

**THE CHALLENGES OF THEORIES ON
DEMOCRACY**

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DEMOCRACY**

Elaborations over new Trends in Transitology

edited by
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PREFACE

As there have been 'waves' of democratization, there have been 'waves' of analysis of democratic norms and forms. Democracy is then understood as both means and ends to the 'optimal/best' political system guarding the 'good' society. After the unexpected breakdown of communism in Central- and Eastern Europe, the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the signals of more stability of democracy in Latin America, the last 'wave' of theoretical discussion over the foundation of democracy took off. Democracy is now envisaged as the only acceptable model ('end of history') to modern societies all over the world. Therefore the interest in explaining how democracy did come about, and also the inherent dangers in modern politics of its possible breakdown, has grown into the perhaps most important field in comparative political science and political sociology.

The present book is part of this new tradition and we intend to contribute to the new theoretical challenges by offering various perspectives on what is now termed 'transitology'; i.e. the change from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one. As will be discussed in some of the chapters in this book, the new task of explaining the recent transitions from one regime to another gave today's scholars impetus to shifts of concepts and analytical perspectives from more uni-dimensional theories towards more multi-dimensional ones. This has much to do with the contemporaneous position of the analysts; they did themselves watch or even took part in the events, feeling the uncertainty and the 'openness' of the process. Earlier processes of democratization, and the position taken by the observers, were analyses of democratization that had taken place at a more distant time period. It was thus seen as a more 'given' and 'static' process, or the building of new democracies were done through formal decisions by either occupational authorities after breakdown of fascism, or – at a given moment – through decolonization of various forms. The modern media has also given us a more direct access to the international events, thus bringing the observer of democratic transitions in direct contact with the flow of dramatic news from the one hour to the next.

However, there is an ongoing discussion of the effect of long term factors in the transition, compared to the effects of the immediate actions and events. The framing of the context in which the transition takes place has to be located in conditions 'settled' long before the regime change happened. They do have historical roots that are layered into social structures, political institutions, political learning and political culture. In the three first chapters

of this book, by Seymour M. Lipset, Philippe C. Schmitter and Ronald Inglehart, the role of social structure, corporatist institutions and political culture are examined in general terms and related more or less directly to the founding conditions for democratic transition or democratic consolidation.

The complexity in both the transition process, in the consolidation of the new democracy, and the challenge of conceptualizing the transition process itself as a political entity, has been in the center of discussion among the 'transitologists.' Claus Offe points to some of the many difficulties of bringing about a right understanding of what is actually taking place during the 'transition stage,' and Harald Waldrauch examines some of the difficulties within the comparative setting of the many of the post-1974 transitions with reference to an important article by Valery Bounche. Andrei Melville gives a broad overview of the Soviet transition and outlines an important scheme of how we can visualize the transition as a widening left-right negotiation process leaving the power center in vacuum – thus producing a very uncertain outcome.

The pressure towards 'wholeness' and an integrative scheme of analysis has moved James Mahoney and Richard Snyder to propose a suggestive strategy for how to combine past-present variables and to see the explanation of democratic transition as a series of interrelated effects of different variables into a unified model. Josep M. Colomer was one of the very first (in 1991) to introduce game theory to the analysis of transitions and in his chapter he applies this on the Polish case. Kurt-Henning Tvedt continues on in the same direction in his chapter on the GDR-transition – or transit-incorporation – building on various ideas on decision equilibria as more or less optimal for peaceful solutions during the transition games. Ekkart Zimmermann has been inspired by the works of Leif Lewin to formulate decisive games in Europe's inter-war period where the threat of political crises and/or democratic breakdown was at stake. He thus points to how game-thinking forces the analyst to map out clearly the actors priorities and analyse their strategies.

The integrative scheme of Mahoney/Snyder and the game-scheme of Colomer, stimulated us in the milieu at the Institute of Comparative Politics in Bergen to try to use an integrative model taken from 'the funnel of causality' and to focus on how the games played at the 'stem' of the funnel could make transition theory more explicit. In the chapter by Natalja Altermark she addresses herself to how the Russian transition can be understood by using the 'funnel of causality' model and pointing to how political preferences were formed. She illustrates how the games played during the final phase can be explained by a retrospective mapping of the effect of the variables in the funnel. Stein Ugelvik Larsen also examine similar ideas in his final chapter.

The political system of democracy is often assumed to stand against pressures of change because of its ability of provide efficient solutions to intense demands. Miroslav Novak thus addresses the problems of how election systems may function to channel demands in democratic polities. Klaus-Dietmar Henke was involved in the first research on the STASI-archives and provides us with a firm understanding of what democracy is *not*, by outlining the most modern of the totalitarian institutions of political control through secret police institutions – an obvious missing institution in full scale democracies.

The apparent failure of Social Science of not being able to foresee the coming of democracy in Central- and Eastern Europe gave both pessimism to the disciplines and new stimulus to 'introspective search' for reasons that had limited our sensitivity to forecast such important political events. In Gyorgy Benche's and Seymour M. Lipset's chapter they do provide us with a set of critical points, which they claim 'blinded' the modern scholars. They point to how scholars did want to see the developments behind the Iron curtain differently from what the situations actually contained, and thus mistook what was really going on.

In the final chapter Stein Ugelvik Larsen brings together some of the issues dealt with by the different authors in the book in an effort to give a broad overview of the integrative perspective on democratic transition, or democratization, mentioned earlier. The ambition is to suggest an overall idea of how to combine elements of formal analysis with present ideas of substantive thinking in transitology.

The first presentation of some of the papers, which later were incorporated within this book, were read at a symposium organized at the Institute of Natural and Cultural Heritage, in Moscow 17.- 21. June 1996, during the days of the polling and counting of the initial round of the first democratic election of the president (Yeltsin) in Russia. Since then other authors were recruited to the team in order to get a broader coverage of the themes needed for the overall perspective and to 'challenge' the present situation of democratic thinking. Later we had the pleasure to organize a smaller, final meeting at the Institut für Wissenschaften vom Menschen, in Vienna 23.-25. November 1996.

The symposium, and the final meeting, was supported by the Norwegian Research Council through the Program on Eastern Europe, the Volkswagenwerk Stiftung and the EU-Directorate XII. Natalja Altermark did function as a particular valuable assistant to the editor at an important stage of the project and Janniche Herdlevær has with great patience worked the pages into proper layout format. Arne J. Ibsen has again provided the necessary help in designing some of the figures, which I appreciate very much. In the very

important concluding phase Kurt-Henning Tvedt took on the responsibility to carefully read through and edit the manuscript. He also checked the logical consistency of the game matrices and preference lists, thus giving great assistance to many of the authors – including the editor. He therefore deserves a special word of thanks.

Køllatangen, August 1999

Stein Ugelvik Larsen

1

SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET

ON THE GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR DEMOCRACY¹

The role of leadership against contextual environments in the
process of democratization

Conditions for Democracy

Aristotle differentiated between democracy (popular rule), oligarchy (domination by traditional elites), and tyranny (authoritarianism that is mass-based). He hypothesized that the latter two forms, oligarchy and authoritarianism, were most likely to occur amidst a poorer, highly stratified polity, while the former, democracy, was facilitated by a large middle class. Subsequent political thinkers owe a debt to him for the now common discussions of the effects of class distribution on the nature of politics.²

A move to democracy is not simple. Countries that previously were under dictatorships generally find it difficult to establish a stable democratic system, since aspects of their institutions, traditions, and beliefs may be incompatible with the workings of a free polity. New regimes inherently begin with little or no legitimacy.

In the past two decades, democracy has spread throughout the world for the first time in human history. It is hard to recall, but just a few years ago the overwhelming majority of the members of the United Nations were not democratic. By 1996, *Freedom House* reported that 118 of the 191 countries had competitive elections and various guarantees of political and individual

¹ This is an abbreviated version of three lectures given as the Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lecture in Representative Government at the Carl Albert Center of the University of Oklahoma. The Carl Albert Center has the copyright and the University of Oklahoma will publish an expanded version of this article.

² Seymour Martin Lipset: "Conditions of the Democratic Order and Social Change: A Comparative Discussion," in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.): *Studies in Human Society: Democracy and Modernity*, vol. 4. New York: E. J. Brill, 1992: 1.

HARALD WALDRAUCH

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6

ANDREI MELVILLE

POST-COMMUNIST RUSSIA: DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND TRANSITION THEORIES

Introduction

An often made accusation against contemporary social theory is that one of the most dramatic and large-scale events of our time – the collapse of communism – caught social theory by surprise. A second accusation is that the phenomenon of post-communism, the understanding of which is vital for grasping and conceptualizing the social dynamics of the current situation, has not yet been explained theoretically by social science. If the first accusation is at least partly correct, the second one is so to a much lesser degree. For various reasons this accusation should not in this field of research be considered as a final verdict passed on social theory.

Indeed, at the present time there exists in the methodological arsenal of social scientists no integral and complete theory which could describe and explain the entire spectrum of the new social, economic, political, ideological and psychological phenomena which have appeared on the ruins of the communist domain. But it is also true that there have been various theoretical approaches to post-communism during the last decade in the social science literature. These approaches have managed to reveal several of the specific features of post-communism.

On the one hand, these approaches are attempts to conceptualize post-communism along the lines of various general transition theories – by revealing the general logic and pattern of transitions from authoritarianism to democracy (Bova, 1991; Di Palma, 1990; Huntington, 1991-92; Linz and Stepan, 1996; O'Donnell, 1994; Przeworski, 1991; Reisinger, 1997; Schmitter & Karl, 1994; Karl & Schmitter, 1994). From this point of view Gorbachev's perestroika, the disintegration of the USSR, the collapse of communism and the subsequent transformations in post-communist Russia and the former

socialist countries are all part of one global process – of the ‘global democratic revolution’ (Huntington, 1991-92; Markoff, 1994; Shin, 1994).

On the other hand, quite a different understanding of post-communism has emerged in recent years. According to this, post-communism is to a large degree a specific phenomenon (with regard to initial conditions, tasks, political actors, etc.). Therefore there is no reason for comparing it with the post-authoritarian processes of democratization, which are characteristics of Southern Europe and Latin America (Terry, 1993; Bunce, 1995). In line with this approach there is also an understanding of post-communism as a ‘world revolution’ (McFaul, 1995; Fish, 1995) – a ‘revolution’ incomparable to other processes of democratization because of the political and socioeconomic tasks it introduces. The complexity and difficulty of these tasks make transitions to post-communism fundamentally different from the mainly political transitions from Right authoritarianism to democracy.

The post-communism of today has many elements – for this reason its various aspects can be described with the help of a number of theoretical models. These include theories on democratization of political systems, theories on the transition from command economy to market economy and models that see post-communism as a component element of the global democratic wave. Moreover, there are theories on the disintegration of empires, theories national self-determination, and theories that emphasize the establishment of new statehood and national identities, etc. In its essence post-communism consists of different, though intersecting phenomena and processes, and this is why various theoretical models can conceptualize it. As for a general and integral theory of post-communism, it appears that the time for it has not yet come. One of the reasons for this is that post-communism itself has not yet been fully developed and established – its development still continues and it has not yet acquired complete and crystallized features.

In this connection several questions arise, questions which are of theoretical and methodological importance and which are especially important for the branch of comparative political science which deals with research on post-communism:

Firstly, is there sufficient ground for seeing specific cases of transition from non-democratic rule to a relatively greater degree of democracy in countries and regions (including Russia), in cases which all have their own specificity and which are as much as two decades apart in time, as part of one democratic wave?

Secondly, what factors influence the outcomes of democratization most – *structural* ones-, that is socioeconomic and cultural prerequisites and conditions, which facilitate or impede the establishment and consolidation of

democratic institutions and norms; or *procedural* ones, that is particular features and sequences of specific decisions and actions which are taken by a relatively small number of initiators of and direct participants in the process of democratization?

Thirdly, is it possible to analyze the processes of post-communist transformation (in Russia and in other newly independent countries) with the help of the general theoretical and methodological framework developed for the present post-authoritarian democratization wave, or is the phenomenon of post-communism so specific that it is inappropriate to draw any parallels?

Fourthly, is it possible to make at least a preliminary theoretical synthesis of the various research approaches that are now used to explain the phenomenon of post-communism?

THE GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC WAVE AND TRANSITIONS TO DEMOCRACY

Despite its general character, the notion of a global democratic wave encompasses various processes that take place in different world regions. The beginning of this democratic wave, which is the third during the last two centuries, dates back to 1974 when the authoritarian dictatorship in Portugal collapsed. Later on this wave spread to the other remaining dictatorships in Southern Europe – Spain and Greece – and then to Latin America. By the mid-80s it reached some countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Since the second half of the 80s the democratic wave also spread to the communist world – to the USSR and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In 1991 Gorbachev’s perestroika, which was initiated five years earlier, led to the collapse of the Soviet system and the USSR and to the emergence of Russia among other newly independent states which proclaimed themselves new democracies.

Compared to the previous democratic waves, the present one has several specific features. First and foremost, it has a much larger and practically global scale – in fact, only Moslem countries and China have remained unaffected by it. It is the global scope of the ongoing democratic wave that makes us ask: are we not really experiencing various currents of democratization, which appear at about the same time, but on the basis of quite different conditions, circumstances and contexts, that can hardly be compared with one another and, consequently, are following different patterns?

Indeed, the present transitions from authoritarianism to democracy, unlike the democratization that were initiated after World War II and which continued until the second half of the 60’s, did not arise in connection with or

as a result of the military defeat of some authoritarian regimes. They arose in an international context that can hardly be compared to the contexts of the preceding waves of democratization. The third wave also spread democracy to countries that in many respects had quite different social systems and political regimes – from the classical Right authoritarian regimes and military juntas in Latin America and Southern Europe to the post-totalitarian regimes in the USSR and the Eastern European countries (even to remains of traditional totalitarian regimes of the Stalinist type as they existed in Romania or Albania). So what kind of a process is the third wave – separate phenomena which were engendered for various reasons and are governed by different factors; or parts of one single, global process?

The methodology of comparative politics presupposes the disclosure of elements of similarity and difference. However, one must be aware of which factors are singled out during a comparison as *permanent* and as *variable*, and what the grounds for doing so are. In the case of democratization analyses, it appears that we can single out at least the following permanent factors (subjective and objective) – the effect of them can be traced to some degree in practically all the processes of democratization, processes which can be compared, but which are still heterogeneous in many respects (some of these factors are singled out by Markoff, 1994):

– Firstly, a normative assessment of democracy as a declared ideal (although seldom implemented practically) and as the objective of the suggested social transformations;

– Secondly, the growing popularity among the masses of democratic models and patterns. This second factor is connected with the first one, and is a result of a broad cultural influence stemming above all from the mass culture of the Western world;

– Thirdly, the objective expansion (although it is often inconstant and interrupted) of democratic rights, freedoms and experiments, which entail important social consequences and can result in democratic institutions and procedures;

– Fourthly, the doubtful efficiency of authoritarianism. Authoritarianism used to be regarded as an efficient instrument of social modernization. However in the 1990's there appeared certain signs that made this assumption more questionable (Geddes, 1994);

– Fifthly, the global de-legitimization and loss of attractiveness of authoritarianism as a model for national development (with some exceptions mainly in the Moslem world and in China);

– Sixthly, the appearance of a partly institutionalized international context which is particularly stimulating for transitions from authoritarianism to more democratic forms of government.

These circumstances enable us to suggest at least a partial similarity between the various contemporary processes of democratization. Although they originate from various sources they seem to merge in the end into one democratic wave. This similarity can be observed both in the genesis and the internal dynamics of ongoing transitions from authoritarianism – yet at the same time the practical results of the transitions, far from being predetermined in any way, are actually quite different.

There is no doubt that the transitions from non-democratic forms of government that have taken place during the last few decades in Southern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and in the territory of the former USSR, are so different that it is impossible to reduce them to one model. However, in those cases when democratization was more or less successful it followed a certain logic and consisted of a certain sequence of actions and developments (this logic is described in part by Bova, 1991 and by Kharitonova, 1996).

A common feature in most of the successful democratization processes is that the initiative to change the authoritarian regimes came from 'above' as a result of a split within the ranks of the ruling elite into *reformers* – the supporters of transformation – and *orthodox* actors (or *hard-liners*) – the opponents of change. The reforms came about, to be exact, not as democratization as such but as a tentative liberalization of a regime, as a regime's 'decompression' and 'weakening.' Unlike democratization, the initial liberalization was not only initiated but was likewise fully controlled from above and could be interrupted at any time.

In their effort to counteract more efficiently the conservative forces of the regime, the reformers within the system (holding what we will characterize as centrist positions) tried to seek support for their actions from outside – they appealed to the forces of civil society, to opposition movements and the like. Balancing between the Scylla of the orthodox guardians of the regime and the Charybdis of radical democrats in the opposition, the centrist reformers were able for some time to pursue their policy of gradual reforms. However, the legalization of a radical opposition as a new participant in the official political process (at first sanctioned by the regime reformers), and the counter-consolidation of orthodox actors caused by this circumstance, inevitably led to an increase in tension and to an aggravation of the conflicts in the processes of liberalization and subsequent democratization.

In most cases of successful democratic transitions the solution to such a situation was not the victory of one of the adversaries over the other, but a kind of agreement or a pact between the conflicting parties. This pact will define the 'rules of the game' for the subsequent stages of the democratization process and give some guarantees to the regime incumbents, who are the potential losers. This stage was typically followed by the first free 'founding' elections, which, as a rule, brought the representatives of the radical opposition but not the centrist wing of the reformers who had initiated the reforms, to power. Usually, however, the triumph of the original opposition did not last for long.

Very often, especially in cases when the new democratically elected government was forced to implement painful economic reforms, the negative public reaction to the reforms brought persons from the old elite back to power when succeeding elections were held ('elections of disappointment'). These, however, did not at all strive for reactionary restoration. On the contrary, as genuine 'thermidorians' they actually stabilized and balanced the new political system introducing some minor recoil in the development. The institutionalization of democratic procedures and, above all, the fact that one political wing was replaced by another in cabinet after democratic elections, laid the grounds needed for the subsequent consolidation of democracy – a consolidation which was not necessarily a direct result of the process of democratic transition as it was once initiated.

We wish to underline once more that the pattern described above is by no means a universal model of democratization. It merely establishes the line of events in a number of empirical and concrete cases of successful democratization.

Here lies the source of a widespread misunderstanding which can be found in the writings of those authors who claim that the parallels drawn between transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America (considered to be post-authoritarian), and post-communist transitions, are incorrect. These authors are quite correct when they emphasize the specific features of post-communist transformations and the obvious differences between these and other types of transformations. In most cases the specific features of post-communist transitions are the lack of an initial pact between reformers and conservatives, the twofold and simultaneous task of political democratization and economic transition to a market economy, the need for the dismantling of a great part of existing production capacities for the modernization and restructuring of others, the appearance of a nationalist (and eventually non-democratic) reaction to the communist collapse, the lack of a civil society consisting of a system of ties within civil society itself and between civil

society and the State, like it existed in Southern Europe and Latin America. This list of differences between post-communist and post-authoritarian transitions can easily be extended further.

But it does not follow from the above that transition theories, which are based on the analysis of post-authoritarian processes of democratization, suggest only one model for transition to democracy – like the pact between reformers and conservatives in the political elite (similar to the well-known 'pact of Moncloa'). In reality, the pact is only one of several possible options – an option that is seldom encountered in practice, although it is the optimal one when it comes to a democratic transition being efficient. Other options, which have also been analyzed by transition theories, include, for instance, transitions to democracy through reforms carried out by the elite; or transitions through the direct imposition of democratic reforms by means of force 'from above' or through revolutionary action 'from below' (Karl & Schmitter, 1994). However, the chances for stabilization and subsequent consolidation of the new democracy in these cases prove to be smaller than in the pact scenario.

It should be noted that these democratic transition models do not uncover the entire diversity of the complicated and multidimensional social processes, which are all part of the present democratic wave. However, the analysis and comparison of various transitions from authoritarianism are not at all aimed at constructing a single and generally applicable paradigm of democratization. Their aim is to reveal certain phases of and links between concrete social processes. It is such an approach that enables us to reveal some of the characteristics of efficient and successful transitions to democracy. Consequently, these characteristics can be traced not in all types of transitions from non-democratic forms of government, but only in the most successful of them.

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS – STRUCTURAL PREREQUISITES OR PROCEDURES?

The above-mentioned subjective and objective factors, which make it possible to draw parallels between the various ongoing processes of democratization, cannot explain, however, the differences between them. Why does democratization begin earlier and proceed more smoothly in some countries than in others? Why do some non-democratic regimes initiate a gradual democratization themselves, while others resist it until they collapse? In an effort to answer these questions some authors emphasize structural factors – they talk of socioeconomic and cultural conditions and prerequisites of democracy and

democratization. Others stress procedural factors – the sequence of specific choices, decisions and actions taken by concrete political actors whom the process of democratization rests upon.

Thus, some authors (Almond and Verba, 1963; Almond and Verba, 1980; Ingelhart, 1977; Ingelhart, 1988; Rustow, 1970; Lipset, 1969; Lipset, 1996; Pye, 1990; Huntington, 1991-92) have tried to demonstrate correlation between socioeconomic and cultural-normative variables and the chances of establishing and preserving democratic regimes in different countries. Such correlation are often interpreted as proof of necessary structural prerequisites and conditions of democracy – of the fact that democratization is conditioned by objective social structures rather than by subjective intentions and actions.

These authors single out three main types of structural prerequisites of democracy: firstly, ensuring national unity and achieving a national identity, secondly, achieving a sufficiently high level of economic development and, thirdly, a spread of specific cultural norms and values that recognize democratic norms, tolerance, trust and civic duty.

1) The first structural condition does not cause any doubt – the problems of national unity and identity should be solved before the process of democratization begins. Otherwise, these problems can often turn (and in reality do turn) into serious obstacles for democratic transitions. Certainly, acute national conflicts, which lead to a rise in various forms of nationalism and nationalist movements, make democracy practically unachievable under such social conditions.

In some democratic countries there are still problems concerned with nationalism which have not been solved – for example, problems to do with the Basque Country in Spain, Corsica in France, Quebec in Canada, Northern Ireland in Great Britain, to mention only a few. However, in most cases these national problems are either of a local character and do not pose a threat to the territorial integrity of a given country and its national identity, or a solution to them is not sought by resorting to violence but rather through democratic methods and institutions. Nevertheless nationalism, especially in its acute form, caused by conflicts over national and territorial unity and national identity, is incompatible with democracy. This is especially relevant for those countries which are at the beginning the democratization process. In these countries acute forms of nationalism can not only bring democratization to a halt, but also result in a systematic oppression of national minorities and even in the building of ethnocratic states under the cover of a democratic rhetoric (such tendencies can be traced in certain parts of the post-Soviet region). This seems to be incompatible with democracy.

2) The second type of correlation – between democracy and the level of socioeconomic development and the modernization of society – causes more doubt today than a few decades ago, when the supporters of a structural approach to democratization formulated a hypothesis that there was a connection between the well-being of a nation and the likelihood of it becoming a democracy (Lipset, 1959). These doubts are both of a theoretical and an actual character.

From a theoretical point of view it is questionable whether it is correct to interpret democracy on the basis of economic determinism – as a rectilinear consequence of certain socioeconomic conditions. Essential for democracy is not economic development and the achievement of well being as such. What is vital is the creation of prerequisites as a result of socioeconomic factors, prerequisites that will help create a middle class as the social base of a future democracy – something Moore spoke about long ago (Moore, 1966). However, this factor alone does not guarantee democracy, either.

Certain examples do not confirm that democracy is necessarily determined by socioeconomic development. It is well known that there are non-democratic regimes with a high level of economic development (for instance Singapore). On the other hand, India, with a sufficiently stable democratic order is one of the poorest and less developed countries of the world. Recent studies (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997) show that there is no direct connection between democratization and the level of economic development. Democratization is not a direct product of economic development and modernization. Democratization can be initiated in economically under-developed societies, even though it has more chances of survival in a modern developed society.

Moreover, the thesis that democracy and the level of modernization are mutually conditioned discourages in a certain sense those who do not want to wait passively for the results of an 'objective' development. The thesis states that efforts aimed at the democratization of societies which have not achieved a certain level of development (and such societies are a majority in the present democratic wave) are doomed to failure. This certainly narrows the field of countries that could attempt democratization with a fair chance of succeeding.

3) Thirdly, certain cultural conditions which are at hand in a society, especially the diffusion of values associated with a 'civic culture' and certain, above all Protestant (and to a certain extent Catholic), religious traditions are also often referred to as structural prerequisites of democratization. Modern democracy certainly originated in Protestant countries and the diffusion of democratic values in the Catholic world was not a simple matter. (It should be noted that, apparently, it is still to be convincingly demonstrated that

democracy in the form presently known to us can take deep root in on Orthodox, Moslem or Confucian cultural soil). There is no doubt that norms and values like acceptance of pluralism, tolerance, mutual trust and the recognition of democratic rights and freedoms, together with a relatively high level of economic development and well-being, create a favorable climate for democracy. In this sense there is a correlation between democracy on the one hand and economic development and political culture on the other hand, and the supporters of a structural approach were quite right to emphasize this.

Nevertheless, the existence of a certain correlation is not the same as stating that there are preliminary structural conditions without which it is impossible to initiate democratization. Firstly, such correlation does not present obligatory prerequisites, but only indicate factors that 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.

The voluntaristic approach

These doubts about the universal and substantial nature of the thesis about common socio-cultural prerequisites of democracy led to the emergence of another methodological approach to the problems of democratization. This approach focuses on endogenous factors of democracy and democratization – that is, not on prerequisites but on specific processes, procedures and political decisions made by the agents of democratization themselves (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Linz, 1990, Di Palma, 1990; Przeworski, 1991; Schmitter & Karl, 1994; Karl & 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) at that moment. The main element of such an approach is to focus upon the interaction of competing elite-groups and the elite's deliberate choices of organizational forms and institutions as parts of a new political set-up in the process of their political bargaining.

This voluntaristic approach applies particularly well to the third wave of democratization because this wave democratization is characterized by an extreme diversity when it comes to points of departure, political trajectories, agendas of transformation and strategies. We can exemplify this by pointing to the varieties of democratization patterns from Paraguay and Honduras to Poland and Romania.

It appears that there is really no insurmountable contradiction between these two methodological approaches and that they can even complement each

other. They actually deal with different aspects of the same type of phenomena – democratic transitions. Theoretically, nothing, at least not *a priori*, impedes a synthesis of the two methodologies, with one of them focusing on structural factors (even taking into account the above-mentioned doubts about the universal nature of these factors) and the other one on procedural factors.

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

In this connection, an idea of Larsen's (Larsen, 1997) seems productive. Larsen suggests that the conditions of an initial pact create a kind of a 'frozen ceiling' – a limit for the reforms which could be implemented. As a follow-up to this idea it can be added that the 'ceiling' of reforms might be a result not only of the conditions of the concluded pact, but also of preceding traditions, circumstances and historical context.

However, the actors who choose their actions and thereby create institutions during a transition, do so under circumstances which are not created by themselves and which affect the choices made from outside. In other words the choice is not absolutely arbitrary, nor completely uninfluenced by objective prerequisites. It is not made under conditions of a social *tabula rasa* in which any political project can be realized. The choice is determined not only by procedures, that is, by specific political actions, but also by structural factors – above all by the burden of past experiences, by preceding traditions and by the broad social context in which it takes place. It is possible to begin crafting a democracy without waiting for the right structural conditions for it, but the preceding traditions and the general context in which a choice is made influence the progress and the results of a democratic transit.

Tradition and context largely determine how the chosen procedures and the established institutions work to a large extent. Structural factors, by their existence and character, affect formal procedures and institutions – this explains, for example, why in one case elections become a most important institution for the emerging democracy and why in some other 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 to a great extent are determined. They are determined both by the procedures that are used in the process and by conditions and traditions already in existence before democratization started.

When suggesting the possibility of a fundamental 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. Such attempts are made along various lines – for example, as part of a neo-institutional approach – in the analysis of the role played by the institutions that emerge during a democratic transition in structuring a new socio-political reality (O’Neil, 1996). Other authors try to investigate to what extent the character and structures of the old regime affect the dynamics and results of a democratic transit. How, for example, do the leaders of an authoritarian regime decide upon the rules of participation in a political process that will eventually determine whether or not the regime disintegrates? And how does the type of the old regime and the structure of the new elite affect a possible emergence of an opposition, the specific features and actions of this opposition, the probability of reaching a pact with it, and so on (Bratton and Van De Walle, 1994; Easter, 1997).

It must, however, be admitted that at present even a preliminary theoretical synthesis of these two methodological approaches is a goal not yet achieved. Such a synthesis would be equally important for the elaboration of an integral theory of contemporary post-communism, the lack of which has been described above. To reveal what is general and what is particular in various types of democratic transitions (including those in Russia) can provide additional data necessary for the search of answers to this theoretical challenge.

Thus, we suppose that the synthesis of both methodological approaches to transitions is not only possible but also desirable because in this case we will be in a position to take into account a larger group of factors and variables and create multidimensional models of the objects under analysis. We believe that for these purposes, and as a preliminary stage in a search for synthetic methodology, we may turn to the methodological model which for the first time was used in the classical study ‘American Voter’ by Angus Campbell, Phillip Converse, Warren Miller and Donald Stokes – the so called ‘funnel of causality.’¹

The authors explains this methodology in this way:

¹ In a general form Stein Ugelvik Larsen, during a private discussion in September 1997, suggested this idea to the author. Later the author had found the reference to the ‘funnel of causality’ methodology in the chapter in this book by James Mahoney and Richard Snyder (Mahoney and Snyder 1999).

We can visualize the chain of events with which we wish to deal as contained in a *funnel of causality* ... Let us imagine that the axis of the funnel represents a time dimension. Events are conceived to follow each other in a converging sequence of causal chains, moving from the mouth of the funnel. The funnel shape is a logical product of the explanatory task chosen. Most of the complex events in the funnel occur as a result of multiple prior causes. Each such event is, in its turn, responsible for multiple effects as well, but our focus of interest narrows as we approach the dependent behavior. We progressively eliminate those effects that do not continue to have relevance for the political act. Since we are forced to take all partial causes as relevant at any juncture, relevant effects are therefore many fewer in number than relevant causes. The result is a convergence effect (Campbell/Converse/Miller/Stokes, 1960: 24).

This ‘funnel of causality’ methodology has been successfully used in the analysis of electoral behavior. But we believe that its heuristic potential is broader. As it seems, the application of this methodology to the analysis of democratic transitions could provide us with a multi-factor approach that would progressively converge our analysis from the following factors of the macro-level to those of the micro-level:

- International context (economic, political, strategic, ideological, etc.);
- State-building and nation-building (integrated territory and state, identity, etc.);
- Economic and social level of development and modernization;
- Social stratification, social classes and groups;
- Culture and values;
- Political processes (parties, organized groups, new political institutions and procedures, political strategies and tactics);
- Individual factors (decisions and actions of the key political actors).

All these factors play a role for determining conditions, the process and ultimately the outcome of the democratic transition, but none of them is alone sufficient to give a full explanation. In the gradual movement from the macro-to micro-factors one could find a useful way to structure the analysis in a way which permits to move to a ‘lower’ level of the ‘funnel’ after the explanatory potential of the ‘higher’ level is exhausted. This narrowing of the focus of analysis is actually the very idea of the ‘funnel of causality’ methodology.

In our case it will permit to move from the accounting of the structural factors of the democratic transition to the procedural ones. Thus one could combine both – structural and procedural – approaches in one analytical model.

Is the 'funnel of causality' methodology best suited for the analysis of the democratic transitions and can it be considered the first step toward the elaboration of the theory? These questions do not have obvious answers. In the first place, ideal methodologies do not exist and the 'funnel of causality' methodology should be considered as a possible one, among others. It may become especially useful as a step that attempts to put together in a systemic way most of the factors, which are related to the democratic transition.

The question is whether the system of factors, which affect a particular phenomenon, might be considered its explanation. Obviously, not. But it is probably a *sine qua non* phase toward the creation of an integrated theory, which is still missing today. It is one possible route toward the search of explanations of the 'mystery' of birth (or, rather, inauguration) of democracy – but not the explanations themselves.

Another point worth mentioning has to do with the fact that the democratic transitions of the third wave had demonstrated that formal inauguration of democracy, i.e. of the formal democratic institutions and procedures of 'electoral democracy' and not yet 'liberal democracy' (Diamond, 1996; Diamond/Plattner/Chu/Tien, 1997), in no way guarantees the outcome of the transition itself. Hence, a widely accepted analytical distinction between two major phases in the practice of democratic transition is (a) transition per se, i.e. in the narrow sense (formal inauguration of democracy) and (b) its consolidation.

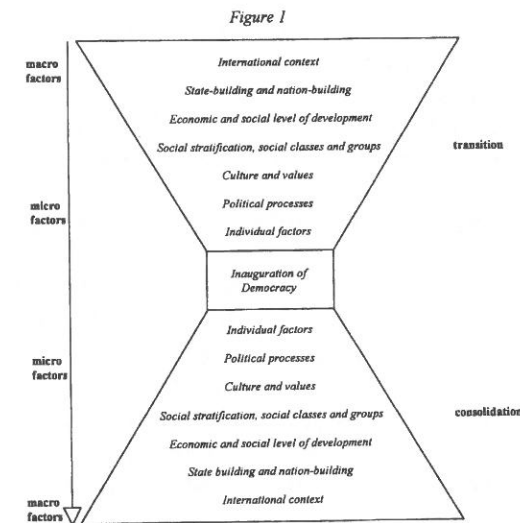
Taking this into account, we believe that a modified 'funnel of causality' methodology may also be useful in the analysis of the process of consolidation of democracy (as well as of the factors which prevent it). But, as it seems, in this particular context the logic of the analysis should be reversed – in order to systematize and understand the factors which influence upon democratic consolidation we need to start from micro-level and gradually move to macro-level.

We may assume that in this case the logic of the analysis to a large degree reflects the logic of the process of democratic consolidation itself (although this assumption needs additional argumentation and proof). Indeed, we may begin our analysis with the variables and factors of the lower micro-level and proceed to those of the higher macro-level. This is essential because democratic consolidation involves a process that leads from individual decisions and actions of political actors to interactions between non-individual political actors and political institutions, to establishment of particular political culture, values and orientations, to social changes. In turn these changes are connected to the process of economic development and modernization, to state building and nation building, and finally to the

development of the international context which would be favorable to preservation of consolidated democracy. This would involve an inversion of the vector of our analysis – from procedural to structural factors of democratic transitions.

Since we in such analysis want to use the same general methodology which attempts to combine procedural and structural approaches, we would end up with a 'funnel of causality' which in a certain way is 'inverted.' This specific 'inversion' represents the following logic:

We may start out the analysis of democratic consolidation at the level of individual decisions and actions. Important as they are those individual choices can in no way guarantee democratic consolidation. That is why our next analytical step would bring us to the level of political factors and processes, i.e. to the analysis of the role of political strategies and tactics and interactions between political parties, social movements and organized groups and newly established political institutions. For democratic consolidation, however, the level of political interactions (even in cases when formal institutions and procedures of democracy acquire adequate substance) needs to be supplemented by the factors of a larger scale. Durability of a democratic polity rests on factors of social and class nature as well (such as, for example, existence of a more or less potent middle class, rather low level of social conflicts, etc.) As we start to analyze those factors we would gradually move from predominantly procedural to predominantly structural factors.



This level of analysis is also insufficient for final judgements about the level of democratic consolidation. Thus we would move to a broader context of structural factors of socioeconomic and socio-cultural nature (i.e., the level of social development, economic modernization and cultural values and orientations), and finally to the level of state and nation building and to the factors of international context.

In a most general and schematic way suggested methodological model of the analysis of structural and procedural factors, which influence the process of a democratic transition and consolidation, may be presented, with the help of two inverted 'funnels of causality' presented in Figure 1 above.

POST-COMMUNIST RUSSIA AS A DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

Efforts to understand the changes taking place in post-communist Russia by looking for elements of a democratic transition makes it necessary to reveal the general and specific elements of the process – something which is needed for subsequent theoretical generalizations. Keeping in mind all the differences between Russia's post-communist transformation and the transitions from Right authoritarianism to democracy in Southern European and Latin American countries, it can still be suggested that the processes were influenced at least partly by some similar factors, factors that can be traced if examining and using various phases of Gorbachev's perestroika as an example.

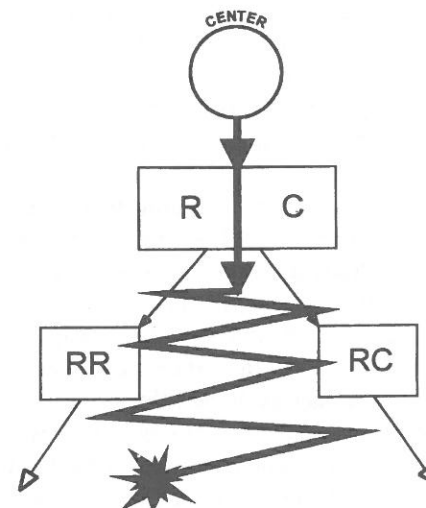
Analogies between the Russian case and the classical post-authoritarian transitions are often dismissed on the grounds that Gorbachev's coming to power was not the result of a split-up in the Soviet elite into reformers and conservatives, and that he initiated reforms by using purely Soviet apparatus methods (from above to below). In reality, even if Gorbachev's way to power was ensured by traditional nomenclature methods, it was his subsequent reform initiatives that caused the Soviet elite to split into conservatives and reformers.

The initiative, composed of liberalization followed by partial democratization of the regime was taken from above, by the leader-reformer – like in most of other cases of democratic transition. As a centrist reformer Gorbachev, who was initially inclined to gradual and evolutionary reforms within the framework of the system, appealed for support to the radical democratic opposition forces outside the regime in order to strengthen his position in the confrontation with the orthodox and fundamentalist groups. This attempt was made by many leaders-reformers in other cases of democratic transitions – as an effort keeping control over the situation. The

legalization and then the institutionalization of the radical democratic opposition (first and foremost represented by the Interregional Group of Deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet and by the 'Democratic Russia' movement) caused a reaction from the orthodox. They pulled ranks more closely and subsequently institutionalized themselves as the Communist Party of the RSFSR, and as the 'Unity' bloc in the Supreme Soviet.

For a certain time Gorbachev succeeded in balancing between these two groups by pursuing a policy of zigzags. However, the gap between the two political poles, which both of them assumed their own speed and logic of development, was constantly widening. As a result, the political centrism as a method of reforming the system suffered a complete collapse. Radical democrats through a successful counter-coup responded to the unsuccessful attempt of a conservative coup for the sake of saving the system (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The Collapse of the Centrist Reformism



R = reformers; C = conservatives; RR = radical reformers; RC = radical conservatives

At the same time, despite a number of analogies to other processes of democratization described in this figure, Russia's democratic transition in many respects stands apart. The Russian case not only differ from the classical Southern European and Latin American transitions from authoritarianism, but also from the transitions to democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The distinguishing features of the Russian transition can, on certain conditions, be grouped into two categories: The first refers to the general

context and the conditions in which the processes of reform and transformation was initiated and developed, initially in the USSR and then in Russia. The second refers to the specific internal features of these processes themselves.

The following can be included in the first category:

1) The interrelated task of political and economic reforms

It has become almost trivial to speak about the unprecedented double task of carrying out democratic transformation of the political system and reforms aimed at creating a market economy in post-communist Russia. The latter task presupposes dismantling the command economy and the creating of new foundations for market economy relations. It is believed that ideally both tasks should not only condition one another, but also, in the end, mutually support each other – democratization facilitates advancement towards the market, while the market creates the economic and social basis of democracy. In classical post-authoritarian transitions the problem concerning the simultaneous nature of political and economic reforms, did strictly speaking not arise because a market economy already existed. In the Soviet Union and Russia, however, these two tasks proved in many respects to create obstacles for each other.

We certainly do not claim that the quite painful economic structural transformations, including the privatization of property, were absent from the agenda during other democratic transitions. But still, successful political and economic reforms, including those taking place in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, were not carried out simultaneously. And they were not carried out in the way they are in China, where economic reforms do not only precede, but also actually replace political reforms.

In successful transitions political democratization was first consistently carried out. Then effective democratic institutions were built and consolidated. Thereafter came the establishment of what Linz and Stepan (1996) call an 'economic society,' that is, a system of social guarantees and mediating institutions between the state and the market. Only after this painful economic transformations were carried out. Other authors (Brzezinski, 1993; McFaul, 1995) also draw attention to this circumstance. Following such a sequence of events, persistent political democratization helped ensure mass support for democracy during heavy economic reforms on the one hand, and a social contract was provided to facilitate the economic transition on the other.

Neither of these procedural elements did emerge in Russia. The building of democratic institutions was impeded. After 1991 the state, which partly

disintegrated and was partly destroyed, was not restored – the new post-communist regime of Russia tried to make its functions its own. In other words, Yeltsin did create neither democratic political institutions that could have supported the economic reforms, nor any institutions for state support of the market economy and the social security system. Extremely painful economic reforms, which were not accompanied by any social contract and were not supported socially or politically, fell upon the unprotected population.

When analyzing this, one ought to go beyond the framework of the market's opposition to the command administrative system. This is mainly for theoretical and comparative reasons – the point is that in none of the countries which have undertaken processes of successful democratic transitions during the last two decades, was the market in its pure form, so to say *per se*, a prerequisite of or a guarantee for democracy. Here lies the source of one of the fatal errors of the early strategists of Russia's transition, who acted out of the belief that a 'wild' market is enough to provide the economic and social basis needed for political democracy.

A comparative analysis of what actually happened in cases of fortunate democratic transition, shows that nowhere – neither in Southern Europe and in Latin America, nor in Central and Eastern Europe, did the process solely rely on reconstruction of the classical ideal of the free market under a state functioning as a 'night watchman.' We wish to repeat that contrary to a widespread misconception, the logic and actions of successful democratizing agents were quite opposite. Initially radical political transformations were carried out (= the building of effective institutions of democracy). Then social reforms, which provided some sort of a social safety net and a social basis of support for democracy were introduced, to be followed by profound economical restructuring (= the establishment of a modern social market).

Moreover, the ideological opposition of the market to state interventionism does not work when applied to the present situation in Russia either. The former administrative system of economic management, which already had disintegrated by the end of the Gorbachev epoch, was completely crushed through the efforts of the reformers. But at the same time many key administrative levers of influence still continued to exist. We wish to emphasize once again that the previous economic system was broken down before an effective democratic power was created. As a result, there has appeared not so much an economic as a political market (which is semi-criminal at the same time) – a market where bargaining between political and economic clans in key positions, combining power and property, takes place. Today, as distinct from what was going on in the recent past, these cartels

have become all the more vigorous and powerful – they no longer ‘enter’ politics by delegating the representation of their interests to authorized persons, but are becoming influential political players themselves.

These players do not need the competition of a free market economy. They are well adapted and have also adjusted the state they privatized to their personal and corporate needs. It is the state, now upheld by shadowy political bargains, and the state subsidies, no matter how insubstantial, that are needed to preserve the monopoly of and the domination by of certain cartels of the economy.

Another important element to note is that there is no full agreement between these cartels. On the one hand, the ruling economic powers (in the sectors of finance and banking, fuel and energy, and other raw materials monopolies) are apparently ready for a new re-division of property and influence. On the other hand, the technological and production sectors of the military-industrial complex, which are not favored by the present economic policy and which will not survive without change in the priorities of the state’s economic policy, can prove to be quite ready for revenge. The struggle between these forces takes place not in the economic, but eventually in the political sphere – it is a struggle for influence and control over the state’s economic policy.

In Russia economy and politics are no less woven together than they were in the Soviet epoch. The current economy in Russia is actually a mixed one. Although dominated by monopolies in the financial and raw materials sectors that rely on state support, it also contains a service sector large enough to have an impact, and which adapts to the rules of a wild market dominated by criminal elements. The impact of this social segment is not so much economic as socio-psychological. In the segment a stratum of active people, oriented towards independent and individual goals, is gradually emerging. This stratum can gradually become a social basis for real rather than declared market economy relations.

2) The lack of an adequate social basis for democracy

Observed from the standpoint of political democratization and its tasks, the transition to a market economy is not an end in itself but a means of creating a middle class as a mass social basis for democracy. The processes of modernization, which went on in a concealed way in the Soviet society at least from the 1960s, created a kind of an embryonic analogue of a middle class – a group that in the end became the grave-digger of communism (Starr, 1988; Lapidus, 1989; Lewin, 1991). However, as distinct from the middle class associated with Western societies, it was its professional and institutional

position in the state system and not its property that shaped the Soviet embryonic ‘old middle class.’

With the disintegration of the Soviet state, the deepening economic crisis and the initiation of market economy reforms this embryonic Soviet ‘old middle class’ was actually washed away as society split up into two poles (a process also typical for Third World countries). Between them emerged a zone of mass poverty and a narrow stratum of wealth with socially amorphous elements. As for a ‘new middle class,’ it has not yet appeared in Russia. Consequently, the problem of shaping an adequate mass social basis of democracy, based on private property relations as opposed to attitudes to the state, remains unsolved in post-communist Russia.

3) The centrifugal forces of nationalism and the crisis of national identity

Another specific feature of Russia’s democratic transition is the polyethnic composition of the USSR and Russia, and the rise of the centrifugal forces of nationalism under the slogans of democracy – factors that in the end lead to the disintegration of the USSR and that continue being a threat to Russia. During the progressing disintegration of the Soviet society national and nationalistic ideas were used to give meaning and substance to the program of anti-communism. However, in the post-communist context the understandable desire for national revival began to assume forms hardly compatible with democracy and in some cases even directly contradicting it – nationalism assumed the features of openly ethnocentric and imperial forms of statehood.

Attention should be drawn to a 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 aspect is quite specific for Russia and cannot be found, as a rule, in other cases of democratic transition. From a long-term perspective it may prove to be the most difficult task because presently there is no clear answer to a seemingly self-evident question: what is Russia today like? Did it really inherit the status of the USSR? Is it a successor to the last great empire of the world? Or is it only one of the empire’s 15 splinters? Is it true that post-communist Russia represents a fundamentally new type of statehood, which emerged out of the rubble of the empire’s collapse? Or is today’s Russia a continuation of 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 of whether it is possible to achieve a different (democratic and non-imperial) regime that could govern and organize these giant territories which have

historically been structured under an autocratic and imperial paradigm. Until answers to these questions are found, until the problem concerning territorial integrity within the framework of a voluntary federation is solved, and until the new national identity of post-communist Russia is established, it is difficult to predict not only the outcomes, but also the progress of Russia's transition.

In the second group of specific features of the processes of transformation in post-communist Russia, the following can be singled out:

a) The establishment of a democratic movement in the USSR and its special relations to the new Russian authorities

The democratic movement in Russia differed to a large extent from similar movements in other cases of democratic transition. Unlike the small dissident movement of the 1960s-1970s among the *intelligentsia*, which was almost completely crushed during the Brezhnev period, the democratic movement at the beginning of perestroika was the product of communist reformism and had numerous ties to the Soviet system. As distinct from opposition movements in Eastern European socialist countries, it was engendered not by the civil society but by the state – it emerged within the Soviet system itself and was initiated by this system's most far-sighted and capable segments. By the mid-1980s they came to the conclusion that liberalization was needed for the sake of preserving the foundations of the system.

For this reason the socio-psychological basis of the democratic movement which emerged in the favorable atmosphere of perestroika did not have its roots in the dissident traditions of resistance to the regime (as was the case, for example, in Poland or Hungary). It was to a great extent shaped by a specific conformism and special kinds 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 we mean is something else: Unlike in most other transitions, the democratic opposition outside of the regime, to which, as mentioned above, centrist reformers and above all Gorbachev himself began to appeal at a certain stage for the purpose of expanding their social base, was in many respects created by the authorities themselves (Pastukhov, 1992). The fact that the democratic movement, which initially was controlled from above, eventually entered into a real confrontation with centrist reformers can be explained by various circumstances, including the above-mentioned institutionalization of political poles on each side of a split that went in opposite directions after the collapse of the political center.

In the consciousness of the democratic movement, and also among broad layers of the people, the idea of democracy initially assumed the character of an amorphous myth containing a general ideal image of the desired future. Because of this, already in the early stages of the development of the democratic movement, both the myth of democracy and the myth of the market existed in a kind of symbiosis, as a magic means of solving all economic problems and achieving mass well-being at Western levels. However, in mass consciousness this ideological symbiosis proved to be short-lived.

The destructive social consequences of the first economic shock-reforms put an end to the idealization of the market already in 1992. The dramatic political crisis and the bombardment of the parliament in 1993 dealt a heavy blow to the illusions of democracy in Russia. Both circumstances led to the emergence of a profound ideological crisis and to a value vacuum in mass consciousness, and eventually to a crisis in the democratic movement.

This crisis was also predetermined by another circumstance – by 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 much emphasis on the personal charisma of the leader, did not follow a path that could have led to any real reforms – it neither built up effective institutions of democracy, nor re-established the system of tough authoritarian power. In this connection other specific features in Russia's transition towards democracy became apparent and manifested themselves.

b) The lack of a formal pact between reformers and the orthodox

After renouncing the compromises which were sought, albeit inconsistently, by Gorbachev, and as part of the bid for a full and unconditional victory over the Soviet regime, Yeltsin and the radicals supporting him deliberately dismissed the possibility of achieving compromises and eventually a pact with their adversaries. As mentioned above, various pacts proved to have an important stabilizing function in most successful democratic transitions. In other cases pacts helped formulating the rules of the democratic game, rules that were subsequently adhered to by the main political forces of the system. As there was no such pact in Russia, quite a big political segment of society was excluded from the democratic process for a long time, until the 1993 elections, which legalized the opposition.

It should also be noted that the lack of a formal pact in no way prevented the second and third echelons of the Soviet nomenclature from successfully 'parachuting' and becoming part of the new system of authority and property.

Today, however, there is reason to believe that the pact after all did take place *de facto* – at least some of its elements came into existence, but in a specific and distorted form.

One element of this partial pact was the nation-wide political forces of Russia recognized that carrying out formal elections were the only acceptable method for legitimization of power. However, as distinct from the logic of classical transitions to democracy, this pact was not a phase that preceded the democratization of an authoritarian regime. It was a stage of post-communist transformation at which a new ruling class had already emerged and at which the different ruling groups had already sufficiently 'adjusted' themselves to each other. They had found a 'common language,' determined their interests and zones of intersection, and agreed upon the 'rules of the game' not taking into account and even at the expense of the overwhelming mass of the population. As a result the pact, which appeared *de facto* but in a limited form and among the most influential groups within the present Russian elite, only deepens the gap between the authorities and the society and keeps society away from real politics.

c) The lack of a 'founding' election

A people's leader who enjoys everyone's support does not need an additional legitimization to his personal charisma. Apparently rooted in this logic Yeltsin deliberately ignored the need for carrying out the subsequent phase of the classical model of successful democratization. He refused to hold the first free 'founding' elections, which could have laid the foundations for legitimate democratic power and facilitated a smooth and gradual development of a multi-party system in the country. It should be noted that Yeltsin refused to hold these first free elections in the particular situation that arose in Russia after the victory over the putschists in August 1991. At that time radical democrats would have had the best chances of obtaining a vast majority in the parliament and initiating radical economic reforms supported by such a majority.

Only one factor can more or less convincingly explain the Yeltsin's refusal to hold free parliamentary elections in the autumn of 1991 – his reluctance to share the laurels of victory with persons who only recently had become his close associates in the democratic movement. As a result, the Russian democrats were only partly co-opted into the new structures of authority, whereas a large section of the democratic movement remains 'out of business,' in a position of disappointed observers who are becoming ever more critical.

The lack of this crucial initial institutional phase in the process of Russia's democratic transition largely explains (or at least makes less unexpected) the results of the parliamentary elections in December 1993, which shocked most observers in the country and outside it. The important thing to note is that these parliamentary elections were only formally and chronologically the 'first' and founding ones. If held up against the general logic of democratic transitions, a logic confirmed in most cases by historical fact, the 1993 elections were more reminiscent of 'second' elections – that is of 'elections of disappointment.'

The initial shock stage of market economic reforms, a stage that for various reasons lasted for a short time only, was forced on the population by an executive power, which in the general consciousness of the masses already was associated with the radical democrats. It does not come as a surprise that the result of this very short and agonizing stage of shock therapy was the growth of mass discontent with the democratic authorities and their policies. This was the case in practically every similar phases of democratic transition. Reforms have inevitably caused a public reaction – the pendulum of mass sentiment has swung to the left. It also happened in Russia during the first (chronologically speaking) free parliamentary elections in December 1993, which according to the general logic of a democratic transition fulfilled the function of the second elections (the 'elections of disappointment').

d) The preservation of basic elements of the old nomenclature in key positions of the new ruling elite

A specific feature of Russia's transition is also the keeping of groups of the old ruling class in power. In cases of successful transition, a pact between parties competing with and confronting each other during the process of democratization provides for the old ruling class guarantees of political and economic security. As a result of this, the old ruling class can take part in the democratic political process. In Russia, however, there was a lack of a social agreement or a pact, but nonetheless the old nomenclature retained its political and economic security and was included in the new political system as a legitimate participant of the democratic process. The nomenclature was not only saved by the camouflaging administrative changes made by the new democratic authorities (for instance by the re-labeling of official positions, while filling these positions with the same officials as before, both in the center and in the provinces). They also remained in power without any rhetorical explanations of this, as one of the central components of the new authority.

It is partly for this reason that the uncompleted transition in Russia became not so much a radical break with the past Soviet system as a particular metamorphosis of it. As a result of this the nucleus of the old nomenclature, which includes the old party apparatus and economic pragmatists and new career professionals from democratic ranks, was preserved as part of the renewed ruling class under slogans of democracy and anti-communism (Shevtsova, 1995). This renewed ruling class held on to power and acquired property. It became the winner of the large-scale processes of redistribution of state property and of the transfer of this property to private ownership. All this took place between clans and cartels, which were and still are part of the ruling class, behind a smoke screen of so-called public privatization. As a result, corporate interest groups created a base for the oligarchic political system that is presently being established in Russia. At the same time the interests of the masses are still poorly articulated and the lower layers of society do not have adequate political representation.

The present oligarchy in Russia is of a special kind. Strictly speaking, the oligarchy is a certain method (among others) for managing of big organizations – a method based on power as an expert examination but not as wealth. As for the oligarchic principles of the post-communist structure in Russia, they lead our thoughts back to the antique understanding of plutocracy as a regime under which power and privileges are based on wealth. The interests of property and one's own material benefit, rather than of the organization of power as such, is the main element in the present plutocratic regime of Russia. Under this regime does not only wealth engender power, but power itself gives rise to the wealth of those who are party to it.

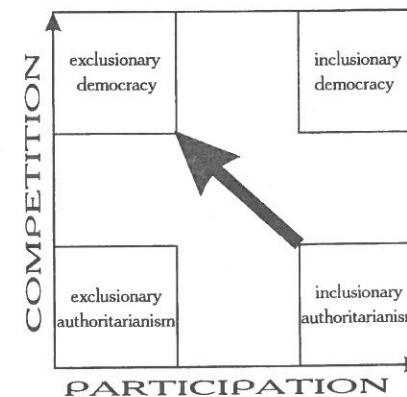
Taking this into account, and employing the two main dimensions of the process of democratization analyzed in Dahl's classical work (Dahl, 1971) – 'competition' and 'participation' – the present direction of and the path followed in Russia's post-communist transition can be conditionally described as following the pattern: from 'inclusionary authoritarianism' to 'exclusionary democracy' (see Figure 3).

The present situation is actually shaped by a variety of elitist rule that makes use of the formal institutions of democracy for non-democratic purposes. This situation is the result of a superficial democratization that provides no mechanisms of democratic control over the actions of the authorities (Shevtsova, 1997).

It should be noted that unequivocal categories are hardly applicable to the present political regime in Russia. In its essence it is a hybrid and mixed regime. According to the terminology of Schmitter and Karl (1994) it is a kind of 'democradura,' that is a regime which drastically limits the possibilities for

an effective mass participation in politics, but which at the same time allows competition for power at the elite level. Still, the 'democradura' in Russia is a relative one, at least because of the fact that at the elite level the rules of the game are not those of open political competition, but consist of clan and corporate laws that give rise to the 'under-the-carpet' struggle for power. Characteristics such as 'delegated democracy' (O'Donnell, 1994), 'authoritarian democracy' (Sakwa, 1997) or 'hybrid regime' (Shevtsova, 1997) can also be applied in many respects to the key features of the regime. On the other hand, the present hybrid regime in Russia inherited much of the old Soviet political genotype and furthermore it resembles to an ever-greater extent closed corporate structures of the Latin American type.

Figure 3. Russia's Postcommunist transition



e) The traditional administrative method for implementing political and economic reforms

The almost full subordination of social groups, classes and strata to the paternalistic vertical arrangement of state power was always characteristic for the history of pre-Soviet Russia and the USSR. It was not society which was creating the state, but state power itself that was shaping society. By means of administrative methods social relations and social groups were emerging to a great extent not on the basis of articulation of manifest socioeconomic interests, but as a bureaucratic creation (like, for instance, the nobility under Peter the Great). In post-Soviet Russia the embryonic democracy and its representative institutions began to emerge in a flat social landscape in which there were few signs of a differentiated social structure, of diverse

socioeconomic interests, and of organizations to express these (Clyamkin, 1993; McFaul, 1993).

Moreover, the new authorities in Russia followed the Russian tradition of carrying out reforms and transformations in an arbitrary way and according to a vertical top down power structure. In most successful transitions the reform initiative comes from above. However, an important and fundamental difference between Russia and these cases is that in the latter a reform impulse from above acts only as the primary catalyst of profound processes which emerge and develop in society as a whole. After society's involvement in the process the functions of the authorities are usually reduced to providing institutional support for these processes in accordance with generally accepted democratic procedures.

Things are different in Russia. Here the new authorities' approach to reform were consistent with traditional administrative methods (mainly due to the new power-holders' ties with the old nomenclature) throughout the whole post-communist period. This, in turn, could create nothing but a split between the authorities and the society, a split that is pernicious for democracy and leads to a growing alienation of society from the authorities. According to many sociological data Russian authorities and political leaders are discredited. There is also a growth of political disappointment and apathy, and a tendency in public opinion of moving away from public interests into private ones. Certainly, positive factors can be observed in these data as well – the 'privatization' of one's personal sphere is about to replace a sense of traditional statism according to which an individual is only a part subordinate to the whole of the state (Levada, 1995). However, private interest is perceived in mass consciousness not merely as independent of the state and the authorities, but also as in direct contradiction with them. This does not in any way provide favorable conditions for the development of the forms of political participation needed for a normal functioning of democratic institutions.

f) The continued influence of authoritarian forces and tendencies

Against the background of disappointment with democracy and democrats in Russia, authoritarian tendencies manifest themselves clearly. These tendencies can be observed in the actions of both the authorities themselves and of other forces. The authoritarian inclinations of president Yeltsin are not only visible in the directive and arbitrary style of his rule, but equally find their expression in the Constitution. It might be even more dangerous (especially in a situation where the president himself becomes a prism of influence for groups and

interests close to him) that there is no democratic control of the actions of the authorities.

The threat of authoritarianism in Russia recently exemplified by the growing influence of nationalist forces, also needs to be taken seriously. On one hand, this is due to the fact that the group of intellectuals who provides services to the authorities, is promoting an idea according to which only the strong hand of enlightened authoritarianism is capable of carrying out painful economic reforms which eventually lay the ground needed for a subsequent building of democracy (Migranyan, 1993). On the other hand there is in the attitudes of the Russian people undoubtedly a growing tendency to support a strong authority capable of creating order in the country. On the basis of these sociological data one often comes to the conclusion that there is growing public support for a reversal of the reforms and a change to authoritarian nationalism (Whitefield and Evans, 1994; Brim, 1995).

But to what extent is the practical implementation of authoritarianism probable in Russia today? Although several arguments could be used to justify a return to authoritarianism – the desire to return to a communist 'paradise,' the need to restore lost 'law and order,' or the attempt of mobilizing national forces for the sake of modernization, can Russia enter the new millennium as an authoritarian dictatorship? One can hardly deny the possibility of the present Russian authorities becoming more autocratic, or being influenced by a new autocrat brought to power by the sad realities of the present socioeconomic situation. After all, different scenarios of a possible authoritarian coup in Russia have already been described in great detail in the political science literature (Yanov, 1995).

Nevertheless, the arguments against labeling the present political regime as authoritarian are also well known. To mention just a few, these are the authorities' weak vertical influence upon society from the top and downwards, the malfunctioning or even the absence of previous mechanisms of repressive control, and the creeping decentralization and regionalization throughout the country. We have also the fragile equilibrium of different elites and groups of interests, none of who can, alone or in a coalition with others, monopolize power completely. Such arguments contribute to a perspective that holds an authoritarian backlash in Russia to be possible from a theoretical point of view, but rather improbable from a practical point of view.

It seems rather dubious whether authoritarianism might be an efficient mechanism for carrying out market economic reforms in Russia – in the present political situation there are practically no forces that hold authoritarianism to be a means of modernization of society through the implementation of a market economy. Quite the contrary, almost all the

political forces which are susceptible to authoritarian temptations see authoritarianism as something different, namely as a possibility of returning to state control of the economy and of restoring the positions of Russia as a world superpower. As for public opinion polls, they are really indicating not a desire to return to the authoritarian past, but a desire to see democratic rights and freedoms guaranteed by a strong power against arbitrary bureaucratic and even criminal rule.

There are reasons to believe that the emerging pluralism among groups and corporate, as well as regional interests will serve as an obstacle for a possible resurgence of authoritarianism. At present there is no political or administrative institution that could implement and secure the horizontal and vertical aspects of a purely authoritarian model in Russia. Moreover, the regional elites, which have already tasted the fruits of the weakening of the vertical axis of power, will hardly be positive to authoritarian attempts at reconstructing this axis.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis presented above enables us to draw some preliminary conclusions. Due to its multidimensional character and to its ongoing evolution, various theoretical models can conceptualize post-communism. Among other things we can find in post-communism some of the elements identified by and dealt with in current transition theories. Given all the indisputably specific features of post-communism, there are nevertheless theoretical and practical reasons for considering the present socio-political dynamics of Russian society as part of the context of democratic transitions, and for using the methodological and theoretical tools offered by transition theories to analyze it.

Some, but far from all, of the particular elements of the post-communist social transformation in Russia that have been examined enable us to emphasize its specificity and at the same time to draw some parallels between it and other democratic transitions that are considered components of the present democratic wave. If, by performing a comparative analysis (that among other things can apply to Russia's transition), one is able to single out what is general and what is particular in different processes of democratization, this might hopefully contribute to the elaboration a general and integral theory of post-communism.

When it comes to analyzing post-communism as one of the varieties of democratic transitions, there seems to be no insurmountable contradiction between the various methodological approaches to this contemporary problem.

A theoretical synthesis of several approaches, which puts an emphasis both on structural and on procedural factors, is possible – among other things through a comparative analysis of the conditions, the contexts and the very processes of democratic transitions.

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