but don't let this spill over in your public rhetoric.
4. Don't play their games! Avoid currying favor with them, one of the most recent examples of typical such behavior being that of German National Olympic Committee chairman, Thomas Bach, when he praised president Putin after Sochi for his

"extraordinary efforts at the Games"⁷⁴. Prestigious international sports (Sochi) or cultural (Eurovision Song Contest in Baku 2012) events do not help democratization and human rights implementation.

5. Work through leaders, not with civil society against them! Civil society is weak and will remain so for the foreseeable future. If change comes, it will come from the top. At the same time do nothing to strengthen the position of leadership against civil society. Remain on good speaking terms with both, but consider the government the more important partner for shaping the country's future. Cooperate on fields that are less antagonistic than civil liberties. Highlight the advantages of a rule of law culture.
6. Strengthen democratic institutions, beginning with the judicative! For the time being they are very often only part of the Potemkin village. But they have the potential to develop in the long term their own dignity and by that establish their independent relevance. Sympathy for the rule of law must gain prominence over the law of the strongest. The patrons must recognize that this is their best protection against arbitrariness of their successors.
7. Be wary of invitations! International conferences and congresses in non-democratic states are more often than not only image-creating exercises. You can in no way control the media coverage of your visit and the perception in the country and you may be abused for the purposes of a regime with whom you have little in common.

⁷⁴ Hertzinger R 'Thomas Bachs peinliche Lobhudelei für Putin' Die Welt, 24 Feb 2014

Democracy Rankings Eurasia

Table comparing Freedom House Index (FHI), Nations in Transit (NIT), Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), Economist Democracy Index (EDI)
Year 2012

Country Name	FHI		NIT						BTI		EDI								
	Rank (calculated with NIT scores)	Aggregate Score	Political Rights	Civil Liberties (CL)	D ^{*1}	E ^{*2}	F ^{*3}	Score	Score	Rank	Rank	Category 2.3 ^{*4}	Category 2.4 ^{*4}	Category 3.4 ^{*5}	Category 3.4 ^{*6}	General Rank	Rank within Region	Political Participation	
Armenia	4	4.5 PF	5	4	8	6	6	5.36	5	66	5	5	4	4	6	4.09	114	5	3.89
Azerbaijan	9	5.5 NF	6	5	4	2	4	6.64	-7	85	8	4	4	4	4	3.15	139	7	3.33
Belarus	10	6.5 NF	7	6	3	1	1	6.71	-7	101	9	3	3	3	2	3.04	141	8	3.89
Georgia	1	3.0 PF	3	3	12	7	7	4.75	6	58	3	7	6	6	6	5.53	93	3	5
Kazakhstan	8	5.5 NF	6	5	5	3	4	6.57	-6	79	7	4	4	4	4	2.95	143	9	3.33
Kyrgyzstan	5	5.0 PF	5	5	9	5	4	5.96	1	76	6	7	7	6	4.69	106	4	5	
Moldova	2	3.0 PF	3	3	11	8	8	4.82	8	43	1	7	7	7	6.32	67	1	5.56	
Russia	6	5.5 NF	6	5	6	4	3	6.21	4	60	4	4	4	4	5	3.74	122	6	5
Tajikistan	7	5.5 NF	6	5	5	4	3	6.25	-3	117	11	3	3	3	4	2.51	151	10	2.22
Turkmenistan	12	7.0 NF	7	7	2	0	1	6.93	-9	116	10	1	1	1	1	1.72	161	12	2.22
Ukraine	3	3.5 PF	4	3	10	8	7	4.86	7	55	2	5	6	6	5.91	80	2	5.56	
Uzbekistan	12	7.0 NF	7	7	1	0	0	6.93	-9	123	12	2	2	2	2	1.72	161	12	2.78

Table 1

*1 Freedom of Expression and Belief
Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression?
Are religious institutions and communities free to practice their faith and express themselves in public and private?
Is there open and free private discussion?
Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free of extensive political indoctrination?

*2 Associational and Organizational Rights
Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?
Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

*3 Rule of Law (Prohibition of Torture)
Is there an independent judiciary?
Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Are police under civilian control?
Is there protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile or torture, whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies?
Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

*4 Freedom of Assembly
To what extent can individuals form and join independent political parties or civic groups? To what extent can these groups associate and assemble freely?

*5 Freedom of Expression
To what extent can citizens, organizations, and the mass media express opinions freely?

*6 Rule of Law
To what extent are civil rights guaranteed and protected, and to what extent can citizens seek redress for violation of these rights?

Table 2

GDP Development in Connection with Monitor Rankings														
Country	GDP Breakdown by Sector (percent)*			GDP per capita PPP (USD)*			Total GDP nominal (billions of USD)*			CPI 2013*	Freedom House Rating	Polity IV Rating	Bertelsmann Transformation Index	
	Sector	1992	2002	2012	1992	2002	2012	1992	2002	2012	2013	2012	2014	
Armenia	Agriculture	31	26	22	341	780	3351	1.272	2.376	9.95	36	2	5	5.35
	Industry	39	39	33										
	Services	30	35	45										
Azerbaijan	Agriculture	29	15	5	712	753	7383	4.991	6.236	66.604	28	1	-7	3.92
	Industry	40	50	63										
	Services	32	35	31										
Belarus	Agriculture	24	12	10	1732	1481	6726	17.022	14.594	63.267	29	1	-7	3.93
	Industry	48	37	44										
	Services	29	51	46										
Georgia	Agriculture	53	21	9	730	735	3632	3.691	3.395	15.747	49	2	6	6.5
	Industry	24	24	23										
	Services	23	55	68										
Kazakhstan	Agriculture	27	9	5	1663	1699	12455	24.906	24.636	203.52	26	1	-6	3.85
	Industry	45	39	39										
	Services	29	53	56										
Kyrgyzstan	Agriculture	39	38	20	490	321	1183	2.316	1.605	6.474	24	2	7	5.8
	Industry	38	23	26										
	Services	23	39	54										
Moldova	Agriculture	51	24	13	562	419	2064	2.319	1.661	7.252	35	2	8	7.15
	Industry	31	23	17										
	Services	18	53	70										
Russia	Agriculture	7	6	4	3292	2372	14178	460.205	345.11	2014.774	28	1	4	4.4
	Industry	43	33	36										
	Services	50	61	60										
Tajikistan	Agriculture	27	25	26	359	191	953	1.909	1.221	7.632	22	1	-3	3.6
	Industry	46	39	26										
	Services	27	36	48										
Turkmenistan	Agriculture	11	22	15	680	1891	6469	3.201	4.462	35.164	17	1	-9	2.78
	Industry	12	42	48										
	Services	78	36	37										
Ukraine	Agriculture	20	15	9	1522	880	3872	73.942	42.392	176.308	25	2	6	6.1
	Industry	51	35	30										
	Services	29	51	61										
Uzbekistan	Agriculture	35	34	19	640	390	1801	12.953	9.687	51.112	17	1	-9	2.85
	Industry	36	22	32										
	Services	29	44	49										

*GDP Breakdown and total GDP Figures from the World Bank

*GDP per capita figures are from the IMF

*CPI = Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International

*Polity IV by the Center for Systemic Peace

Acknowledgements

The fellowship at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs while in Harvard during the academic year 2013/2014 has been a unique opportunity to reflect on human rights issues that have played such an important role in many phases of my professional career, especially while living in Pretoria, Havana and Baku and looking at the outside world from my offices in Bonn or Berlin. I am grateful to my employer for providing me with this opportunity and to the Weatherhead Center and its great hospitality personified by Kathleen Molony. The execution of this essay would not have been possible without my research assistant Peter della Rocca, who made some valuable content proposals and whose technical assistance was indispensable. Invaluable scholarly input has been contributed by Professor Pippa Norris from the Harvard Kennedy School (fall term course "Democratization") and Professors Tim Colton (spring term course "Comparative Politics of Eurasia") and Thomas Simons Jr. (spring term course "Post-Communist Central Asia and the Caucasus"), both from the Department of Government of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Beyond participating as auditor in their courses I have enjoyed the privilege of discussing my project with them. I thank Professor Henry E. Hale for granting me permission to quote from his still unpublished new book. My final thanks goes to my wife, Corinna, for supporting and excusing me whenever I focussed on the work connected with this paper.

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