

BULGARIAN TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY – WHY WAS IT SO DIFFICULT?

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ABSTRACT

The study of Transition to Democracy is one of the most important aspects in the social sciences and there are major important works written on it already. The previously accumulated knowledge is the basis for every paper, thus, social scientists like Huntington, Fukuyama, Linz and Stepan are particularly valued when talking about the study of transition. Furthermore, their works have contributed to the point that they have become foundation in the field – a “must know”.

This is why the methods that the current paper employed are partially based on their works, especially Linz and Stepan’s findings. Transition to Democracy in Bulgaria is highly interesting topic and this is why it was chosen for main research field. Examining the early stages of Democratic Transition in the state have provided us with answer to the question why it was so difficult and what were the reasons behind those hard and demanding early years of Democracy in Bulgaria. The question is not only interesting, but controversial as well. This is why relying on the theory to lead and inspire further knowledge was the main approach, chosen for the paper.

The findings proved to be more consistent with Linz and Stepan’s knowledge than in contradiction with it. For example, the political and economic situations were not only in the hands of the Bulgarian political elite, but also influenced from outside factors. The declining power of the USSR and the increasing power of the West played a role in all the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which includes Bulgaria as well. The previous relation to the East and the current attraction from the West had impact on all levels in the state. Another important aspect that was revealed is the role of the political elite and what was it in Bulgaria in particular. The political elite has the decision making process in their hands, which determines the country’s way in emerging into Democracy and its level of success. This is why the findings in the project concerning the political elite are one of the milestones in it. Also, the society should be playing a major role too, but the Bulgarian case proved to be out of consistence with that point.

Overall, the results from the research are interesting and prove important point with the case of Bulgaria. Transition to Democracy is not an easy process and the Balkan state is not an exception of this fact.

CHAPTER ONE. Introduction.

1.1 Topic Explanation.

There comes a time in a country when, for good or for bad, political systems change. The matter of political change will be the subject of this paper. To be more exact – the shift in the Bulgarian political system in 1989. There are many questions which come up when such change occurs. Why and why now? How and what caused it? However, the most important one from historical perspective is “Was the change for better?”. This project will try to answer the question – “***Why was Bulgarian Transition to Democracy so difficult?***”

When we talk about change there always comes the question what is change? Can we consider every little transformation a shift by itself or should we take it as part of the bigger picture, which may cause general change eventually? Most certainly, both of the aspects are important in every paper claiming objectiveness. However, it requires huge amount of time in order to cover every aspect, so most often change is observed and analyzed when it occurs in bigger dimensions.

This is certainly the case here – the political shift in Bulgaria 27 years ago did not come by itself and only there, on the contrary – the world changed. With the falling of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, which marked the breaking apart of the USSR and the end of the cold war, many processes were born, one of which was the future democratization of Bulgaria. This implies that major part in the change of Bulgaria took an external factor and not internal one.

Before the falling of the wall Bulgaria was a Socialist country with planned economy and strict, centralized ruling for almost 45 years. These years of course had great impact not only on the political life in the country, but also with economy and society. After the falling of the wall the country had to convert into free marketed, capitalist democracy, which is still a great challenge. This task proved to be very difficult for Bulgarians and we are yet to examine what exactly was the cause for these difficulties. It is not an easy question to answer, but using proven scientific methods and the accumulated knowledge of notable social scientist, we will be able to determine what exactly was the reason behind it.

In the case of Bulgaria and the other Eastern European countries which went through the same process after 1989 there is a point in their history, which some consider being a valid distinctive one in their democratic transition – their acceptance in the European Union. As the Union has certain criteria for the countries which want to join, this is understandable to some point.

Here are the standards, which the candidate countries have to fulfill laid in the so called “Copenhagen Criteria”:

1 – “*stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities.*” (European Commission, 2015)

2 – “*a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces in the EU;*” (European Commission, 2015)

3 – “*the ability to take on and implement effectively the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.*” (European Commission, 2015)

However, despite the Union being a guarantee to some point, we can see that some of the countries do not exactly have “*stable institutions*”, “*rule of law*” or “*respect for and protections of minorities*” to its full extent. This is partly a follow up from the first years of the transition in the specific countries and Bulgaria is not exception here. Being the democratic anchor it is supposed to, sometimes the Union seems to be lacking strength to rein its member’s arbitrariness, which brings a little doubt to the statement. Also, one after another, crises seem to be always around, shaking the Union’s foundations and showing division in it. (Tramsin Rutter, 2015)

So, despite being a member of the European Union with its powerful democratic institutions, it is not always certain that given country is fully democratic. The Bulgarian case is the same. Even though it has been more than ¼ century now, the country is still suffering from corruption, which cripples its institutions and its smooth transition. For 25 years much has been done, but Bulgaria is still one of the last member countries in regards to almost every objective development mark. Corruption, organized crime and problems with the judicial systems are only few of the problems, stated in the Commissions reports. (novinite.com, 2016)

The objective of this paper will be to cover some of the aspects of the transition to democracy in Bulgaria, explain what went wrong in the first years. Of course, the democratic idea has been elusive in other countries too, which gives us other cases to consider, but there is always the specific wrong steps or actions that can be held accountable.

1.2 Research Puzzle.

In this subchapter the main objective will be to explain why this topic is important and relevant. Transition to democracy is highly interesting and significant milestone in social scientists' papers. A lot has been written about it and there are many aspects, which need to be covered. The topic itself is very complex and requires many pieces in order to come up with one big finished puzzle. However, talking about the Bulgarian case as a subject will make it a bit easier, because the specific cultural pattern can be taken into consideration, which will give the project more complete perspective.

First, the Bulgarian transition to democracy is of big relevance, because it is part of the bigger picture. The world has changed and Bulgaria was not the only country going through that process. Explaining why was it problematic in the Balkan country will contribute to the bigger picture, thus clarifying one aspect of the Eastern Europeans' transition. Furthermore, this transition as a whole is a landmark in political history and it has the power potential to shape the future.

Also, we can talk about transition to democracy as a shift in the political system, but we can also talk about change in the everyday life of the citizens. The subject is very broad and it changes not only how the country works, but also how the ordinary people live their lives, which is fascinating. This indicates how important the matter is. It is subject of many discussions and disputes whether the people actually live better in democratic system or in communist society. In Bulgaria this is even considered "everyday talk" matter. People are so interested in politics, that they talk about it all the time. Every subject is part of politics somehow, which also indicates the gravity of that matter.

Another important aspect is the European Union perspective. It is crucial for the union to have stable and democratized countries as members, otherwise it will be shifting from its basic foundations. It is also crucial for Bulgaria to be part of the Union, because otherwise the country will be small and insignificant in the periphery between the Democratic West, the Middle East and Russia. All of this is guaranteed by democracy to some extent. Of course, this is also controversial, since there are many people with different opinions, but this is the interesting and fascinating thing about it. One thing is for sure – the country underwent a transformation process, which marked its future and the difficulties in the beginning still have their impact now. It is up to us to examine all the aspects relevant to it and shed some light on different processes that took place.

These are some of the many reasons why this exact topic is relevant and interesting. The spectrum of aspects connected to and dependent from the matter guarantees its significance and attention-grabbing. Furthermore, this paper will come up with a reason for why was the Bulgarian Transition so hard and what were the reasons behind it. The goal is to use theories and by combining those with empirical data to find out what actions taken by the Bulgarian political elite in regards to the political system and economy were not correct.

There are very good works on that matter and the paper will gain as much use from them as possible.

Also, one other goal, not with focus on it, is to lay out some alternative solutions by presenting the case of Hungary, because the country had the same goal, but it underwent it differently and had other results. This will bring contrast to the Bulgarian case and provide the reader with the comparative aspect.

1.3 Delimitation.

This subchapter will be dedicated entirely on why that exact question was chosen in comparison to others, also very important and interesting questions. Each of the alternative questions, of course, had the same guidelines and basic ideas. In the present globalized world everything is somehow interconnected. For example, one event in Ukraine can lead to heavy consequences in other parts of the globe, such as the U.S. or the E.U. However, picking one narrower subject and focusing on it will provide the paper with far better structure and impact, which is the target here.

One of the alternative questions was to examine the levels of development and make comparison between one central European country and one Eastern European. This will be also used, but as a single subchapter in the analyses part. The subchapter won't determine the focus of the paper, but it will merely contribute to the bigger picture, since as stated earlier – Bulgaria was not the only country to undergo such process and it will be interesting to find out what other states did in the same case. The examined state will be Hungary, because they have taken roads particularly interesting. The work of Stepan and Linz on democratization in the post-totalitarian states will be highly used, because they have very good coverage on that matter.

Another supposed question would have been comparing between the east and the west, but this is even boarder approach. There are huge amounts of aspects to be considered and this study would have required many researchers in order to cover every piece of the puzzle. Perhaps this question would be a lot more interesting and relevant, but its broadness makes it impractical for a paper that short in length. Despite how interesting and provoking would be this method was not chosen either.

There is one very important aspect which needs to be acknowledged before everything. Democracy has many shapes and features. There are many different types of democracy and probably we won't even come up with one complete definition, which explains the specific situation in every country. For ancient Greeks democracy has one shape, for us in the present it has completely different. There are also different levels of democratic development, which needs to be considered as well. Thus, focusing on the Bulgarian case only will be the best option. It will ensure a good consistent project, which will cover most of the aspects.

These are some of the many reasons that exact question was chosen. However, there will be a chapter in which EU's perspective will be covered, because focusing solely on one narrow matter, without accounting for at least few external factors will be a mistake. As stated earlier, we live in highly globalized world and every paper claiming objectiveness has to comply with that fact.

1.4 Word Explanation and concepts.

As the terms, which will be used in this paper are very common, but are often mistaken in their explanation or used interchangeable, there will need to be a good and simple explanation. The purpose of that is to clarify the concepts, thus, providing us with better starting approach. Some of the concepts, which are going to be discussed here are communism, socialism and the difference between them and capitalism.

Socialism and Communism are two very interesting concepts, however, they are often being used interchangeable. If we look in one of the biggest dictionaries for explanation, we will see this:

Socialism: *“a way of organizing a society in which major industries are owned and controlled by the government rather than by individual people and companies”* (merriam-webster dictionary, 2016)

Communism: *“a way of organizing a society in which the government owns the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc) and there is no privately owned property.”* (merriam-webster dictionary, 2016)

Seemingly both of the concepts have one structure and objective. Both of them promote equality and want to remove the classes. Theoretically both of them sound pretty good and utopian. However, history has proved that wrong. Most of the countries have not succeeded or even became dictatorships – the threat that comes from centralizing powers. Also, there is a slight difference between communism and socialism.

In the communistic society everyone works for the communal goal. Everything is owned by everyone and no one has more than anyone. People are rewarded for their labor with ration equally. However, that type of political and economic structure demolishes people's drive to

develop and be better, thus resulting in slow economy and poor production. Also, it is often argued that real communism cannot exist in its pure form, certainly not with a species like humans. (*Investopedia, 2016*)

The socialistic type of system is very similar to communism. Its ultimate purpose is the same, but its structure has lesser degree than the communistic one. While with the first one no individual owns anything, here the laborers are paid with money, which they can spend as they see fit. Each laborer is being provided with the basic requirements for his living but advancement is also slow here, because there is no motivation for individual developing. The government here operates in the interest of the working class. The main objective of the country is to relocate the money and transform it into social benefits, such as health care, pensions, etc. We can see that in most of the modern countries some of these benefits also exist to some degree. (*Investopedia, 2016*)

Both of these concepts have their advantages and disadvantages, which is normal. Both of them are near the opposite of the current system we live in – capitalism. In the capitalistic society, people are free to produce more than the bare minimum. They are also free to keep the excess production without limitation of how they use it. This means individuals can get wealthier in the capitalistic system, thus introducing competition. To be competitive requires more efforts and personal development, resulting in better economy, technological and scientific breakthroughs. However, this system also has its flaws. Some of them are huge difference between the wealthiest and the poorest, exploitation and inequality in general. Here comes the question if people are equal by definition, which is matter for more philosophical projects.

Another important concept we must not forget to clarify is certainly the idea of Democracy itself. This term has a rich history. It was first conceived by the Greeks, so the word itself has Greek roots (*demos* – people, *cratos* – rule). However the ancient Democracy practiced in Greece is not the same as the one we practice now. The concept went through different meaning throughout the ages. The classical definition, typical for 17-18 century claimed Democracy to be the opposite of Monarchy, which means that the power is concentrated in a single ruler and Aristocracy, which means the power was given by heritage and normal people again had no involvement in it. Naturally, even then, Democracy meant the rule of people. The modern definition is: “*Form of government, where a constitution guarantees basic personal and political rights, fair and free elections, and independent courts of law*”. (*Democracy-building, 2016*) We can see that there are common key elements in the meaning of the concept throughout the years. However, the modern democracy is more complex, because it is adjusted to the existing reality in the contemporary world. If we outline the crucial aspects they will be: Separation of Powers, Security of Human rights, Freedom of speech and Equal right to vote. The separation of powers is extremely important here, because centralization of power almost always leads to the abuse of it. (*Democracy-building, 2016*)

One more concept that needs to be explained is the idea of Democratic Transition. Following from the previous subchapter, the idea of transition is to go from more centralized power to more widened one. In a broader sense, this means sovereignty must shift from the hands of

few people to the hands of all the people, thus giving them the tool of power through elections. The three major powers (Executive, Legislative and Judicative) must not be in the hands of one and also must be made to depend from each other, thus keeping themselves at check. Another important aspect is the guarantee of human rights, which must be succeeded by strong institutions and the rule of law. The Freedom of speech also falls into this column.

A country can be called successful in its Democratic transition only once every one of these aspects is fact. The rule of law must be applicable to everyone, even the ones with power, people must have free and non-tampered elections and free speech. Institutions must be strong, so they are able to fix the problems through approved legal procedures. Also, Linz and Stepan have very good contribution to that field. They use the concept “consolidation”, which will come in very handy for explaining the first few years of Democratic Transition in Bulgaria.

Consolidation is a very important concept when taking about Democratic Transition. Linz and Stepan use it in the meaning of democracy becoming “*the only game in town*”. A country is fully consolidated democracy only once it is secure from going back to authoritarian regime. It also implies that there are many tasks that need to be taken into account in order for that to happen. Explaining these tasks and conditions will be central for the paper, because it will reveal what was done wrong.

These are the most important terms, which will be used in this paper. Furthermore, using the foundation laid by the theorists and explaining what actually happened will give us the difference, thus providing the paper with answer to the main question.

CHAPTER TWO. Methodology.

2.1 Synopsis

The synopsis subchapter has imposed as one of the most important parts in the contemporary project writing. Its meaning is to lay out shortly what is happening throughout the whole paper or book. Living in the modern world, people often do not have time to read the whole book or project or they just want to get the basic idea and then start reading throughout the complete paper. Here comes the synopsis subchapter, which has the objective the cover shortly the content of the scientific work and present it to the reader in a few pages.

This paper's target is to introduce the reader into Bulgarian's transition to democracy and what were the processes which condemned it to be as it is. The main idea is to follow some of the most important events and cases in the country's history from its socialistic past to its democratic present. This will give us the understanding and knowledge of how exactly Bulgarians altered their political system and how it ended up in the condition it is now. Furthermore, democratic transition does not have one pattern, which can be applied in every reality, so the cultural and psychological precondition of Bulgarians needs to be taken into account as well, which makes the paper unique and interesting. Examining the important aspects like economy, society and politics during the whole transition will contribute to a good paper.

The first chapter of the paper will be Introduction, which consists of few other subchapters. Topic explanation is the very first subchapter, having the objective to lead the reader into the subject. Numbers of different ideas are implemented in it, in order to draw interest and light up the way ahead. As an opening subchapter "Topic explanation" also has the aim to give a short description, which will lay out the groundwork for the whole project ahead, which makes it a very important one.

Research puzzle is the second subchapter in the introduction part. Its purpose is solely to explain why is this paper interesting and relevant and draw more attention to it. As the character of the project has problem solving aspects, it is of high importance to draw as much interest as possible, otherwise it would have no purpose. This puts the Research Puzzle part amongst the most important ones here, since raising awareness is one of the imperative aspects for every initiative.

In the Intro part we can also see a chapter called "Delamination". Its objective is to explain why exactly this question was chosen as research approach. Since there can be many different approaches in social science, this is very appropriate subchapter. It will give the reader understanding of the surrounding topics, thus providing him with different points of view. Having different points of view and critical thinking is important aspect for every social scientist claiming objectiveness.

The last subchapter in the Introduction part is "Word Explanation". Its purpose is to introduce good explanation of the most important and controversial words, which will be used in the paper. In this paper's case some of the explained terms are "socialism", "communism" and "capitalism", as these will be used mostly and we will be able to see them in every part of the project. Aspects as simple as word's meaning are very often underestimated, which leads to false understanding or confusion, which needs to be avoided for the sake of real knowledge. This is why the "Word Explanation" subchapter is part of this and many other papers.

Going further into the project we can see that the second subchapter is called "Methodology". Its purpose is to introduce the "hard" aspects of the project, which will ensure its good structure and appearance.

The first subchapter in the “Methodology” part is Synopsis – the current one. As stated earlier, it has the objective to explain and contribute to better understanding of the project’s structure.

Second in turn, part of the Methodological chapter is “Case Studies and other approaches”. This will be the groundwork of this project, since the approach into it predetermines the whole structure and aim. In this subchapter we will see explanation of what “Case Studies” is and why it was chosen as leading method. Also, introducing the basics of the Bulgarian Case will be part of this subchapter. This will lay the ground work for further writing. The “Case Studies” subchapter is crucial for the paper, since it will give it structure and it will tunnel the knowledge and data in the right direction.

After Case Studies it follows the “Data and Materials used” subchapter. It will have the aim to describe what are the materials used in the project. Every project needs sources and data in order to be achieved. This ensures that the paper is properly connected to the reality, which is of high importance. Otherwise it will be just speculative and one-sided. Part of this subchapter is also to make short review of the existing literature of the topic, which has the same purpose. Relying on previously accumulated knowledge is perhaps the most important thing in science, since it ensures its development and way forward.

The third chapter of the paper will be the “Theoretical Framework” one. This will give the project the needed connection to the academic world. It will also provide it with better and more understandable explanation, so we can see the essence of the paper. As stated previously, relying on theories will provide the paper with strong already accumulated ground knowledge, which will ensure the good integrity that we need.

Another important part of the project is to make review of the history in regards to that particular topic. Of course, we won’t be able to judge and try to predict what will happen just by relying on history, but this will give us good points of similarity, which can be used in order to compare and understand better. It will also help the reader into the topic even further by providing another piece of knowledge on the topic. We need to learn from history, because *“Those, who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (George Santayana, 1905)*

In the analyses subchapter the project will be dealing with different aspects and points of view during the Bulgarian transition, which will ensure thoroughness. The first subchapter here will present the case. It will have one of the most important parts here, since it has the aim to introduce the reader with Bulgarian’s Transition to democracy in just few pages. This part will follow the biggest and most relevant events in Bulgarian history, thus presenting the reader with the knowledge needed for judging later.

The second and third subchapters in the Analyses part are “Economy and Political Elite before and during the transition”. It gets very interesting here, since these aspects are the building columns and also mark for advancement in every country. Examining them before,

after and during the transition will provide us with spectrum of very important data, which can be used to answer the main question. Moreover, by comparing the conditions before and after should reveal what was done wrong and what was the right action to be taken. After that the paper will be using the case of Hungary, because that state had the same task to complete, but they had different approach. As the emphasis will be on the first two subchapters of the analyses part, this subchapter won't be a leading one but it will have a lot to contribute with. Juxtaposing Hungary's ways with the Bulgarian ways will contribute to the bigger picture and will put Bulgaria in contrast, shedding more light on its crucial decisions in that period.

There will be also a chapter, part of the analysis, which explains briefly EU's role in the Bulgarian Transition. It is of big importance to have subchapter, even brief one, because starting from the very beginning of the transition, EU membership was a goal not only for Bulgaria, but for the most other Central and Eastern European countries. Provided with a goal to reach, the country had to alter all its political and economic realities in order to fit the criteria for acceptance. This is why the EU's role chapter will hold big importance in this project.

The last chapter of the project will be to conclude using everything stated in the previous parts. It is very important to wrap everything up in the end, since it gives the project a good finished look. This chapter will also introduce a few predictions in regards to the future of Bulgaria.

2.2 Case Studies and Other Approaches

There are many research methods in the academic world like Comparative Research, Case study, etc.. Each of them has its advantages and weak points. This particular paper will be relying on the case study method in order to achieve its goals and answer the main question. The case study approach has a better straight to the point aspect in contrast to the Comparative Method and it will be better suited for this specific question. Of course, the other method also has its benefits, and this is why they will be partially used, just to strengthen the analyses part by putting Bulgaria in contrast.

Being the leading approach here, Case Study needs to be shortly explained in its essence. A simple description in regards to that research method would be that we are using certain event or example in order to analyze it and answer the main question. The spectrum of cases, which can be used for that purpose is very wide. Events, problems, programs, activities, a single person or processes, like in our case – all of these cases can be used and analyzed for the sake of answering the main question. Here is a good scientific explanation on Case Study:

"Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame — an

object — within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates." (Thomas, 2011. Pp. 23)

The core objective of the paper is to answer the question, thus the case study approach will provide us with the needed analytical structure for that purpose. The event or process in our case, which will be used and analyzed is Bulgarian Transition to Democracy. Using Case Study also suggests that there will be time or space restrictions, because there exists no limitless case, nor it can be possibly analyzed if it existed. In this paper the event or process is limited by time and space both. Bulgarian Transition to Democracy has clear time boundaries and it is limited to Bulgaria. This will provide us with a clear and well designated process we can follow, using different sources of data and then analyze.

Also, talking about transition to Democracy sets another useful tool, which the paper can exploit in order to achieve its goals. The very word transition implicates that there is a shift or change with a goal to be accomplished, which is sustainable Democracy in this case. This gives us the dependent variable or the goal Bulgaria is looking to achieve. The independent variables in our case are the causes, which occurred or did not in order to achieve sustainable democracy. Of course, some of them failed partially or completely and this is the interesting part. Why did that happen and what could have been done differently?

This is the reason case study was chosen for leading method or approach in our endeavors to assess Bulgarian Transition to Democracy. As stated earlier – it provides the paper with good, consistent structure, which will ensure the integrity of the project.

2.3 Data and Materials Used

The central purpose of the paper is to answer its main question and examine the different factors in regards to it. Since transition to democracy is a broad field, the project will be focusing on Bulgarian transition to democracy in particular. In order to achieve that goal and answer the main question, the project will have to rely on different, already accumulated information. This information can be divided in two types – primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of information are authentic and first hand, which can be proofs or data left by participants or first-hand witnesses of the event. They are most often raw records of info, which can be used and further analyzed in order to help with the research. This is the main difference between the primary and secondary sources. While the primary pieces of information are just data the secondary ones are already analyzed data with conclusions. The secondary sources are materials, which have gathered and analyzed the information. They are easier to use because the needed data is previously summarized and conclusion has been made. However, there always is a threat of deviation when using them, because the author may have imposed his way of thinking on the summarized information and we will see that info through the author's prism of thinking and understanding.

In this case, the paper will be using more secondary than primary sources of information, because transition to democracy is a process and we cannot pinpoint one specific event from which we can gather all the needed data. However, primary sources will be used also. Some of them are institutional and governmental records before and after the shift. Some other good primary sources will be already conducted interviews with participants in the transition – people with serious input in that process.

The secondary sources in our case are countless. Good examples of those are articles, books, documentaries and many others. The project will be using many secondary sources, because they can be as much valuable as the primary ones, when the main subject is a process. Endless numbers of scholars and academics have dedicated their lives to work on that matter, which gives us good pool of information to trust on. While primary sources will be used to try and pinpoint the main and most important events in Bulgaria's transition to democracy, secondary sources will be trust upon to help with explaining the most relevant terms and aspects in regards to the events.

The most important thing is to make sure all the informational sources are reliable, because otherwise the project will have questionable integrity. More knowledge from scholars and official organizations will ensure the project's uprightness, which is crucial for every paper concerning social sciences.

2.3.1 Literature Review

This subchapter's subject will be to present a short literature review on the matter. Part of the review will be based on some of the sources, which were used for the whole paper. However, some of it will be covering different sources, because all the input, which can be found, is valuable. Compared to all the information out there on that topic, this literature review will be very brief, because huge volumes of literature have been written throughout the years and it is not possible to cover it all.

Transition to Democracy and especially that transition in Bulgaria is a new thing in historical terms. However, the same does not apply for the literature, which has been written on it. As mentioned previously, there is a huge amount of work in concern to that and this makes it somewhat hard to orient, much less summarize in that topic. However, there are number of distinguishable scholars and writers, which are always worth mentioning while talking about transition to democracy. First, Stepan and Linz with their work on democratization theory are one of the most noticeable cases in regards to that subject. Their effort on the matter of consolidation can be considered as a highlight of the knowledge on transition to democracy. Their contribution to the field is very notable and no research in that area can go without using that as an advantage. (*Linz, Stepan, "Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, 1996*)

Another very important volume of works on that matter has been accumulated by the well-known scholar Francis Fukuyama. He is well known for his masterpiece “*The end of history and the last men*”. His work and style is one of the most influential in the social sciences area, but it also has a pinch of contradictory character in it. A huge amount of useful knowledge can be drawn and used from his works, which will also prove helpful to this project too.

There are also many Bulgarian scholars and politicians who have great pieces of work, especially in the Bulgarian Transition to Democracy. One of them is Vasil Prodanov, who is a well-known academician. His main interest is the Bulgarian Transition, which makes him one of the most useful theorists for this paper. His work “*Theory of the Bulgarian Transition*” is one of the most thought books in the universities in Bulgaria and it will surely prove to be useful for this project too.

Another notable work on the Bulgarian Transition in particular is “*Myths and Legends about the Bulgarian Transition*” of Zhelyo Zhelev. He is a political scientist, philosopher and the first democratically elected president in Bulgaria. His work on that subject will bring priceless input to the project also, because it has the knowledge of a social scientist and the actual experience of a politician, who was part of the Bulgarian Transition.

These are some of the most noticeable scientists and writers, which are worth mentioning. Of course, there are many others, which have invaluable contribution in that field, but unfortunately it is not possible to mention them all. There is a notable gap between the Bulgarian and the foreign scholars in the light of the main question, which is understandable. They all have had different perspective in their lives and works. However, each of their works contributes to the bigger picture in the Democratic Transition field and there are no two opinions about it.

CHAPTER THREE. Theoretical Framework.

3.1 Democratization

The study of democratization and transitology has proved to be one of the most influential in the social sciences for the last 50 years. This is more than understandable, since

the democratic transition phenomenon has been not only present, but also determinant in the social science study for many years now. The most famous and influential authors are that well-known exactly because of that – they have tried to theorize and simplify democratic transition.

No social science paper regarding democratization can go without mentioning Samuel Huntington and Francis Fukuyama. Going through their works on the matter one can understand not only the basics of it, but also the core fundamentals of democratic transition. Their constructive contradiction in two of the most famous works in social science “*The end of history and the last man*” and “*The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*” has become not only a milestone, but democratic history itself. Huntington’s work in “*The Third Wave*” determines the transition study as one of the most important approaches in democratization to that point, that his ideas can be used as a theory alone. In this book he examines the democratic transitions throughout the years. His idea is that democracy occurs in waves, starting from the early 19th century, when it was granted to vote for some of the white males in the States. This wave is the longest by time frame. It built up to 29 democracies worldwide, when in 1922 Mussolini came to power, which had great impact to the democratic development and left only 12 democracies worldwide after just 20 years of time. The second wave started after the allies won World War II. The recognized democracies worldwide rose to almost 40 once again in just 20 years. The Third wave started in 1974 and it is still ongoing. Huntington considers the transitions in South America, South Europe and East Europe part of this third wave. It is specific about his works that he distinguishes some different types of transition, such as transformation, replacement and intervention. (*Samuel Huntington, 1991*)

Another important aspect of Huntington’s work is that he managed to outline the prospects for consolidation. According to him, countries that have had previous experience with democratization, even if it was unsuccessful, have better starting point now. Furthermore, states with good level of development and well-shaped middle class with demands on the market also have better prospects at better consolidation in their democratization efforts. Another factor which plays a role, according to Huntington is if the change came solely from outside factors or inside push was also present. These observations will prove to be very helpful later in the paper, since his theory can be used in order to assess Bulgaria’s starting point in its endeavor to successful democratic transition. (*Samuel Huntington, as cited by Scott London, 1993*)

His input to explaining and theorizing democratic transition and consolidation is undoubtedly vast. His book can be reflected as an answer to Fukuyama's work, where he considers liberal representative democracy as the end of history. Fukuyama thinks this is the final goal for every country and there will be no better political system conceived. (*Francis Fukuyama, 1989*)

Of course, both of the authors had more works in the future, which were different from their most notable books, some even in contradiction with what they have previously wrote. The reason for that is that democratization theory, like everything else, is constantly evolving and changing. Furthermore the theory has never had one complete, accepted from everyone meaning, which is understandable. Each author has a different approach and understanding, like all humans, but this is the most interesting and hard aspect – achieving complete consolidation, just like with democracy.

Another great point of view on theorizing democratic transition, even Bulgarian transition in particular we can find in the works of Vasil Prodanov. In his book, "*Theory of the Bulgarian Transition*" he has contributed more than anyone else on that specific subject. One good idea of his is that the Democratization Theory has a big flaw, because it fails to take into account the specific cultural and historical reality in the specific country. By his opinion, there is no one universal method for achieving successful Democratic Transition exactly because of that fact. Each country has to do it on its own by planning, surrounding the decisive institutions with experts and constantly discussing matters of importance in the public domain. Of course, there are good examples, which must be taken into account. Examples from many successful to certain extend countries, but that knowledge needs to be adjusted so it can fit into the Bulgarian reality first. (*Vasil Prodanov, 2012, Pp. 27*)

Even greater impact on democratic transition we can find in the works of Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan. As their work will be decisive for this paper, we will need to have better understanding of it. First, we will start with their definition of Democracy, which makes a great opening point. According to them a country is only fully democratic when it reaches its consolidation point. In a way this is the point when a democracy is completely matured and it cannot turn to authoritarian regime again. For that reason, countries that have not completed their transition yet, do not fall in the consolidated democracies chart. Of course, there are certain conditions laid out by Linz and Stepan, which indicate that the process of democratization has been completed. One of them is the holding of free and non-tampered

elections. Democracy needs open and free contestation when it comes to power. Everyone must be eligible to compete for control of the government, which is only achievable by unrestricted elections. This is probably the most important aspect of every democratic system, because it is the nature of Democracy – to have sovereignty brought into the people’s hands. However, the free elections alone cannot guarantee for a consolidated democracy. Another important aspect is that the elected rulers must rule democratically, bounded by the law and kept in check by the other institutions. If the executives have power over the legislative and judicative systems also, the country is not a fully consolidated democracy by any means. Juan and Stepan’s idea is that when saying consolidated democracy they mean: *“a political regime in which democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become, in a phrase, “the only game in town.””* (Linz and Stepan, as quoted by Muse) Other important aspects of fully consolidated Democratic systems, according the Linz and Stepan are well organized and firm bureaucracy; the rule and wide applicability of law, which will ensure legal securities for the citizens and sovereign associational living; well established economic society. These are some of the points we will be looking for later, when analyzing the case of transition in Bulgaria.

Linz and Stepan are using many tables with rankings in their book *“Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation”*, which is generally good, but I tend to believe that the numbers do not always carry the whole truth and can be somewhat deceiving in regards to social sciences.

Another important contribution of theirs is about the prior political structure in the country in transition and how this affects the transition as a whole. They distinguish few different types of regimes in Eastern Europe right before the fall of the Wall. According to them, these are the types of regimes: Totalitarian, Authoritarian and Post-Totalitarian, depending on the state of the “party” in the country. Their study says, that the more autonomous the nomenclature was from the party – the better their chances are for more successful consolidation later in time. It also helps explain why the country took that specific road up to the point of constitutional arrangements and political struggles. *“The degree of pre-transition pluralism is central to understanding the type of transition and consolidation.”*, they say. Another important case that can be added here is the one with the state of the party before the transition. In the case of Romania, their leader associated the regime with himself, leaving the party in the background, which ended up in the election of the communists again, after the change. This case also has very important roots in Bulgaria. However, according the Linz and Stepan there are other aspects that play role here, such as if the elections were held before or

after the creation of the new constitution. (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*)

In the area of economics, Linz and Stepan argue that privatization and liberalization are naturally needed, but what has bigger impact on consolidation is the actual improvement in the economic society (the private sector), which comes after the privatization and liberalization. It is easy to grasp their point, because if people are actually involved in the economic affairs in the state and are benefiting from that, they will see the advantage of the new system, thus start to endorse it in order to protect their interests. This point is very important for the case in Bulgaria and we will see why later.

Another important point in their work towards explaining democratic consolidation is the aspect with civil society and its potential not only to contribute for better transition, but also to influence the ruling process. They give two very clear examples here – Poland and Hungary. According to them, such society formed in Poland, but it was apolitical, which prevented them to influence the transition. However, such society developed in Hungary as well, but it was more prompt to intervene into political processes, which helped the country into its endeavors of consolidation. It is important to make clear that in both the cases, the society was made of intellectuals that we not communists. (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*) Analyzing that, we have to say that individuals and certain groups in society did play roles in the cases of Romania, Hungary and Poland. Further into the paper we will understand what was the case in Bulgaria in regards to that.

Lastly, but not least important, Linz and Stepan considered what role the external factors play in the shaping of the new democracy. According to them the process of learning from their neighbors had big impact on the consolidation with the states in Central Europe. However, we need to examine the geopolitical aspect here, because being closer to the core may bring better prospects for the central European states.

The work by the political scientists that we touched upon will be very beneficial for this paper by giving it a proper guidance in the academic reality. Linz and Stepan in particular have proved to be one of the best theorists on Democratic Transition in the contemporary reality. Their work will be one of the main guiding theories of this paper, because it presents us with the depth needed in order to write good analytical part and answer the main question.

CHAPTER FOUR. Historical Review.

4.1 Transition in history.

Political transition in human history is not a new thing. It has been a reality for the whole recorded past of the human kind and there are many reasons for it to be always present. One of the most important reasons for political systems to change is necessity. The need for adjusting or evolving to the existent reality is deeply rooted in the human beings as species. As reality is an ongoing and constantly changing process, each of us, being a single human, organization or political system, have to change in order to keep up. This makes necessity one of the most dominant driving powers.

This subchapter will be examining some of the transitions in history, in order to get existing examples, which will be of great value to the paper. A few countries, which have already undertaken the transition to democracy will be mentioned, so we can have a wider point of view. This will also enable us to see the link between the countries in transition, according to Huntington's idea of democratic waves, occurring for many countries at once.

The first country, which transition will be examined here is Spain. Being one of the first states from the "Third Wave" to make that transition, Spain's history will be of great contribution to this paper.

The country's political shift happened in the 1970s, with the death of the dictator Francisco Franco. His death marked the beginning of Spain's transition to democracy, but that does not mean he did not have hand in it. He pointed Juan Carlos as his successor. King Carlos, a man with distinguishable democratic will, proved to be the engine of Spain's political change. However, there is an aspect that needs to be mentioned. Spain already had vastly spread and

educated middle class, which stimulated the transition to democracy strongly. Also, the business already wanted Spain to join the common market in Europe, so they can profit from that. The only way this could have happened was if Spain is democratic, free marketed country. This means the country did not start from zero. The social and economic reality had already been changed, which imposed as necessity for the political reality to be changed too. This undoubtedly makes it a lot easier to shift in comparison to the countries in Eastern Europe later in time, because socialism was, and some argue it still is, deeply rooted in society and every other important aspect of the country. This is why Spain had different task to fulfill and Franco's rule was also indirectly part of it. King Juan Carlos turned out to be the best choice to achieve that task. He has had the trust of the old regime and the ideas for the new reality, which made him the best candidate. Political reform was easier to achieve that way, because without it, the new system would not have credibility.

The King selected Suarez as prime minister. He was also one of the leaders under Franco, which was highly criticized at that time, because it seemed just as continuity from the old regime. However, Suarez also proved to be valuable for the transition.

In just a few years Spain went from dictatorship to democratic. The most important aspect is that the country made that transition peacefully with the will of capable leaders, which is admirable, because only few other countries had that fate. (*Eugenio Bregolat, 2016*)

Another country we cannot fail to mention in this chapter is undoubtedly France. The country was one of the first to shift from monarchy. For some people, France paved the way for more democratic systems with its Revolution in the late 18th century. This is considered not only a central moment in French history, but one of the primary historical events that solely affect the modern history. It started in 1789 and completed in the mid-1790s. For this short in historical terms period, the citizens of France revolted and shifted the political structure in the country, eliminating the absolute monarchy and the centuries old feudal system. The Revolution was highly influenced from the Enlightenment principles, which included widespread sovereignty and strong human rights. Of course, that kind of transition had to be well stated, because monarchy was deeply rooted in Europe for many centuries before that. In order to change a system like the feudal one you need strong and radical actions, which in France's case took the shape of massive bloodshed and massacres. Even if it wasn't fully successful and it seemed more like chaotic massacre at times, the French Revolution proved to be one of the most important milestones in the modern political history.

It helped in shaping the modern countries by revealing the power of ordinary people. (*History Channel, 2016*)

One more country that has significant impact on the transition to Democracy study is certainly East Germany, or the so called German Democratic Republic. Its history is very remarkable for few reasons. First, East Germany was occupied by the Soviet Union after the Second World War, so it had more than 40 years of socialist history, secured by the fact that it's on the right side of the Berlin Wall. This ensured completely different way of living from West Germany. Of course, as many other countries on the right side of the wall, East Germany also had uprisings throughout the years. The biggest one was in June, 1953, when 1 million East Germans all around the country started a protest against the countries labor policy. This protest was crushed in less than a day with a military and police power. The Western Democracies rushed to label this protest as a drive for democracy and this is a very important aspect. If the population had the will to protest with 1 million people, it also has the will for change further in time. (*Foster, McClendon, Wenta, 2003*)

Anyhow, East Germany remained under socialist ruling, which had its impact on society, economy and every other aspect of the country. After the falling of the Wall in 1989, the country was destined to merge with Western Germany or Federal Republic of Germany. Unification is the most commonly used word for this event, but some people would argue that it is wrong. Some argue that the real merging was just East Germany adopting every piece of policy from its West neighbor. In their article "*After the Euphoria: An investigation into East German Experience of Democratic Transition*", John Foster, Gwyneth McClendon and Ale Wenta have very curious observations. They decided to follow and analyze the lives of ordinary people and not the whole system. Some of the people are teachers in universities, some just normal factory workers. The interpretation in the article show that all the asked individuals have split views in regards to the matter "was it worth it". All of them had the mission to become accustomed to the new reality, without being asked if they really want to. The teachers had to learn the western techniques of educating, despite the fact that they considered the ones under socialist system better. Of course, some of the characteristics are just a matter of personal understanding, which makes them subjective in nature. This only shows the impact 40 years of socialism had on each and every aspect of the country's reality. The falling of the wall and reuniting with its western part was a big deal in East Germany exactly for that reason. Foster, McClendon and Wenta's observations even argue that East Germany's population considered itself as a minority in the newly unified Germany.

Unemployment rates have risen and life got harder, according to the interviewed people in the observation. Young, non-settled tended to immigrate more from the eastern part of the country, thus making the healing process even slower.

Another important observation in their work is that according to the interviewed people, life got more complicated, especially for women who wanted to raise a child. The socialistic system had strong social policies, which allowed them to take long periods off work in order to raise their children, but in the newly introduced system this was made very hard. This is also the reason why socialistic societies tend to have high positive growth in the population, like in the case of Bulgaria.

Foster, Mcclendon and Wenta's work is a good example how before the transition the people are expecting to gain all the positive policies from the other system, but also to keep all the good ones, which socialism provides. However, in most of the cases it does not happen like that and we are observing a different reality. (*Foster, Mcclendon, Wenta, 2003*)

In this chapter we have observed some very useful examples of transition to democracy, which will undoubtedly be of great value to this paper. It is interesting how we can observe some similarities that are present in each and every case, which is a great starting point for deeper investigation. However, there are always the differences, which we cannot afford to neglect in any case.

CHAPTER FIVE. ANALYSES

5.1 Presentation of Case.

This subchapter will be occupied with the task to introduce the case, which the paper will be examining – Bulgarian Transition to Democracy. It is important to have this subchapter, because it will give plain facts that will lead the reader into the topic, leaving him with the empirical knowledge needed for the analyses. The presentation of the case is in the

analyses chapter on purpose – this way the paper will have better arranged structure, which will help to identify and show the clear connection.

Bulgarian's Transition to Democracy is a very plain and clean process. It is commonly percept that the coup is almost always a violent process, which most often takes casualties in the name of one idea or another. This was not the case in Bulgaria. Of course, there were protests and strikes, but they were not like the ones in Romania, for example. Although the Bulgarians had their transition at the very same time as the Romanians, it was completely different by means of methods. Romanians had violent transition, highly emphasized by the conviction and shooting of their former authoritarian leader Chaushesku. In Bulgaria the situation was completely different. The former political elite were the one partly responsible for carrying out the process of transition. There were no strikes and protests with significance whatsoever and the transition was said to be just a natural consequence from the falling of the Berlin Wall and the decay of USSR. There were only two civil mobilizations that played some role. The first one, so called "Ekoglasnost" (Ecological Publicity) took place in a city near the Romanian border called Russe. Some 5000 people went out on a protest against a pollution threatening their health. Their strike did not result in anything big enough to claim it was successful, but there is another aspect. The authoritarian regime have never allowed such objections against it and this time it did not do anything violent in order to put it down. This was a clear sign that something was changing. Furthermore, this was one of the first instances of civic defiance and this shows that something was changing with the people too, not only with the state apparatus. (*Federico M. Rossi, 2012*)

The second case with more notable impact happened in 1984-1985 and 1989. Todor Zhivkov, the leader of the communist party in Bulgaria, had employed a very contradicting policy against minorities in Bulgaria – the Revival Process. It was a process of bulgarization. All the minorities had to change their name into traditional Bulgarian names, had no right to speak their language again and were forbidden to profess their religion. It was a forceful process of assimilation, which obligated 10% of the Bulgarian population to change their identity. Of course, this was condemned by the West and number of other important countries, including Turkey. The first assimilation in 1984 did not produce much of a backfire, but the second one in 1989 did. This fact only showed that the reality has changed, due to the upcoming and anticipated change in the USSR. This not only encouraged the people to go on strike, but showed division in the Bulgarian Communist Party itself. Another strong participant in the BCP, Petar Mladenov organized a coup inside the party, which ended with the accepted

resignation of Zhivkov and his allies in the party. This act was considered as the end of communist rule and the beginning of the transition period in Bulgaria. However, this does not mean that the two uprisings had the leading role, but the opposite. After Gorbachev's "perestroika" this was the natural way and the Bulgarian political elite were aware of that and the fact that it only took an uprising from a few thousand people strongly emphasizes it. From then on, Bulgarian transition was led by post and anti communistic elites emerging into dialogue and roundtables. (*Federico M. Rossi, 2012*)

After that point it was just a matter of coming up with a plan on how to go through the transition. The anti-communistic elites merged into a party called Union of Democratic Forces and became significant part of the political processes in Bulgaria for a decade ahead. However, after the first democratic elections they were second in power after the former communist party, now renamed in Bulgarian Socialist Party. Their leader was Zhelyo Zhelev, the first democratically elected president of Bulgaria.

In conclusion, the transition in Bulgaria was more a byproduct of the economic and political collapse of USSR than a targeted or planned carefully from inside the country. The political elite were in charge of adjusting the state to the new reality, which included emerging into liberalization and privatization. Normal people were partially involved through unions, but their impact was minimal. After the falling of the wall and the collapse of the USSR, there was no other possible way then. There was no widespread urge for Democracy before that point, which emphasizes a lot on the character of Bulgarian Transition.

5.2 Bulgarian Political System and Elite Before and During the Transition

The Bulgarian Political system and elite will be the main subject of this subchapter. Since the elite are most often the ones with the biggest impact in the political scene, it will be important to follow the steps which the Bulgarian elite took in order to adjust for the change and shift the Bulgarian political system.

It is a fact, that in Bulgaria the Elite was responsible for the change and there were no uprisings, strikes or anything with enough impact in order to be given a credit for the shift. As stated before, there were two main events that can be categorized as revolts against the party, but none of them was strong enough to bring a change that turned to be crucial for the system

transformation in the country. On the contrary – the political elite, most of which former communists, were in charge of the whole transition process and this is a very important aspect. According to Linz and Stepan and number of other political scientists, it is decisive for the future democracy if there were uprisings against the party before. Such uprisings, even unsuccessful would indicate that there are intellectuals or groups in the country that are against the current system and want change. It presents the newly emerged democracy with a tradition against the previous system to some extent, which can help for better consolidation after the power shift. In Bulgaria there was no such thing, except for the two cases, which had no democratization character almost at all. Furthermore, nearly all the other former totalitarian countries like Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany had major uprisings against the regime, which puts Bulgaria in contrast. Also, Romanians had such violent uprisings that it ended up with killing the former leader Ceausescu. This can be easily categorized as one of the problems from the very starting point for the Bulgarian Democracy. It also gave a lot of space for the politicians to conduct the transition as they see fit. (*Federico M. Rossi, 2012*), (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*), (*Georgi Prodanov, 2008*)

The process of change was given start by two former communists in leading positions. Petar Mladenov and Dobri Dzhurov, members of the communist party, were responsible for the coup against the former leader Todor Zhivkov. They had also changed the party's name into Bulgarian Socialist Party, disassociated the party from the state and paved their way, so they have better leverage in the upcoming events. Only after that the democrats realized, that they also have leverage for the power and merged into Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). They were mainly regarded as the intelligentsia and had their impact later, but the major part in the beginning was done by the former communists, which is very indicative. By the time the democrats actually joined forces, formed a party and earned enough respect amongst the people as a party, the former communists had changed the Communist Party's name to Socialist, disassociated it from the state, took the presidential spot and abolished the assimilation process in order to gain popularity and remain with the power. Streaming from Linz and Stepan's ideas, the civil society or the so called intelligentsia hardly played any role in the first few most important months. This is very indicative of how everything started and by Linz and Stepan's theory – played a role in the later attempts for smooth transition, which can be easily qualified as one of the problems in the transition. Of course, the democratic forces played a role later in time, but it is a fact, that the first elections were won by the former Communist party with a new facade. They earned more than 47% of the votes in the

first democratic parliamentary elections, which gave them the position in power again. (*Federico M. Rossi, 2012*), (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*), (*Georgi Prodanov, 2008*)

Another important aspect of the Bulgarian coup in the beginning of the change was that the former communist Petar Mladenov had planned the removal of Todor Zhivkov, the former leader, with Gorbachev in Russia. After Gorbachev started the process of perestroika, the Bulgarian system, with its old leader did not fit in the major plans anymore. This indicates what role one external factor played in the beginning of the change, which influenced the whole process later. This also shows what was the leverage of the USSR in Bulgaria's external and internal affairs at that time. The Balkan country was considered as the closest satellite state of USSR, which is a very powerful signal of how decisions were taken in the state. It is obvious that the theories of Huntington, Linz and Stepan, Zhelyo Zhelev and Vasil Prodanov can be applied here also. They all have one aspect in common. According to all of them it is not only that the change came majorly from outside, but the processes in the beginning after the changes were also influenced heavily. This also became a problem for the Bulgarian Transition in the beginning. The country was supposed to start its new way into world with liberal values and necessities like free elections and freedom of speech, but it all started with a plot influenced by an outer voice. (*Federico M. Rossi, 2012*), (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*), (*Georgi Prodanov, 2008*) (*Samuel Huntington, as cited by Scott London, 1993*)

The other important aspect we should be looking for, which would have minimized the difficulties according the Linz and Stepan is the political system as precondition. As stated above, they distinguish few different types of totalitarian regime and they fit Bulgaria in the early post-totalitarian one. This would mean that the nomenclature was relatively autonomous from the party Leader, which would imply that in the future this will ease the process of consolidation, because it provides the roots for an upcoming opposition. This actually happened to be exactly like that, because Todor Zhivkov gave some power with the politburo in the Bulgarian Communist Party. However, Linz and Stepan's observations are that it was insignificant amount and this is why the state falls into the early post-totalitarian category. It is obvious that this had big impact, since exactly the people from politburo were responsible for the coup. But this does not change the fact that these people were no anti-communists by any mean. They emerged from the old system to the new one in matter of days, bringing the

same values with them, which became one of the major issues later. (*Federico M. Rossi, 2012*), (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*)

Another very important aspect, proving the same point as before, is the creation of Movement for Rights and Freedoms political party (MRF). The party was formed in 1990, which was a follow up to the rebellion against the forced assimilation by the previous regime. It is a right, liberal party with strong emphasis on protecting the rights of the minorities, especially Turkish. This seemed like a very important step towards multi-party system and democracy in general. However, the truth is that most of its members, including its leader Ahmed Dogan were part of the secret service of the communists – an agency used mainly to ensure control by information and reporting on the citizens. This brings high contrast, which provides another prove of the same point – that the political elite was no different before and after the transition. (*Georgi Prodanov, 2008*)

In this chapter we can see the major marks of the early transition period in Bulgaria, which happen to account for some of the main difficulties in the following years. Each of them by themselves do not seem as a key wrongdoing, which led to heavy consequences for the political system later in time, since after the first year of uncertainty and backstage plots everything went on relatively smoothly. However, the economic reality was completely different as we will see in the next subchapter.

5.3 Bulgarian Economy Before and During the Transition

In this subchapter the discussion will be on Bulgarian Economy before and during the transition. As Economy is probably the most important factor in a country's development index, this will be one of the milestones in the whole paper. Furthermore, here we will see partial answer to the main question in regards to what actions were taken in order to switch from planned to free-marketed economy.

Bulgarian economic history in the last 100 years is very colorful. The country's location foretells its geopolitical life, which forces it to change its political direction every few decades. Every time a major geopolitical change occurs, Bulgarian economy suffers, because

it is left with the challenge to adjust to the new economic reality. The same can be said about society. Before 1944 the country's economy was predominantly agricultural and more than 80% of the labour force was in that sector. After that period, when Bulgaria was part of Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the country had very strong connections to the USSR. The country was importing machinery, technology and energy, and exporting products ready for exploitation and consumption. This fact directed the country into industrialization, but huge percent of its trade were done entirely with the CMEA countries. Close to the end of socialism in Bulgaria, in the 1989s, the country had 84.1% of its export and 73% from its import with CMEA states, which had made it very dependent from the council. Its economy was intensely dependent from and guaranteed by CMEA and this became a problem, since the alliance was falling apart. Furthermore, Bulgaria was the closest satellite country to USSR, which came with some perks, such as cheaper energy. This is why when Gorbachev had decided not to follow up with that agreement and refused to treat Bulgaria as privileged ally, this turned into one of the important milestones of the end of socialism in the country. As Bulgarian economy was heavily depended from the country's relations with USSR and its satellite states, the restructuring or so called "perestrojka" had great impact on it. Many of the heavy industry factories stopped working or use 10% of their capabilities towards the end of 1980s, which forced the country into turning to a trade with the west, so it can modernize its economy. However, in order to import from the west, Bulgaria needs to export first, because it lacks the currency to do so. (*Vasil Prodanov, pp. 541, 2012*)

The country found itself in a vicious circle, because now the country went from semi-periphery in one system to the far periphery in another system, which were a big hit for the economy, since the new system required completely new set of political and economic tools. It was a time for a transition, which required actions. Talking about economic transition, there are 2 main approaches a country can take – the shock therapy and the gradualist approach. The first one trusts on the immediate transition by a fast price liberalization and property privatization, actions that Poland and Russia took in order to make their shift faster. The second method, gradualist one, features with slower pace, which has its strong sides too, because that kind of changes must me thought through carefully. Moreover, there are other aspects of the country that need time to adjust too, like the way society and the political elite grasps the new concepts. (*Naydenov, 2011*)

It is very difficult to identify which of the methods was used when talking about the Bulgarian Economic transition and this may be one of the problems for the slow transition. The country

had its price liberalization relatively soon after the regime shift, but the privatization did not happen until 6-7 years after that. Furthermore, the price liberalization resulted in more than 300% inflation only few years later. The slowed privatization also led to excessive spending in state owned companies (SOC), which led to debt growth. These actions resulted in huge banking, financial and economic crisis in 1996 – 1997 and hyperinflation. Not only that, but almost all the undertaken reforms were either incomplete or non-working whatsoever, which ended up to the benefit of corrupt bankers, politicians and officials. This problem found its ending in 1997 when the new Prime Minister Ivan Kostov institutionalized the currency board in the country. The Bulgarian Lev was anchored to the German Mark, which had positive effect on not only the privatization pace, but to the economic environment generally as well. The board resulted in making 1998 a turning point for the former socialist country. The inflation dropped drastically and the GDP grew. The board is still an existing thing in Bulgaria, but now the Lev is anchored to the Euro, where one Euro is roughly equal to 2 Levs. *(Naydenov, 2011)*

There is something else of high importance in Bulgaria's case. Something that Linz and Stepan call "The simultaneity problem". It means that while the country had to make its political transition, which made the system full of uncertainty, it had to make its transition to market economy as well. This proved hard not only for Bulgarian, but for the other Central and Eastern European Countries too. The Bulgarian case was special, because all up until 4-5 years after the change, the country was governed by the old elite, which gave its impact as we can see above. As the privatization was initiated in 1995, when the democratic forces were in power, the formation of well-structured private sector became virtually impossible. According to Linz and Stepan, a well-established private sector, which profits from the new system, is essential for the country's transition. That fact became one of the main difficulties of the Bulgarian transition, since the people were not provided with the means of having leverage and the government kept its monopoly over the enterprises. To bring contrast – Russian and Poland had their privatization as soon as 1 year after the liberalization which helped their economies to go quicker through the whole process. *(Naydenov, 2011), (Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006)*

In conclusion, the economy in Bulgaria had very turbulent years from the change up until the implementation of the currency board in 1997 by Ivan Kostov, the leader of UDF. The problems and difficulties emerged from the inadequate decisions of the government right

after the change, which did not follow up with the Shock Therapy method, result of hesitation, inability or both. The government's unwillingness to split with the enterprises and put them in private hands, resulted in delay of the transition, which on the same hand had effect on people's trust in the new system.

5.4 The Case of Hungary in Perspective.

The current subchapter will be dedicated on the case of Hungary's democratic transition. The state is Easter European just like Bulgaria is. It also emerged from some form of totalitarian rule into democracy. This is why it will be helpful to lay out some of the differences between Hungary and Bulgaria. It will give us the needed contrast in order to have better viewing point of the Bulgarian case, which will reinforce the findings in the previous two chapters.

There is a subchapter about other country's transition above, but its focus is on history and the perspective is entirely different. Also, the "Transition in History" subchapter is using different states and completely different social scientist's knowledge. It is based on Huntington's "Third wave" and has the objective to give prospect of continuity of the democratic transition study, which lays the foundations and preconditions for the case of Bulgaria. This subchapter will be using the same methods and measures given by Linz and Stepan in order to examine briefly what was the difference between Hungary and Bulgaria and bring the needed contrast.

What is interesting is that the Central European state had very different starting point from Bulgaria. Linz and Stepan categorize it as matured post-totalitarian, almost authoritarian regime, which gave it a better precondition before emerging to its democratic future. They argue that and economic type of change was initiated in the country as soon as 1972, with incretion the rule of law and most importantly – the introduction of some degree of private property. This laid out the foundations and contributed to better adjusted for democracy society later. In fact, the political movements against the regime started as soon as 1980, which helped for the formation of the future democratic forces in the country. In contrast, Bulgaria had no such phenomenon and furthermore, the state had its democratic participants on the round table negotiations, but they were chosen by no one and had no legitimacy whatsoever. They only had the legitimacy, which the consolidation of the democratic forces gave them, but this was no more than mutual recognition in-between them. Furthermore, most

of them were true to the communist party just a few weeks ago, thus, dissident would be strong and overestimating word for them. While Bulgaria emerged into the change with no previous organization whatsoever, Hungary already had a well formed understanding of political pluralism and ideology. This resulted in round table negotiations with already well formed political society, which emerged from its shape of civil society long enough to be characterized as matured and legitimate one. (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*), (*Antal Visegrády, 1992*).

The area of Economy was no different in contrast. While Bulgaria struggled weather to follow up with the Shock Therapy or shift the process into more gradualist approach, which did not help its economic society at all, Hungary already had a fine economic society. As stated above, it had developed all the way from 1972, so it had a proper start a lot before the Bulgarian one. Furthermore, in 1991 Hungary “*had more foreign investment than all the other Eastern European states combined*”, which puts the things in perspective pretty obviously. (*Stepan and Linz, as cited by Tim Weaver, 2006*)

These are some of the reasons for Hungary to have better start in its Democratic history than Bulgaria, which provided less difficult beginning for the Central European Country. It really puts the Bulgarian emergence into its democratic history in perspective and reveals some of the negative conditions in the Balkan country. Hungary was chosen, because many social scientists have selected it as a “model” state in their works, just like the cited above Antal Visegrády did. Of course, there are other states with different approaches, but the focus of this paper is Bulgaria and the current chapter was written, because the Hungarian case really helps to shed more light into the Bulgarian wrongdoings by introducing the differences.

5.5 European Union’s role in the Bulgarian Transition.

Except for Bulgaria’s political elite and economy during the transition, there is one other very important aspect. The European Union also played a big role in that transition and consolidation in the state. Being the liberal democratic Union it is, it has very powerful attractions (the so called “soft power”) and this played a positive role not only in Bulgaria, but with all the other Central and Eastern European countries as well. This subchapter will have

the objective to explain what was EU's role and how did that bring a change to the Bulgarian reality.

The important fact about the Union is that it has criteria in order to let countries be its members, called the “*Copenhagen Criteria*” (see above). The newly emerged democratic states were required to cover certain level of advance, regarding their political system and economy, plus to be able to “*take on and implement effectively the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.*” (*European Commission, 2015*). Of course, the first two criteria that regard the economy and the political system were the aim of every new democracy anyway, but an EU membership played the role of catalyst in achieving them and there are numbers to prove that. Bulgaria had started its association with the EU as early as 1995 (*ec.europa.eu, 2015*) with agreement aiming to approximate both sides through political dialogue, trade and give foundations to a future Bulgarian acceptance in the community. Bulgaria was not accepted in the Union until 2007, but this only means that the state needed this time in order to catch up with the criteria laid by the Union, with its help. According to European Stability Initiative (ESI), a Think Tank based in Berlin, Bulgaria had raised its per capita GDP by 12 percent from 2002 to 2008; the labor market improved by nearly 10 percent for the same time frame and economy had major improvement in regards to the private sector. (*ESI, 2014*) Of course, these are only the raw numbers. Another important aspect is people's perception of this fact and how this helps for the better transition.

This also proves Linz and Stepan's observation, that the external factors, or as they call it “*the process of political learning*” also plays a big role in a state's transition. Some political scientists would argue, that Bulgaria went from semi-peripheral state in the old geopolitical reality to a fully peripheral one in the new one (*Vasil Prodanov, 2012*), but L+S consider that a better opportunity to learn, evolve and grow.

It is clear, that the European Union played its role in the Bulgarian transition, a role that can even be categorized as major one. The agreements, political dialogue and trade opportunities had its impact on the Bulgarian political elite's experience in the new system, thus, resulting in better actions, which contrasted with the difficulties in the beginning.

CHAPTER SIX. Conclusion.

6.1 Conclusion.

This paper was set to do a study on the first years of Democratic Transition in Bulgaria and highlight the difficulties. Its purpose is to shed some light on the wrongdoings of the politicians in the early years and provide the main research question with an answer. The conclusion chapter will be used not to summarize but to draw the lines between the points of the thesis together. Wrapping it in the end will provide the paper with nice and finished look, which contributes to its overall credibility. This makes “conclusion” one of the most important chapters in the whole project.

First, it is important to state that the thesis itself has limitations that need to be considered. It is mainly limited by exploring the findings of notable social scientists, merging them together and applying theoretical knowledge on the findings. Naturally, the specifications imposed by the method result in certain boundaries of the study, which must be taken under account. Many other different approaches can be taken, but the aim will be different. Of course, the project is also confined by time boundaries, but sometimes limits mean also better focus. The current paper provides well-structured approach, which stems from the very essence of the main research question and this is why it gives us clear answers to it.

There are 3 main points of the project. The first one being the state of the political elite, the second one being the economy in the early years and the last one is the lack of involvement from the society. They are all connected and this is the important point here.

The political elite, which was responsible for the decisions that were taken during the transition was no different from the political elite before the very transition. Furthermore, they were the same people, but some of them had changed their political view overnight. The problem here is that they had neither the knowledge for the new reality, nor the political views needed for it. Very notable prove of that was the creation of MRF (Movement for Rights and Freedoms) and its leader, whose previous job was to spy and report on citizens in order to keep the regime strong. The fact that these people made the decisions in order to take Bulgaria from planned to marketed economy is also crucial. The findings above are clear on that matter. The state had initiated the shock therapy method for the economic transition, but did not follow up with it, because it proved to be resilient when it came up to privatizing the state-owned enterprises. This led to economy in chaos and big financial crisis in 1996, which was very hard for the nation. On top of everything else, the society had no involvement whatsoever in the political process in the early stages of transition. This was also important issue, because the politicians were not kept in check for the whole time.

Applying the theoretical knowledge of Linz, Stepan and the other social scientists' on the factual findings led the paper to this point, which provided us with answer to the main question. Also, the findings of this paper proved to be more in support, than in contradiction in regards to the already accumulated theoretical knowledge on democratic consolidation.

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