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**DECENTRALIZATION AND REGIONALIZATION AFTER
COMMUNISM: LESSONS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE AND
TERRITORIAL REFORM IN POLAND
AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

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Abstract: While the regional level of authority has gained much attention in recent years in Western Europe, Eastern Europe is still emerging from decades of centralization and homogenization under communism. Several post-communist countries, however, have taken steps toward administrative decentralization and territorial regionalization. This article explores possible reasons for taking these steps and traces the progress of administrative and territorial reform in two post-communist cases: Poland and the Czech Republic. The conclusion considers several implications of these reforms for domestic politics and foreign relations.

Following decades of ideological and institutional uniformity and the suppression of regional particularism under communism, East Europeans are now free to embark on the important processes of decentralization and regionalization. The extent to which they pursue decentralization and regionalization varies from case to case. At minimum, these processes entail restoring self-government to local level authorities. Decentralization and regionalization may also lead to territorial restructuring and the creation of an intermediary level of self-governing units between the central and local levels. This latter type of reform has generally taken much longer than the reform of central political institutions or the command economy. In some cases, the creation of regional units is merely a matter of restoring a previous pattern of territorial organization. In other cases, a lack of historical precedence necessitates finding a new pattern for territorial organization. This search often includes the consideration of numerous models, sometimes other countries' structures, and may become highly politicized and bogged down in competing proposals and timetables for reform. In cases where ethnic minorities are concentrated in particular areas, or where there are fears that more regional autonomy

will spark independence movements, decentralization and regionalization may be highly sensitive issues.

Among the first to embark on decentralization and regionalization, the Polish and Czech cases illustrate how a variety of factors can influence decisions about administrative and territorial reform. This analysis begins by examining the conceptual and theoretical dimensions of decentralization and regionalization. The focus then turns to the reform processes in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Background

Before turning to the processes and outcomes of decentralization and regionalization in two post-communist cases, it is necessary to more precisely define these concepts. Decentralization is a broad term covering a range of possible ways to divest the central government of responsibility to outside organizations. For the purposes of this analysis, these outside organizations will be called sub-national governing bodies.

Hicks and Kaminski distinguish between three modes of decentralization: deconcentration, devolution, and delegation.[1] Deconcentration of central authority entails the transfer of limited responsibility to lower levels of administration. In this case, a regional authority represents the prime minister at the local level but is not a legal, self-governing entity. Similarly, delegation denotes "the transfer of managerial responsibilities for specifically designed tasks to public organizations outside of the regular bureaucratic structure."[2] This may include local governments (or special agencies), however, these organizations remain agents of the central government. Devolution, in contrast, is the transfer of authority to relatively autonomous bodies outside the direct control of central authorities. Here, the regional authority is a legal entity and self-governing. Popular elections are held for the regional council, and an executive is either elected or appointed by the prime minister. In short, decentralization may merely entail the shifting of selected administrative activities to lower levels in the name of greater efficiency, or it may entail the introduction of self-government at lower units of territorial division. In the latter cases, the authorities at these lower levels are "endowed to act in matters relating to local and supra-local problems."[3] In this article, decentralization will be used synonymously with devolution.

Regionalization is a "procedure aiming at establishing or testing territorial divisions for the purposes of practical action, i.e. the formation of the *territorial organization of the State.*"[4] Regionalization generally refers to a process of decentralizing authority specifically to regional units at an intermediate level between the national and the local. This process takes the form of government activity from above, such as studying proposals, debating their merits, legislating reform, and implementing reform. Regionalization requires that certain internal and external conditions be taken into account. According to Chojnicki and Czyz, reforms must consider the existing internal territorial division as well as the existing "nodal systems of socioeconomic phenomena" – linkages such as services and infrastructure that shape the region of a town or urban agglomeration.[5] External conditions include the size of

the proposed regional units (this is especially important in a market economy where local budgets receive relatively little subsidy from the central government), their shape, population size, and economic potential. These conditions are derived "from the assumed functions of territorial division and the necessity to accommodate the principles of good management and administration, as well as the satisfaction of people's needs with a minimum of effort."[6] Other conditions or factors, such as historical administrative and territorial patterns or the demographic character of the country, that influence decentralization will be discussed below. Finally, these regional units may be administrative or self-governing. Regionalization is most advanced in federal systems, which provide for self-government at the regional, or provincial level. In other words, full regionalization is characterized by autonomous regions with their own parliaments empowered to issue legal acts and their own governments able to perform their own policies.[7]

Decentralization and regionalization have been carried out in a number of West European countries – since the end of World War II in the cases of Germany, Austria and Spain and, in more recent decades, in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. In some cases, like Germany[8] and Austria, decentralization and regionalization have been significant and have entailed the federalization of the country. In other countries, decentralization has been far less complete, with the transfer of some responsibilities from center to periphery authorities but short of federalism. In these cases, the nature of administrative and territorial reform depended on domestic political considerations. [9]

Analysts of decentralization and regionalization in Western Europe have offered a number of explanations for these developments. The first emphasizes pressure from below, usually from particular groups defined by ethnic, religious, or linguistic features, who desire a "return to the roots," greater distance from and recognition by central authorities and the dominant culture, or more autonomy (and in the extreme, even separation). Another explanation focuses on economic reasons for decentralization. In this case, pressure for decentralization may come from above, from an over-burdened central authority wishing to devolve more responsibility for provision of services, general welfare, and wealth creation to lower levels of authority. Alternately, pressure may come from below, that is, from interests at the sub-national level, usually in wealthier regions, desiring more control over economic planning, raising and spending revenues, and, in the current global economy, more direct access to international markets.[10] Another more general explanation is that these processes are a reaction to the centralizing drive of modernization.[11] This argument suggests that in the process of industrialization and nation-state building, central authorities have increasingly assumed greater responsibility over citizens lives, making major decisions, and delivering more and more services (particularly social welfare), thereby encroaching into local culture and private lives. The resulting sense of powerlessness and alienation – caused by the central government's penetration into private spheres of activity – has created an opposite reaction: a desire for more local solutions, "smaller government," and, ultimately, self-government. In this light, the rise of citizen initiatives and neighborhood councils in Western Europe (and elsewhere in advanced industrial societies) in the 1970s and 1980s is part of a reaction to the centralizing forces of modernization. Rather than viewing decentralizing and regionalizing counter-forces as anti-modern, they may be seen as a "harbinger of

continued modernization, and of the arrival of a stage of governmental service better attuned to the differentiated needs of culturally diverse people than national government can ever hope to be."[12]

Some or all of these reasons may lead post-communist countries to move toward greater decentralization and possibly regionalization and will be further discussed. There are, however, important contrasts between the starting points of decentralization and regionalization in Western versus Eastern Europe. The forces of centralization in the communist world were far more acute than in Western Europe. The state structures inherited by post-communist leaders were highly centralized, over-bureaucratized and overburdened. Decisions (political and economic) in the old system were taken at the very top levels of the party-state and through a paradoxical process of "democratic centralism," while the lower levels of the party-state apparatus carried out decisions. Sub-national institutions were merely appendages of the central government. Territorial divisions created under communism rarely reflected historical or cultural ties; rather, they were drawn with political and economic policy implementation in mind, and each sub-national unit was treated as a piece of the larger whole. No particular interests or cultural differences were taken into account when sub-national units were created. To the contrary, such particularisms were to be obliterated by the communist territorial-administrative order.

Historically, Eastern Europe contains a diverse array of ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. In contrast to Western Europe, however, these groups were long dominated by outsiders and often forcibly assimilated. In the post-communist context, we might expect a "return to the roots," a rediscovery of cultural traditions and ties with "kin" separated by borders drawn by outside powers. A particularly dangerous form of "return" or "reaction" to years of forced centralization has taken place in the former Yugoslavia and parts of the former Soviet Union, where ethnic conflict has escalated to full-scale war. Echoes of these ethnically-based conflicts have been heard in places like Hungary and Slovakia where ethno-nationalism occasionally taints political debates. Unlike these examples, most post-communist countries have set about peacefully reforming their political and economic systems. Nonetheless, the historical complexities of ethnic relations in the region are likely to surface in post-communist societies.

In contrast to Western Europe, Eastern European societies under communism experienced a certain kind of modernization, or, more appropriately, mis-modernization. The type of modernization carried out in East Europe after World War II was accompanied by central planning. This mode of development provided little incentive for lower level managers and workers to take responsibility or pride in their work and stifled innovation. For the communist leadership of Eastern Europe, modernization meant maintaining control at the center and imposing uniformity throughout the periphery. The service sector and light industry, especially in the high-technology field, were neglected in favor of heavy industry. The spatial distribution of industry under communism focused on industrial-urban agglomerations, industrial "zones," or "axes."[13] These "very large, vertically-organized agricultural and industrial enterprises and infrastructure required organization at the national level rather than regionally or locally."[14]

Despite the communist regimes' efforts to impose uniformity throughout their countries, regional disparities remained, and they were quite sharp in some cases. In Poland, for example, regional disparities in industrial employment shares range from 12 to 61 percent.[15] In East Germany and Hungary, significant north-south differences existed, with higher levels of industrial employment in southern East Germany and north-eastern and north-western Hungary. The provision of transport and telecommunications infrastructure has also been characterized by a west-east difference, with availability decreasing with distance from Western Europe. (In contrast, the distribution of "social infrastructure" – for example, basic education and healthcare – was relatively even under communism, although the quality of healthcare services, in particular, was often lacking.) As a result of the modernization strategy pursued under communism, "the Central European countries entered the challenging phase of transformation with a strongly polarized regional structure and deep spatial inequalities... [as well as] over-industrialized cities, an underdeveloped infrastructure and a polluted environment."[16]

In addition to being centralized, communist systems were closed. This meant not only closure to the West, but also a high degree of closure to communist neighbors. Closure was especially marked between countries like East Germany and Poland, where the more dogmatic East German communists feared their citizens would be infected with the ideas of the Polish opposition movement. A result of the closed-nature of communist systems was the relative under-development of border areas. Other reasons for not developing border areas included a fear on the part of communist regimes that such areas would be too great a distance from center, making control more difficult. Furthermore, there was also the notion that border development would drain resources away from industrial agglomerations, the heart of communist economies. As a result, there were few border crossings and almost no trans-border cooperation.

After years of fierce centralization, imposed uniformity, a paternalistic state, and what one East German author has called the "infantilization" of the population by the communist regimes,[17] it would seem likely that post-communist societies would experiment with reforms to limit the power of central authorities and revive or create new sub-national authorities. One of the most compelling reasons to pursue administrative and/or territorial reforms would be to counter the ill-effects – both structural and political cultural – of communism's over-centralization. In this regard, the decentralization and regionalization processes represent steps in building more efficient, transparent, and flexible political institutions that are responsive to citizens' needs and provide avenues for citizen participation. According to this idea, devolution of authority is a more efficient way of providing services at regional and local levels. Bringing the decision-making process closer to the people also facilitates greater accountability and allows for greater flexibility in meeting the particular needs and tastes of communities. By shifting responsibilities away from a heavily centralized state to lower levels, the central government can better focus on other tasks, such as international relations and national security. Finally, greater autonomy for sub-national actors and institutions can encourage attitudes and behaviors compatible with democracy and capitalism. Tackling problems locally develops a sense of political efficacy and pride. Arguably, assuming

responsibility and perceiving that one has a stake in the system are important to the development of attitudes and behaviors that support democracy.

Another likely reason for decentralization and regionalization is certainly related to economic revival, particularly as a means to develop long-neglected border regions and to unburden the state of some of its economic development tasks, such as promoting regional economic development. One could also argue that decentralization is more compatible with a market economy in that it promotes greater administrative efficiency and accountability.

Administrative and territorial reforms might also represent a way of responding to pressures from below for greater autonomy, especially in countries with significant minority populations or with a strong history of regional autonomy. However, the legacy of efforts to create nation-states after World War I and the redrawing of borders following World War II, including the ethno-cultural, economic, and political sensitivities that contributed to the wars in the former Yugoslavia and the break-up of Czechoslovakia, would seem to make national/regional cleavages a reason *not* to regionalize.

The reasons for (and against) decentralization and regionalization posited above relate to the internal political and economic developments of a country. Domestic politics, however, cannot be separated entirely from the international arena. It is useful to explore whether efforts to decentralize and regionalize are also linked to external developments, such as European integration and globalization. One possibility is that decentralization and regionalization contribute to a post-communist society's integration with the western part of Europe by providing another avenue – the sub-national – for building linkages to other countries and to the European Union (EU). Regions, especially border regions, may seek to cultivate ties with neighbors in order to promote economic development, intercultural exchange, and generally improve relations after decades of communist-imposed separation. In this regard, the cross-border cooperation and regional development efforts on the borders of East Europe and the European Union (namely between Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria) are relevant to a discussion of regionalization.[18] Also, because in many West European cases the supra-national dimension of the EU has reinvigorated the sub-national dimension of politics,[19] it is important to consider whether the prospect of EU membership also reinforces regionalism in post-communist Europe. Administrative and territorial reforms in post-communist countries signal a movement toward multi-level governance, a prominent feature of the EU. It also allows communities in post-communist countries to take greater advantage of EU structural policies and gives them the opportunity to influence the EU level through the Committee of the Regions. In addition, East European regions, like those in the West, may seek to form linkages to the global economy without working through national capitals. Regions in East Europe, as in West Europe, can attempt to link themselves into global trading patterns, the information superhighway, the free movement of capital, and the routes of important transport networks.

Against this background, we now turn to the cases of Poland and the Czech Republic. These post-communist countries illustrate a range of possible decentralization

and regionalization steps and outcomes. Each represents a unique constellation of variables: the particular pre-communist traditions of administrative and territorial organization, demographic and cultural characteristics, experiences with reform under communism, as well as the modes of transition from communism are especially important influences on the processes of decentralization and regionalization after 1989. This paper first explores the forces of decentralization in each society, including the historical precedents, the economic development factors, and the political pressure put on the post-communist central authorities by certain parties and interest groups. The analysis then moves to the particular steps taken and obstacles confronted by post-communist authorities in the decentralization and regionalization processes. The concluding section of the article suggests which factors were most influential in the decisions to pursue administrative and territorial reforms in each case and, more generally, considers some of the implications of decentralization and regionalization for internal and external relations.

Poland

Poland has traditionally been a unitary state, subordinated to the authority of the center (usually a king, and since 1918, a government). For over two centuries, Polish governments wielded power on behalf of occupying powers. This fact may explain a prevailing lack of confidence in the central government, which was exacerbated under the communist regime following World War II. Poland has never had a tradition of regional federalism, though throughout history, certain parts of Poland attained some degree of autonomy (as far back as the Middle Ages, and local self-government existed during the interwar period).[20] During partition times, some regions like Poznan (within Prussia) and Galicia (within the Austro-Hungarian empire) enjoyed partial autonomy. The three major occupiers of Poland – Austria, Russia, and Prussia – shaped Poland's economic and political development along three different paths.[21] Where self-government rights existed, they were enjoyed exclusively by the landed-gentry. It is important to note here that feudalism lasted longer in Poland than in Western Europe.

The OECD noted several obstacles to implementing administrative reform in Poland. They include: a history of under-developed local and regional government structures; a concern that regional economic disparities will grow; tendencies for regionalism to become ethnically-based; and the fact that, with vertical economic and administrative sectoral organization, regional thinking and decentralizing efforts have been stifled.[22] To this list should be added a general fear of change, especially any change that might weaken the Polish nation-state, and lingering suspicions about outside ideas and influence. "Many Polish politicians are convinced that regionalization would weaken the state and that it would be contrary to the idea of a 'Europe of nations'… Large territorial units would encourage artificial differences and inner conflicts."[23] Also, some critics have claimed that decentralization would pander to a 'German' view of Europe, with strong regional governments that would eventually transform the EU into a federation of regions.[24] Although the Polish-German past certainly colors opinions in Poland, the general suspicion about outside influences and a loss of national sovereignty is not a Polish phenomenon; it is shared by many East Europeans, such as the Czechs, as will be demonstrated below.

Historically, Poland was differentiated along south-east, north-west lines. The south-east territories were traditionally more sparsely settled, had an older population, a smaller share of state or cooperative agriculture, and a smaller share of bigger private farms. Culturally, centralism and obedience to authority were more common in the south-east of Poland than in the north-western areas, which were more innovative and influenced by Western traditions such as self-organization and control of authority.[25] Today, the level of industrialization and urbanization is also a basic differentiating factor. Some islands of modernity and relative economic health, such as Warsaw, Poznan, Krakow, Wroclaw, and Gdansk, enjoy a higher "level of modernity of regional economic structures and [an] ability to adopt to the requirements of a market, internationally open economy."[26]

The territorial division of Poland between 1950 to 1973 resembled the Soviet three-tier system. There were 17 voivodships (provinces), over 300 *powiaty* (districts), and over 4000 (eventually 8000) *gromady* (communes).[27] The *powiat* has been the most stable feature of Polish territorial division. It has existed for over 400 years, even during periods of foreign domination. For this reason, transport networks, social infrastructure, and even emotional attachment to geographic space in Poland are organized along the *powiaty*.

Further reform of territorial organization in Poland took place between 1973 and 1975, when a two-tier system was introduced. This increased the voivodships from 17 to 49, abolished the *powiaty*, and reduced the number of communes to 2500, changing their name to *gmina*/plural *gminy*. The purpose of these changes was to decrease the strength of the voivodship party apparatus and to destroy the well-established district elites, as well as destroy the emotional attachment to the *powiaty*. The reform significantly increased the centralization of the state, even though the regime claimed to be decentralizing. The smaller, weaker voivodships were easier for the central government to control. The territorial changes, however, created several small, economically unviable regions, whose boundaries ignored traditional ties and spatial economic, social, and cultural relations. The *gminy* were often too small and weak to assume the duties shifted to them from the abolished *powiaty*, so many responsibilities were moved up to the voivodships. At each level of administration, "national councils" directly supervised the authorities and acted as instruments of the central party.

Despite these limitations, under the Polish communist regime proto-self-governments existed – the "alternative" local elites organized around Solidarity.[28] Their presence would greatly facilitate the reform of the local government after the fall of the communists. Both the intellectual wing and trade union leaders of Solidarity advanced the idea of "maximum administrative decentralization of the state." [29] By bringing the decision-making process closer to the people, the power of central state authorities would be counteracted and the nomenklatura weakened.[30]

The first post-communist government led by Solidarity quickly acted on its commitment to local self-government. In devising the administrative reform, the post-communist Polish authorities looked to the experiences of different Western cases as well as to the experiences of Polish self-government during the interwar period.[31] In March 1990, the *Sejm* passed the Law of Local Self-Government,[32] which granted new powers of self-

government to the *gminy,* numbering 2,489. This reform introduced democratic elections at the local level, transferred the ownership of communal property (and thus the responsibility for privatization) from the central to local governments, and introduced local administration and local budgets separate from the central government.[33] This reform opened up new areas for political activism, gave more administrative and executive responsibility to local governments, and put the collection and disbursement of revenues in the hands of local authorities.[34] Although the new reform was fundamentally in the spirit of representative democracy, elements of direct democracy, such as a local referendum, were also introduced.[35]

Though popularly elected bodies were created at the local (city and commune) level, the voivodship remained a level of central government administration.[36] The 49 voivodships maintained limited formal power; namely, they were responsible for executing legislation initiated by the central government. The economic development departments of voivodships carried out government policy but had no budgetary funds of their own.

Meanwhile, the deeply entrenched bureaucratic powers in Poland resisted the transfer of powers to lower, self-governing bodies. In addition, financial problems and the inexperience of new personnel at the local level served to undermine the capacity of the new local governments.[37] Nonetheless, "there was a widespread consensus that the g*miny* had proved more responsible to local needs and conditions."[38]

In June 1990, legislation introduced the *rejon* – a quasi-subdivision of voivodship administration, with no responsibilities or tasks of its own. The *rejon* served as the territorial deconcentration of the state administration for purely technical and organizational purposes. Following this legislation, there were debates about future reforms but no legislative action. By this time, severe recession and fiscal problems occupied the attention of the new regime. In this environment, the central government moved to maintain fiscal responsibility over the municipalities.

Later in 1990, a State Commission was created to design a proposal for territorial reorganization and suggest a way to implement reform. This commission produced a 500-page report detailing the major points for debate: the delimitation of regions, somewhere between 10-14; the constitutional status of new regions, ranging from subordination to the central government to complete federalization; and the role of the intermediate level, whether self-governing, merely administrative, or a mix.

Between 1991 and 1993, preparations began for administrative reform, only to be abandoned after a change in the Polish government. The new *Soyusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (SLD)/Alliance of the Democratic Left and *Polski Stronnictwo Ludowe* (PSL)/Peasants' Party coalition blocked any new movement on territorial reform. The PSL was the major force in opposition to this reform, as it wanted to maintain its strength in agricultural provinces and feared a shift in the power base to urban areas. The post-communist SLD "was unwilling to sacrifice its coalition on the altar of local government reform"[39] and went along with the PSL. Both parties used their powers of patronage to install like-minded authorities in the provincial administration.[40] The government of Prime

Minister Pawlak (PSL) defended its decision to halt the reforms by claiming that order and discipline of the political administration was needed in the transition period.[41]

The lull in the administrative-territorial reform process ended with the change of government in 1997. That year, a Solidarity-based coalition, joining the *Akcja Wyborcza Solidarnosc* (AWS)/Solidarity Election Action and *Unia Demokratyczna*(UW)/Freedom Union, returned to power and immediately began work on administrative reform as well as reforms of education, health care, social security and the courts system. A goal of Solidarity politicians since the transition began, decentralization represented a significant step in weakening the control of the communist-era bureaucracy. It was also viewed as a means to modernize Poland after four decades of communism and four years of inadequate post-communist governments. The Solidarity-led government's intention was to "change intergovernmental relations in Poland as well as its fiscal and territorial structure, by decentralizing control over public services and public finance to two new levels of democratically elected self-government: *powiaty* and voivodships."[42] Moreover, the government stated that the reform was designed to "relieve the central government of the tasks that it used to administer under the old, communist system. The redefined tasks of a modern and effective government, freed of unnecessary responsibilities, will now include strategic issues, in both economic and political terms. The Polish central government administration will not be able focus on the elaboration of national economic, foreign and security policies, as well as on supervising the balanced and harmonious development of the whole country." [43]

Once again, the PSL opposed the reform, claiming this time that poor farming regions would suffer if they had to rely on locally raised taxes.[44] The PSL also still feared that the reintroduction of the *powiaty* would shift the locus of power at lower levels away from their strongholds in rural areas.[45] Some nationalist members of the AWS, the senior partner of the governing coalition, also voiced opposition to the reforms, fearing that devolution would allow regions to cooperate closely with the German authorities, diminishing Warsaw's sway over its regions.[46]

The new government, led by Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek, first proposed reducing the number of voivodships from 49 to twelve and introducing about 300 *powiaty*. Much protest followed, with some provinces aiming to preserve their status, some joining in protest to counterweight larger ones, and others vehemently opposing the division of their province. The government went back to the negotiating table. President Alexandr Kwasniewski (SLD) endorsed his party's plan to create 17 provinces (the number of provinces in communist Poland before the abolishment of the *powiaty* in 1975).[47] The government counterproposed with the number 15, which Kwasniewski vetoed. The government then accepted a compromise number of 16 provinces. In the final analysis, "[t]he whole debate about the number of provinces has been nothing but a political tug-of-war: no substantive arguments of any serious weight were presented by the involved parties."[48]

The government's reforms were prepared by the Government Plenipotentiary for the Systematic Reform of the State, Professor Michal Kulesza. The enactment of the provisions

was carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. This ministry was responsible for tasks such as monitoring reform and providing training for members of the newly elected self-government bodies.[49] The legislative phase of the reform lasted throughout 1998.

On October 11, 1998, elections to *gmina*, *powiat*, and voivodship councils were held. As with elections to the Sejm at the national level, a proportional representation electoral system is used at each level (except in the least populous communes). On all levels, these first elections were dominated by two parties, the AWS and SLD. Together, they won two-thirds of the vote and almost four-fifths of all seats at the voivodship level. The voter turnout was highest for local elections since the beginning of the Polish transition to democracy: 45 percent for the voivodship council (*Sejmik*, plural *Sejmiki*), and 48 percent for the *powiat* councils (*rada*).

On January 1, 1999, the reform became effective, giving the newly elected councils three months to organize. The reform reduced the number of voivodships to 16 and created 308 *powiaty*, while 65 urban *gminy* were given *powiat* rights. In the new system, the 2,424 *gminy* constitute the basic level of public administration, endowed with all powers not specifically reserved for other levels. They run nurseries, kindergartens, elementary schools, libraries, and cultural centers and maintain local roads, bridges, and squares.[50] They are also responsible for land management and planning, zoning, water mains, sewage systems, landfills and solid waste disposal, electricity and heat supply, local public transport, primary health care services, municipal housing, public markets and fairs, public order and fire protection, and many social welfare programs. They share responsibility (with the *powiaty* and voivodships) for maintaining order. Environmental protection also lies within their jurisdiction. The *gminy* have their own budgets. They are responsible for all public matters of local significance not reserved by law for other entities and levels of authority. Finally, they perform tasks relegated to them by the central government – assured by law the funds necessary to carry out delegated tasks.

The *powiaty* are responsible for local issues which, "due to the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, cannot be ascribed to the *gminy*."[51] They run secondary education, operation of public health services, social welfare services beyond *gminy* boundaries, run orphanages, support the disabled, maintain order, handle police and fire station administration, as well as fire and flood prevention, manage emergencies and natural disasters, construct and maintain *powiat* roads, and protect consumer rights.

The voivodship councils, or *Sejmiki*, are responsible for the development and implementation of regional economic policies; their task is to stimulate business activities and improve competitiveness and innovation in the region. These bodies are independent legal identities with independent budgets (like the *powiaty* and *gminy).* They are also responsible for higher education, specialized health services, and supra-local cultural activities. The preservation and "rational utilization" of cultural and natural environment also fall under their jurisdiction, as do the modernization of rural areas and spatial development. The *Sejmiki* are elected in general elections. As the main decision-making body at this level, they elect governing boards to exercise executive authority. These boards

are headed by elected Marshals. The Voivods, on the other hand, are state-appointed officials who represent the central government at the regional level. The Voivods supervise the activities of the other levels and can annul decisions made by the self-governments if they are inconsistent with statutory law. The Voivods are also responsible for all service related to public security. Their presence gives a dual structure to administration at this level.

The voivodships can enter into bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation with foreign partners. When Poland enters the European Union, the regional governments will manage EU Structural Funds. "Therefore, Polish regions can become one of the leading forces in the process of Poland's integration with the European Union in the near future."[52]

According to the Polish government,

"[t]hese reforms increase citizens' ability to control and monitor public institutions, and to ensure that public moneys are spent effectively. By decentralizing responsibilities, the central government relieves itself of performing local tasks that it performed poorly, allowing itself to focus on truly strategic issues. The reforms should also allow Poles and Poland to take full part in the economic and security structures of Europe, and in the development of European and Euro-Atlantic security structures. They will help the Polish state secure its position in the arena of international politics as a fully sovereign, resourceful, and responsible partner."[53]

Further, the government states that these reforms are intended to transform Poland into

"a modern state, capable of using effectively its economic, social and political potential ; a democratic state, whose public and private values belong to a shared European civilization; a state that functions in accordance with clear and transparent procedures, and is permanently controlled by democratically elected representatives of the people … a state in which local and regional communities can rebuild their identities and manage their own affairs, and in which the principle of subsidiarity is respected by all levels of government; a state capable of shouldering the responsibilities and sharing the benefits of participation in supranational organizations and structures…"[54]

As stated by the prime minister's office, among the principles underlying reform is civil society: "The state will support citizen activities that enrich the public interest and will consider the expression of this interest as its highest goal."[55] Moreover, "[t]he self-governing *powiat*, together with the existing self-governing *gmina*, allow citizens to shape and control the local public institutions and policies that are closest to their daily lives." Another guiding principle – subsidiarity, the idea that policies should be carried out at the lowest level – "constitutes one of the foundations of the European Union. It also forms the basis of the restructured Polish state." Effectiveness, transparency, openness, accountability, and flexibility are also principles central to the new reforms. A new system of public finance would render public administration entities "more transparent and accountable to the electorate."[56]

In summary, Poland has taken significant steps toward decentralization and regionalization. According to the statements of the Polish government, issues relating to the quality of democratic governance, integration into the European Union, and Poland's integration into the global economy were the reasons for embarking on the reforms. Official statements aside, the political debates and delays surrounding the reform clearly indicated that the process was related to the on-going conflict over decommunization. While the Solidarity-led governments saw administrative reform as a way to wrest power from entrenched political forces in the bureaucracy centered in Warsaw and in the communist-era voivodships and *gminy*, the PSL and SLD resisted the reforms as useless reorganizations and a waste of valuable public funds. Rather than a society-wide consensus on the benefits of and necessary steps to reform, the decentralization and regionalization processes were bogged down by partisan bickering, political maneuvering, and fears on the part of some communities of lost political and economic influence.

In the final analysis, Poland remains a unitary state, though a decentralized one, and is not likely to move toward full regionalization, or federalism. Such a development would be contrary to its historical tradition as well as public opinion.

The Czech Republic

The Czech Republic claims a long tradition of public administration and local and *Land*-level (regional) self-government that is connected with administrative developments in neighboring Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and even France.[57] The two historic regions, Bohemia and Moravia, have constituted the core of the Czech state since the 11th century. Under the Habsburg Monarchy, the regions of the Bohemian Crown, the Margraviate of Moravia, and the Duchy of Silesia enjoyed a relatively strong system of local and regional self-government.[58] The Slovak lands came under the Hungarian Crown and enjoyed no such autonomous or administrative tradition. When Czechoslovakia was created in 1918 as a multinational state, it was divided into the lands of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia. This first Czechoslovak state lasted twenty years, until the Munich Pact of 1938. After World War II, Czechoslovakia was rebuilt first as a unitary state (1945-1968), then as a federation (in form only, 1969-1989), and then as an actual federation (1990-1992). There was a brief period after the war (1945-1948) where the legal order was partially restored, but this was soon displaced by the imposition of the Soviet-style system.

Until December 1990, the Czech and Slovak republics had three tier administrative structures (municipal, district, and regional). The lower tiers of administration lacked legal status. The goals of communist era administrative changes were to weaken the historical legacy of the three ancient regions – Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia – and to replace traditional demarcations with more "economically functional distribution."[59] At first, the communist authorities created 19 large regions (*kraj*), which they reduced to 10 in 1960, plus 2 urban centers. The task of these regions was to administer the orders of the central government. Each region was administered by a centrally controlled national committee.

The regions were subdivided into 114 districts (*okres)* and over 7500 municipalities (*obec).*[60] The federalization of Czechoslovakia following the Prague Spring in 1968 was modeled after Soviet nationality policy: nations were constitutionally equal and given the "right" to express their right to self-determination – with the understanding that such expression must conform to the regime's goals or incur a suppression of human rights and basic freedoms.[61] Federalization under these terms meant rigid centralization.

After 1989, the new democratically elected government turned its attention to the implementation of strong national reform policies. Centralization, rather than decentralization, facilitated these national reforms. In 1990, the new government abandoned the old three-tier system. The regions were abolished, as they were seen as having arbitrary administrative units with no historical roots.[62] The number of districts was reduced to 73, with four statutory cities (Prague, Pilsen, Brno, Ostrava). The responsibilities of the former regions were transferred to the district level and, to some extent, to the communities. The new government also eliminated the communist system of national committees. The municipal and communal authorities were recognized as the basic units of self-government.

The 6,236 municipal governments (with an average population of 1700) can initiate by-laws and local legislation. The elected assemblies were endowed with both legislative and executive power. The first local elections were held in November 1990. A referendum was also introduced at this level. The powers of the municipal governments included: the approval of development plans for its territory; the administration of the estate of the municipality; granting and receiving donations; preparing municipal budgets; establishing legal bodies and other local institutions; determining the types of local charges; implementing tasks in the fields of education, social and medical care, as well as culture that are not reserved for other authorities; and managing local public order and municipal police, as well as local environmental affairs.[63]

No directly elected bodies have been created at the district level. Instead, the district remains an appendage of the central government, responsible for carrying out state administration. District agencies of the republican government have the right, in some instances, to overrule the decisions of the self-governing municipal or communal governments. Among the criticisms of the new administrative structure was a concern that there is no connection between the municipal level, the district, and the republican executive bodies. Also, issues of broad, regional concern were not adequately addressed, as the system failed to take into account local traditional characteristics.[64]

In 1990, at the time of the above changes, President Havel and then Prime Minister Petr Pithart argued for a new administrative structure that would be based on a traditional territorial division into *Lands.*[65] Efforts to create new territorial and administrative units, however, have been impeded by political fighting between the government and the opposition, as well as by conflicts between individual politicians.[66]

In September 1990, the Czechoslovak government created a commission to examine various proposals for a new administrative arrangement. The commission studied the German, Austrian and Italian models and considered eight proposals from which it selected

four proposals for final consideration: 1) a new administrative structure based on traditional *Land* structures; 2) a provincial variant, which would entail the creation of 15-30 provinces or somewhat enlarged districts and would still be highly centralized; 3) a combination of the first two, with provinces based on historic *Land* ties, the creation of state government, and self-governing bodies at the provincial level; and 4) an overhaul of the federal system, giving the Czech and Slovak republics and Moravia and Silesia each its own constitution, citizenship status, legislative and executive bodies and judicial system. Each region would decide on its own form of government, and federal ministries would be reduced.[67]

Interest in the issue of administrative reform faded quickly among Czechoslovak politicians. Attention was diverted to other matters, as the commission's work coincided with first round of privatization, economic reform, and worsening disputes between the Czech and Slovak republic governments. By 1992, the issue of administrative and territorial reform was completely overshadowed by the break-up of the country. In 1993, the issue resurfaced and the new Czech constitution obligated the government to set up new 'higher self-governing units,' with assemblies elected every four years, and with minimum interference by state authorities.[68] Although this provision was opposed by the Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus, his party, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), as well as its coalition ally, the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), it was supported by their coalition members, the Christian Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union (which has strong support in Moravia). Since the Christian Democratic parties made their support of the constitution conditional on the inclusion of a provision on self-government on a higher level than the municipality, the measure passed.

According to Dusan Hedrych, it is generally assumed that the regional level self-governments will be competent to draft and approve their own budget, manage their own property and their own financial resources, draft and approve regional development programs, establish their own organs, establish and abolish legal entities within their territory, issue generally applicable ordinances, supervise the financial management of the municipalities, and grant loans and subsidies to municipalities.[69]

In 1993, two commissions were set up: the Office for Legislation and Public Administration, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Jan Kalvoda (ODA), and another set up by the Internal Affairs Ministry and headed by Jan Ruml (ODS). These commissions worked independently and were controlled by two competing parties. Kalvoda's group proposed dividing the country into 12 to 14 *Lands*, or regions, with both state and self-administrative institutions. Ruml's commission proposed 8 self-governing territorial units.[70] The debate was not resolved, so Prime Minister Klaus proposed combining the two models. He provided few concrete guidelines for achieving this goal, however, and in retrospect, it is clear that Klaus and his party were opposed to regionalization for political and ideological reasons. As Michal Illner has observed, "[c]entralism of the ruling political establishment was supported by doctrinal arguments. It is, in particular, the idea of regional self-government which antagonized the opponents. Doubts were cast on the relevance of any political institutions that stand between a citizen and the state, apart from political parties. The very concepts of civil society, self-government, local democracy and even decentralization have become contested political issues."[71] Indeed, decentralization and

regionalization became one of a number of points of disagreement in the on-going debate between President Havel and Prime Minister Klaus and their supporters. Havel advocated the idea of civil society, while Klaus resisted any notion that, beyond political parties, there should be intermediary representation of political and social interests.[72] In addition, as Illner notes, the central government "delayed, or even torpedoed, continuation of the reform of the intermediary level because of fears that it would lose control of the country's development" – namely economic development, about which Klaus had very clear preferences.

In general, the stakes of regional administrative reform were much higher than they had been with local governmental reform; the central authorities stood to lose influence in the areas of political and economic development to self-governing regions. Interestingly, the battle lines on the issue of decentralization and regionalization fell differently in the Polish and Czech cases. While the center-right parties in Poland tended to favor administrative and territorial reform as a way to marginalize former communists, in the Czech case, there was no significant post-communist faction to contend with and it was the center-right that feared losing influence and, therefore, supported the status quo. In the Czech case, moreover, disagreements over regional reform also touched upon the ideological or philosophical differences among political actors regarding the nature of democracy and the role of the citizen in politics.

With none of the proposals for reform acquiring sufficient support in the parliament, the debate over decentralization and regionalization continued in the election period 1996-2000. In 1997, both chambers of the Czech parliament approved the Constitutional Act on the Formation of the Regions. This act provided for the creation of 14 higher, self-governing units (*kraje)*, whose boundaries and names were drawn from the regions that existed from 1948 to 1960. This act did not address the matter of regional assemblies. Consequently, the related subject of the responsibilities of the regions and their relation to local and central authorities continued to be debated.[73] Many of the laws and regulations connected to regionalization, including a new election law, were not passed until 2000. In the interim period, local government continued to be the responsibility of 77 districts, which report to the Council of Ministers, and 6,242 municipalities. In the long term, it is expected that the districts will be abolished and that the number of municipalities would be reduced.[74]

According to Roman Linek, Deputy Minister for Regional Developments, the new regions "will use their powers for the benefit of economic, social and cultural development of the territory they administer; [meaning] that their role should be comprehensive and should comprise resolution of regional economic, social (welfare) and ecological problems… They should also draft regional budgets, approve them and check their fulfillment. Naturally, greater territorial self-governing units will join international associations of local authorities and will cooperate with self-governing regions of other states."[75] Linek also noted that the regions would play an important role in providing public services, especially in the areas of social welfare care, health services, transport, education and culture. He suggested that one of the motivations for pursuing regional reforms in the Czech Republic has been the emphasis the European Union places on decentralization: "Considering the significance of regions in conditions of a "unified"

Europe currently being born, it is necessary to lay greater emphasis on the comprehensive role of these (regional) units as subjects and entities of regional policies, territorial development, the provider of public goods and chattels, etc., and to anchor a role for it in legislation."[76]

In April of 2000, the Law on Regions and Municipalities was passed in the Chamber of Deputies. Under the new law, the new regional assemblies elect and dismiss the region's governor and council. They also approve the regional budget, issue bonds and submit bills to the Chamber of Deputies. Regional assemblies will have the authority to issue regional by-laws and subsidize municipalities, civic associations, and other associations in the region.[77] Another law passed in 2000, concerned the rights of the fourteen newly established self-governing regions to acquire and manage their own properties. Moreover, the law stipulated that the regions would now have the power to manage secondary schools, vocational high schools, and basic art schools, all of which were previously under the control of the central government. Roads, national scientific libraries as well as some galleries and museums would also fall under the jurisdiction of the regions.[78]

The ODS tried, unsuccessfully, to have the regional elections postponed to 2002 when regular local elections take place.[79] Elections to the 14 new regional bodies were held November 12, 2000. The new assemblies are expected to begin meeting in early 2001.

The Czech experience with administrative and territorial reform demonstrated somewhat differently than the case of Poland, the political and philosophical concerns of various actors. Whereas in Poland, decentralization was linked to decommunization, in the Czech Republic, the issue boiled down to competing visions of democracy – one emphasizing political parties and national-level authority, and the other in favor of local democracy. As in Poland, EU membership was an important motivation for regionalization, though unlike the Polish authorities (regardless of party affiliation), the Czech government under Klaus bristled at what it viewed as outside pressure to carry out regional reforms. Finally, the political debates in this case, at least initially, reflected fears about regionalization. In particular, some Czechs feared that regional economic differentiation would increase and that national unity would suffer. Foremost on the minds of many Czech politicians was the 1992 break-up of Czechoslovakia. Some feared that, with greater regionalization, Silesia and Moravia would grow more independent from the central government and, perhaps someday, seek full federalization or even separation.[80]

Conclusions

By and large, the initial priorities of post-communist regimes in East Europe were national – political and economic stability. Pursuing these goals often led officials to maintain centralization, or at least to put off decentralization until other priorities had been met. Decentralization and regionalization were also impeded by the situation of rapid change and flux that characterized post-communist societies after 1989. In such an

environment, it was often difficult to identify regional issues or disparities. To compound matters, most of the new political elites lacked experience with decentralization and with market-based regional policies.

Within a few years of the collapse of communism, however, both the Polish and the Czech governments began to debate the issues of decentralization and regionalization and link them to the broader processes of political and economic reform. The experiences of these two countries' attempts to introduce decentralization and regionalization revealed several common developments.

First, administrative and territorial reform easily became hostage to political conflicts. Issues such as the number of regional units, their borders, and even their names became burning political questions, stalling reform for months and even years. Behind such debates lay other concerns. A general criticism of regionalism was that decentralization and regionalization could erode national identity and unity. Decentralization, it was assumed, would encourage the development of local and regional leadership. Moreover, elected leaders at sub-national levels would presumably be more familiar with local tastes, goals, and interests than elites at the national level. Thus, sub-national elites, who represent local-regional concerns, would foster a sense of local-regional over national consciousness. Also, certain parties (such as the PSL in Poland or the ODS in the Czech Republic) or groups (for example, entrenched bureaucrats in the lower tiers of the centralized administration) fear a loss of influence in a new administrative and territorial arrangement.

Second, decentralization and regionalization tended to be favored by organizations and individuals who, before the collapse of communism, were associated with the democratic opposition. This was clearly true of the post-Solidarity parties in Poland as well as the off-shoots of the Czech Civic Forum that represented the Havelian, rather than Klausian, positions on democracy. What the Solidarity and Havelian groups shared was a value on citizen participation, checks on power, and decentralized authority.

The opponents of reform in both countries clearly feared a loss of authority to subnational, self-governing units. In contrast to the Polish reform opponents, however, the Czech opponents were not holdovers from the communist era but had been in power since 1990 and resisted changing the post-communist status quo, which was centralization. Moreover, much like British conservatism, the Czech brand that dominated Czech politics for most of the 1990's is skeptical about the benefits of regionalization and European supranationalism. Czech conservatives fear that both forces seek to undermine national sovereignty and serve to weaken the central government and national unity.

Third, economic development was another major reason cited by the governments of both countries for pursuing regional reforms. Granting sub-national authorities greater authority over regional economic development would lessen the burden on the central government and allow it to focus on other areas, such as foreign policy and national security. Regional economic planning bodies preceded the development of political-administrative and elected assemblies in both cases. Moreover, discussions about the

borders and size of the regions were linked to economic factors. It is important to note, however, that many post-communist leaders were concerned about the possibility of exacerbating regional economic disparities through decentralization and the redrawing of regional boundaries. They rightly noted that disparities in the creation of wealth, access to resources, and provision of services can affect the local culture, as well as migration and foreign investment patterns.

Fourth, the issue of greater regional autonomy for minorities had a small, but decidedly negative impact on the debates about decentralization and regionalization. In countries with ethnic minorities or historically important regions, decentralization and regionalization is likely to raise fears about a weakening of national authority, the exacerbation of divisions within a society, and even separatism. These fears were most evident in the Czech Republic regarding Moravia and Silesia, but they were also raised in Poland regarding Silesia.

Finally, the desire for admission into the Europe Union was an important factor in both countries' administrative and territorial reform processes. The official statements of the Polish government reflected a high level of Polish motivation to integrate into the EU by adopting the EU principles of regionalism, multi-level governance and subsidiarity. In comparison, there was less elite pressure, at least under Klaus and the ODS, for administrative and territorial reform in the Czech Republic. Relative to Poland, the Czech Republic has been slower overall in adjusting its laws and regulations to those of the European Union. EU membership and integration into the global economy are far less prominent in official Czech statements about regional reform. There may be a number of reasons for the relatively slow, hesitant Czech response to the processes of regionalization and Europeanization. One was already alluded to: the relative conservatism of post-communist governments in the Czech Republic, particularly under Klaus. Another possibility is that, in contrast to Poland, the Czech Republic is supremely confident that it 'belongs to Europe' and does not need to take great pains to demonstrate that its political, economic, and social systems are compatible with the EU. Poland, on the other hand, is bordered by Russia and may be more concerned about making its affinity with Western Europe more evident.

The cases of Poland and the Czech Republic offer a number of lessons for other countries seeking to design and implement reforms. At the heart of debates over such reforms is power. Inevitably, certain parties or groups, namely those most entrenched in the political and economic institutions of a country, will resist decentralization and regionalization. Arguments over the economic benefits of decentralization, its impact on national unity, and even the names of new sub-national units are largely variations of this underlying question of power.

In sum, the processes of decentralization and regionalization are companions to economic and political reform. As a second round of East European countries looks forward to EU membership, it is very likely we will see continued efforts at, and surely more debates about, administrative and territorial reform after communism.

Endnotes

[1] James F. Hicks and Bartlomiej Kaminski, "Local Government Reform and Transition from Communism: The Case of Poland," *Journal of Developing Societies*, XI(1) (1995): 1-20; 4-5.

[2] Ibid., 5.

[3] Zbyszko Chojnicki and Teresa Czyz, "Region, Regionalization, Regionalism," in Grzegorz Gorzelak and Anoni Kuklinski, *Dilemmas of Regional Policies in Eastern and Central Europe* (University of Warsaw, European Institute for Regional and Local Studies, 1992), 428.

[4] Ibid., 434.

[5] Ibid., 424.

[6] Ibid., 435.

[7] Grzegorz Gorzelak, "Polish Regionalism and Regionalization," in Gorzelak and Kuklinski, 487.

[8] In Germany, the subnational level (*Länder*, or state) was granted significant powers, with independent legislatures and executives, and became a strong base of party politics. A number of factors led to significant decentralization and regionalization in West Germany after 1945. Nazi Germany had been a highly centralized state, with little or no room for opposing viewpoints or power bases. Both the Allied occupiers and the postwar German leaders sought to ensure that no politician, party, or city would ever gain the type of totalitarian control that Hitler, the NSDAP, and Berlin had in interwar Germany. As a result, the territory of defeated Germany was first divided into occupation zones and then federal states (Länder), each having a constitution, elected government, and significant executive and legislative powers. The Federal Republic's constitution of 1949 provided for a multi-party system, numerous checks on executive power, and set up a federal system. Länder politicians and party organizations would play a new and important role in Germany. To further prevent a resurrection of the highly centralized fascist system, the new capital of democratic West Germany became Bonn (moved to Berlin in 1999), with Frankfurt as the financial center, and Karlsruhe the home of the new constitutional court.

[9] In Spain, these domestic considerations were regional tensions that had been building under the Franco regime and demands from particular regions and national and linguistic groups for more autonomy. Post-Franco Spain has also experienced decentralization and regionalization. Under immense pressure from particular regions (in particular Catalonia and the Basque Country), the negotiators of Spain's democratic transition agreed to create "autonomous communities," of which there are seventeen, each with a directly elected provincial council. The Spanish constitution of 1978, sets out explicitly reserved powers for the central government (immigration issues, international relations, defense, administration of justice, monetary system, and authorization of referenda) and shared powers (environment, public security, economy). Any powers in areas not expressly attributed to the central government in the constitution may be taken over by the autonomous communities.

Postwar France has also taken steps to regionalize, although far less than in Spain and certainly dramatically less than in Germany. A strong center-periphery dimension traditionally characterized France, with Paris as the center of political, economic, and cultural life. In 1972, regional units were created to offer the central government advice on economic development in the region. Although these units had regional prefects and councils, they had no executive or legislative powers and remained subservient to other levels of government (national, department, and commune). With a 1982 reform, the 96 departments were given more autonomy and a new tier of elected government was introduced – the regions, of which there are 22. The scope of regional activity is still relatively limited and still related largely to economic development, however, there is pressure from areas with either particular cultural-identitive interests (Bretagne) or a strong regional economic profile (as in the Rhone-Alps).

Britain is the most recent country to embark on a process of decentralization. This process, still ongoing, entails the devolution of authority away from the center, London, to newly created parliaments in

Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Each of these three constituent parts of Britain had its own reasons for wanting devolution, exerting different levels and kinds of pressure. For example, Scotland has an interest in exerting control over the North Sea oil off its coast, as well as a long cultural tradition (including institutions of higher education, the Church of Scotland, and a separate legal system). Though the Welsh have pressed for change the least, the issue that has promopted some to embrace reform is language. In both cases, political pressure led to referenda for more autonomy in 1979 that failed. Referenda were held again in 1997, both passed, although by a smaller margin in Wales. After years of protracted sectarian violence and on-again, off-again negotiations since 1991, a peace accord was reached in April of 1998 in Northern Ireland. Soon after, referenda in Northern Ireland and Ireland approved the peace accord. In May 1998, a new Northern Ireland assembly was created. In late 1999, a Northern Irish coalition government assumed power, only to be disbanded in February of this year when the IRA was found to have failed to begin disarming, as mandated by the peace agreement.

[10] For a general discussion of these first two explanations, see the essay by John Newhouse, "Power Trickles Down" in Newhouse's *Europe Adrift* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997).

[11] L. J. Sharpe, "Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies: A First Appraisal," in *Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies*, edited by L. J. Sharpe (London: Sage, 1979), 5.

[12] Ibid., 5.

[13] John Bachtler, ed. "Regional Development Studies: Socio-economic Situation and Development of the Regions in the Neighboring Countries of the Community in Central and Eastern Europe – Final Report to the European Commission," (Brussels, 1992), ii.

[14] Ibid., 126.

[15] Ibid., i.

[16] Gorzelak, 42.

[17] Hans-Joachim Maaz, writing about the East Germans, although the same could be said about the elite-mass relations in other countries. See Maaz, *Behind the Wall: The Inner Life of Communist Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).

[18] For more on cross-border cooperation between Eastern European countries and the European Union and, especially, the development of "Euroregions" along this border, see G. Gruber, H. Lamping, W.. Lutz, and E.W. Schamp, (eds.), *Neue grenzüberschreitende Regionen im östlichen Mitteleurope (Institut für Wirtschafts-undSozialgeographie der Johann Wolfgang Goethe - Universität Frankfurt/Main, 1995)*; Marek Koter, "Transborder 'Euroregions' Round Polish Border Zones as an Example of a New Form of Political Coexistence," in Werner A. Gallusser, ed., *Political Boundaries and Coexistence* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1994); Krätke, Stefan, "Where East Meets West: the German-Polish Border Region in Transformation," *European Planning Studies*, 4(6) (1996): 647-669; Helga Schultz and Alan Nothnagle, *Grenze der Hoffnung: Geschichte und Perspektiven der Grenzregion an der Oder* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1996); and Harald Zschiedrich, and Harald Sempf, "Euroregion - Prüfstein auf dem Weg in die EU," Osteuropa-Wirtschaft, 40 (4/1995): 255-278.

[19] See Robert Leonardi, ed., *The Regions and the European Community* (London: Frank Cass, 1993); and Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, eds., *The Regions and European Integration: The Case of Emilia-Romagna* (London: Pinter, 1990).

[20] GrzegorzGorzelak, "Polish Regionalism and Regionalization," in Grzegorz Gorzelak and Anoni Kuklinski, eds., *Dilemmas of Regional Policies in Eastern and Central Europe* (University of Warsaw, European Institute for Regional and Local Studies, 1992), 469. See also Zygmunt Niewiadomski, "Die

Wiedereinführung der kommunalen Selbstverwaltung in Polen durch das Gesetz über die territoriale Selbstverwaltung vom März 1990," *Archiv für Kommunalwissenschaften*, 29(2) (1990): 306-319.

[21] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Transition at the Local Level: The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and the Slovak Republic* (Paris: OECD, Centre for Co-operation with the Economies in Transition, 1996), 102. Also, Swianiewicz points to four historic regions: Galicia, the southeastern part of Poland which belonged to Austria in the nineteenth century; Kongresowka, the central and eastern area which belonged to Russia in the nineteenth century; Wielpolska, the mid-western part which belonged to Germany in the nineteenth century; and the recovered territories, the western and northern parts of Poland which belonged to Germany until 1945. Pawel Swianiewicz, "The Polish Experience of Local Democracy: Is Progress Being Made?" *Policy and Politics*, 20(2) (1992): 87-98; 91.

[22] OECD, op.cit.

[23] Noted in *Lokale und regionale Selbstverwaltung in Polen*, 256.

[24] Millard, 55. According to Bohdan Jalowiecki in his contribution, "The Regional Question," in Gorzelak and Kuklinski, (1992), regionalism in Poland is backed by particular groups/regions – primarily Silesia (linked to German minority, ethnic-cultural and economic dimensions) and Greater Poland (based "exclusively on economic and civilizational revindication claims." (p. 456.) He compares this to the autonomy claims of the Lombardy League in Italy. The numbers of Poles with German origins is disputed – Poles claim 300-400,000, Germans 400,000 to a million. Socio-Cultural Association of German Minority I Opole claims membership of 180,000 (p.456). Jalowiecki reports that an organization called the Upper Silesian Union promotes a concept of Greater Silesia, which would include all Silesian areas, including those of the Czech Republic (458). In 1990, a Commonwealth of independent regions for Poland was proposed. Herein, communities of several million and naturally defined areas around historical centers would have right to enact their own laws, propose country-wide laws in the Polish parliament, raise and disperse revenues, and take part in international agreements and treaties.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Gorzelak, 473.

[27] "Der historische Hintergrund," *Dokumentation Ostmittel europa: Lokale und regionale Selbstverwaltung in Polen: Diskussionen und Entwicklung nach 1990*, Heflt 5, Jahrgang 20 (44) (October 1994): 229.

[28] Hicks and Kaminski, 3.

[29] Frances Millard, *Polish Politics and Society* (London" Routledge, 1999), 53.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Swianiewicz, 88.

[32] For details on the reform act, see Niewiadomski, op.cit.

[33] Ibid.

[34] OECD, op.cit., 106.

[35] See Niewiadomski, 312.

[36] For an analysis of the process and outcomes of this 1990 reform, see Hicks and Kaminski.

[37] Millard, 53.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 54.

[40] Ibid.

[41] *Lokale und regionale Selbstverwaltung in Polen*, 271.

[42] Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Government Plenipoteniary for the Systemic Reform of the State, *Effectiveness, Openness, Subsidiarity: A New Poland For New Challenges* (Warsaw, December 1998), 5.

[43] Ibid.

[44] "Poland's Devolutionary Battleground," *The Economist* 346(8054) (February 7, 1998): 53.

[45] Krzysztof Jasiewicz, "Poland" in: Political Data Yearbook 1999, special issue of the *European Journal of Poltiical Research* (December 1999).

[46] Millard, 55.

[47] Jasiewicz, op.cit.

[48] Ibid. Jasiewicz also notes that the province given up in the compromise deal between the Buzek Government and the SLD was President Kwasniewski's native region, Middle Pomerania. With this, the SLD "scored also a point against its former leader."

[49] *Effectiveness, Openness, Subsidiarity*, 6.

[50] Ibid., 12.

[51] Ibid., 14.

[52] Ibid., 16.

[53] Ibid., 8.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 9.

[56] Ibid., 7.

[57] Dusan Hendrych, "Constitutional and Legal Bases of Czech Public Administration," *European Review of Public Law*, 8(2) (Summer 1996): 299-312; 300.

[58] For more on the historic lands, see Elizabeth Wiskemann*, Czechs and Germans: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (Oxford University Press, 1938). See also Hendrych, 300-301.

[59] OECD, 38.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Hedrych, 303.

[62] Jan Obrman and Pavel Mates, "Subdividing the Czech Republic: The Controversy Continues," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Reports*, 3 (March 4, 1994): 27-32; 28.

[63] Richard Pomahac, "Restoration of Public Law and Public Administration: The Case of Czechia," *European Review of Public Law*, 8(2) (Summer 1996): 313-327; 320.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Obrman and Mates, 28.

[66] Ibid., 27.

[67] Ibid., 27-28.

[68] Ibid., 29-30.

[69] Hendrych, 308-309.

[70] Obrman and Mates, 30.

[71] Michal Illner, "Territorial Government in the Czech Republic," in Emil J. Kirchner, ed., *Decentralization and Trnasition in the Visegrad: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 94.

[72] See the exchange between Havel and Klaus, "Rival Visions," in the *Journal of Democracy,* (1994).

[73] *Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States 1999*, 4th edition, (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1998), 318.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Roman Linek, "Resolution of Territorial Setup of the CR - Developments and the Current Situation," http://wwwold.mpo.cz/english/g/gc/1-97/page0007.htm.

[76] Ibid.

[77] *Central Europe Review*, 2(10) (March 13, 2000). http://www.ce-review.org/00/10/czechnews10.html.

[78] *Central Europe Review*, 2(16) (April 25, 2000).

[79] "Czech ODS Wants Simultaneous Regional, Local Elections," *FBIS Daily Report on East Europe,* (September 27, 1999).

[80] Obrman and Mates, 27.