

**Privatization's Unequal Toll: Explaining Cross-Country
Variation in Mortality and Health Outcomes After Transition
From Communism**

Introduction

The collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s marked a significant turning point in global political and economic history. The complexity of carrying out political, territorial, and economic reforms simultaneously is often termed the "dilemma of synchronicity" [1]. A cornerstone of this economic paradigm shift was privatization, which entailed the replacement of planned economies with free-market principles. That process was expected to lead to increased efficiency, economic growth, and improved living standards. However, the outcomes of this transition have been far from uniform across countries, with some nations experiencing significant improvements in health and mortality rates, while others have faced deteriorating conditions [2].

This paper draws on ...

Relevant Literature

Transition Types

The widespread institutional collapse across Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union in the late 1980s led to an imperative for simultaneous political, territorial, and economic restructuring. Within the academic field of transitology, literature seeks to define and categorize these complex processes in various ways [3]. Probably the most commonly referenced typology of transformation processes [3] of Samuel Huntington divides countries into three categories based on the nature of their reforms [4]:

- "transformation" (e.g., Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary) - when reformators group is originated in government elites,
- "transplacement" (e.g., Czechoslovakia, Poland) - when the reforms are imposed by

both government elites and opposition forces, as it happened during the round table talks,

- "replacement" (e.g., East Germany, Romania) - when opposition has a significant role in reforms.

These categories reflect the degree of domestic consensus and external pressure influencing the reform processes. It is also worth mentioning that both power camp and opposition are divided, government into reformators and "hard-headed", opposition into moderates and radicals. In case of other classifications, they mostly match the above-mentioned typology, sometimes however some differences in countries grouping can be observed. Sometimes, a separate category is being created for countries created from multi-national states, like Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia, due to merged effect of divisions on the level of top leadership and the nationalistic pressure from below. [5]. Worth to mention is also the division proposed by Herbert Kitschelt due to underlining group of countries where preemptive reforms were the idea. Examples are Soviet Union Gorbachev's initial innovations, as well as the regime changes in Bulgaria, Romania etc. [6].

Economic Transformation and the Privatization Debate

Mortality and Health Outcomes

Research Gaps: Quantifying the Unequal Toll

Data and Methodology

Results

Conclusion

References

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