

Transition as a Legacy

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Abstract:

Almost two decades after their transition to democracy it is no longer questioned whether the new EU member states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are democratic in the minimalist, procedural sense. Academic attention has turned to analysing various pathways of democratic development in the region and the consolidation of democracy (CoD). CoD in the broadest sense investigates the stability and survival of democratic regimes.¹ In opposition to transitologists (which focuses on the regime question), CoD addresses the question of what kind of democracy is actually developing in various countries.² Next to institutional and behavioural factors cultural or attitudinal variables are increasingly considered in this context. Elite commitment to the existing democratic system is seen as a crucial component of CoD.³

Keywords:

Democracy, transition, CEE countries, EU acquis, EU accession, consensualism

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¹ G Munck, ‘The Regime Question – Theory Building in Democracy Studies’, *World Politics*, Vol.54, October 2001, p.130.

² P Schmitter / N Guilhot, ‘From Transition to Consolidation: Extending the Concept of Democratization and the Practice of Democracy’, in: M. Dobry (ed.), *Democratic and Capitalist Transitions in Eastern Europe: Lessons for the Social Sciences*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000, p.132.

³ J Higley / Gy Lengyel (eds.), *Elites after State Socialism – Theory and Analysis*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.