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### about the editor . . .

STUART S. NAGEL is a Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana, and Secretary-Treasurer, Cofounder, and Publications Coordinator of the Policy Studies Organization. He is the author or editor of more than 70 books, including the *Encyclopedia of Policy Studies, Second Edition*, the *Handbook of Global Economic Policy*, the *Handbook of Global International Policy*, and the *Handbook of Global Legal Policy* (all titles, Marcel Dekker, Inc.), and the author or coauthor of over 450 professional papers and book chapters on all major aspects of policy studies. He has served as an attorney to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure, the National Labor Relations Board, and the Office of Economic Opportunity Legal Services Program. Dr. Nagel received the J.D. degree (1958) and the Ph.D. degree (1961) in political science from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

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# Handbook of Global Political Policy

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To the people who especially stimulated  
my awareness of political policy, including:  
John Ferguson, Raymond Gettell, Frank Magruder,  
Jack Peltason, George Sabine, and Dwight Waldo.

## Preface

This handbook on global political policy is one in a set of six global policy handbooks. The other five deal with economic, technology, social, international, and legal policy.

Public policy studies in the past have tended to emphasize domestic policy rather than cross-national policy. This has been especially true of American policy studies, which tends to be especially nation-bound. This is also true, to some extent, of policy studies in France, Russia, China, Brazil, and elsewhere.

When American policy studies show an interest in other countries, those other countries tend to be exclusively Western European. This six-volume set, however, will include all the regions of the world—Africa, Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, Latin America, and North America.

Public policy studies also tend to place a great deal of emphasis on methods of analysis and the policy process. They do not get much into substance, especially at the professional or scholarly level, as contrasted to undergraduate textbooks. That is so because scholars have traditionally considered substance to be not as philosophical or theoretical as methods or process.

In this six-volume set, however, each volume is devoted to a different substantive field, including economic, technology, social, political, international, and legal policy. The discussions are more theoretical than most substantive discussions because they emphasize comparisons across places, across times, and across different substantive fields. Furthermore, the discussions are practical in terms of applicability to real-world problems.

Scholars and others who study comparative government unfortunately tend to overemphasize such structures as federalism, separation of powers, legisla-

tures, chief executives, and supreme courts while neglecting public policy, which this series emphasizes.

Comparative government scholars also tend to emphasize area studies, which involve specialization in a single country or subregion, as contrasted to this set of six volumes, which cuts across six regions and six policy fields.

Thus, the key objective of this set is to encourage more cross-national and cross-policy research and applications. The set not only advocates more of this kind of research but practices what it advocates by providing almost 200 studies in six volumes, averaging about 30 studies per volume. This set of handbooks should be a landmark in the disciplines of both public policy studies and cross-national studies.

*Stuart S. Nagel*

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## Contributors

**Said Adejumobi** Research Fellow, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, and Department of Political Science, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria

**Carsten Anckar** Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, Finnish Academy, Åbo, Finland

**Dag Anckar** Professor, Department of Political Science, Åbo Akademi University, Åbo, Finland

**Charles T. Barber** Professor, Department of Philosophy and Political Science, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana

**Kisuk Cho** Assistant Professor, Graduate School of International Studies, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea

**Eva Etzioni-Halevy** Professor, Department of Sociology, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel

**Richard C. Fording** Assistant Professor, Political Science Department, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

**N. S. Gehlot** Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, M.D.S. University, Ajmer, India

**Pierre Hamel** Professor, Urban Planning Department, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada

**Gabriella Ionszki** Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Budapest University of Economic Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

**B. M. Jain** Professor and Research Scientist, South Asia Studies Centre, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

**George P. Jan** Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio

**Siamak Khatami** Professor, Department of Political Science, Complutense University, Madrid, Spain

**Habibul Haque Khondker** Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, Singapore

**HeeMin Kim** Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

**Erik Komarov** Guiding Research Worker, Department of History of Orient, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

**Da-chi Liao** Professor, Department of Political Science, National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

**Mike H. Meiring** Professor, Department of Public Administration and Management, University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

**Andrei Melville** Professor, Department of Political Science, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia

**Jonathan Mendilow** Professor, Political Science Department, Rider University, Lawrenceville, New Jersey

**Natalia M. L. M. Morales** Professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

**Stuart S. Nagel** Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois

**Hannu Nurmi** Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

**Jan Pakulski** Professor, School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

**Carlos Pereira** Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science Department, New School for Social Research, New York, New York

**Vladimir Rukavishnikov** Head of Department, Social Dynamics Department, Institute of Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

**Frank L. Rusciano** Professor, Political Science Department, Rider University, Lawrenceville, New Jersey

**Michelle A. Saint-Germain** Professor, Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration, California State University, Long Beach, California

**Eve Sandberg** Associate Professor, Politics Department, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio

**Eberhard Schneider** Privatdozent, Federal Institute for Russian, East European, and International Studies, Cologne, Germany

**Jim Seroka** Professor and Director, Center for Governmental Services, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama

**James S. Wunsch** Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science and International Studies, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

**Katsuaki Yamazaki** Professor and Director, Institute of Comparative Regional Studies, Kitakyushu University, Kitakyushu, Japan

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### Post-Communist Russia as a Challenge to Transition Theories

**Andrei Melville**

*Department of Political Science, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

One of the accusations which is addressed to social theory and which is pronounced most often today is that the development of our times, which can be called most dramatic and the biggest in its scale—the collapse of Communism—took social theory unawares; the second accusation is that the phenomenon of post-Communism, which is most important for understanding the social dynamics of today, has not been comprehended theoretically enough. If the first accusation is at least correct in part, the second accusation is correct to a lesser degree and cannot be considered for various reasons to be a verdict passed on social theory.

Indeed, at the present time in the methodological arsenal of researchers there is no integrated theory which could describe and explain the entire diversity of new and heterogeneous social, economic, political, ideological, and psychological phenomena which appeared in the ruins of the Communist domain. At the same time, in the recent decade in social and political literature there have been various research approaches to post-Communism. These approaches reveal various, quite real, and substantive features and aspects of post-Communism.

On the one hand, these are attempts to conceptualize post-Communism along the general line of various transition theories, among other things, on the basis of revealing the general logic of transition from authoritarianism to democracy (Bova 1991; Di Palma 1990; Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1996; O'Donnell 1994; Przeworski 1991; Reisinger 1997; Schmitter and Karl 1994; Karl and Schmitter, 1994). From this point of view Gorbachev's *perestroika*, the

disintegration of the Soviet Union, the collapse of Communism, and subsequent transformations in post-Communist Russia and the former socialist countries are links of one global process—the “global democratic revolution” (Huntington 1991–92; Markoff 1994).

On the other hand, a quite different understanding of post-Communism has become widespread in recent years—such a specific phenomenon (in regard to initial conditions, tasks, political actors, and the like) that there is no ground to compare it with postauthoritarian democratizations which are characteristic of southern Europe and Latin America (Terry 1993; Bunce 1995). In line with this approach is also the understanding of post-Communism as the “world revolution” (McFaul 1995; Fish 1995), which is incomparable in regard to the depth and scale of not only political but also socioeconomic tasks with the changes of only mainly political regimes when there is transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

Present-day post-Communism has many dimensions indeed, and it is for this reason that its various aspects can be described within the framework of various theoretical models. These include the democratization of the political system, its transformation, while preserving many traditional features, transition from an administrative command economy to a market economy, a component element of the global democratic wave, the disintegration of the empire, national self-determination, the establishment of new statehoods and national identities, and many other things. In its aspects of this kind post-Communism belongs at the same time to different, though mutually intersecting types and varieties of phenomena and processes. In this sense it can really be conceptualized in various theoretical models. As for the general integrated theory of post-Communism, to all appearances, the time for it has not come as yet, among other things for the reason that the establishment of post-Communism itself has not been completed and post-Communist development still continues and has not found somewhat completed and crystalized forms of expression.

In this connection, it appears, several points arise which are of theoretical and methodological importance and which are especially important for that branch of comparative political science which deals with post-Communism:

1. Are there sufficient grounds for referring the specific cases of transition, which are individual in each particular case, from nondemocratic rule to relatively greater democracy in different countries and regions (including Russia), cases which have been prolonged in time for more than two decades now, to one democratic wave?

2. What factors produce the greatest influence on the outcome of democratization—structural, that is, socioeconomic and cultural-value prerequisites and conditions which facilitate or impede the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions and norms; or procedural—that is, particular features and se-

quences of specific decisions and actions which are taken by a sufficiently narrow number of initiators of and direct participants in the process of democratization?

3. Is it possible to consider the processes of post-Communist transformation (in Russia and in other newly independent countries) in the general theoretical and methodological context of the postauthoritarian democratization of the present wave, or is the phenomenon of post-Communism so specific that it is inappropriate to draw any parallels here?

4. Is it possible to make at least a preliminary theoretical synthesis of various research approaches which exist now to the phenomenon of post-Communism?

## II. THE GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC WAVE AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITS

Despite its relative character as a whole, the notion of the global democratic wave encompasses diversified processes which take place in different regions of today's world and which are united in this way or another both by attempts of transition from various non-democratic forms of rule and by some general factors and circumstances. The beginning of this democratic wave, which is the third in the last two centuries, dates back to 1974 when the authoritarian dictatorship fell down in Portugal. Later on this wave spread to the other remaining dictatorships in southern Europe—Spain and Greece—and then to Latin America. By the mid-1980s it reached some countries of Asia. Since the second half of the '80s the democratic wave has also spread to the Communist world—the Soviet Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In 1991 Gorbachev's perestroika, which was started five years earlier, led to the collapse of the Soviet system in the USSR itself and the emergence of Russia among other newly independent countries which proclaimed themselves new democracies. The repercussions of this global democratic wave could also be heard in some countries of Africa.

As compared with the previous democratic waves, today's global democratic wave has several specific features. First and foremost, it has a much larger, practically global scale; in fact, only Muslim countries and China have remained outside its influence. It is the global scope of the present-day democratic wave that makes us ask a question: Don't we encounter various democratic currents which appear at about the same time but in quite different conditions, circumstances, and contexts, which are hard to be compared with one another and, consequently, are governed by different regularities?

Indeed, the present transits from authoritarianism to democracy, unlike democratizations which were started after World War II and which continued till the second half of the 1960s, arose not in connection with and not as a result of the

military defeat of authoritarian regimes. They arose in such an international context which is hardly to be compared with the international environment of the preceding waves of democratization. At last they spread to the groups of countries which in many respects have quite different social systems and political regimes—from classical authoritarianism and military juntas in Latin America and southern Europe to posttotalitarian authoritarianism in the Soviet Union and the European socialist countries (up to such fragments of the traditional totalitarianism of the Stalin type as Rumania or Albania). Thus, what is it—separated phenomena which were engendered by various reasons and are governed by various regularities or links of a single global process?

In actual fact, it is comparative methodology that presupposes the disclosure of the elements of similarity and difference. The point is only what permanent and what variable factors are singled out during this comparison and what the grounds are for this. In this case, we can single out at least the following permanent factors (subjective and objective) the effect of which can be traced to this degree or another practically in all phenomena, which are compared and which are heterogeneous in many respects (some of these factors are singled out by Markoff, 1994):

1. The normative attitude to democracy as to a declared (though even seldom implemented) ideal and the objective of the suggested social transformations.
2. The growing mass attractiveness of democratic models and patterns, which is connected with the first factor, as a result of broad cultural influence, above all, under the impact of the mass culture of the West.
3. The real expansion (though inconsistent and interrupted) of democratic rights and freedoms and experiments, which entail important social consequences, with democratic institutions and procedures.
4. The economic inefficiency of authoritarianism, which became quite clear in the 1980s and '90s especially as an instrument of social modernization, which refutes the widespread perception of the efficiency of the authoritarian modernization of the economy (Geddes 1994).
5. The loss practically everywhere (with some exceptions, such as the Muslim world and China) of attractiveness and the ensuing delegitimization of authoritarianism as a model of national development.
6. The appearance of such an international context (including the institutionalized one) which turns out to be specifically favorable for stimulating transition from authoritarianism to more democratic forms of government.

These circumstances enable us to ask a question at least about the elements of partial similarity between various phenomena of present-day democratization, which, though originating from various sources, merge in the end into one democratic wave. These elements of similarity refer to both the genesis and the internal

dynamics of contemporary transits from authoritarianism; at the same time, their results, far from being predetermined in any way, are quite different.

There is no doubt that real transits from nondemocratic forms of rule which took place in the last few decades in southern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and the former Soviet Union, are so diversified that it is impossible to reduce them to one model. However, when democratization was more or less successful it followed a certain logic and was governed by a certain sequence of actions and developments (this logic is reproduced in part by Bova, 1991).

Thus, in most of the successful southern European and Latin American (and some East and Central European) democratizations of various authoritarian regimes, the initiative came from "above" as a result of the split in the ranks of the ruling elite into reformers (the supporters of transformations) and conservatives (the opponents of changes). The reforms started, to put it exactly, not with democratization as such but with the preliminary liberalization of the regime, its peculiar "decompression" and "weakening." Unlike democratization, the initial liberalization was not only initiated but was fully controlled in practice from above and could be interrupted at any time.

In their effort to counteract more effectively the conservative forces of the regime, reformers within the system tried to seek support for their actions from outside; they appealed to the forces of civilian society, opposition movements, and the like. Balancing between the Scylla of the conservative guardians of the regime and the Charybdis of radical opposition democrats, centrist reformers were able for some time to pursue the policy of reforms. However, the legalization of radical opposition, sanctioned by them as a new participant in the political process, and the counterconsolidation of conservatives, which was caused by this circumstance, led inevitably to a new growth of tension and friction and to the aggravation of conflicts.

In most cases of successful democratic transits the way out of the situation was found not as a result of the victory of one of the confronting forces over the other, but in the kind of agreement or pact between the parties to the conflict, as a result of which an agreement was reached on the "rules of the game" during subsequent stages of democratization and on guarantees for the losers. This was followed by the first free "founding" elections which, as a rule, brought the representatives of radical opposition but not the centrist wing of the reformers, who had started the reforms, to power. However, usually their triumph was not long-lived.

Very often, especially in cases when the new democratically elected power was forced to implement painful economic reforms, the negative mass public reaction to them brought to power during subsequent democratic elections ("elections of disappointment") not radicals but persons coming from the old elite, who did not strive at all for reactionary restoration. On the contrary, as genuine

Thermidoreans, they actually stabilized and balanced the new political system by means of a certain recoil backwards. The institutionalization of democratic procedures and, above all, the replacement of political power in case of successful democratizations laid the basis needed for the subsequent possible consolidation of democracy (which is not necessarily the result of the processes of democratic transits which were started).

We will repeat once again that the pattern described above is not by any means a universal model of democratization. It establishes merely empirically the sequence of some phases in a number of specific cases of successful democratizations.

Herein lies the source of a widespread misunderstanding which can be found among authors who reject the correctness of whatever analogies between democratizations in southern Europe and Latin America, which are considered to be classical postauthoritarian and post-Communism. It is indisputable that such authors are quite correct when they emphasize the obvious differences and specific features of post-Communist transformations—in most cases the lack of an initial pact between reformers and conservatives, the twofold task of political democratization and transition to the market economy, the need of dismantling a great part of production capacities for the benefit of the modernization and restructuring of others, the appearance of nationalistic (that is, eventually non-democratic) reaction to the Communist collapse, the lack of civil society not as elements but as the system of ties in southern Europe and Latin America between themselves and between them and the state, and the like. Moreover, this register of post-Communist differences from traditional postauthoritarianism can be easily extended.

But it does not follow from this in any way that transition theories based on the analysis of postauthoritarian democratizations suggest only one model of transition to democracy, which has been described above—through a pact between reformers and conservatives in the political elite (similar to the well-known “pact of Moncloa”). In reality, it is only one of the possible options, which are seldom encountered in practice, though it is the optimal option in many respects from the standpoint of the efficiency of democratic transition. Other options, also analysed in transition theories, include transition to democracy not through the pact between reformers and conservatives but through reforms carried out by the elite or through the direct imposition of democratic reforms by means of force “from above” or through revolutionary action “from below” (Karl and Schmitter 1994). However, in practice the chances for the stabilization and consolidation of democracy in these cases prove to be less.

It should be noted that these models of democratic transits do not disclose the entire diversity of complicated and multidimensional social processes which refer to the present-day democratic wave. However, the analysis and comparison of various options for transitions from authoritarianism are not aimed at all at

constructing a single, generally applied paradigm of democratization. Their aim is to reveal the ties and sequences of certain phases in real social processes. It is such an approach that enables us to reveal some characteristic regularities in the logic of most effective and successful transitions to democracy. At the same time, by their definition these regularities are applied not to all options of transits from nondemocratic forms of rule but only to the most successful of them.

It this connection it must be admitted that an extensive use of the notion of democratization as applied to all varieties of social transformations, which are connected in this way or another with the present-day democratic wave, can not always be justified, especially if we keep in mind the real multidimensional character and practical results of these processes. As it appears, a broader and more neutral notion of a democratic transit (as distinct from transition to democracy, which is the final result of this process) reflects in a better way the diversity of circumstances, features, and many options for the results of social transformations under review.

We will repeat once again that by their definition democratic transits do guarantee transition to democracy. This is the designation of diversified processes of transits from one social and political condition to another; as has been emphasized above, democracy is not necessarily (and it is even seldom appears in this capacity) the final point. However, these are such transits which are made under the impact of the above-mentioned general (and in this sense global) factors (the normative attitude to democracy and the mass attractiveness of democratic ideals, the economic inefficiency and delegitimization of authoritarianism, real experiments with democratic institutions and procedures, the international environment which is favorable for democratization, and the like). It is this circumstance that enables us to consider democratic transits, which are diversified in regard to their character and results, as component elements of the present-day global democratic wave.

### III. DEMOCRATIC TRANSITS—STRUCTURAL PREREQUISITES OR PROCEDURES?

The above-mentioned general group of subjective and objective factors, which made it possible to unite in the category of democratic transits and social transformations, which are diversified in regard to their character and their results and which make up the present-day democratic wave, cannot explain, however, these differences. Why does democratization start earlier in some countries and proceed more successfully than in others? Why do some nondemocratic regimes start their democratization gradually while others resist it till they do not fall apart? In an effort to answer these questions some authors placed an emphasis on structural factors—socioeconomic and cultural-value conditions and prerequisites of de-

mocracy and democratization, while others laid stress on procedural factors—the choice and sequence of specific decisions and actions taken by the real political authors on whom the process of democratization depends.

Thus, some authors (Almond and Verba 1963, 1980; Inglehart 1977, 1988; Rustow 1970; Lipset 1969, 1996; Pye 1990; Huntington 1991–92) sought to reveal the main correlations between socioeconomic and cultural-value variables and the chances of establishing and preserving democratic regimes in different countries. These correlations are often perceived as structural prerequisites and conditions of democracy, that is, those that are conditioned by the impact of objective social structures rather than by subjective intentions and actions.

These authors single out three main types of structural prerequisites of democracy: (1) ensuring national unity and achieving national identity; (2) achieving a sufficiently high level of economic development; and (3) spreading specific cultural norms and values, which presuppose the recognition of democratic norms, tolerance, trust, and civic duty.

The first structural condition does not cause any doubt; the problem concerning national unity and identity is solved before the process of democratization begins. Otherwise, it can turn into a serious obstacle and hindrance to democratic transits. Certainly, acute national differences and contradictions, which lead to a rise of various forms of nationalism and nationalistic movements, make democracy in these social conditions practically unachievable.

In some democratic countries there are still national problems that have not been solved—the problem concerning Basques and Corsica for Spain, Quebec for Canada, Northern Ireland for Great Britain, to mention a few. However, in most cases either these national problems are of a local character and do not pose a threat to the territorial integrity of a given country and its national identity, or opponents do not resort to force and violence but make efforts to rely on democratic institutions and methods for the solution of these problems. Nevertheless, in these cases, too, nationalism, especially in its acute form, which is engendered by the lack of solution to problems concerning national and territorial unity and national identity, is incompatible with democracy. This refers especially to countries that are only beginning the process of democratization and in which this process can not only come to a stop but also be cardinally malformed toward systematic oppression of some national groups, which is incompatible with democracy, or even building openly ethnocratic states under cover of democratic rhetoric (tendencies of such a kind can be traced clearly enough in certain sections of post-Soviet space).

The second type of correlation—between democracy and the level of socioeconomic development and the modernization of society—causes more doubts today than a few decades ago, when the supporters of a structural approach to democratization formulated dependence between the well-being of a nation and the probability of its becoming a democracy (Lipset 1959:75). These doubts are both theoretical and actual.

From the standpoint of theory the question arises whether it is correct to interpret democracy in the spirit of economic determinism—as a rectilinear consequence of certain socioeconomic conditions. What is important for democracy is not economic development and the achievement of well-being as such, but the creation of prerequisites as a result of these factors, for shaping a mass middle class as its social basis about which Moore spoke long ago (Moore 1966:418). This, too, however, does not guarantee democracy.

Certain facts do not fit into this understanding of democracy. For example, it is well known that there are nondemocratic regimes with a high level of economic development (take Singapore as an example). On the other hand, India, with a sufficiently stable democratic order, is nevertheless one of the poorest and least developed countries. Studies made in recent times (Przeworski and Limongi 1997) show that there is no direct dependence between democratization and level of economic development. Democratization is not a direct product of economic development and modernization. Democratization can be started in economically undeveloped societies, though democracy has more chances for survival in a modern, developed society.

The thesis that democracy and the level of modernization are mutually conditioned disarms those who would not like to wait passively for the results of “objective” development because it actually follows from the thesis that efforts aimed at the democratization of societies that have not achieved this level of development (and such societies make up a majority in regard to the present-day democratic wave) are doomed to failure. This, certainly, narrows down the list of the countries that would be able to count on democratization.

Thirdly, certain cultural conditions which exist in society, above all, in the form of spreading those values and provisions, which are associated with “civic culture” and certain, above all, Protestant (and to a certain extent Roman Catholic) religious traditions, are also often referred to the structural prerequisites of democratization. Certainly, modern democracy originated in Protestant countries and its spread in the Catholic world was not a simple matter. (It should be noted that, to all appearances, it is still to be convincingly demonstrated that democracy in its present-day form can take deep root in the Orthodox, Muslim, or Confucian cultural soil). There is no doubt that the norms and values of pluralism, tolerance, mutual trust, and the recognition of democratic rights and freedoms—and, equally, the level of economic development and well-being—create a climate which is favorable for democracy. It is in this sense that there is a correlation between democracy, on the one hand, and economic development and political culture, on the other, which the supporters of a structural approach were quite right to note.

Another thing is that the availability of such correlations is not the same matter as the existence of preliminary structural conditions without which it would be impossible to start democratization. Firstly, such correlations point not to obligatory prerequisites but indicate only factors which facilitate or impede



democratization. Secondly, what is considered by some authors to be the prerequisites and conditions of democracy can prove in reality to be the results and consequences of the process of democratization itself.

In actual fact, it is this kind of doubts about the universal and substantiated nature of the thesis about the availability of the common sociocultural prerequisites of democracy that led to the emergence of another methodological approach to democratization problems in modern transition theories. This approach is focused on the endogenous factors of democracy and democratization—that is, not prerequisites but some specific processes, procedures, and political decisions which are made by the agents of democratization themselves (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Linz 1990, Di Palma 1990; Przeworski 1991; Schmitter and Karl 1994; Karl and Schmitter 1994). From this point of view the sequence and mutual conditions of specific political decisions and actions, and the tactics chosen by those actors who initiate and carry out democratization are more important for its outcome than the prerequisites of democracy which exist (or do not exist) by that time. The main thing in such an approach is the interaction of competing elites and their deliberate choice of some organizational forms and institutions of a new political setup in the process of their political bargaining.

In this second approach there is a special reason as applied exactly to the present-day democratic wave which is distinguished for an extreme diversity of starting points, political trajectories, the agendas of transformations and strategies (let us say, the options of democratizations from Paraguay and Honduras to Poland and Rumania). But is it true that these two approaches—structural and procedural—mutually exclude each other, as is generally believed?

As it appears, in reality there is no insurmountable contradiction between these two methodological approaches, and they can complement each other. In actual fact, they address different aspects of one group of phenomena which we defined above as democratic transits. Theoretically, nothing, at least a priori, impedes synthesis of the two methodologies with one of them being focused on structural factors (even taking into account the above-mentioned doubts about their universal nature) and the other on procedural factors.

It goes without saying that the specific decisions and actions of political actors in many key periods determine the course of a democratic transit and the social transformations which are connected with the transit. The actors themselves choose their actions, strategies, and tactics, and in this way they choose the procedures and institutions to be established.

In this connection Larsen's (1997) notion that the conditions of an initial pact set a kind of a "frozen ceiling," that is, the limit of reforms which are implemented, appears productive. As a follow-up to this idea it can be added that the "ceiling" of reforms appears as a result of limitations which stem not only from the conditions of the pact, which has been concluded, but also from all preceding traditions, circumstances, and the historical context.

However, the actors, who make choices of their actions and institutions during a transit, do so in circumstances engendered not by themselves which are external factors in relation to the choice itself. In other words, it is a choice that is not absolutely arbitrary, that is not fully devoid of prerequisites, and that is not a choice in conditions of social *tabula rasa* in which any political project can be put into effect. This choice is determined not only by procedures themselves, that is, specific political actions but also by structural factors—above all, the burden of the past, preceding traditions, and the broad social context in which they take place. It is possible to begin to craft democracy without waiting for conditions to mature to be appropriate and favorable for it, because preceding traditions and a general context in which a choice is made produce their effect on the progress of a democratic transit.

The traditions and the context fill the procedures, which are chosen, and the institutions, which are established, with their substance. It is structural factors that determine to a large extent the filling of formal procedures and institutions with their substance (and explain, for example, why in one case elections become a most important institution of emerging democracy and why in another case they are used by a new oligarchy as a mechanism of self-preservation). Democracy as an institutionalized uncertainty (Przeworski 1991) presupposes, nevertheless, a choice between options which are determined to a great extent. They are determined both by the procedures themselves, which are used, and by the preceding conditions and traditions.

When speaking about a fundamental possibility of a theoretical synthesis of the structural and procedural approaches to the study of democracy and democratization, attention should also be drawn to practical attempts to overcome methodological one-sidedness and to elaborate more thorough, multidimensional approaches. The searches of such a kind are made along various lines, for example, as part of a neoinstitutional approach, and analysis of the role played by institutions, which emerge in the process of a democratic transit in structuring a new sociopolitical reality (O'Neil 1996). Other authors try to reveal to what extent the character and structures of the old regime affect the dynamics and results of a democratic transit. How and in what way, for example, do the leaders of an authoritarian regime set the rules of participation in the political process which also affect the disintegration of the regime; how do the old regime and the new elites affect the probability of the emergence of an opposition, its specific features and actions, the probability of reaching a pact, and the like (Bratton and Van de Walle 1994; Easter 1997)?

At the same time, it is to be admitted that as of today even a preliminary theoretical synthesis of these two methodological approaches is a task that has not been solved. Such a synthesis is also important for the elaboration of an integrated theory of contemporary post-Communism, which has been stated above. Revelation of what is general and what is particular in various types of

democratic transits (including those in Russia) can help in the search for answers to this theoretical challenge.

#### IV. POST-COMMUNIST RUSSIA AS A DEMOCRATIC TRANSIT

Efforts to understand the changes that have taken place in post-Communist Russia during its democratic transit presuppose, as we have already said, the revealing of general and specific elements, which is needed for subsequent theoretical generalisations. Given the differences between Russia's post-Communist transformation and the southern European and Latin American transitions from authoritarianism to democracy they were governed at least in part by some similar sequences, which can be traced taking various phases of Gorbachev's perestroika as an example.

When stating very often that analogies do not work in this case, attention is drawn to the fact that Gorbachev's coming to power was not the result of a split-up in the Soviet elite into reformers and conservatives and that he started reforms by purely Soviet *apparat* methods (from above to below). In reality even if Gorbachev traveled his way to power by traditional *nomenklatura* methods, it was his actions aimed at reforms that caused the subsequent split-up in the Soviet elite into conservatives and reformers.

In actual fact, the initiative first of the liberalization and then of a partial democratization of the regime was taken, as in most of other democratic transits, from above—by the leader-reformer. As a centrist reformer Gorbachev was inclined to gradual and evolutionary methods within the framework of the system, for the purpose of strengthening of his positions in the confrontation with conservatives and fundamentalists appealed for support—like many other leaders-reformers—to radical democratic opposition forces outside the regime, making efforts at the same time not to lose control over the situation. The legalization and then the institutionalization of the radical democratic opposition (first and foremost, represented by the interregional group of the deputies of the Supreme Soviet) caused a response reaction of conservatives who rallied their ranks more closely together and were also institutionalized as the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

For a certain time Gorbachev succeeded in balancing between these two groups by pursuing the policy of zig-zags. However, the gap between the two political poles, which assumed their own inertia and logic of development, was constantly widening. As a result, political centrism as a method of reforming the system suffered a complete collapse. To the unsuccessful attempt of a conserva-

tive coup for the sake of saving the system radical democrats responded with their successful countercoup (Fig. 1).

At the same time, despite a number of analogies described in Figure 1, in many respects Russia's democratic transit stands apart not only from classical southern European and Latin American transitions from authoritarianism but also from transitions to democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. If these specific distinguishing features are to be summed up, they can be conditionally grouped into two categories: (1) the general context and conditions in which the processes of reforms and transformations started and went on first in the Soviet Union and then in Russia, and (2) the internal specific features of these processes.

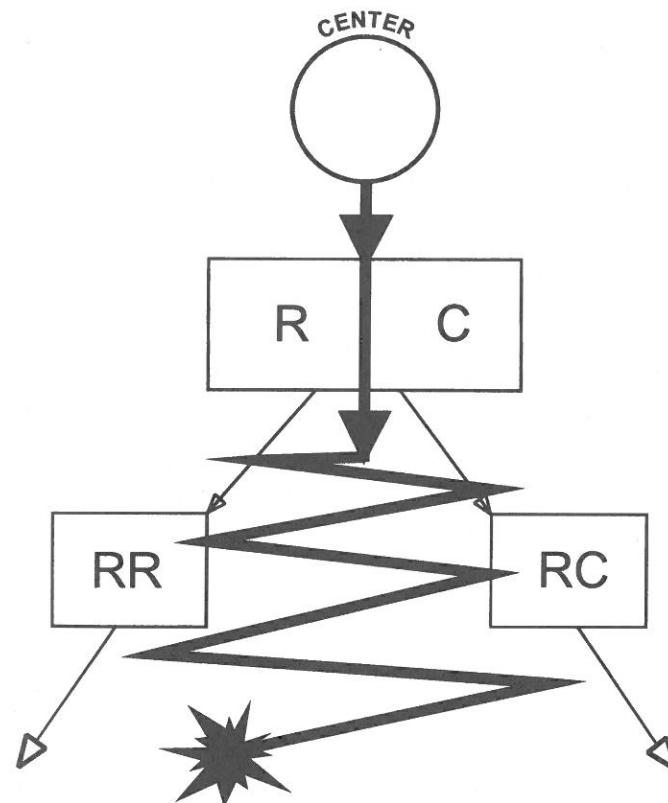


Figure 1 The collapse of centrist reformism. Abbreviations: R, reformers; C, conservatives; RR, radical reformers; RC, radical conservatives.

## A. Context of Reforms

### 1. Political and Economic Reforms

It has become almost trivial to speak about the unprecedented task of carrying out in post-Communist Russia both democratic transformations of the political system and market economy reforms, which presuppose the breakdown of the administrative system of economic management and the building of foundations for market economy relations. It is believed that in an ideal sense the two tasks not only are mutually conditioned but also, in the end, support each other: democratization facilitates advancement to the market, while the market creates the economic and social basis of democracy. At the same time, in classical postauthoritarian transits the problem concerning the nature of simultaneous political and economic reforms does not arise because the market economy exists in some forms. However, in the Soviet Union and then in Russia these two tasks became in many respects obstacles for each other.

It should not be thought at the same time that economic—and quite painful—structural transformations, including the destatization of property, were not on the agenda of other democratic transits. Another thing is that successful political and economic reforms, including those in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, were carried out not simultaneously or in the way like it is in China where economic reforms do not only precede but also actually replace political reforms.

The strategists of successful democratic transits effected at first a consistent political democratization, built and consolidated effective democratic institutions, and then built what Linz and Stepan (1996) call an “economic society,” that is, a system of social guarantees and intermediary institutions between the state and the market, and it is only after that they carried out painful economic transformations. Other authors (Brzezinski 1993; McFaul 1995) also draw attention to this circumstance. In this way, on the one hand, persistent political democratization helped ensure mass support for democracy in the conditions of heavy economic reforms and, on the other hand, a social guarantee was provided to facilitate the economic transition.

Neither of the things was done in Russia. The building of democratic institutions proved to be impeded. After 1991 the state, which disintegrated in part or was destroyed in part, was not restored after all—the new post-Communist regime of Russia tried to take its functions upon itself. In other words, Yeltsin did not create either the political institutions of democracy for the support of economic reforms or the institutions of state support for the market economy and the system of social security. Extremely painful economic reforms, which lacked any social guarantee and were not supported socially and politically, fell upon the unprotected population.

When speaking about this, we should go beyond the framework of opposition of the market to the command administrative system. Firstly, for theoretical

and comparative reasons, the point is that in none of the countries which carried out democratic transits in the last two decades the market in its pure form, so to say, market per se, was there a prerequisite or a guarantee of democracy. Herein lies the root of one of the fatal errors of the strategists of Russia's transit, who proceeded from the belief that the “wild” market will provide the economic and social basis needed for political democracy.

A comparative analysis of what happened in cases of successful democratic transits shows that nowhere—in neither southern Europe, Latin America, nor Central and Eastern Europe—did the transition to democracy rely on the reconstruction of the classical ideal of the free market under the state as a “nightwatchman.” We will repeat once again that contrary to the widespread delusion the logic of actions of those who were successful at democratization was quite opposite: first radical political transformations (the building of effective institutions of democracy), then social reforms which ensure an effective economic redistribution and the provision of a social basis of support for democracy to be followed only after that by profound structural transformations of the economy (establishment of a modern social market).

Secondly, the ideological opposition of the market to state interventionism does not work either as applied to the present-day situation in Russia. The former administrative system of economic management, which had already disintegrated by the end of the Gorbachev epoch, was completely smashed by the efforts of reformers, but at the same time, many key administrative levers of influence continued to exist. We will emphasize once again that it was broken down before effective entities of democratic power were created. As a result, there appeared not so much an economic as political (being semicriminal at the same time) market of bargaining between key political and economic clans which combined power and property. Today as distinct from the recent past these cartels act ever more vigorously and “enter” politics not by merely delegating the representation of their interests to authorized persons, but they are themselves becoming the biggest and most influential political players.

They do not need a free market economy competition. They have adjusted themselves well and have adjusted the state which they actually privatized to their personal and corporate needs. It is the state, no matter how weak it might be, and state subsidies, which are ensured by a shadow political bargaining, that are needed to preserve the monopoly domination of certain cartels in the economy.

Another thing, among these cartels there is no full agreement. On the one hand, the ruling economic forces (financial and banking, fuel and energy, and other raw-materials monopolies), to all appearances, are ready for a new redivision of property and influence. On the other hand, technological and production sectors of the military-industrial complex, which are discriminated by the present-day economic policy and which will not survive without a change in the priorities

of the state economic policy, can also prove to be quite ready for a *revanche*. The struggle between these forces goes on, in the end, not in the economic but in the political sphere—for influence and control over the state policy of economic preference.

Today in Russia the economy and politics have proved to be no less merged together than in the Soviet epoch. The present-day economy in Russia is actually a mixed one. With the domination of financial and raw materials monopolies which rely on the state support there is, above all, a service sector of the economy, which is already big enough and which really lives according to the laws of the wild and criminal market. The importance of this social segment is not so much economic as sociopsychological. In this sphere a stratum of active people is gradually emerging and they are oriented to independent individual economic activities. This stratum can gradually become a social basis for real rather than declared market economy relations.

## 2. Inadequate Social Basis for Democracy

To put it strictly, from the standpoint of the tasks of political democratization transition to the market economy is not an end in itself but is a means of shaping a middle class as a mass social basis for democracy. The processes of modernization that went on under cover in Soviet society at least from the 1960s created a kind of embryonic analog of the middle class which, in the end, became the grave-digger of Communism (Starr 1988; Lapidus 1989; Lewin 1991). However, as distinct from the middle class in the West it was the professional and institutional position in the state system but not property that became the basis which formed the Soviet embryonic "old middle class."

With the disintegration of the Soviet state, the deepening economic crisis, and the beginning of market economy reforms this embryonic Soviet "old middle class" was actually washed away with the society being split up (typical of third-world countries) into two poles—the zone of mass poverty and a narrow stratum of wealth with socially amorphous elements between them. As for a "new middle class," it has not appeared in Russia as yet. Consequently, the problem related to shaping an adequate and sufficiently mass social basis of democracy to be based on private property relations but not on the attitude to the state remains unsolved in post-Communist Russia.

## 3. Centrifugal Forces of Nationalism and the Crisis of National Identity

Another specific feature of Russia's democratic transit is the polyethnical composition of the Soviet Union and Russia and the rise of the centrifugal forces of nationalism under the slogans of democracy, thus leading, in the end, to the disintegration of the USSR and continuing to be a threat to Russia. In the con-

ditions of the progressing disintegration of the Soviet society national ideas became an attempt at imparting a kind of a positive and substantive form to anti-Communism. However, in the post-Communist context the explicable desire for the national revival began to assume forms hardly compatible with democracy and even directly contradicting it, from openly ethnocratic to imperial forms of statehood.

Attention should be drawn to the crisis of national identity, which is clearly felt today in post-Communist Russia and which confronted the authorities with the task of ensuring national unity. This is an aspect which is quite specific for Russia and which cannot be found, as a rule, in other cases of democratic transits. In the long-term perspective it may be the most difficult task because today the answer is not clear to the seemingly self-evident question: What is today's Russia like? Did it really inherit the status of the USSR? Is it a successor to the last great empire in the world? Or is it only one of the empire's 15 splinters? Is it that post-Communist Russia represents in general a fundamentally new statehood which emerged, as it were, in the rubble of the empire's collapse? Or is it the framework of the Eurasian geopolitical entity, which is huge and unique in the history of civilizations and which existed first in the form of the Russian Empire and then in the form of the USSR? There is still no answer to the question whether it is possible to have a different—democratic and nonimperial—regime of the political organization of these giant territories which had been historically structured in an autocratic and imperial paradigm? Until answers are given to these questions, until the problem concerning territorial integrity within the framework of a voluntary federation is solved, and until a new national identity of post-Communist Russia is determined, not only the results but also the progress of Russia's democratic transit are hard to be predicted.

## B. Internal Features of Reforms

### 1. Establishment of the Democratic Movement

The democratic movement in Russia greatly differed from similar forces in cases of other democratic transits. Unlike the narrow movement of dissidents from among the intelligentsia of the 1960s and '70s, which was crushed practically completely during the Brezhnev period, the democratic movement of the time when perestroika began was the product of Communist reformism and was connected with the Soviet system by numerous ties. As distinct from opposition movements in East European socialist countries, it was engendered not by the civil society but by the state, that is, it emerged within the Soviet system itself and was initiated by its most far-sighted and capable segment which came to the conclusion by the mid-1980s about the need of liberalization for the sake of preserving the foundations of the system.

It is for this reason that the sociopsychological basis of the democratic movement, which emerged in the favorable atmosphere of perestroika, was made up to no small extent not by the dissident traditions of resistance to the regime (as it was, for example, in Poland or Hungary) but by specific conformism and a special kind of career orientations. This, naturally, in no way belittles the invaluable contribution of the democrats of the perestroika wave to the cause of democratization. What is meant is another thing: unlike many other democratic transits, the democratic opposition outside the regime, to which centrist reformers and Gorbachev himself began to appeal at a certain stage for the purpose of expanding their social basis, was engendered in many respects by the authorities themselves. That the democratic movement, which was initially sanctioned from above, came eventually into real confrontation with centrist reformers can be explained by various circumstances, including the above-mentioned institutionalization of political poles which divert from each other and go in opposite directions in the situation of the collapse of the political center.

In the ideology of the democratic movement and in mass consciousness the idea of democracy assumed initially, as it were, the character of an amorphous myth symbolizing a generalized ideal image of the desired future. On this basis in the early stages of the development of the democratic movement the symbiosis of both the myth of democracy and the myth of the market appeared as a magic means of solving all economic problems and achieving a mass well-being at the Western level. However, in the mass consciousness this ideological symbiosis proved to be short-lived.

The destructive social consequences of the first shock economic reforms put an end to the idealization of the market already in 1992. The dramatic political crisis and the shooting at Parliament in 1993 dealt a most heavy blow upon illusions about democracy in Russia. Both circumstances stimulated the emergence of a profound ideological crisis and the vacuum of values in mass consciousness and a crisis of the democratic movement.

But this crisis was also predetermined by another preceding circumstance: the actual betrayal of the democratic movement by the new regime in the establishment of which the movement had played such an important role. The Yeltsin regime, which put an emphasis on the personal charisma of the leader, did not go along any fundamentally possible ways of carrying out reforms; it did not build effective institutions of democracy and did not reestablish the system of tough authoritarian power. It is here that other specific features of Russia's democratic transit made themselves felt and manifested themselves graphically.

## 2. Lack of a Pact Between Reformers and Conservatives

After renouncing compromises which were sought, though inconsistently, by Gorbachev and in a bid for a full and unconditional victory over the Soviet re-

gime, Yeltsin and the radicals deliberately excluded the possibility of achieving a compromise phase of the pact, which, as we have said above, performed an important stabilizing function in most of the successful democratic transits. Such a pact in other cases formulated the democratic rules of the game, which were subsequently adhered to by the main political forces. As there was no such pact in Russia a quite big political segment of the society found itself to be artificially excluded from the democratic process for a long time, till the 1993 elections which legalized the opposition.

It should be noted at the same time that the lack of the formal pact in no way prevented the second and third echelons of Soviet *nomenklatura* from successfully "parachuting" and building themselves into the new system of authorities and property. Today, however, there are grounds to say that, after all, this pact took place de facto in some of its elements but in a specific and distorted form.

It was the recognition of the formal procedure of elections by the nationwide political forces of Russia as the only acceptable method of legitimization of power that was one of the elements of this pact. However, as distinct from the logic of classical transitions to democracy, this pact was not a phase which anticipates the democratization of an authoritarian regime but was a stage of post-Communist transformation when the new ruling class had already emerged, when the ruling groups had "got adjusted" to each other to a sufficient degree, found a "common language," determined their interests and the zones of their intersection, and agreed upon the "rules of the game" at the expense of the overwhelming mass of the population. As a result, the pact, which appeared de facto, though being limited, among the most influential groups within the elite of today's Russia, only widens the gap between the authorities and the society and keeps the society itself away from real politics.

## 3. Lack of the First "Founding" Elections

When relying on his charisma as the people's leader who enjoys the support of everyone, Yeltsin also ignored quite deliberately the subsequent phase of the classical model of a successful democratic transit: he refused to hold the first free "founding" elections which could lay the foundation of legitimate democratic power and facilitate a smooth and gradual development of the multiparty system in the country. It should be noted that he refused to hold these first free elections in the situation when, according to the general logic of democratic transits and in the specific situation which arose in Russia after the victory over the *putschists* in August 1991, radical democrats had the best chances of forming a vast majority in the parliament and, when relying on this support, starting radical economic reforms.

Only one argument can explain more or less convincingly the refusal of Yeltsin to hold free parliamentary elections in the autumn of 1991: his reluctance

to share the laurels of the victory with the persons who were only recently his close associates in the democratic movement. As a result, only certain democrats are coopted to the new structures of authorities, whereas a big part of the democratic movement remains out of business in the position of disappointed observers who are becoming ever more critical.

The lack of this most important initial institutional phase in the process of Russia's democratic transit largely explains the results of the parliamentary elections in December 1993 (or at least makes them less unexpected) which were responded to with the feeling of a shock by most of the observers in the country and outside it. The point is that only formally and chronologically these elections to the new parliament of Russia were the "first," whereas to the general logic of a democratic transit, the logic which is confirmed in most of the cases by historical facts, they were the "second" (that is, the "elections of disappointment").

In actual fact, the initial shock stage of market economic reforms, the stage which continued for a short time (for various reasons), was brought down on the population by executive power which was already associated at that time in mass consciousness with radical democrats. It is not surprising that the result of this very short and then agonizing stage of shock therapy was the growth of mass discontent with the policy of the democratic authorities—as it was practically in all similar phases of democratic transits which almost inevitably caused a public reaction in response—that is, the swing of the pendulum of mass sentiments to the left. This is what happened in Russia during the chronologically first free parliamentary elections in December 1993, which, however, according to the general logic of democratic transits, fulfilled the function of the second elections (the "elections of disappointment").

#### 4. Preservation of the Basic Elements of the Old *Nomenklatura*

A specific feature of Russia's transit was also keeping the key groups of the old ruling class in power. The phase of the public achievement of a social agreement and a pact between the representatives of the parties, which are in confrontation with each other in the course of democratization, the phase which was absent in Russia, preserves for the old ruling class the guarantees of political and economic security and includes it in the new political system as a legitimate participant in the democratic process. In this capacity the old groups can take part in the struggle for participation in the power, which is governed by democratic rules. In Russia when there was no formal pact the old *nomenklatura* ruling class (with the exception of its most ideologized fragments) was not only saved by the little-advertised practical administrative actions of the new democratic authorities (like giving new names to positions when preserving the same officials in the center and in

the provinces) but was also preserved without special additional rhetoric as one of the central components of the new authorities.

It is for this reason in part that the uncompleted democratic transit in Russia became not so much a radical break from the past Soviet system as its specific metamorphosis as a result of which under the slogans of democracy and anti-Communism the nucleus of the old *nomenklatura* was preserved as part of the renewed ruling class which included the time-tested personnel of party and economic pragmatists and new career professionals from democratic ranks (Shevtsova 1995). This renewed ruling class preserved power and acquired property, and became the chief prize winner of the large-scale redistribution of state property and its transformation in private ownership in the form of joint-stock companies between the clans and cartels, which are part of the class, behind the smoke screen of the so-called public privatization. As a result, the corporate groups of interests formed the basis of the oligarchic political system which is being established in Russia. At the same time, mass interests are still poorly articulated and do not have adequate political representation.

The present-day oligarchy of Russia is of a special kind. To put it strictly, the oligarchy is a certain method (along with others) of the management of big organizations, which is based on power as an expert examination but not as wealth. As for the oligarchic principles of the post-Communist structure of Russia, they most likely bring us back to the old understanding of plutocracy as the regime under which power and privileges are based on wealth. The interests of property and one's own material benefit rather than the organization of power as such are the main thing in the present-day plutocratic regime of Russia under which not only wealth engenders power but power itself gives rise to the wealth of those who are a party to it.

Taking into account what has been said above and making use of the two main dimensions of the process of democratization, which were analysed in the classical work of Dahl (1971), "contestation" and "participation," the present direction and the route of Russia's post-Communist transit can be conditionally described according to the following pattern: from "inclusionary authoritarianism" to "exclusionary democracy" (Fig. 2).

In actual fact, it is a variety of elitist rule under which the formal institutions of democracy are used for nondemocratic purposes. This is the result of superficial democratization when there are no mechanisms of democratic control over the actions of the authorities.

It should be noted that unequivocal categories are hardly to be applied to the present-day political regime in Russia. In its essence it is a hybrid and mixed regime, according to the terminology of Schmitter and Karl (1994), a variety of *democradura*, that is, the regime which drastically limits the possibilities of an effective mass political participation but allows at the same time the elements of competition at the level of the elite. Though *democradura* in Russia is quite

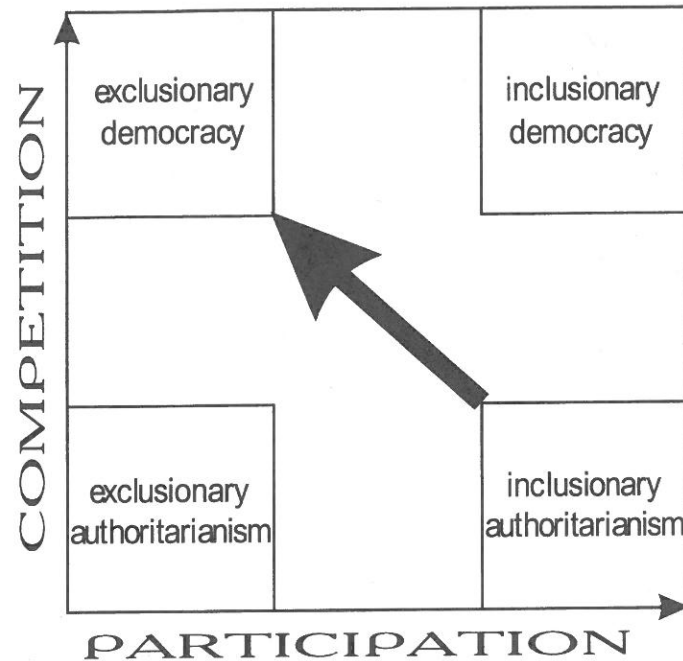


Figure 2 Russia's post-Communist transit.

relative at least on the strength of the fact that at the level of the elite the rules of not an open political competition but the clan and corporate laws of the under-the-carpet struggle are used. Such characteristics as "delegated democracy" (O'Donnell, 1994) or "authoritarian democracy" or the "hybrid regime" can also be applied in many respects to the key features of the regime. On the other hand, the present-day hybrid regime in Russia inherited much of the old Soviet political genotype and, on the other hand, it resembles to an ever greater extent the closed corporate structure of the Latin American type.

##### 5. Traditional Administrative Methods

The almost full subordination of social groups, classes, and strata to the paternalistic vertical of state power was always characteristic of the pre-Soviet Russian and Soviet history. It is not the society that was creating the state but it was state power itself that was forming to a great extent by means of administrative methods the social relations and social groups which were emerging not as an articulation of socioeconomic interests, which had manifested themselves, but as a

bureaucratic creation (for example, the nobility under Peter the Great). In post-Soviet Russia the embryos of democracy and its representative institutions begin to emerge in the flat social landscape in which there are no somewhat developed signs of a differentiated social structure, socioeconomic interests and organisations which express them (McFaul 1993).

Moreover, the new authorities of Russia actually went along the way, which is quite traditional in Russia, of carrying out reforms and transformations in an arbitrary way and according to the vertical from above to below. In most of the successful democratic transits the initiative of making reforms is really taken from above. However, an important and fundamental difference is that in these cases an impulse from above acts only as the primary catalyst of profound processes which subsequently emerge and develop within the society itself. Moreover, the functions of the authorities are mainly reduced to providing institutional support for these processes in accordance with generally accepted democratic procedures.

Things are different in Russia. Here the approach of the new authorities to reforms (above all, due to their genetic ties with the old *nomenklatura* ruling class) continued to be traditional *apparat* administrative methods actually throughout the post-Communist period. In its turn, this could not but cause a split, which is pernicious for democracy, between the authorities and the society and the growing alienation of the society from the authorities. According to many sociological data, in the public opinion of Russia there is a growth of political disappointment and indifference, discreditation of the authorities and political leaders, and a moving away from public interests into private. Certainly, positive aspects can also be seen here: there is a kind of the privatization of the sphere of one's personal life, which comes to replace traditional statism which perceives an individual only as a part subordinate to the whole of the state. However, private interests are perceived in mass consciousness not merely as those which are independent of the state and the authorities but also as those which are in direct contradiction with them. This does not provide conditions favorable for the development of the forms of political participation and to be needed for the normal functioning of democratic institutions.

##### 6. Continued Influence of Authoritarian Forces and Tendencies

Against the background of disappointment with democracy and democrats in Russia, authoritarian tendencies make themselves clearly manifest. These tendencies are demonstrated both by the authorities themselves and by other forces. The authoritarian inclinations of President Yeltsin himself not only manifested themselves in the directive and voluntarist style of his rule but found their expression in the Constitution. It may be still more dangerous (especially in the situation

when the president himself is turning ever more into a collective and anonymous person and the prism of the influence of groups and interests which are close to him) that there is no democratic control over the actions of the authorities.

The threat of authoritarianism in Russia, propped up in recent times by the growing influence of nationalistic forces, also needs special attention because, firstly, the group of intellectuals who provide services to the authorities are strongly pushing through the idea that only the strong hand of enlightened authoritarianism is capable of carrying out painful economic reforms which will prepare the basis needed for the subsequent building of democracy and, on the other hand, in the mass attitudes of the people of Russia there is, certainly, a growing slant toward the support of strong authorities capable of putting things in order in the country. On the basis of these sociological data the conclusion is often made about the growing public support for the line aimed at reversing reforms and changing over to authoritarian nationalism (Whitefield and Evans 1994).

But to what extent is the practical implementation of the authoritarian option probable in today's Russia? Can Russia enter the new millennium as an authoritarian dictatorship no matter what arguments might be used to justify it—the desire to come back to the Communist “paradise,” the need to restore the “law and order” which were lost, or the mobilization of national forces for the sake of carrying out a modernization. It is hardly possible that today there is a streamlined system of arguments which would clearly exclude such a coincidence of circumstances in which it will be unlikely a priori an authoritarian regeneration of the present-day authorities of Russia or their passage into the hands of an autocrat to be brought to life on the crest of the mass populist reaction to the sad socioeconomic realities of today. After all, most diverse scenarios of an authoritarian coup in Russia have already been described in great detail in political science literature.

Nevertheless, arguments against the statements that the present-day political regime is authoritarian are also well known. These are the weak vertical of the authorities and the fragile equilibrium of the elites and groups of interests none of which—or their coalition—can lay claim to a monopoly, and the disorder or even the absence of mechanisms of repressive control, and creeping decentralization and regionalization, to mention a few. Moreover, these arguments also work for the perspective, making the authoritarian scenario for post-Communist Russia possible theoretically but improbable practically.

The groundless hopes for authoritarianism as a mechanism of carrying out market economic reforms is also testified to by the circumstance that in Russia's politics at the present time there are practically no forces which regard authoritarianism as a means of the modernization of the society through the market economy. Quite the contrary, almost all the political forces which are susceptible to authoritarian temptation would like to see in authoritarianism a quite different thing—to return to centralized state control of the economy and to restore the position of Russia as a world superpower. As for public opinion polls, they testify

in not to the desire to return to the authoritarian past but to the desire to see in a strong hand the guarantee of democratic rights and freedoms against the bureaucratic and criminal arbitrary rule.

There are grounds to believe that the pluralism of group and corporate, including regional, interests, which is really emerging in Russia, will also serve as an obstacle in the way of authoritarianism. At the present time there is no political or administrative institution which would provide conditions for a horizontal and vertical introduction of a purely authoritarian model in Russia. Moreover, the regional elites which have tasted the fruits of the disintegration of the vertical axis of power will hardly be positive in their attitude to the attempts of its authoritarian reconstruction.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis that has been made enables us to draw some preliminary conclusions.

Due to its multidimensional character and its evolution, which is still going on, post-Communism can be conceptualized in various theoretical models, among other things, in the categories of democratic transits which are considered within the framework of present-day transition theories. Given all the indisputable specific features of post-Communism there are theoretical and practical grounds to consider the present-day sociopolitical dynamics of Russia in the overall theoretical and methodological context of democratic transits.

Some (far from all) peculiarities of the post-Communist social transformation of Russia, which have been examined above, enable us to single out its specific features and to draw some parallels to other democratic transits as component elements of the present-day democratic wave. The revealing of what is general and particular as a result of the comparative analysis (among other things, as applied to Russia's democratic transit) can help elaborate a general integrated theory of post-Communism.

There seems to be no insurmountable contradiction between various methodological approaches, which exist today, to the analysis of post-Communism as a variety of democratic transits. A theoretical synthesis of approaches, which put an emphasis on structural and procedural factors, is possible, among other things, through a comparative analysis of the conditions and the context of a democratic transit and the very process of such a transit itself.

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