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STATES IN TRANSFORMATION ACCORDING TO POLITICOLOGY PARADIGMS – SELECTED EXAMPLES

ABSTRACT: Since the beginning of the 1990s, the states in Central and Southeast Europe have been in the stage of system changes. This paper will consider whether these changes fit in with the existing political paradigms, and whether the assumptions of theoretical models are compatible with the system changes occurring in reality. Currently, there are many recognizable models of transformation in Central and Southeast Europe that are related to Yugoslavia and several post-Yugoslav countries.

In the political literature on this topic, many outstanding theoreticians can be identified as the founders of interesting models of transformation in Central and Southeast Europe, such as: Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, Donald L. Horowitz, Marc F. Plattner (2014: 86-100), Samuel Huntington (1991), Herbert Kitschelt, Philippe C. Schmitter, Terry Lynn Karl, Gerardo L. Munck, Carol Skalnik Leff, Klaus von Beyme, Wolfgang Merkel (1999a), Jerzy J. Wiatr, Sabrina Petra Ramet and F. Peter Wagner. When exploring the system transformation of selected countries, attention will also be paid to the basic causes of its beginning. For example, Samuel Huntington described the transformations occurring in the USSR, Bulgaria and Hungary as a transformation, while those in Romania and East Germany as a replacement, while believing that the best expression for Poland and Czechoslovakia would be a transplantation.

In these considerations, attention will be paid to the countries such as Yugoslavia and, after its breakup, only selected countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia. The process of system transformation undergone by almost all post-socialist countries has not been realized through a single coherent theory that contains universal quantitative characteristics. It is worth mentioning that democratization is a necessary characteristic in defining the transformation process. Therefore, democracy is a *sine qua non* condition for the

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transformation process undergone by the analyzed countries. That is why special attention will be dedicated not only to the turning point of transformation, but also the level of the present system transformation (democratization).

KEYWORDS: transformations, democratization, states, political paradigms, Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia. Macedonia, Serbia

INTRODUCTION: TRANSITION – TRANSFORMATION – PARADIGM

Transformation, along with transition, is one of the main and quite interesting political categories. So far, a question has often been posed as to what is what, whether transformation of the political system means the same as the transition of this system or not. There are experts who deal with that topic and say that transition is a phenomenon and that it just means transiting, or a moment of transiting from a non-democratic to a completely democratic system. Transformation of a political system is a long-lasting process that most frequently encounters numerous difficulties and barriers. It can be seen in each state of Central and Southeast Europe with the still ongoing a rather complex process of democratic transformation. This primarily refers to the development of the civil society in the full sense of the work, then of democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for freedom and equality etc. It is worth mentioning that democratization is an inevitable characteristic of defining a complex (ambiguous) process of transformation. Namely, democracy is a *sine qua non* condition for the process of transformation undergone by the analyzed states. That is why special attention will be dedicated not only to the breaking point of transformation (which in this paper means transition as a moment/phenomenon of transiting, but also to the level of current system transformation, or democratization). It is important which of the two is used, transition or transformation consequently, according to some theoreticians. It is perfectly seen in the book by Professor Uroš Šuvaković entitled “Transition: a contribution to sociological study of social changes”. In this monograph, the concept of transition is used consequently, in line with the determinations we have given (Šuvaković, 2015: 2). Moreover, this paper will consistently use these two terms. The topic of democratic transition was written in a very interesting and professional manner by Mirjana Kasapović as early as 1999. In her book entitled “Democratic transition and political parties” she pays special attention to the development of political parties and party systems in East Europe. Here I will underline that I fully agree with the author’s opinion that transformation is a form of democratic transition founded on the relation between reformers and scholastics inside the authorities. It develops through five stages (Kasapović, 1996: 24). The first stage is within the non-democratic regime, which is gradually shaped by a group of leaders or potential leaders who want democratic changes; in the second stage, reformers within the regime attempt to win power. If long-standing authoritarian leaders or dictators in certain countries do not die, when taking over power, reformers most frequently determine rules themselves and appoint a new leadership; in the third stage there is stabilization of

“liberalized authoritarian politics”;² the fourth stage proceeds in the search for legitimacy; and the fifth stage of transformation presupposes the co-option of the opposition. It is important that reformers begin consultations with the leaders of opposition political parties, main social groups and outstanding public figures (Kasapović, 1996: 24-25).

In this reflection, of particular interest is the question of a paradigm. It is a concept that is considered to denote a pattern, but it also denotes a model, treated as a disciplinary matrix, i.e., an organized set of beliefs, attitudes or opinions shared. Thomas Samuel Kuhn, the founder of the paradigm theory, said that a paradigm is a set of concepts and theories that make the foundations of science. The founder of the paradigm theory noted firstly that it was a pattern to say that the paradigm is a solution to a similar problem, accepted by the scientific community and, secondly, that it may be, as indicated by Khun, a matrix of a scientific discipline (Khun, 1962: *passim*). This article sees the paradigm as a theoretical model for democratic changes in a political system. In political literature, there are various models in this regard, for example, the model devised by Khun, as well as by other theoreticians, including Samuel Huntington. He described the changes taking place in the USSR, Bulgaria and Hungary as a transformation, while he referred to the same changes in Romania and East Germany as a replacement, thinking that the best term for Poland and Czechoslovakia would be a transplantation. This paper dedicates special attention to the countries such as Yugoslavia (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), and after its breakup (in 1991), only to specific countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia. The question will be if the phenomenon of transition, experienced by almost all post-socialist countries, has been realized through a coherent theory (paradigm) that contains universal quantitative characteristics. I completely agree with academician Mihailo Marković, who says that transition is “an ideologically coloured concept and that it denotes the transition to liberal capitalism (Marković, 1997: 33; see also Šuvaković, 2015: 2). However, I cannot agree that, as it is sometimes said in a derogatory way, transformation is a bad version of transition, when transition has its defined neoliberal ideological foundation, while transformation and the use of that concept are meant to blur the class essence of the transition process. In this paper, transition is consequently understood as a moment of transiting from a non-democratic to a fully democratic system. The paradigm will be discussed as a thought/concept of selected theoreticians, and not as a paradigm in the conventional meaning of the word, for example as Thomas Khun’s constructivism.

In this paper, I will pay special attention not only to the breaking moment of transformation (transition), but also to the level of current system transformation (democratization). Several countries selected as examples were formed after the breakup of Yugoslavia (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), such as Slovenia and Croatia, which were the first to declare independence (25 June 1991), then Macedonia and, finally, Serbia.

² Samuel Huntington believes that it is a critical stage of the transformation process.

There is extensive literature about transition and transformation of the countries in Central and Southeast Europe. However, in my opinion, there are no studies dealing with this topic explicitly in a research manner – the subject dealing with filling in the research gap in political literature. The following theoreticians provide a very interesting discussion dedicated to this, including Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, Donald L. Horowitz and Marc F. Plattner (2014). Nevertheless, given the limited length of the article, their attitudes will not be discussed here.

The main thesis would be that in all the analyzed countries there was transition; although still in the process of transformation, they are in different stages of its progression. Depending on the occurring phenomena, progress in the transformation process is interpreted differently, which is conditioned by different opinions, i.e., paradigms of certain theoreticians.

The most important research method used in this paper is the descriptive method that, apart from economics, is often used in political science. Here it is important to stress that special attention is dedicated to the changeability of the conditions in which the analyzed phenomenon occurs. The system method was helpful as typical of political science and intended to turn attention to the changeability of the conditions in which the analyzed phenomenon proceeded. A very interesting example is that of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the moment of its breakup, each republic, i.e., “new state” deriving from the non-democratic system decided about the direction of its democratic changes; which radically changed the face of the federation.

YUGOSLAVIA (SFRY): THE PHENOMENON OF TRANSITION AND THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION ACCORDING TO SOME THEORETICIANS

In his model paradigm, Klaus von Beyme described Yugoslavia as similar to Romania and Bulgaria, where “changes were conducted under the leadership of old cadres” (Bujwid-Kurek, Mikucka-Wojtowicz, 2015: 32). According to Merkel (Wolfgang Merkel), one of the models (paradigms) of transformation are newly created states (*neu gründung von Staaten*) that, besides Yugoslavia, include Czechoslovakia and the USSR (Merkel, 1999b: 135). What occurred in Yugoslavia, as well as in the USSR, was described in an interesting manner by the theoreticians who created theoretical models (paradigms) of transition, among whom we should distinguish Sabrina P. Ramet and F. Peter Wagner, who used the most suitable term; frustration (fragmentation + reconstruction), literally *frugstration* (fragmentation + reconstruction) (Ramet & Wagner, 2012: 45). One of the Polish researchers of the transition occurring in Yugoslavia and the USSR respectively called the most used term simply as the “collapse of the federal state” (Wiatr, 1999: 49). There are also others who use the term “collapse” (Waldenberg, 2005: passim), which, in my opinion, is rather debatable and not completely adequate.

THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA – THE PHENOMENON OF TRANSITION AND THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE OPINION OF CERTAIN THEORETICIANS AND ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF THE FOUNDATION FREEDOM HOUSE “NATIONS IN TRANSIT 2022”

Slovenia declared independence on the same day as Croatia, on 25 June 1991 (Bujwid-Kurek, 2014: 67-113). As an independent and autonomous state, it strives to be a democratic state, and that is why it must meet strictly defined requirements. One of the basic and most significant criteria is the Constitution adjusted to a different, new, political, economic and social reality. In that context, it is important to underline that each constitution makes the political system legitimate (Bujwid-Kurek, 2019: 41-52). The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, consisting of 175 articles divided into expected groups, was adopted at the session of the Slovenian Parliament on 23 December 1991. At the historical moment when it was written, the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia was to the largest extent modelled after the German Constitution (Toplak, 2014: 99). Since 1991, the Slovenian Constitution in its preamble states “the right of the Slovenian people to self-determination”,³ while the historical heritage of the Slovenian people is emphasized in building its own statehood. The founding provisions of the Slovenian Constitution emphasize that all the citizens of the country are bound to it by their citizenship, but it is unambiguous that the act devised in this manner is actually profoundly extremely ethno-national (Đukanović, 2014: 108). I completely agree with the opinion of one of the legal experts, Andraž Terešek, that the constitution is a mirror of the constitutional-legal identity of a political community (Terešek, 2009:143). The ideal model presupposes that the constitution is adequate to the reality it refers to. Unfortunately, that is not always the case, which is proved by, among others, the case of Slovenia. It seems that in the first stage of transformation Slovenia was best prepared of all post-Yugoslav countries for conducting democratic reforms, However, with time it encountered usual problems just like other countries undergoing the process of political system transformation. Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl who, just as in some other countries (Albania, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania), ascribed the changes occurring in Slovenia to one of the paradigms (transition model), calling it “imposed transformation” (Schmitter & Karl, 2010: 35). According to the latest data from the report of the Foundation Freedom House “Nations in Transit 2022”, Slovenia is rated as a country characterized by the following indicators: its degree of consolidated democracy is rated as 79/100, with total democracy in its percentage 78.58/100, democracy evaluation = 5.71/7.00, the democratic nature of the state organization = 5.50/7.00, election process (elections, multiparty system, society’s participation in the political process) = 6.25/7.00, civil society = 5.75/7.00, independent media = 5.25/7.00, local democratic governments (decentralization of power, independence of local administration) = 6.50/7.00, independence of the judiciary = 5.75/7.00,

³ Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, Preamble, Indent 2, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, Ljubljana, No. 33/91-I, 42/1997, 66/2000 i 24.2003.

corruption = 5.00/7.00.⁴ As it can be seen, the poorest results are independent media, which substantially reduces the rank of the transformation of the Slovenian political system. Decentralization of power and local self-government are ranked higher, which may be comforting in the anticipation of successful transformation.

**THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA – THE PHENOMENON OF TRANSITION
AND THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE OPINION OF
CERTAIN THEORETICIANS AND ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF
THE FOUNDATION FREEDOM HOUSE “NATIONS IN TRANSIT 2022”**

The Republic of Croatia declared its independence on the same day as the Republic of Slovenia (25 June 1991), thus becoming independent of the Yugoslav federation. The text of the Croatian Constitution from 1990 with its numerous amendments to date, emphasizes in its preamble that the country is “a national state of the Croatian people and a state of the members of autonomous national minorities”. This introductory section mentions Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Austrians, Ukrainians, Ruthenians and others (Đukanović, 2014: 107).⁵ Here it is important to emphasize that the Constitution of Croatia, in Article 3, Paragraph 1, stresses the principle of national equality as one of the fundamental values of the constitutional system. According to Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, pressing a non-democratic system towards a democratic one can be described as a “forced revolution”. This term was also used to describe transitions occurring in, among others, Armenia, the Czech Republic, Georgia, and Latvia (Schmitter & Karl, 2010: 35-36). If someone was tempted into assessing democracy, whose feature is inherently related to the system transformation, it should be mentioned that the functioning of democratic institutions, similarly to those in Slovenia, did not smooth, which is doubtless confirmed by the latest data from the report of the Foundation Freedom House “Nations in Transit 2022”. The report rates this as a semi-consolidated democracy = 54/100, while in Slovenia it is a consolidated democracy. The total democracy in its percentage = 54.17/100, democracy evaluation = 4.25/7, the democratic nature of the state organization = 4.25/7.00, election process (elections, multiparty system, society’s participation in the political process) = 5.00/7.00, civil society = 5.25/7.00, independent media = 3.75/7.00, local democratic governments (decentralization of power, independence of local administration) = 4.50/7.00, independence of the judiciary = 3.50/7.00, corruption = 3.50/7.00.⁶ From the report it can be clearly seen that the independence of the judiciary is ranked lowest, while local democratic government

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/slovenia/nations-transit/2022> Slovenija (Accessed on 14 August 2022).

⁵ See: Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, Preamble, Indent 15, *Narodne novine*, Zagreb, No. 56/1990,135/1997, 8/1998,113/2000, 124/2000,28/2001, 41/2001,55/2001,76/2010, 85/2010, 05/2014.

⁶ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/croatia/nations-transit/2022> Hrvatska (Accessed on 15 August 2022).

is ranked highest regarding the decentralization of power and independence of local administration, similarly to the case of Slovenia.

NORTH MACEDONIA – THE PHENOMENON OF TRANSITION AND THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE OPINION OF CERTAIN THEORETICIAN AND ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF THE FOUNDATION FREEDOM HOUSE “NATIONS IN TRANSIT 2022”

On 17 September 1991 Macedonia declared the act of its independence, following the example of Slovenia and Croatia. Since then, it has been an autonomous state functioning first under the unrecognized name the Republic of Macedonia, and since February 2019 it has been named the Republic of North Macedonia. The Constitution of Macedonia was adopted on 17 November 1991. While stopping the armed conflict between the Albanian rebels and Macedonian authorities in 2001, and thanks to the Ohrid Agreement, the international community, i.e., the United States of America and the European Union led Macedonia to amend its 1991 Constitution (Đukanović, 2014: 111). Here it is important to stress that the amendments to the Constitution were made although the preamble states that Macedonia is a “civil state”.⁷ It should also be noted that, according to the Ohrid Agreement in 2002, a section was added mentioning Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other nations respectively, besides the Macedonian nation.⁸ According to Article 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, citizens are bearers of sovereignty, while then the Constitution states that the expression of national particularity is guaranteed in this country.⁹ Therefore, in the Macedonian constitutional re-engineering, the European Union and the USA actually redesigned this country from the originally civil (1992) into a two-ethnic (Macedonian-Albanian) state. This is confirmed by the ethnic principle and the manner of necessary participation and representation of ethnic communities in the authorities from the local to the central level of power (Đukanović, 2014: 112). According to the above-mentioned theoreticians (Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl), Macedonia is, similarly to Slovenia, included in the paradigm (model) of “imposed transformation” (Schmitter & Karl, 2010: 35-36). When assessing the level of democratic transformation currently ongoing in North Macedonia, the latest report of the Foundation Freedom House “Nations in Transit 2022” considers Macedonia a transitional or hybrid regime = 47/100. The total democracy in its percentage = 47.02/100, democracy evaluation = 3.82/7, the democratic nature of the state organization = 3.50/7.00, election process (elections, multiparty system, society’s participation in the political process) = 4.50/7.00, civil society = 4.75/7.00, independent media = 3.50/7.00, local democratic governments (decentralization of power, independence of

⁷ Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Macedonia, January 2006, Preamble, Indent 2.

⁸ Ibidem, Preamble, Indent 1.

⁹ Ibidem, Article 8.

local administration) = 4.00/7.00, independence of the judiciary = 3.25/7.00, corruption = 3.25/7.00.¹⁰ As seen from the data displayed here, the results within the independence of the judiciary and corruption (exeqo) are ranked lowest, while the civil society is ranked highest, which, despite a relatively low total grade, may encourage optimism and hope for successful democratic transformation. Nevertheless, in the case of Macedonia this process seems to be rather tortuous and substantially prolonged.

THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA – THE PHENOMENON OF TRANSITION AND THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE OPINION OF CERTAIN THEORETICIAN ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF THE FOUNDATION FREEDOM HOUSE “NATIONS IN TRANSIT 2022”

The Republic of Serbia declared its independence as late as 5 June 2006. In November the same year, the Constitution was adopted that legitimizes the new political system (Bujwid-Kurek, 2012: 58, 2019: 61). The new Constitution defines Serbia as the “state of Serbian nation and all citizens”.¹¹ Here it should be noted, as it was done in the case of previously analyzed state constitutions, that the state-building tradition of the Serbian nation is emphasized in the preamble¹² (Bujwid-Kurek, 2019: 82). The Serbian Constitution lists the principles of civil democracy – sovereignty belongs to citizens.¹³ Serbia is defined in ethno-national terms by this Constitution,¹⁴ but also the obligations are determined regarding the protection of the members of the Serbian nation outside Serbia, while “the protection of national minorities” is particularly emphasized. The deeper analysis of other sections of the Serbian Constitution shows that it is an ethno-national strategy of defining the state (Đukanović, 2014: 114). The changes in the Republic of Serbia, similarly to the previously analyzed Republics of Slovenia and Macedonia, the same theoreticians – Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, apply the paradigm (model) defined as “imposed transformation” (Schmitter & Karl, 2010: 36). In the report of the Foundation Freedom House “Nations in Transit 2022”, Serbia was rated the same as Macedonia, i.e., as a transitional or hybrid regime = 46.43/100. The total democracy in its percentage = 46.43./100, democracy evaluation = 3.79/7, the democratic nature of the state organization = 3.25/7.00, election process (elections, multiparty system, society’s participation in the political process) = 4.25/7.00, civil society = 5.25/7.00, independent media = 3.00/7.00, local democratic governments (decentralization of power, independence of local administration) = 4.00/7.00, independence of the judiciary

¹⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/nations-transit/2022> (Accessed on 15 August 2022).

¹¹ Constitution of the Republic of Serbia”, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, Beograd, No. 98/2006.

¹² *Ibidem*, Preamble, Indent 1.

¹³ *Ibidem*, Articles 1 and 2.

¹⁴ See: *Ibidem*, Articles 13.and 14.

= 3.50/7.00, corruption = 3.25/7.00.¹⁵ From the data displayed here, the lowest results refer to independent media and corruption, while the civil society is ranked highest. It is similar to the case of Macedonia, which may encourage optimism regarding democratic changes in the full sense of the word.

CONCLUSION

As the analysis shows, three of the selected countries (Slovenia, Macedonia, Serbia) belong to the paradigm (model) of transition called “imposed transformation”, according to whose authors there are two theoreticians: Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl. In these theoreticians’ opinion, only the transition in the Republic of Croatia can be called y “forced revolution”. It is quite interesting to look at the transition undergone by Yugoslavia (SFRY). Several theoreticians dealt with this interesting case of the federal state that fell apart at the end of the 20th century. Wolfgang Merkel used a term “newly-created states (*neu gründung von Staaten*)”, while Sabrina P. Ramet and F. Peter Wagner used “frustration (destruction + reconstruction)”, literally: frugstraction (fragmentation + reconstruction), and one of the Polish theoreticians, Jerzy J. Wiatr, used only the term “the collapse of the federal state”.

Table 1. Paradigms (models) of transition occurrence in the opinion of certain theoreticians –graphic overview of the comparative studies

No.	Name of the paradigm (model)	Name of the state	Creator (theoretician/s)
1.	“imposed transformation”	Republic of Slovenia, North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia	Philippe C. Schmitter, Terry Lynn Karl
2.	“forced revolution”.	Republic of Croatia	Philippe C. Schmitter, Terry Lynn Karl
3.	newly-created states (<i>neu gründung von Staaten</i>)	Yugoslavia (SFRY)	Wolfgang Merkel
4.	Frustration (destruction + reconstruction); literally: frugstraction (fragmentation + reconstruction)	Yugoslavia (SFRY)	Sabrina P. Ramet, F. Peter Wagner
5.	“collapse of the federal state”	Yugoslavia (SFRY)	Jerzy J. Wiatr

Source: The author’s own study based on: (Schmitter, Karl, 2010; Merkel, 1999b; Wiatr, 1999; Bujwid-Kurek, Mikucka-Wójtowicz, 2015: 31-32).

The table below gives the most important categories which are a *sine qua non* condition for successful democratic transformation.

¹⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/nations-transit/2022> (Accessed on 15 August 2022).

Table 2. The Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Croatia, North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia according to the reports of the Foundation Freedom House “Nations in Transit 2022” – graphic overview of the comparative studies.

No.	Analyzed categories	Republic of Slovenia	Republic of Croatia	North Macedonia	Republic of Serbia	Notes
1.	Democracy	78.57/100	54.17/100	47.02/100	46.43/100	
2.	Democracy evaluation	5.71/7.00	4.25/7.00	3.82/7.00	3.79/7.00	
3.	Democratic nature of the state organization	5.50/7.00	4.25/7.00	3.50/7.00	3.25/7.00	
4.	Election process (elections, multiparty system, participation of the society in the democratic process)	6.25/7.00	5.00/7.00	4.50/7.00	4.25/7.00	
5.	Civil society	5.75/7.00	5.25/7.00	4.75/7.00	5.25/7.00	In the Republic of Croatia, North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia, this category was rated higher than all other rated categories
6.	Independent media	5.25/7.00	3.75/7.00	3.50/7.00	3.00/7.00	
7.	Local democratic governments (decentralization of power, independence of local administration)	6.50/7.00	4.50/7.00	4.00/7.00	4.00/7.00	Macedonia and Serbia – the same note as above
8.	Independence of the judiciary	5.75/7.00	3.50/7.00	3.25/7.00	3.50/7.00	
9.	Corruption	5.00/7.00	3.50/7.00	3.25/7.00	3.25/7.00	Macedonia and Serbia – the same note as above
10.	Democratization level in %	79/100	54/100	47/100	46/100	
11.	Determining the degree of the development of democracy (transformation)	Consolidated democracies	Semi-consolidated democracies	Transitional hybrid regime	Transitional or hybrid regime	Macedonia and Serbia – the same name

Source: The author’s own study based on: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/slovenia/nations-transit/2022> (Accessed on 14 August 2022), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/croatia/nations-transit/2022> (Accessed on 15.08.2022), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/croatia/nations-transit/2022> (Accessed on 15 August 2022), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/nations-transit/2022> (Accessed on 15 August 2022).

As shown in the list above, Slovenia can boast of the best results of its democratic transformation, and its political system is defined as a consolidated democracy. Jan Linz and Alfred Stepan think that democracy is consolidated when: 1) there are no violent attempts of taking over power; 2) citizens know and believe that change may occur only as a result of the democratic process; and 3) democracy is based on legally codified routine activities and institutions (Linz & Stepan 1966: passim). In the ranking by the

main creator of transitology (transitology paradigm). Dankwart Rustow (Ganes-Morse, 2004:325-326), only consolidated democracy is the final stage of transformation that begins depending on the degree of economic development and certain social conditions. This state is proved by a great influence on his thinking about the modernization theory, in the light of changes observed in economy that bring changes in the social structure, and finally in the political sphere as well. Political elites play a very important role in the stabilization and destabilization of democracy (Rustow, 1970: 355). Democratic transformation is the poorest in the Republic of Serbia and is called, just as in North Macedonia, a transitional or hybrid regime. I completely agree with Thomas Carothers, who says that the existing paradigms (models) taking into consideration the quantitative characteristics of transition should be supplemented by paradigms that would include the characteristics of the degree of transformation (democratic change) occurring (Carothers, 2002: 6) in the countries of Central and Southeast Europe.

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