ditions would predict, in part because it tries to incorporate so many explanatory factors that the relative importance of each to the analysis becomes difficult to distinguish. Ironically, the attempt to be comprehensive may represent the book's main weakness. The first chapter buries the book's central argument in a broader discussion of every factor that might possibly affect reform success, while the subsequent extensive and sometimes tangential literature review means that the book's own analysis does not begin until chapter 4. Nevertheless, Nørgaard's study should be widely read by scholars interested in institutional change, the relationship between economic reform and democracy, and post-communism.

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How should post-communist transition be conceptualized? Are the transformations occurring in post-Soviet states fundamentally different from regime change in other regions of the world? Graham Smith argues that they are substantially more complex and should be seen as unique. The post-Soviet states are undergoing a triple transition in which these newly formed states are overhauling their political systems (like transitions in Latin America) at the same time as restructuring their economic systems (like transitions in Eastern Europe) while also effecting the transition from colonialism to post-colonialism. Thus not only are political and economic institutions under review, physical borders and national demographics are also in flux. Smith begins his analysis of these simultaneous transitions with a discussion of the inadequacies of existing schools of thought on transition. What Smith promises to add to the literature on transition — and ultimately delivers — is a sophisticated appreciation of geopolitical variables. The book is divided into three parts: The first part investigates the geopolitical implications of the decolonization process; the second explores post-communist political development; and the third reviews economic change in light of the regional and global economy.

After providing historical background from the Soviet period, Smith considers in part one how a post-Soviet Russian identity has evolved around changes in Russia's geopolitical role in the world. He describes the disorienting and painful process of adjusting to the loss of superpower status, and the identity crisis that this has created for ordinary Russians. Within this discussion on identity, especially interesting is Smith's analysis of the struggle over Russia's place in Eurasia and the existence of competing visions of the Russian homeland. He identifies and reviews four discourses or "homeland stances": the liberal-Westemist, neo-nationalist, neo-Soviet and democratic statist — and contends that the latter stance currently dominates Russia's political elite. Smith also offers in this section an interesting exploration of how Russia's borderland states cope with the presence of Russian nationals in their territory. He emphasizes the variation in the ethnic politics surrounding the 25 million Russian diaspora within the Eurasian states. In particular, he highlights the contrasts in the citizenship laws, language politics, and emigration patterns
in the Baltic region (specifically Estonia and Latvia) vis-à-vis those in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan).

In the book's second section, Smith turns to domestic political transformations in post-Soviet states. He looks at grassroots social movements, local governance, and organized crime and their implications for democratic development in Russia. First, Smith argues that despite the importance of social movements for challenging the power of the Communist Party and bringing about the collapse of the Soviet Union, social movements and citizen activism ironically have been at the margins of the democratic transformations in the post-Soviet period. Smith draws from the labor movement and the environmental movement to demonstrate his point. He also looks at local governance "as the closest point of contact between civil society and the state" (p. 102) in order to argue that citizens are not especially effective in influencing decision-making in their communities and enforcing the accountability of local leaders. Finally, Smith turns to a more traditional consideration in the democratic literature -- the rule of law -- to assess democratic development in Russia. Smith asserts that the weak rule of law undermines democratization by diminishing citizens' trust and state capabilities. In addition, Smith notes that organized crime along with globalization exacerbates post-communist economic transition by dampening foreign investment, encouraging capital flight and ultimately slowing economic growth. He concludes his analysis of political transformation by returning to an issue raised in earlier chapters, namely the treatment of different national groups. Considering the treatment of minorities in Russia (rather than the Russian minority in the near abroad), Smith reviews the development of federal structures in post-Soviet Russia in order to assess how Russian federalism copes with destabilizing nationalist forces. These chapters offer a somewhat limited discussion of the issues surrounding democratic change, and thus for many readers the treatment of democratic development may seem incomplete. However, while the analysis of political development is narrow in scope, it does serve as a useful complement to more standard analyses of democratization that focus on conventional variables, like the institutionalization of political parties, electoral systems or an open media.

The remainder of the book concentrates on patterns in inter-state relations between Russia and the CIS states from the dissolution of the Soviet Union to the present, considering currency issues, regional trade and resource flows among states. His review leads him to consider the possibility that the CIS will follow a similar trajectory to the EU and eventually transform itself from an intergovernmental commonwealth to a federated superstructure. He notes that the EU like the CIS began, after all, as a customs union. While Smith does recognize factors discouraging CIS integration, like the lack of a common post-Soviet identity and the asymmetrical distribution of power and resources between Russia and the other CIS states, he nevertheless is surprisingly supportive of the prospects of deepening integration. What Smith may not take into account sufficiently is that the degree of integration seems as dense as it is because of a shared past rather than a strong future pull toward integration.

Smith concludes with an analysis of alternative scenarios for the geopolitical development of the post-Soviet region. Despite widespread predictions of ethnic conflict, ethnic secession and economic crisis, he does not foresee either the Balkanization of the region or a Weimar scenario. Instead, he is much more optimistic about the development