

# ОГЛЕДИ И СТУДИЈЕ

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## **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS IN MEXICO AND POLAND\***

### **Summary**

The object analysis of this paper is comparison of democratisation process that occurred in two countries - Mexico and Poland. Beside common political past and authoritarian nature-character of previous regime, those countries are different in almost every aspect: geographical position, history, culture and politics. The aim of this paper is to discover the similarities and differences of democratisation process as well as to find to which degree democratisation is a universal process. During the twenty century many countries with previously nondemocratic regimes transformed itself into democracies. That process simultaneously occurred on distant continents and concerned countries with totally different political and economical regimes. The main reason of studying transition is to uncover the conditions and paths that had led to political democracy. The main purpose of the paper is to analyse and compare democratisation process in Mexico and Poland in the context of wider democratisation theories. The period of reforms between the authoritarian regime and fully democratic state is called in literature de-

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mocratisation or transformation and should be analysed on two levels. The first one, the institutional, concerns changes in political and economical system. The second one, the societal, relates to modifications inside society, the impact of institutional changes on political culture of both, ruling elite and opposition.

Key words: democracy, democratisation, Mexico, Poland, politics, political parties, institution, transition, consolidation, election

## **THE CONCEPT AND MODEL OF DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATISATION**

During the twenty century many countries with previously non-democratic regimes transformed itself into democracies. That process simultaneously occurred on distant continents and concerned countries with totally different political and economical regimes. The main reason of studying transition is to uncover the conditions and paths that had led to political democracy. Every democratisation involves a change of socio-political regime. Every regime change presupposes the demise of a prior regime. But, of course, an undemocratic regime can terminate without being replaced by any equally coherent successor regime; and a change from an authoritarian regime may not result in a democratic regime. Therefore every transition generates uncertainty, and raises the spectre of potential insecurity (both domestic and in relation to neighbours and allies of the authoritarian incumbents). Every regime change also raises fear of betrayal, reversal, or collapse. So those who struggle for a democratic regime change are aiming to introduce a new political order in which old authoritarian practices are permanently ended, not just temporarily interrupted. In this sense they aim for 'liberation' of their society from its repressive traditions and heritage. The establishment of new democracies around the world had a direct impact on social sciences and resulted in emergence of many theoretical approaches in order to clarify this phenomenon. Before studying the particular aspect of democratic reforms it is necessary to describe the most important concepts of democratisation theories.

First of all, the concept of democracy itself needs to be explained. There is a multitude definition of this term in the political sciences, each of them underlying different aspects of that complicated concept. For the purpose of the paper I would adopt Robert Dahl definition. To perceive country as democratic three basic conditions need to be fulfilled: 1) Broad adult suffrage; 2) Regular and fair elections with real

chance of alternation; 3) The respect for civil and political rights.<sup>1)</sup> In accordance with above definition I will consider process of transition to democracy as successful when all three conditions will be accomplished.

In all countries democratisation can be divided into three phases: liberalization, transition and consolidation. However, it depends from the country how progress each of that phases and how long does it take. T.G. Ash noticed on the example of the Eastern and Central Europe that democratisation process in Poland took ten years, in Hungary ten months, in East Germany ten weeks, in Czechoslovakia ten days and in Romania ten hours. Political liberalization is the first phase of democratization process. In that stage the authoritarian regimes decrease repressions and in the same time allow for existence of basic civil and political rights. The authority tolerates to some extent existence of autonomous organizations. This process can be a result of division inside the ruling elite, civil mobilization or both processes.<sup>2)</sup> Next stage, transition, can be defined as 'interval between one political regime and another.'<sup>3)</sup> During that time two processes takes place, the erosion and dissolution of old regime and in the same time the emergence of new, pro-democratic elite. This phase is the most uncertain about the results and it is still easy to come back to ancient regime as 'not all significant actors of the regime have impeccable democratic credentials and where democratic rules of procedures have yet to be internalized by the society at large.'<sup>4)</sup> The last phase, consolidation consist in formation and maintenance of both valid democratic institutions and democratic political culture.<sup>5)</sup> It signifies stability of election norms and procedures as well as acceptance of this form of acquiring power by society.

In Leonardo Morlino theory the democratisation process can result in the establishment of four different regimes: 1. Limited democracy that exists when only some of the political and social groups cannot take part in the political game; 2. Institutional hybrid is characterised by an openness of authoritarian system but the elite and all the ba-

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1) Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p.2.

2) Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market; Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.51.

3) Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p.7.

4) Economía y Sociedad, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, *The democratic transition in Mexico and Latin America in the late 20th Century*, año/vol. 10, número 016, julio-diciembre, 2005, p.102.

5) Ibid.

sic institution do not change; 3. Liberalisation occurs when some rights previously belonging only to ruling elite are granted to other groups; 4. Democratisation exists when there are recognized wide social and political rights that are the basis for political rivalry.<sup>6)</sup>

To sum up the theoretical part it is important to underline that in most cases liberalisation occurs ahead of democratisation but as Samuel Huntington noticed liberalisation process does not have to lead to full democracy. There exist many examples when in last moment democratisation processes were stopped and the country come back to authoritarian system, as in Peru in 1962, Brazil and Bolivia in 1964 or Korea and Indonesia in 1950s. In most of the cases it was caused by civilian or military coup. One of the most innovative approaches is Samuel Huntington's waves of democratisation theory. Samuel Huntington claims that democratisation proceed similarly to the waves, in the same period of time group of states decide to establish democratic regime. Until now we could observe three waves, the first one between 1828 and 1926, the second one between 1943 and 1963, and the most contemporary one from 1974 until 1990s. In between two counter waves took place, the changes from democratic to authoritarian regime, in period 1922-1942 and 1958-1975.

Huntington defines democratisation waves as 'a group of transition from nondemocratic to democratic regime that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transition in the opposite direction during the period of time.'<sup>7)</sup> The first wave had its roots in the ideas of American and French revolution and concerned countries such as the USA, France, Switzerland and Great Britain. The second wave was related to the end of the Second World War and in the same time the defeat of fascism. During that time countries as Austria, Italy, West Germany or Japan established democracy. However, in many countries the second wave of democratisation did not last for a long time and reverse process occur. As the countries the will be analysed in next part of the paper both belong to the third wave of democratisation I would like to focus on that phenomenon more deeply. The third wave of democratisation began in 1974 with the overthrown of authoritarian regimes in South Europe. First, military dictatorship was overthrown in Portugal. Secondly, one month later, authoritarian regime in Greece collapsed and the following year Spanish dictator Francisco Franco

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6) Leonardo Morlino, 'Democratic Establishments: A Dimensional Analysis', in Enrique Baylora ( ed.), *Comparing New Democracies. Transition and Consolidation in Mediterranean Europe and Southern Cone*, (London: Westview, 1987), pp. 53-54.

7) Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p.15.

died. During next two decades many European, Asian, Latin American and to the lesser extend African countries rejected different kinds of nondemocratic rules and become democratizes. The culminating event in this process was dissemination of Soviet Union and adoption of democracy by the Central and Easter European Countries.

According to the modernization hypothesis there need to exist some preconditions for successful democratization. Lipset<sup>8)</sup> pointed at education, in contrast to Max Weber and Samuel Huntington<sup>9)</sup> that had emphasized the role of the social environment as religion and culture. For other scholars the most important precondition is economy<sup>10)</sup>. In the following part of the paper I will focus on two broad approaches to the prerequisite of successful regime change, as social environment on the one hand and economical factor on the other. The concept of social environment encloses religion and political culture. There exist two totally different views about impact of religion on democratization process. On the one hand, scholar such as Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, analysing the East European experience, suggested that religion has a minor influence and other factors better explain democratization in that region.<sup>11)</sup> Other scholar went even further and pointed out the hierarchical structure of religious communities and its resistance to changes as something that makes democratization harder. By way of contrast Samuel Huntington has seen religion as crucial in defining the civilization blocs and has argued that religious tradition does have a strong impact on effects of democratization.

The relations between country and religion are complicated and multidimensional and in the result it is impossible to determine if religion is or is not a precondition of democratisation. First of all, there are many religions in the world with three monotheists that are the most powerful, Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim. As the religious laws differ between each other they have different impact on country politics. Secondly, the impact of religion on state also depends from circumstances and traditions. Interesting example is the correlation between Protestantism and democracy. The majority of Protestant countries established democracy very early, in the first or second wave of democratisation. In the same time the Catholic Church was in favour of maintenance exi-

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8) Seymour M. Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53 (1959).

9) Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York, 1996).

10) Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

11) John Anderson, 'Does God matter, and if so whose God? Religion and democratization', *Democratization*, Vol.11, No.4 (2004), p. 192.

sting social relations. But the case of Poland and Brazil were religious authorities had traditionally support the political freedom and the opposition shows how difficult is to find 'one-fit-all' precondition.

The political culture is other part of social environment with regards to democratisation process. Sidney Verba defined the political culture as 'the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which defines the situation in which political action takes place.'<sup>12)</sup> Political culture is rooted in the broader culture of the society that includes system of beliefs and values, the relations among people and relations among people and the state. Scholars believe that culture in general and political culture especially has strong impact on democratization. The domination of certain values and beliefs over others is regarded as making democratization much easier and more successful. The values that support the reform process are a high degree of mutual trust among members of society, a willingness to tolerate diversity, and a tradition of compromise. Simply, consensus and common values can be considered as the main precondition of political democracy. Obviously, the prevailing of opposite values will make that process much harder and in some cases almost impossible.

The other approach advocates the importance of economic development on political process. Seymour Martin Lipset once postulated that 'more well-to-do nation, greater the chances that it will sustain democracy.'<sup>13)</sup> By many scholars a certain degree of economic development was considered as a prerequisite of democracy. As Roderic Ai Camp noticed 'market economies in themselves were not enough; a country had to cross (and remain beyond) a minimum threshold of economic performance before political competition could be institutionalized.'<sup>14)</sup> It is also worth to notice correlation between economy and social factors. The better functioning economy the higher level of literacy, education and urbanization. By way of contrast in many countries, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, the economic crisis directly contributed to social movement in last phase of transition. When the impact of the ideology had diminished and the authority could no longer show positive economic successes the people started to demonstrated and demand changes. It was the case of Poland and to some extent also Mexico.

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12) Adam Kuper and Jessica Kuper (eds.), *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 610.

13) Seymour M. Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy', p.75.

14) Roderic Ai Camp, *Democracy in Latin America: Patterns and Cycles* (Scholarly Resources Inc., 1995), p. 24.

There exist no single factors that can explain the institutional and social transformation in different countries with the same level of accuracy. Democratization is a complex issue that in each region and each country has emerged from correlation between economic, social and political causes. However, the use of preconditions makes understanding of this process much easier and allows the scholars to formulate general laws that can be analytically used in the future. As above mentioned the democratisation rest on transformation from authoritarian regime to democratic one. Under the term authoritarian regime can be found totally different forms of political organization that have only one common future, the 'absence of the institutional core'<sup>15)</sup> and suppression of competition and participation. For analytical purposes the regimes democratised during the third wave are being divided into personal dictatorship, one-party and military regimes. Both Mexico and Poland were classified by scholars as one-party regimes. In context of democratisation they achieved a relatively higher level of institutionalization than others, what had positive impact on reforms and consolidation of the democracy. Generally the reform process was caused by significant lose of the monopolistic power by the party. What is also characteristic, ex-monopolistic party in most of the cases remained a political actor in new multiparty system.

## **PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEM IN POLAND AND MEXICO**

Polish United Worker's Party was established in 1948 by unification of Polish Workers Party and Polish Socialist Party. Party governed People's Republic of Poland from 1948 to 1989. Until the 1989 party held authoritarian power in Poland, controlling all aspects of state activity: the economy, the bureaucracy, the military and the secret state police. The party kept strong connection with Soviet Union and the communistic parties in other parts of Europe and Marxism-Leninism was used as its ideology. In theory party organization was based on democratic centralism. However, the key actors such as Central Committee, Political Bureau and Secretariat decided about the composition of the main organs and party policy. PUWP had it branches almost everywhere including work places, schools and cultural institution. The Communists tried to create illusion that Poland was not a single-party regime by giving permission to exist pro-government, satellite political parties such as the People's Party and the Democratic Party. The Peo-

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15) Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, p.109.



ple's Party held responsible for agriculture and food production and the Democratic Party for trade community and small enterprise. So even if in theory Poland was not a single-party regime, in practice was ruled by Polish United Worker's Party.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party was the main political organization in Mexico politics for almost seventy years. One can divide the position of party in the political system of Mexico into two periods. From 1929 until 1980s party held hegemonic power, after that date opposition parties gained some power. However, until 2000 elections the PRI was the most important political structure in the country. The party was founded by President Plutarco Elias Calles in 1929 under name the National Revolutionary Party. Before its present name party was also called Party of the Mexican Revolution. The idea of Calles was to unite into one political organization all then-relevant powerful revolutionary leaders, local bosses and existing political parties as the country was politically instable from the end of Mexican Revolution in 1920. At the beginning party had clear socialist orientation. The second president Lazaro Cardenas extended the range of a part by founding National Confederation of Workers and National Confederation of Peasant. After PRI established itself as a hegemonic party it was the easiest way of taking part in political life. As Hagopian and Mainwaring observed the strength of PRI was derived from the elite immunity to split, the authoritarian nature of electoral institutions and massive electoral support.<sup>16)</sup> In 1940s party had 4.3 million members: 2.5 million peasants, 1.3 million workers, and 500,000 in the popular sector.<sup>17)</sup> Due to positive economic growth by substitution of imports and low inflation until beginning of 1980s party was extremely popular in Mexico and had no real opponents. In that period Mexican GDP increased six time.<sup>18)</sup> The PRI created strong relationship with almost all parts of the society in accordance with theirs political strength. However, to hold its position the party used also electoral fraud, corruption, bribery, and repression. Its dominant position was undermine in the end of 1970s as a result of

16) Frances Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring (eds' ), *The third wave of democratization in Latin America*.

*Advances and setbacks*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.121.

17) *The Institutional Revolutionary Party* in Tim L. Merrill and Ramón Miró (eds), *Mexico: A Country Study*.

Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996, <http://countrystudies.us/mexico/84.htm>, last access 15.01.2013.

18) Russell Crandall, 'Mexico's Domestic Economy', in Russell Crandall, Guadalupe Paz and Riordan Roett,

*Mexico's Democracy at Work: Political and Economic Dynamics*, (Boudler, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).



the unprecedented scope of corruption and serious economic crisis. By 1980s other political parties grown in strength. The most important were the National Action Plan that in 1983 elections won in record number of state capitals and major cities and the Nation Democratic Front with roots in the Mexican Communist Party.

Authoritarian parties in Mexico and Poland shared some common features. Both dominated countries political life for many decades, the Polish Worker's United Party was the main body in Polish politics for almost 50 years and the Institutional Revolutionary Party even for longer time, 70 years. In theory both countries were not a typical single party regime as some other political organizations existed. However, in practice both parties held that role. In Poland as well as in Mexico satellite, pro-government organisations and parties were created in order to show common support for country's policy. In both cases it were economic problems that triggered declined support for the government and unveiled the need for change. On the other hand, there were some obvious differences. The main one was close cooperation and dependency of the Polish Party from the Soviet Union. The party politics was explained in accordance with Marx-Leninist ideology and in Mexico the PRI did not underpin its rule on any particular ideology. Its goal was the massive support that was achieved by use of populism. The last important difference is that the changes in Mexico were strictly internal process and the Polish reforms were possible due to changes in the Soviet Union.

## **THE SOURCES OF DEMOCRATISATION IN POLAND**

In the relevant literature different typologies of sources of democratisation can be found. The basic one divide the sources of democratisation on external and internal one. It is obvious that during the third wave of democratisation external influence was very important, especially support granted by international community for democratising countries. However, that impact differed between regions. In the East and Central Europe it played much bigger role than in the Latin America. The internal changes inside the Soviet Union, mainly power assumption by Mikhail Gorbachev who reject the Brezhnev Doctrine and changed the Soviet stance toward countries of the region enabled Poland and then other countries to starts reform without fear of external intervention.

Samuel Huntington divided internal factors due to the role the government and the opposition played in that process. Using the ter-

minology of Huntington transformation is a top-down process lead by elites. Transplacement occurs form joint action between elites and opposition. Replacement occurs when the opposition takes the lead in bringing about democracy and the authoritarian regime collapse or is overthrown.<sup>19)</sup> As democratisation is a complex process it is hard to clearly classify every country. However, both in Mexico and Poland, the characteristics of transplacement prevailed what I would like to show in further part of the paper.

Regime of the Polish United Worker's Party was not an peaceful time in the history of Poland. From the beginning of its rules Polish society tried to reject its authority. The confrontation of power took place in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980-1981. However, in this period the Communistic party was enough strong to beat the opposition. Its power was based on the military, expanded apparatus of coercion and support from the Soviet Union. As long as there was positive economic growth the impact of communistic ideology was not undermine. The economic situation in Poland was declining and in the summer of 1980 the Communist government increased food prices. It initiated national strikes that had started in Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk on 14 August 1980. The strike was lead by *Solidarność* with Lech Wałęsa as it leader. The demands of workers went much further then only to economic issues, considered labour reform, more civil rights including freedom of expression and religion and release of political prisoners. It resulted in first negotiation between the government and opposition. The accords were reached on 31 August 1980 and concluded the right to form independent social union, the right to strike and release of political prisoners.<sup>20)</sup> In the 1980s also members of the PUWP divided itself on the supporters of reforms and its opponents. In that time the hardliners were stronger and in the consequence on 13 December 1981 the martial law was introduced. The trade unions were once again delegalized, many members of *Solidarność* were imprisoned and civil and political rights were suspended. The martial law was formally lifted in July 1983, though many controls on civil liberties and political life as well as food rationing, remained in place through the mid- to 1980s.<sup>21)</sup> It was the last activity took by the government in order to maintain its power.

Poland was the first country in the Soviet bloc that started democratisation process. Indeed, it can be assumed that the Communist Party

19) Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, p. 114.

20) *The Birth of Solidarity*, U.S. Library of Congress, <http://countrystudies.us/poland/19.htm>, last access 29.03.2013.

21) *Jaruzelski*, U.S. Library of Congress, <http://countrystudies.us/poland/20.htm>, last access 29.01.2011.

agreed for far reaching reforms, believing that if they will go to far the Soviet Union will intervene, as there was uncertainty about the scope of change Gorbachev was willing to countenance. The level of economy in 1988 was even worse than one in 1980. Economical sanctions imposed by the international community and the lack of reforms drove to the huge inflation. Polish Catholic Church was strongly engaged in opposition activities. After almost ten years from the beginning of liberalization Poland started the transition phase. For the Communists the impetus behind the decision to negotiate was to legitimate economic program in a time of crisis. For the opposition it was clearly about opening the ancient regime. The main discussion to *The Round Table Talks* considered economy and social policy, political reforms and union pluralism. The most important issues that were discussed related pay rises, future elections and the competence of political institution after the elections. The final agreement included legalization of trade union, introduction of the post of president and the formation of Higher Chamber of the Parliament called *Senat*. Only 35 per cent of seats in Lower House, *Sejm*, were voted in free elections. The elections to *Senat* were free and the president was chosen by *Sejm* and *Senat* called in that occasion *Zgromadzenie Narodowe*.<sup>22)</sup>

The first elections from August 1989 were not fully democratic. The contractual *Sejm* as it was called was dominated by holdovers from the former regime but opposition won all the 35 per cent of seats that were designated for it. In the *Senat* opposition won 99 per cent of places. General Wojciech Jaruzelski was selected as the first President after the Second World War. He won with Tadeusz Mazowiecki just by one vote. In that time opposition was still afraid that too big changes, as choosing president from opposition, could result in the Soviet intervention. Even though the first election in Poland were not fully democratic it was a huge step in reform process for all Central and East Europe countries.

The process of consolidation of Polish democracy took 15 years. The process had started with the general elections from 1991 and ended with Polish membership in the European Union in May 2004. The October elections were the first free elections in Poland since 1922. The elections to *Sejm* were universal, direct, equal, free and conducted in secret voting. The turnout was only 43,20 per cent. The first three parties were Democratic Union, Democratic Left Alliance and Catholic Election Action. The turnout to *Senat* was the same as to *Sejm* and Democratic Union, Solidarity and Catholic Election Action were the three

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22) Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 318-319.

parties with the highest score. No political party achieved a decisive majority and after the elections a coalition government was formed. Tadeusz Mazowiecki was the first Prime Minister of democratic Poland.

At that point the situation in Poland was far from that in consolidated democracies. It lacked adequate mechanisms to regulate prerogatives between legislative and executive. The latter period of consolidation was characterized by constant clashes between the president and the parliament. What is more the unrestrictive electoral law from 28 June 1991 resulted in fragmented *Sejm* with twenty-nine parties what strongly undermined the power of legislative. The next elections took place in 1993. They were the consequence of dissolution of previous fragmented parliament ordered by the president Lech Wałęsa. The turnout totalled 52 per cent. The alliance of left-wing parties, Democratic Left Alliance and Peasants' Party, won the elections. The new election law opposed the fragmentation of parliament, this time only fourteen parties won the seats. In 1992 was introduced the Small Constitution that regulated relations between executive and legislative and what is the most important annulled the provisions of the Stalinist Constitution from 1952. However, its regulations were less than perfect and resulted in constant conflict between the president and the government. The Small Constitution was replaced by The Constitution of the Republic of Poland adopted on 2 April 1997 that is valid until now. The Constitution states that Poland is a parliamentary republic with tripartite division of power.

The first part of democratic reforms in Poland was positively recognized by international community and in November 1991 Poland became a member of the Council of Europe. Before the accession Warsaw had to fulfil preconditions concerning the rule of law, human rights, cultural co-operation and democratic standards. The breaking point were the first free elections from 1991. Then Poland started the negotiations with the NATO. From 1994 Warsaw took part in the Partnership for Peace programme what had started holistic reforms in order to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. The reforms of oversized security sector are one of the most important in post-authoritarian states that enabled further democratisation.<sup>23)</sup> Warsaw reorganized its security sector with regard of good governance principles and in 1999 became a member of the Alliance.

The last step of Polish democratization was accession to the European Union. The EU have the most complex precondition for can-

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23) Hänggi Heiner, 'Making Sense of Security Sector Governance', in Hänggi Heiner and Bryden Alan (eds.), *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* (Münster: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces - DCAF, 2004), pp.3-21.

didate countries that concern every sector of state activity. Only when the country accept *acquis communautaire* one can say that the it is a consolidated democracy. On 1 May 2004 Poland become the member of the EU and was in the first group of states accepted from ex-Soviet bloc.

## THE SOURCES OF DEMOCRATISATION IN MEXICO

*In Mexico the* Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) dominated, by mixture of legal and illegal sources, the elections *for 71 years*. The liberalisation phase started in the end of the 1970s. In the next twenty years the ruling party has promulgated six packets of political reforms that focused on party and electoral system. The reforms had the aim to fulfil demands of opposition without giving the major position in the political system. During that time the PRI tried to control all aspects of political game what was similar to the democratisation process in the Central and East Europe where the dominating forces thought that opening of the regime is possible without giving the power to the opposition. From the establishment of the party in 1929 the PRI was able to keep the opposition weak. It established the patron-client relationship that was dealing with demands of interest groups, by satisfying or constraining them.<sup>24)</sup> Almost all parts of the society were under the umbrella of the party in the form of different pro-party organizations.

During the 1970s there occurred important changes in Mexico. First of all, there were significant modification in Mexico social structure. The middle classes growth in the number and importance. The economic crisis from mid-1970s, the successful 1968 student movement demonstration, increasing guerrilla insurrections and urban terrorism showed that the party do not engaged all parts of the society and that there exist non-electoral form of the political participation.

The reform process was initiated by the Jose Lopez Portillo regime in 1977. First reform lowered the barriers to the formation and registration of political parties. The 1977 law enhanced the abilities of small parties to participate in elections and granted a small amount of free radio and television time each month to all legally registered parties. It is worth to underline that during that process Lopez Portillo believed that benefits achieved from discovery of significant oil sites would undermine the scope of reforms as the economy started to recover it-

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24) Joseph Klesner, *Electoral Reform in Mexico's Hegemonic Party System: Perpetuation of Privilege or Democratic Advance?*, [http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/PSci/Fac/klesner/Electoral\\_Reform\\_in\\_Mexico.htm](http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/PSci/Fac/klesner/Electoral_Reform_in_Mexico.htm), last access 25.02. 2013.

self. The opening of political participation for wider masses of society resulted in increased political participation and the desire for further reforms.

In 1983 elections the National Action Plan (PAN) won in record number of state capitals and major cities. New regime of Miguel De la Madrid at the beginning had recognized the victories of opposition.<sup>25)</sup> However, shortly after the reforms so-called failure of democratisation took place. In the 1985 general elections and 1986 local elections in the north part of Mexico the fraud by the PRI was used. Under the strong pressure of hardliners de la Madrid refused to recognise the successes of opposition. The size of violence after the 1985 and 1986 elections showed that discontent with the regime is far greater that the PRI had supposed.<sup>26)</sup> The same year under the pressure from opposition new reforms were introduced by President de la Madrid. The opposition got further possibilities for representation in the Congress, as the Lower House was enlarged from 400 to 500 members and 200 were reserved for open competition. However, in the same time reforms strengthen the executive control over election process. The 1988 presidential elections marked a dividing line in Mexican politics, as the PRI candidate for the first time barely won the elections.

Very often it is hard to distinguish when liberalisation phase ends and transition starts. As in the beginning of the paper transition was defined as „interval between one political regime and another”<sup>27)</sup> I believe that in the case of Mexico it has started after the breakthrough 1988 elections. At the beginning of 1990s the PRI lacked two-third majority to amend the constitution. Under the pressure from opposition and the United States concerning the North American Free Trade Agreement President Carlos Salinas promised to refrain from electoral fraud.<sup>28)</sup> What is more the new electoral law was passed that ‘enhanced non-PRI representation on the newly created body charged with organizing the elections, strengthened the oversight function of opposition parties, went further in ensuring the neutrality of the workers handling the election, created an electoral tribunal to handle complaints of fraud,

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25) Wayne Cornelius, ‘Political Liberalization in an Authoritarian Regime: Mexico, 1976-1985’, in Judith Gentleman (ed.) *Mexican Politics in Transition* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), pp. 22-24.

26) Joseph Klesner, *Electoral Reform in Mexico's Hegemonic Party System: Perpetuation of Privilege or Democratic Advance?*, [http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/PSci/Fac/klesner/Electoral\\_Reform\\_in\\_Mexico.htm](http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/PSci/Fac/klesner/Electoral_Reform_in_Mexico.htm), last access 25.01.2011

27) Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p.7.

28) *Latin American Regional Reports: Mexico and Central America*, 10 May 1990.

and called for a new voter registration list.<sup>29)</sup> In the same time the PRI tried to strengthen its position by passing the governability clause that determined that a party with the most votes automatically is awarded the majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

In the 1991 federal elections the PRI took 61 per cent of the national votes so there was no need to use the governability clause. The 1993 reform packet eliminated the governability clause. The Senat doubled its size and new law enabled opposition to get at least one-quarter of the seats. However, it was not enough to affect the PRI power. For future of Mexico democratisation process the most important change was the cancelation of the 82 article of the Constitution that enabled the people borne in Mexico from the foreign-born parents to run for presidency. This amendment made possible for Vincente Fox, the National Action Plan (PAN) leader, to take part in 2000 presidential elections.

The reform process initiated in 1977 partially concluded with the electoral triumph of the PAN in 2000 presidential election. Until the breakthrough election there existed above constitutional scheme of electing the president. The ruling PRI party practice was to hand-pick by president his successor from his cabinet. The cabinet member that was going to start in presidential election had to resigned from office six month before elections and in that manner public opinion new how was picked as favourite in presidential race. As Padgett noticed in his book the successor had to have some socioeconomically characteristic, such a, physical appearance, a middle-class background from a large state, a neutral position vis a vis religious organization and wife with moderate views.<sup>30)</sup>

Currently Mexicans have divided government, 'the president is no longer a virtual dictator, the PRI is no longer a hegemonic party, and the regime is no longer authoritarian.'<sup>31)</sup> On the other hand, the events that have happened in last ten years clearly shows that it is to early to call Mexico a consolidated democracy.

Mexico held general elections in 2003, 2006 and 2009 and one presidential elections in 2006. From three conditions of consolidated democracy enumerated by Robert Dahl, in Mexico exist broad adult suffrage, the elections take place regularly, there is the alternation of

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29) Stephen Morris, *Political Reformism in Mexico: An Overview of Contemporary Mexican Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), p.89.

30) L.Vincent Padgett, *The Mexican Political System* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), pp.188-89.

31) Joseph Klesner, *Electoral Reform in Mexico's Hegemonic Party System: Perpetuation of Privilege or Democratic Advance?*, [http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/PSci/Fac/klesner/Electoral\\_Reform\\_in\\_Mexico.htm](http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/PSci/Fac/klesner/Electoral_Reform_in_Mexico.htm), last access 25.01.2013.



power and political and civil rights are rather respected. However, the elections are not totally free and there are accusation of fraud that in many cases considered all parts taking part in Mexican political game. The presidential elections in 2006 and the general elections from 2009 are the appropriate example. The elections also showed that there exist need for further reforms both institutional and societal one.

The long process of electoral reform in Mexico had a positive impact on the freedom of the elections. However, more time need to pass to recognize Mexico as a consolidated democracy. The changes need to take place not only in the institutional part but also the political culture need to transform itself and that process just has started. As was stated in early studies on political culture the democracy requires a compatible value system to endure it<sup>32)</sup> and Mexico clearly needs more time to achieve that objective. Adam Przeworski noticed that due to the Soviet factor it is hard to compare and apply the Eastern and Central Europe models of democratization to one founded in Latin America.<sup>33)</sup> However, in my paper I have tried to show that democratisation is an universal process and comparative analyses of different countries is extremely useful for social scientists.

## **DIFFERENCIES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN POLAND AND MEXICO**

Even though Mexico and Poland lie in different continents and have more differences then similarities the main characteristics of democratisation process were alike. Both countries were ruled by an authoritarian party that for decades were enough strong to suppress the opposition. In both countries the liberalisation phase had started as a combination of desire of freedom and more down-to-earth economical problems. Each concession made by the Polish United Worker's Party and the Institutional Revolutionary Party took place after the time of economical problems and was backed by the mass protests. From the beginning both parties wanted to supervise the reform process and believed that they are strong enough to maintain its power. The transition phase started in both countries in similar way as well. The opposition gained enough strength, so that its demands and further reform could not be stopped and for the first time elites had to implement reforms

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32) Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

33) Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.5.

that were seriously undermining their position. It is also important to underline that in both countries democratisation proceeded in relatively peaceful way with only occasional use of force by the government.

The main difference between Poland and Mexico considers the consolidation phase. In fifteen years Poland has fully consolidated its democracy on both institutional and societal level. By way of contrast Mexico is still in process of doing so. That shows that the changes in political and economical system is very often much easier then transformation of political culture. In the paper I wanted to show that democratisation is an universal trend and experiences of Easter and Central Europe countries can be used as a good lessons for the Latin American ones. Mexico can learn from example from Poland that taking part in the international organizations is the best motivator and in the same time source of help on the way to consolidate democracy on institutional level. At the same time existence of non governmental organizations and international civil society has a positive impact on society and enable to transform political culture into one that strongly support democratic values.

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## Зоран Крстић

### КОМПАРАТИВНА АНАЛИЗА ПРОЦЕСА ДЕМОКРАТИЗАЦИЈЕ У МЕКСИКУ И ПОЉСКОЈ

#### Резиме

Демократизација као политички феномен и метод, колико одређеног толико и неодређеног супстрата и форме, представљао је политички догађај *par excellence* у последњим декадама 20. века и појмовно-терминолошки изум савремене политичке науке. Овај планетарни феномен подједнако је захватио и источно-европски

регион и латиноамерички континент. Често се праве паралеле између транзиционих и демократизационих процеса између поменутих региона. Источна Европа и Латинска Америка су крајем 20. века преобразиле муњевито, готово истовремено, сопствене политичке системе нашавши се на сличном путу, иако су једни журили улево а други удесно. Комунистички политбирои и војне хунте уступили су место демократским правилима игре, вишепартијским парламентарним изборима и изборној егзекутиви. Никад дотад се два тако велика и тако различита региона нису ланчано променила, тако рећи, у исти мах и у истом правцу, као кад возачи који се крећу у супротним правцима скрену један лево, други десно и наставе у истом смеру.

Упоредном анализом демократизационих процеса две значајне, утицајне и репрезентативне земље у својим регионима, Мексика и Пољске, дошло се до неких занимљивих и интригантних резултата. Два региона, Источна Европа и Латинска Америка, су крајем 20. века постали симболи убрзане историје са релативно интактним националним традицијама и ослободили се белега империја диктатура -левичарске (источно-европски регион) и десничарске (латиноамерички регион). Оба екстрема су пала од 1983. до 1990. на просторствима од Огњене земље до Панамског канала и од Јадрана до Беринговог мореуза, супституишући аутократију демократијом.

Политички системи у оба региона били су изразито мобилизациони и милитаризовани. Комунистичке партије су то правдале потребом одбране од западног империјализма, а војне хунте императивом заштите од комунизма и „црвене“ опасности. У оба случаја, војска је практично владала унутрашњом политичком и друштвеном сценом. Војска је била на врху политичке пирамиде и пиједесталу развијене фактократије, односно стварне власти која је моћнија од формално-институционалне расподеле функција и утицаја. Фактократија, односно стварна власт у коју се углавном убрајају велепоседници, велики предузетници, војска и католичка црква, лако је уклањала формалну *de jure* власт. Једно од заједничких обележја два региона је и присутна, мање или већа, дистанца од правне државе и хронична инсуфицијенција конституционализма.

Кључне речи: демократија, демократизација, Мексико, Пољска, политика, политичка партија, институције, избори, транзиција, консолидација

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