

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

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PUBLIC LIFE DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STATE FORMATION PROCESS AND GLOBAL TRENDS OF POLITICAL TRANSITION

The article suggests to consider the problem of new states political recognition through the prism of political transitology, a modern theory of political changes, on the example of the Pridnestrovian (Transnistrian) Moldavian Republic. The author reveals the stages of political transition theory formation and grounds to make a conclusion that initially the object of research within the framework of the late stage in the evolution of political transitology was degeneration of democratic principles in established democracies. However, the collapse of the socialist federations and, as a consequence, the development of state formation process within their territories turned the research interests of the theory supporters to the problem of democratization in the new states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Analyzing the political processes taking place in Pridnestrovie (Transnistria) and around it, the author argues that the democratization of public life in Pridnestrovie (Transnistria) takes place within the global trends framework and this, in its turn, is one of the grounds for the Pridnestrovian (Transnistrian) people to have a right for independent statehood. According to the author, future of the states appeared on the political map in the late 20th and early 21st centuries is in the recognition of changed modern world realities by all interested parties.

Key words: democratization of public life, political transition, state formation processes, legitimation of new states.

The concept of «political transition» was included in the scientific terminology not long ago. This category formation was due to limitations of the political modernization theory, which originated in the last quarter of the 20th century and is expressed in its engagement. It turned out that in the theory framework forecasting scenarios of the political development is possible only in a general way. Political practice needs to make analysts, public figures and political leaders answer specific questions and deal with specific political problems.

Firstly, it is a question of what kind of political system should be established in order the state power, the ruling party and other political institutions can most effectively contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress. Secondly, it is a question of what changes need to be carried out in the political system for the implementation of democratic governance of the society. These two problems make up the contents of the political transition as a political transitology process and as a political changes theory. Thus, the study of the democratization processes is an essential element of the study of political transition and political modernization.

In the studies the political scientists carried out within the past three decades, democratization refers to the processes taking place in the successor states within the former Soviet and post-socialist space. However, many researchers forget that the term «democratization» appeared in connection with the development of the political process in Europe and in the world after the Second World War. Changes in the political life during that period were marked by F. Schmitter as the second wave of democratization; moreover, this scientific term was introduced in connection with the Hitler Coalition Member States¹. The process of democratization in Germany, Italy and Japan had its own characteristics, but to some extent was the result of both direct or indirect impact on these countries on the part of the United States; and the primary sources of democratization in those regions were external factors rather than internal ones.

1 Schmitter, Ph. (1995). Waves of Democratization. *In Encyclopedia of Democracy*, 2, New York, 346-350.

The current stage of the political transition development theory started in 1971, when the Yale University hosted a seminar on the problems of Brazil political development which showed relatively high rates of economic growth after the military coup. This workshop outcome was the publication of «Authoritarian Brazil. Origins, Policies, and Future» edited by A. Stepan, which criticized the modernization theory in the light of the transformation processes in the political life of Brazil and some other Latin American countries. The result of the leading political scientists controversy was the introduction of the «authoritarian situation regime» concept into the scientific literature. The concept is considered to be a special form of a political regime which is different from the total authoritarianism¹.

The key point of the modern political transitology development is a three-volume monograph «The Breakdown of democratic regimes» edited by J. Linz and A. Stepan and published in 1978. In this work, the causes and symptoms of the democracy collapse in the twentieth century, basic forms and this process patterns were examined through the comparative historical analysis method; and the problems of possible recovery and consolidation of democracy were investigated². Since that time, the main focus in the research of transitive dynamical systems was placed on the transition to democracy, which was due to the changing nature of the world development and the beginning of a new wave of democratization in the world. Published in 1986 and in 1991 respectively the collective monograph under the title «Democracy in Developing Countries» edited by L. Diamond, J. Linz, S. Lipset³ and the monograph «The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century» by S. Huntington⁴ contributed to the creation of a new research paradigm, which includes a sample analysis of the transition processes to democracy in the modern societies.

Initially, the research focus within the late stage of the of political transition theory development was the deficiencies and the democratic principles degeneration in the countries with so-called stable democracies. By the end of the 1980s, it became obvious that democracies, even in the developed countries, are not the ideal social order the states with emerging democracies could and should follow. However, the political changes that led to the collapse of the USSR and the world socialist system turned the research interests of the specialists in the political transitology field to the political life democratization processes in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. A new stage in the political transitology development is characterized by a variety of approaches to the social transformations analysis. In modern political science, attempts to conceptualize the changes in the post-communist countries are taking place now; and theoretical reflection is based either on revealing general logic of the processes of transition from authoritarianism and post-totalitarianism to democracy observed in different countries over the past two and a half decades, or on revealing specific conditions, tasks and other elements of the democratic process in these countries.

The task of the theorists studying the social system development is to figure out which specific events influence the further development of the political regime. According to S. Rokkan, the results of such events as the Reformation, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 determined several ways of the political system development in the European countries. In the early 21st century, this list of events can become longer through including such events as the Second World War, the collapse of the Soviet state and the establishment of a unipolar political world into it. Characterizing the processes specified in the political field of the post-Soviet space, including internationally unrecognized Transnistria (hereafter Pridnestrovie, in accordance with the local name), one should underline the priority influence of internal factors on the processes of the public life democratization. Moreover, it should be noted that these diverse and sometimes conflicting factors make up a unity the result of which is a political development trend. An example of this is contextualism and universalism, globalism and localism, legitimation and self-legitimation, democratic diffusion and democratic evolution.

Thus, legitimation implies recognition of the political regime. Traditionally, the legitimacy of the political regime is associated with the ability of the political power to solve economic and social problems

1 Stepan, A. (1973). *Authoritarian Brazil. Origins, Policies, and Future*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

2 Linz, J., Stepan, A. (1978). *The Breakdown of democratic regimes*. Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

3 Diamond, L., Linz, J., Lipset, S. ets. (1999). *Democracy in Developing Countries*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

4 Huntington, S. (1993). *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

and meet the growing aspirations of the population on this basis. However, in regard to Pridnestrovie and other unrecognized post-Soviet states, the problem of the international recognition of the political regime legitimacy shifts from the socio-economic sphere into ideological one. However, the way to provide support to the power on the part of the population in the modern political field has not changed. Therefore, in the opinion of the Pridnestrovian population the political regime, which has evolved since 1990, is legitimate and the only possible one in the current political environment. Within this political regime, in Pridnestrovie, a constitutional system and a workable system of public authorities were established; and the region economic potential was preserved and increased. Both the government in general and the state leaders are trusted by the Pridnestrovian citizens. The indicator of the high degree of democratic principles development in the Pridnestrovian society is the last presidential election resulted in a change of the political elite. In December 2011, the first President of Pridnestrovie I. Smirnov, who was seventy years old at the election time and whose political position was formed during the Soviet period and was conservative in many ways, lost the election. The winner was a representative of the political elite new generation – a young (43 years old at the election time) liberal and reformer E. Shevchuk. Most experts predicted that the change of elites in Pridnestrovie would lead to an escalation of the political tensions in the breakaway republic, but in practice the change of power was a civilized democratic process.

Do the above mentioned facts mean the Pridnestrovian political organization has no disadvantages? No, it does not. However, it should be noted that this development of the events is a result of establishing a relatively effective system of interaction between the state mechanism and civil society in the environment where any Pridnestrovian citizen can appeal directly to a highest rank official through a public reception office; it is becoming a factor to stimulate the state development and improvement. Having such a possibility to get feedback from the authorities and government representatives manifests one of the many sides of the public life democratization in Pridnestrovie. One of the most effective channels for citizens to influence the authorities is a relatively new institution of the civil society – Public Chamber of the Pridnestrovian Republic established on August 3, 2012 in accordance with the Decree of the President of Pridnestrovie¹.

Analyzing the political processes taking place in Pridnestrovie and around it, one can come to a conclusion that despite all the negative epithets the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic got from its opponents – a «black hole», a «shard of totalitarianism» and so on – the public life democratization in the country is going on within the global trends. Studying various aspects of the Pridnestrovian social life indicates that there are more data supporting the democratic principles growth in the society life than the facts supporting the opposite.

The very formation of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, which can be classified as a direct action of masses in politics according to the political theory is an important argument to prove the democratic institutions development in the Pridnestrovian society. Another important component of the democracy processes in the society is the direct democracy forms development. Evaluating the role of such a form of direct democracy as a referendum in the political process, it should be noted that none of the internationally recognized states has so many referendums in political history in terms of the state age and the number of residents as Pridnestrovie has. The origin of direct democracy institutions in Pridnestrovie should be considered not as a mere borrowing of certain methods and principles from other democratic countries but as a result of an organically formed perceived need and as part of the national way of life. In accordance with the Constitution, referendum provides a direct taking part of the Pridnestrovian people in the state affairs management and administration².

Indirect evidences of the public life democratization are the population high political activity expressed, first of all, through taking part in referendums and elections and a high degree of trust to the different government branches. The results of the referendum conducted on September 17, 2006 on the relationships between the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova are of a conceptual importance for the further consolidation of the Pridnestrovian statehood and

1 Указ об Общественной палате Приднестровской Молдавской Республики. 2012 (Президент Приднестровской Молдавской Республики). *Официальный сайт Президента Приднестровской Молдавской Республики*. <<http://president.gospmr.ru/ru/news/ukaz-prezidenta-pmr-no515-ob-obshchestvennoy-palate-pridnestrovskoy-moldavskoy-respubliki>> (2015, January, 27).

2 Конституция Приднестровской Молдавской Республики 1995. *Официальный сайт Президента Приднестровской Молдавской Республики*. <<http://president.gospmr.ru/ru/news/konstituciya-pridnestrovskoy-moldavskoy-respubliki>> (2015, January, 27).

its legitimization on the international arena. 78.6 % of the population took part in the referendum the results of which show that more than 97 % of the Pridnestrovian citizens support the Republic independence and its further free joining the Russian Federation¹.

Evaluating the political situation in Pridnestrovie many researchers place the Pridnestrovian state on a par with Kosovo, Chechnya and other regions where there are heavy political conflicts due to ethnic confrontation. To consider the Pridnestrovian state from this point of view is a great mistake: there is no and has never been an ethnic dimension in the Pridnestrovian conflict. The Moldo-Pridnestrovian conflict is based on both political and socio-economic factors. The citizens of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic clearly identify themselves with a state, not with an ethnic group. This means that for the majority of the Pridnestrovian population self-awareness to be Pridnestrovians is more important than that of Moldavians, Russians, Ukrainians or representatives of any other nationality. Thus, there are all the grounds to state that within twenty-five years of existence there appeared a special community – the Pridnestrovian people – in the PMR, which is a precondition to form an independent state by this community.

Turning back to the division of political regimes into democratic and anti-democratic, it should be noted that according to most scholars concerned in political transition, the political regimes emerged within the post-Soviet space are difficult to be classified. To refer to such regimes scientists introduced such concepts as «delegative democracy», «administrative democracy», «authoritarian democracy» and «exclusive republic». G. O'Donnell suggested to denote transition regimes that are truly democratic in terms of formal procedures but have no evolution in the direction of liberal democracy as delegative democracy. Such regime characteristics as administrative democracy and authoritarian democracy introduced respectively by S. Fisch and R. Sakwa emphasize their hybrid nature and incomplete democracy elements. According to F. Roeder, an exclusive republic is a regime under which the power is accountable to one part of the population, while the other part is deprived of the rights². According to Western political scientists, authoritarian democracy developed in Russia and Kazakhstan where the government is accountable to a narrow circle of the political elite. This type of political regime appears due to converting populist regimes through a strong executive power establishment; it is considered to be most typical of the post-Soviet space. Administrative democracy where power is an agent of officials and clan groups can be observed in Tajikistan; and an exclusive republic can be observed in Estonia.

While considering the political regime in the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic one should take into account the fact that the origin, formation and development of the independent statehood began and continues to develop in a complex political environment of non-recognition, political, economic, ideological, and, at certain moments, violent pressure on the part of both official Chisinau and the international community. As for the relationship of authoritarian and democratic elements in the political regime, in the opinion of a sufficiently large number of political scientists, during the transitional periods an authoritarian regime with elements of a democratic regime is preferable for any state in terms of responsibility for the impact of political decisions and for all the events taking place in the country. Supporters and defenders of democracy recognise the actual presence of authoritarianism elements in any most democratic of all democracies in the modern political field. By their nature, they can be either subjective, connected with the political or state leader personality, or objective and depend on a particular political situation.

The political process development in Pridnestrovie within global trends thus becomes one more reason for the Pridnestrovian people to have a right to obtain an independent state. In our opinion, the right of Pridnestrovie to have a status of an independent state is not actual so far in the modern political world. The quarter-century history of the Pridnestrovian statehood is a good reason to believe the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic to be a full-fledged state. Today's agenda should contain the question to develop a mechanism for the new states recognition, since the problem of the new states recognition is important not only for Pridnestrovie.

The modern practice of international relations contains a contradiction between the two fundamental principles of international law: the right of people to self-determination and the principle of preserving the integrity and inviolability of the European states borders. It is rather problematic to prioritize in this context, but it is necessary to underline that the first principle is nearly 300 years old and the second one is only 40. Society is defined by modern science as a dynamic system, which implies an ability to change any

1 Волкова, А.З. (2006). *Референдумы в Приднестровской Молдавской Республике (1989-2006 гг.)*. Тирасполь: Типар, 15.

2 Мухаев, Р.Т. (2008). *Теория политики*. Москва: Юнити-Дана, 506.

of its elements including the international law norms if they become historical that is, they lose their importance and actuality in the current world. So, an offer for modern states to organize the lives of their citizens under the laws of Hammurabi or «Russian truth» by Yaroslav the Wise would be absurd. Therefore, the new realities of the international community development, an integral part of which are peoples of the self-proclaimed states, require the development of new political instruments and procedures and, if necessary, change of the international law norms.

The future of the states emerged on the political map in the late 20th and early 21st centuries is connected with recognition of the modern world changed realities by all interested parties. In this connection it is appropriate to turn to one of the popular theories of political transitology – the theory of ways – which focuses on the dependence of democracy emergence on a vector of historical development a country follows. The theory founder S. Larsen believes there are at least two opposite directions in the development of countries and peoples: 1) a «way of historical trajectories», which is a long historical path characterized by historical predestination and 2) a «strategy gap» corresponding to a democratic breakthrough, which is a changeable way dictating the cause and the effect. However, these opposite directions are united by the basic idea of the «theory of ways» that can serve as a motto of the new states active work towards achieving an international recognition¹. It is impossible to backtrack after taking a decision and cancel it; the development starts to go on the determined «path» according to the decision.

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