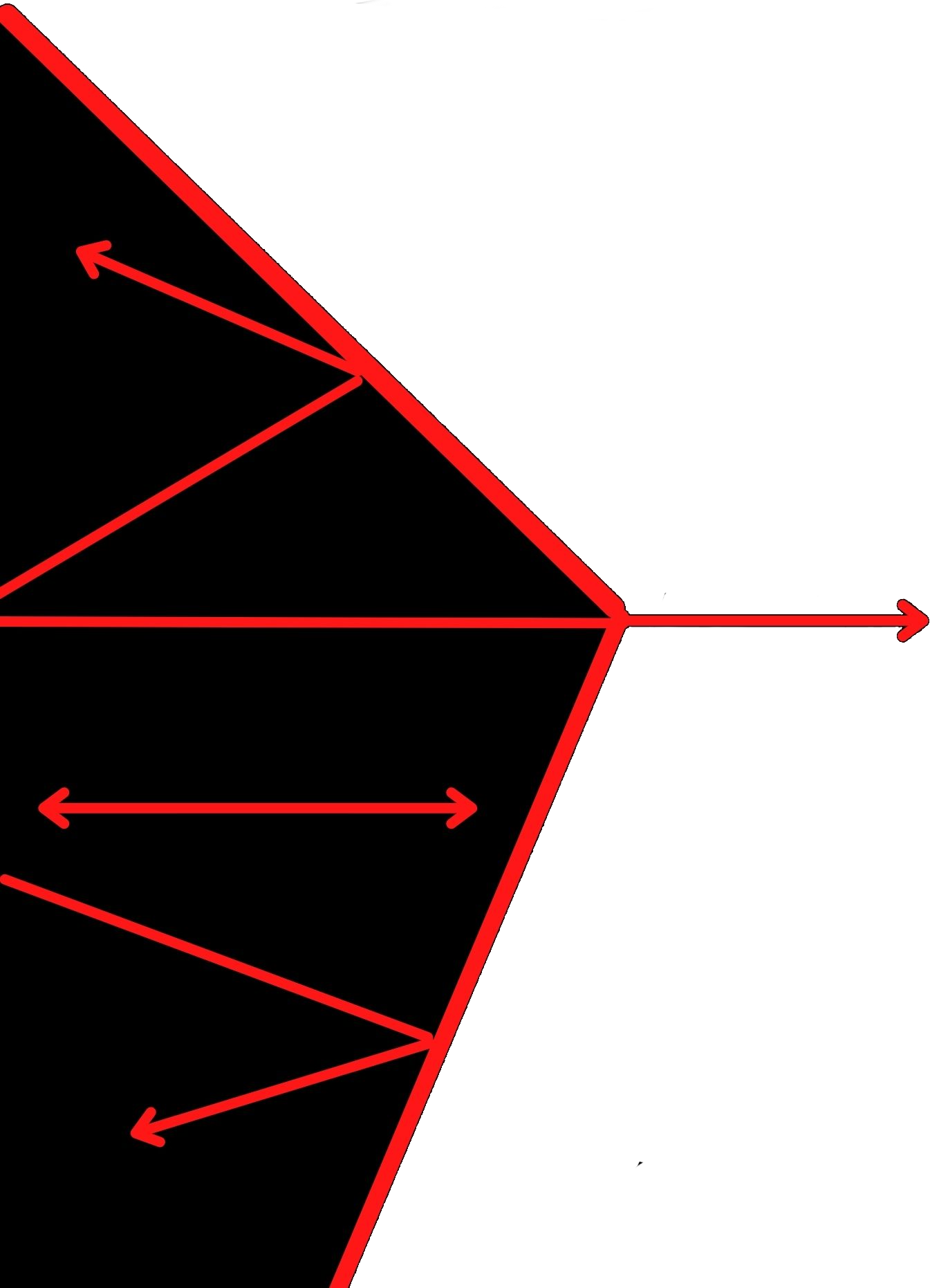


Transitology

Yevheniy Haydanka



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TRANSITOLOGY

TRNAVA - 2022



*The present handbook is dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the
resumption of activities of the University of Trnava
(1992 – 2022)*

TRANSITOLOGY
(Handbook)

Yevheniy Haydanka

Trnava – 2022

The present handbook endeavours to systematize comparative political science theories accounting for democratic transits. From the second half of the twentieth century until the present, transitological procedures have helped scholars to delve into the design and prospects of democratic transits. The decay of democratic regimes in Central Europe confirms that the methodology of 21st-century transitology needs updating.

This handbook covers a range of themes useful for political science majors at the Faculty of Philosophy of Trnava University and future professionals interested in the preconditions (liberalization), processes (democratization), and consequences of democratic transitions (consolidation of democracy) in different countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern comparative political science is an important applied discipline in terms of comparative analysis. It is capable of providing accurate explanations of the current political processes and phenomena. In the late twentieth century, a wide-scale transition to democracy became one of the global political phenomena that needed explaining and political science forecast. World democratic transits required a more refined research methodology. After all, the world community, like political science itself, has encountered brand-new political processes, the importance of which is hard to overestimate. Transitology has emerged as a political science domain that could provide a thorough insight into the nature of democratic transits.

In the present handbook, I have attempted to consider the fundamental theories of transitology and outline the most controversial aspects of the transitological paradigm. Of course, we should not disregard constructive criticism of transitology. However, while working on this handbook, I also encountered some phenomena that need a more profound analysis.

Firstly, from the very beginning, the idea of writing a textbook on transitology seemed ambitious. The matter is that writing a handbook in a highly specialized scientific field always presupposes a lack of theoretical background. However, the transitological paradigm has developed rapidly over the past few decades. Moreover, both successful and unsuccessful democratic transits provide an abundance of empirical material to look into. Democratization is an infinite process, unlikely to come to end in the upcoming decades, ascertaining the urgent need to systematize and classify the existing transitological theories.

Secondly, transitological theories are bound to democratic transits in a particular region or country. Therefore, the peculiarities of Latin American transit in the 1980s, for instance, and the 1990s post-communist transits differ drastically. Respectively, transitology theorists propose a variety of studies and approaches. In this light, it seemed expedient to delve into transitological theories that account for democratic transit in diverse parts of the world. These transitologists pioneered democratic transit analysis. So I decided to narrow it down to the so-called “Classical transitology” that stipulated numerous scientific debates and critical approaches.

Penultimately, the proposed systematization of the transitological paradigm (a set of theories on democratic transits) is a monograph rather than a handbook. The study is sure to be of service for political science majors exploring transitology or allied political subjects. I endeavoured to keep my subjective judgments to a minimum, focusing on the essential democratic transit features proposed by acclaimed transitologists. However, given the lack of handbooks on transitology, I also offer my conclusions.

Ultimately, this handbook is more theoretical than empirical. I believe it is its primary drawback since it focuses upon the actual course of successful or failed democratic transits. However, I find it crucial to primarily consider democratic transit theories and determine the principal models of successful transit and the political processes underlying each transit stage. Vindicating or refuting certain theoretical models, we employ empirical monitoring of the world countries (their democratization level). However, the handbook did not explain the methodological framework, nor did it utilise the findings of Freedom House, Bertels-

mann Fund or other world organizations. Thus, I intend to revise the present handbook and supplement the transitology theory with empirical data.

The handbook has four chapters. The *first chapter*, substantiating the study relevance as well as the basic transitological categories, is the shortest. *Chapter 2* provides the research into democratic transits through the prism of comparative political science (including modernization theories and central stages of transitology evolution). The largest is *Chapter 3*, which contemplates the classical theories of democratic transit in different parts of the world (*Dankwart Rustow, Samuel Huntington, Philippe Schmitter, Adam Przeworski, Carsten Schneider, Zbigniew Brzeziński, etc.*). *Chapter 4* emphasises how to define the final stage of democratic transit (consolidation of democracy) and briefly exemplifies criticism of the modern transitological paradigm.

I hope that the present handbook will contribute to a modern vision of the transitological paradigm evolution. Importantly, understanding the complexity of democratic transits and overcoming hindrances on the way to consolidated democracy will be of interest not only to political science majors but to political practitioners.

Yevheniy Haydanka

TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

1.1 The Relevance of the Democratic Transit

In most CEE countries, changes that attended the transition from a communist state model to a more liberal form have become the biggest democratic experiment in the world (Haydanka 2021). At the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries, transformational changes in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region brought the study of transit countries into the focus of modern comparative political science. The study of democratic transformations has been relevant since the end of World War II and a vast anti-colonial movement in the “third world countries”. Nonetheless, it was the post-communist transit that stirred up a hornet’s nest of the response from comparative scholars. As transitive countries (with a democratic regime potential) were developing, they illustrated contradistinct outcomes of democratization. In some countries, new European standard-based national democracies were established over a short time (approximately 15 years). On the contrary, other countries (mostly post-Soviet) reversed to a slightly modernised version of authoritarianism in three years or more.

Regarding post-communist transformations, we can differentiate four conventional groups of countries:

(1) *Eurointegrational version of the democratic regime* – the Visegrad 4 countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia), the Baltic group (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia), Balkan countries, the most progressive group in the process of European integration (Slovenia, Croatia),

(2) *countries with authoritarian political regimes*, mostly Soviet model-

based (Belarus, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan),

(3) *countries with a transitive political regime*, based on an underdeveloped democratic regime but encountering problems with democracy consolidation (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova),

(4) *Balkan countries* in pursuit of thriving democratic reforms that have not yet joined the EU due to the tumultuous break-up of the communist Yugoslav Federation (Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, Kosovo).

Undoubtedly, each group of countries has exceptions. For instance, as of 2020, Hungary and Poland faced troubles with democracy, up to questioning their democratic regime, as Freedom House's Nations in Transit monitoring attests (Nations in Transit 2020, 2021). The second group includes miscellaneous political regimes. These are authoritarian regimes, though with peculiarities, e.g. Belarus and Russia that epitomise modern European authoritarianism, or Turkmenistan, which nearly reached the totalitarian regime in 2020. More or less homogeneous is the third group where each country have had at least one civil revolution (*Rose Revolution in Georgia 2003*, *Orange Revolution 2004* and *Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine 2013–2014*). The fourth group of countries is the most heterogeneous. For instance, Northern Macedonia joined NATO in 2020, whereas some EU countries have not yet recognised Kosovo's independence. Therefore, we ought to explain democratic transit separately: concerning a particular country and in a clearly defined period.

1.2 Transformation, Democratization, Democratic Transit, Consolidation of Democracy

The post-authoritarian transformations' trajectory highlights the complexity of democratic transits. In the early 1990s, the course of such transits seemed unambiguous and discernible. Transitologists believed that each of the former communist countries would become part of the international democratization process (Huntington 1991). While in practice, the democratic transformation has determined various forms of political regimes: *illiberal democracy* (Fareed Zakaria 1997), *democracy with adjectives* (Collier & Levitsky 1997), *declining democracy* (Attila Ágh 2014), *deconsolidated democracy* (Foa & Mounk 2017).

In transitology, the four categories relate to the shift of political regime from authoritarianism to democracy, e.g. *transformation*, *democratization*, *democratic transit*, and *consolidation of democracy*. Each of these determines the vector and outcomes of the country's democratic revival. In broad terms, the concept of **“transformation”** entails institutional transformations in all social spheres of the country, as well as the transition from one socio-political state to a fundamentally different one. Transformation does not necessarily mean democratic change. Under democratic transformation, a country is gradually estranging itself from authoritarian traditions. Democratic institutions and processes are emerging. Likely is the shift from non-democratic forms of government to democratic ones.

“Democratization” is a broad political process not involving institutional changes in the country. It is sooner a “cosmetic repair” that can lead to democratic changes in a particular area (e.g. multipartyism or electoral process). However, it hardly ever leads to political regime

change. Attributes of democratization occur in authoritarian regimes when political elites (political leaders) are changing or with the growing role of the opposition.

The concept of “**democratic transit**” is more precise. It defines democratization as a process with perspicuous outcomes. In an ideal scenario, it is a non-democratic country’s smooth transition to a democratic political regime. However, in practice, democratic transits do not always imply the operation of steady democratic institutions. Democratic transit merely determines the general direction of transformation towards a democratic regime. The final result of democratic transit depends exclusively on the country's or region's peculiarities or the historical past of the country.

“**Consolidation of democracy**” is a final stage of democratic transit. It is a political process marked by high plurality at the level of the political system (the party system consolidation). At the level of society, its main marker is the developed civil society. Consequently, the consolidation of democracy is a possible outcome of democratization that presupposes a potentially stable democratic regime. In fact, the consolidation of democracy tests out the quality of a democratic regime in a transitive country.

Self-Control:

1. *Describe the period when most of the world's large-scale democratic transits occurred and the international factors underlying them.*
2. *Which group of countries fully completed the transition to democracy?*
3. *Identify the spectrum of post-communist countries referred to as the “European model of authoritarianism”.*

4. Enumerate the main forms of political regimes arising when the democratic transit's direction changes.

5. Explain the principal transitological categories and their significance for democratic transits.

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**DEMOCRATIC TRANSITS IN COMPARATIVE
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

2.1 Modernization Theory and Transitions to Democracy

The authors of modernization theory were the first to level critical analysis at democratization processes in the world. The elaborateness of this theory lies in the fact that it explains democratization through the “re-surgence” of political and socio-economic institutions. In this regard, social and economic changes are primary, whereas political changes are secondary. Thus, in his seminal work *“Political Man”* (1960), *Seymour Lipset* outlines two main markers of successful democratic development: (1) legality and (2) the political system stability. Both factors are dependent on economic transformations and changes in the social structure. In a nutshell, the researcher stresses that economic variables play a decisive role in the sustainability of political institutions (Lipset 1960).

James Coleman, another proponent of modernization theory, claims the priority of the society social dynamics and education level in the democratic renewal of political systems (Coleman 1967). Quality education contributes to the socialization of the population (positive perception of democratic ideals and norms) and hence stimulates the spread of democratic rules in society.

Another fundamental study in the modernization theory, *“The Politics of the Developing Areas”* (1960), is devoted to the modernization of Third World societies and sheds light upon the current state and prospects of democratic development of political systems in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In *“Political Development. Essays in Heuristic Theory”* (1970), *Gabriel Almond* explores the interaction between the main com-

Chapter II. Democratic Transits in Comparative Political Science

ponents of a democratic political system – interest groups, citizenship, nationality, education, and directly the type of political power.

In terms of modernization theory, worthwhile is *Gabriel Almond* and *Sidney Verba's* “*The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*” (1963), the survey-based research into public influence on democratization processes in the country. It identifies socio-political factors with a decisive influence on democratic progress in numerous Western European countries. The authors argue that one of the main factors to foster democratization is the level of political participation of citizens.

In the late 20th century, the explication of democratic processes derives primarily from a modernist tradition. New studies offer a comprehensive approach to defining the attributes of democratic modernization. The new modernist research considered the experience of democratic reform in post-communist countries. The most notable are the explorations of the modernization theory classic *Seymour Lipset*. The scholar examined the results of socio-political modernization in most transitive countries in different world regions. “*The Democratic Century*” (2004) thoroughly explores the outcomes of global democratization. *Seymour Lipset* and *Jacon Lakin* highlight the monolithic nature of cultural traditions as mandatory components of a democratic regime. No less important are (1) competition in politics, (2) consensual decision-making and (3) autonomy of civil society (Lipset & Lakin 2004).

Another modernist, *Claus Offe*, discloses the interaction between the market laws transformation and the development of democratic institutions. His “*Modernity and The State: East and West*” (1996) examines the experience of the new CEE democracies on their way to balance

market economy and political pluralism. A mandatory requirement to maintain democratic models is regulatory state support for civil liberties. *“Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies”* (1997) by *Ronald Inglehart* is another conceptual work of the “new wave of modernization”. The scholar contemplated the trajectory of cultural and socio-economic changes that imminently lead to miscellaneous consequences of democratic change. Based on an array of empirical material, *Ronald Inglehart* argues that the postmodern era (post-industrial society) witnessed the declining role of socially-based communist regimes against the background of the growth of political pluralism.

2.2 Pre-Transit Perspective on Democratic Transits

In modern comparative political science, there is no unanimous opinion on who fathered transitology. Without a doubt, the increasing number of countries that have attempted to install democracy led to the upsurge in studies devoted to these complex processes. Around the same time, *Dankwart Rustow*, an American comparativist, proposed the definition of democratic transit as a dynamic process that follows a clear logic and includes coherent stages. In 1970, the scholar published an article *“Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model”* in a specialized American journal *“Comparative Politics”*. *D. Rustow* based his transitological concept on the criticism of modernization theories, which viewed the processes of democratization from different standpoints. The famous Western political scholar *Seymour Lipset* and sociologist *Phillips C. Cu- tright* promulgated the first approach to the study of democratization. The scholars have attributed democratization in society to socio-

economic factors. These are the fairly high economic welfare of citizens, their proper education level, and the demographic advantage of the urban population (Rustow 1970, 337).

The *second approach*, proposed by other Western scholars (*Walter Bagehot, Ernest Barker, Gabriel Almond, Sidney Verba*), stresses that in society, citizens must be democratically oriented. True democratization prospects arise only after the citizens have reached a consensus on democratic development. Primarily, the country has to establish a democratic type of civic culture (Rustow 1970, 337–338).

The *third pre-transit* scientific approach explained world democratization through internal conflicts. Influential social institutions (the church, business, and the family) must be democratically focused, which will enable them to influence government activities (Rustow 1970, 338). Among the proponents of conflict society that facilitates democracy development were *Carl Friedrich, Ralf Dahrendorf, Arend Lijphart, Harry Eckstein*, and others.

The abovementioned democratization theories faced criticism mainly due to (a) prioritizing social and economic democratization factors, excluding political aspects, (b) disregarding the national historical traditions. The course of democratic transit requires empirical evidence based on countries' historical development and exemplary attempts to transition to democracy. For this reason, *Dankwart Rustow* endeavoured to present democratic transit through a concrete model of democratic transit in specific countries.

2.3 The Main Stages of Transitology

The modernization theory was followed by the transitological paradigm in the study of global democratization processes. Transitology emerged out of the need to explain the course of democratic transitions, frequent throughout the world since the 1970s. The more democratic transits (or attempts at democratic transit), the more theories of transitology appeared in comparative political science. This approach instantly defined transitology as an empirical branch of political science that accounts for (confirms or denies) democratic transits.

Having published his conceptual article “Transition to Democracy: Toward a Dynamics Model” in 1970, *Dankwart Rustow* established a new comparative trend in political science. His main contribution was to employ a procedural approach to determine the peculiarities of democratic transit. He viewed the transition to democracy as a set of interrelated actions and procedures that are structural components of democratic transits.

The erosion of authoritarian regimes in Latin America, the fall of authoritarian regimes in the Pyrenees in the 1970s, and initial democratic transformations in most “socialist bloc” countries (the late 1980s – early 1990s) led to a new phase in transitology. These studies had not yet touched on transformations in the post-Soviet period. First of all, we should highlight the multi-volume editions:

(1) “*Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*” *Guillermo O’Donnell*, *Philip Schmitter* and *Laurence Whitehead* (1986a, 1986b, 1986c). This was a seminal study that gave impetus to scholars to elaborate the methodology of transitology to analyze the liberalization processes (democratization) in different parts of the world, e.g. Central and South America,

Southern Europe, etc. The paper offers a clear structure of transit, from authoritarianism to democracy. It considers possibilities of spreading anti-democratic processes in transition countries, based on regional peculiarities.

(2) *“Developments in Central and East European Politics”* Batt Judy, Stephen White and Paul Lewis (1993, 1998, 2003, 2007). The papers look into the peculiarities of democratic transits since the erosion of communist regimes in the late 1980s and take into account the successful experience of Euro-Atlantic integration. These comprehensive studies cover a wide range of post-communist transformations: the evolution of electoral and party systems, the style of political leadership, and the nature of citizen participation in political life, social and economic reforms in traditional post-communist societies.

(3) *“Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe”* Jan Zielonka, Alex Pravda (2001). Both books offer insight into the processes of democratic consolidation in the post-communist space. This is a holistic study of successes and failures of transformation over several decades, including most post-authoritarian European countries (the Baltics, the Balkans, the Western Balkans, the Visegrad Four, some post-Soviet countries). The criteria (factors) of the analysis were (a) institutional engineering (new regime model), (b) foreign policy, and (c) development of civil society in transitive countries.

In most countries CEE countries, transformations have challenged traditional transitology methods. For instance, since post-communist countries started transitioning, *Dankwart Rustow’s* dynamic theory, which looked into the experience of Swedish (late 19th – early 20th century) and Turkish (since 1945) democratization, has required updating. *Samu-*

el Huntington was one of the first transitologists to propose a systematic analysis of the democratic change in the world. In *“The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century”* (1991), the scholar devised a formula for successful democratic transit based on a combination of internal processes within the state and a favourable international situation.

Another group of transitology experts (*Philip Schmitter, Guillermo O'Donnell* and *Terry Karl*) explored the trajectory of democratic transits, threats to authoritarianism in new democracies, and the challenges of consolidated democracy (Schmitter 1994; O'Donnell 1994; Karl & Schmitter 1995). The scholars proved the efficiency of the three-phase model of post-communist transit, the main phase being the consolidation of democracy that entails political life stabilization and developed civil society.

The American scholar *Zbigniew Brzezinski* focused on post-Soviet transits. He argued that the geopolitical location of the transit country is among the principal prerequisites for successful democratic transit. In his seminal work, *“The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century”* (1990), *Z. Brzezinski* outlined the necessary preconditions for the collapse of communism in Europe. Also, through empirical political analysis, he endeavoured to determine the trajectories of forthcoming democratic transformations in the post-communist space.

The principles of interaction between economic reforms and political change in the course of democratic transformation have become central to *Adam Przeworski's* transitological concept. In *“Democracy and the Market”* (1991), the scholar examined the economic structure of Latin

America and Eastern Europe, identifying real possibilities for the liberalization of authoritarian political regimes.

The studies by *Dankwart Rustow*, *Samuel Huntington*, *Zbigniew Brzezinski* and *Adam Przeworski* are considered pillars or the “first school” of transitology. It considered democratic transits in various parts of the world and elaborated empirical methods to analyze post-authoritarian transformation. A three-phase model with three successive stages of a successful democratic transit became a fundamental model of transitology (*liberalization*, *democratization*, and *consolidation of democracy*). Notably, their views on phases of democratization vary considerably:

- *Dankwart Rustow*: the preparatory phase, the decision phase, and addiction,
- *Samuel Huntington*, *Zbigniew Brzeziński*, *Philippe Schmitter* and *Guillermo O'Donnell*: liberalization, democratization, and consolidation of democracy;
- *Adam Przeworski*: liberalization and democratization.

2.4 The General Overview of the Research into Democratization in Comparative Political Science

Apart from the fathers of transitology, other political scholars have significantly contributed to the methodology of the transformational processes analysis.

In 1978, *Juan Linz* established the scientific tradition of comparative research into transitive societies with “*The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis Breakdown and Reequilibration*”. Jointly with *Alfred Stepan*, *Juan Linz* explored democratic transit based on the experience

of Latin America and Southern Europe and countries of post-communist origin (Linz & Stepan 1996). *Juan Linz* analyzes how particular political institutions (the presidency and parliamentarism) impacted either progress or regression of democratic transformations. In “*The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*” (1994), he and his coauthors emphasize the threat of a single-person (President) usurpation of power to democratic development. Sooner or later, this will lead to the authoritarianism of the executive branch and a decline in political pluralism due to weak competition within Parliament.

Arend Lijphart examines the institutional factors of stability (legitimacy) of a democratic political system. The scholar argues that when the political elites fully or partially reject constitutional principles, it seriously jeopardises democratic prospects. Such countries are likely to return to or assume the authoritarian vector. This is threatening both for the countries that have lived through decades of democratic reform, and traditional (“old”) democracies (Lijphart 2000).

A well-known American political comparativist, *Robert Dahl’s* theories are also pertinent to transitology. The scholar called for reconsidering a classical theory of democracy, as transformations in numerous ex-authoritarian countries in the late 1970s – 1980s required a brand new methodology. In his “*Democracy and Its Critics*” (1989), *Robert Dahl* emphasizes that the current model of democracies requires reconsidering of the existing democracy models. The scholar predicted the mass spread of democracy in the late 20th century, followed by the emergence of dozens of new democracies. Each of those will eventually need to focus on time-tested democratic models.

In “*To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*”

(1990), *Giuseppe Di Palma* explores the crisis of dictatorial regimes and presents democratic regimes as an alternative to authoritarianism. He argues that in the last decades of the 20th century, the main preconditions for democratic transformation may be (a) convergence of social interests in transitional societies, (b) political compromises between old and new political elites, and between elites and the public, and (c) optimal choice of constitutional design of the political system for each country.

The processes of democratization that unfolded in the second half of the twentieth century in southern Europe, Latin America and, later in post-communist countries, boosted studies of the world experience of democratic transits in comparative political science. *Geoffrey Pridham* (*“Transitions to Democracy: Comparative Perspectives from Southern Europe, Latin America and Eastern Europe”* (1995)) discusses the patterns of 3 democratization processes: (a) the international (geopolitical) situation, (b) the course of democratic transit, and (c) prospects (predictions) for democratization. Another comprehensive study, *“Problems of Democratic Transformation and Consolidation – South Europe, South America, Post-Communist Europe”* (1996) by *Juan Linz* and *Alfred Stepan*, explores diverse regions of the world and examines different models of successful/unsuccessful democratic transits. Given regional characteristics, the scholars outline non-democratic types of political regimes, arguing that farther to the East of Europe, the stronger the authoritarian traditions. They define the criteria that differentiate a consolidated democracy and a pseudo-democracy, the main being the guarantee of individual rights and freedoms of citizens, as well as separation between the state’s and the community’s interests.

The democratic transits in the post-communist space in the early 1990s were complex and, respectively, their outcomes varied. In some post-Soviet countries (primarily Central Asia, Belarus, Moldova), democratic change was very superficial. Some of them did not even start democratization. In certain countries, authoritarianism even strengthened in less than five years. *Valerie Bunce* significantly contributed to the democratic transits methodology. She argues that democratic transits hardly follow the hypothetical “**liberalization – democratization – consolidation of democracy**” vector. A serious threat to democracy is a political reincarnation of communists, usurping power and thereby hampering the country’s economic and political development in the so-called “post-socialism model” (Bunce 1999). As a result, many transitive, neither authoritarian nor democratic political regimes have emerged in the world.

Another political comparativist, *Larry Diamond*, mainly examines the trajectories of post-communist transits. The scholar scrutinises the “third wave of democratization”, noting that the quality of new democracies is more important than the total number of countries transitioning to democracy. The biggest threat to world democracy is the “reverse waves” of democratization, which lead to a global democratic crisis (Diamond 1996). In his view, the main vectors of democratic transformation include (a) public administration reform, (b) development of political culture, (c) the peculiarities of ethnic and national conflicts.

The study of post-communist transits is a separate branch of modern comparative political science. The primary outcomes of democratic transformations were ambiguous, so it was necessary to reconsider the idealized approach to post-communist transitions in the late 1980s. An

example of such works is a comprehensive study *“Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea”* (1998). Defining the main preconditions for democratic transformations in post-communist countries (traditions – instability of new institutions – aspiring path of development), the authors highlight the difficulties in front of post-communist countries (in this case, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia). Among those is the complexity of the constitutional choice, underdeveloped civil society, the existing socio-political cleavages.

The study *“Post-communist Democratization: Political Discourse across Thirteen Countries (Theories of Institutional Design)”* (2002) compares 13 countries at different stages of their democratization. These are most post-communist countries and socialism-based China. Given the historical backgrounds and traditions, the main principles of democracy disperse differently – from unequivocal approval and democracy as the basis for further development to denial (rejection of democratic prospects and strengthening of authoritarian foundations). The countries fall into five main groups: (1) Pre-transition countries – Yugoslavia and China, (2) Halting transitions – Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, (3) Transition torn by war – Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova, (4) Late developers – Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, and (5) Trailblazers – Poland and the Czech Republic (Dryzek & Holmes 2002).

Geoffrey Pridham’s “Designing Democracy: EU Enlargement and Regime Change in Post-Communist Europe” (2005) focuses on the impact of European integration on the dynamics and patterns of political regime change. The scholar identifies the peculiarities of the EU foreign policy to promote democracy in the transitive countries. He argues that

European integration rests not only on democratic reforms not only at the level of the political system but requires a unanimous European choice of new political elites.

Ever since the early 2000s, the process and consequences of the political transformations in the CEE have been a relevant issue in Western political science, resulting in many studies that appeared in the first decade of the 2000s. In his *“East-Central Europe in the Modern World: The Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism”* (2002), Andrew Janos attempted to determine the democratic prospects of post-communist countries. There is a noticeable democratic imbalance between Western and Eastern European countries. The author contrasts the democratic pinnacles of Western and Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, post-communist countries lag in terms of consolidation of democracy due to three factors, e.g. (a) economic retardation, (b) a complex of “inferior nation”, and (c) religious heterogeneity.

Judy Batt analyses the actual opportunities post-communist countries face upon entering the European political and economic space (*“Statehood and European Integration in Central And Eastern Europe”* (2006)). She emphasizes that despite the growing potential of post-communist countries, after their return to Europe, they should prioritise their sovereignty and traditions of governance.

The book *“Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in East-Central Europe”* (2001) is a compilation of comparative studies of the democratic consolidation in the post-communist space. It urges to reconsider the fundamental transitological theory that accounts for the change of political regime. Functional civil society institutions, increasing democratic political culture, and deepening Europeanization processes are the

real opportunities to strengthen new democracies. Undoubtedly, it is far from the exhaustive list of democratization studies in comparative political science. I have attempted to pinpoint the most renowned works on transitology that contribute to its general theory. However, since the 2000s, the transitological paradigm has met with harsh scepticism.

Self-control

1. *Point out the difference in explaining democratization processes between the modernization theory and the transitological paradigm.*
2. *Why did the transitology founder Danquart Rustow's modernization theory face criticism?*
3. *When did transitology emerge as a separate political science domain? Which countries did it examine?*
4. *Which political institute facilitates the power usurpation during democratic transits? And which, conversely, stimulates democratic transformation (Juan Linz & Alfred Stepan)?*
5. *Which post-communist countries displayed the best outcomes of democratic transformations in the 1990s? Which countries showed the most noticeable democratic regress?*

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FUNDAMENTAL THEORIES OF TRANSITOLOGY

3.1 Early Transitology in Dankwart Rustow's Dynamic Model of Transit

Dankwart Rustow's dynamic model explains the trajectories of democratic transit in two countries, e.g. Sweden, where the democratic transition began in 1890 and came to an end in 1920, and Turkey, where democratic transit began in 1945 and lasted until *D. Rustow* began his comparative study.

The dynamic model of democratic transit includes **four stages**, one being static and the rest being dynamic. The *three dynamic stages*, which follow each other, comprise a successful model of democratic transit.

A “**background condition**”, or a set of essential prerequisites for transformations in the country, is the static stage. The main condition for the democratic transit to begin is to achieve “*national unity*” in society, which eventually makes a majority. National unity in the country remains an efficacious precondition for the beginning of democratic transformations. *D. Rustow* argues that with national unity being a democratization factor, minimal economic guarantees and social differentiation in society are becoming less relevant. The first phase of democratic transit is a “**preparatory phase**”, which is an onset of dynamic changes. These changes affect both the political system (a new active political elite emerges) and society (new ideas gain popularity among the once inactive social group or a particular stratum in society). As a rule, the causes of non-political confrontation between the rural and urban populations or the “rich” and “poor” lay the foundations for further political

struggle. This political struggle will be long-lasting and will ultimately polarize society instead of consolidating it. At the same time, the previously achieved national unity will not allow a conflict society to plunge into a severe political crisis. A democratic agreement between the conflicting parties could be one of the efficient compromises. However, despite the national unity in the country, a violent victory of one of the parties or their failure to agree democratically will jeopardise a smooth transition of society to the next phase of transit.

If a preparatory phase of democratic transit is successful, the society enters the second or the “**decision phase**”. At this stage, logical decisions are taken to implement the democratic compromise reached during the preparatory phase. These decisions should primarily tackle broad suffrage and proportional representation in parliament. (Rustow 1970, 356). Embracing democratic attributes does not imply the end of the political struggle, for example, conservatives (supporters of old political rules) and radicals (supporters of rapid democratization). At the same time, each of the antagonistic parties will be forced into a pact between the elites based on their political sentiment. For instance, for fear of losing control of society due to their reactionary policies, conservatives will agree to liberal change; in turn, despite believing they have plenty of time ahead, radicals will instantly seek to strengthen their political positions (Rustow 1970, 357). The democratic changes adopted can have two outcomes. The first outcome is “*threatening*”. Unless both camps of the political elite foster new democratic procedures (elections and proportionality), a country may end up on the brink of a civil war. The second outcome is “*unsatisfactory*” when decisions taken by both conservatives and radicals meet an equal level of dissatisfaction. There-

fore, to complete successfully, democratic transit needs another phase.

The third and final phase of democratic transit is the “**habituation phase**”. Democracy brings competition into political life when different ideologies compete in elections, and the endless struggle for leadership continues in the intra-party hierarchy (Rustow 1970, 357). The very principle of competition boosts society dynamics. As a result, democratic changes may evolve as basic rules of conduct. The first feature of the habituation phase is that politicians and the majority in society consent that democracy is not a transient state but a new type of coexistence. The second feature is that democracy can serve not only as a means of competition in the struggle for power or in social confrontation but as an efficient conflict-settling mechanism. At an early habituation stage, successful resolution of conflicts will seriously rev the country’s democratic development, while failing to reach consensus can be disastrous for the future of democracy (Rustow 1970, 358–359).

The third feature of adjusting to democratic rules is the growing role of party structures. Political parties become the central mediators between the political elite and the citizens. Each party is evolving as it establishes an electoral link between the party leadership and local voters (Rustow 1970, 360). The newly formed parliaments hold broad political debates, and the voter, in turn, is granted broad suffrage.

The structure of the democratic transit by Dankwart Rustow

Social change	Attributes	Subjects	Democratic transit phases
Society in crisis	National unity	Society majority	Preparatory Phase
Social conflict	Compromise	Politicians / social groups	Decision Phase
Democratic struggle	Emergence / perception of democracy	Politicians / electorate	Habituation Phase

Dankwart Rustow's model of democratic transit is dynamic and includes a specific set of components. The scholar comes up with two explanations for the dynamic transit (Rustow 1970, 361–363):

1. The beginning of democratic transit requires four essential processes: (a) achieving national unity in society, (b) resolving conflict in society, (c) the emergence of democratic rules, and (d) a positive perception of democratic rules by both politicians and the electorate.
2. All the necessary components of democratic transit must succeed each other, sliding from one phase of transit to another.

3.2 The Waves of Democratization by Samuel Huntington

Samuel Huntington advocates the principle of the external origin of democracy in a particular country. Democratization is an international process and by nature occurs in **certain waves** (Huntington 1991b, 12):

1. The first wave of democratization:

rise (the 1820s – 1926) – the spread of democratic principles (parliamentarism, multipartisanship) in the United States and Western Europe (19th century): 29 democracies;

reverse (1922 – 1942) is an era of totalitarianism (Soviet Union, Italy, Spain, Germany): the number of world democracies was reduced to 12 states.

2. The second wave of democratization:

rise (1942 – 1962) – victory over national socialism and establishment of democracy in West Germany, Italy, Japan, and the collapse of the world colonial system: 36 world democracies;

reverse (1960 – 1975) – the spread of authoritarian regimes in some countries of southern Europe, Latin America, Asia: 30 world democratic countries.

3. Third wave of democratization (1975 – present). *Samuel Huntington* described it as indefinite, and, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, having only positive dynamics (*rise*).

The scholar identifies five main factors that fostered massive democratic transits, the process he defines as the “**third wave of democratization**” (Huntington 1991b, 13):

- (1) the general problem of the authoritarian regime legitimacy against the spread of democratic rules of the game in the world. In the second half of the 20th century, authoritarian regimes are increasingly losing legitimacy due to failed economic experiments or failed military coups;
- (2) economic growth in most countries of the world, including non-democratic, leads to an increased education level of the population. As a result, the urban middle class, which strives for economic and political

freedoms, is steadily growing;

(3) the departure of traditional church doctrine from the support of political regimes, including non-democratic. The Second Vatican Council's Decisions (1963 – 1965) brought the national Catholic Churches closer to defending the political freedoms of citizens;

(4) change of the foreign policy strategies in the US, the Soviet Union and the leading countries of Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century;

(5) the so-called “*Snowballing*” effect, which impacts the dynamics of the democratic transit in the world. The positive experience of democratic transit in one country ensures the vitality of the democratic regime and facilitates the global spread of democratization.

In his transitological concept, *Samuel Huntington* mainly focused on the “third wave of democratization”. The scholar studied not only the factors that boosted the global expansion of democratic regimes but also those that hindered the positive dynamics of democratization. Based on the outcomes of the 1991 Soviet Union's collapse, *Samuel Huntington* identified **seven factors** that led to a descend of the third wave of democratization (Huntington 1991b, 17–18):

(1) insignificant installation of democratic values – democratic norms being new, democratic “rules of the game” may have little impact on the political elite and part of social groups;

(2) changes in the political system are accompanied by economic reforms, which are not always successful. As a result, society is dissatisfied with liberal reforms and starts to search for undemocratic alternatives to improve the citizens' welfare;

(3) “*social and political polarization*” following the rapid implementa-

tion of economic and social reforms. Society is the most likely to polarize under left-wing governments;

(4) political fragmentation in new democracies – a conservative political class emerges (most middle and upper social classes in society), which attempts to reduce the impact of leftist ideology supporters and populists on the government (less affluent strata of society);

(5) a threat of terrorism that could arise in any country or a social revolution followed by a power reboot. As a result, real threats to the existing (weak) democracy are emerging, and authoritarian rule is likely to return;

(6) external aggression on the part of another state. Both the provoking of conflict situations and invasion of part of the territory are likely, which will lead to the destruction of the democratic regime;

(7) *reverse “Snowballing”* or emergence and spread of undemocratic political regimes. The dynamics of the democratic transit that galvanized the “third wave of democratization” can cause an enormous decline in global democratization.

3.3 Transition to Democracy by Samuel Huntington

Samuel Huntington identifies a successful model of the transition to democracy that is consistent and includes three main successive stages.

Stages of the democratic transit (Huntington 1991a, 35):

I. Liberalization – the old political elite plays a decisive role in the state and political decision-making. At this stage, the former authoritarian regime stops operating. The first stage of democratic transit in the country may show signs of the strengthening anti-democracy trends against the background of strengthening of the old authoritarian or totalitarian

political elite. Huntington identifies two major obstacles to democratization in a country:

(a) *weak economic development* – the political regime of liberal democracy can be established only when at the moment of democratic transformations in the country the economic development is relatively high. The wealthier the country and the more positive GDP dynamics, the better the chances of further democratization. After World War II, the global economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s facilitated democratization processes across the world;

(b) *civilizational and cultural preconditions* – given the dominance of Western cultural values in transitional societies, democratic transit seems easier to make. This can be exemplified by some countries from the Asian (Muslim) and Eastern European (Eastern Christianity) regions of the world, where the democratic transition was successful.

II. Democratization – means the discrediting of the old elite and their diminishing role in governmental decision-making. At this stage, there emerge the democratic institutions, critical for the democratic regime functioning, e.g. parliamentarism, elections, multiparty system, etc.;

III. Democratic consolidation – the political elite acquires the status of political opposition and the process of institutionalizing democracy is gradually completed. This stage imbues the new democratic regime in the future. Undoubtedly, the transition to democracy has been both a test and a challenge for most countries as democratic transits have been successful and failed.

Based on the experience of the “third wave of democratization” in a variety of countries, *Samuel Huntington* highlights **five main models of transit from authoritarianism to democracy** (Huntington 1991a, 41–

45):

(1) **cyclical model** – a socio-political situation in the country between authoritarianism and democracy. This model implies a systematic change of political regimes and unstable political development. For instance, a country establishes a democratic regime that rapidly loses its legitimacy and the country recoils to authoritarianism. Further on, the authoritarian regime crumples, and democracy intercedes. Institutionally, this model rests on the democratic populism and the conservatism of the military dictatorship. The cyclical model is typical for the Latin American region (Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador) and some other countries (Nigeria, Turkey);

(2) **second-try model** – after a failed attempt at democratization, a country makes recurrent attempts to institutionalize democratic institutions. Despite similarities to the cyclical model, the second-try model is more consistent and less chaotic. The scenario of democratic transit is the following: a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, a return to authoritarianism and, subsequently, a final attempt to establish democracy, which in most cases is successful. Spain, Portugal, Greece, South Korea, post-communist Czechoslovakia, and Poland have pursued such a scenario of democratic transit;

(3) **interrupted democracy model** – a country installs a stable democratic regime. This model of democracy operates steadily until, due to the systemic crisis (society polarization, temporary instability), for a brief period, an authoritarian regime establishes. If countries have strong democratic traditions, they are resuming the former democracy. Among the countries that have tried an interrupted democracy model were India and the Philippines at different periods;

(4) **direct model** – a direct transition from authoritarian to the democratic type of political regime. Notably, a stable authoritarian regime changes to a stable democratic one. Such transition to democracy can be instantaneous (mainly due to social revolutions) or evolutionary. Such transits typically occur in post-communist countries (Romania, Bulgaria) and some other regions countries across the world (Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador);

(5) **decolonization model** – the emergence of democracy in the former colonial countries, as a result of replicating the governing institutions of the former metropolises. *Samuel Huntington* assumes that the most exemplary countries that followed this model are small, predominantly island states of the former British Empire. In this regard, Hong Kong is remarkable in terms of the pace and progress of democratic reform. However, to study the features of the “third wave of democratization”, the experience of these countries is insignificant.

3.4 Philippe Schmitter and Carsten Schneider’s Model of Democratic Transit

G. O’Donnell and *P. Schmitter* formed their transitological concepts under the influence of the theory of political culture by *G. Almond*, *S. Verba*, *J. Coleman* (the society in the transition country needs to have a democratic type of political thinking (culture) during the democratic transit).

The main problems of research into post-authoritarian transformations (by *P. Schmitter*): (a) the methodology for analyzing democratic transit should include all possible options for the democratic transit scenario (success or failure), (b) it is necessary to determine the number of the

state power's internal resources in a transitional country for it to become a consolidated democracy.

To determine a universal model of democratic transit, *Philippe Schmitter* and *Carsten Schneider* studied the transition to democracy in over 30 countries from a variety of regions (CEE, the former post-soviet countries, Central and Latin America, etc.) from 1974 and 2000. Based on the high level of democracy and course of the democratic transition, democratic transit in Central Europe was relatively effortless. In South America, the transition to democracy has been controversial and time-consuming. The scholars also explored early liberalization and democratization in North Africa and the Middle East. Given the volatility of these regions and the negative experience of democratic transits in the 1990s, since the 2000s, it has been hard to predict their course and outcomes.

Stages of democratic transit (Philippe Schmitter and Carsten Schneider) (Schneider & Schmitter 2004):

I. Liberalization (liberalization of autocracy) – as a result of the emergence of the democratic political elite, there is a reorientation of the majority of the population to democratic norms and values.

II. Democratization (mode of transition) is the process of institutionalization of democracy in the political sphere.

III. Political socialization (consolidation of democracy) – democratic norms and values are established and embedded throughout society.

Each stage of the democratic transit includes several elements or indicators (events/features in society and politics) that must attend specific stages of democratic transit.

Liberalization stage (liberalization of autocracy) includes seven ele-

ments (Schneider & Schmitter 2004, 5):

- (1) the authoritarian regime begins to partially launch political and civil liberties,
- (2) the number of political prisoners declines considerably,
- (3) the authoritarian regime no longer persecutes opposition social movements, socio-political and public organizations or individual dissidents,
- (4) against the crisis of the authoritarian regime, multipartyism is emerging – there are more than one officially recognized and registered political party (opposition) in the country,
- (5) there is at least one opposition political party in parliament or other transitional parliamentary forms (e.g. the Constituent Assembly),
- (6) there are trade unions or trade unions in the country which are not controlled by the authoritarian regime and are oppositional by nature,
- (7) there is access to alternative information that contradicts official ideology.

The second stage of democratic transit is *Democratization*, being by nature a format of democratic transformations. *The main elements of this stage (mode of transition) are as follows:* (Schneider & Schmitter 2004, 6):

- (1) social and political movements in opposition and the authoritarian government start negotiations to democratize the regime,
- (2) the authoritarian political elite splits due to intra-party conflicts (the democratization practice proves that there appear the supporters of democratic change, i.e. reformers opposing the conservatives/the followers of the authoritarian regime),
- (3) to limit the potential of the authoritarian regime, the first constitu-

tional (legal) reform comes about,

(4) constitutional or legislative amendments are introduced to limit the influence on informal pressure groups in the country (primarily, the party nomenclature, the military leadership, the initial oligarchy, etc.),

(5) a new Constitution is adopted to guarantee equal political rights and civil liberties,

(6) the country held the first alternative elections,

(7) the first elections were transparent and fair, without the former authoritarian regime interference,

(8) the first alternative elections results became generally accepted.

The final stage of the democratic transit is *Political socialization* (in fact, the consolidation of democracy) and confirms the successful completion of the transit. It is the most controversial stage of democratic transit as many countries start liberalization or democratization but fail to consolidate democracy. Also, there tend to be too many indicators to determine the precise level of democracy consolidation in the country.

The main elements of Political socialization (consolidation of democracy) are as follows: (Schneider & Schmitter 2004, 10):

(1) no parliamentary political party advocates undemocratic changes to the democratic Constitution,

(2) regular elections are held, with both the Government and opposition political forces (parties) recognizing their results,

(3) all elections are free and fair (elections to both central and local government),

(4) in the political system, there is no influential political party that would not recognize the electoral system as a mechanism for the political elites' rotation,

- (5) the fragmentation of the political party space significantly decreases, leading to the consolidation of the party system,
- (6) the influence of informal pressure groups (crime, oligarchy, etc.) on political decision-making in the country and individual elected officials declines,
- (7) during the democratic period, the first rotation of political elites obeys electoral rules,
- (8) during the democratic period, the second rotation of political elites follows election rules,
- (9) society reaches a formal (legislative) or informal agreement on the democratic rules the political system organization (a democratic type of political culture arises),
- (10) a formal (legislative) or informal agreement on the organization of the executive branch,
- (11) a formal (legislative) or informal agreement on the territorial division of executive competence,
- (12) a formal (legislative) or informal agreement on universal rules regarding ownership and access to the media.

Summarizing *Philippe Schmitter's* and *Carsten Schneider's* views on the consolidation of democracy as the final successful stage of the democratic transit, we can outline **three main indicators of consolidated democracy**:

- (1) **level of political elites** – political leaders uphold the legitimacy of the democratization in the political sphere,
- (2) **the level of the public** – the overwhelming majority of the population supports the democratic form of government (about 2/3), with a positive attitude to authoritarianism not exceeding 1/3,

(3) **the level of socio-political space** – the absence of a powerful political party or public organization that upholds anti-democratic means of exercising state power.

3.5 Adam Przeworski's Model of the Transition to Democracy

Exploring democratic transits in the world, *Adam Przeworski* pointed out their unpredictability. Studying the countries of the CEE and Latin America, the transitologist argued that now and then, the democratization trajectory took a wrong turn. Due to failed democratic transformations, Czechoslovakia (1968) and Brazil (1974) resumed dictatorship. In some countries (Romania), authoritarian dictatorship became even more powerful (Przeworski 1991, 51). The transition to democracy is a complex process that depends on various factors, such as (1) the ability of the old and new political elites to negotiate, (2) the impact of economic factors (market economy) on the nature and outcomes of democratic transit, and (3) the degree of conflict and social differentiation between classes in a transitional society.

Adam Przeworski outlines two main stages of the democratic transit:

I. Liberalization – includes the preconditions and initial transitional types of political regime.

II. Democratization is the communication and pact-making between old and new types of political elites.

Let us consider the principal institutional changes and liberalization stages of the political regime. *Adam Przeworski* emphasizes that the overall success of democratic transformations depends on the initial potential for political transformation, shaped by the degree of conflict in

a transitional society. In case the authoritarian regime collapses, **5 transformation scenarios are likely** (Przeworski 1991, 52–54):

(1) struggle for a new authoritarian regime (political dictatorship) – new democratic (semi-democratic) institutions fail to overcome a high level of conflict in society based on religion, race or language,

(2) reaching agreements on the democratic future of the country – at the same time, the high level of conflict in society does not allow to establish at least one steadily functioning democratic institution,

(3) instability of the democratic regime – a high level of conflict between different groups of political elites over the definition of the future format of the country (for example, unitarism or federation), leads to the collapse of a potentially stable new democracy,

(4) the inefficiency of democratic institutions – low level of conflict in the country creates allows the installation of new democratic institutions, but the political elite selects ineffective democratic institutions (for example, the old authoritarian elite demands political-economic guarantees from the new democratic elite),

(5) stability and efficiency of democratic institutions – a successful start of democratic transit and the likelihood of an efficient democratic regime (insignificant conflicts in society).

The transformation environment varies, and, consequently, different types of transitional regimes emerge.

Types of political regime in the process of transition to democracy (types of dictatorships) (Przeworski 1991):

(1) SDIC (status quo dictatorship) – traditional authoritarianism (the authoritarian political regime of the old type),

(2) BDIC (broadened dictatorship) – modernized authoritarianism

(authoritarian political regime based on liberal transformations),

(3) TDIC (narrower dictatorship) – modernized authoritarianism (authoritarian political regime based on illiberal transformations),

Between these types of transitional regimes, the political elite may start to install non-violent democratic transformations (*Transition*) through the activation of the public or attempt at democratic change through increased repression (*Insurrection*).

Let us consider the principal institutional changes during the political regime democratization. At this stage, political elites agree on specific types of political regimes.

Types of political elites in the process of democratic transit (Przeworski 1991):

(1) hardliners (conservatives) – supporters of authoritarianism,

(2) reformers – supporters of democratization among conservatives,

(3) moderates – neutral political elites (between authoritarianism and democracy),

(4) radicals – supporters of democratic change (stand out as a separate political force among the reformers).

Types of political regime in the process of transition to democracy (Przeworski 1991):

(1) traditional authoritarianism – the authoritarian political regime of the old type,

(2) modernized authoritarianism – authoritarian political regime based on liberal transformations,

(3) extended democracy – a democratic political regime with political guarantees for authoritarian opposition),

(4) limited democracy – a democratic political regime with no political

guarantees for authoritarian-minded opposition.

Options for interaction between political elites and the political regime (Przeworski 1991, p. 69):

- (1) reformers + conservatives and moderates + radicals = **traditional authoritarianism**,
- (2) reformers + moderates = **extended democracy**,
- (3) moderates + radicals and reformers + moderates = **limited democracy**,
- (4) reformers + conservatives = **modernized authoritarianism**.

3.6 Zbigniew Brzeziński's Model of Transition to Democracy

Zbigniew Brzeziński is one of the state figures who have successfully combined serving as the United States Secretary of State and scientific activities. On the other hand, a high office in the US Government shaped *Zbigniew Brzeziński's* pro-American views on world law and order and geopolitics. The scholar focused on both post-Soviet transformation (including cultural and historical changes) and classical transitological issues (the structure of post-communist transit).

Z. Brzeziński's theoretical model of democratic transit is devoted to the analysis of democratic transformations in post-communist countries.

Factors influencing the democratization of post-communist countries are as follows:

- (1) systemic social transformations in the *political, economic, legal spheres*,
- (2) an *external factor* is the promotion of the democratic transit in post-communist countries by developed Western democracy.

Each stage of post-communist transit has a precise periodisation. The

stages of transition can be completed rapidly or, conversely, over a while with unpredictable transformation outcomes. **Z. Brzeziński outlines 3 stages of democratic transit in a post-communist country** (Brzezinski 1997, 107):

I. Liberalization (1–5 years) – the transformation of the political system and stabilization of the economic sphere. Liberalization is implemented in the political, legal, economic spheres and needs some assistance from the West:

(political) → formation of fundamental democratic institutions; the emergence of state control-free press; decay of the one-party system; the emergence of democratic social associations

(legal) → deprivation of state control over the legal sphere

(economic) → end of collective production; price liberalization; beginning of privatization

(Western Aid) → initial financial assistance; granting the first loans.

II. Democratization (3–10 years) refers to political processes (Transformation → Stabilization) and changes within the economic system (Stabilization → Transformation).

(political) → implementation of normative democratic principles in the political system; adoption of a new Constitution; approval of a new electoral legislation (democratic); formation of an efficient democratic coalition in the parliament; formation of a new democratic elite

(legal) → adoption of efficacious legislation for business development and entrepreneurship

(economic) → formation of the banking system; small and medium privatization; demonopolization of production; the emergence of a new social class of entrepreneurs in society

(Western Aid) → initial foreign investment; providing loans for the infrastructure development; granting trade preferences; technical and managerial assistance.

III. Consolidated democracy (5–10 years and over) – the political system stabilizes based on the general public democratic interest (Consolidation). The economy shows signs of steady growth, without any government intervention (Sustained Take-Off).

(political) → formation of a stable political system with similarly stable political parties (consolidation of the party system); the democratic political culture dominates;

(legal) → operation of the system of independent justice; development of legal culture in society;

(economic) → large-scale privatization; formation of the capitalist lobby; gradual evolution of business culture;

(Western Aid) → the inflow of large foreign investments; integration to major international organizations in the Western world (NATO, EU, etc.).

On the eve of the major enlargement of the European Union and NATO in 2004, *Zbigniew Brzeziński* argued that Central European countries should be viewed separately from the post-Soviet ones. The principal

institutional difference between the Visegrad Four and the former Soviet countries is de facto completed democratic transit in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary, while the 15 post-Soviet republics demonstrated ambiguous transformation trajectories. In 2001, *Zbigniew Brzeziński* identified three broad groups of post-Soviet countries by the progress of democratic transformations (Brzezinski 2001, 20–21). The first group includes the trio of Baltic countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia), which have significantly progressed in democratization and established regimes of a consolidated democracy. *The Baltic countries* should no longer be referred to the category of “post-Soviet”. All three countries have successfully implemented institutional reforms and are ready to join the EU and NATO. The second group of countries are countries *in transition*. These are the countries showing authoritarian tendencies against rare attempts at democratic transformations (Georgia, Russia, and Ukraine). They are stuck between authoritarianism and democracy with a de-jure functioning democracy and complex implementation of democratic norms. The third and the most numerous group includes *nine countries*: five Central Asian (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), two Caucasian (Azerbaijan, Armenia), and two European countries (Belarus, Moldova). Regarding democratic transformations, they are the most problematic countries, with thriving oligarchic regimes and democracy viewed as financial dependence on the United States and Europe. These are non-democratic countries with unlikely development of efficient democratic institutions.

Self-control

1. Which of the classical transitologists has developed a dynamic model of democratic transit? What are its peculiarities?
2. Define the peculiarities of each stage of a successful democratic transit proposed by the representatives of classical transitology?
3. What is the defining point for a successful democratic transit (Dankwart Rustow's dynamic model)?
4. What are the features of democratization as an international process (Samuel Huntington)?
5. Explain the principal models of Samuel Huntington's democratic transit.
6. Describe the elements of the democratic transit stages (liberalization – democratization – political socialization) by Philippe Schmitter and Carsten Schneider.
7. Define the political and social factors of the democracy consolidation by Philippe Schmitter.
8. Explain the democratic transit stages in Adam Przeworski's concept.
9. Explain the types of political elites that emerge during the democratic transit. How do political elites and transitional regimes interact (Adam Przeworski)?
10. Analyze the post-communist democratic transit stages proposed by Zbigniew Brzeziński.

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SOME ISSUES OF DEMOCRACY CONSOLIDATION AND CRITICISMS OF TRANSITOLOGY

4.1 The Mechanism of Consolidated Democracy by Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter

Integrally, in their consolidated democracy concept, *Philippe Schmitter* and *Guillermo O'Donnell* elucidated the theory of consolidated democracy. Their concept gives a complete categorical content to the consolidation of democracy in comparative political science. The scholars reveal the nature of consolidated democracy through *institutional choices* in a transitional country, based on the mutual harmonization of rules and regulations. Among the threats to a consolidated democracy, *Philippe Schmitter* outlines, first of all, the lack of communication and understanding regarding the institutional design of the new democracy between the political elite and the public. Consolidation of democracy is viewed as the establishment of new norms of democracy, their positive perception in politics and society and the reduction of obstacles to strengthening democracy at the early stages of transformation (Schmitter, O'Donnell & Whitehead 1986, 73). One way or another, the consolidation of democracy is the final stage of the democratic transition, which testifies to the successful strengthening of the new democratic regime.

Based on the analysis of *Philippe Schmitter's* consolidated democracy concept, it is possible to unify the criteria and levels of the democracy consolidation mechanism (Schmitter 1994, 1995).

Consolidated democracy levels

Public and political organizations → Regulatory consolidation of basic values of democracy in programmes of political parties and public organizations,

Political Elites → Influential political leaders advocate the implementation of democratic principles at the level of the political system and society,

Public → At the level of the general public: the majority positively perceives the democratic form of government; the minority supports non-democratic forms of government.

Guillermo O'Donnell's concept of **delegative democracy** denies the threat of individual power usurpation during the consolidation of democracy. The scholar argues that delegative democracy is the transfer of significant powers of government to the head of state, i.e. the President. The phenomenon of delegative democracy arises as a result of deepening social and economic crises on the path to consolidated democracy (O'Donnell 1994).

4.2 The Mechanism of Consolidated Democracy by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan

Juan Linz and *Alfred Stepan* consider the consolidation of democracy in the context of the standardization of *behavioural* and *institutional characteristics* in transit countries.

Consolidation of democracy envisages a unified system of governance that is based on holistic, regulation-making rules that are binding on everyone (“*the only game in town*”) (Linz & Stepan 1996).

Juan Linz and *Alfred Stepan's* Democracy Consolidation Model includes a *three-tier structure* (Linz & Stepan 1996, 5–7).

Consolidated democracy levels

Behavioral → The absence of a social group that seeks to revive the authoritarian regime or change democratic governance,

Constitutional → Establishment and functioning of a system of public authorities based on the principles of democracy

Value-based → The vast majority of citizens view democracy as the the optimal form of government

Researchers point out that **parliamentary democracy** is the best institutional design for consolidated democracy. *Juan Linz* believes that, unlike the principles of presidentialism, parliamentary elections give rise to many alternatives, such as the formation of a coalition government; open or covert cooperation between the government and opposition in the legislative process (Linz & Valenzuela 1994, 39). In addition, parliamentary republics typically stabilize the newly formed democratic political system, which is considered a compromise between the civil and governmental institutions. The political elites' choice between parliamentarism and presidentialism is fateful. Indeed, transition countries, institutionally based on parliamentarism, have demonstrated better results of democratic transformation than those with firm executive institutions (President, Prime Minister).

4.3 The Mechanism of Consolidated Democracy by Larry Diamond

Larry Diamond identifies the main institutional paths and challenges to achieving consolidated democracy. The incomplete democratic transit could significantly threaten the development of democratic institutions, leading to a synthesis of traditional authoritarianism and a new democracy. To complete the consolidation of democracy, public reaction and behaviour towards democratic pluralism are crucial. *Larry Diamond* argues that the consolidation of the regime is a process of such in-depth and broad legitimization of democracy among citizens that the destruction of democracy becomes unlikely, virtually impossible (Diamond 1994, 15).

Active civil society and public-sector engagement with the public sphere are gaining weight. To complete the consolidation of democratic institutions, it is necessary to support political institutionalization and the development of civil society. *Larry Diamond* discusses the interrelation between the pace of democratic consolidation and the degree of development and efficiency of civil society. Civil society is supposed to play a key role in shaping the preconditions and establishing a regime of a consolidated democracy. The following pattern is noticeable: the more active, pluralistic and democratic civil society, the more likely is democracy to emerge and consolidate for a while (Diamond 1994, 8).

Based on the concept of consolidated democracy, *Larry Diamond* develops a **structured model** (Diamond 1997) that is close to *Philippe Schmitter's* mechanism for consolidating democracy.

Consolidated democracy levels

Organisational → Constitutional legitimacy of democratic political institutions,

Elitist → State leaders and leaders of major political parties uphold the democratic principles of government; the influence of the army on the political situation in the country is disregarded,

Public → Absence of either influential public power or social movement of anti-democratic orientation

4.4 Criticism of Classical Transitology

Dating back to the 1970s, transitology was able to elucidate the directions of the 1990s democratic transits. At present, however, it is getting less relevant among political science disciplines. Even the resurgence of classical transitology via empirical analysis of post-communist transits was ambiguous. The concepts like the “third wave of democratization”, invariability of democratic transit, and the consolidated democracy regime are becoming outdated. However, *since the early 2000s*, the transitological paradigm has been **critically revisited** (Ramet 2013).

Regarding democratic transits, there are several main reasons for constructive criticism of classical theories of transitology. *Firstly*, as of the early 2000s, failed democratic transits in a variety of post-Soviet countries (Russia, Belarus, Central Asia) were the main causes of the crisis in the transitological paradigm.

Another reason for the criticism of transitology is the stagnant nature of post-communist transits. Unlike the Visegrad countries, the democratic transit in Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Albania did not follow up with a stage of a consolidated democracy. On the contrary, in the

course of democratic transit in these countries, there arose many interim mini-stages due to various manifestations of authoritarian regimes.

Another episode that challenged the transitological paradigm was the social and political revolutions in numerous countries during the post-communist era. Each of these revolutions should have fostered democratic processes in these countries (Serbia 2000, Georgia 2003, Ukraine 2004, Kyrgyzstan 2003) and brought the consolidation of democracy. As a result, none of the countries, where the colour revolutions had taken place, reached the political regime of a consolidated democracy.

Ultimately, it is worth mentioning that consolidated democracies eroded in countries that had set examples of successful democratic transit and Euro-Atlantic integration. First of all, this has been “*Orban’s*” Hungary with growing authoritarian tendencies since 2010, Poland with its conservative governments and the conservative dominance in the executive branch since 2015, and populist threats in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Tomas Carosers was one of the main critics of transitology. In his 2002 article “*The End of the Transition Paradigm*” (2002) he discussed **3 flaws of transitology:**

- (1) an attempt to confine the practice of democratic transits to theoretical models,
- (2) inability to explain many forms of transition modes,
- (3) failure of transitology to take into account regional features of a country’s development.

Tomas Carosers pointed out **5 reasons that prompt revisiting the transitological paradigm** (Carosers 2002, 14–17). These are factors that show the methodological weakness of transitology.

Firstly, transitology faced criticism as it had proposed an idealized image of the “third wave of democratization”, viewed as a country’s automatic transition to a democratic regime. However, this did not happen, primarily because the political elite would not perceive it, and civil groups would continue the constant struggle for their rights (“*feckless pluralism*”). Numerous transition countries have either abandoned democratic experiments (Belarus or Russia) or undergone only superficial democratisation (Central Asian countries of the former USSR). *Tomas Carosers* illustrates the unpredictability of democratic transit with Moldova, Zambia, Cambodia and Guinea.

Secondly, transitology proposed a somewhat incoherent definition of democratic transit and a transit country, as a country is hard to classify as “transitional” without understanding the limits of transitivity. Regarding the sequence of the main stages of democratic transit (**liberalization – democratization – consolidation of democracy**), many countries did not follow this transitological scenario. For instance, democratization starts without liberalization, or there are no universal indicators of democratic consolidation. In terms of their experience of democratic transformation, South Korea, Taiwan, and Mexico stand out, whereas in most African countries, the stages of democratic transit overlap.

The third reason is the exaggerated impact of the first democratic elections upon the democratic transit. According to classical transitology, the first free and alternative elections play a huge role in further, presumably irreversible, democratic reform. However, even regular free elections cannot ensure a growing political responsibility of the Government, actual party pluralism, a proper increase of citizens’ political participation, etc. Despite systematic competitive elections, in the 1990s,

Nepal was a case of a country with a complex democratic situation.

The fourth reason for the crisis of transitology stems from its denial of both historical traditions and the classical modernization theory. Traditional transitology disregards the past of transition countries, which lays the foundations for democratic transit. The transition per se is necessary from the standpoint of a succession of democratic stages, ensured by appropriate political instruments (especially elections). However, the experience of transition countries confirms: the better the starting economic conditions and historical background, the faster and steadier the democratic transit. In this group, the most successful democracies are various countries from Central Europe, Southern Cone, and East Asia.

The fifth reason is the complex democratization processes associated with state-building reform. One of the biggest obstacles for transit countries was the collapse of multinational empires and the need to build new national democracies. About 20 countries of former socialist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union faced the need for nation-building. Transitology did not foresee a devastating effect national, religious and separatist differences had upon the success of the democratic transit. Post-socialist reforming has demonstrated these threats in many transition countries. Instead of implementing effective reforms in the political system, political elites fought between presidentialism and parliamentarism, decentralization and separatism, civil society development and society radicalization, etc.

Paradoxically enough, the complexity of the traditional transitological paradigm in the early 21st century lies in the fact that, until recently, some post-socialist countries have had the best democratic dynamics. First of all, the Visegrad Four countries have completed Euro-Atlantic

integration. Several influential approaches in comparative political science offer a **new perspective at post-socialist transits:**

(1) Illiberal democracy Fareed Zakaria. The researcher discusses an alarming trend that has transformed into a new format of democratic governance, i.e. “*illiberal democracy*”. It presupposes that political elites, elected according to democratic procedures (elections and referendums), do not comply with the rules of constitutional liberalism (broad guarantee of citizens’ rights and freedoms, parliamentary traditions). At first glance, illiberal democracies retain a high level of regime legitimacy, as political elites form under democratic law and follow electoral procedures. The threat to democratic values stems from the low quality of governing democracy, fairly discrediting democratic governments (Zakaria 1997, 42). As of the mid-1990s, only Slovakia was an illiberal democracy among the rest of the CEE countries (Haydanka 2021, 183).

(2) Deconsolidated democracy Roberto Foa and Yascha Mounk. As *Roberto Foa* and *Yascha Mounk* argue, the democracy deconsolidation, as a domestic political process, is not yet capable of undermining the foundations of democratic governance but already hardly guarantees civil liberties and political rights (Foa & Mounk 2017, 10). Therefore, it will help decrease political competition. Another side of the democracy deconsolidation is the violation of democratic governance procedures and constitutional reform at the behest of the dominant forces’ political interests. *Roberto Foa* and *Yascha Mounk* single out two representative cases in Central Europe. The first case relates to the Hungarian constitutional reform initiated by FIDEZ in 2011, and the second case is the rebate of the independence of the Constitutional Tribunal and the intro-

duction of state control over the media space in Poland in 2015, initiated by the ruling “Law and Justice”. One way or another, upon achieving a consolidated democracy regime, countries should stabilize democracy. In contrast, even in the most successful Central European democracies, the consolidation of democracy is deteriorating (Haydanka 2021).

(3) Democracies in Decline Attila Agh. Not only had the 2004 accession of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia to Euro-Atlantic structures confirmed the European Community’s acknowledgement that the recent autocracies managed to achieve consolidated democracy, but it also led to a new stage of transformation in Central Europe. The V4 countries had to pass a test on the consolidated democracy regime stability in dynamics. *Attila Agh* believes that the first decade of the EU membership is the best catalyst for understanding the quality of democracy in Central European countries, given the noticeable descending trends in recent years (Agh 2014). The scholar emphasized that after most democratic post-socialist countries joined the European Union, their party space radicalized, the number of populists rose, and the executive branch strengthened. This was not yet a direct threat to the future of democracy but proof that democracy in the Visegrad Four was declining.

(4) Empirical approach “Varieties of Democracy” (V-Dem 2022). It is empirical monitoring of the democracy/non-democracy level in the world to get an objective picture of the world's democratic prospects, elaborated by a group of Swedish comparativists as an alternative to the mainstream Freedom House (Freedom House 2022). The conceptual basis of monitoring was the denial of two defining ideas of comparative political science and transitology of the late twentieth century, e.g. the

absence of a reverse in *Samuel Huntington's* "third wave of democratization" and *Francis Fukuyama's* "End of history" concept, which never happened. The monitoring methodology is the opposite of classical transitology, as it studies the degree of authoritarianism, not democratization in the world. According to V-Dem experts, the "**third wave of authoritarianism**" is currently underway. It started in 1994 after Belarus had withdrawn from liberal experiments due to Alexander Lukashenko's first presidency.

In the 21st century, transitology must revise its fundamental methodology. Currently, the views of comparative political scientists on the future of democratic transits and their implementation differ. At the same time, transitology is still relevant, so is the trajectory of the "new old" democracies and predictions for the future of democracy across the world.

Self-control

1. *Why is the stage of democracy consolidation considered the most significant for a successful democratic transit?*
2. *Explain the tiers of Philippe Schmitter's consolidated democracy.*
3. *Explain Guillermo O'Donnell's concept of delegative democracy.*
4. *Explain the tiers of consolidated democracy proposed by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan.*
5. *Explain the tiers of Larry Diamond's consolidated democracy.*
6. *When did the transitological paradigm face the most severe criticism? What are the main socio-political factors in the critique of transitology?*
7. *Define and analyze the five main reasons for Tomas Caroser's critique of the transitological paradigm.*
8. *Analyze the transitional forms of democratic transit, such as Illiberal democracy, deconsolidated democracy, and democracies in decline.*
9. *What are the prospects of transitology as a direction of modern comparative political science?*
10. *Which countries should be subject to transitological analysis nowadays? What theories can contribute to modern transitology development?*

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CONCLUSIONS

In modern comparative political science, global democratic transits are still relevant. Despite decades of transformation, the “behaviour” of new democracies is quite unpredictable. Moreover, former post-communist countries can hardly be considered new democracies. After joining the European Union and NATO, these countries deservedly became a part of the Western Democratic Community. However, over the last decade, normative democracy has increased, leading to the spread of authoritarian tendencies in some CE countries. Most post-Soviet countries have displayed various forms of authoritarianism or partial totalitarianism, blended with democracy. These issues remain a priority focus of modern transitological research.

The transitological paradigm *has evolved considerably*. Conceptual changes stem from the transformations in the countries under study and historical periods. Transitology is believed to begin in 1970 with the study of monarchical Sweden’s (late 19th – early 20th century) and Turkey’s (since 1945) experience of democratic transit. Later, democratic transits coincided with global processes. As a result, the study of “waves of democratization” in dozens of countries became relevant. The fall of authoritarian regimes in Latin America and the Third World, and primarily the collapse of the communist community in the late 1980s, made transitological research trendy in political science. Transitology somewhat lost relevance in the early 2000s, when some transition countries, instead of regaining democracy, either returned to non-democracy or deepened their already powerful authoritarian traditions. The criticism of transitology

confirms that since the 1990s, the transitological paradigm needs improvement, not methodological repudiation.

Transitology lays down a clear structure of democratic transit. Respectively, democratic transits include *three successive stages*, such as liberalization, democratization, and consolidation of democracy. The *first stage* indicates the erosion of the authoritarian regime. During *the second stage*, fundamental democratic institutions emerge. Eventually, *the third stage* presupposes habituation to the democratic regime. Undoubtedly, various countries go through stages of democratic transit differently, and it is complicated to complete all of them. Transitology has both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, the proposed model is effective, as most transition countries have completed all stages, establishing the consolidated democracy regime at the final stage. On the other hand, there are cases of the reluctance of some transition countries (more precisely, their political elites) to go through all three stages, or of putting transit on hold, for example, at the stage of democratization. In such cases, the transit trajectory changes, yielding unpredictable results, which classical transitology fails to explain.

One of the main priorities of modern comparative political science is the ambiguous democratization trends worldwide. The *rise of populism and radical political forces* in Central Europe have led to an upsurge in Euroscepticism and a decline in the consolidation of democracy. The process of curtailing democratic transformations is currently underway in various parts of the world (Latin America, traditionally Asian countries, the former post-communist space, some Western European countries). The *COVID-19 pandemic* put to another test the sustainability of democratic

Conclusions

values, as world governments had to balance between preserving fundamental democratic freedoms and human lives. This and many other issues are a focus of modern transitology. Therefore, to demonstrate its complexity and efficiency, the *transitological paradigm needs constant updating and revisiting*.

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