

**DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE–
SLOVENIA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

by

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ABSTRACT

During the last fifteen years, South Eastern Europe has been undergoing a major political and economic transformation. This analytical paper focuses on the case of Slovenia, a country that has been a front-runner in regional efforts at political consolidation and economic reorientation. As a candidate country, which is scheduled to join the European Union in the first half of 2004, the Slovene case represents a fascinating laboratory for the analysis of the difficult challenges posed by transition and European Union accession. Various sections of the paper examine the vibrancy and scope of the party system; the level of national identity and cohesion; the participation and vitality of civil society; and the control of corruption in societal affairs. The final section of the paper examines the issue of whether or not Slovenia represents a productive model for the other countries of South Eastern Europe.

DEDICATION

To my parents, who have unwaveringly supported my endeavours through words, prayers and actions.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a florescence of thought concerning democratisation in the post-communist states of Europe. While some countries have met (and even surpassed) expectations, others have encountered pitfalls along their path. Among the supposed leaders is the Alpine republic of Slovenia. Slovenia's forthcoming membership in both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), suggest that consolidated democracies will soon view the country as a member of the 'democratic club'. However, this potential membership in Western democratic institutions does little to scientifically evaluate the degree of consolidation that has taken place in Slovenia. Nor does it provide evidence as to when consolidation will be complete. Given the propensity of post-communist states to describe themselves as fully consolidated¹, it is of utmost importance to distinguish leaders from laggards in the process of democratic consolidation.

The impetus for this project is the need to increase the overall understanding of democratic transition models. This issue is explored through focussing on the sequences, formulas and actors involved in the process of democratisation. Hopefully, as our knowledge of these factors is enhanced, insights regarding Slovenia's role in buttressing democratisation in South Eastern Europe will be gained. If the Slovene democratic endeavour is deemed to be healthy, the country can possibly serve as a template for

¹ Following the March 2003 referendum on EU accession, when Slovenes voted 89% in favour of joining the EU, prominent politician Dimitrij Rupel told reports that Slovenia's transition was complete. *New York Times*, "Slovenia Votes for Membership in European Union," March 24, 2003.

neighbours in the region. (This is assuming that other countries in South Eastern Europe would permit Slovenia to serve as the bridgehead for consolidation.) However, if Slovene democracy is found to be weakly anchored in Euro-Atlantic values and plagued by problems of self-interest, a different model of transition may prove to be more beneficial for the region.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW ON TRANSITOLOGY

For students of political science, and more specifically democratisation, the past fifteen years have provided an academic smorgasbord of cases from which one may develop and test their thoughts concerning transition from authoritarianism to democracy. This political reality has resulted in the formation of a broad ranging body of literature focused on transitology. While most certainly a spectrum of opinion exists, there are certain commonalities among the published works. This section presents the basic tenets of transitology and highlights some matters of contestation.

Shared by the transitologist scholars is an understanding that democratisation is experienced in three sequential stages---“opening, breakthrough and consolidation”.² While the essence of their message is very similar, some scholars prefer the usage of “liberalization, transition and consolidation” to explain the same three stage process.³ Regardless of word choice, the first stage is described as a “a period of democratic ferment and political liberalization in which cracks appear in the ruling dictatorial regime, with the most prominent fault line being that between hardliners and softliners.”⁴ As noted by Jean Grugel, a large portion of the transition literature has dealt with the

² Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2002): 7.

³ Jean Grugel, *democratization*, (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 57.

⁴ Carothers, 2.

origins of the democratic 'opening'.⁵ Consequently, investigation of the third stage, consolidation, has not been seriously explored until more recent years.

The second stage, the breakthrough, witnesses the ushering out of the old regime and the establishment, however tenuous, of the new democratic order. While the end result is the ousting of the non-democratic rulers, the experience of the breakthrough varies from case to case. Samuel Huntington, in his seminal work, "The Third Wave", labels the three forms of this second stage as transformation, replacement and transplacement. To summarize, transformation is when the initiative for change is provided by leaders in the non-democratic regime. Replacement is when the driving force of change is opposition groups. And finally, transplacement is when transition is realized through a combination of efforts from the former and latter groups. In his writing, Huntington pays homage to earlier transitologists, acknowledging the fact that his labelling of stage one and two echoes the typology of "*reforma*" and "*rupture*" by Juan Linz. The evidence of wide agreement on this typology within political science is strengthened by Huntington's reference to the works of Donald Share and Scott Mainwaring. In describing the processes of breakthrough, they prefer the descriptors of "transaction", "breakdown/ collapse" and "extrication". Through drawing upon the earlier writings of transition, Huntington creates a typology that reflects the nature of the 'third wave', but does not betray the theoretical foundations of democratisation.⁶

⁵ Grugel, 56-58.

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 112-115.

Consolidation, the third phase of transition, is when a nascent democracy moves beyond the minimalist definition of free and fair elections.⁷ In colloquial terms, it is when the democratic system ‘takes root’, and in so doing is widely perceived as having ‘joined the club’ of long standing democratic countries. Giuseppe Di Palma aptly describes this third stage as involving two different processes. He states that consolidation “suggests the contemporaneous formation of both valid democratic institutions and a democratic political culture (hence consolidation’s automatic connection with the acquisition of legitimacy).”⁸ The necessity, and the interdependence of this two-pronged approach cannot be stressed enough. Through the growth and entrenchment of functioning legislative, judicial and executive branches of government, the citizens are provided with incentives to trust the newly formed democracy. Consequently, the citizens begin to view democracy as the only acceptable political regime.

While on paper this process may seem like a reasonably achievable outcome, the renowned political sociologist, Seymour Martin Lipset, asserts that the challenges new democracies face are often insurmountable “since aspects of their institutions, traditions, and beliefs may be incompatible with the workings of a free polity.”⁹ Indeed, old habits are not easily eliminated. Complimenting this position, Huntington lists a score of predicaments that are encountered on the road to consolidation. His self-explanatory subsection titles include: “The Torturer Problem: Prosecute and Punish VS. Forgive and

⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸ Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 138.

⁹ Seymour Martin Lipset, “On the General Conditions for Democracy,” in *The Challenges of Theories on Democracy*, ed. Stein Ugelvik Larsen, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 11.

Forget”, “The Praetorian Problem: Rebellious and Powerful Militaries” and “Contextual Problems, Disillusionment and Authoritarian Nostalgia.”¹⁰ In the process of democratic transition, proponents of democratisation must engage in many battles in order to achieve complete consolidation.

Transitologists view the application of the three-stage model as having universal validity, regardless of location and culture. Grugel points out that “by divesting democracy of its structural context” it is suggested that democracy is achievable in any setting.¹¹ Therefore, democracy is not viewed as a club for the select few, but rather, as a viable option for any country with the political will to choose the three steps of transition. The weakness of this premise of universality is that it may cause some observers to view consolidation as being path dependent. For example, if stages one and two have been realized, then it is logical to expect stage three to arrive smoothly. Remarking on such deterministic thinking, Di Palma states that there has been a tendency for “social scientists to consider regime transitions as a kind of black box---interchangeable steps to a foreclosed outcome---rather than open processes of interaction.”¹² Recently, as transitologists have witnessed the many pitfalls on the road of democratisation, the value of the transition paradigm has been debated.

Thomas Carothers, in the provocative and highly contested article “The End of the Transition Paradigm”, asserts that the three stage model of transition is no longer appropriate for a score of countries that have barely, or not at all, progressed since

¹⁰ Huntington, 211-253.

¹¹ Grugel, 63.

¹² Di Palma, 10.

completing the stages of opening and breakthrough.¹³ Carothers eschews the notion that consolidation ought to be viewed as an inevitable outcome, and that consolidation deficiencies may simply be explained through the usage of a consolidation continuum, or what he terms the “gray zone”.¹⁴ Breaking with tradition, Carothers suggests that countries that are democratic in name alone have entirely departed from the three-stage model of transition. He goes on to describe two syndromes, “feckless pluralism” and “dominant-power politics”, which render, as he views it, the transition paradigm inaccurate and misleading. In his opinion, countries in the gray zone are not on a minor democratisation detour, nor have they merely encountered a roadblock. Rather, they have charted a completely non-democratic course, void of any authentic intention to pursue consolidation. Carothers believes that the failure of transitologists, as well as the actual practitioners of democratisation, to grasp this reality has seriously hindered assessments and retarded programs aimed at bolstering democracy. However, not all scholars agree with this position.

Long-time observer of democratisation, Larry Diamond, agrees with Carothers’ view that consolidation is not the clean and predictable stage that has often been promulgated in the transitology literature. Diamond writes at some length of what he terms “electoral authoritarianism”.¹⁵ This is a situation where elections occur, but their degree of freedom and fairness are highly questionable. Thus, Diamond purports that the

¹³ Carothers, 7-15.

¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵ Larry Diamond, “Thinking About Hybrid Regimes,” *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2002): 27.

state of many 'third wave' countries is one of "pseudodemocracy".¹⁶ Despite these aspects of Carothers' argument that resonate with Diamond's case, he is unwilling to reject the notion of a consolidation continuum, with full consolidation at the far end of the spectrum. He states,

As we add the forms and dynamics of electoral authoritarianism to our long list of issues in comparative democratic studies, we should not neglect these imperfections in our own systems. The transformations of Taiwan, Mexico, and Senegal in the 1990's show that competitive authoritarian regimes can become democracies. But democracies, new and old, liberal and illiberal, can also become more democratic.¹⁷

Therefore, while Diamond agrees with Carothers that bastardized forms of consolidation exist, he is in favour of maintaining this existential ideal as a source of democratic participation.

Echoing the position of Diamond, but with a more clarion rejection of the 'end of the transition paradigm', is the writing of Ghia Nodia. This Georgian scholar¹⁸ is adamant in his assertion that 'gray zone' countries ought to be viewed through a transitional lens. This is largely because of the need to reify the goal of consolidation in a normative sense in the post-communist psyche. Nodia interprets the transition paradigm not as an aide in the process of democratisation, as Diamond proposes, but as a requisite for consolidation. Furthermore, he is critical of Carothers for the absence of any policy

¹⁶ Diamond, 25.

¹⁷ Diamond, 33.

¹⁸ The unique insights gained on transition through having been born and socialized in the former Soviet Union cannot be underestimated.

alternatives in his call to abandon the transition paradigm, alternatives which Nodia believes to be *sine qua non* to any suggestion that a more productive paradigm exists.¹⁹

The debate surrounding the transition paradigm, and more specifically the third stage of consolidation, underscores the need to better understand the sequences and actors involved in the process of democratisation. This debate begs a number of questions. For example, is the use of consolidation as a normative value a benefit to nascent democracies? Also, does use of the transition paradigm incline proponents of democratisation to exaggerate democracy's progress, in order to avoid labelling a specific case as pseudodemocratic? If this bending of the truth is present, does it serve a productive role in the process of consolidation?

Slovenia serves as an excellent laboratory in the pursuit to find answers to such challenging questions. The role of the EU has been integral to the process of consolidation in Slovenia. The focused pursuit of EU membership by Slovene elites has served as a catalyst during the process of democratic consolidation. While the above mentioned scholarly discussion provides a theoretical framework concerning transition, EU and Slovene government documents reveal some of the more practical aspects of consolidation. In 1999, a comprehensive document titled "Republic of Slovenia's National Programme from the Adoption of the Acquis by the end of 2002" was published.²⁰ In this document, the Slovene government provides a plan listing the many achievements that are required in order to comply with EU standards of democratic

¹⁹ Ghia Nodia, "The Democratic Path," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2002): 13.

²⁰ Government of Slovenia, *Republic of Slovenia's National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis by the end of 2002*, Government of Slovenia (1999): 11-26.

consolidation. Specifically addressing “Political Criteria”, sub-section headings reveal the elements that the EU interprets as imperative to consolidation. These include section 1.1.1 Parliament; 1.1.2 The executive; 1.1.3 The judiciary; 1.1.4 Anti-corruption measures; 1.2.1 Civil and political rights; 1.2.2 Economic, social and cultural rights; and 1.2.3 Minority rights and the protection of minorities. Having discussed the theoretical underpinnings of transition and briefly introduced some case specific indicators of consolidation, it is now possible to discuss the methodology of this project.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

By comparing present day Slovenia to the earlier democratic transition of Spain, a trajectory of consolidation may be obtained. This can assist in determining whether Slovenia's claim of consolidation is actually one of substance, or if it is merely hollow self-praise. This project evaluates the degree of democratic consolidation in Slovenia through an examination of four components essential to all democracies. These variables are the nature and function of the party system; the vibrancy of civil society; the level of national consciousness and cohesion; and the control of corruption in societal affairs. While it is recognized that the influence of each variable will differ from country to country, democratic theory suggests that there must be a base existence of each of the four variables. In a sense, there is a democratic threshold that a democracy must cross in order for the recognition of consolidation to be conferred.

This project is a qualitative endeavour, adhering to the 'most similar systems' comparative design. In this approach, the researcher chooses "countries that appear to be similar in as many ways as possible in order to control for 'concomitant variation'."²¹ Therefore, this project will compare present day Slovenia with the historical experience of Spain in the early stages of its democratic consolidation. This adjustment for time is vital to the project, as it can allow the researcher to more accurately forecast the democratic development of Slovenia. Cognizant of the fact that Spain continued in its consolidation from the early stages, the project is provided with a benchmark, whereby

²¹ Guy Peters, *Comparative Politics: Theory and Methods*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 37-41.

the current status of Slovenia may be gauged. If Slovenia exhibits a deficiency in any of the independent variables, vis-à-vis Spain, then those variables can be identified as possibly retarding consolidation. In sum, the ‘most similar systems’ method assists the project in accurately evaluating Slovenia’s current status, and provides a rough measure of the country’s progress.

When surveying Spain’s modern history, 1981 is used as an equivalent to present-day Slovenia. It was in that year that a coup attempt failed, in part due to the actions of King Juan Carlos, but more as result of “the Spanish people who saved the regime by turning their backs on any form of dictatorship.”²² This rejection is closely linked to the gradual emergence of civil society in the previous two decades.²³ At the same time, a wide spectrum of political parties had taken form.²⁴ Thus, the developments of 1981 serve as a watershed in Spanish democratisation.

In order to adhere to the ‘most similar systems’ comparative design, it is necessary to highlight why the South Eastern Europe-Southern Europe (or Balkan-Iberian) comparison is appropriate. First, while on different ends of the ideological spectrum, Slovenia and Spain have both had authoritarian pasts. Second, in the early stages of democratic transition, King Juan Carlos and former communist leader Milan Kucan²⁵ played similar mediating roles. Third, in both countries the citizenry

²² Gerard Alexander, *The Sources of Democratic Consolidation*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 181.

²³ Victor Perez-Diaz, *Spain at the Crossroads*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 16-23.

²⁵ Milan Kucan was a prominent politician during the communist era. Post-independence he became a promoter of democracy and served as President of Slovenia for two terms.

experienced the psychological trauma of a decline in national prestige---Slovenia as a former member of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Spain as a past imperial power. Fourth, both countries experience low self-esteem due to their respective authoritarian pasts. Fifth, and lastly, Catholicism has greatly influenced society in both Spain and Slovenia.

CHAPTER 4 – EXAMINING THE SPAIN OF 1981

The Party System

It goes without saying that authoritarian systems do not encourage a plurality of political parties, and Spain is no exception to this maxim. During the rule of General Francisco Franco, political parties were seen as being “divisive, corrupt, and inefficient”, ultimately diminishing the overall strength of the country.²⁶ This disdain for a competitive multiparty system resulted in the banning of opposition parties to the ruling Falange Espanola Tradicionalista (FET), latter referred to as the National Movement.²⁷ Reversing this absence of tolerance was the challenge of the early Spanish democratisers.

Parliamentary elections were held in June of 1977. Aside from minor incidents of vote tampering, the elections were widely considered to be free and fair.²⁸ While there were isolated events of violence leading up to the election, conflict did not escalate to an uncontrollable level. Commenting on this Donald Share remarks,

Had elites acted less prudently, had opposition leaders incited their followers, had the government overreacted by resorting to increased repression, or by slowing down the pace of the reforms out of fear or intimidation, transition through transaction could have failed.²⁹

²⁶ Howard Wiarda and Margaret MacLeish Mott, *Catholic Roots and Democratic Flowers*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 128.

²⁷ Jean Grugel and Tim Rees, *Franco's Spain*, (Bristol: Arnold, 1997), 14.

²⁸ Donald Share, *The Making of Spanish Democracy*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), 137.

²⁹ Share, 120.

The relative peace of the campaign and election suggested that elites on both the left and right had learned from their past actions which ultimately war.

By the early 1980's, a Spanish party system had emerged which represented the full spectrum of ideological positions. Howard J. Wiarda and Margaret Macleish Mott accurately describe the party system of this period.³⁰ At the far left of this spectrum was the Communist Party (PCE). Membership of this party was mainly comprised of individuals who had held a communist worldview throughout the reign of Franco, often enduring a great deal of persecution. While most assuredly the PCE views on economic matters were consistent with the advancement of a planned economy, they did deviate from Soviet model with respect to their support of free and fair elections. In the 1977 national election, the PCE garnered nine percent of the popular vote.³¹ The second party to consider is the left of centre Socialist Party (PSOE). In order to broaden its appeal to the electorate, this party purged a number of its more radical views. Consequently, the PSOE won the general election in 1982. At the centre of the Spanish party system in the early 1980's was the Union of Democratic Centre (UCD). Essentially this party was an umbrella organization that sought to defeat the PSOE. Members of this group are described as belonging to the subgroups of "technocrats, bureaucrats, Christian-democrats, moderates, independents, former Franco supporters, [and] friends of the young prime minister".³² The organizer of this broad coalition was Adolfo Suarez, chosen by King Juan Carlos to be Prime Minister during the transition. Throughout the

³⁰ Wiarda, 132-138.

³¹ Ibid., 132-133.

³² Ibid., 34-135.

late 1970's a common dislike for the socialists brought cohesion to the group. However, diverse interests led to infighting and their demise in the 1982 election at the hands of the PSOE. The fourth party of early Spanish democracy was the *Alianza Popular* (AP), later to be named the Popular Party (PP). Membership of this party stemmed directly from Franco's support base. Its leader, Manuel Fraga, had been a cabinet minister during the period of authoritarianism. In elections during the late 1970's and early 1980's, its support did not surpass ten percent.

Although there were many actors in the development of the party system, the actions of Adolfo Suarez and King Juan Carlos demand special attention. Scholar, Victor Perez-Diaz, aptly describes their influence. He states,

Certainly the history of the Spanish transition cannot be written without giving proper recognition to the way in which King Juan Carlos and, above all, Adolfo Suarez guided their plans for political reform through the murky waters of the Francoist establishment, and to the way they persuaded public opinion and the political opposition to play by their rules, as well as to the way in which that opposition (along with the church and other socioeconomic elites) responded to, helped shape, and supported those plans.³³

While it would be foolish to suggest that elites by themselves are responsible for orchestrating the transition to democracy, this point does emphasize their necessity in the formation of a liberal democracy.

After surveying the party system of early Spanish democracy, it is clear that the electorate was provided with a considerable amount of candidate choice. Distinct platforms were presented to the voter, platforms clearly based on ideology. It is

³³ Victor Perez-Diaz, *The Return of Civil society*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 31-32.

important to note that these party groupings did not ‘fall from heaven’, or occur by chance. Spain’s nascent democracy was rooted in the political battles of the past. The period of Franco’s control over the public arena served as a gestation period for the political parties on both ends of the ideological spectrum. During authoritarianism, convictions of those on the right became embedded, encouraging them to compete for power in the post-authoritarian system. Similarly, the persecution endured by the left galvanized their efforts, increasing their hunger for power once in a position to openly compete. In sum, by 1981 a minimalist definition of democracy had been realized.

Civil Society

When examining civil society in early Spanish democracy, it soon becomes clear that the history of this variable shares many similarities with the already discussed party system---namely, the manner in which civil society was viewed during Francoism and the period that civil society experienced growth. The Francoist state has been described as the combination of

...what it considered an up-to-date version of a medieval parliament with some features of sixteenth-century Spain, including the characteristic concessions to the preeminence of the counter-reformist Catholic church, and the trappings of nineteenth-century European colonial powers and contemporary fascist regimes.³⁴

This sort of society leaves little or no place for the participation of an active and vibrant civil society, a requisite for liberal democracy. For much of Franco’s rule, his state machinery effectively smothered the formation of any opposition group that sought democratic change.

³⁴ Ibid., 10.

As introduced in the above quote, the privileged position of the Catholic Church was of particular importance to authoritarian Spain. The overlapping interests of the state and the Church were so great that seldom did their positions differ. Consequently, in the minds of the masses there was no separation between church and state. And indeed, this conception was consistent with the temporal reality. On the one side of the church-state equation, the Church received direct funding from the government. On the other, through the delivery of education the clergy promoted a traditional ordering of society that benefited the existing political structure. At the core of this teaching was a devotion to the family as the basis of Spanish society, along with traditional values espoused by the Catholic church. This emphasis largely discouraged the non-familial formation of groups needed in a healthy civil society.³⁵

Despite the existence of a state ethos that hindered civil society, its emergence occurred. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's a number of societal changes had taken place. Early steps towards civil society such as voluntary organizations and increased educational levels were established. This provided the opportunity for Spaniards to 'learn by doing'. Through increased involvement in the rudimentary processes of a civil society, the aptitude for such activities increased. A new understanding of what was appropriate political behaviour guided actions. Trust among the active public increased, and consequently the pro-democracy forces were bolstered.³⁶ Once this had occurred, the politics of the past---division, mistrust and violence---were no longer interpreted as

³⁵ Grugel and Rees, 128-130.

³⁶ Victor Perez-Diaz, *Spain at the Crossroads*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 9.

acceptable. The citizenry had embraced “countless social rituals of negotiation and dialogue, generally based on values such as reason, freedom of choice, tolerance, prosperity, individual happiness, and citizenship.”³⁷ Had this shift not occurred, the transition to a multiparty system would not have been as smooth. This is a valuable reminder of the interconnected nature of transition components.

The influence of European neighbours was an additional force in the liberalizing of the country. The flooding in of tourists and the score of Spanish students that studied abroad, both served the end of political liberalization as the notion of ‘normal’ became more European.³⁸ Economically speaking, Spain was forced to adopt elements of the capitalist economies found throughout Western Europe. However, this partial adoption resulted in receiving only partial benefits of capitalism. In the late 1970’s, the standard of living for the Spanish worker was one third lower than his Italian or French counterpart. Workers’ demands, often in the form of strikes, occurred simultaneously with the previously described formation of civil society.³⁹ These events came to a head in the last days, and a considerable opening of society was allowed by the authoritarian regime.⁴⁰

In addition to the external influence from the European region, domestic forces were continuing to shape the emerging civil society. Perez-Diaz highlights the first domestic force as “the development of already existing neocorporatism, which seemed to

³⁷ Perez-Diaz, *The Return of Civil Society*, 19

³⁸ John F. Coverdale, *The Political Transformation of Spain After Franco*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 17.

³⁹ Perez-Diaz, *Spain at the Crossroads*, 10-11.

⁴⁰ Wiarda, 150.

fit better with a social democratic tradition as well as with a conservative one”, whereby a role for civil society was provided. Secondly, Perez-Diaz underscores the importance of ongoing economic changes, such as “deregulation, privatization, and the expansion of open markets”. Similar to the effect of increased neocorporatism, market reform opened the closed doors of authoritarianism, allowing a diversity of actors into the national arena.⁴¹ In sum, by 1981 Spanish civil society had made great strides. Its level of development was not on par with the long-standing European democracies, but a solid foundation for continued growth had been achieved.

National Consciousness and Cohesion

To many students of political science, the category of national consciousness and cohesion may be interpreted as the chink in the armour of Spanish democracy. Such sentiment is quite apt. Addressing the notion of national consciousness, it is necessary to examine the independence movements of the Basque and Catalan regions. Tied to the topic of nation, but unique in its own right, is the component of social cohesion. Even if there was full agreement of the existence of the Spanish state, the nature of that state presents further topics for debate.

Momentarily placing the topic of national consciousness to the side, it is possible to examine the influence of national cohesion in Spanish democratisation. A common thread of societal division runs through much of Spanish history. Wiarda and Mott describe the national climate of the 1930’s as “splitting along a variety of unresolvable cleavages: monarchists against republicans, scientists against theologians, absolutists

⁴¹ Perez-Diaz, *The Return of Civil Society*, 88.

against anarchists.”⁴² Ultimately, these fissures resulted in brutish civil war, which lasted from 1936 to 1939. It is from this context that General Francisco Franco asserted his dictatorial rule, justifying the need for authoritarian leadership in order to maintain peace. It is this attitude that motivated and shaped Franco’s rule in the ensuing decades.⁴³

Constitutional matters are controversial in any country. However, when the memory of civil war and decades of ideological polarization are added to the mix, constitutional debate has the potential to incite further violence. Fortunately, Spain was able to effectively confront these challenges between August of 1977 and October of 1978. As the name would suggest, ‘The Constitution of Consensus’ was achieved through compromise. Similar to the emergence of Spanish civil society, elected officials on both the right and the left had improved in their ability to negotiate. This experience of ‘learning by doing’, combined with the general fatigue associated with protracted debate, allowed the dissenting political parties to engage in constitutional talks. Donald Share nicely summarized some of the compromises that took place:

The PSOE dropped its demands that no mention of capitalist market economy be included in the constitution, and the Socialists accepted a provision limiting civil rights in order to combat terrorism. UCD agreed to the inclusion of a statement concerning the role of public enterprise in the economy, accepted a watered-down version of the right to stage lockouts, and altered its previous stance on educational issues.⁴⁴

Through democratic debate, what at one time could only be described as impossible became a reality.

⁴² Wiarda, 106.

⁴³ Grugel and Rees, 23-24.

⁴⁴ Share, 148.

By 1981, the political leaders of Spain had established a framework through which the country could operate democratically. Most assuredly, conflict, and perhaps even incidents of violence, would surface in the coming years. After all, a healthy democracy demands that there be dissenting voices within society. However, these differences would not be so great as to undo the national cohesion that was achieved through the adoption of 'The Constitution of Consensus'.

National consciousness refers to the masses' embracement and identification with Spanish nationality. When examining the different ethnic groups in the country, it becomes clear that the centrifugal pull of regionalism on the Spanish national project has been persistent and quite intense. During authoritarianism the Basque and Catalan groups chafed under Franco's centralist approach to issues of ethnicity.⁴⁵ As democratic transition occurred, once again King Juan Carlos filled the role of conciliator. The king realized that in order to move democracy forward, it was necessary to address some of the regional demands for increased autonomy. However, there was a cacophony of viewpoints concerning the actual model of decentralization.⁴⁶ In September of 1977, the Suarez government granted autonomy to Catalonia and a few months later a similar situation was formalized with the Basque region. While many on both sides of the debate were not fully satisfied, the arrangement is a watershed event in Spain's post-authoritarian history.⁴⁷ In sum, by 1982 the creation of a new constitution and the

⁴⁵ Coverdale, 28-34.

⁴⁶ Share, 163.

⁴⁷ Kenneth Maxwell and Steven Spiegel, *The New Spain*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), 20-22.

granting of regional autonomy had dramatically improved the likelihood of democratic growth.

Corruption

Examining the level of corruption in Spanish government in the early 1980's is a very different task from an examination of current corruption. In the initial years of transition, Spain was preoccupied with the creation of truly democratic legal institutions. Under Franco there was no real independent judiciary. The Spanish system of law was described as being "enmeshed in complex legal and extra-legal controls imposed by the executive"; the rule of law simply did not exist.⁴⁸ Without a democratically functioning judiciary, a discussion of corruption in any branch of government was rendered moot. The completion of this challenge was of considerable importance for the future control of corruption.

As new programs were introduced in early democratic Spain, the issue of patronage came to the fore. Especially in the early days of democracy, the need to reward the party faithful was understood by all political parties. As a result, the growth of an excessively large bureaucracy was not only due to the development of new programs, but the need to reward party membership.⁴⁹ Therefore, the advent of democracy improved the legal framework through which justice was delivered, but it also created the opportunity for shady behaviour.

⁴⁸ Jose Amodia, *Franco's Political Legacy*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), 164-165.

⁴⁹ Wiarda, 151.

The emergence of a large bureaucracy through non-professional means created its own set of problems. For example, the absence of merit-based promotion further encouraged a culture of corruption. Commenting on such a scenario, Wiarda and Mott assert that low salaries leave many in the civil service “vulnerable to bribes or feel compelled to take private sector positions, thus blurring the line between public and private interests.”⁵⁰ In sum, by 1981 significant legal gains had been realized in order to provide a framework that adhered to the rule of law. However, in the process of transition the non-democratic forces of bribing and cronyism were unleashed.

The Spanish case provides a useful benchmark for assessing democratisation in Slovenia. In the following chapter the process of Slovenia’s democratic consolidation will be examined more closely, keeping in mind the useful experience of Spain, and the project’s overall concern with assessing the reasons for Slovenia’s front-runner status in the region of South Eastern Europe. The next chapter will also explore the problems and pitfalls faced by Slovenia, and the country’s appropriateness as a model for other states in the region.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 120.

CHAPTER 5 - EXAMINING SLOVENIAN DEMOCRACY

The Party System

Slovenia became an independent state in 1991, although it had already become semi-autonomous as socialist Yugoslavia drifted apart. It was the first of Yugoslavia's republics to have a truly competitive election in April of 1990 and after that point Slovenia might be regarded as quasi-independent. Upon the arrival of independence and the exit of communism, Slovenia was faced with the formidable task of developing a multiparty political system. The absence of formal opposition groups during the era of communism meant that the initial years of transition witnessed the crystallization of political parties. The spring election of 1990 was a pivotal event for Slovenian democracy. At this time a broad coalition, the Democratic Opposition of Slovenia (DEMOS), won the parliamentary elections. The leader of this coalition, Lojze Peterle, became Prime Minister.⁵¹ This coalition was comprised of various pro-democracy and nationalist parties that were united by their opposition to communism and their desire for an independent democratic Slovenia. Once the transition was well underway, it did not take long for their differences to surface.⁵² The coalition collapsed in December of 1991. This was followed by a vote of non-confidence in the parliament on April 22, 1992. While the duration of DEMOS was not lengthy, it was a crucial stage in the advent of

⁵¹ Charles Bukowski, "Slovenia's Transition to Democracy: Theory and Practice," *East European Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (1999), 90.

⁵² James Gow and Cathie Carmichael, *Slovenia and the Slovenes*, (London: C. Hurst and Co., 2000), 157.

pluralism. As a result, and in keeping with the minimalist definition of democracy⁵³, the foundational basis for consolidation was laid.

The government that followed the collapse of DEMOS was led by Janez Drnovsek, a reformed communist that had been chosen to lead the LDP⁵⁴ in March of 1992.⁵⁵ He formed a temporary government before the parliamentary elections in December. Despite a communist past, his pre-election performance as Prime Minister was well received and his coalition won a four-year term at the polls.⁵⁶ At the same time, communist era leader Milan Kucan was elected President. Kucan went on to serve in the office of President for the maximum duration allowed by the constitution, two five-year terms. These two men would go on to dominate Slovenian politics in the years to come.

The extent to which Drnovsek and Kucan are embedded in Slovenian politics is largely due to the nature of the post-communist political system, a system that they helped shape.⁵⁷ As the crystallization of parties occurred and working relationships among parties were created, there was an immense need for “consensus and stability”.⁵⁸ These two men were well suited to bring such traits into the political arena as a result of their many years of political experience. Ironically, the need for “consensus and

⁵³ Seymour Martin Lipset has asserted that three basic elements exist in democracies: societal acceptance of a common *modus operandi* concerning political behaviour, one group of individuals that form the government and lastly, an opposing group which seeks to replace the government through established democratic means. Seymour M. Lipset, “Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review* 53 (1959), 71.

⁵⁴ The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was later renamed the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS).

⁵⁵ Government of Slovenia, *Elections in Slovenia 2002* [online], 2002.

⁵⁶ Bukowski, 90.

⁵⁷ Kucan, having served two terms as president, is no longer holding an elected office. Drnovsek migrated from the post of Prime Minister to that of President. Anton Rop is the current Prime Minister.

⁵⁸ Gow and Carmichael, 167.

stability” that was created through the rejection of communism was met by the remnants of that system.

At first glance, the election of former communists by the electorate would appear to be antithetical to the aim of democratisation. Adolf Bibic, however, has a different understanding of the phenomenon. He suggests that having already ousted the communists in 1990, and having undergone constitutional changes, Slovenians opted for a path of democratisation characterized by “moderation, tolerance, and stability”. In order to emphasize that the 1992 elections were not a return to the communist past, Bibic goes on to point out that anyone continuing to promote a communist ideology was overwhelmingly rejected.⁵⁹ For the most part, candidates belonging to the centre of the political spectrum (or relatively close to it) garnered the support of the majority.⁶⁰

Slovenian society has continued to value “moderation, tolerance and stability” beyond the initial years of independence. Evidence of this orientation is found in an examination of the results from the previous two parliamentary elections.

⁵⁹ Adolf Bibic, “The Emergence of Pluralism in Slovenia,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 26, no. 4 (1993), 380-381.

⁶⁰ These results are consistent with Harry Eckstein’s description of “division and cohesion” in a stable democracy. While the citizenry exhibited division through supporting a wide variety of political parties, cohesion was evidenced by the selection of moderate parties and allowing them to serve their term. Harry Eckstein, *Division and Cohesion in Democracy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 186-192.

Table 1 Slovenian National Assembly Election Results ⁶¹

Party	2000	Seats	1996	Seats
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS), liberal	36.3 %	34	27.0 %	25
Social Democratic Party of Slovenia (SDS), conservative	15.9 %	14	16.1 %	16
United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD), social democratic	12.1 %	11	9.0 %	9
Slovenian People's Party (SLS-SKD), Christian-democratic	9.6 %	9	29.0 %	29
New Slovenia-Christian People's Party (NS-KLS), Christian-democrat	8.6 %	8	-	-
Democratic Party of Retired People (DESUS), pensioners	5.2 %	4	4.3 %	5
Slovenian National Party (SNS), nationalist	4.4%	4	3.2 %	4
Party of the Youth of Slovenia (SMS), social democratic	4.3%	4	-	-
Others	3.7%	2	11.4 %	2

From the results listed in the above table it is clear that the LDS, a centre-left party, has preformed quite well, even increasing in seats in the legislature. Consistent with Bibic's interpretation of the 1992 elections, it appears Slovenes continue to favour the moderate approach of the LDS. It is also probable that the existence of seasoned leadership assisted the continuation of LDS domination. The number of seats for the SLS-SKD, a right of centre party, greatly dropped. However, some of this change can be attributed to the formation of the NS-KLS, a party with a similar centre-right platform. The parties belonging to the more extreme ends of the political spectrum, the ZLSD on the left and the SNS on the right, experienced no great change in their levels of support. In sum, Slovenian society has shunned radical political viewpoints. Capitalizing on this preference, the LDS has done well on a platform of continued moderate reforms as it leads the country in the pursuit of European integration.

In 1996, Danica Fink-Hafner surveyed the political landscape of the Slovenian party system. She grouped the wide array of parties into the following categories.

⁶¹ Parties and Elections in Europe. *Slovenia* [online], 2002. The author has made minor revisions, such as the omission of Slovenian party names and the addition of 'social democratic' label to the SMS.

- religious parties (like the Slovenian Christian Democrats, the Christian Socialists);
- ethnic parties (like the organizations of the Italian and Hungarian minorities, Romi/Gypsies);
- rural-agrarian parties (like the Slovenian Farmers Union- now the People's Party)
- socialist parties (like the United List of Social Democrats, the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia);
- liberal parties (like the Liberal Democratic Party, the Liberal Party);
- ecological parties (like the Greens of Slovenia, The Greens - Social Ecological party);
- regional parties (like The League for Primorska and several others);
- at the 1992 parliamentary elections also a typical charismatic party appeared (the Slovenian National Party).⁶²

From these eight groupings, it is clear that a high level of political articulation has occurred in the party system.⁶³ However, this does not necessarily guarantee that the parties provide a means of expression for the popular will.

While there does exist a wide spectrum of political parties with respect to ideology, Fink-Hafner is critical of the overwhelmingly strong control of the parties by elites. She states that for the most part, parties have not internalized the demands of constituents for the broadening of democratic procedures. Consequently, many Slovenes

⁶² Danica Fink-Hafner, "Development of a Party System," in *Making a New Nation: The Formation of Slovenia*, ed. Danica Fink-Hafner, (Brookfield: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1997), 148.

⁶³ Giovanni Sartori's three-fold assertion is that political parties exist for the purposes of channelment, communication and expression for members of society. Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: a framework for analysis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 56-58.

feel no great sense of identification with specific parties. In keeping with this sense of political disconnectedness, the party system is commonly perceived to be run by elites to the benefit of elite interests. Fink-Hafner goes so far as to suggest that the party system is best described as having “close ties with the state, clientelism, domination of personal networks and weak ties between voters and parties.”⁶⁴ These observations are shared by Anton Bebler. He believes that many communist methods of rule from the top have been carried over into the new democratic system.⁶⁵ Indeed, well established patterns of behaviour have lingered for many years in Slovenia.

Political reality in Slovenia casts doubts on the ability of the country’s party system to meet all three of Sartori’s criteria for a truly democratic party system.⁶⁶ While a decent amount of “channelment” may have occurred, it is not clear that satisfactory amounts of expression and communication, or genuine representation of the citizens’ views, are present in the current political system. The views of the citizenry are too often subordinated to those of the elites. Elite control over the upper echelons of the various parties often inhibits party democracy. As a result, surveys that explore the public’s view of institutions often indicate that mistrust runs through Slovene society.⁶⁷ Most assuredly, this situation has undermined the process of consolidation.

The final component of democracy to be examined in this sub-section is the level of participation by society in the political process. In this respect Slovenia has acquitted

⁶⁴ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁵ Anton Bebler, “Slovenia’s Smooth Transition,” *Journal of Democracy*, 13 no. 1 (2002), 136-138.

⁶⁶ Sartori, 56-58.

⁶⁷ Frane Adam and Matej Makarovic, “Postcommunist Transition and Social Sciences: The Case of Slovenia,” *Eastern European Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (2002), 369.

itself well, exhibiting high levels of voter turnout. The International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES) reports that in the 2002 presidential elections, voter turnout was 65.10%.⁶⁸ This figure is comparable to (and often above) levels of voter turnout in fully recognized liberal democracies. This indicates that Slovenes widely support the electoral process, viewing it as the proper means by which to select their political leaders. As a result, it can be said that while Slovenes have a degree of dissatisfaction with the governance of specific parties, their confidence in the larger democratic process remains strong. However, a caveat regarding democratic participation in Slovenia is closely tied to ethnicity (keeping in mind that 88% of the country is ethnic Slovene). Token representation of one seat in the National Assembly is guaranteed to both the Hungarian and Italian enclaves. Such status has not been awarded to the Gypsy or Serbian populations. This is despite the fact that the latter ethnic minorities are proportionally larger than the Italian and Hungarian groups. Therefore, participation in the political process is well supported, but these positive findings reveal that ethnic disproportions still persist in Slovenian society.

Civil Society

Civil Society in Slovenia has had a critical role in the process of democratisation, just as it was a key factor that led to the end of communism and eventual independence.⁶⁹ The influence of civil society on political processes began in the late 1970's with the birth of the punk movement. This initial stirring of the political order spawned many 'new social movements' (NSMs), addressing concerns such as "alternative national

⁶⁸ International Foundation for Electoral Systems, *Voter Turnout 2002* [online], 2002.

⁶⁹ Adam and Makarovic, 365.

service, environment, homosexual rights and women's rights.”⁷⁰ The NSMs were agents of change because they questioned the status quo of the communist system. While their feelings were clearly in opposition to the current political norms and values, they chose to label themselves as ‘alternative’ as opposed to ‘opposition’. Their aim was to not provide the communist rulers with a pretext for crackdowns.⁷¹

The continued existence of the NSMs was a catalyst for splitting the communist command structure. Traditionally, the Slovenian League of Social Youth (LSY) served the interests of the communist elites. However, by 1986 the LSY had recognized the futility of persecuting the NSMs and chose to sever its ties with the communist party. Through this action the control of the party was weakened and the causes of the NSMs were advanced.⁷² While the ‘alternative’ groups were not embraced by the government, they had achieved a degree of permanency. This turn of events was fortunate for the proponents of democracy, as Slovenia was on the cusp of experiencing extraordinary events that would benefit from the influence of a strong civil society, no matter how nascent.

In 1988, Slovenian chafing under the edicts of the central government in Belgrade began to intensify. One incident in particular, the so called trial of ‘the Four’, contributed to the exponential growth of civil society. The trial revolved around the leaking of documents by a Slovene recruit in the Yugoslavian army. The soldier, Ivan Borstner, informed the youth run newspaper Mladina that a military crackdown on the emerging

⁷⁰ Bukowski, 90.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

civil society was imminent. Subsequently, Borstner and three individuals belonging to Mladina were put on trial. In addition to anger over the holding of such a trial, most Slovenes were furious that the language of the court proceedings was Serbo-Croatian, not Slovenian. Public outrage came to a head when approximately 40,000 people protested in Ljubljana's Liberation Square on June 22, 1988. This period became commonly referred to as the 'Slovenian Spring'.⁷³ Indeed, a vibrant civil society had emerged, and communism was soon to be ushered out.⁷⁴

In the 1990 elections, the leadership of the opposition parties were comprised largely of members from civil society. What occurred was the transfer of NSMs from the domain of civil society to the domain of formal politics. Such movements were no longer simply working to create political accountability by the political system. Through participation in the elections the NSMs were becoming part of the process and institutional structure that they originally sought to keep accountable to society. Referring to the influential role of NSMs in society, Anton Bebler states that the elections "marked the beginning of civil society's descent from this zenith of activism and public attention."⁷⁵ This is not to say that NSMs should not have entered institutionalized politics. In fact their role in DEMOS was vital to the process of democratisation. It merely highlights the fact that civil society was essentially left void as a result of the NSM migration into democratic political life.

⁷³ Sabrina J. Ramat, *Balkan Babel*, 4th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002), 32-35.

⁷⁴ At a rudimentary level, this period of collective action meets the requirement put forth by Almond and Verba that society keep a check on the power of the government. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: political attitudes and democracy in five nations*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), 477-488.

⁷⁵ Bebler, 135-138.

The situation underscores an important problem with Slovenian civil society. The end of communism marked the beginning of a transformation of individuals who traditionally had belonged to civil society, but who now chose to enter mainstream politics. As a result, an essential check on power was weakened. The severity of the situation is adroitly summarized by Tomaz Mastnak. He states: “Only a civil society distinct from the state could be conceived as a body able to exercise control over it and, consequently, to define and limit state action. Civil society in power, on the contrary, represents *unlimited power*.”⁷⁶ In realizing its objective of unseating the communist rulers, civil society had succeeded, but the migration of NSM activists into politics had created a weakness. Namely, it greatly reduced the voices of opposition within society that guarantee government accountability. The challenge for Slovenians, and a true test of consolidation, is whether they would be able to fill this void.

At the same time as its entrance into formal politics, the leadership of civil society became dominated by members of the intelligentsia. Hence, civil society was not only corrupted by its membership in political institutions, but its leadership was no longer representative of a wide sector of society. In the 1990 elections, “intellectuals of the middle generation entered political life en masse.”⁷⁷ Now that there was a decreased risk of persecution, academics came ‘out of the woodwork’ to join what the NSMs and the

⁷⁶ Tomaz Mastnak, “The Powerless in power: political identity in post-communist Eastern Europe,” *Media, Culture and Society*, 13 (1991), 403.

⁷⁷ Tomaz Mastnak, “Civil Society in Slovenia: From Opposition to Power,” in *Democracy and Civil Society in Eastern Europe*, ed. Paul G. Lewis (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 145.

punk movement had begun. The intelligentsia realized that “the new power elite was in formation” and they wanted to guarantee themselves a place at the table of influence.⁷⁸

The influence of the intelligentsia has not subsided since the early days of Slovenian democracy, as proven by an examination of the curriculum vitae of the 2002 presidential candidates. Of the nine candidates, six hold a PhD, one is a pharmacist, one is a lawyer and one is painter. And to illustrate their interconnectedness with the earlier NSMs, all but one had spent some period of time at the University of Ljubljana, usually in the faculty of Arts.⁷⁹ This illustrates the high concentration of academics in the political institutions of Slovenia. Elite members in most democracies are highly educated, but Slovenia stands out in the role played by the emerged intelligentsia.

This blurring of the line between civil society and government is further illustrated in The National Council, the upper house of parliament. This body has an advisory role to the National Assembly, holding no real power. It seeks to have representation from throughout Slovenian society, such as representatives from local interests, employees, employers, farmers and independent professionals.⁸⁰ It is loosely conceived as a means by which civil society may have a role in the legislative process. However, the degree to which this is occurring is highly questionable. Indeed, in the current Slovenian government there is a poor understanding of what constitutes civil society. State councillor, Prof. Franc Vodopivec, stressed this point at the Meeting of the

⁷⁸ Ibid., 146. As discussed in the previous section, the domination of the political system by elites contributes to an explanation as to why the public feels disengaged from the party system.

⁷⁹ Government of Slovenia, *Elections in Slovenia 2002* [online], 2002.

⁸⁰ The National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, *The Influence of Upper Chambers on the Development of Democracy and the Role of Civil Society*, Ljubljana: The National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2002.

Association of European Senates in June, 2002. The government's failure to grasp the nature of true civil society is illustrated through "the fact that the same person has served as a representative of civil society during two ministerial terms of office on the basis of party affiliation."⁸¹ Indeed, this echoes the concerns raised by Mastnak that civil society in power can lead to undesirable outcomes. When politicians are also representatives of civil society, there is great opportunity for conflict of interest to exist between the platform of their party and the needs of the group they represent. Most assuredly, this is not consistent with the role of civil society that was outlined by Almond and Verba.⁸²

Currently (2003) in Slovenia the amount of participation in civil society is quite low.⁸³ A 2002 report tabled to the Joint EU-Slovenia Consultative Committee describes the vitality of civil society in Slovenia. It states that 97% of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are classified as 'societies', of which there are 15,000. While this figure initially appears to be quite encouraging, it turns out to be rather hollow. The report states the alarming fact that a high percentage of the 15,000 groups exist only on paper. Examining the number of Slovenes employed by the NGOs is more representative of their clout in society. Only 0.4% of all Slovene workers are employed by societies. And of this meagre figure, the majority of employees belong to sport societies or fire brigades. To make matters worse, the report suggests that civil society levels are not increasing.⁸⁴ This is a major challenge confronting Slovenian democracy.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Almond, 477-488.

⁸³ Bebler, 135-138.

⁸⁴ European Union-Slovenia Joint Consultative Committee, *The Role of Non Governmental Organizations for the Economic and Social Development of Slovenia*, Brussels 19-20 November, 2002.

National Consciousness and Cohesion

The long and rich history of the Slovene people awards them with a highly developed national consciousness. Historians mark the migration of Slavic people into the Eastern Alps circa 500 CE. Through the centuries a Slovene identity was formed, despite the fact that Slovenes belonged to multinational empires. Of particular importance was the period of the Habsburg dynasty from 1382 to 1918. During this period the region of modern day Slovenia was ruled from Vienna, which permitted the cultivation of a unique Slovene identity.⁸⁵ A degree of Slovenian autonomy was also present throughout the decades of belonging to the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.⁸⁶ Therefore, while independence is relatively recent vis-à-vis other European countries, the foundation for that independence is of comparable age to foundations in many longstanding democracies.

Besides an historical awareness, national cohesion is realized through the demographics of the country. Geographically speaking, Slovenia is quite small covering 20,273 square kilometres. Its population is under two million people, of which ethnic Slovenes comprise 88%. Catholicism is the dominant religion, with 70% of the population at least nominally affiliated.⁸⁷ As a result of this high degree of homogeneity, Slovenia lacks many of the divisive aspects of other post-communist states. One can safely assume that this has contributed to a relatively peaceful process of achieving independence. Cognizant of the demographic realities, it is now possible to explore the

⁸⁵ Gow, 9-16.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 51-53.

⁸⁷ Government of Slovenia, *The Country and Its People* [online], 2003.

unique challenge confronting Slovenia --- namely, how to maintain a strong national identity while pursuing European integration.

Since achieving political independence in 1991, the leadership of Slovenia has been obsessed with the objective of joining NATO and the EU. In fact, very few government documents fail to mention the planned accession to these two bodies. The sentiment expressed in government publications is that Slovenia is a country with a great history. However, through historical circumstance Slovenia has not reached its potential. Membership to NATO and the EU are a means by which Slovenia is able to most fully prosper. However, membership goes beyond the tangible goals of increased economic productivity. Membership, particularly in the EU, would symbolically represent that Slovenia has reached a level of statehood that is second to none. In accomplishing this, Slovenia would no longer be viewed as a 'backward' Balkan country, forever destined to the ethnic conflict that has plagued the region.⁸⁸ Long time politician Dimitrij Rupel nicely summarized this view in the early years of independence. He stated that "Slovenia did not become an independent country because it wanted to become an island out of Europe."⁸⁹ In this instance the lust for national assertion and international recognition can be a motivating factor in the process of consolidation, as European integration will only occur once democratic success has been realized.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Government of Slovenia, *Ten Years of Slovenia's Foreign Policy* [online], 2003.; *The Economist*, "Going Nordic," Vol. 352 Issue 8130, 41-42.

⁸⁹ Dimitrij Rupel, "Slovenia's Shift from the Balkans to Central Europe," in *Independent Slovenia*, eds. Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 199.

⁹⁰ Ghia Nodia has been vocal in his belief that nationalism often serves a constructive role in the process of democratic consolidation. Ghia Nodia, "Nationalism and Democracy," in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1994), 3-7.

Research indicates that national cohesion has remained high throughout the preparation process for EU accession. While some segments of society such as pensioners, the less educated, older farmers and large families with a single income have been least suited to adjust to the changes associated with transition, overall the level of cohesion has remained stable.⁹¹ Without this amount of societal cohesion, the aim of political elites to pursue European integration would not have proceeded as easily as it has. This point is further illustrated by the referendum results from March 23, 2003. The results indicated that 89.61% of the population was in favour of Slovenia joining the EU.⁹² Whether due to a natural propensity in the population to support European integration, or the mobilization of citizens by political elites, the referendum results are clear.

At the same time as the EU question, Slovenians were asked to endorse membership into NATO. This result of 66.02% in favour, while not as decisive as the former, does allow the government to proceed with the support of the population.⁹³ Some media reports explained the lower showing of support for the NATO question as a consequence of the war in Iraq. Since members of the 'Coalition of the Willing' belong to NATO, it is possible that Slovenes interpreted the question as a referendum on the war.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, the referendum passed and politicians are quick to downplay the discrepancy between the two responses.

⁹¹ Adam and Makarovic, 378.

⁹² Government of Slovenia, *Referenda Results* [online], 2003.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *The British Broadcasting Corporation*, Global News Wire, "Slovene Press Reaction to Outcome of EU, NATO Referenda," March 24, 2003.

The enthusiasm for NATO and the EU may not be without its costs to national cohesion, and this is what worries critics of European integration. As stated earlier, throughout centuries of existence within multinational kingdoms, empires and states, the Slovene people have been able to maintain a distinct society. The supranational character of the EU has great potentiality to erode the national cohesion of the Slovene people. Opponents of the integration mandate continually reiterate this possibility.⁹⁵ Provided that membership occurs, it is conceivable that Slovenia may one day chafe under the authority of ‘Eurocrats’ in Brussels as it once did under the apparatchiks of Belgrade.⁹⁶

Scholars have labelled the dominant Slovene view concerning EU membership as “Euro-realism”. This orientation suggests that it is not a particularly strong love for Europe that motivates the Slovene pursuit of membership. Rather, it is largely interpreted as an excellent way to accelerate economic progress, and in so doing, compensate for the backwardness incurred under communism. This instrumentalist approach is fundamentally rooted in a nationalist desire for greatness.⁹⁷ Moreover, EU membership is not motivated by an ethnically oriented vision for the embedding of democracy throughout the former communist states. It is about Slovenia jettisoning the communist legacy that is now viewed as a hindrance to progress. As mentioned in other sections, transition accounts have many ironies. What is presently believed to be the path to greatness for Slovenian society may eventually prove to be it unravelling. In the mean

⁹⁵ Frane Adam, Mitja Hafner-Fink and Samo Uhan, “Public Conceptions and Images of the European Union: The Case of Slovenia,” *Innovation* 15, no.2 (2002), 141.

⁹⁶ I thank Dr. Lenard Cohen for his insights given to me on this point.

⁹⁷ Frane Adam, Mitja Hafner-Fink and Samo Uhan, “Slovenia and the European Union: Attitudes and Perception,” *Newsletter Social Science in Eastern Europe*, Special Edition (2001), 154.

time, advocates of consolidation can hope that European integration will further embed democracy in Slovenian society.

Corruption

Transparency International is an organization that annually gauges the level of corruption in countries throughout the world. Once their survey responses are tabulated, countries are ranked from most corrupt to least corrupt. In the scoring system, a figure of ten indicates that the system is highly clean and zero suggests that it is highly corrupt. In each of the past four years Slovenia has changed positions. In 2000, a score of 5.5 was received which landed Slovenia in 28th place. In order to put this ranking into perspective, Estonia scored 5.7, Hungary 5.2 and Greece 4.3.⁹⁸ In the following year, Slovenia greatly slipped in the rankings to 34th place with a score of 5.2.⁹⁹ However, 2002 saw improvement as Slovenia climbed to position 27 at a score of 6.0.¹⁰⁰ The 2003 ranking of 29th place has not changed greatly from last year, with a score of 5.9. While the stabilization that occurred in the last two years is a positive sign, the level of corruption must decrease in order to match the scores of other EU members such as Finland (9.7), Netherlands (8.9) and Spain (6.9). However, Slovenes may take solace in the fact that current EU member Greece scored worse than Slovenia (4.3), earning the ranking of 50th place.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ International Transparency, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2000* [online], 2001.

⁹⁹ International Transparency, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2001* [online], 2002.

¹⁰⁰ International Transparency, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2002* [online], 2003.

¹⁰¹ International Transparency, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2003* [online], 2003.

In order to achieve the level of cleanliness held by long-time members of the EU, Slovenia must wage a sustained attack on corrupt practices. This is will not be an easy task. As a result of the communist legacy, the current system is neither fully public nor fully private. Consequently, the opportunity for individuals to make a profit through unlawful practices is particularly high in the area of public procurement.¹⁰² While the evidence does not cause scholars to fear that society is on the cusp of collapse due to corruption, general observations suggest that “institutions of prosecution and enforcement appear to be weak, the effectiveness of several other institutions of oversight is questionable, and conflicts of interest appear to be a widespread phenomenon.”¹⁰³

Due in part to a number of high profile scandals in recent years, the public perceives corruption to be prevalent throughout government and business. Two incidents in particular (both involving elected officials from the LDS) have made headlines. The first revolved around Boris Sustar, the former state under-secretary in the Ministry of the Economy. Sustar was found guilty of demanding bribes in exchange for a guarantee of monetary aid from the state. The humorous aspect of the story is that he was turned in by the individual supposed to pay the bribe because Sustar went back on this word concerning the demanded figure. The second LDS elected representative to face charges was Zdenko Kodric. This deputy mayor was in a number of blatant conflict of interest situations as he owned a private company that benefited directly by receiving contracts

¹⁰² Open Society Institute, *Corruption and Anti Corruption Policy in Slovenia*, (2002), 574.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 572.

from the municipality.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, these high profile cases do not build to a sense of trust among Slovenes.¹⁰⁵

The euro-savvy politicians of Ljubljana are cognizant of the impact that such trials have at home and abroad. In response to a set of recommendations by GRECO (a Council of Europe organization that fights corruption), the executive of Slovenia created the Office for the Prevention of Corruption in 1991. This government agency is intended to aide in the development of anti-corruption legislation, its implementation, and a variety of educational initiatives.¹⁰⁶ Despite the ambitious language of its publications, critics have described the bureau as “virtually powerless”. Even the director of the office, Bostjan Penko, told reporters that “the way it is organized means the bureau cannot take concrete action.”¹⁰⁷

The formation of the Office for the Prevention of Corruption supports the notion that the political leadership will take any course of action that would portray an image of democratic progress, and in so doing improve the perception of Slovenia to those that determine admittance to the EU. A more important motivation for combating corruption would have entailed an effort to strengthen civil society. After all, it is citizen involvement in their society at large which would provide a true attack on corruption. However, such activity is not taking place. The open society institute reports that “a

¹⁰⁴ Alternative Information Network, *Far From Its Southern Neighbours* [online], 2003.

¹⁰⁵ As both Francis Fukuyama and Robert Putnam have suggested, it is this sense of trust that facilitates commerce and good governance, two hallmarks of a consolidated democracy. Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity*, (New York: Free Press, 1995), 358. Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 223.

¹⁰⁶ Government of Slovenia, *Main Areas of Activities* [online], Office for the Prevention of Corruption, 2003.

¹⁰⁷ BETA News Agency, *A Virtually Powerless Anti-Corruption Bureau* [online], 2003.

recent attempt to form a branch of Transparency International failed due to lack of interest.”¹⁰⁸ Control of corruption remains to be a hurdle for Slovene society.

¹⁰⁸ Open Society Institute, *Corruption and Anti Corruption Policy in Slovenia* (2002): 581.

CHAPTER 6 - TREND IDENTIFICATION AND FORECAST FOR SLOVENE DEMOCRACY

The preceding chapters have examined the case of Slovene political development utilising concepts derived from the comparative literature on democratisation, and also comparison to the transformation of political life in Spain. This section of the analysis will evaluate the degree of consolidation that has occurred in Slovenia and assess that country's future prospects. The fact that Spain continued to slowly grow from its early transitional year of 1981, this analysis will compare recent development in Slovenia with the Spain of that year. The underlying assumption of the analysis is that if massive discrepancies between the two cases are absent, then the likelihood of eventual full consolidation in Slovenia is substantial.

By 1981, Spain had established a fairly sophisticated party system, representing the full spectrum of ideological views. Those parties mirrored the various ideological positions regarding historical disputes in Spain. Spain had moved to a situation where conflicts and disputes were being settled at the ballot box rather than through violence in the cities and countryside. For the most part, elections were free and fair. Although the political leaders were a product of the previous decades under Franco's rule, continuity in leadership was not necessarily a bad aspect of Spanish political life.

The state and party system in Slovenia after 1990 has a close similarity to the general course of Spanish development. A wide array of parties had become available to voters in Slovenia. No openly pro-communist party remained on the scene. Moreover, a party appeared representing those that endured hardship in the transition (Slovenian

Nationalist Party – SNS). The formation of the SNS parallels the existence of the far right party in Spain, which favours an authoritarian type of rule. The platforms of other major parties, such as the democratic socialists and the Christian democrats, are also consistent with the centrist parties in Spain. Thus, the Slovene party system provides adequate expression and representation for the citizens. In sum, the Slovene and Spanish party systems both exhibited a good deal of representation, which contributed to democratic consolidation.

The examination of Spanish civil society revealed that in 1981 Spain had established a strong foundation in civil society, although the number of non-state actors did not exhibit a very strong level of participation. As a result of the close cooperation between the Church and the state, society continued to be organized along traditionally conservative lines. The family continued to be the anchor of societal life. As the Franco regime was forced to gradually open during its twilight years, a nascent civil society emerged. As gradual change occurred, citizens were socialized in methods of political cooperation and political compromise.

Similarly in Slovenia, the existence of civil society is rooted in the process of regime change. As Slovenes became increasingly disgruntled with Yugoslavia, New Social Movements (NSMs) began to take form. In contrast to the Spanish experience, however, Slovenian NSMs rather quickly became part of the fabric of official politics and government, thereby essentially departing from the realm of civil society groups. In brief, Slovene civil society partially became incorporated into the Slovene state. The transition process undoubtedly benefited from the expertise of civil society activists, but

ironically this occurred at civil society's expense. This situation is likely to remain a concern for Slovenia in the foreseeable future.

The degree of national consciousness and cohesion was not especially strong at the beginning of Spanish democratisation in 1981. The Spanish Civil War, and then the domination by the winning side in an authoritarian system, left a deep scar on the soul of the nation. An effort to bridge the gap between the multiple cleavages in Spain occurred through the creation of a new constitution in 1978. Beyond the constitutional engineering in the new Spain, a second effort to improve national consciousness was made through the awarding of regional autonomy to the Catalan and Basque regions. Interestingly, King Juan Carlos played an influential role in both processes.

In the case of Slovenia, the serious difficulties of political division and mistrust that existed under communism did not continue to trouble society to the same extent that was witnessed in the Spanish case. Slovenia is a small country of roughly two million people. Most citizens are acutely aware of their country's long history and its unique culture. While ethnic minorities do exist in the country, their populations are not significant enough to cause a major concern to the majority group. Members of the elites, such as former President Milan Kucan, have been ardent promoters of both EU and NATO membership, largely interpreted as a means to improve Slovene prestige. Benign treatment of minorities is therefore important to the Slovene political elite. A caveat to this positive assessment of societal cohesion is that of the potential displacement of Slovene identity by a supranationalist EU identity, which can swamp both Slovene ethnicity and minority identities. However, this possibility of identity transformation is more of a long-term danger than an immediate threat. In sum, concerning the variable of

national consciousness and cohesion, Slovenia can be regarded as a rather successful case, one that even surpasses the record of Spain.

One of Spain's first tasks in the transition process was the creation of an independent judiciary. Having achieved this goal, Spain began making other necessary institutional changes. However, as the bureaucracy was expanded, patronage was used in the staffing of many ministries. Consistent with this non-democratic facet after 1981 was a culture of bribery and general inefficiency. In Slovenia the experience has been quite similar. As the privatization of national industries occurred, patronage also played a significant role. Recently, publicized incidents of corruption among elected officials have confirmed that corruption was not merely a symptom of the initial transition process. In sum, concerning the variable of corruption, no great difference is found between Spain and Slovenia.

Having evaluated the four independent variables of democratic consolidation, it appears clear that no great disparity exists between the two cases. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that democratic transition in Slovenia will continue to make progress in the process of consolidation.

Such a conclusion is encouraging to the student of political development. Since the first free elections in 1990, Slovenia has made tremendous strides in democratisation. As Bebler points out, there are a great number of accomplishments that Slovenes may look to with pride.

-First, the country has peacefully managed the stresses, tensions, and crises that have come with its rapid triple transition to sovereign statehood, a democratic polity, and a market based economy.

-Second, there have been repeated rounds of parliamentary, presidential and local voting with no serious deviation from accepted European standards for free competitive and clean electoral contests.

-Third, political pluralism and toleration flourish

-Fourth, key institutions of the political system have functioned reasonably well, despite the incompetence of some highly placed office holders.

-Fifth, popular support for democratic procedures and institutions is high.

-Lastly, Slovenia's transition has been accompanied by fewer instances of corruption or other abuses of political power for personal gain than one sees elsewhere in the region.¹⁰⁹

Indeed, these points illustrate that Slovenia has done exceptionally well at adopting the mechanics of democracy. Especially when compared to its South Eastern European neighbours, the case of Slovenia is a beacon of hope in a region that in other respects has a fairly bleak record. It is not surprising that politicians are keen to mention these accomplishments whenever they are given the opportunity. Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenia's foreign minister, upon hearing the outcome of the 2003 referendum in which Slovenes voted to join NATO and the EU, made the bold assertion that Slovenia's transition to democracy was complete.¹¹⁰ However, the many accomplishments summarized by Bebler, and the enthusiasm of Rupel, does not negate the fact that Slovenia has a tremendous amount of work to do in order to go beyond the formal mechanics of democracy. It is important to remember Diamond's admonishment that in all democracies there are imperfect aspects.

¹⁰⁹ Bebler, 135-138.

¹¹⁰ *New York Times*, "Slovenia Votes for Membership in European Union," March 24, 2003.

The use of a metaphor is helpful in understanding the imperfections of democracy. If the process of democratisation is compared to building a new house, Slovenia has constructed what appears to be a delightful home. The windows work, the doors swing open, the shingles repel water and the siding has not been tarnished by the weather. These aspects of the house are representative of the six points mentioned above by Bebler, and they are by no means minor accomplishments. However, though the house is new, the lot that the house is on had an existing foundation from a previous home. It is upon this foundation that the new home was built. The foundation is the intrinsic nature of Slovenian political culture. Consequently, many of the strengths and weaknesses of the old house have carried over to the new. Having been made aware of some of the weaknesses of the earlier foundation, the builder must now reinforce and renovate the home. As the foundation for the house (democracy) is strengthened, it becomes more likely that it will endure the dangers of earthquakes, termites and floods (economic recessions, extreme forms of nationalism, corruption scandals).

In each of the four aspects addressed in this discussion - party system, civil society, national cohesion and corruption – a common thread emerged; the weak participation of Slovene citizens in their political system. While the party system contains a variety of parties, representing a spectrum of opinion, the influence that ordinary citizens have upon the party leaderships is minimal. The problems for civil society are somewhat similar. Various societies and NGOs exist, but their vitality is weak. In regards to national cohesion, citizens generally support EU membership since it is widely understood that it will bring benefits to the country. While citizens did choose to participate through the passing of the referendum question, they are not engaging in

democracy building exercises *en masse* in order to hasten acceptance. Indeed, Slovenes are somewhat conflicted by their entry to the EU.¹¹¹ Lastly, corruption is a concern for the average Slovene, but there has been no great upsurge in the number of societies to serve a ‘watchdogs’ on government and business practices. At bottom, the nature of the political culture that currently prevails is not proactive. It passively supports initiatives that it believes to be in its best interest, but it does not actively pursue them.

Consolidation demands that Slovene democracy go beyond the simple mastery of electoral mechanics. The affinity that the population has for democracy cannot be strictly of an instrumentalist nature. While it is recognized that human self-interest will promote the instrumentalist view, a truly consolidated democracy has the ability to engender devotion to its citizens even in times when the immediate payoff is minimal. A consolidated democracy consists of citizens that participate because they believe it to be the proper course of action. It is this conviction to participate that ensures the survival of democracies in times of economic recession, corruption scandals, and unresponsive political parties. Therefore, foreign aid that is directed to Slovenia should be targeted for the re-emergence and nurturing of civil society. This would be an initial step towards further consolidation.

¹¹¹ Matej Makarovic, “Politicka participacija v desetletju demokratizacije,” in *Demokracija v Sloveniji*, eds., Niko Tos and Ivan Bernik, (Ljubljana: Dokumenti SJM 9, 2002.), 75-86.

CHAPTER 7 – SLOVENIA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS

Before assessing the relevance of the Slovene transition model for the countries of South Eastern Europe and other post-communist states, it is useful to briefly summarize the features of the Slovene experience. The Slovene model can be viewed as a methodology to achieve certain goals. In other words, members of society and their leaders support a certain type of democracy because it is seen as a tool to achieve a specific end. For Slovenia the goal was to obtain economic prosperity at home and prestige in the international arena. The Slovene model, as in most countries, was elite driven. Members of the elite sought as their task to organize referenda on EU membership, cultivate a relationship with the ‘Eurocrats’ of Brussels and constantly reiterate its conception of Slovenia ‘belonging’ to Europe. In this type of model, receiving incremental benefits fuels the consolidation of democracy, such as increased access to markets, continual growth of GDP, and the pride associated with ‘trailblazer’ status. Timelines are a major component of such a model. Through utilizing a transition schedule, the citizens are provided with a common goal, which instils a sense of accomplishment and tangible process. The model does not emphasize the need for a vibrant civil society. Lip service is usually paid to groups outside the state, but the primary focus of the government’s resources is directed towards European integration. An unwritten belief on the part of Slovene leaders is that as integration with the EU occurs, a surge in civil society will inevitably follow. This model gives the impression to outside observers that consolidation is unidirectional and relatively easy to achieve.

Finally, this model asserts that what is currently an instrumental task - - the democratisation process and moving towards Europe - - will become gradually embedded in the fabric of the polity. In brief, the entire thrust of Slovenian political development since 1990 has been to consolidate Euro-Atlanticism in the society's political culture.

While this Slovene model may appear to be a useful methodology for the other countries of South Eastern Europe, it may not be an appropriate model for every state in the region. As the literature on transitology suggests, the stage of consolidation is not a fixed order of steps that adheres to a timeline. It is the abundance of failed consolidation efforts that fuels the debate surrounding the best approach to political transition. The application of a transition model must be appropriate for a specific aspiring democracy in order to improve its chance of success.

The pragmatic approach to transition has worked well for Slovenia because of the unique features of the country and its politics. Two Slovene scholars, Vlado Miheljak and Niko Tos, believe that Slovenia's fast track transition of simultaneous democratisation and state building is linked to three key factors.¹¹² The first characteristic to consider is the national homogeneity of Slovenia. This allowed Slovenia to separate itself from Yugoslavia without the prolonged violence that was endured by many of the other breakaway republics. This also reduced the irredentist claims during the post-independence era. The second factor to consider is directly tied to the country's communist legacy. Slovenia was the most economically developed region of Yugoslavia, thus underscoring its similarity with Western and Central Europe and its dissimilarity

¹¹² Vlado Miheljak and Niko Tos, "Pogled nazaj. Tranzicija v Sloveniji med demokratizacijo in suverenizacijo," in *Demokracija v Sloveniji*, eds., Niko Tos and Ivan Bernik, (Ljubljana: Dokumenti SJM 9, 2002.) 3-33.

with the other states of South Eastern Europe. Of course the privatization of industry still was required after 1990, but this was a more favourable challenge than having to build the economy from the ground up. The third factor that brought the pragmatic approach success was Slovenia's geographical location and excellent relations with Austria and Italy. The ease of travel encouraged Slovenes to visit their democratic neighbours and facilitated growth in key sectors of a modern economy. While other transition countries in South Eastern Europe may have benefited from some of these factors, Slovenia alone had the good fortune of possessing all three. Without these factors Slovenia would not be the success story of South Eastern Europe.

If the Slovene model is applied to the countries of South Eastern Europe, the end result will not be a carbon copy of the Slovene experience. The existence of the three above mentioned factors is capable of supporting Slovenia's democratic consolidation even when there are certain democratic deficits (such as the elitist nature of the party system). For example, even though Slovene citizens may by and large not see the inherent value of voting in a free and fair election, voter turnout will likely be high in the country. This is mainly because high levels of Slovene participation, as well as a desire of most citizens to portray their country as belonging to the advanced democracies of Europe. If the Slovene model were transferred to a different country, the same outcome would not necessarily ensue.

The primary weakness of the Slovene model is that it fails to incorporate a strong civil society as a pre-requisite for continued institutional change, whether economic or political. In other societies, which do not benefit from Slovenia's level of economic prosperity, the absence of a strong civil society would be highly detrimental to

democratisation. Very likely the citizens in such states would withdraw their support from the consolidation process, thus giving rise to a weak or 'grey zone' democracy. Indeed, if the transition model was completely abandoned, the possibilities resulting would go beyond the mere frustration with the transition paradigm. In a failed democracy it is highly conceivable that political violence would rear its ugly head. It is the mechanisms of civil society that provide an outlet for the public when frustration mounts. When promises are not delivered in such a failed scenario, the citizenry is prone to bypass avenues of civil expression and opt for non-conventional and often non-democratic patterns of behaviour.

An additional consideration that discourages the use of the Slovene model in South Eastern Europe is the existence of the EU perimeter. When Slovenia is admitted to the EU in the spring of 2004, it will form part of the new border of an integrated Europe. In many ways this is not an entirely new situation for Slovenia, as the country has long been a border region. As this analysis has shown, Europe can be quite confident that democratic consolidation in Slovenia will continue, and that the country will provide a secure border for the EU. That said, this raises an important consideration with respect to overall transition. If the boundary of Europe was hastily extended beyond Slovenia, the possibility of consolidation failure in South Eastern Europe would be present. Granted, the EU is not about to admit a country that does not meet its admission criteria. However, if the EU were to embrace the pragmatic model, it is conceivable that the dangers flowing from a weak civil society could be overlooked when enlargement took place. The 21st century realities of terrorism, trafficking and refugee migration certainly elevate the need for stable and competent EU border states. In assessing the readiness of

countries to take on the responsibility for managing the EU's borders, economic and institutional indicators by themselves are not a sufficient measure of potential success. The depth and breadth of civil society must also be taken into account when assessing a country's eligibility to enter the EU, or to perform well as a border post on its periphery.

The establishment of a strong civil society is immensely difficult. The process involves a great deal of time and money, two commodities that are in short supply in practically every political setting found in the modern world. However, for true democratic consolidation, the sort that shuns the label of pseudo-democracy, it is necessary to cultivate a strong civil society. Few and far between are situations that resemble the endowments Slovenia was fortunate enough to receive when it began its journey towards membership in the EU. Most often countries in the region are plagued by endemic corruption, ethnic rivalry and a completely illiberal historical experience. Sadly this is a constant reality that the post-authoritarian world faces, and the reality the democratic world must confront. In a country such as Slovenia it is acceptable to overlook a relatively feeble civil society, and to be relatively confident that future political development will move in a positive direction. However, this approach of mixed optimism and future opportunity is not a suitable basis for state building in South Eastern Europe, or the rest of the world for that matter. As the international coalition that militarily intervened in Iraq is gradually recognizing, the consolidation of democracy is a protracted matter that requires the involvement of prudent leadership and many other supporting factors.

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