

DEMOCRATIZATION - CONCEPTUAL DELINEATIONS

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ABSTRACT:

DEMOCRATIZATION TERM IS USED IN SOCIOLOGY IN A VAGUE SENSE, IGNIFYING THE PASSAGE OF A STATE AWAY FROM NON-DEMOCRATIC REGIME TO A DEMOCRATIC ONE. IN THE PRESENT PAPER WE WANT TO PRESENT MEANING OF THE WORD DEMOCRATIZATION, STARTING FROM ITS ORIGINS AND REACHING MEANING OF THE TERM TODAY. OUR SCIENTIFIC APPROACH FOCUSES ON THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM AND THE TRANSITION COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE TO DEMOCRACY .

KEY WORDS: POST COMMUNISM, DEMOCRACY, EAST EUROPE, DEMOCRATIZATION, FREEDOM

In the middle of the 80s, in terms of global politics, we talk about a third wave of democratization, which was noticed by those concerned with the study of world politics. Calling on recent history, we see that the third wave followed by two periods of expansion of democracy: the first is to be found in the XIX century, and that the second in the first years after the Second World War. Until 1990, different governments have been invested in construction in a stable democracy in various countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Poland, Philippines, Argentina and South Korea. If we set as a starting point 1989, We notice how the collapse of communism and pro-democracy demonstrations in China have led to the belief that liberal democracy becomes the only legitimate political ideology².

The collapse of Soviet Empire marked the beginning of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe and was perceived as a political and economic triumph of the West. One famous interpretation of this event was attributed by Francis Fukuyama, as representing an *end of history*. Going forward, we can sustain that democracy was *a new chapter of history*, marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall, and not an end, as the Fukuyama sustained . *A chapter* in the possibility of a viable alternative to capitalism affirmation or democracy was virtually nonexistent³.

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² Flavius Cristian Marcau, *Democratization in the former Communist States: imposition or necessity?*, in *Research and Science Today*, No. 1(7)/2014, p.81

³ Flavius Cristian Marcau, *Democratization in the former Communist States: imposition or necessity?*, in *Research and Science Today*, No. 1(7)/2014, p.81

To continue our scientific approach, it requires the definition of democracy. What is it? First, above all, the term refers to construction of a democratic state but bear in mind that democracy means more than simply introducing elections. The first studies on the concept democratization were made in the early 70's⁴, and their approach strict *vis a vis* process itself, the authors focusing on providing some viable explanations on mechanisms that led to democratization. Were launched definitions of the term that meant "*simply transform the political system from non-democracy to a responsible and representative government*"⁵ omitting the explanation which could reach democracy. We make these statements based on the description given by the theorist Robert Dahl concept of American democracy has made a treatment of this process, which Western countries have passed (from point of view socio-historical), considering two coordinates: the right of citizens to participate in political life and its ability to challenge government decisions.

Starting from these two coordinates, Dahl describes four possible forms of political regime:

1) *closed hegemony* when there is no possibility of participation and contestation; 2) *comprehensive hegemony* when there is opportunity to participate but missing the possibility of opposition (the opposition); 3) *competitive oligarchy* when there is the right to participate but there is the possibility of contesting and 4) *polyarchy* when citizens enjoy both rights: challenging government decisions and political participation⁶. Therefore, we can say that full democratization of the state is a combination of institutional change (form of the state), change representativeness (who influence policy and towards to who is responsible the state) and functional transformation (what does the state or which is the area of responsibility)⁷.

Stepan in the book *Paths Toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations* (1986) identify eight distinct pathways leading to democratization:

1. The internal restoration after liberating foreign intervention: *the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway and Denmark (all after 1945)*
2. Internal reconfiguration: *France (after 1945)*
3. Installation external monitoring: *West Germany and Japan (after 1945)*
4. Initiated democratization within authoritarian regime: *Spain (1977), Brazil (1982), Portugal (1974)*
5. Final determined by society: *Argentina (1969), Peru (1977)*
6. Pact between parties: *Colombia (1958), Venezuela (1958)*
7. Organized violent uprising (led by democratic parties) : *Costa Rica (1948)*
8. Revolutionary war led by Marxists: *Nicaragua (1979)*⁸

Besides these eight pathways, we identified four more pliable to communist states in Central and Eastern Europe since the early 80s:

1. External influences (the West, the Vatican, etc.): *Poland (1981), Hungary (1988), Romania (1987)*
2. Negotiation with civil society: *Poland (1989), Hungary (1988)*

⁴ See Jean Grugel, *Democratization*, p.17

⁵ Jean Grugel, *Democratization*

⁶ Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition*, Publisher European Institute, Iasi, 2000, 32-33

⁷ Jean Grugel, *Democratization*, Iasi: Polirom, 2008, pp. 77-78

⁸ See Jean Grugel, *Democratization*, p 17-19; J. Link, A. Stepan, *Problem of democratic transition and consolidation: South Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996; L. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, Johns Hopkins University Press, London, 1999

3. Fractionation of Communist Party : *Bulgaria (1988)*4. Quitting USSR influence: *Romania, R. D. Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland*

Some researchers sustain that the transition to democracy depends on the existence in society of special preconditions social, economic or cultural, though there is little agreement on the role of these preconditions. A different school of thought believes that democratization is primarily the political leaders who have the will and skill to initiate this process⁹. However, obviously both preconditions and democratic construction have their importance and facilitates democratic construction but certain preconditions regarding the transition, we can say that, in terms of the process was a novelty. First, according to Catalin Zamfir, "*transforming a socialist organization in a capitalist process represent a new, inexperienced in history until now.*"¹⁰ In the second, the transition to be a viable one has been accomplished on the basis of a strategic plan. Nothing was done randomly just that some countries have entered the slope democracy faster than others, and this was due strictly political class reached the lead after the fall of communism.

Any strategic plan is well defined, includes details of operations and anticipated results. We can not say that the achievement of a strategic plan developed properly will achieve the results anticipated. We say this, starting from the fact that the very newness of the transition process generated several questions about the future of democratic state building : how should look like a society built on a plan? Who built this plan and if it correct or not? Are there better alternatives? Chasing something, for personal, those who made this plan? There will be difficulties or failures in the process of construction? These are questions that have generated fear because of the unknown or distrust in the political class, and this was due to the long years spent under the communist regime. There are natural questions given that communism was based on a plan do just that failed.

I said earlier that the transition is a novelty that she only began in 1989, when the communist regime disappeared in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe, but much earlier. We make this statement starting from the idea of reform is not a communist society, but from the collective contiinta considering that from the beginning, large segments of the population opposed to the new model of social organization imposed by the totalitarian regime. As an example. Catalin Zamfir, says that "*the only hope was to change miliatre international political relations, expressed in popular hope that Americans will come.*"¹¹

By focusing on the collapse of communism, it requires an explanation about its total dissolution, begun in 1985 under Jean-Fracois Revel. Trying to offer an explanation of this phenomenon of dissolution, we want to obey carefully what Tolstoy said about losing a war "*is not lost after a series of defeats, how serious they are, but when you convinced that you lost.*"¹²

We can not say that the regime has not suffered any defeat until 1985, on the contrary, but suffered failures over time have made to ease the number of followers or that they lose confidence. Recent history provides enough information atrocities committed about spreading fear among the population and about maintaining party terror but they have not made the trust to be lost among supporters of socialism. Novelty factor was felt in

⁹ See Adrian Gorun, *Political thinking and the idea of freedom*, Targoviste: Bibliotheca Publishing House, 2006

¹⁰ Catalin Zamfir, *A critical analysis of the transition*, p 18

¹¹ Catalin Zamfir, *A critical analysis of the transition*, p 19

¹² Jean Francois Revel, *Revival of democracy*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1995, p 138

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the '80s, when trust communists in communist regime was shaken. *"Three quarters of a century had believed in the triumph of what was to come and avenge them shiny nothingness suffered. Then in a day, and have lost their faith: they have left than eternal disappointment disaster that I have lived somewhat odious and ridiculous"*¹³

¹³ Jean Francois Revel, *Revival of democracy*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1995, p 139

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