Next Generation Democracy

Post-Soviet Eurasia

Track 1 - People and Communities

Regional Trends 2000-2015 & Scenarios 2015-2030

#NGD

NOTE TO THE READER

NGD regional reports for Track I, 'People and Communities' analyze trends and projections in democratic governance from a predominantly socio-political perspective on the basis of a multidimensional template specifically formulated by the Club de Madrid, with the collaboration of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, for this purpose.

NGD regional reports have been written by the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) Regional Coordinators and extensively discussed with the BTI team, the CdM Secretariat and NGD regional partners. They constitute the first step of the NGD process, which will progressively organize transformative practices and ideas according to the same template, and subsequently draft NGD regional agendas to react to signals of democratic decline and advance democracy worldwide.

NGD regional reports start with a summary of regional indicator trends according to the NGD template. The summary includes colored boxes and arrows expressing the present state of affairs and the evolution during the last 15 years of democratic governance for each relevant indicator. The sources for trend calculations are the BTI and the Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI), also developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung.
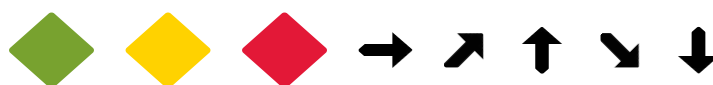
Indicator boxes are colored to differentiate between the most recent state of affairs for each regional indicator (BTI/SGI 2014). Green, yellow and red respectively indicate 'high level', 'medium level', and 'low level' in relative quality. Levels for each regional indicator are based both on inter- and intra-regional averages, thus the indicator boxes highlight the relative strengths and weaknesses of a region, but also indicate how well the region is scoring on a global scale.

Trend arrows express whether the situation improved or worsened during the last 15 years. The indicator boxes contain five types of trend arrows, signaling 'significant improvement', 'improvement', 'continuity', 'decline', and 'significant decline'. The positive or negative trend reflects changes of averages above or below a certain threshold (which varies according to the size of the country sample) in the respective regional indicator. Changes of more than double that threshold form a significant trend.

The combination of colors and arrows thus shows whether a given change, and the speed of it, is observable from a low or high starting level. In the former case, a positive trend means that modest change has occurred during the past years in a situation which remains problematic. In the latter case, depending on the speed of change, a positive change may indicate that an already high status is being further improved. In case the trend is negative and the present state of affairs is of a low quality, regression is taking place in spite of a problematic situation. Finally, negative trends against a high quality background indicate potential decline in deep-rooted aspects of democracy.

For a detailed explanation of the calculations, see NGD Methodological Note at:

www.nextgenerationdemocracy.org

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INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

Post–Soviet Eurasia

Track 1 – People and Communities

Values and Institutions   Access and Inclusiveness   Management and Policies

Trends 2000 – 2015		Projections 2015 – 2030
Political participation		
Electoral process Regular elections are held in all PSE countries, but should be considered as largely democratic only in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia and Ukraine.	→	• Incumbent political elites will continue to rely on elections for legitimation, but there will be less opportunity to initiate democratization through protests against electoral fraud.
Association/assembly rights Authoritarian political regimes have increasingly restricted association and assembly rights to prevent mass protests against fraudulent elections.	↘	• Authoritarian political regimes in the PSE region are increasingly seeking to control the Internet and social media, which have evolved into a powerful means of networking and mobilizing public protest. However, sustaining this surveillance and repression will be costly for these regimes if their legitimacy erodes.
Freedom of expression Authoritarian political regimes are increasingly taking efforts to limit the freedom of media and the Internet. Independent media and media pluralism are also threatened in the PSE region's democratic regimes.	→	
Rule of law		
Separation of powers With the exception of Moldova, all PSE states have semipresidential or presidential systems of government. Strong presidents have dominated policymaking in all these systems through formal and informal powers.	→	• Global economic integration and the need for economic modernization will continue to generate a demand for business-friendly rule-of-law reforms. These reforms will not extend to core power structures and may become stalled.
Independent judiciary Judicial bodies in most countries of the region continue to depend on the president and the broader executive.	→	
Civil rights Violations of civil rights have become more frequent in many PSE countries.	→	

Post–Soviet Eurasia

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Values and Institutions   **Access and Inclusiveness**   Management and Policies

Trends 2000 – 2015		Projections 2015 – 2030
Political and social integration		
Party system Party systems are dominated by pro-presidential parties in most authoritarian states. Party systems in the democratic political regimes are more competitive, but parties are organized around political leaders rather than cohesive political programs.	→	• High levels of social distrust are likely to persist, reinforcing the dealignment of citizens and intermediary organizations. Social media may partially replace political parties by producing more flexible, issue-specific forms of political organization.
Interest groups Party systems are dominated by pro-presidential parties in most authoritarian states. Party systems in the democratic political regimes are more competitive, but parties are organized around political leaders rather than cohesive political programs.	→	
Social capital Trust and self-organization are weak in most countries, but civil-society organizations have played a key role for political mobilization in Ukraine and other PSE countries.	→	
Inclusiveness and non-discrimination		
State identity Most countries are confronted with unsettled statehood issues and conflicts. Since 2014, Russia has increasingly asserted a hegemonic role by interfering with Ukraine and other countries in the name of ethnic Russians.	→	• Authoritarian and democratic political regimes are likely to "nationalize" their states further in order to legitimize political rule and form political communities out of societies that are still "post-Soviet" in many regards. Such policies contribute to the exacerbation of ethnopolitical divisions.
Socioeconomic barriers Poverty and inequality are pronounced and structurally ingrained. Central Asian countries have less developed health and education systems than do most East European countries.	→	
Equal opportunity Women tend to be underrepresented in public office and leading positions despite relatively high participation rates in education and labor markets. Migrant workers face discrimination and growing ethnic hostility.	→	

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Trends 2000 – 2015		Projections 2015 – 2030
Strategic capacity and efficiency		
Prioritization Policies of economic modernization are regularly subordinated to the requirements of political stability and regime survival. Only Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have concluded association agreements with the EU.	→	• Since most states lack a bureaucracy committed to the public interest, attempts to emulate the developmental states of East Asia are unlikely to succeed. The examples of Russia and Azerbaijan show that economic modernization may be subordinated to the stabilization of authoritarian rule.
Implementation Weak accountability mechanisms within authoritarian systems and power struggles in democratic political regimes hamper implementation effectiveness throughout.	↗	• Executive capacity continues to be limited by weak accountability mechanisms that enable powerful interests to secure private rents.
Efficient use of assets A weak public-service ethos, segmentation, informal practices and an ongoing brain drain limit the efficient use of resources.	→	
Anti-corruption policy Governments are only partly willing and able to address corruption as a systemic problem, and the implementation of new laws often lags behind.	→	
Consensus-building		
Cleavage/conflict management Russia's political elites have engineered a nationalist mobilization, exacerbating ethnopolitical cleavages both internally and in post-Soviet countries with native Russian-speaking groups.	→	• Future societal support of authoritarian and democratic political regimes will depend on their capacities to produce mass prosperity, security and other common goods. Nationalism may function as an integrative device, but will escalate ethnopolitical conflicts and undermine regional stability.
Civil-society participation Authoritarian and democratic political regimes have institutionalized consultation with civil society, but authoritarian regimes limit such participation to issues that do not challenge their existing monopoly on political rule.	→	

Introduction

Although the 13 East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries of Post-Soviet Eurasia (PSE) share, with the exception of Mongolia, a common past as constituent republics of the former Soviet Union, they exhibit a large variety of political regimes today. In Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, democracy emerged from mass protests against fraudulent elections in 2003 – 2005. Moldova and Mongolia have been able to sustain competitive political regimes since the early 1990s.

In contrast, the other eight countries of the PSE region display trajectories that have led from initial power struggles among elites and in some cases periods of political pluralization to a reconsolidation of authoritarian rule. Incumbent political elites in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan recognize elections as the only legitimate mode of access to political authority and hold regular presidential, legislative and local government elections. However, presidents and ruling political parties ensure victories through the use of various manipulative and repressive methods. While sharing this trait, the authoritarian regimes differ considerably in the scope of their vote-rigging and in their individual policy mixes of repression, co-optation, patronage and support building.

Russia's legacy as an empire-building center in Soviet and Tsarist times has entailed a particular burden and challenge for democracy and its protagonists in this country. Internally, the ruling political elites have used the needs and goals of a strong state as imperatives justifying the postponement and repudiation of democratic reforms. Externally, Russia's elites have been unable to overcome the inherited territorial fuzziness of Russian statehood. Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has increasingly used its economic and military power to assert a hegemonic role in the PSE region. Russia has interfered with several PSE states, seeking to shape domestic political processes in Russia's interest and claiming to act in the name of ethnic Russian minorities. As a consequence, domestic politics in all PSE countries is today strongly influenced by the web of relations with Russia. In 2014, Russia incorporated the Crimean Peninsula, an autonomous region of Ukraine, into its Federation and Russian troops assisted separatist insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. Previously, Georgia and Moldova had already lost control over portions of their territories where local political actors supported by Russia have striven for independence.

Values and institutions

Regional overview

The five democratic regimes in Post-Soviet Eurasia organize regular, free and largely fair elections that have resulted in a transfer of power between competing political forces. However, the democracies of **Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia** and **Ukraine** cannot be considered stable or consolidated, since governing political representatives

Values and Institutions			Political Participation				Rule of Law		
			Free and fair elections	Association / assembly rights	Freedom of expression		Separation of powers	Independent judiciary	Civil rights
Moldova	7.00	7.3	8	7	7	6.7	7	6	7
Mongolia	7.00	7.3	8	8	6	6.7	7	6	7
Georgia	6.83	7.7	8	8	7	6.0	6	6	6
Kyrgyzstan	5.83	6.7	6	7	7	5.0	6	3	6
Ukraine	5.67	6.0	6	6	6	5.3	5	5	6
Armenia	5.00	5.3	5	6	5	4.7	4	4	6
Russia	4.17	4.0	5	3	4	4.3	4	4	5
Azerbaijan	3.50	3.3	3	4	3	3.7	3	4	4
Tajikistan	3.17	3.0	3	3	3	3.3	3	3	4
Kazakhstan	3.00	3.0	3	3	3	3.0	2	4	3
Belarus	2.67	2.7	2	3	3	2.7	2	4	2
Uzbekistan	2.00	1.7	1	2	2	2.3	2	3	2
Turkmenistan	1.50	1.0	1	1	1	2.0	2	3	1

Indicator Scores, Transformation Index BTI 2014
Note: Scores reflect the situation as of January 31, 2013.

frequently abuse their offices to exploit state resources and expand their partisan networks of clientelist exchange. Legislatures, courts and other formally independent institutions are too weak to hold governing political elites accountable. These deficiencies with regard to horizontal accountability mechanisms are compounded by the weakness of independent media and civil-society organizations. The lure of partially unchecked executive power and the corresponding institutional uncertainty exacerbates conflicts between rival political elites. Such conflicts often tend to spread from the contestation of policies to the institutional arrangements governing the exercise of political authority. "Selective justice" applied against former government officials is just one symptom of these inherently disruptive power struggles.

The eight authoritarian regimes in the region vary according to degrees of openness. Since **Armenia** and **Russia** tolerate niches of political competition, independent media and civil liberties, they may be classified as electoral authoritarian regimes. **Uzbekistan** and **Turkmenistan** mark the other end of the authoritarian spectrum, constituting closed autocracies that prohibit and persecute political opposition, suppress civil society and violate civil liberties and human rights. **Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan** and **Tajikistan** are situated between these two authoritarian poles, combining intermediate levels of repression and openness.

Political elites and citizens in the PSE region generally concur in approving of democracy as an idea and a principle, but hold widely diverging and to some extent vague views about what democracy means in practice and how to realize it in their own country. Linkages with Europe, limited patronage resources and a strong sense of national identity have facilitated the creation and political survival of democratically elected executives and legislatures within PSE countries. These structural conditions have all been present in **Georgia, Moldova** and **Ukraine**. Over the past 15 years, economic, political and cultural linkages with Europe have deepened, national awareness has increased with the fading of the Soviet experience, and economic reforms have reduced opportunities for rents. These trends also affect other PSE countries, but revenues from natural resources (**Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia**), a large state-controlled economic sector subsidized by **Russia** coupled with weaker national identity (**Belarus**), and peculiar post-imperial identity beliefs (**Russia**) or threat perceptions (**Armenia**) have weakened their impact.

In **Central Asia**, linkages with Europe tend to be weaker, and socioeconomic, political and cultural modernization is more associated with Russia. Political leadership has contributed to the creation and maintenance of democratic institutions in **Kyrgyzstan** and **Mongolia.** However, their future is uncertain in view of the recent interethnic tensions in **Kyrgyzstan** and the recent mining boom generating large patronage resources and inequalities in **Mongolia**.

Analysis

Political participation

Electoral process
To what extent are political representatives determined by general, free and fair elections?

Regular elections are held in all PSE countries, but only the parliamentary and/or presidential elections in Georgia (2012, 2013), Kyrgyzstan (2010, 2011), Moldova (2010), Mongolia (2012, 2013) and Ukraine (2012, 2014) have approximated the standards of a free and fair electoral process. Even in these countries, electoral processes and institutions are at times disputed and continue to be hampered by irregularities. However, incumbent political elites lack the means and/or resolve to manipulate the outcomes of elections decisively.

In the other countries of the region, governments and parliaments restrict the right to campaign and run for office by excluding or marginalizing groups and politicians who oppose the regime. Ruling political elites and their supporters or agents possess and use administrative resources to influence voting. Frequently used methods of manipulation include vote buying, voter intimidation, the casting of multiple votes, ballot stuffing, voter misinformation, the misrecording of votes and the invalidation of ballots. For the ruling political elites, elections serve to demonstrate mass support for incumbent presidents and pro-presidential parties, to broaden the societal basis of the political regime, and to improve elites' awareness of societal concerns. In 2013 such elections confirmed incumbent presidents in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

Association/assembly rights
To what extent can individuals form and join independent political or civic groups? To what extent can these groups operate and assemble freely?

Seeking to prevent "electoral revolutions" emulating Ukraine's Orange Revolution or Georgia's Rose Revolution, authoritarian political regimes in the PSE region have increasingly restricted association and assembly rights. Russia implemented a law obliging civic groups to register as foreign agents if they received foreign funding and engaged in political activities. The law

introduced new restrictions and increased penalties for administrative violations. The government sued the renowned NGO Memorial human-rights group with the aim of ensuring its dissolution. In 2013, Azerbaijan tightened registration rules for foreign and foreign-funded NGOs, and introduced restrictions on the ability of NGOs to raise funds. Belarus imposed sanctions on NGOs that violated requirements for registering foreign grants. In Turkmenistan, foreign grants to NGOs must be approved by the government. Politicians in several Central Asian countries have considered copying the Russian foreign-agent law. Law-enforcement agencies in Russia, Uzbekistan and other countries have carried out more frequent and invasive inspections of civil-society organizations.

The Russian authorities prosecuted numerous participants in the Bolotnaya Square demonstration in Moscow that preceded the inauguration of President Putin in May 2012. The Kremlin established an "Anti-Maidan Council" of pro-regime civil-society organizations tasked with mobilizing against potential protests after the regional elections in September 2014. Several authoritarian countries adopted more restrictive regulations for public protests that empowered the police and prosecution to use minor irregularities as a pretext for treating protest organizer as criminals. Police also intervened more massively to suppress protests by civil-society activists.

Association and assembly rights are relatively well established and protected in Georgia, Moldova, Mongolia and Ukraine. For example, in 2013 Ukraine simplified the conditions and procedures governing registration for public associations and charitable organizations.

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

The authoritarian political regimes in the PSE region have increasingly limited the freedom of media. Spearheading the broader backlash observable throughout PSE, the Russian government and parliament have recently focused their repressive initiatives on the Internet and social media. In August 2014, a law on bloggers entered into force, obliging those with more than 3,000 readers to register at the Supervisory Agency for Communication (Roskomnadzor), and to respect numerous requirements such as the mandate to publish only "credible" information. In July 2014, Russia's parliament adopted a data-retention law requiring web services and operators of WiFi hotspots to collect and store the data associated with their Russian users. The authorities have also started blocking websites containing oppositional content, and recently forced the founder of Russia's most popular social network, VKontakte, to leave the country.

These measures have been accompanied by Kremlin-sponsored campaigns of pro-Russia In-ternet commenting (trolling) and systematic moves to discipline or shut down Russia's remaining independent media outlets. In 2013, Russia's president integrated RIA Novosti, a formerly relatively unbiased state-owned news agency, into a new information agency headed by Dmitry Kiselyov, a TV news presenter known for his anti-liberal and nationalist views. Pro-Kremlin producers and journalists were placed at the helm of Ekho Moskvy, an independent radio station, and Lenta.ru, an online news portal. A pro-opposition newspaper was charged with alleged extremism. In July 2014, the Duma banned advertising on cable and satellite channels, depriving pay channels, including the independent Dozhd TV station, of a vital source of revenue. In September 2014, Russia's parliament limited foreign ownership stakes in Russian media outlets to no more than 20%. The Duma increased penalties for persons advocating "separatism."

While other authoritarian regimes such as Azerbaijan have also intensified their repression of independent journalists and media outlets in the wake of the Ukrainian revolution, some dem-ocratic political regimes in the PSE region have in fact implemented reforms to improve as-pects of free expression, including media-ownership transparency and the pluralism of political opinions, for example. However, journalists have been threatened more frequently in Ukraine and other democratic countries.

Rule of law

Separation of powers
To what extent is there a working separation of powers (checks and balances)?

With the exception of Moldova, all PSE states have semi-presidential or presidential systems of government. Strong presidents dominate policymaking in all these systems, relying on formal and informal powers and mechanisms of political coordination.

Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine reduced their presidents' constitutional powers following their democratic breakthroughs. In Georgia, the president's powers were reduced in 2010, with the changes entering into force after the presidential election in October 2013. Georgia experienced a period of "cohabitation" from October 2012 to November 2013, with the governing majority and the president representing the two major opposing political forces. The Kyrgyzstani president has continued to exercise strong political influence on parliament and government, although the president's constitutional position was weakened in 2010. Similar constitutional amendments weakening presidential power in Ukraine were passed in 2004, repealed in 2010, and restored in February 2014 following the collapse of President Vladimir Yanukovich's regime. Yanukovich's control over parliament diminished after the parliamentary elections of October 2012, and collapsed after he ordered the use of violence against the protesters gathering at Maidan square in Kiev.

Presidents and their administrations largely control parliaments in the other countries, mostly through pro-presidential parties. Presidential decrees are widely used as a substitute for laws, thereby undermining the authority of the legislature. Presidents sustain an informal division of powers by balancing the influence of different centers of power. Two authoritarian governments have taken cautious steps toward decentralization: Russia reintroduced the direct election of regional governors, though they are now pre-selected by municipalities and the president, and Kazakhstan enabled local representative bodies to elect the heads of district-level and rural local governments.

Independent judiciary
To what extent does an independent judiciary exist?

Judicial bodies in most countries of the region continue to depend on the president and the broader executive. The executive often controls or influences judicial appointments, determines court budgets, and is able to interfere with proceedings. Most PSE countries are still struggling to reform the office of the prosecutor general (Prokuratura), which constitutes an independent branch of power and holds far-reaching supervisory and investigative competences inherited from Soviet times. Several governments have implemented reforms intended to enhance courts' administrative capacities and effectiveness in adjudicating business disputes. These reforms are aimed at improving the institutional and legal conditions for investment.

Georgia adopted several laws strengthening the autonomy of the judiciary and withdrawing prosecutorial functions from the Minister of Justice. Moldova adopted laws in October 2013 aimed at strengthening judges' professional accountability. In February 2014, Ukraine released its former Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko, who had been imprisoned after a politically motivated trial.

Civil rights
To what extent are civil rights guaranteed and protected, and to what extent can citizens seek redress for violations of these rights?

Violations of civil rights have become more frequent in many PSE countries. Mechanisms and institutions to prosecute, punish and redress such violations are formally established, but do not function reliably. The war in eastern Ukraine and the suppression of resistance in the northern Caucasus have entailed numerous killings and other human-rights violations. Persons belonging to ethnic and other minorities face discrimination in many countries of PSE. Incumbent political elites exploit hostility to non-heterosexual minorities in their denouncements of the West as a morally degenerate culture. Hostile attitudes toward non-Slavic migrants have intensified in Russia, leading in October 2013 to anti-migrant riots provoked by Russian nationalists in Moscow. Several Central Asian states have used threats of Islamist radicalism as a pretext to restrict the rights of religious communities.

Authoritarian political regimes in the region have increasingly arrested civic activists and members of the political opposition in efforts to prevent the diffusion of the Ukrainian revolution. According to reports by local NGOs, the number of persons imprisoned for political reasons ranged between 11 (Belarus), 45 (Russia), 98 (Azerbaijan) and several thousands in both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In August 2014, a Moscow court ordered the house arrest of Alexei Navalny, Russia's popular anti-corruption blogger, to be changed to a prison sentence on the basis of fabricated charges of asset embezzlement. Opposition leaders have been subject to prosecution and harassment in other authoritarian countries, as well. For example, Kazakhstan arranged for the illegal deportation of the wife and child of Mukhtar Ablyazov, a regime critic and oligarch, from Italy.

Overcrowded and unsanitary prison facilities persist in many PSE countries. Detainees are subject to ill treatment by police and prison staff, and in some cases are also tortured, particularly in the region's authoritarian states.

Projections 2015 – 2030

Political participation

Authoritarian political regimes in the PSE region are increasingly seeking to control the Internet and social media, which have evolved into powerful means of societal communication, networking and public-protest mobilization. This policy will increase the risks and obstacles faced by civic activists seeking to organize anti-regime movements. However, sustaining a broad and intense policy of surveillance and repression will ultimately strain the resources of authoritarian regimes, particularly if they are faced with economic decline and weakening nationalist enthusiasm.

Rule of law

Global economic integration and the need for economic modernization will continue to generate a demand for rule-of-law reforms that aim at improving the legal and judicial environment for business activities and investment. Business-oriented rule-of-law reforms will be promoted by PSE's democratic and authoritarian political regimes alike. However, in the latter regimes, these reforms will be limited insofar as they will not be extended to apply to political leaders, the repressive apparatus, clientelistic networks supporting the exercise of political power, or to the state-controlled economic sectors (primarily natural resources industries) that sustain these clientelistic power structures. The democratic political regimes have an opportunity to transition to the full rule of law, but reforms are likely to become stalled if governments' political commitment, public attention and civil-society pressure wane.

Access and inclusiveness

Regional overview

Access and Inclusiveness		Political and Social Integration				Inclusiveness and Non-Discrimination		
		Party system	Interest groups	Social capital		State identity	Socioeconomic barriers	Equal opportunity
Mongolia	6.17	6.0	6	6	6	6.3	10	3	6
Armenia	6.00	6.0	6	6	6	6.0	9	4	5
Ukraine	6.00	5.0	4	5	6	7.0	9	6	6
Moldova	5.83	6.3	7	6	6	5.3	8	3	5
Belarus	5.17	3.7	3	4	4	6.7	8	7	5
Kyrgyzstan	5.17	4.7	4	5	5	5.7	8	4	5
Russia	5.17	4.0	4	4	4	6.3	8	6	5
Azerbaijan	4.67	3.3	3	4	3	6.0	7	5	6
Georgia	4.67	4.3	5	4	4	5.0	7	4	4
Kazakhstan	4.67	3.0	2	4	3	6.3	8	5	6
Tajikistan	3.83	3.0	3	2	4	4.7	7	3	4
Uzbekistan	3.33	2.0	1	2	3	4.7	7	3	4
Turkmenistan	3.17	1.7	1	2	2	4.7	7	4	3

Indicator Scores, Transformation Index BTI 2014

Note: Scores reflect the situation as of January 31, 2013.

In most cases, Post-Soviet Eurasia's democracies have stronger institutions of political representation than do the authoritarian regimes. Similarly, parties, interest groups and civil-society organizations are more effective in mediating between society and the political system. Authoritarian regimes in **Azerbaijan, Belarus** and **Kazakhstan** have institutionalized and differentiated channels of territorial and functional interest representation, but these are less open than in the democratic states, and privilege certain interests and lobbies. In the closed autocracies of **Uzbekistan** and **Turkmenistan**, political parties and associations exist, but they are either tightly controlled by the ruling group or suppressed. Distrust pervades the public sphere, and civic self-organization is largely limited to private circles of dissidents.

Patterns of social and political inclusiveness in the PSE region are less influenced by countries' democratic nature and political-regime quality. Ethnically homogenous nation states such as **Armenia** or **Mongolia**, as well as comparatively more affluent countries such as **Belarus** or **Russia**, provide more favorable conditions for inclusiveness. High levels of socioeconomic

inequality, as in **Georgia**, hold the potential for social exclusion and conflict if these issues are not addressed in the course of market reforms. The Central Asian countries of **Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan**, but also **Moldova** in eastern Europe, constitute the poorest PSE countries in terms of average per capita gross national income. Widespread high poverty levels constrain inclusiveness in these societies.

Analysis

Political and social integration

Party system
To what extent is there a stable and socially rooted party system able to articulate and aggregate societal interests?

Party systems in most authoritarian states of PSE are dominated by pro-presidential parties that control large majorities of seats in their individual parliaments. Pro-presidential parties often also command the support of nominally independent members of parliament, thereby blurring parliamentary accountability. All authoritarian regimes in PSE tolerate such independent deputies and regime-loyal "opposition" parties within their parliaments. In December 2013, even Turkmenistan, the PSE region's most repressive autocracy, reduced the parliamentary dominance of the pro-presidential party (90% of the seats) to include new parliamentary parties claiming to represent business, women and young people. Such additional parties perform important legitimating and coordinating functions for authoritarian incumbents, as they enable different segments of society to articulate their interests; this in turn allows governments to co-opt representatives of these segments, while distracting voters from groups opposing the regime.

Party systems in the democratic political regimes are more competitive, but are not structured according to clear programmatic differences. Political parties are organized around political leaders and personal relations. Since most political parties lack a broad membership or a cohesive and stable electorate, they depend on access to state resources.

Interest groups
To what extent is there a network of cooperative associations or interest groups to mediate between society and the political system?

Business-interest associations and trade unions exist in all PSE countries, but their ability to mediate between society and the political system is limited. Business and political interests are deeply intertwined in many countries. The authoritarian political regimes closely supervise the activities of interest groups, operating their own pro-regime groups and restricting the creation of independent organizations. Governments in Russia and other authoritarian states grant a privileged status to pro-regime or regime-neutral interest groups, and have established institutionalized forms of consultation with these groups. Private business associations wield comparatively little political influence in countries with small private economic sectors (Belarus, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan).

Large domestic companies and large foreign investors maintain direct and partly informal relations with governments, ignoring interest associations. Informal relations and networks also dominate the natural-resource sectors. Small companies tend to be underrepresented in the political process, although governments in several PSE countries have recognized their importance for economic innovation and modernization. Traditional trade unions have lost many members, and trade unions are generally only weakly rooted in economic sectors with small, privately owned companies, in services and in modern industries.

The Orthodox churches in Russia and other post-Soviet countries are unified in their rejection of the moral evils associated with modernity and Western culture. Russia's political regime has relied on the Russian Orthodox Church to provide legitimacy for its drive to reintegrate the post-Soviet states and for the exceptionalism of Russia as a non-Western national culture.

Social capital
To what extent have social self-organization and the construction of social capital advanced?

Levels of the interpersonal trust required to accumulate and reproduce social capital are low in most PSE countries. According to survey data published in 2013, 25% of the citizens in the 13 countries (unweighted average) believe that most people can be trusted. Trust levels are highest in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan (34%) and lowest in Moldova (12%).

Few citizens are members of civil-society organizations, since self-organized associations and groups have not filled the void left by the dissolution of the compulsory mass organizations common under state socialism. Autonomous civic groups are largely confined to urban milieus, formed by younger citizens with higher education belonging to an emerging middle class. According to a USAID report, the number of registered civil-society organizations in 2013 ranged between 20 (Turkmenistan) and 4,184 (Georgia) per million residents. However, many registered civil-society organizations are not operational, and some of these organizations serve purposes of tax evasion. A Russian opinion survey from August 2014 indicated that about 90% of respondents had not participated in any civic or political activity in the 2012 – 2013 period.

Civil-society organizations in Ukraine played a key role in the broad political mobilization of citizens that led to the ouster of President Yanukovich. In Georgia and Armenia, civic and community-based groups and organizations have also become more active, running several successful public campaigns.

Inclusiveness & non-discrimination

State identity
To what extent do all groups in society have access to citizenship and naturalization? To what extent do all relevant groups in society agree about citizenship and accept the nation-state as legitimate?

Most countries in Post-Soviet Eurasia face unsettled statehood issues and protracted conflicts. Majority ethnic groups constitute less than 90% of the population in all PSE countries but Armenia, Azerbaijan and Mongolia. Sizeable native Russian-speaking or ethnic Russian groups live in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. These ethnic divides have rendered the Russian Federation a kin state and advocate of these groups. In addition, Russia's elites and citizens have traditionally viewed the other post-Soviet states as Russia's "near abroad," characterized by a shared past and a special affinity.

Since 2014, Russia's political leadership has increasingly tried to mobilize Russian-speaking citizens of other post-Soviet states. Following the 2014 revolution in Ukraine, Russia sent political and military personnel to organize and support separatist political forces in Crimea and the Russian-speaking eastern regions of the country. Relying on the population's ostensible approval as manifested in a hasty referendum, Crimean separatists asked for and were immediately granted membership in the Russian Federation. In eastern Ukraine, the separatists occupied Luhansk, Donetsk and adjacent areas with the support of Russian troops and paramilitary units. In April 2014, the authorities of the self-declared Transnistrian Republic requested that Russia recognize it as a sovereign state, and that it be integrated into the Russian Federation. Likewise,

the autonomous Gagauz-Yeri territorial unit within Moldova applied to join the Russian Federation in 2014. In October 2014, Russia proposed the administrative incorporation of Abkhazia into the Russian Federation in exchange for guaranteeing the security of the border between Georgia and its breakaway region.

Other simmering ethnopolitical conflicts exist inside the Russian Federation (Chechnya, Daghestan), in Georgia (Abkhasia, South Ossetia), in Kyrgyzstan (ethnic Uzbeks in Southern Kyrgyzstan), between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (disputed border) and between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic-Armenian majority region of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia.

Socioeconomic barriers
To what extent are significant parts of the population fundamentally excluded from society due to poverty and inequality?

Poverty and inequality are pronounced and structurally ingrained across PSE. Within the region, Belarus and the countries with export revenues from oil and gas resources (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan) belong to the economies with upper-middle or high (Russia) incomes. A gross national income per capita of $2,500 in 2013 (on a purchasing-power parity basis) renders Tajikistan the poorest country of the region. Income inequality is particularly high in Russia and Georgia, where Gini coefficients range above 40, whereas Belarus and Ukraine demonstrate less income inequality (Gini values below 30). The countries of Central Asia are characterized by lower average life expectancies and durations of schooling, indicating less developed health and education systems. Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have particularly high absolute poverty rates.

Equal opportunity
To what extent does equality of opportunity exist?

Female participation rates in primary and secondary education are relatively high in most countries of PSE. However, women continue to be underrepresented in public office and in other leading societal positions. In rural areas, traditional and religiously based attitudes regarding the role of women in society prevent girls from attending school. Female labor-market participation rates have declined from their relatively high levels under formerly state socialist economic regimes.

All states define themselves as civic nation-states, and their constitutions grant equal rights to all citizens irrespective of ethnicity or religion. Political parties also seek to integrate ethnic minorities by including minority representatives among their leadership. However, persons belonging to the dominant ethnic groups are overrepresented in public offices and other leading positions. There are legal provisions against discrimination, but their implementation is highly deficient. Migrant workers from the poorer Central Asian and other post-Soviet countries are subject to various forms of discrimination in Russia, ranging from bad working conditions and weak legal protection to a growing degree of ethnically motivated hostility.

Patterns of discrimination
To what extent is the inclusiveness of societies hampered by structural discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or gender?

Structural discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and religion significantly hampers the inclusiveness of societies. The impact of these identity-shaping markers is enhanced by continuing changes in economic structures, value orientations and social ties due to the dissolution of state socialism. While the more affluent PSE states have limited the extent of structural discrimination by maintaining inclusive education and other public policies, disadvantaged persons in the less developed states depend more on family and community mechanisms of social protection. In Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and other poor PSE countries, states lack the capacity to deliver basic public services.

Projections 2015 – 2030

Political and social integration

High levels of social distrust are likely to persist, reinforcing the dealignment of citizens and intermediary organizations of territorial and functional interest representation. This constellation impedes the emergence of programmatic party competition and responsible party government. Social media offer potential for decentralized communication and networking that may partially replace political parties with more flexible, issue-specific forms of political organization. However, pro-presidential parties in the PSE's authoritarian political regimes will continue to exist, as they not only enable political leaders to organize support, but also provide citizens with career opportunities and access to state resources.

Inclusiveness & non-discrimination

Authoritarian and democratic political regimes are likely to "nationalize" their states further in the sense of shaping distinctive hegemonic national cultures from the traditions, practices and symbols of the dominant national group. This trend is driven by the need to legitimize political rule and form political communities out of societies that are still "post-Soviet" in many regards. In addition, Russia's policy of veiled military intervention and of making territorial claims justified by the existence of an alleged ethnic "Russian world" will contribute to a sharper delineation between dominant and native-Russian-speaking groups in other PSE countries. While one might argue that increasing nationalization is necessary to overcome Soviet and post-Soviet legacies that impede the functioning of democracy and a market economy, nationalization policies are likely to exacerbate ethnopolitical divisions while providing support for extremist political actors in Russia and elsewhere in the post-Soviet region.

Management and policies

Regional overview

Management and Policies			Strategic Capacity and Efficiency					Consensus-Building	
			Prioritization	Implementation	Efficient use of assets	Anti-corruption policy		Conflict management	Civil society participation
Moldova	6.38	5.3	5	6	6	4	7.5	7	8
Mongolia	6.13	5.8	7	6	5	5	6.5	7	6
Georgia	6.00	5.5	5	6	5	6	6.5	7	6
Armenia	5.13	5.3	5	5	6	5	5.0	5	5
Kyrgyzstan	4.88	3.8	4	4	4	3	6.0	5	7
Russia	4.63	4.3	5	4	5	3	5.0	7	3
Kazakhstan	4.38	4.8	5	5	5	4	4.0	6	2
Ukraine	4.25	4.0	4	5	4	3	4.5	5	4
Azerbaijan	3.75	4.0	5	4	4	3	3.5	4	3
Tajikistan	3.38	3.3	4	4	3	2	3.5	3	4
Belarus	3.00	3.5	3	3	4	4	2.5	3	2
Turkmenistan	2.25	2.5	3	3	2	2	2.0	3	1
Uzbekistan	2.00	2.0	2	2	2	2	2.0	3	1

Indicator Scores, Transformation Index BTI 2014

Note: Scores reflect the situation as of January 31, 2013.

Within Post-Soviet Eurasia, the governments of **Georgia, Moldova** and **Mongolia** have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to implement political and market reforms, manage the social and political conflicts associated with these reforms, and reach out to civil society. In the cases of **Georgia** and **Moldova**, the management of policy reform has been complicated by crises and changes of governments, but new governments have remained committed to European integration and the roadmaps agreed with the European Union. Armenia belongs to this leading group with regard to its governmental implementation capacities, but lags behind insofar as its political elites have remained stuck in a confrontation between government and opposition.

While **Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan** and **Russia** also possess significant capacities to implement economic reforms, their governments do not pursue a democratic agenda and have made less effort to build broad coalitions with civil society. By contrast, **Kyrgyzstan** and **Ukraine** have engaged in relatively plural and participatory debates about reforms, but their governments and state administrations

possess comparatively limited strategic and enforcement capacities. The closed autocracies of **Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan** clearly lack the political will to carry out policies aimed at establishing market-based democracy, and have made no effort to seek consensus with societal actors about such policies.

Analysis

Strategic capacity & efficiency

Prioritization
To what extent does the government set and maintain strategic priorities?

The political leadership in several authoritarian PSE regimes has attempted to formulate and implement long-term strategies inspired by East Asian developmental states and by China's model of economic modernization. Developmental priorities include improving the business environment, enhancing the quality of education and research, and diversifying the industrial structure to reduce the economy's dependence on revenues from the export of natural resources. However, economic-modernization policies are regularly subordinated to the requirements of political stability and regime survival.

The European Union's association agreements provide an important roadmap and external anchor for governments that intend to establish and maintain liberal democracy and a competitive market economy as strategic priorities. However, of the six East European and Caucasian states that were offered such agreements, only Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine signed and ratified them, each in 2014. Azerbaijan and Belarus refrained from accepting the European Union's proposal, and in September 2014, Armenia's government opted instead to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) established between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in May 2014. The EAEU intends to establish a common market guaranteeing the free movement of goods, capital, services and persons, supported by a coordination and legal harmonization of economic and other policies. In parallel with its EAEU commitment, Kazakhstan sought closer relations with the European Union by completing negotiations in October 2014 on an enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement.

Implementation
How effective is the government in implementing its own policies?

PSE governments that possess cohesive states with substantial administrative capacity – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia – have been able to implement some of their policies. For example, Armenia adopted new electoral and criminal codes, reorganized local self-government structures, and took measures to reform the judiciary. Kazakhstan improved its business environment and reformed its system of higher education. However, weak accountability mechanisms have reduced the effectiveness of implementation, as powerful stakeholders have been able to exploit public policies for private gains. Power struggles between elite groups hampered implementation in the PSE region's more pluralist political systems – Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine – but also increased public scrutiny and broadened the support base for some policies.

Efficient use of assets
To what extent does the government make efficient use of available human, financial and organizational resources?

Governments use only some of their available human, financial and organizational resources efficiently. One of the main reasons is that the public-service ethos and merit-based personnel-management principles are weakly institutionalized in the region's public administration systems. Rather, public administration in most PSE states is characterized by significant segmentation between line ministries and their deconcentrated units, units of territorial administration, and subnational self-government bodies. This inherited structure constrains the capacity for cross-sectoral coordination, and reinforces both centralized decision-making and redundancies. This formal, hierarchic and often excessively legalistic public-administration organization contrasts with widespread informal relations and practices of political appointment, patronage and corruption. Low salaries cause highly qualified employees to seek jobs in the private sector, leading to a loss of know-how in the public administration. Non-transparent procedures of public procurement in Ukraine and other PSE countries provide opportunities for the abuse of public funds.

Anti-corruption policy
To what extent does the government successfully contain corruption?

Governments are only partly willing and able to address corruption as a systemic problem. Georgia constitutes a positive example within the PSE insofar as it has effectively reduced petty corruption, and as its government has implemented measures to fight high-level corruption more effectively. In 2013, Moldova adopted several anti-corruption laws that strengthened disciplinary and supervisory procedures within the judiciary, increased judges' salaries, enabled the confiscation of unlawfully acquired assets and increased penalties for corrupt behavior among law-enforcement officials. Armenia adopted a law on the public service requiring government officials to declare their assets. In October 2014, Ukraine adopted a law obliging high-level public officials to declare their own and their families' assets and financial transactions. Previous laws had increased penalties for corruption. The Azerbaijani government created an independent anti-corruption department within the State Prosecutor's Office in October 2013, and has sought to improve statutory audits of officials and legal entities.

However, implementation of these new regulations often lags due to insufficient administrative capacity and a lack of political will, particularly if anti-corruption activities interfere with clientelistic relations of vital importance for ruling political elites.

Consensus-building

Cleavage/conflict management
To what extent is the political leadership able to moderate cleavage-based conflict?

The political leadership in many PSE countries does not act to prevent the escalation of cleavage-based conflicts. This is most evident in the case of Russia, and the nationalist mobilization engineered by its ruling political elites. Russia's state-controlled electronic media not only celebrated the annexation of Crimea as the return of one part of a divided but single ethnic nation; it also engaged in a massive propaganda campaign against the Ukrainian revolution and portrayed the war in eastern Ukraine as a defensive struggle by a threatened Russian population against a fascist regime, all while obscuring Russia's own military involvement. In his March 2014 address to Russia's Federal Assembly, President Putin labeled opposition-minded citizens and political actors as "national traitors," paving the way for their repression and exclusion.

Governments in Central Asia seek to manage relations with Islamic groups by co-opting official religious organizations and incorporating Islam as the leading religion, while clamping down on organizations suspected of radical Islamism. However, restrictions on the freedoms of associations and religious practice may increase support for radical Islamist groups rather than marginalizing these actors as intended.

Civil-society participation
To what extent does the political leadership enable the participation of civil society in the political process?

The political leadership in several PSE states, both authoritarian and democratic, has tried to institutionalize consultative links with civil-society organizations. Armenia, for example, established public councils and joint working groups attached to ministries with the aim of consulting with civil society. The government and parliament also considered draft policies and laws prepared by civil-society organizations. Belarus also created public councils, while Azerbaijan adopted a law on public participation in November 2013, aimed at institutionaliz-ing public councils, discussions, hearings and public-opinion surveys.

In December 2013, Georgia's parliament signed a memorandum of cooperation with civil-society organizations. Kazakhstan's government initiated a civic forum in 2013 to develop recommendations and a national plan for cooperation between the government and civil society. Moldova amended its Law on Transparency in Public Decision-Making to further institutionalize the participation of civil society in the legislative process. However, civil-society participation under the authoritarian political regimes is limited to issues and policy areas that do not fundamentally question the existing monopoly on political rule. Moreover, several authoritarian governments have tried to create regime-loyal civil-society organizations in order to ensure their control over the sector.

Projections 2015 – 2030

Strategic capacity & efficiency

Political leaders in the authoritarian political regimes pride themselves on superior strategic-management capacities, claiming to be in a stronger position than democratic political elites to make and enforce rational decisions. However, most PSE states lack a bureaucracy committed to the public interest as exists in East Asian developmental states. This renders the successful emulation of an authoritarian modernization less likely. In countries with revenues from the export of natural resources, the political leadership will be able to afford ineffective modernization policies for some time. But Russia's recent authoritarian regression demonstrates that ruling political elites will sacrifice the pro-modernization alliance with the urban middle classes if they perceive these groups to be a threat to the future of the authoritarian regime.
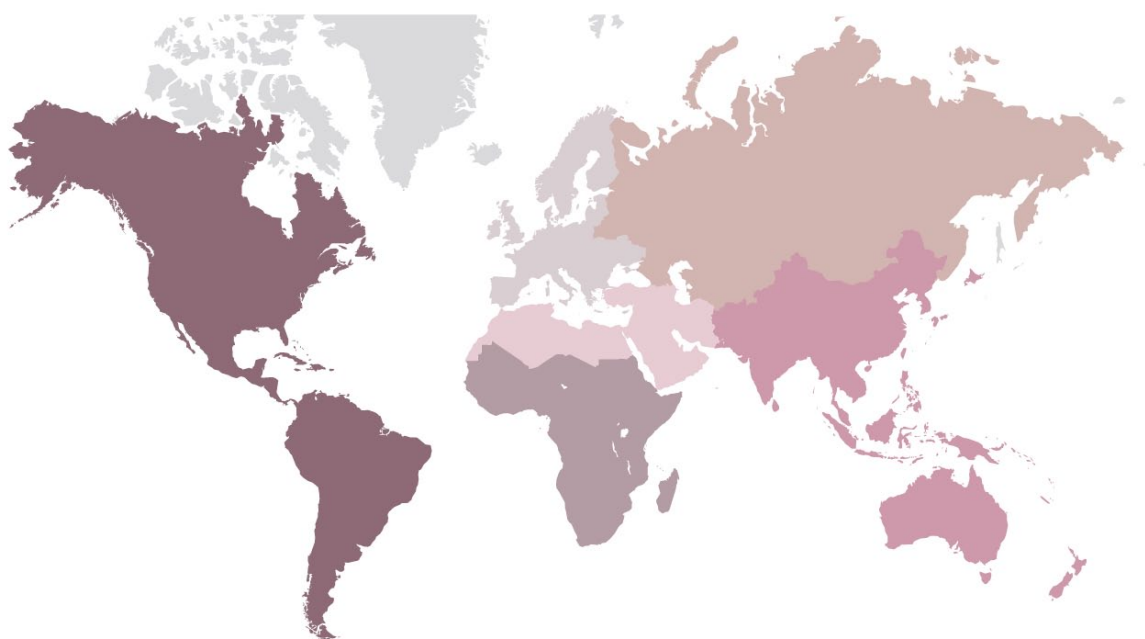
Consensus-building

The degree of future societal support accorded to authoritarian and democratic political regimes in the PSE region will depend on their capacities to produce mass prosperity, security and other common goods. This systemic performance, the associated technocratic knowledge and the personal charisma of incumbent presidents have been important sources of legitimacy in Russia and other states of the region, but these sources have suffered from the global economic crisis that has impacted several PSE countries more seriously than China or other emerging markets.

Nationalism is being explored as an alternative strategy of generating regime support, but its mobilizing power is uncertain in the middle- to long-term, as citizens will ultimately realize the associated economic and political costs. Nationalism may function as an integrative device for rival domestic political elites in the peripheral successor states of the former Soviet Union,

providing the basis for emergent joint institutions and democratic rules of the game. Yet if ethnic Russian nationalism becomes a unifying ideology for Russia's elites, this will not only produce further conflicts with Russia's "near abroad," but also deepen interethnic divides within Russia.

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