This paper reconsiders Barrington Moore’s work on the historical emergence of democracy in the light of the democratization of Soviet-type regimes. It evaluates the impact of Moore’s major critics -- Skocpol; Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens; Therborn; and Luebbert -- on the continuing relevance of his work. This is considered both in terms of the so-called Moore thesis -- “No bourgeoisie, no democracy” -- and the more elaborate concomitant variation formulation of the relationship between bourgeois strength and democracy. The paper concludes that the Moore thesis remained valid in skeleton form until the events of 1989. It then proceeds to a discussion of the collapse of state socialism and its replacement by liberal democracy in parts of Eastern and Central Europe. It tries to make sense of how democracy emerged in a region in which the bourgeoisie had been eliminated and what this means for the continued relevance of the Moore thesis in Europe.

Barrington Moore’s *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* continues to have an enduring impact in both sociology and political science more than forty years after its publication.\(^1\) It was central to several earlier literatures on phenomena as diverse as revolution, peasant politics, and the breakdown of democracy.\(^2\) The contemporary

\(^{1}\) Moore 1966.

staying power of the book is due to the continuing importance of issues of regime and regime change in the social sciences.  

The main dependent variable in *Social Origins* is the political systems adopted by modern states -- liberal democracy, fascist dictatorship, and communist dictatorship. The rise of all three is tied to revolutionary paths out of traditional society – bourgeois revolution, “revolution from above,” and peasant revolution. In its parsimonious structural explanation of the path that several major nations took to modernity, it has strongly contributed to recent debates on structure and agency in the current literature on democratization.

Despite the fact that the argument contained in the book is more complex, *Social Origins* is often summarized by one of the many propositions offered by Moore: “No bourgeois, no democracy.” Dubbed the “Moore thesis,” this formulation is a statement of necessary condition -- absent the presence of a bourgeoisie, democracy will not emerge. The book, however, outlines a far more substantial argument concerning the emergence of modern regimes. This argument, structured according to a logic of concomitant variation, holds that variations in the strength of the bourgeoisie opens different paths to modernity via different revolutionary means for overcoming the residual power of feudal structures.

This article begins with summary of the concomitant variation version of Moore’s thesis. It will then review several critical rejoinders to it and consider the ramifications of these critiques for the Moore thesis as necessary condition and in its full-blown version.

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3 Mahoney 2003.

4 Moore 1966 :418.
Finally, the paper will consider what recent cases of democratization in Eastern Europe mean for both versions given that democratization in this region was accomplished absent a bourgeoisie. My purpose here is to understand the temporal limitations of Moore and how democratization was possible with no bourgeoisie.

**Moore’s Argument**

The central dependent variable in *Social Origins* is the regime form taken by several of the world’s major powers in their path from traditional to modern society. Moore draws his inference from the experience of eight countries -- Great Britain, France, the United States, China, Japan, India, Russia and Germany.\(^5\) He defends his case selection on the basis that it includes the world’s most innovative and powerful countries whose paths to modernity shaped those taken by less significant countries.\(^6\)

The dependent variable itself is trichotomous. The regime forms that emerge are democracy, fascism, and communism. The main independent variable is the strength of the bourgeoisie.\(^7\) In countries in which the bourgeoisie is strong enough to substantially

\(^5\) Moore does not present casework on Germany and Russia in but knew both cases in great detail (see Moore 1950, 1954, 1978). His account of India treats it as an anomaly where democracy managed to emerge without (and at the cost of) modernity. This account clearly needs updating, but this is not the place for that.

\(^6\) Moore 1966: xix.

\(^7\) This summary presents Moore’s argument at a high level of abstraction. At the level of the individual cases the book contains a richer causal level that discusses whether the relative bourgeois strength and how this affects the relationship between peasants and lords. For those interested in discussion of Moore’s richer causal logic Skocpol’s
weaken the economic structures of feudalism, democracy emerges (see figure 1 below for a visual summary of the narrative argument). However, it is not the direct action of the bourgeoisie that is decisive in Moore’s theory. The strength of the bourgeoisie has a definitive effect upon how rural upper classes and the peasantry approach politics. Where the bourgeoisie is strong enough, the aristocracy is able to adapt itself to the emerging structures of the market economy and competitive politics. Agricultural labor also comes to be regulated by the market, allowing for both commercial success and control of rural populations (although not without considerable human costs).

Figure 1 here

In Germany and Japan, the bourgeoisie was weaker than in the cases above. The Stein-Hardenberg reforms, and both Bismarck’s and the Meiji “revolutions from above” focused and accelerated the pace of industrialization in these societies. Such measures included standardization of the legal code and enhanced enforcement by the state, reduction of internal barriers to trade, the creation of modern professional armies and national education systems, and the promotion of a unified national identity. In both countries the landed upper classes continued to be politically dominant into the modern era. They cemented a political alliance committed to a program of a militarism, nationalism, and expansionism in which the bourgeoisie was a willing junior partner. This alliance protected large estate agriculture and nascent industry with tariffs. The state also kept wages low by thwarting the attempts of the working classes to organize.

summary of the fourteen main independent variables used in the cases is invaluable (1994: 32).

Democracy ultimately failed in these cases because of the upper class’ inability to defend its interests without dictatorial enforcement of a labor repressive accumulation. The result was fascism.

In countries like Russia and China, where the bourgeoisie was even weaker, modernity was achieved even later under a communist dictatorship that emerged following a peasant-based revolution. In these societies both conventional modernization and “revolution from above” failed. Attempts at reform had the effect of undermining traditional modes of peasant control and replacing them with ineffective forms of state control. Such failures both undermined the power of the rural ruling classes and exacerbated peasant grievances against landlords, creating a peasantry with revolutionary potential.

**State and Class**

One of the earliest critical discussions of Moore was offered in 1973 by Theda Skocpol. The main thrust of her criticism was that Moore ignored the role of the state and its connection to the power of landed elites. She articulated this critique through commentary on several of Moore’s cases.\(^9\)

In the case of England, Skocpol argues that the initial effect of the revolution was to diminish prospects for industrialization and democratization because it promoted cooperation between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie out of fear of radicalism. The contribution of the English revolution in the long run was to weaken the trend toward a centralized, bureaucratic absolutist state, which meant that the nobility did not have the

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\(^9\) Skocpol 1994.
power of a modern state or a standing army at its disposal to stave off challenges to its power in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{10}

In her discussion of Germany and Japan, Skocpol confirms the centrality of “revolution from above led by officials drawn from the upper classes. However, in Japan she contends that the state bureaucracy, staffed by a service cadre of landless samurai, was independent of traditional land owners and modernized against their will and interests. She argues that this bureaucratic autonomy from landed interests made the Meiji agenda of modernization possible.\textsuperscript{11}

Ultimately Skocpol’s criticism of Moore centers on an underappreciation of the role of the state in “late developing” countries. Early modernizers have a decided advantage in interstate struggles, and responding to such to international pressure is critical to understanding political developments in Germany and Japan. Both used centralized state power to create a modern military capable of defending their territory as well as the interests of their ruling classes. In contrast, England’s early modernization and insular geography helped to promote democracy. Its nobility was able to adapt to commercial farming on the basis of local power rather than state coercion.

Does Moore really underplay the state to the extent to which Skocpol charges? With regard to the effect that international competition has in pressuring states to modernize, Skocpol acknowledges that Moore looks at bourgeois revolution, “revolution from above”, and communism as successive stages for achieving modernity. And within the cases Moore does talk about how foreign pressure motivates reform. Where the

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid :38-9.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid :42-3.
criticism is more telling is in the internal effects of the state. She is right to point out that Moore does not systematize this dimension in the same way that he does class relations and that in many of his cases the discussion of the choices made would be enriched or improved by more systematic comparisons of the state, its organization, and its role in modernization.

In this regard Moore probably overstates the causal effects of direct class-based political action and underestimates the impact of the development of autonomous state power within societies. While all this is a useful corrective, it by no means invalidates his thesis in its necessary condition form. Even in those cases where Skocpol contests Moore’s causal logic, democracy did not emerge in the absence of a bourgeoisie. And in terms of the Moore’s more elaborate argument, Skocpol’s criticism leads to question as to why the level of bourgeois strength translates into the different paths, but not the basic disposition of the cases or whether the class power and interests are integral to the outcomes in question.

**Bourgeois Revolution and Democracy**

Goran Therborn’s work on the rise of democracy and its relationship to capitalism also challenges Moore. Therborn acknowledges *Social Origins* as a precursor to his own work, but disagrees on the significance of bourgeois revolutions with regard to the timing of the establishment of democracy:

… [N]one of the great bourgeois revolutions established bourgeois democracy. It is not only true of the early Dutch and English revolutions… [T]he democratic constitution produced by the French Revolution remained a dead letter from beginning to end of its brief
existence. …The American Republic was established by white propertied gentlemen, and the only blacks enfranchised by the Civil War were male northerners.\textsuperscript{12} 

Therborn reminds us that bourgeois revolution and the emergence of capitalism has been associated with forms of rule that fall short of democracy.\textsuperscript{13} To remedy this defect in our understanding he explores what led to the creation of democracy in sixteen core capitalist countries. By examining the causal patterns in this sample, he differentiates five different paths to democracy: 1) through defeat in war, 2) through national mobilization, 3) as a by-product of national mobilization, 4) through the independence of petit bourgeois social forces, and 5) through a divided, but unthreatened, ruling class.

In his discussion of these paths, Therborn shows that capitalism and democracy did not emerge in harmony, but in contradiction to each other. Even though Moore shows that bourgeois ascendance opens the path to democracy, Therborn finds no case in which a united bourgeoisie pushed for democracy on the basis of its interests. In cases where the bourgeoisie was divided on democracy and lower classes did pose a significant threat to the ruling classes, democracy emerged in an evolutionary fashion. In most other cases a range of other class actors, sometimes in league with the bourgeoisie and just as often facing its opposition, provided the impetus for democracy. Here Therborn notes the consistent pressure of working class parties for parliamentary democracy, but also acknowledges that their strength alone was never sufficient to install democracy. In the

\textsuperscript{12} Therborn 1977 :17. 

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid :10-11.
late nineteenth and twentieth centuries he demonstrates the pro-democratic orientation of lesser agrarian proprietors, artisans and the petite bourgeoisie, which stands in contrast to the decidedly authoritarian preferences of large landowners, as well as the mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie.  

Therborn reminds us that the bourgeoisie does not have a record of support for democracy. But this works to augment and enrich Moore’s work, not to contradict it. Bourgeois reticence toward full democracy would really only rebut Moore had he argued in terms of a sufficient condition: “if bourgeoisie, then democracy.” And of course, Moore’s discussion of the non-democratic paths to modernity openly acknowledges the existence of an authoritarian bourgeoisie.

The concomitant variation form of the thesis does not predict a democratic bourgeoisie. It only argues that where the bourgeoisie was strongest historically, it paved the way for democracy to emerge. Therborn’s reconstruction of the latter stages of those causal paths does not contradict what Moore says about his main cases. Among those cases in which splits in the bourgeois ruling coalition are central to the expansion of franchise for Therborn, we find Moore’s three cases of bourgeois revolution and liberal democracy (US, UK, France). Second, in terms of the states that took the fascist path to modernity in Moore (Germany, Japan), Therborn does not so much contradict Moore, but provide a much needed update of his account. He shows that their ability to switch to a pattern of democratic modernity came only with catastrophic defeats in war that undermined the socio-economic patterns that promoted fascism in the first place.

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Therborn’s greatest contribution is to our understanding of the paths to democracy among highly developed capitalist countries. His consideration of what transpired in the period between the revolutions that opened the path to democratic development in the West and the actual installation of democratic regimes in the early twentieth century shows that democracy does not emerge in tandem with capitalism, but through contradictions in that process. Another important innovation is Therborn’s introduction of the distinction between the middle classes and the bourgeoisie. It helps us to understand an important aspect of where the popular backing for democracy originates as the process comes to fruition.

**Enter the Middle Classes**

Another work relevant to a reassessment of Moore is Gregory Luebbert’s *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy.* The subject of his investigation is regime type in interwar Western Europe. The dependent variable is trichotomous as in the title of the book. Luebbert poses a challenge to Moore in exploring a non-liberal path to democracy.

Luebbert’s main argument is summarized in Figure two below. Its starting point is whether nineteenth century liberalism was able to integrate the working class into the political system. This led to rule by what Luebbert calls “lib-labism,” a coalition of traditional liberal parties and the organized labor movement. Liberal democracy proved durable in the interwar era only in those countries where this had been successfully accomplished in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century. Because of this early incorporation of the working class, the labor movement tended to be less well organized.

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and less radical compared to cases where the working class was excluded. During the interwar era democracy persisted as labor continued to be effectively regulated by the market, as in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and France.

(Figure 2)

Where nineteenth century liberal regimes excluded the working class, labor movements tended to be unified and better organized. Under such circumstances the market alone was insufficient to regulate the relationship between labor and capital. Two types of regimes emerged in response to this: fascism and social democracy. These two outcomes were based on different coalitions of social forces. The key variable for alliance formation was whether the labor movement attempted to organize rural labor. Where they did, it threatened the interests of family farmers who then entered into an alliance with the urban middle classes against the socialists, resulting in fascism. Where they did not, family farmers allied with the working class and the result was social democracy.

Luebbert’s argument builds on Moore in certain ways and challenges him in others. Those cases where the bourgeois impulse is strongest in the Moorean sense seem to correspond to the pattern of lib-labism that allowed for the working class to be peacefully incorporated into the polity. Where the work seems to radically challenge Moore is in its contention that both fascism and social democracy grow out of the failure of liberalism. The implication here is that at least some of these countries may have had a bourgeoisie of medium strength yet managed to find a path to democracy without a detour into fascism.
Another unique aspect of Luebbert’s argument is the centrality of middle class actors to regime outcomes. The urban middle class is presented as a threat to democracy. The decisive choice between fascism and social democracy was made by the rural middle class, family farmers, which can support either of the two alternatives. In this set of outcomes Luebbert posits that the upper classes were not significant actors. It does seem plausible to argue that social democracy was imposed on the upper classes, but does this really make them irrelevant? It seems, however, more difficult to see how the upper classes are irrelevant to fascism.

Luebbert attempts to make such a case for Spain, Italy and Germany. However in this discussion, he mischaracterizes the kind of support necessary for fascist dictatorship. Before the Junkers foolishly handed Hitler the keys to the state, the Nazis never won more than a weak plurality in contested elections. Franco came to power via civil war and Mussolini by putsch. If the urban and rural middle classes were strong enough to put these dictators into power, why would they not just create right of center, liberal governments as in England, France, and Switzerland? While a substantial level of popular support is essential for fascism, majority support is by no means essential to take power. And clearly, the support of the rural elite and big bourgeoisie, even if initially highly contingent and offered cynically, made it possible. Can one imagine fascism in a case where the upper classes did not support it or try to use it for ulterior reasons?

But even more so, if the rural upper classes in the fascist cases are irrelevant as Luebbert asserts, this still may not be fatal for Moore. The question remains as to why the rural middle classes would be threatened by organized labor in the rural sector. And here one would have to examine whether a tradition of labor repressive agriculture was
something that benefited the rural middle classes in these countries. And conversely, did interwar social democracies, only low and Scandinavian countries in Luebbert’s account, lack a labor repressive tradition in agriculture which made social democracy more feasible there?

Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens present evidence precisely of this nature. By the late nineteenth century they argue that the rural upper classes in Scandinavia, Belgium, and the Netherlands were weak. In all authoritarian cases they find rural upper classes that were still uniformly strong (Spain, Austria), regionally strong (Germany and Italy), and all still ideologically influential.16 If this is the case, Luebbert’s finding does not invalidate Moore’s account of fascism. Luebbert turns up something unanticipated by Moore: a social-democratic path to democracy for a number of cases which had bourgeoisies of medium-high strength. Depending on where one places the Scandinavian and Benelux cases in terms of bourgeois strength, one could see this as a variation in the path to democratic modernity, or a unique social-democratic path to modernity overlooked by Moore.

Europe Bound?

Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens (henceforth RSS) in Capitalist Development and Democracy examine the emergence of democracy in Western Europe, the British settler colonies, the Caribbean, and South America.17 Their work extends the geographic scope of a Moore-like analysis and explicitly seeks to improve upon his framework by more fully integrating the autonomous state and the impact of the world system into the


17 Ibid.
global expansion of democracy. Though their work strongly confirms and extends aspects of Moore, they criticize his account of the role of specific social classes and raise important questions about his treatment of fascism.

Like Therborn and Luebbert, RSS present a more dynamic picture of the class alliances in different historical paths to democracy. Like Therborn they point out how the organized working class was indispensible to democratization in many cases, but they temper their analysis where working-class authoritarianism promoted dictatorship. They also discuss the ambiguous relationship of the bourgeoisie towards democracy, finding that its strongest contribution comes in those cases where it pushed for parliamentary government. Like Therborn, they find its commitment to universal suffrage weak.18

RSS also pay a great deal of attention to the modern middle classes as a key actor in the struggle for democracy. In the European context, like Therborn and Luebbert, they show how the struggle for democracy often entailed alliances between working and middle class groups. In Latin America, because of the relative weakness of the working class in the context of dependent development, middle class and professional groups played an even stronger role in the expansion of suffrage. However, RSS also find no evidence of a universal middle class commitment to democracy. In many cases urban and rural middle class groups abandoned struggles for lower class enfranchisement or supported authoritarian political movements in pursuit of economic advantage.19

RSS also question the causal sequence in Moore’s account of the fascist path. They incorporate revisionist accounts of German history which judge the bourgeoisie to


19 Ibid :181-186.
be the stronger partner in the reactionary alliance with the aristocracy. This challenges the specifics of Moore’s German case, and his theory generally, in that this would represent a case of the bourgeoisie as the moving force in a reactionary “revolution from above.”

Instead of discarding Moore’s notion of a reactionary class alliance, RSS use Kurth’s insights on late industrialization to argue for its continued relevance, even as the bourgeoisie had begun to overtake the landed elite in strength. Relatively late-industrializers in Europe, like Germany, modernized in the age of heavy industry in contrast to England, France, and Belgium who industrialized on the basis of light industry. The greater capital intensity of heavy industry tied the German bourgeoisie to the monarchical state and its program of railroad building, military build-up, and overseas expansion, thus justifying the extension of its alliance with landed interests.

In expanding their analysis to encompass Italy and Spain in Europe and Latin America, RSS also encounter cases that took a reactionary path despite labor practices that are not repressive in Moore’s sense. Here the impulse of the landed elite towards authoritarian solutions was a product of the market regulation of rural labor and the introduction of democracy. In these cases democracy allowed forces sympathetic to rural labor to capture the local state and intervene to its advantage in ways that threatened

\[20\] Blackbourn and Eley 1984; Calleo 1978.

\[21\] Berman’s work (2001) presents Germany on an evolutionary trajectory toward democracy and would see the ascendance of the German bourgeoisie as a move in that direction.

\[22\] Kurth 1979: 82-3, 147.
landed interests dependent on hired labor, increasing their support for dictatorship.\textsuperscript{23} RSS thus reconceptualize Moore’s theory, showing that “labor intensive” agriculture dependent on hired labor can also promote authoritarian revolutions from above, especially where democracy threatens to raise the wage rate.\textsuperscript{24}

Like the works discussed earlier, RSS improve upon Moore. Their theoretical framework takes account of the autonomous state as an important factor and the impact of the global political economy on many developing countries, thus making the kind of comparative historical approach that Moore championed applicable to a larger number of cases. They also improve upon Moore’s framework for understanding the reactionary path to modernity by incorporating Kurth’s insights on late industrialization and their own concept of labor intensive agriculture. Like both Therborn and Luebbert, RSS push the comparative historical study of democracy beyond the revolutionary junctures at which Moore’s analysis ends and in doing so enrich understanding of the role of a range of different twentieth century class actors.

As I argued earlier such analysis enriches the Moorean tradition, but does not undermine the Moore thesis in either its necessary condition or concomitant variation forms. That both the working and middle classes are key actors in pushing for democracy, or that the bourgeoisie itself lacks a fully democratic orientation, does not mean that its actions are indispensable to democracy. Where its actions subverted the agrarian social order, something that Moore, Skocpol, Therborn, and RSS all agree is the most daunting barrier to the emergence of democracy, democracy emerged earlier. The

\textsuperscript{23} Rueschemeyer et al.: 146.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid: 163-5.
explanation of this produced by RSS is more encompassing and at a higher level of
generality than that provided by Moore. Here they build on Therborn’s insight that
democracy is an inadvertent product of capitalist development, and further refine his
account of the roles of a larger number of classes. For RSS, democracy emerges as the
balance of power between classes in civil society shifts in favor of democratic actors.
This builds off Moore’s work to provide a framework to make sense of the specific
trajectories of regime evolution that follow bourgeois revolutions and “revolutions from
above.”

Whither the Moore Thesis after 1989?

If we reduce the Moore thesis to the statement of necessary condition (“no
bourgeoisie, no democracy”) and the three causal sequences based on bourgeois strength
and regime outcome (strong – democracy, medium – fascism, and weak – peasant
revolution), his critics largely leave this framework intact. The major responses outlined
are nevertheless powerful social science that forces us to modify, reconceptualize, or
rethink the causal logic of the three paths outlined in detail by Moore. Skocpol points out
the need to more explicitly theorize the effects of an autonomous state and the impact of
the world system on the paths chosen by specific countries. RSS soundly demonstrate
that these concerns can be systematically integrated into an account of the rise of
democracy that is consistent with Moore’s main arguments.

Both Therborn and RSS lament the lack of attention that Moore places on
working class strivings for enfranchisement and the rather mixed record of the
bourgeoisie in struggles for full-blown democracy in many countries. And indeed Moore
does not present a full picture of the final stages of any of his paths. He concentrates on
their origins, true to the title of the book. Both Therborn and RSS fill in this part of the story, giving us a fuller appreciation of how both the democratic and reactionary paths to modernity worked in Europe, and in the case of the latter – the Americas.

Luebbert, RSS, and Therborn also put an important emphasis on the middle classes as a potentially democratic actor. And Luebbert, in elucidating the social democratic path to democracy in the interwar era, shows how smaller nations without the burdens of great power competition have the potential to take a non-liberal path to democracy on the basis of middle class/working class coalitions without a detour into fascism. All three, however, caution us not to see the middle classes as a universally democratic, pointing to numerous examples in both Europe and Latin America where they became bulwarks of dictatorship.

By clarifying the reactionary path to modernity, RSS make two important refinements to Moore’s original theory. The first contribution concerns the growing power of the bourgeoisie once the path of “revolution from above” is taken. Under such conditions the bourgeoisie eventually grows stronger than the agrarian elite, and this begs for an explanation as to why it continues on the reactionary path. Here Kurth’s work on late industrialization shows that the bourgeoisie continues to require the assistance of the state due to the saturation of the domestic market’s demands for the heavy industrial products it produces. The second has to do with the concept of labor repressive agriculture. Here RSS show that there are “labor intensive” forms of agriculture whose regulation by a democratic state could pose severe problems for a landed elite operating on the market.
One limitation of these critical responses to Moore is that they are concentrated on those countries that have taken either the liberal democratic or the reactionary path to modernity. There is almost no consideration of the countries who have taken the path of peasant revolution to modernity. There is little discussion about the other half of Europe, let alone China, except for Skocpol’s consideration of revolution. Her coverage of these cases ends with the attainment of modernity through the consolidation of revolutionary regimes in the USSR and China. Therborn limits his discussion to the “advanced” countries and Luebbert considers Eastern Europe outside the scope of his theory. State socialism only makes an appearance in RSS in their discussion of Moore and in passing references to 1989 in their conclusion.

But what of 1989, 1991, and the collapse of state socialism that grew out of Russia’s peasant revolution and its replacement, at least in some places, with democracy. The post-revolutionary consolidation of power by Stalin created a form of modernity quite different from liberal democracy, social democracy, and fascism. It industrialized without the market, created its own unique class structure, system of rule, and social system. Bureaucracy replaced the market to an extent not imagined by either the fascists or social democrats. Like fascism it replaced civil society with a society administered and mobilized by the state and forsook democracy for the political monopoly of its core leadership. All this brought a massive transformation of the social structure of Russia and those societies in which its unique brand of modernity was transplanted. Societies

25 Skocpol 1979.

26 Luebbert :99.

that had been hovering between capitalist modernity and feudal traditionalism were rapidly modernized in a way that avoided capitalist methods. In that process the weak bourgeoisie of the region was demolished.

Thus in 1989 we witnessed for the first time the emergence of democracy without a bourgeoisie -- “no bourgeoisie, democracy.” If we confront this development in terms of an end to Moore’s relevance in understanding regime change in Europe in the late twentieth century, two questions immediately present themselves. How could democracy emerge in the absence of a bourgeoisie? And, following Moore’s critics, which social force or forces were instrumental in the process of democratization?

How is that in the “other” Europe, the areas in which the bourgeois impulse was weakest, where traditional dictatorship was still a viable form of rule in the interwar era, some countries could make a relatively rapid and peaceful transition to democracy? One major reason for this was that the imposition of Soviet-type systems abolished many of the socio-economic features that presented barriers to democratization in these countries. As Bernhard has argued in a different context, the partition of Germany after the Second World War relieved West German politicians of the Junker problem, making democratization in what would become the Federal Republic much simpler than during Weimar. Forty years later the East Elbian estates that had been at the center of

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28 Not all areas into which Soviet-type systems were introduced had a weak bourgeoisie, e.g. the Czechlands.

29 Bernhard 2001.
Germany’s problems had been reduced to inconsequential state farms scattered across East Germany, Poland, and Russia.\textsuperscript{30}

**Postcommunism and the Agrarian Question**

As in postwar Germany, communist parties in the entire Soviet bloc presided over the dismantling of estate-based commercial agriculture. This had the effect of destroying the landed elites that presented the greatest barrier to democracy. They also destroyed the independent small-holding peasantry, forcing it into either state or collective farms under the direct control of the party state.\textsuperscript{31} Soviet-type regimes thus solved the landlord-peasant problem, though democracy was not on the agenda. When change came in 1989 there were no longer any landlords to worry about, just a fairly uniform, demoralized peasantry concentrated on large collective farms.

The agrarian problem which continued to nag at those countries that took the fascist path to modernity no longer seems relevant in this part of Europe. Given the level of democratic success in many countries, it seems that the postcommunist rural sector poses no generalized insuperable barriers to democracy. However, this is not to say that the picture is fully positive, especially in countries with conventional neo-authoritarian or competitive authoritarian systems. Particularly as we move out of Europe into Central Asia the agrarian sector may present some problems.

\textsuperscript{30} Gerschenkron 1989.

\textsuperscript{31} In both Poland and Yugoslavia collectivization was not fully successful. In both countries there remained a substantial group of smallholders, who were also dependent on the state.
Some observers have noted how following the collapse of Soviet rule, the rural population has increased and moved toward subsistence agriculture in unreformed collective farms in a number of authoritarian post-communist states. Kurtz and Barnes have found that a larger rural population correlates with lower levels of democracy. And Collins points to the persistence of structures of traditional society, such as clans, as an important factor in the false start for democracy in Central Asia. In as much as these structures are embedded in the patterns of the rural economy, this constitutes one factor, among many, making democratization in this part of the world more difficult.

The pattern of a burgeoning, little-reformed, subsistence-based rural sector contrasts strongly with the pattern in Central Europe and the Baltic countries where the peasantry has shrunk, agricultural production is increasingly commercialized, and competition from more advanced neighbors has forced farmers to adapt or go out of business. At this stage the rural question does not seem the definitive one, in terms of the fate democracy in European post-communist societies.Rather it seems more likely that the patterns we see in the rural areas are more reflective of the status of reform in any given society. They seem more a consequence of change rather than a central determinant of its trajectory.

To sum up the findings of this section – in the agrarian sector, the Soviet pattern of rule played the same role that bourgeois revolution did in earlier historical contexts. It

33 Kurtz and Barnes 2002.
34 Collins 2004.
obliterated the agrarian barriers to democracy before democracy itself emerged. In an irony of history, Leninist commissars functioned as an accidental and surrogate bourgeoisie for these societies in terms of eliminating anti-democratic landed elites. In that sense one can say that in constructing an anti-democratic, radically anti-capitalist (and anti-feudal) form of modernity, the commissars made it possible for democracy to emerge later without a bourgeoisie. This is not unlike Moore’s view of England, where a violent past contributed to the peaceful evolution of democracy.

**Actors in the Postcommunist Context**

In examining a region where democracy emerged in the absence of a bourgeoisie, one critical question that immediately presents itself is which actors pressed democratization. We confront an instance in which a highly undemocratic type of regime created the conditions of its own undoing. To understand which actors were responsible, one must begin by discussing the economic organization of Soviet-type regimes and their class structure. Soviet-type regimes were able to modernize rapidly by using methods of “teleological redistribution.”36 In bringing the economy under control of the state the leaders of Soviet-type regimes were able to generate forced savings, effectively deploy and exploit labor resources, and industrialize rapidly. Critical here is an elite that controlled production and reallocated the societal surplus in pursuit of transformational goals. In the USSR Stalin also instituted a “revolution from above” which placed priority on heavy and military industry that solved the problems posed by the hostile external environment in a way that his predecessors could not.37 This new model of economy,


37 Skocpol 1979
which was transplanted across the communist world, also brought along with it a new social structure.

Not only was there the transformation of the agrarian sector described above, but two substantial largely urban classes were also created. Where capitalism and the bourgeoisie had been weak, the commissariat constructed a working class. Instead of making the revolution, the Eastern European proletariat was made by it. Industrialization also produced a large urban white-collar class. Its education and the possession of skills in short supply endowed this class with a higher economic position and status. At its lower reaches among secretaries, clerks, and low-level functionaries of the state, it tended to blend into the proletariat. Like the new middle classes in capitalist societies, it was a professional and service class, but one that served in the party-state apparatus rather than a more diverse set of employers as in the west.

At the pinnacle was a social group which Konrád and Szélényi (K&S) have characterized as “intellectuals.” Writing from the perspective of the 1970s they described the intellectuals as though they were a ruling class or at least one in statu nascendi. This class, as will become apparent later, is not coterminous with the intelligentsia as a social phenomenon, but includes it as but one subgroup. K&S do not define intellectuals in terms of their level of education or their vocational position, but in terms of the justification of their social position. Here they refer to claims of superior knowledge that justified their role in teleological redistribution.38

Konrád and Szélényi enumerate three different strata of intellectuals. The first, economists and technocrats, “actually carries out the work of rational redistribution.”

38 Konrád and Szélényi 1979 :28-29.
The second, the administrative and police bureaucracy, “guarantees the undisturbed functioning of the redistributive process.” The third is composed of the “the ideological, scientific, and artistic intelligentsia, which produces perpetuates, and disseminates the culture of rational redistribution.”

I will use the term intelligentsia to talk about the group as a whole. This is distinct from prewar sense of this term in Eastern Europe which applies to a narrower group that shares a specific critical ethos. Stipulating the meaning of the term to that specified by K&S is the best compromise available given the more narrow semantic and value-laden choices available in English. I will also refer to the three strata identified by K&S as the administrative, technocratic, and cultural intelligentsia.

One striking characteristic of the collapse of Soviet-type systems in Europe was that the impetus for change was urban. In this regard the countryside lagged far behind the cities. In all countries where democracy was created, critically oriented members of the intelligentsia were the leading element or a major partner in the process of change. None of the three broad strata of intellectuals were devoted to democratic change as a group, but those who began to advocate democracy and undertake oppositional activity on its behalf were drawn overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, from the cultural stratum. For purposes of clarity, I will specify this activist group as the oppositional intelligentsia.

Poland is the only country in which the working class played a central role in

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oppositional politics, though there were other countries where workers played significant but lesser roles in the process of change.\textsuperscript{40}

Among intellectuals there were strong political divisions with oppositional elements pushing for radical changes, others advocating more limited reforms, and a third group defending the status quo. As noted above the cultural intelligentsia contained the greatest concentration of oppositionists and reform-minded individuals. It was often elements from this stratum that played a leading role in organizing insurgent civil society groups to contest state power or were the most vocal advocates of state-sponsored liberalization of the system. The technocratic stratum tended to favor moderate reforms that would have rationalized the economy in ways that would have increased their autonomy from the ruling elite, though without cutting themselves off from state subsidies. Of all the parts of the intelligentsia, it was the administrative component (especially the security apparatus) that was the most resistant to change. There were, however, individuals and groups from this stratum as well who played important roles in the process of change, particularly where splits emerged over early reform efforts.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{40} A general strike by workers in Czechoslovakia during an impasse in negotiations was a key event in the Velvet Revolution. There was some independent organization of workers in the USSR (e.g. the coal miners beginning in 1989), but clearly nationality trumped class in the USSR (Beissinger 2002).

\textsuperscript{41} If one just takes the example of the Soviet Union/Russia, Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin were all strong advocates of reform. The passage of time has made clear that for none of them was reform synonymous with democracy.
What seemed to motivate most intellectual actors in this process was not democratization per se but the removal of political constraints on the exercise of what Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley conceptualize as their cultural capital. However, rather than seeing them as a late twentieth century Bildungsburgertum, with a shared set of capitalist commitments like Eyal et al., I think their position is better captured by analogy to the intellectuals discussed by Kurzman. Their class interests, while not completely identified with democracy, were better pursued via democracy than the alternatives.

The push to democracy developed out of the desire of cultural and technocratic intellectuals to reduce the scope of political control over the realms of knowledge and production exercised by the administrative stratum. For the cultural intelligentsia, the political power of the party-state bureaucracy interfered in the pursuit and expression of knowledge. For the economic intelligentsia, the issue was encroachment of the party-state bureaucracy in the organization of production. And, of course, some members of administrative stratum supported these efforts as a means to restore the vitality of system, which was clearly on the wane.

The motivating issue was thus not the creation of capitalism but the termination of the political encroachments of the party apparatus into the realms of knowledge and production. And as in Kurzman’s accounts these interests became embedded in the struggle for democracy as intellectuals began to make claims not on their own behalf but on behalf of the nation as a whole, as they had in many areas just prior to World War I.

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42 Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley 1998.

43 Kurzman 2008: chapter 2.

44 Kurzman 41-2.
This began as an assertion of the prerogatives of independent civil society against comprehensive etatization and calls for reform of an economy which was broadly perceived as technologically backward and deficient in meeting consumer expectations. By the late 1980s as the system both liberalized and continued to stagnate economically, demands for outright democratization and economic rationalization using the market as a means emerged more broadly.

Thus these intellectuals neither conformed to the free-floating stratum described by Mannheim, nor as the kind of Gramsician organic intellectuals who advocate the interests of other classes.45 Transformations in the nature of capitalism in the late twentieth century also made it less of a threat to intellectuals in Soviet-type systems. Here both the expansion of the role of knowledge in the success and attainment of well-compensated positions, as well as globalization of the world economy, enhanced the value of education and international perspective. Because of their education, experience with the outside world, and knowledge of foreign languages, intellectuals had less to fear from the market than they did in earlier phases of capitalism.

Eyal et al. foreground capitalism as the motivating force in their analysis. They even argue that the discourse of civil society functioned as a kind of ideology for the emergence of a monetarist model of capitalism.46 I differ with them in seeing the centrality of the political and here the issue was breaking the monopoly of power of the party-state bureaucracy. At the point of regime transition in all post-Soviet systems (1989-91), as the era of the party-state control came to an end, more competitive politics


46 Eyal et al. :chapter 3.
emerged and elites sought to convert power resources under the old system into new forms of power. The issue of the direction of the economy remained up in the air. Certain countries were able to establish viable market economies while others moved with hesitancy, protecting vested interests, and succeeded in creating only pale copies of a market economy which functioned poorly, were rife with corruption, and prolonged economic stagnation.

Rather the question of what sort of political and economic system that emerged following transition is inherently political and is a product of both the contestation of power among the intelligentsia and the extent to which advocates of change could mobilize the forces of civil society in that struggle. Different outcomes emerged under rather similar ideological narratives that stressed democracy and the market. While civil society was an element in this ideology, it was a material force just as it was in other regions and times (see RSS) and not just a legitimizing myth for extending the Washington consensus east of the Oder-Neisse. Variation in the strength of civil society led to different sets of outcomes. Here the role of opposition intellectuals and their supporters at the point of transition was key.

How did the strength of civil society at the point of exit from the old regime affect economic change and the prospects for democracy? Whereas the cultural intelligentsia tended to support its most critical elements and push strongly for democracy, the administrative and police strata were working hard to find ways to hold onto the levers of power and to reconstitute the regime in a new form that preserved elements of their power. At this stage, where the technocratic stratum lined up politically was decisive. In situations where the opposition was able to mobilize strongly and demonstrate the
weakness of regime incumbents, the intelligentsia abandoned efforts to save the regime and began to adapt to competitive politics. This is what tipped the balance between the countries that embraced reform quickly and decisively and those who did not. In those countries in which there were well-established oppositional civil society organizations (Poland, Hungary, the Baltics, Slovenia) or a combination of more modest oppositional organization and large demonstrations in support of democratization (Czechoslovakia and the DDR) the economic stratum was prepared to defect from the administrative and police stratum’s defense of the status quo. Where civil society was weaker, elements of the elite were able to paint themselves as newly reborn nationalists, keep the allegiance of the economic stratum, and slow down (Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia), derail (Ukraine, Moldova, Albania, most of the former Yugoslavia), or ultimately defeat democratic reform (Russia, Belarus, Central Asia).

Where civil society was stronger and the technocratic stratum was willing to accommodate itself to democracy and capitalism (whether competitive or some variant of welfare statism), there was more radical economic and political reform, greater social mobility, and the creation of a more diverse economic elite. Where late communist politics were more contentious across the regime/opposition divide, there emerged a wider array of countervailing social forces which blocked the wholesale conversion of state assets into private capital. Here is where I strongly disagree with Eyal et al. on civil society. Where it was strongest in the final stages of communism it became a force that prevented the concentration of property and this had critical ramifications for whether democracy was possible in the postcommunist context.
In certain ways this argument is congruent with some of the literature on reform outcomes in the region. For instance Vachudova argues that oppositional strength and liberal reform are correlated in East Central Europe.\footnote{Vachudova 2005: Chapter 2.} Similarly, Fish argues that in countries in which the opposition defeated regime incumbents in founding elections, economic reform turned out better.\footnote{Fish 1988.} My argument differs from these in three ways. First, it concerns the adoption of a complex of institutions – a modern liberal society grounded in both representative democracy and a market economy. Second, unlike Vachudova, but not Fish, it looks at the context of the whole postcommunist space. Certain cases which might not seem as effectively positioned for liberal reform from the perspective of Central Europe, such as Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, fall into an intermediate zone with somewhat better prospects than many postcommunist countries to the east. Third, while Fish’s position on electoral victory strongly correlates with the countries that had the strongest oppositions at foundation, it also omits the distinctions between countries which had an intermediate oppositional strength, and have moved more slowly toward a modern liberal society (e.g. Bulgaria, Romania), as compared to the weakest cases which have opted for neo-authoritarianism.

Where civil society was weaker, it was easier for recalcitrant elements within the administrative intelligentsia to convince the technocratic stratum to make common cause with them to convert their positions of power into concentrations of private property.\footnote{Solnick 1998, Ganev 2006.} Where civil society mobilization was weak at the point of transition, advocates of
democratic change were unable to bring countervailing power to bear to prevent massive concentration of property in the hands of the elite. As a result, the capitalism that resulted was more explicitly “political” rather than market driven.\(^50\) This led to conversion of party political assets into economic ones, and a concentration of property in the hands of a few.

The concentration of property is one of the conditions that has made it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain democracy in some postcommunist countries. Where the former power elite has been able to privatize huge concentrations of state property, downward mobility across society has been more profound and the nature of postcommunist society has been different. This is strongly reflected in levels of material inequality. Whereas Soviet-type systems created societies that were relatively equal in terms of monetary income, in the postcommunist era income inequality has increased and nowhere more so than those places where parts of the old elite has been able to privatize state assets. Whereas inequality in Central Europe and the Baltics has approached the level of places like the UK and Canada, in many regions of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, it has moved to levels that resemble the most extreme cases in Latin America.\(^51\) This represents a major problem for creating or sustaining democracy, especially where the antecedent authoritarianism was egalitarian.

Under such circumstances the prospects for democracy have been dim. In most cases of this type, democratization has been slow and at best, uneven, or abortive, resulting in the emergence of neo-authoritarian regimes. In such cases, the rhetoric of the

\(^{50}\) Ganev 2009.

market and democracy continue to serve as devices to legitimate dictatorship or justify the concentration of assets and political capitalism. Dictators who do not allow political competition nevertheless justify their rule as democratic by resort to plebiscitary elections, while pursuing economic policies which protect the concentration of wealth in the hands of political associates, kin, and other dependents. In some cases we even see the emergence of “competitive authoritarian regimes” that simulate democracy while denying its substance. The latching onto such talismans of modernity in the guise of justifying neo-authoritarianism and kleptocracy is nothing new in this part of the world.

Where capitalism emerged, the impact of the international system needs to be taken into account. New elites, confronting the decomposition of Soviet-type systems, looked to market models as a proven alternative to stem continued economic decline. Where international assistance and foreign direct investment was forthcoming in post-transition period, it was linked to the adoption of standards of democracy and open markets. All this was abetted by the carrot and the ideology of a reentry into “Europe,” which brought EU assistance to meet its economic and political standards. But unlike some who think that the EU was force behind reform I agree completely with Vauchudova who argues that entry into Europe did not trigger an embrace of the market and democracy. Rather those who made the fastest progress towards liberal democracy and market economies were brought into Europe first. Over time the effect has become

52 Way 2005.
54 Vachudova 2005.
interactive in that the success of the countries which gained entry into the EU seems to have produced a demonstration effect (notably in the Balkans).

Table 1 looks at the political, economic, and social development of the postcommunist states in terms of a rough sorting of the strengths of their civil societies at the point of transition. The presentation of descriptive statistics is not meant as a strong form of inference, but as a crude check on the plausibility of the theory. Should the countries with stronger civil societies not exhibit a higher degree of democracy and stronger socio-economic performance, this would certainly call the theory outlined here into question.

[Table 1 here]

The table is composed of standard indicators used in cross-national quantitative research. Both the indicators and where each country ranks in terms of the universe of postcommunist countries are arrayed in the table. The means for each group for each indicator is calculated as well. In the political dimension it relies on both Freedom House and Polity. Freedom House is composed of two seven-point scales that measure civil and political rights. The score reported here combines the two scales and thus runs from 2 to 14 with a lower score indicative of stronger protection of rights. The Polity score, a twenty-one point interval scalar measure running from -10 to 10, is used to assess the degree of democracy. Higher scores are indicative of a greater degree of democracy.

Economic performance is measured here by the year in which a country regained its pre-transition level of GDP following post-transition recession and adjustment. The social indicators get at distributional issues. The Gini score is the standard measure of the distribution of income and captures the extent to which that distribution is equitable.
Lower scores indicate higher equality. Food supply is the mean kilocalories/person/day distributed in each country. It is one of the standard measures of basic needs satisfaction. The UN recommended supply for a working adult is 2400 kilocalories.

The expectation given by the theory would be that countries with more mobilized civil societies at transition should do better in terms of all these indicators. These expectations are strongly born out in the table. In terms of democracy we see the strongest values accruing to the highest range of countries in terms of the civil society sorting and then falling off in each group. The same pattern emerges with both the social indicators with greater degrees of relative equality and basic needs satisfaction for the high group and a drop off in the middle and lowest ranges. The only indicator that does not conform to this pattern is economic recovery. Here we see a much faster recovery with the high range countries, but with the low range countries nosing out the mid-range here for a slightly faster recovery. Generally speaking these rankings are what we would expect given the theory outlined above.

**Whither the Intellectuals?**

What is also striking about the post-1989 transformation of the region is that although the intellectuals led this process they did not push a set of narrow class interests against the existing political and economic system. In this sense they were different from the revolutionary bourgeoisie. While reformist intellectuals originally aimed to abolish the aspects of the status quo that impeded their interests as a class in the existing order (specifically political control over the production of knowledge and material production), they came to embrace liberal democracy and market capitalism as the only viable alternative model in the wake of the collapse of Soviet-type regimes. Still they had no
intrinsic material interest in capitalism. They owned nothing. Instead they became the agents of liberal democratic capitalist modernity on the basis of a set of ideal interests, the intention to create a society that enjoyed western standards of political freedom and economic development.

Where market and democratic reforms were successful, opposition intellectuals put the material interests of the intelligentsia into jeopardy. To maintain an elite status they would be forced to adapt to a new set of requirements to attain power and gain economic security. Their one concrete advantage in this situation was the set of cultural attributes that they retained from the old system -- specific skills, contacts, and education. These attributes would have to be adapted to the new reality. They were no longer intrinsic to the exercise of power and control of assets as they had been in the past. Thus in embracing democracy and the market, opposition intellectuals were abandoning the very mechanisms that saw to their reproduction as a privileged group.

If this picture of the motivation of intellectuals is correct, we should see substantial downward mobility for parts of the old elite. Yet at the same time, those who are able to adapt their skills to the new environment should remain in the elite despite the systemic transformation in the region. The best cross-national data to date have been assembled by Eyal et al. for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The picture they present is highly consistent with what we would expect from the account above. We see substantial downward mobility. Only about forty percent of the old political elite was successful in retaining their social position. While they are the group that has been most successful in holding high political office, only ten percent of them have managed to do so. Part of this group, approximately six percent, has also been able to convert some
aspect of their position into entrepreneurial careers. The stratum that has done best in terms of maintaining its elite position is the economic and technocratic stratum (seventy percent, with over half remaining high-level managers in public or private firms). Another five percent of them became entrepreneurial capitalists. The cultural elite also experienced strong downward mobility (only about 45% remained in elite positions, with only 19.3% remaining part of the cultural elite). 55

Ultimately, where the oppositional intelligentsia was the social force that played the most important role in the democratization of Soviet-type systems, they were a peculiar historical midwife. First, they did not create a new system of economic reproduction in which they had vested material interests. Rather if anything, they embraced a market economy out of necessity and a certain utopian faith in the historical record of the west. At best one could say that its interests were ideal. Second, its actions dismantled the basis for its power as a social formation. Despite this, a portion of its members have been able to prosper individually on the basis of skills, positional power, and knowledge which provided advantages on the market. Some attributes of the intellectual class were convertible into new forms of power on the market. Clearly though, they were not the only ones capable of making the transition to the new systems. In many regards, the white collar professionals just below them in the old hierarchy did just as well in the postcommunist system. 56 With the dismantling of the mechanisms of the redistributive society, intellectuals and others with relatively rare forms of knowledge

55 Eyal et al. :120.

56 Ibid. :131.
and/or skills were in a reasonable position to convert aspects of their position under the old system into new forms of power and privilege.

Where postcommunist change has not produced democracy, we see a different pattern altogether. Here we should expect to see less downward mobility among members of the old elite and the wholesale transfer of state assets to their control. Their ability to do this has been based on a politics in which they had few competitors once Soviet-type regimes collapsed. Here elements of the former elite should be more firmly entrenched in the halls of power. The expectation is that on the basis of a renewed alliance at the moment of transition, elements of the old administrative and economic strata should have seized control of the most lucrative state assets, converting their political power into private ownership of formerly state-owned assets. This is precisely the sort of configuration of power that Kryshtanovskaya and White present in their work on the conversion of the Russian *nomenklatura* into a new power elite. They report that former members of the *nomenklatura* constituted the bulk of the new Russian elite in the 1990s – ranging from 57.1 percent of the leadership of political parties, to seventy-five percent of the government and presidential council, to 83.1 for regional elites.\(^{57}\) While these figures are not exactly comparable to Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley, the differences in magnitude begin to demonstrate why we see such a difference in outcome.

**Conclusions**

So what does this consideration of Moore and his critics in light of postcommunist developments since 1989 tell us? First, 1989 represents the temporal limit of the direct applicability of Moore’s thesis to development and regime form in Europe. Both the

\(^{57}\) Kryshtanovskaya and White 1996: 725.
necessary condition and concomitant variation versions of his theory hold the bourgeoisie as central to understanding the emergence and persistence of democracy. Democracy came to Eastern and Central Europe in the almost complete absence of a bourgeoisie and of strong market impulses. Moore continued to be of relevance in the wake of fascism or other forms of reactionary “revolution from above” because of the centrality of the bourgeoisie and agrarian elites in understanding such outcomes. However, in the case of countries following the path of Soviet-type systems to modernity, the existing social structure was so transformed that the role of the bourgeoisie and the market in the construction of modernity was negated.

Second, with that negation of the bourgeoisie, certain tasks that seem necessary to democratization are accomplished by social forces other than the bourgeoisie. In Moore’s liberal democratic path to modernity the bourgeoisie plays a role in the transformation of the agrarian sector such that the landed elites are no longer an insuperable barrier to democracy. They also deserve some credit for the initiation of democracy as a regime form, despite the well-founded reservations of Moore’s critics. Even if bourgeois revolution did not immediately create full-blown modern democracies and the bourgeoisie as a social actor rarely pushed for full democratization of the political system consistently or on its own, this does not mean that the bourgeoisie did not play a critical role in the emergence of regimes that were representative and competitive, two critical milestones on the march to modern mass democracy.

Third, whereas fascism in its most dynamic forms turned out to be short-lived because of its self-destructive nature, communism was a much more stable alternative to liberal- or social-democratic capitalist modernity. For these societies to embrace liberal
democracy after 1989, other social forces had to accomplish the two historical tasks of the bourgeoisie. It was the actual installation of the Soviet system itself that finally destroyed the barriers old agrarian orders posed for democracy. Labor repressive and feudal forms of agriculture were replaced with a fairly uniform peasantry that either directly worked for or was highly dependent on the state. This configuration of agriculture has not proved to be the kind of formidable barrier to democracy that either Moore’s labor repressive or RSS labor intensive forms of agriculture seem to be. It is ironic that Stalin and the minions that he put into power unintentionally transformed the agrarian sector so that it would no longer be a barrier to democracy in an unimagined future.

Fourth, the social actor most responsible for initiating the path to liberal democracy was drawn from the intelligentsia that stood at the top of the division of labor under communism. While intellectuals have often been a force for modernity in the societies in this part of Europe, they hardly have an unblemished historical record in terms of a commitment to democracy. East European intellectuals, sometimes in large numbers, were not immune to the enticements of both fascism and communism. Not all intellectual groups in all countries embraced liberal democracy, and where they were able to appropriate state assets to privatize their power, democracy has had less success. The central variable here seems to be whether critical intellectuals played a major role in the resurrection of civil society under communism. Where they had, there were stronger barriers to the appropriation of state assets and the economic intelligentsia needed to make common cause with oppositional radicals and reformists to successfully adapt to economic and political liberalism. Where civil society was weak, an alliance between the
economic and administrative strata to convert state power into private power seems to have thwarted or slowed strivings for democracy and a full embrace of the market.

Fifth, the role of intellectuals in successful democratization stands out as rather different from how the bourgeoisie timidly embraced full democracy, while giving precedence to their material interests. In leading their countries towards liberal-democratic capitalist modernity, intellectuals undermined their claims to privileged socio-economic status based on specialized knowledge. This does not mean that the transformation was an unambiguous material setback for intellectuals. Where they have been able to convert their knowledge, skills, and contacts into assets utilizable on the market, they continue to play important roles in these societies and constitute an important part of the new power elite.

Sixth, the consideration of social structural concerns once again confirms that social forces that do not have democratic motivations can bring about forms of socio-economic change that later promote democracy. Moore’s critics make clear that the role of the bourgeoisie in eliminating feudal restraints on the emergence of democracy was accomplished often when the bourgeoisie was not fully committed to it. Similarly, the Leninist program of social transformation was profoundly anti-democratic, yet it removed structural barriers to democracy in the agrarian sector and created new social actors that had democratic potential. This reminds us that not all social outcomes are purposive. The emergence of democracy, as RSS and Therborn remind us, is something that in its deep structural causes can be epiphenomenal. Social actors that are ambivalent to democracy or even hostile to it can create conditions that promote it unintentionally.
Leninist commissars had no intention of creating liberal democratic market societies, yet the fruits of their labor facilitated it in certain ways.
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Figure 1: Structure of Moore’s Argument Concerning Modernity and Regime-type

Is the bourgeoisie sufficiently strong to pull down the structures of feudal society?

- no
- yes

Can modernization be achieved by means of “revolution from above” supported by a labor repressive alliance coalition of the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie?

- no
- yes

**Liberal Democracy**
- France
- England
- United States

With failure of “revolution from above” does peasant revolution lead to consolidation of power by a modernizing revolutionary elite?

- yes
- no

**Fascism**
- Germany
- Japan

**Communism**
- Russia
- China

**Persistence of Traditionalism**
- India
Is nineteenth century liberalism successful in incorporating the working class?

- **yes**
  - Interwar liberalism – continued market regulation of the relationship between labor and capital (UK, France, Switzerland).
  - Political regulation of capital-labor relationship required. Does the organized working class attempt to organize the rural poor?
    - **no**
      - Social Democracy on the basis of an alliance of the working class and the family farmers (Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden).
    - **yes**
      - Fascism on the basis of an alliance of the urban middle class and family farmers (Germany, Italy, Spain).
Table 1: Indicators of Aggregate Political, Economic, and Social Performance, 1989-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength of Civil Society at Transition</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FH Rank</td>
<td>Polity Rank</td>
<td>Year of Recoverya (2008)b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(mean)</td>
<td>(mean)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Range</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>8.8</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>8.7</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>mean or median</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>20.6</td>
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</table>

Notes:

^aYear 2009 used in calculating the mean for countries that had not recovered their pre-transition GDP levels.
^bOr last observation in series.
^cRecovery not attained by 2008.

Sources: