

**THE VALUE CRISIS AND THE WEAKNESS OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE POST-
TOTALITARIAN SOCIETIES IN EASTERN EUROPE (THE BULGARIAN CASE)**

(Final Report)

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NATO Fellowships Programme 1995-1997

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Introduction

The *scientific interest* in the problems of post-communist transition continues to be a topical one because it is relatively new theoretically, the totalitarian experience memories are quite recent and their solving is interconnected with the changes in the more global European and world politics.

The *subject* of this research is to study the *political culture and behavior of the main political actors* in the recent stage of Bulgaria's democratization. This stage is almost completed and this fact has permitted society to describe itself in terms of certain forms. Although not yet concluded, it makes the means of understanding the process more "available" and suggests the ways it could be plausibly explained.

More specifically, the research *problem* for us is studying the reasons for the obvious weakness of the new democratic institutions. Its solution requires revealing the political parties' and the masses' political orientations as well as analyzing the specific features of the new socio-economic context.

This research project had to face numerous *methodological difficulties*: first of all our own participation in these processes and the possibilities this inclusion to bias our views; the lack of the necessary time distance; the issue of different research studies' data reliability and compatibility; the presence of many interested and still active participants in the events that have been happening. To a certain degree these difficulties are inevitable and their relative neutralization requires the most encompassing presentation and critical utilization of the different points of view as possible.

The specific characteristic of the post-communist transformation consists in the simultaneous change of the political and economic system. This simultaneous quality requires the corresponding *methodological strategy* -- matching the approaches which would grant consideration of the interplay of different-level social changes.

This presentation is structured according to the requirements of the research tasks we have set for ourselves.

The *first part* is a theoretical one and attempts to conceptualize the problem in the framework of the existing theories of social change.

The *second part* deals with political behavior and culture of the main political actors in Bulgaria -- the political parties.

The *third part* presents an analysis of the political orientations and behavior of mass citizenship.

The *fourth part* is devoted to the role of state institutions for democratic consolidation.

Part I. Theoretical framework

1. The system of state socialism

1.1. State socialism system coherence

Traditionally, communist societies have been described and explained from two main theoretical perspectives -- that of totalitarianism [1] and of convergence [2]. Communism's fiasco and the immediate and unquestioned orientation of these countries to market economy and democracy have been the reason why some authors turn back to the older theories of modernization [3]. According to them, the major difference between the former socialist countries and the developed market ones should be looked for on the dimension of presence/lack of values and norms which are necessary for modern economy and democracy functioning [4, p. 320].

This difference in the value system is substantial but it is not sufficient. Value system is determined by more important differences on the level of mechanisms, structures and institutions.

According to Habermas, every type of society has some *basic principle of organization* that determines which of its sub-systems would have the principle significance [5, pp. 32-42]. While in capitalist societies it is the *economy* which determines system's integrity, in state socialism it is *politics* which carries out such functions [6, p. 278].

The *communist* party is the nucleus of this system because it coalesces with the state and legitimizes itself through Marxist ideology. It builds up through force a *new coherence* between the ways and the mechanisms of economy, politics and culture functioning.

Researchers point out that the major task of each totalitarian political party after taking hold of the power is the destruction of any autonomy inside and outside the party [7, pp. 295-296]. Private property abolishment and economy's nationalization is in line with this tendency.

The ruling class -- the *nomenclature* -- is a special coalition of interests which is based on the redistribution of the profits of the subordinate centrally planned state economy. It is deeply interested in such economy's progress but the only possible way the nomenclature can stimulate it while maintaining the political status quo is the political-administrative one.

The initial successes in the *industrialization* as almost everywhere have been achieved at the expense of agriculture. The result, though, is a substantial drop of incomes of the people living in the villages, their migration and the loss of the specific agricultural labor ethos.

Forcefully imposed after the nationalization, the *former social structure* has been gradually cemented by the new life circumstances and the ruling ideology. As a whole, it has developed in the direction which could be observed in the developed countries as well with the exception of two features -- a very low number of independent artisans and merchants, and private agricultural producers. By the end of socialism, it has already been based both on the formal and the informal sectors [8]. The *educational structure* of the former socialist countries is more similar to those of the developed ones than to the developing states.

A fairly good level of social domain development has been reached during the socialist period -- free health care and education, substantial state subsidies for house rents, basic foods, transportation, paid maternity leave, free medicines for children.

These expenditures, however, have not been allocated according to economic efficiency and as a result *major disproportion* have ensued: (i) depopulation of villages; (ii) underdeveloped infrastructure (especially the roads and communications); (iii) especially low work ethics resulting in low productivity and mass "thefts" of working hours.

The only period state socialism had been successful was at the time of the initial speedy industrialization but afterwards it proved helpless in the face of the requirements of new and intensive forms of development and technologies.

The general comparison between the former socialist countries and the developed market democracies reveals that the differences between them are mainly in terms of the contemporary industrial society. It follows then that although socialism's collapse is a total reformation of a whole political and economic system, it is still a *secondary transition* in the framework of the unified society [9, pp. 22-23].

1.2. Totalitarianism and authoritarianism

The opinion prevails in the existing literature that the late communist societies are authoritarian and not totalitarian types of dictatorship [10, pp. 140-148; 11, p. 20]. The justification of this view is seen in the

lack of mass political repression, citizens' indifference to the total ideological control and the late nomenclature's skepticism and cynicism. However, the comparison of communist societies even at the moment immediately prior to their collapse with the essence of authoritarianism unveils substantial differences [12, p. 1474]. Till the very end of this system's existence, they preserve -- although in a weaker form -- the main features of totalitarianism [13, pp. 9-10].

Communist totalitarianism stability is also due to the fact that it has been cemented not only via physical force but through a whole new culture as well. As opposed to the specific mentality of authoritarianism, the mass communist culture has never lost its strong *ideological component* [14, p. 213].

Also, it is not sensible to speak about some "officially unregulated" and so to speak *limited political pluralism* in the late communist parties. The late nomenclature's ideological skepticism and/or cynicism do not mean there has been some limited political pluralism which is characteristic for the late authoritarian regimes. Besides, the *centralized state monopoly in economy* remains practically unchanged both prior communist system's collapse and a long time afterwards.

Summing up, despite the way the late communist societies are defined -- as weakened totalitarianism or a strengthened authoritarianism -- the point is that *they leave a cultural mark on mass consciousness which by no means helps the process of democratization*¹.

Nevertheless, the differences between the former authoritarian and totalitarian states are not of a kind which would require some "special" theory of the post-communist transition that would be qualitatively different from the already existing conceptions. According to Schmitter and Karl, the post-communist transition in Eastern Europe should be studied in the context of the same "democratization wave" which has started in 1974 in Portugal [15].

2. Two concepts of democracy

The analysis of conditions for stability/instability of the democratic institutions requires the *explication and adoption of certain concepts of democracy and institutions*.

Generally, there are *two types of concepts* about democracy: a procedural and a substantive ones. In the Anglo-Saxon literature and the one of democratic transitions in the recent decades there is the conception about the greater significance of the *procedural definition of democracy* which could be traced back to the classical definition of Schumpeter [16, pp. 173-174]. The addition of the requirement for general suffrage to this definition leads to understanding democracy as Dahl's "polyarchy". He connects the existence of democratic regime with the presence of eight "institutional requirements" [17, p. 3]. The majority of contemporary writers sum them up in three or four characteristics².

Ultimately, these efforts lead to a *liberal, procedural and minimal definition* of democracy in which political regime's connections to the other social spheres are inadequately represented or are totally lacking. This definition is based on the relative autonomy of politics and on the methodological necessity to function as a comparison basis between the different political regimes. *The inclusion of social characteristics in it would make the comparative political analysis very difficult or almost impossible*.

Of course, this approach advocates are aware of the interconnections between politics and the other social sub-systems but they treat them as *outside phenomena to the political regime conditions which influence the type of democracy* without being features of the democracy *per se*. It is when the types of democracy -- weak, consolidated, pseudo-democracy, etc. -- are differentiated, the inclusion of content criteria is possible.

However, according to the *substantive* understanding, the same criteria are not just outside conditions for democracy but its major features. It seems to the advocates of this approach *the weak, non-consolidated or pseudo-democracies just do not merit the term because the formal democratic procedures are not filled with the corresponding social content*.

The debate between the adherents of these two conceptions of democracy is not just a formal-logical or a semantic one. It concerns the contents insofar it refers to the issue of human freedom's nature.

A. Touraine speculates that the inadequacy of the purely procedural approach is in its inability to pose the question, "What forces would be mobilized, what sacrifices would be made in the name of democracy's protection?" [20, p. 279]. Democracy cannot exist if it is not based on a belief in the political freedom for which people are willing to *sacrifice their lives*. In this sense, "the real democracy" is far from being a formal political market which competes for the votes of the citizens.

It presupposes the existence of a shared social experience, language, traditions, way of life. Without this "ethos" there will not be any sense of collective identification nor the aspiration to collective action. Without stable beliefs there will be neither stable institutions nor stable society [21, p. 92, 93, pp. 103-105].

In this line of reasoning *the critical problem when establishing new and stable institutions is the formation and the internalization of new values*. And this is a time-consuming process because the new institution inevitably goes through a period of struggles and negation when it embodies the name and the form of the "new" although accompanied by old beliefs and practices. *It is an intermediate form and, hence, its defining is a difficult process indeed*.

Still, the application of the procedural definition is necessary insofar it connects the different types of democracy with the stages of their historical development.

3. The conception of the two transitions

The conception of the *two transitions (or two stages)* of the democratization process is developed on the basis of the two types of democracy differentiation (weak and consolidated) [23a, p. 18]. As a matter of fact, the common stages of every democratization transition are three because the discussed two phases here are preceded by the *liberalization* of the former regime.

The logic of the main political actors' behavior in the period of liberalization ("reformers" and "conservatives" among the old ruling elite, as well as "radicals" and those with "moderate views" among the newly formed opposition) is brilliantly explicated by A. Przeworski [24, pp. 105-152]. The liberalization, however, does not necessarily lead to democracy. It might be stopped at some point or even it is possible to reverse the process to its starting point.

It is believed that with the first free elections and the formation of the first democratically elected government the stage of democratization ends and the country enters the second, equally difficult transition to democratic regime's consolidation. As already mentioned, the *consolidation criteria* are the same as the ones which the substantive approach advocates require for defining the "real" democracy. In this case, too, there are no general guarantees that this stage will end successfully for the new democracies. Even if they do not regress to authoritarian (totalitarian) rule, these democracies could be transformed into some hybrid regime which combines elements of autocracy and democracy or they could spend much time in a state of institutional instability [23b, p. 56; 25, pp. 58-59].

On the one hand, they are democracies insofar they meet the definition of polyarchy but on the other hand they are unstable, non-consolidated democracies which O'Donnell calls *delegative democracies* [26b]. *The main characteristics of this type of democracy are:* (i) poor social representation and accountability; (ii) poor citizens' participation in the political process; (iii) the dominance of non-democratic "power models" among the population, the state bureaucracy and the very political elite; (iv) low level of trust and prestige of democratic institutions; (v) lack of coordination among the three pillars of power which manifests itself in constant conflicts among the President, the government, the Parliament and the courts.

The most important general reasons for the weakness of the new democracies are the uninstitutionalized political and socio-economic conflicts, the poor law abidance and the paternal spirit of the inherited culture. That is why the main task of democratic consolidation is the *stabilization* both of democratic and other economic and state institutions.

4. Conditions of democratic institutions' stability

4.1. General conditions of institutions' stability

We can define *democratic institutions* as all cases of democratic political interaction which include formal and informal norms which are practiced as procedures that are embodied in temporary structures or constant organizations³. In contemporary complex societies they carry out the critical functions of mediating, uniting and representing social interests. Their *stability* means first and foremost a stabilization of expectations, demarcation of temporary limits for actors' planned, goal-directed and rational action.

Having in mind these definitions, we would define *institutions' weakness* as their inability and/or inefficiency to function the way they have been established. Besides, in the new democracies there is a very real danger of *perverse institutionalization* which manifests in the existence of the so-called *tutelary powers* and *reserve domains of power* [26, p. 65]. Hence, the *elimination of all other institutions, practices and expectations which are not compatible with their functioning* has a critical significance for democratic institutions' stabilization.

Institutions are always established as a response to certain social needs. This is the *natural historical avenue* for their emergence [27, p. 40]. However, the opposite way is also possible -- the deliberate creation of new institutions which will help the formation and the verification of new needs. This option for institutions emergence from top to bottom could be effectuated in *two ways* -- *the evolutionary-reformatory and the revolutionary ones*.

H. Schelsky believes the *stable change* is the way of reforming institutions because it does not immediately demolish the old institutions and rules but changes them gradually. In his view, the revolutionary elimination of all old institutions leads to "overloading" the new ones with meeting the still existent old needs and thus destabilizing them [28].

4.2. Conditions for new democratic institutions' stability

The conditions for the new democratic institutions' stability could generally be grouped according to the feature "internal/external" to the political system. The new and still consolidating democracies are also characterized by the typical for the developed democracies *internal dilemmas*: (i) danger of political parties' oligarchization; (ii) transformation of politically concerned citizens into politically disinterested "free riders"; (iii) cyclic recurrence in government changes which leads to unstable majorities; (iv) functional autonomy and interdependence with the other primary institutions; (v) dependence on the international context [25, pp. 62-63].

These countries, however, are much more engaged in finding the solutions of the more complex *external dilemmas*. These are most of all the delineation of political boundaries and political actors identities, the relationship of the new democratic power with the capitalist economy, the provision of the necessary political and legal legitimacy, the struggle against corruption and crime, the problems of the internal and external security [25, pp. 63-72].

The *central problem* with these *external dilemmas* is the ability of the main political actors to sign a basic *meta-agreement* on the priorities of change: where society is heading off to, which social interests would form its legitimate basis, what institutional arrangement would be protected⁴.

Democratic consolidation requires first of all the establishment of new rules of political interaction. This means developing a clear *definition of the procedures and functions of the three institutional pillars of democracy -- the legislative, the administrative and the legal power*. Despite the fact that as if each and every of us understands the harmful consequences of institutional instability, "assuming control of a particular institution and extending its formal powers becomes a new form of political contestation (?) in consolidating democracies" [29, p. 88]. Its overcoming presupposes meeting of certain conditions which are almost identical with the above-mentioned *external dilemmas*.

First, *calming down the political conflict* to the extent of reasonable concessions which are needed for stabilizing the formal power of state institutions.

The *consensus* among the political parties *which is necessary* for the successful consolidation has three dimensions: consensus on (i) ultimate values; (ii) the rules of the game, and (iii) the specific for the time being governmental policy. According to G. Sartori, the first type of agreement helps consolidation but does not have crucial significance because the *second type of agreement* is the *fundamental prerequisite for the successful democratization*. The third one is just part of the problems every democratic government faces [30, pp. 90-91].

A. Przeworski also poses the question, "To what extent and with what means the opposition should oppose?" Between the two extremes -- on the one hand, the anemic opposition, and on the other hand, the rigorously confronting opposition to the extent of being a threat to democracy -- he stresses the necessity of a reasonable political "treaty" which would minimize confrontation [24b, pp. 122-123].

It is not possible everything to be negotiated and that is why the goal of this fundamental agreement of all democratic actors should be to subjugate their strategies to the goal of preventing the re-emergence of authoritarianism and not of gaining dominance at any cost.

The *second important condition* of democratic consolidation is the *management of social conflicts*. The most important ones today are connected to the *redistributive role of the state*. That is why democratic consolidation requires the institutionalization of all distributive and re-distributive conflicts. The strong pressure for immediate consumption on the one hand, and the necessity of restrictive budget policy on the other hand, requires first of all a stable and explicit social "pact" with the trade unions [24a, p. 130].

This means *political parties should canalize their economic demands through democratic institutions and should give up the other (non-Parliamentary, revolutionary, populist, etc.) tactics*⁵.

Third, a necessary condition for the successful democratic consolidation is the establishment of *civil control over the military*, police and security forces. Apart from legal guarantees of army's political neutrality it is necessary to *practically avoid the discontent of the military personnel*, especially the officers; the timely compensation of their life standard lowering due to the economic reforms is obligatory.

It could be added here that in contrast to the Latin American countries, *the military personnel in the Central and East European countries has not preserved its autonomy* as politically significant actor which makes meeting this condition relatively easy. At the same time we should not overlook the serious consequences of economic crisis in the army.

Fourth, an equally important condition for the successful democratic consolidation is the *legitimation of the new regime* both legally through the recently written Constitutions and ideologically and morally through the new values, language, symbols, or in other words, through the new democratic "ethos". Political stability which is based solely on force, egoistic interest or apathy is not sufficient for contemporary societies [31, pp. 31-38, 212-217].

The new legitimacy should be established both through the "anti-former regime" ideology and positively. This presupposes the availability of opposition with positive ideas and not only demagogues who have been promoted by the wave against the former regime, of free and nationally responsible mass-media,

of a re-union of the national symbols, of clearing the collective memory from the ideological fallacies of the former regime mainly through revealing the truth about it.

It is only the strong legitimization of the new democratic power that could stand up to the social and economic crises which are characteristic for every major transformation. Spain is the prototypic example in this respect [32, p. 43, 46].

Of course, democratic regimes could survive even for a longer time without the necessary positive legitimacy but this means only that they stand just because the other possibilities have been exhausted -- *democracy by attrition* [33, p.335]. Just the continuation of their existence does not make them less unstable.

However, before the above-mentioned conditions to be met, the new democracies face the cardinal question, “Which are the democratic actors and whether they recognize each other as such?”

At the time when authoritarian regimes collapse, the democratic discourse becomes highly prestigious, *everybody talks about democracy but the real motives and values of the acting political actors are not always visible*. That is why we should judge them not by the new political parties’ programs and the speeches of the leaders but by the real actions and political interaction results.

4.3. (Un)successful consolidation

The unsuccessful solving or not solving at all the above mentioned dilemmas usually leads to *disintegration of new democracies or their turning into some form of pseudo-democracy*.

In-between the total regression and total consolidation, democratization could stop at some hybrid regime, at some of the already described in the literature pseudo-democratic forms -- *democradure* or *dictablanda* [34, p. 9].

The reasons for this could be historical, socioeconomic, political and cultural. Because they are subject of a separate analysis, I would mention here the seemingly validated hypothesis of T. Karl that the type of transition from autocracy is significant for the eventual democratic result [35]. Moreover, in the case of post-communist countries one could argue that the type of transition determines not only the type of democracy but the type of the “new” society [36].

5. Two approaches

In the literature, there are two competing approaches to explaining actors’ behavior during sociopolitical changes -- the culturalist and the rational (rational choice) ones [37, pp. 265-285].

5.1. The culturalist and rational choice approaches

The culturalist approach is based on the following premises: goal-oriented action, variability of orientations, cultural socialization, cumulative character of socialization. These stipulations and especially the last two ones suggest the *continuity* of cultural models (moral, political, etc.) but in reality these are subjected to changes. The point is how to explain these changes.

H. Eckstein bases his work on the observation that there are *two types of cultural changes*. The first one is *maintaining* cultural models or changing them gradually, adaptively and continuously. The second one is a gross social change (speedy industrialization, economic crisis) which does not permit the maintenance or the adaptation of the former models but institutes *cultural discontinuity*. It is in this case the “rational choice” approach proves to be powerless just because the lack of conditions for rational action.

The necessity of quick reorientation gives birth to the initial vagueness of orientation clues -- the synonym of anomie or the frustrated behavior. Generally, *frustration* is defined as remedying behavior which aims at avoiding suffering rather than getting satisfaction or some other, more significant goals. As such, it is characteristic for individuals and groups which have faced a continuous and systematic inability to carry out their goal-directed behavior and accomplish their goals. Frustrated behavior results from the imperative of life to act even when one does not have clear goals and does not know how to satisfy their needs.

The typical forms of frustrated behavior are [38]:

(i) *Stereotypical (rigid) behavior* that represents reenactment of one and the same reactions despite the result which is by definition arbitrary and unforeseeable. The political dimension of this type of behavior is conformity with power.

(ii) *Not every aggression but the aimless one* is the response to frustration. Politically, this type of frustration manifests in the aimless riots and resistance to the power which personalizes the change. As a rule, however, these forms are limited, weak and short-lived because they require much energy which is necessary for the very survival of the individuals concerned.

(iii) Another form of frustrated behavior is the *withdrawal* which is manifested in total apathy to life circumstances and absolute restriction of needs. Politically, withdrawal manifests in retreating from the

big, “foreign” society which (due to the abrupt change) has become incomprehensible to the smaller and more familiar “worlds” of the family, friends, neighborhood and hobby groups.

(iv) Still another form of frustrated behavior is *regression* or going back to former patterns of thought and behavior. Politically, this manifests in the preferences to former power models with which the individual or the group have been socialized. That is why such people do not wish things to change and always vote for the past. The typical features of frustrated behavior are especially characteristic for the so-called *culture of poverty* and politically lead to authoritarian dominance.

(v) Nevertheless, frustrated behavior is a *kind of adaptive behavior*. This means it could also be considered in the terms of rationality -- not the one which is connected to attaining high goals but rationality which is associated with the struggle for survival. The different life circumstances determine the different forms of adaptation. Even the voluntary acceptance of authoritarian control is such adaptation to the uncertainties of life [39].

And finally, the culturalist perspective raises the question, “How the new social order could be established?” The general answer is that the new models of *oriented behavior* would emerge rather slowly with the change of generations because of the cumulative formation of the old ones⁶.

The gross cultural discontinuities of our time are due mainly to revolutionary changes. The typical reaction of the new ruling class for establishing and reinforcing the post-revolutionary social order is either to apply (military) force or to use external legal guidance as a substitute for the lost internal orienting clues for action. The latter comprise the so-called *revolutionary legalism* [37, p. 279] as the primary means of ensuring change’s success. It is this type of *legalism* which is the most probable response on the part of the state and the new ruling elite to the mass cultural confusion. *The new legal culture seems to be the only way to legitimize the new political and economic order.*

5.2. The “legacy of the past” and the “imperatives of liberalization” approaches

In the research studies of the post-communist transition, the culturalist perspective is articulated in the so-called *legacy of the past approach* while the rational choice one -- in the *imperatives of liberalization approach* [40].

The legacy of the past approach explains the transformation of the post-Communist societies as a function of the social, economic and cultural structures from the past -- the strong legacy determines to a great extent the current changes and could substantially hamper and/or distort political and economic liberalization.

The imperatives of liberalization approach stresses the determining role of the new institutions (democratic and market) and the international context (pressure) which limit the influence of the past and help develop the new rules and practices.

These explanatory models are represented in their purest form as “ideal types.” Actually, the differences between them are frequently easy to be overcome and they could be synthesized, having in mind the *immediate contextual conditions*. These contextual conditions determine which legacy will be relevant for which country as well as which liberalization imperatives would most probably be realized and which would not. Thus, *the explanatory strengths of these approaches depend on the actual way social change has been effectuated.*

The relative value of these approaches depends also on *which transition phase they are applied to*. Each transition has at least *two major phases* -- destruction of the old and construction of the new -- which could be fused in time and could only be differentiated analytically. I think it is during the first transition phase that the explanatory strength of the legacy of the past approach is greater. After passing the critical point between these two phases, the old orientation clues, values and practices either totally disappear or are transformed according to the new context.

Since the phases of change in the different domains of societies in transition do not coincide, the value of these approaches depends also on *which domain of social transformation they are applied to*. It could prove that for some spheres the liberalization imperatives are stronger in the beginning while for others the opposite is true.

Different types of “legacy” are analyzed in the literature and most of the authors believe six of them have crucial importance [40, pp. 179-181]: (i) the legacy of underdevelopment, sacrifice and intolerance; (ii) the power of the old elite; (iii) the weak party system and the weak civil society; (iv) the uncompleted process of nation’s building; (v) the old political and economic institutions; (vi) the legacy of the centralized state and command economy.

In principle, K. Jowitt rightfully maintains that the “Lenin’s legacy ... will have the tendency to support the anti-liberal and anti-capitalist results rather than the smooth transition to democracy” [21, p. 307] but legacy’s influence is not clear-cut. It is always affected by the *requirements* of the actual socio-political and international context and by the *interests of all political actors*.

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Endnotes

Part II. The efforts to consolidate democracy -- the main political parties

The fundamental political decisions are made mainly by the political parties which are born independently from institutions. That is why the character of these parties and not the formal rules determines democratic regimes' stability.

1. Ideological constitution of the main political parties

The post-Communist countries managed for a relatively short period of time to change the old political regimes and to build up the system of the so-called *procedural democracy*. These democratic structures have developed *irregularly* in the different countries depending on the irregular democratic ethos manifestations in them.

Did political parties in Bulgaria succeed in the first stage of change to turn into real *political go-betweens* which express different social interests and canalize societal manifestations in the framework of the democratic game rules?

It is hard to give an unambiguous answer to this question; the answer would rather be "partly yes and partly no." "Yes" because during this dangerous phase a strong anti-democratic political force could not form; "no", because it is not clear to what extent this was due to the pragmatic approach and nation's prevailing power models and to the political parties *per se*.

Many researchers note the *specific ideological character* of the new political parties' construction, especially in terms of Communism/anti-Communism opposition. According to D. Ost, during state socialism, there have not been "independent" interests to form the basis of different parties and programs. Everybody has relied on the state-redistributive system. The social restructuring process which has begun with the transition to market economy is not completed yet and in this respect the new social groups and interests have not been quite well-defined. This fact has guaranteed *the success of political parties which had not been founded on interests but on identities* that have to do mainly with differences in the collective memory [1].

The Round Table has played a crucial role in the formation of Bulgarian political model in transition's beginning. It is these parties which participated then that have managed *to legitimize* themselves as main political actors. Those which have been left "outside," could not enter the political scene afterwards. Some of the parties which had existed in the past have been restored but demonstrated rather unimpressive success. On the contrary, the former Bulgarian Communist Party has proved to be especially adaptive.

The main direction has been towards the establishment of "catch-all parties rather than class-based parties" [2]. As E. Comisso puts it, these are parties which differ only in terms of *gemeinschaft--gesellschaft* orientations and not in terms of the traditional "left--right" distinction [3].

The Round Table legitimized *two-pole party model* which is characteristic for Bulgaria: the one pole being the united anti-Communist opposition (the Union of the Democratic Forces, UDF) and the other - the former Communist party (now Bulgarian Socialist Party, BSP). This model has been reproducing itself on the next parliamentary, presidential and municipal elections.

2. Political models and political behavior of UDF

As opposed to other Central European countries, during the former regime in Bulgaria there have not been a strong anti-Communist movement and structures. The country has not witnessed such events like those in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or in Poland in 1980. That is why the initial elite of the already "authorized" anti-Communist opposition has been composed of the few famous and not so famous decedents and the representatives of the political parties which had been outlawed 45 years ago and the critically minded intellectuals.

2.1. Power models of the anti-Communist opposition

Two contradictory views about the character of the political values and the role of this first formation of opposition leaders continue to exist even now. According to the first view, these have been democratically minded individuals who had struggled and suffered in the name of their ideas and the second opinion states that they have been the members of the intentionally created and pushed out by Bulgarian Communist Party opposition, and the access to it has been controlled by that Party. With its development, however, people without decedent past have gradually entered the opposition. They had not been repressed by the Establishment and some of them had even been favored.

What interests us, though, is the fact that *the opposition parties in Bulgaria have been initially "authorized" from the top and have not evolved in a process of historical struggle against the old regime.*

That is why they have not had their own history, own stable political behavior patterns, own democratic language and own moral "ethos". The anti-Communist character of opposition parties has not automatically guaranteed their democratic nature.

In any way, contradictions have been bound to appear between the new and the former (decedent) formations of the anti-Communist leaders. The reasons have been both personal (the so-called *anti-decedent complex* [4]) and general ideological ones. In this case *two types of value models of understanding democracy and the means for its establishment has clashed.*

The initially united anti-Communist opposition has gradually stratified on its way to taking hold of the power. The majority of the former decedents and the representatives of the formerly outlawed political parties remained in UDF-Center and UDF-Liberals (absolutely arbitrary terms). As a whole, they have expressed more moderate anti-Communist views but the main distinction has been their subscribing to the idea of national consensus on the peaceful character of system's change through democratic (legal, parliamentary) means.

The other wing of the opposition -- *UDF-Right* -- has proved to be a more revolutionary one. The extreme confrontation and public rejection of any compromises with the political opponent has been the feature of its leaders. They have understood *system's change* not only as changing the type of all socio-economic and political structures but as a *literal change of all former rulers.* Having this in mind, it is not surprising they have considered all means -- parliamentary and non-parliamentary -- as suitable and justifiable, and have applied them [5].

While the first wing of opposition has consisted of the "moderate", the second one united the "radicals" [6a, pp. 107-116]. Anyway, the second wing has managed to take hold of the official structures and symbols of the whole opposition, to push out the former decedents from their leadership positions, to win the 1991 elections and to form the first non-Communist government.

2.2. The traps of the peaceful transition

This government has tried to turn the anti-Communist revolution into an anti-nomenclature one, to finish it once and forever: it passed decisions for court confiscation of the former Communist Party's property, for auditing part of the so-called "red" firms and banks, attempts to substitute the whole former government and economic administrative apparatus and manifested the aspiration to make BSP an absolutely marginal party.

From the very beginning of change, however, BSP has managed to impose a political agreement on the "peaceful" character of transition to democracy and market economy. It has made possible the future legitimization of this party and facilitation of the process of turning parts of the former nomenclature into economically privileged class. *Has this been a trap or the inevitable although immoral (according to some comments) price of the peaceful process of democratization in Bulgaria?*

The fact that BSP won the first elections (June 1990) shows that the attempts to eliminate it from the political scene would have resulted in strong civil tension. Still having in its hands strong power and economic resources, this party was ready to share the power but not to totally give it up.

Besides, the opposition did not have enough well-prepared specialists who would have been able to govern the state in the transition period. That was why the refusal of some opposition leaders to respect the political transition democratic (parliamentary) character essentially meant *refusal to pay the price for the lack of mass historical struggle against the former regime.*

The actions of the ruling UDF were limited by the new Constitution (the irony was that they did not sign it but were the first ones to observe it) and especially by the protection it provided to private property. In this framework they tried to infringe upon late nomenclature's economic interests. *At that time this goal could have been reached only at the price of a new totalitarian regime and not by democratic (parliamentary) means!* That was why the attack against the "red capital" -- ironically -- turned to be an attack against privatization as the core of the publicly acclaimed transition to market economy.

The next actions of the first anti-Communist government showed only that the *following of this political logic would inevitably (or again ironically) lead to falling in the trap of the power models of the late-nomenclature value system.* The trap consisted in the advancement of some moral values above the generally accepted democratic procedures no matter how formal they could have appeared at that moment.

This could be explained primarily in terms of the specificity of the struggle against the former totalitarian party-state [7, pp. 295-296] which inevitably gives birth to similarities in the internal structure, language and behavior. The similarity manifested in the authoritarian tendencies in the UDF which frequently overpowered the democratic ones -- the unity was unquestioned imperative, every criticism was neglected as "communist", the democracy inside the party was lacking¹. The results were numerous internal contradictions and finally the expulsion of the disagreeing members of the Union -- the notorious "peeling".

According to this logic, the attempt to "democratize" Bulgarian Orthodox Church led to a severe internal schism, an attempt to totally substitute the former personnel, unscrupulous job hunting, one-sided decisions to close parts of the plants, disturbed social partnership and grave conflicts with the trade unions, a

“war” against the “red” mass-media and the staff of the national electronic media and encroachment upon freedom of speech.

The *influence of the old power models* manifested in the demonstrated tendency to rather administrative-bureaucratic (authoritarian) government methods and lack of any capacity for political compromises and dialogue. Through such actions the ruling anti-Communist party inevitably generated a strong resistance of the concerned social groups, individuals and political actors. Both the “red” nomenclature and part of the economic and scholarly elite (because of the so-called Panev law) were antagonized to UDF and this resulted in a strong reduction of its social base. At a certain point this permitted the other political actors -- BSP, the Movement for Rights and Liberties (MRL), the President’s Office -- to take a shared view that the government should be overthrown via parliamentary meansⁱⁱⁱ. However, the UDF preserved its strong political positions at the Constitutional Court, the central D.A. office and partly at the President’s office^{iv}.

2.3. The UDF -- the “second velvet revolution”

2.3.1. From a political movement to a political party

The UDF failure at the Parliamentary elections in 1994 resulted in a substantial reconsideration of its tactics, an internal restructuring and propaganda measures to publicize the new opposition actions. The internal party struggles and confrontations were not entirely overcome but went in the background. Together with the other opposition parties -- People’s Union (PU) and MRL -- the UDF reached an agreement upon the creation of an united opposition -- United Democratic Forces -- and this proved to be an especially successful tactical move.

After the United Democratic Forces won the Presidential elections in 1996, the leader of the UDF started making steps to turn the Union into a political party. The need for this had existed for a long time -- at least the voters of the UDF usually vote for the Union as a whole and not for separate parties or movements which participate in it. Thus, the biggest anti-Communist force finished a cycle of its development, *transforming itself from a voters’ movement into a disciplined structure which could not only win elections but could carry out its own policy* [11].

2.3.2. The social and political protests in January 1997

The BSP failure to win the Presidential elections made explicit the crisis of its rule. This led the united opposition to the conclusion that it was only a new Parliament that could elect a new government which would enjoy mass public trust that was obligatory for the real effectuation of reforms. The opposition already had *a new voters’ majority* which made possible for it to require BSP to give up its mandate to rule, the 37th Parliament to be dismissed and new pre-turn Parliamentary elections to be set down.

For meeting this goals, the UDF and the United Democratic Opposition decided to use the social unrest as a means for exerting non-Parliamentary pressure in case BSP would not resign voluntarily. “Both the street and the Parliament are approved democratic means,” the leader of UDF Ivan Kostov declared. Thus, the leaders of the opposition headed the social-political protest in January 1997 which culminated in the events of January 10 and 11 -- the forceful intrusion in the Parliament building and the use of police force to deal with the situation.

Provoked or spontaneous, the attack against the Parliament did not serve the democratic consolidation goals. Despite the number and the identity of the people who vandalized the building, *the very fact revealed the crisis of legitimacy both of the ruling BSP and the political system in Bulgaria as a whole*. The attack against the Parliament’s building was a very serious warning (not so much physical as symbolic) which was aimed at the parliamentary democracy in Bulgaria.

After these events, the ruling BSP was accused of staining with blood the “peaceful transition” [12] and its response was that “these” were intentional, well-thought and provocative actions aimed at collision and blood.” [13]

In the days that followed the protests continued and spread in the whole country. Highways and railroads were blocked, the employees at the public transportation were on strike in some big cities, doctors and nurses, teachers, workers, dockers, and mainly students were on strike too. The street turned to be a real political force.

2.3.3. The motives

It seemed there was everything in the January 1997 social protests -- a revolt against the BSP policy, the poverty, the fact that Bulgaria was lagging behind in the processes of European integration.

Some of the observers contended that at that time the streets were filled with intelligent people who were oriented to a very specific goal -- preventing the possibility of a second BSP government and getting rid of the system which existed up till then. According to them, despite the fact that the danger of protests' decentralization was great, this was not a riot of the hungry, of the people governed by instincts.

At the same time from ad hoc interviews one could see that the protesters themselves formulated very concrete economic and social demands. They said they protested against paying the outrageously high prices of the central heating, corruption, inflation, the lack of moral in politics and the strongly deflated national currency [14].

According to other observers, while the policy of the International Monetary Fund was to establish immediately a currency board, the Bulgarian economic groupings were interested in having hyper-inflation before currency board introduction so that their debts would be diminished. Thus, behind the struggle between the UDF and the BSP some commentators were inclined to look for the conflict between powerful economic interests [15].

2.3.4. The consequences

Without any doubt, "the street" is also a democratic means of exerting pressure in case the dominant motives are political. When they are primarily social, the situation becomes ambiguous.

If the unrest has been motivated by poverty and not aimed against the philosophy of the ruling class, there is no guarantee that it would not repeat when the next government start more decisive reforms. *Generally, the mass social protests threaten not only the power of the ruling party but the democratic political system per se. This is probably one of the most dangerous traps in which Bulgaria could fall in today's economic crisis.*

The use of the "street pressure" for changing the government is assessed by some observers even more stringently as an unwillingness of the political class to function democratically, as discrediting the two-pole model of country's government.

2.3.5. The UDF -- taking hold of the power again

The political crisis of January and February 1997 resulted in an ever more massive awareness (especially among politicians) of the necessity of political reconciliation and consensus. Their attainment is seen as the only way out of the political and economic collapse. The international organizations -- the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, etc. -- also insist on reaching a political agreement as an obligatory condition continuation of reforms.

Thus, on February 4, 1997 an agreement among the main political forces for pre-term elections was signed, BSP refused to accept the mandate for ruling the country and the President appointed an interim government. *However, the question was whether this agreement was signed sake of overcoming the crisis and in the name of Bulgarian transition priorities or it was the next compromise in a row, forcefully imposed on BSP.*

Some of the steps of the Presidential interim government and the newly elected one which have been connected with serial changes of directors of state enterprises and institutions as well as BSP's reaction still show a *confrontational style that is not overcome yet*. This is evident in the disagreements between the "blue" central government and the local "red" administration even on the celebration of national holidays [16].

The results of the April 1997 elections were in fact predetermined by the January-February events. They were not a surprise for anyone. The United Democratic Forces have majority in legislation and administration as well as the support of the President. The jurisdiction and especially the Constitutional Court have been traditionally considered as pro-reforms inclined and thus in Bulgaria *a stable political majority has formed which is in favor of economic reforms. Perhaps it is this concentration of the separate powers around the common political goals that has been looked for the success of Bulgarian transition.*

Of course, the new Bulgarian government still faces the above-mentioned *unsolved or insufficiently solved dilemmas*:

(i) The attitude of the United Democratic Forces toward the capital has proved to be one of the most sore and sensitive issues having in mind that the economic power in the country has been and continues to be controlled by groupings with ambiguous origin and nature.

(ii) The problem of the social pact, or more explicitly termed, "nothing guarantees that in two or three years the story would not repeat itself, this time with the names of the individuals who would be damned at the demonstrations and the barricades being different" [17]. There is the very real danger of the still not overcome desire for revenge on the part of the UDF which is morally justified by the massive impoverishment of population.

(iii) The problem with the accountability of the M.P.s or the lack of possibilities a M.P. to be dismissed in case they have not met the expectations of their voters.

(iv) Internal party and government contradictions.

(v) The painful reforms will continue to give birth to temptations to use authoritarian measures and that is why the problem with the President's rights in case of a political crisis which are not very well defined in the Constitution is still quite crucial.

(vi) The problem with the inherited and vastly corrupted state administration.

3. Political models and behavior of BSP

After the internal party- and state coup-d-état of November 10, 1989, the leadership of BCP and the state was taken by the leaders of the so-called "reformers' wing". They were the hidden internal opposition of the old ruling class who surfaced to the foreground at that time. As a result a more or less "pro-reforms" oriented leadership emerged as opposed to a vast majority of regular members who had been educated in the spirit of "democratic centralism".

Gradually in the process of transformation and the public moral collapse of Communism, the Bulgarian Communist Party (now Bulgarian Socialist Party) brought to the fore young people with spotless reputation most of whom were coming from the lines of the former Comsomol (the youth organization of the Communist party). At the same time *it did not get rid of the former nomenclature -- neither in the capital, nor in the country*. What BSP did get rid of were the old power figures from the top, the bosses of the law enforcement ministries who were strongly connected to it and a substantial part of the old ideological nomenclature.

Turning into a political representative of the interests of the late communist nomenclature, BSP initially chose the legitimizing *ideology of social democracy* and this choice was not an arbitrary one.

The social-democratic idea was the only means for its internal and external legitimization and that was why BSP insisted on monopolizing it. *Its political strategy* consisted of elimination of potential competitors among the left political parties (and most of all the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party) which could explain why its leader was not elected as a President in the summer of 1990. The pushing of the main opposition force (UDF) into the ultimate "right" political space (characterized as wild capitalism and strong social stratification) was a desired result although it was a kind of as a side effect.

The chosen strategy was effectuated through a *series of tactic moves*. For example, the spontaneous criticism and the attacks against BCP (BSP) in the beginning of transition were skillfully used as a means for building up an image of a hero and martyr -- a champion of the struggle against totalitarianism and now of ... the real democracy! The whole specter of anti-Communist criticisms was reduced to a single dimension -- extremist, non-democratic anti-Communism. The opposition replaced the disappeared *image of the enemy* and it was suggested that the "bad" nomenclature which BSP wanted to get rid of was entering the UDF.

As far as the model of the forthcoming economic reform was concerned, BSP subscribed to a socially more acceptable approach -- gradual steps vs. "shock therapy" (which was pure *demagogy* because even the Andrey Lukanov's government in 1990 was ready with the neo-liberal economic measures which were effectuated later by the economic experts of the UDF).

The adaptation capacities of BSP were not a big wonder -- as a former ruling party it had *enough information* about the models of transition that had been realized in other countries, it had had relatively well-qualified specialists part of whom had been working in the Western democracies. Informationally and financially, its resources were greater than those of the just established opposition.

However, it was strange enough that during the so-called "fermentation" period of BSP the absurd *membership of people from so diverse social strata and frequently with contradictory interests* had not been discussed [18]. To some extent, this became a problem for BSP after it had won the elections in December 1994.

3.1. BSP -- again in power through democratic elections

The explanation of this election result could be found in the fact that the majority of Bulgarians had lost the battle against the shock version of economic reforms. Voting for BSP, they voted for the other -- the more gradual transition version. At that time the gap among the members of this party surfaced most clearly -- between the unbelievably poor and the unbelievably rich strata of society. If this social heterogeneity of membership had some explanation, it was that the two extreme social categories (the pensioners and the greater part of the new "businessmen") still depended on the state. The elderly people depended on the state for their miserable pensions and the new businessmen -- because of the pressing need of "connections" with the state enterprises which continued to be monopolists in many spheres.

After December 1994, the *ideological mist* of BSP has become obvious. It continues the "democratic" tradition to shelter several ideological trends from the Alliance for Social Democracy to the Marxist Alternative but now it does not identify publicly neither with social-democratic ideas, nor with some other ideology and defines itself as a "modern" party which is open to the values of every and each ideology that meets contemporary needs, etc. In other words, its stance is so wide and undefined that it could maneuver, could copy others' ideas and make promises [19, pp. 104-107].

What BSP keeps stressing is what a mass party it is, how well-structured (in contrast with the quarrels of the opposition) and disciplined it is, how many professionals there are among its members. We are dealing here with a structure which values discipline and organizational unity much more than ideology. *It does not unite people with same ideological views but interests that are always pursuing power* and the basic condition for winning power is party unity. That is why its mass members continue to be terrified by the possibility the party to be split up (the "unity above all" principle).

The *BSP type* of behavior is almost a cultural phenomenon which is politically close to the *Bolshevist power models*. Without their political efficiency (of course, together with other factors), one cannot explain the situation of a political party which rejects its former ideology and 50-year ruling practice to resurrect "renewed" so soon and to rule again with the majority of votes.

The analysis of BSP's ruling practices after December 1994 reveals that *besides the familiar administrative government methods* (possible in a centralized state-planned economy) this party does not have any other ideas. The basic idea of its economic policy is the stress on state property -- strengthening state enterprises through subsidies, strengthening state banks and favoring them to the expense of the private ones, attempts at encroachment on private land ownership, censoring information and new attempts at controlling national mass-media, re-appointment of former "aparatchiks" at top positions, etc.

The most impressive thing is that these are not only power models of the new "socialist" leaders but mass models which instead of being in a process of elimination are quite well exploited by BSP^v. *BSP is not forced to change a lot because the mass power models have not substantially changed.*

3.2. BSP -- the second fiasco

The first political manifestation of the *drastic drop of confidence* in the rule of BSP was its loss at the Presidential elections of October 1996. What predetermined the shift of the mass political choice was the total collapse of the socio-economic policy of Jean Videnov's administration. For the country and the ordinary people this downfall expressed in: (i) the continued agony of the inefficient but politically protected state enterprises; (ii) the crash of the bank system accompanied by grave losses and insecurity of firms' capitals and people's savings; (iii) more than three times cheaper national currency for less than six months and, accordingly, outrageous prices of all commodities and services; (iv) the complete failure of government's agricultural policy; (v) multiple "small" crises as a consequence of the total regress and especially the "corn crisis"; (vi) government's failure to deal with both with street and organized crime and to restrict the "state racketeering" and state administration's corruption.

The small and medium size business did not receive any stimulation and the mass foundation of democracy -- the vast class of middle-range private owners -- failed to be created. On the contrary, societal social structure was strongly polarized [21] and this reflected politically in the senselessness of mass approval and support. As far as the public image of the specialists who were members of the ruling party was concerned, the public already did not believe the myth of the exceptional competence of its professionals.

During its rule, BSP made numerous *basic and tactical mistakes*.

(i) The most important being that the government did not establish clear-cut and general rules of market economy. How could a government make steps aimed at transition to market economy when it publicly annihilated private property and competition?

(ii) The politicians turned into a kind of central circle to redistribute resources, then the "advisors" formed the second circle and the rest of the smaller scale state administrators encompassed all what was left.

(iii) BSP proved to be inadequate because it could not find its political identity among all diverse represented interests and did not manage to orient its own followers even to the requirements of the "social" market economy.

(iv) At some point its internal party and cabinet struggles outweighed Bulgaria's national interests.

(v) The attempts to stabilize the country were based primarily on focusing power in the hands of the ministers and not exerting (at least minimal) efforts to reach agreement both with the "reformers" in the party itself and the opposition. BSP refused any collaboration with the rest of the political parties, the President and the other democratic institutions.

(vi) The attempts to control and censor the central mass-media, and the informational black-out of government's policy were not conducive to shaping a positive image of this cabinet.

(vii) The foreign policy activity of the BSP government was also a failure -- the ambiguous position toward the European Council and NATO, the fiasco at the negotiations with Russia.

The government which declared social transition lost any social credence because it did not manage to keep any of the promises it had made in its program declaration [22]. It did not manage to reconcile the concern for Bulgarian population and the market orientation.

Videnov administration's fiasco was a fiasco of the policy of imitating reforms. That was why at the end of its rule the *currency board* (the measure the International Monetary Fund takes in connection to governments which are not capable to control state budgets and insure their payments to foreign creditors) became an absolute necessity.

After it lost the Presidential elections, BSP did not split up but its internal party opposition became stronger. The party started to lose more and more sympathizers (almost a million in the fall of 1996, primarily young and well-educated people), and members from its top echelons (oriented to the establishment of a new, social-democratic left) started quitting the party. Thus, BSP turned into a party of pensioners and people living in the villages. *The project to turn it in a modern left political party failed and at least up till now it is neither European, nor left.* With its reorientation once again to the social-democratic idea [23] the circle of its development closed.

Despite the great fiasco it suffered, BSP remained the second major political force although with a record low representation. Both its pre-election propaganda and the way it started again to play the role of opposition were symptomatic for its evolution. “Aspiring to go out of the winter of its defeat, BSP chose to oppose the reforms, the West and the possibility for a common policy for overcoming the crisis. Such a policy could win votes at elections but does not promise any future for Bulgaria.” [24]

4. The legacy of the late nomenclature value system

Usually the reasons for democratic ethos weakness among the main political actors are looked for in two directions: the new socio-economic context and the cultural changes. These approaches are not mutually exclusive. The proposed up till now cultural explanation models stress the historically formed “anti-modernization spiritual complex” [25, pp. 14-26] which is necessary but not sufficient. They do not consider the *specific cultural models* which have dominated in the late Communist period.

Social change in Bulgaria was realized in a “top-bottom” manner through “negotiations” in which the elite played the major role [26]. This style of transition did not extinguish but transferred the bigger part of the old thought patterns for both elite and masses.

The late Communist parties were almost captured by a *new type of personnel* which was quite well defined as *aparatchik-experts* [27, p. 132]. These people were the carriers of new and qualitatively different values from the official ones. They were characterized not with ideological loyalty but with *pragmatism, skepticism and cynicism*, seeing the obvious fiasco of the system [27, p. 143, 146]. (It were the cynicism and the extreme relativism that were the dominating spiritual forms in the end of every waning epoch.) These people had already developed the models of a new -- hedonistic -- way of life: they had a completed dual ethics ethos, e.g. dual moral, dual conscientiousness, as well as the specific corporate and conspiracy spirit because of their hidden nomenclature privileges. Their circles formed a spontaneously emerging *institution* which gradually took hold of the very state.

It was this stratum which destroyed the system from within. It was the social force and the basis of its change. Together with the democratic-minded intellectuals this stratum provided a substantial part of the new elites passing on to them its contradictory value system^{vi}.

This stratum proved to be the “active minority” [29] which destroyed the old and built up the new political-economic system but *did not become an actual subject of change*. It lacked legitimacy and creativity. Historically, it did not become the carrier of the new social relations. Its activity proved to be an imitation which copied non-coherent models from the Western life style -- consumption but without the rational organization of labor, hedonism with no work ethics and discipline. The results from the first phase of democratization process were in line with this -- formal procedures and guarantees without the spiritualizing influence of the respect for other’s worthiness.

To a great extent, this explains the observed “mediocrity” of the post-communist political elites [30, 1] and the mediocre results of the transition to market economy up till now. The “norms” of this late nomenclature ethos determine the means of the initial accumulation of capital, the *mass models* of “market” and political behavior which are reinforced by the real “successes” of their carriers.

Of course, although only officially proclaimed, the *democratic claims* for ruling are already a step to the establishment of the “democratic power models. However, we could say whether they *dominate* only after the substitution of at least a generation of leaders who are socialized in the new conditions because it is very difficult to change the already developed political (and any other value) orientations [31].

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Endnotes

Part III. Democratic consolidation and the forming civil society^{vii}

During communist regime, civil societies in the Central and East European countries were almost destroyed. According to M. Bernard, it was only in Poland that civil society's emergence preceded and even caused the overthrowing of the communist rule. In the other socialist countries civil society started its real conception only after the fall of the regime and the emergence of legal guarantees for the newly acquired liberties [2].

Democratic consolidation is usually associated with the institutionalization of the new political structure. The majority of researchers believe that civil society plays a very substantial, although not crucial role in this process. Its main function is manifested in the development of democratic civil culture. In many new democracies, the consolidation process is hampered by the lack of such culture, by the mass "civil deficit" which manifests in wide-spread cynicism and apathy toward political process.

Has a well structured and democratically functioning civil society been formed in Bulgaria? The answer to this question requires an analysis of the mass *political orientation cues and behavior*.

1. The mass communist culture legacy

Ironically, Communism also established its "two cultures" (Lenin) -- one for the masses and the other for the ruling elite. That is why citizens as a whole entered the process of democratization with a *completely different value system* from the one of the late nomenclature.

Because Communism "won" in insufficiently modernized countries with predominantly agricultural population whose world view was primarily Christian, the new ideology was inevitably transformed into a kind of religious dogma [3, p. 75]. The *profaned, "country life" Marxism* was born from the combination of traditional petty bourgeoisie with the enforced Communist ideology. This kind of Marxism laid the foundation of the mass Communist culture. In contrast to the typical "authoritarian mentality", this culture was characterized by strong ideological touch. Its characteristics which appealed to the masses were: relative *simplicity* of the major formula [4]; *anti-individualism; paternalism* (depriving the individual of personal responsibility for their choice because the "truth" was owned by one and only political party) [5, p. 139, 183]; strong *egalitarianism; aggressiveness* (constant readiness for fighting the internal and the external "enemy" [6]).

This culture was disseminated through a system of *party education* which encompassed almost the everybody. Educated in the system of the pioneer's, Comsomol's, and Party's organizations, several generations were indoctrinated with its "value models".

The main reason it was not destroyed was the *way change in Bulgaria* was effectuated -- from top to bottom^{viii} and not as a result of independent historical movement against the system in which there would have been struggles, victims, heroes and martyrs, and new values. (In this respect Communism had developed its legends and myths while *democracy was not accomplished through sufferings, social struggle and practice*). That was why the initial contradictory mass political orientations -- "pro" or "against" change -- were based on the *common "values"* of this culture.

On the one hand, the elimination of political monopoly resulted in a boom of political formations, eagerness to participate politically, mass demonstrations and rallies. People were "intoxicated" by the freedom to speak, to criticize, to organize but behind this political euphoria the *real motives of the mass enthusiasm* could not be easily seen in the beginning.

Every social passion in pre-Revolutionary times could acquire any political form [8, p. 252]. Democracy, market economy, legal state, etc. became such forms but their formula were founded on a quite different content. Initially, change was conceived primarily in terms of urgent social problems: certain minimal life standard for all, social justice in distribution, elimination of deficit [9]. What people were most discontent with was the increased social stratification in the late Communist period^k. That was why the mass goals and aspirations for rendering support to the changes were "left anti-Communist motives." [10]^k.

The new ideological cliches that were propagandized by the mass-media embodied the hopes for a better social order which this time would be build after the Western model -- but a Western model which was conceived through the ads and not the way it really was^{xi}.

On the other hand, the quick and agreed upon change of regime left *many moral issues unanswered*, e.g. those of the blame, responsibility, fairness, penitence, victims. Why was the change started, by whom and to what was it aimed? Why so many of the former rulers were again on management positions? Were there people to be blamed and who was responsible for the national catastrophe, the sufferings after the end of the previous system? If all of us were to be blamed, why the pressures of transition were so unequally distributed? "The point was that the everlasting moral values like duty, ethics, patriotism, honor were subordinated to the socialist ideology in Bulgaria. As a result, now -- when this ideology goes bankrupt -- *people are left with no moral orienting cues, they cease to feel what is good and what is bad.*" [13] As a result of the abrupt change thousands of human lives became meaningless in just a moment but people

refused to accept this. Everyone was faced with the question, how should they had been living before? Is the one who has worked hard yesterday a criminal today and vice versa?

The loss of value orienting cues and the subsequent value vacuum resulted in the loss of cultural identity. People asked themselves, "Who are we?", "Where do we come from?" and "Where are we going to?" and couldn't answer these questions. The former ideological and social cues quickly disappeared; the familiar "picture" of the world suddenly vanished [14].

Thus, the majority of the people in Bulgaria were not at all prepared for the quick political and economic liberalization. The prevailing expectations were quite the opposite of what was to happen^{xii}.

2. Ideological construction of the main voter groups

The political stability of the *two-poles party model* which is characteristic for Bulgaria was due to the formation of two major hard voters' groups -- the "red" ones of the BSP and the "blue" ones of the UDF. There were no substantial social differences between these two groups [11, p. 139, 142]. The main determinants of the opposite political choice were the *age*, the *type of settlement* and the *education level*^{xiii}. (In the framework of the culturalist approach these factors are the most important ones for the level of integration/disintegration of the old and the new social order.)

The most important political differentiation of citizens was constructed in a purely "ideological" manner. The political scene was not perceived as a place for different interests representation because they were absent. It became a place for expressing emotional reactions, likes and dislikes. For example, although equally affected by the economic measures of the different governments, the people did not change their political preferences and although disliking the policy of their own parties they continued to vote for them.

The demonstrated behavior justified the statements of some researchers that it was a kind of "political ethos" [16, p. 97]. The relative stability of its cues was explained through two types of "models" of collective memory which contained absolutely opposite views about the events in Bulgaria's recent history^{xiv}.

What was important here was the fact that the two voters' groups were guided by *one and the same evaluation schemes* but with opposite signs. This was a type of thinking which was subordinated to the more general and more ancient *ethnic-scheme for total negation of the other* and hence the ethnic-like character of these groups. Because this negation and the language of hatred were not rationally justified, they had been merely suggested by the political parties. The maintenance of such quasi-ethnic consciousness seemingly favored them.

The two main parties and their newspapers exploited one and the same thought patterns-- economically this was the idea of equality and intolerance to social stratification and ideologically this was the "us--the victims" and "they--the hangmen" distinction depending on which party was in power. *The image of the enemy* dominated party media [18]. Moreover, the *political language* content analysis revealed only surface changes of terminology and not a deeper-level value transformations. If it was true that "only movements the representatives of which have started speaking via new concepts could hope to have historical prospects" [19], something different happened in Bulgaria -- language did not prove to be essentially important; the changes did not touch deeper levels of consciousness; the "nomenclature" survived [20]^{xv}. Thus, *the main opponent of change* proved to be the mass Communist consciousness which dominated not only among the "red" voters but to a substantial extent among the "blue" voters as well, although with the opposite sign. It was coming back as a boomerang every time when it was necessary to make the next step on the way to economic transformation and democratic consolidation.

3. The economic shock and its political repercussions

The quick and simultaneous substitution of both political and economic systems was exceptionally unfavorable for the democratization of mass civil consciousness. In principle, *the simultaneous transition* contained mutually exclusive tendencies [22] and for the time being the democratization has won in the struggle between them but there has not been any substantial progress to market economy establishment. Private sector was introduced in economy and the form of management of the state enterprises was changed but the main part of the reform -- the privatization -- was not rigorously started. Its delay created opportunities for realizing other, illegitimate goals.

On the one hand, an *economic elite* was formed which included representatives of the old nomenclature, part of the new administrative and political officials, individuals from the banks and the dealers strata [23], and on the other hand, for the majority of the population economic liberalization manifested mainly as a shock price increases, enormous unemployment, inflation, and massive impoverishment. "The poor became even poorer, the "middle" strata went several steps downwards and a few rich individuals became exceptionally rich." [24, p. 5].

This fact together with the quick realization that the "ruling class did not intend to tolerate deprivation" [17, p. 48] could not but create *anti-reforms tendencies* which manifested most clearly in the

attitude toward the economic reform as a whole, the privatization and the private business^{xvi}. Moreover, the disappointments from reforms soon generalized to disappointment of the new ideas in general because behind their facade people saw the old practices of narrow-group egoistic interests operating.

The mist of the *new dilemmas* aggravated the fiasco of the old illusions, e.g. "Is it morally correct the yesterday's worker to start working for the ex "comrade in charge" who has already become a private owner?"; "Is it morally correct yesterday's directors and rulers to form the group of today's new rich?", etc. These moral dilemmas had a direct implication on democratization process because they were an expression of society's indignation at a legal (in the best scenario) but *morally illegitimate economic elite*. Thus, indignation generalized to the new democratic power which made possible such illegitimate phenomena.

So, the simultaneous change of political and economic systems resulted in fact in *identifying democracy with the hardships of transition to market economy*. The scientists prognosticated this effect [25]^{xvii}.

It was this identification that was the foundation of the observed negative attitude toward democracy up till now^{xviii}. Democratization was not supported by economic reforms or was supported in such a way that it was soon discredited. That was why the observed '*non-democratic*' nature of mass consciousness could be explained not as a criticism against the idea of democracy but as a diapproval of the economic practices which were hiding behind it^{xix}. In more specific terms, this was a criticism against the weak democratic power which could not impose clear and general rules for market behavior and hence, it discredited itself as democracy in general.

The *exceptionally low* trust in the very democratic institutions during the past period and the stable preferences to the higher levels of administration and its law enforcement agencies were still another manifestation of this critically inclined mind^{xx}. Generally, trust had been strengthening after elections just to drop down after a year or so. The more general negative attitude toward politics and politicians had been in line with this because the politicians had been engaged in their personal quarrels and power struggles and had not considered the more "mundane" but essential problems of the people^{xxi}.

4. Mass frustration and political behavior

It was this value consciousness that went bankruptcy which determined the mass political behavior. The latter could be plausibly explained in terms of the *concept of frustrated behavior* which has been stressing more strongly the enforced socio-economic determinants rather than the rationally made decisions and free choice. The independently thinking free individual (a characteristic feature of the relatively well off middle class in developed democracies) were not born in sufficient numbers in the first phase of post-communism period^{xxii}. The increased financial uncertainty and everyday life entropy created a very *different behavior framework* in comparison with the one in which relatively well off individuals could afford rational political choice. In the first framework, political preferences are determined first and foremost by the survival imperatives^{xxiii}. These imperatives have determined the new social and political orientations in terms of *aggression, regression, stereotypical behavior and withdrawal* [31, pp. 382-386].

It was in a very short moment initially that the horizons of free choice laid open for the people but very soon they disappeared as a result of the economic liberalization shocks.

However, even the mass frustrated behavior could be considered as a fully adaptive and hence a *rational one but only in terms of the specific requirements of the environment* and not in terms of the standards of other, more humane life circumstances.

The above mentioned forms of citizens' political behavior during the studied phase of post-communist transition could be *explained* in terms of this conception. For example, the typical political dimensions of *withdrawal* have been:

(i) *Political center's failure* to consolidate in the stringent two-party model^{xxiv}. It happened so that the struggle for the political center has been won up till now by the main state institutions because for the common late-Communist mind it was the state which remains the primary hope^{xxv}.

(ii) *Weak citizens participation in local elections* -- together with the traditional interpretations of disappointment, mistrust and apathy there is the fact that people do not want to participate in issues which, according to them, do not concern the cardinal problems of their everyday life.

(iii) *The classic "non-democratic" views of the countryside* which could be explained through the strong interpersonal ties (governed by the old models and reinforced by the new economic power of the vast majority of the former country-side nomenclature) and in terms of more pragmatic reasons [33].

The political "war" -- most of all as sign spells -- was a typical manifestation of *aggression* which was a result of triggering the old *stereotypic* reasoning patterns in a situation of seemingly insoluble life problems.

The newly appeared common desire for a "firm hand" and "strong regime" [12, p. 150] was the political form of *regression*. For example, even in the period of initial chaos after the change researchers observed that "one of ten people wants a firm hand." However, 12% "could not determine" and 77% were against the establishment of dictatorship for a certain period as a solution to country's problems [34]. In the following years, however, the disappointment with politics and the almost general view that politicians were

interested mainly in satisfying their own needs has grown substantially and this fact could explain the increased desire for strong power and order.

5. From identity to interests

It is quite natural temporary and ambivalent value orientations to dominate in transition periods [35]. Together with the old authoritarian and state-favorable attitudes, there are the opposite views -- individualistic and democratic -- in the post-communist period. The struggle between them depends directly on the success/failure of democratic and economic consolidation.

For example, after receiving troublesome data about the "strong hand" wishes, some researchers believe "that in order to become dangerous these tendencies should accumulate in a reservoir outside the existing political system and to wait there for the spark which will ignite them. The case is not of this nature ... although seemingly wanting new parties and hard leaders, when in the corner, people are not ready to go outside the framework of the existing political system for this cause." [36] Of course, the fact that there are no institutions (except marginal ones) which would maintain the old "power models" in the country, is essential too. And yet, these contradictory opinions reveal a state of common mind which steps beyond the *critical boundary* between the two phases of change.

The hypothesis that the social crisis of our time is so drastic that the only thing which interests us is survival is more plausible for the first phase. That is why at that time people would choose non-liberty if they could have the floor. From a certain point *financial and material constraints* are so strong that they turn to be a menace to the very existence of people. These constraints do not offer any possibilities for "rational choice" in terms of "rights and liberties" but inevitably push people to the only way to survival -- submission and giving up freedom^{xxvi}.

The observed primarily emotional and not so much political attitude toward the "stringent order" is a symptom of *a new phase of changes*. The actual unwillingness to look for an authoritarian solution of the problems reveals some processes of "normalization", settling down and finding a new equilibrium.

The widespread "survival strategies" [38] during the first phase proved to be successful for almost half of Bulgarian population and this fact clarifies why there was no "such mass despair which was the fruitful soil for "saviors" of Zhirinovski's type. There was no such feeling (described by Trotsky in respect to fascism) that it is better to have a disastrous end than a disaster without end."^{xxvii} [36].

The second victory of BSP in December 1994 elections could not be clarified just in terms of regression (the well-known "prisoner's syndrome" of A. Mikhnik) but with *increased pragmatism*. After surviving from the experiments of the "shock" reform, people voted again for the socialists mainly because of practical reasons. People's choice was less and less influenced by political motives because the *economic motivation* stepped forward -- the impoverishment, the increasing crime rates and corruption. Besides, research studies in the former socialist countries where the former communist parties regained the power, being named now socialist, drew similar conclusions [39].

The Presidential elections in the fall of 1996 and the parliamentary elections in 1997 confirmed this tendency. Feeling deceived in their hopes in BSP, the majority of people turned their vote against it. Of course, this was not a painless process, especially for the hard sympathizers of this party who preferred not to vote or to vote for some third party.

The important thing was that people not only voted for democracy but participated with *changed motivation* for political choice. More and more of them started thinking pragmatically and not ideologically; they linked political choice with life's realities and not with political identities. "The forming majority is not just "blue" but pragmatic. It speaks a different language and could understand only this "other" language. This is the language of crisis." [40] The election results appear to be defined more by the vote of those voters who reconsider their choice to vote and to vote for whom every time. These are the people for whose trust the real political struggle is carried out in contrast with the past big "ethnic-voters" groups.

This increased pragmatism is connected mainly with the desire for the stabilization of the state order in the framework of democracy because the stable democratic systems could not be separated from the stable legal order. The expressed political orientation is an attempt by the civil society to "ground" abstract democratic values through uniting them with the real practical problems of everyday life. This new civil consciousness *is much more democratic in purely practical terms* because it is a manifestation of people's desire for stable democracy.

It proves that civil society is more sensitive to the prerequisites and conditions of stable democracy which in contemporary societies inevitably include some semi-authoritarian elements. According to H. Eckstein, the stable democracy is characterized with a special balance among the different power models which could be achieved only if the very models are not purely, "extremely" democratic but allow for some authoritarian elements. In this way they come closer to the power models of the non-political organizations and institutions (the family, the school, the establishment, etc.) and thus reduce the distinctions between them. It follows then that *the stable rule is a heterogeneous rule -- democratic but with elements of authoritarianism* which are necessary for alleviating non-political social tensions. According to Eckstein, the

exemplar of such stable democracy with the preferred balance among the different (and frequently contradictory) power models is Great Britain [27, pp. 220-223].

Of course, the fixed civil preferences in politics in contemporary post-communist Bulgaria could function as the base both for moving in direction to the desired stable democracy and to be exploited with the aim of establishing a strong state power which would disguise some form of semi-authoritarian regime.

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Endnotes

Part IV. Post-totalitarian state and democratic consolidation

One of the major goals of social change after 1989 was the establishment of the rule of law as a necessary element and condition for democracy and market orientation. The state governed by the rule of law should guarantee the new civil liberties and ownership relations^{xxviii}.

In 1991, the new Constitution of Republic of Bulgaria was passed and it outlined the framework for the new socio-economic and political order. The newly established *Constitutional Court* and the institution of the *independence of the courts* principle had a major role for its observing.

Political system started functioning by the new rules and procedures of representative democracy. They formed quite quickly the new type of political behavior both of political elite and citizens. *From a procedural point of view*, almost nothing was preserved from the old rule. If one could speak of *efficient constitution role of law*, it manifested most strongly in strengthening the position of the new political game rules. This was made possible because of the *common political will* for democracy although the new type of constitutionalism was not directly dependent on the will of all political parties but on their immediate and long-term interests [2, p. 241].

Of course, just the Constitution and the new procedures could not create as if by magic the lacking democratic culture. That was why it was no big wonder that many of the democratic principles were in fact filled up with quite different content. The prototypical example in this respect was the *differentiation of power structures principle*. At least up till now it has been manifesting not as a differentiation of relatively independent but united by one general national strategy power structures but as an extreme political opposition of all parties in the new democratic institutions (the Parliament, the President's office, the courts) functioning.

1. The Parliament

In fact, the Parliament became the main form of political pluralism but the delay of many important laws for providing the basis of economic reforms and the necessary (and strongly disturbed) legal social order managed to discredit it substantially as an instrument of change [3]. The following factors contributed: (i) quite often the M.P.s discussed issues which the ordinary people did not consider of prime importance and thought they were far away from the real life problems; (ii) the Parliament did not succeed to turn into a balancing mechanism for the different interests because the latter were not sufficiently identified with the corresponding political parties; thus, it turned to be a place for strengthening the positions of the parties and the M.P.s who represented ... their own ideological views and interests; (iii) the most serious parliamentary weakness in the recent years was political parties failure to sign the fundamental agreement on the most general priorities of change; (iv) the old power models which were characteristic for part of the M.P.s of all political parties played a major role, too. They manifested in the inability to look for a dialogue, discussion, compromise. Instead, frequent threats of giving up the parliamentary dialogue means in favor of "revolutionary" pressure from outside were very frequent, especially in the beginning^{xxx}.

2. The governments

Under this party incompatibility, the governments could not be but weak and short-lived. For the past seven years Bulgaria has had seven governments and each of them had to realize first and foremost the economic reform. This reform could have been successful only on the basis of the sound political and social consensus and one could hardly say it has been achieved. That is why it has been carried out in a planless, out-of-control and chaotic manner^{xxx}.

From the legal literature it is well-known that there is a difference between the two sides of government: (i) decision making and (ii) execution. They are embodied in the two different parts of power execution -- *state government* and *administration*. The government is an instrument of political management while the actual management is carried out by the administration.

2.1. The administration

When the weakness of the new (democratic) administration is discussed, one has in mind not only the party-political opposition inside and between the main state institutions but the functioning of the *administration which is inherited from socialism*. After some changes of top officials have been effectuated, administration's middle and lower echelons have remained practically untouched. It survived not only as staff but the more important thing was that it survived as a management and thinking style.

The state administration sections have been keeping up with the new "competition" for self-enrichment during the post-communist transition. Their main source of increasing their incomes has been

turning the public service into a kind of “private property” and the material expression of this is the income received via bribes.

The observations on *corruption scale* in the first phase of post-communist transition could not but be compared with its size in the allegedly most corrupted countries of contemporary Asia, Africa and Latin America^{xxxi}.

The most *obvious social consequences of corruption* are the innumerable forms of injustice which affect the lives of vast numbers of individuals: (i) the irregular and poorly maintained public transportation; the terrible state of the roads; the faked safety checks of cars and busses; (ii) recurrent crises of energy sources and commodities like gas, petrol, electricity and even ... bread; (iii) a specific social atmosphere (especially in the big cities) of total insecurity for one's life.

Corruption poisons young people's socialization and its *transmutation effect* is the most dangerous one, i.e. the development of a mass psychology of fascination with the success of criminal enrichment. It creates a climate of social “respect” and encourages the people to follow this example [5, Chapter 5].

Corruption gives birth both to general administrative inefficiency and conscious inconsideration of one's job duties in favor of getting profits. The corrupted state apparatus goes hand in hand with the increasing scope of *black economy and organized crime*. Corruption price is always paid by the ordinary consumers. It manifests in outrageously expensive commodities and services because the price includes the bribes and the racketeering.

It is not a coincidence that A. Altas draws the conclusion that “corruption is the most parasitic, the most handicapping and the most destructive *form of exploitation* which is known” [5, p. 151] because it does not have any positive implications for the social or the economic prosperity of society. A corrupted state cannot collect the full taxes which are aimed at increasing the well-being of its citizens; there is a systematic plundering of the scarce social funds; state agencies and institutions cannot function effectively. Even the most humane and the loftiest social cause is distorted into a business transaction between corrupted go-betweens.

The most general reason for the corruption in the post-colonial societies is the forcefully imposed from outside and from the top *quick modernization* after the national liberation. It is this speeded modernization that disturbs the old relations and ethics without giving them the time to transform into new and rational norms. In this way *the culture of non-ethics* appears; it is a result of the shock and the abrupt pushing out of the habitual cultural milieu.

Post-communist societies went through a *similar change* but this time from totalitarianism to democracy and market economy. This could explain the presence of very similar phenomena in them and the post-colonial states and especially the mass corruption. Seven years after the change the monopoly of the state property and the centralized government is not destroyed, i.e. state bureaucracy enriches in its “own way” during that period. It is this strong dependence of the forming private business on state regulation through a system of licenses, custom taxes, quotas, preferences, etc. that creates favorable conditions for corruption's flourishing [6].

The state bureaucracy which is inherited from socialism does not have the ethos of rational and effective Weberian bureaucracy. Just on the contrary, it is characterized with the principles of “personal connections”, party loyalty and irrational government resulting from the total irrationality of the state-redistribution system.

Socialism has created a state bureaucracy which has proved to be the general mediator between the people and the power, specifically articulating their relations -- servile and pleasing the top and repressive to the bottom. It has formed its own specific group interests which are different and frequently opposite to those of the ruled classes but sometimes opposite to the ones of the ruling class, too. It developed a “special riff-raff-bureaucratic anti-ethics” whose main principle is dishonorableness, “non-observation of honor, truth, morals, dignity -- all that you yourself have lost but others have preserved” [7].

Despite the political changes on the top the state remained the main instrument of change because of the lack of well-structured civil society. This fact explained *the preservation of the privileged position* of state administration. In its typical practices (doubling elites, distortion of information, reversion of goals, etc. [8]), it was not much different from any other bureaucratic organization. The important difference was in the scope of its activities -- the whole society and economy.

Even during socialism the state itself and hence the state property had been turned unofficially into ruling class' property. The totalitarian state *democratization* should have led to its loss as “private property” via the means of the new democratic control. At the same time, transition to *market economy* should have destroyed state's monopoly and hence state bureaucracy's monopoly over economic processes and to give private initiative the necessary freedom of action.

The greatest *historic irony* of the post-communist transition consists in that change has started with an anti-bureaucratic and anti-nomenclature rhetoric which has been the only means of mobilizing people but then was transformed (at least in Bulgaria) by the same state-bureaucratic and nomenclature apparatus into a rhetoric which was favorable for it.

Having taken the key mediator's position between the power and the population, it has had the real ability to distort to calamitous proportions every decision especially if its interests have been threatened.

Bureaucracy managed to turn even the gross social change of “socialism” in its own advantage, working for “as if democracy” and creating “as if market” [9].

Most people believe that the problems with the state employees’ abuses are difficult to be eliminated in the near future because they are controlled by the same bureaucratic apparatus [10]. They are made easier by the *inefficient legislation* up till now. *The international conditions* -- economy’s globalization, financial speculations, etc. -- have also favored the development of corruption in the post-communist countries.

Still other specific cause of corruption is the above mentioned incompatibility of the main political forces which has led to a very serious weakening of all law-enforcing and controlling institutions.

3. The legal system

Generally, under abrupt and quick social transition, the legal system could not but be weak. Every social change is inevitably accompanied by a more or less explicitly expressed law disobedience. In Bulgaria, this weakness is manifested on the level of both *legislative norms* and relations inside the *structure* of legal system and *actual activity*.

Founding the government of law, the new legislation has stressed primarily on the newly acquired civil rights and liberties but has proved to be especially *inefficient* in respect to the newly developed forms of crime. For example, for a very long time there have not been any provisions against racketeering, customs regulations violations and tax evasion, enrichment through quotas and licenses granting, “hidden” privatization, faked payments, banking offenses, unprovided credits, etc. while these practices have been increasing and have turned into one of the major social problems.

Besides, since the very beginning of changes effectuation the penal laws were “democratized” and this resulted primarily in detectives’ overburdening, delays of court case hearings, non-observance of deadline for announcing the sentences, turning many court cases back to the D.A.s and as a whole a general inefficiency and clumsiness of the courts.

The guarantees for citizens rights protection are materialized not only in legal norms but in the “ability of the magistrates to protect and to preserve the rights of the separate individual” [4, p. 113]. The *actual abilities* of the different sections of the legal system (courts, prosecution, investigation and police) has proved to be absolutely inadequate. All of them have been seriously shaken by political changes and have survived many personnel changes, firings, closing-downs and dismissals of whole departments. Their weakening is a result both of these reorganizations and the party-biased way the changes have been effectuated. Personnel substitutions with each change of political power could not but give birth to feelings of indifference, apathy, and fear when one had been trying to fulfill their job requirements strictly.

Initially, the attacks against *police* as the visible symbol of the old repressive regime were especially strong. The attempts at “secondary politicization” just strengthened the erosion of police officers’ moral and willingness to fulfill their functions. Some of them quickly changed their “color” (out of purely pragmatic motives -- the way they had been members of the BCP once) in order to get promotions in their careers, some were dismissed and those who stayed were not especially enthusiastic about their jobs. A substantial part of police officers and former state security staff quit their jobs and started doing private business. Together with the destruction of political police many other departments of intelligence and counter-intelligence, the former anti-terrorist squads, the specialized economic intelligence, etc. were reorganized and/or “purified”^{xxxii}.

During this period there were thousands vacancies at police departments. Many towns and even whole areas did not have any police protection and obviously some other “law” governed there. The Ministry of the interior is saturated with corruption and in some cases it was even “corroded” from inside. A new and common phenomenon was that some of the dismissed and even the functioning police officers went on the other side of the law.

If the enormous crime rates are considered together with the new dangers (low salaries, unspecified working hours, severely cut budget for gas, special equipment, etc.) the reasons for the inefficient work of the law enforcing agencies and their inability to observe the legal deadlines become clear. Besides, the state has proved to be poor and weak enough to be unable to guarantee *witnesses’* lives and safety.

The *strong contradictions* (resulting mainly from the political incompatibility) between the main parts of the legal system -- the courts and the prosecution on the one hand and the investigation agencies and police on the other hand, should be considered as reasons for the new democratic government of law weakness. They manifested in numerous scandalous cases of mutual accusations and criticisms sometimes resulting in arrests [12]. Crime strengthened at the account of the struggles in the legal system as well.

The judges do not want to give the accused the benefit of the doubt but they do not want to sentence too and blame the investigators for their unsatisfactory job. *The witnesses* are filled with indignation with prosecutors letting go well-known criminals on bail who then have to be arrested again (quite often with the help of the Interpol). As a result thousands of *investigation cases are delayed with years*.

At least up till 1997, the Parliaments could not prepare the necessary amendments in the laws in connection to the new quality of crime in Bulgaria. In this situation the extremely *low level of crime*

detection and penalty execution [13] as well as the *unequal social justice administration*^{xxxiii} is quite understandable.

The result of this situation is the extraordinary increase of crime rates^{xxxiv}, organized crime included^{xxxv}. *Child crimes* are also increasing, especially in the big cities [19]. At the same time it is reasonable to believe that the *hidden and non-explicit crime* is also increasing because of the extremely low trust people have in the law-enforcing agencies [20].

Till not long ago, the main political parties accused each other for this state of affairs and with good reasons. According to the one point of view, BSP quite purposefully destroyed the court system because it was aware where Bulgaria was heading off to and did not want previously committed crimes to be proved. In other words, the Ministry of Interior and the court system defeat was purposefully induced because of egoistic party motives [21].

According to the other point of view, the P. Dimitrov government started a real war of institutions trying to impose political control over the National Intelligence Service. At that time the constant mutual accusations of the courts, police, investigation agencies and prosecution started and all this weakened these institutions [22].

During its two-year rule, BSP failed in its fight against crime, its government did not manage to limit it and to carry out the largely publicized "Clear hands" operation. The President-appointed cabinet of S. Sofiansky started the notorious "Mosquito" operation and carried out several ostensive actions. The fight against crime was included as one of the main goals in the Declaration for national recovery of Bulgaria which was signed in May 1997 by all political parties represented in the new 38th Parliament.

According to V. Mutafchieva, the increased violence and crime is a direct consequence of the former mass education in the spirit of class-party ethics -- a pre-modern, pre-Christian ethics that justifies any actions which are favorable to the party and the class. When the party and the class "disappeared" as ideological pillars this pre-ethics model manifested in a full-blown proportions -- everything became justifiable but this time in the name of one's own egoistic interest [23]. Thus crime is explained in terms of the *boomerang effect of the preserved moral legacy*. It is the revenge for the unsurmounted past.

Although plausible, this explanation is insufficient insofar it does not answer the questions, "What has permitted the old model (or parts of it) to preserve itself in such a strong form after the "change"? What new conditions favored its maintenance and not its eradication?"

The general answer is again the way the change was effectuated -- *an abrupt cultural discontinuity* which has been enforced from the top and for which people have not been prepared. The majority of the population has faced with an unfamiliar environment and having to solve the new problems of sheer survival (economic crisis, impoverishment, unemployment, etc.), people were forced to exert a *frustrated behavior*. According to this point of view, the *mass violence in the post-communist period is an expression of mass confusion*. The fiasco of all absurd ideas of a better life from the beginning transformed into different forms of frustration, aimless aggression included.

Political incompatibility and cynicism of the new-old political elites has played a substantial part for the strong social disintegration and the decay of moral order. Together with the above mentioned post-communist version of "marketization", they soon substituted the initially widely publicized ideals and goals with the outspoken egoistic interest which does not recognize any ethics^{xxxvi}.

The *political repercussions* of the situation the legal system was in have been very unfavorable for the process of democratization and democracy consolidation.

(i) Disappointment with the (weak) democratic lawfulness inevitably results in *disappointment with democracy per se*, with its moral legitimacy. In this way the above mentioned desire for a "firm hand" has flourished because people want someone to supply again or to establish firmly the "strict" social order.

(ii) The criminal context has worked *against the formation* of a middle class. Individuals from this forming stratum have become the major object of racketeering and other violations. The gross capital has not been affected because it is powerful enough to protect itself.

(iii) The *legal nihilism* has prospered. Laws could be imposed only with force but this presupposes a strong court system and strong law enforcing agencies. What happens when these are weak, too? Obviously, *law as an instrument* of social change has its limitations. At a certain point it needs the "law" of power embodied by a new and sufficiently legitimate social group. There is no such group in post-communist societies and hence the contradictions of new norms establishment.

(iv) The sense of *moral illegitimacy* of the new rule of law has been reinforced by the obviously criminal nature of the greater part of the new capital.

(v) The sense of insecurity has been a result both of people's facing the ordinary street crime and their unfortunate experience with *as if market economy*, e.g. financial schemes for quick enrichment (the so-called pyramids), bank bankruptcies, insecure institutional environment for their property.

(vi) If a *state* cannot guarantee its citizens' lives, rights, liberties, property, it becomes "useless." When it passes laws which are not obeyed, people start following other, informal rules and norms. Then why should one pay taxes to such a state?

(vii) The paralysis of the tax administration and the legal institutions is not just a *consequence* but also a *reason* for the further increase of illegal practices.

The analysis presented here grants support to O'Donnell's thesis [25] that the inefficient democratic rule of law actually leads to discrediting the democratic power because it cannot guarantee democracy's liberal components -- civil rights and liberties. *The actual disappearance of equality in the face of law is equal to disappearance of equality in political rights* and hence of the very civil society as such. O'Donnell calls it "a type of civil society with low intensity" to which the "uninstitutionalized" or "delegated" type of democracy corresponds. It is characterized with democratic institutions weakness and thus with relative strength of other, non-democratic rules and norms.

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Endnotes

Summary

The presented analysis grants support to the initial hypothesis of the relative weakness of democratic consolidation in Bulgaria. This weakness manifested primarily in (i) the acute confrontation between the main political parties; (ii) the failure (at least up till May 1997) these parties to sign a general agreement on the priorities of change; (iii) the inefficient functioning of the Parliament and the governments in the name of economic reform goals; (v) corruption of state administration and increasing crime rates; (vi) insufficient responsibility of the national mass-media; (vii) weak civil society. The political and ideological struggles were transformed into serious “wars” inside and between the main state institutions.

The main contribution of the present research consists in the clarification of the reasons for these weaknesses. They are due to the way the change has been effectuated: (i) from top to bottom; “agreed upon” and dominated by the elite; (ii) simultaneous democratization and transition to market economy. This type of transition has led to the transferring of the greater part of the old political staff, the old government mechanisms, economic practices and value orientations to the new conditions rather than to their elimination.

That is why the conceptual framework of the *legacy approach* (part of which is the link between values and institutions) proves to be much more efficient in comparison with the *liberalization imperatives* approach. The struggle between the legacy and the new imperatives has developed unequally in the different spheres and phases of change.

(i) The rules of the *procedural democracy* have been quite quickly established but it is much more difficult to consolidate the new democratic *ethos* of respect to the other’s worthiness. This could explain the predominant models of political intolerance, inability to carry out a dialogue and reach compromises.

(ii) The newly created market institutions have proved to be much more weaker than the inherited pseudo-market, “hidden” economic practices. The “perverse” institutionalization of the market has led to identifying democracy with economic reform difficulties.

(iii) Because of the weakness of civil society, the state has remained the main instrument of change and this fact explains the preserved strength of the inherited state bureaucracy. “Liberated” from the former political control, it has proved to be quite disposed to corruption.

(iv) Political incompatibility has led to the weakening of the major state institutions, the legal one included. Thus, the weak democratic rule of law has also contributed to democracy’s idea discrediting.

(v) At the same time, strong political actors and institutions which would maintain the legacy have not appeared. This explains its gradual erosion and democracy’s preservation -- due to the fact that there is no other reasonable alternative.

(vi) The international pressure and limitations (which are not analyzed here in details) have played a crucial role for political regime’s stabilization and economic reforms’ acceleration.

The success of democratic consolidation requires first and foremost the stabilization of the main state (and especially the legal) institutions. For this purpose, the ruling party should: (i) look for the dialogue and the support of the other political parties and the citizens, and to rely on the strength of the new democratic law; (ii) finish the economic reform and to eliminate any conditions which would maintain the old practices that are connected to the “black” market and the organized crime; (iii) to institutionalize firmly the possible social conflicts under the strongly restrictive state budget (currency board); (iv) to give wide space to private initiative in order to increase the number of the middle class representatives. The ideological and moral legitimization of the new order is equally important and the new political elite is obliged to do this. This means exerting efforts for “purification” of collective memory, uniting national symbols (e.g. the state coat of arms), reinforcing citizens’ self-respect (reduction or elimination of visa limitations), personal moral modeling of vicarious experiencing transition’s difficulties.

The strong concentration of political power around the UDF today -- the Parliament, the government, the President’s Office, the Constitutional Court -- could be both a real chance of success in these difficult tasks and a prerequisite of some form of a hidden authoritarian regime. The latter is especially likely to happen in case the new economic policy fails.

¹ “The common feature for all post-dictatorship periods is the presence of such non-democratic consciousness. For example, in post-fascist Spain the researchers observe that their country has to struggle against the *grave legacy of the authoritarian power models which have turned into mass habits which manifest even on the level of formal political practice* [11, Chapter 1].

² For example, S. Mainwaring reduces them to three main requirements: (i) competitive elections which make possible the power changes; (ii) general suffrage; (iii) recognition and protection of the main civil liberties and the rights of minorities [18, pp. 297-298]. D. Collier and J.

Mahon sum up the democracy concept in four main components: (i) contestation; (ii) participation; (iii) accountability and rule of law; (iv) protection [19, p. 851].

³ *Institutions* are regularized patterns of interaction that are known, practiced, and regularly accepted (if not necessary normatively approved) by social agents who accept to continue interacting under the rules and norms formally or informally embodied in those patterns. Sometimes, but not necessarily, institutions become formal organizations... [23b, p. 59].

⁴ The main difficulty of such agreement is the ability "to make binding and collective choices (or, as we shall see, non-choices) between alternative institutional arrangements that are compatible with existing socio-economic structure and cultural identities" [25, p. 64].

⁵ This requirement is an absolute necessity because there is no guarantee that the political party that has won the elections on the basis of a non-canalized social protest would be able to meet the heightened social expectations.

⁶ One of the consequences in respect to people's behavior under these circumstances is the substantial *age difference* among them. As a rule, most of the elderly people as well as some older social structures (family, bureaucracy, etc.) would demonstrate a stronger inertia in the process of their reorientation. Another consequence (contrary to the first one) is the ability of a part of the former socially *marginal groups and individuals* (with intermediate position in the old culture) to quickly reorient. This is due to their weak former socialization and integration and hence, their openness to the new thought and behavior patterns.

ⁱ The direct interference of political power into economic relations for redistribution of income, elimination of economic competitors, etc. is possible but this would mean to undermine the foundations of the very right to own private property and the (incipient) market. This condition is the *interference demarcation line* of a democratic government in a country with market economy [6b, p. 144, 145].

ⁱⁱ While struggling for the right to be a mass one, every party gives birth to oligarchic tendencies in its members [8, pp. 54-74].

ⁱⁱⁱ On the issue of the more general reasons for "losing the historical initiative" by the new anti-Communist elite of Bulgaria, see [9, pp. 41-51]. Ivan Kostov himself said afterwards that in 1991 there had been "no agreement on the major priorities of country's government... It was not even clear what reform meant." [10]

^{iv} The role of the former President in the democratic consolidation in Bulgaria is a separate issue which could not be covered here. It suffices to note that the ex-President Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev has been one of the founders and the first Chairman of the UDF. In 1992, he strongly criticized the Philip Dimitrov government mainly because of the slow economic reforms. He hoped a second UDF government would be formed but this did not happen and the UDF was overthrown. In this way the President lost the support of the political force that distinguished him as a Presidential candidate. Afterwards that was the reason he lost the Presidential elections in 1996.

^v For example, the party announces that in the name of the struggle against the exceptionally high crime rates there will be a "temporary" violation of basic rights and liberties of the citizens and the majority of the population is ready to voluntarily give them up and to "substitute" them for greater social security and safety [22].

^{vi} At that time it was an illusion to think that during the "Perestroyka" the struggle was between the "intelligentsia" and the "bureaucracy" [28]. The democratically-minded intellectuals were used just as public speakers on behalf of the "reformers". Through their criticisms against the system they fulfilled their pre-Revolutionary "educational functions". It is a different point that at that time the interests of the two groups were similar.

^{vii} Civil society is conceived "as the realm of organized life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from "society" in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in public sphere to express interests, passions, and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable." [1, p. 5].

^{viii} Although the first step to liberalizing the regime has been taken from the top as usual, we would agree with A. Przeworski that the very decision for liberalization combines elements from the actions both of those on top and those at the bottom [7]. In the case of Bulgaria, however, the late-Communist elite has ventured some actions at changing the system not because of the influence of internal mass anti-Communist events but as a result of the events in the other former Communist countries and Moscow's ideas of "Perestroyka".

^{ix} It was not a coincidence that in October 1992, 25% of the respondents answered positively to the question whether the idea of Communism was a perversion while 44% answered *negatively* [11, p. 209]. This could be explained as a criticism against ideology but also against the people who abused the idea of equality.

^x Even the Polish *Solidarnost* in the beginning was an attempt to re-establish the classic socialist values in the struggle against Communist bureaucracy abuses.

^{xi} This influence of the "image" of the West over the mass Communist consciousness was like the one of the American Revolution over the French one -- not through real events but through what people imagined about the events which were happening there [8, p. 257].

^{xii} In the eve of economic reforms, namely in September 1990, 85% of the adult population in Bulgaria expected with great hopes and optimism (the prevailing attitudes) Bulgaria's future. The skeptics were just 5% and the pessimists were 7% [15].

^{xiii} As a whole, however, "workers, employees and pensioners, people with high school and university education, young people, individuals living in the big cities and in the capital predominate (although not substantially) in the "blue" voters groups. The pensioners, the people with elementary and high school education and the elderly, the villagers and the small-town inhabitants absolutely dominate in the "red" voters groups." [12, p. 94]

^{xiv} For example, (1) "the red quasi-ethos experiences itself as a historical inheritor of the social subject who had fought against exploitation in the period of the "wild" capitalism and during socialism has been self-sacrificing itself and building the fairest society... The "red" quasi-ethos perceives the period after October 1991, when the UDF took hold of the power, as an attempt to restore the "wild" capitalism", as a revenge of the inheritors of their enemies...; (2) The "blue" quasi-ethos has exactly the opposite views of history. They consider the period prior to the "socialist revolution" as the "successful" period for Bulgaria. Bulgaria has been a "normal" country then. The socialist revolution was a tragedy for our nation. Communists created a faked, superficial, and freaked out society..." [17, pp. 35-36].

^{xv} "However, Communism's potential of intolerance, aggression and authoritarian tendencies reemerged in a different language, in a different ritual and under different banners." [21]

^{xvi} Research results could be summarized as "passivity in connection to participation in privatization and expectations for state administrative decisions in the sphere of economic processes; an attitude of severe deprivation versus avoiding the free market risks." [11, p. 46, 47; 12, p. 132].

^{xvii} If the identification of politics and administrative decision making (i.e. politics is perceived as one-sided rule without civil participation) [26, Chapter 1] was typical for authoritarianism and remained dominant in people's minds, in the post-communist consciousness a more general identification of democratization with "marketization" of politics and economy could be observed.

^{xviii} Although it might seem paradoxical, both the quick industrialization if accompanied by quick democratization and the shock transition to market economy are especially dangerous for democracy and do not favor the development of the post-communist democratization process. On the contrary, it has strengthened the "culture shock" in its totality.

^{xix} "The survey reveals that the disappointments of the East Europeans are not a result of a sincere desire to revive totalitarianism but a dissatisfaction with the chaos in economy and politicians' blunders." [28]

^{xx} Since 1991 up till now several entities share the top places in respect to political trust of the people: the national radio, the army, the President and the national TV, while the Parliament, the local administration, the courts and the investigation services share the bottom places. The governments, the law enforcement agencies and the Church are usually placed somewhere in-between on the scale of trust and the governments generally enjoy widespread distrust [11, 3; 12, 1].

^{xxi} In August 1996, 49% of the respondents believed the politicians did not tell the truth; 61% thought in their actions they were governed by personal interests, and 59% were convinced that the politicians did not know ordinary people's problems [29].

^{xxii} The objective data and the subjective people's assessments reveal the existence of a middle class which is "middle" according to the conditions in the country and not according to the standards of the developed countries. According to different surveys, it varies around 25% which is quantitatively much less than the 65% of the people who objectively and subjectively are described as progressively impoverished in the transition process [24, p. 45].

^{xxiii} The general conclusion from the research studies on the political views of the poor strata as a "new participants" in the political process is that their situation favors the formation of rather "authoritarian power models." These reasoning schemes are the result of a powerful non-independence of the individual. Instead of manifesting personal initiative they "prefer" to give up from some of their liberty in favor to some grouping or party structure and to receive for it guarantees for survival and security [30, pp. 361-373].

^{xxiv} This fact is in sharp contrast with the expressed opinion of the majority of voters that this two-party model is fruitless and even dangerous. Researchers explain this contradiction as an example of disappointment with the main political parties' activities and not as a real support for such hypothetical center [11, p. 132].

^{xxv} The general conclusion is that the socialist attitude toward the state is deeply rooted in social mind despite party preferences [11, p. 25]. The data of comparative studies in Albania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia are similar. [32]

^{xxvi} According to Rogowski, "even in the West the main reason to "give" the power in the framework of the "social contract" consists of the requirement it to provide first and foremost security and safety of people and not so much to realize some beforehand agreed upon and prevailing social ideal." [37]

^{xxvii} Thus " on the background of everyday complaints from fate it is impressive that only one fifth of the people believe that they could hardly make both ends meet (which is substantially less than the total number of pensioners in the country). Almost 42% believe they live "normally"... Only 27.5% of the respondents expect to live worse than now in a few years and 58% believe they will live the way they live now or even better [36].

^{xxviii} Under the conditions of a state (political) organization it is only the law which can guarantee individuals' liberty. It is the main factor for observing the political and the other guarantees for liberty." [1, p. 11]

^{xxix} It is a well-known fact that the "differentiation of power structures is always connected with relative tension and some counter-action among political parties which are identified with certain parts of power" [4, p. 77] but parties that do not represent clear-cut social interests and are not controlled from the bottom are capable to destroy the idea of differentiated power structures unity.

^{xxx} Some hopes for reaching such consensus result from the unanimous passing of the Declaration for national recovery by the 38th Parliament on May 8, 1997. The years to follow will show whether it is a real agreement and not just a piece of paper.

^{xxxi} S.H. Alatas describes the drastic increase of corruption in some former colonial countries and especially in India after its liberation. It affects not only the local private and foreign entrepreneurship but the schools, universities, courts, police, churches, hospitals, prisons, army. It turns into a prosperous subsystem of economy which is connected with powerful politicians and the criminal underground world [5, pp. 69-76]. The same scope of corruption could be observed in Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia.

^{xxxii} This justifies some authors' views that in post-communist societies the great crime rates which are connected to the "spontaneous, criminally organized redistribution of national income" [11] are born as if from top to bottom and hence the idea about the "criminal character" of the revolutions in the East European countries. It is not a coincidence that some of the most powerful new economic groupings have been created with the explicit participation of some of these professionals.

^{xxxiii} "The courts sentence and put in jail one and the same illiterate people, mainly gypsies... More than 80% of all inmates are gypsies. It seems, they are the most easily "digestible" group for Bulgarian legislation both prior November 10, 1989 and now..." [14].

^{xxxiv} See [15, p. 51] and [16] for similar data from other Central European countries. The number of crimes per 1000 citizens in Bulgaria for the years of 1989 to 1994 is as follows: 1989 -- 663; 1990 -- 763; 1991 -- 2042; 1992 -- 2646; 1993 -- 2606; 1994 -- 2644.

^{xxxv} According to data presented at a national meeting of the Ministry of Interior, almost 9,000 are the participants in the organized crime groups in Bulgaria. Their conception could be traced back to 1990. "Initially, they began as purely racketeering groups. Then on the second stage they became "security firms" and nowadays they are already in the insurance business [17]. According to other data, now in Bulgaria there are about 4,000 "security firms which act in more than 62,000 places and have an "army" of almost 100,000 employees, most of whom have guns. For the sake of comparison, according to the published data, about 114,000 people serve in the military [18].

^{xxxvi} "We need a lot of courage to admit that today we are a society of decay. The decay started with the cynicism of the ruling elite and the public rejection of principles, ideals, scruples. Politics and business crushed down and scoffed at ordinary decency..." [24]