

**THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL  
AND EAST EUROPE: EXPERIENCES OF MODEL  
COUNTRIES-POLAND AND CZECH REPUBLIC.**

**BY: MARKOY IOANNA**

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**1. Supervisor's name: Mr. Marantzidis Nick**

**Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies**

**University of Macedonia**

**Thessaloniki**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*This report is concerned with an investigation of the transition to democracy in Eastern Europe in the final stage and the collapse of the Soviet Union through the examination of two case studies: Poland and Czech Republic.*

*Nowadays we can speak for two democratic states which experienced huge transformation in the last decades and still they aim to be a part of Europe and to fulfill the Western-modernized model of a state. Such cases, especially Poland are case studies which can demonstrate through their transformation and experiences how we proceed in general in International Politics. With the combination of Czech Republic we can analyze which is their status in Europe today and how this happened after the democratization process.*

*Historical evidence can prove the final transformation in several arias inside the two states and also we can investigate how internal politics worked in order to install democracy after the existence of a total different regime.*

*Poland is a special case which as a matter of fact was one of the war scenes in the WWII and it is quite interesting to see how was consolidated in the Soviet Union. On the other hand Czech Republic was united with Slovakia and after the dissolution two different States came out.*

*Critical analysis of data related to both periods, with communism and after communism are presented, the differences are shown and the important role that how this transition to democracy finally achieved is highlighted in both cases.*

*Also, after the collapse of the Soviet Union it was not only Poland and Czech Republic but a number of a new states that emerged, following a different path in each case, trying to survive in the arena of the international system.*

*The map of Europe changed dramatically after the two world wars and the end of cold war. All the former satellite states are working the process of democratization until today.*

# **CHAPTER 1:**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Most of the scholarship on the political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe focuses on explaining the fall of communist regimes and democratic transition. To complement this research, the present paper turns attention to the political developments after 1989 and its contribution to the speed and extent of democratic consolidation among the most advanced post communist states by analyzing specifically the cases of Poland and Czech Republic.

We argue that political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe should be viewed as part and parcel of broad-scale changes whereby democratization is intertwined with concurrent social transformations, and influenced by transnational forces.

In this assignment we first focus on the transition to democracy after the experience of communism at the end of WWII and after 1989 in terms of politics, economy and social impacts in central and east Europe. Those decades are quite important because as a matter of fact satellite states were somehow preparing for their new era while simultaneously they were a part of a dictatorship. Being a part of the cold war, fear and terror were central to each country due to the fact that in any minute it could be transformed to a hot war and Poland for example would not be able to sustain another war.

Poland was an example of a country which was devastated and was rebuilt through its own hands.

Four arguments will be discussed<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) First, that Poland was always much closer to an authoritarian than to a totalitarian regime.
- 2) Second, we present the conflict between the nation's "ethical civil society" and the regime's internationalized authoritarian party-state.
- 3) Third, we discuss the "pacted transition".
- 4) Fourth, we examine the new democracy's origins in an ethical civil society and how it finally could consolidate democracy in order to lead to the current political situation in Poland.

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<sup>1</sup> Marjorie Castle and Ray Taras, " *Democracy in Poland* ", Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002

With the exception of Poland all the other post-Communist States had approximated totalitarian ideal type of Stalinism. Czechoslovakia in the 1980s aimed to follow the process of detotalitarianization but actually it can be considered as an example of frozen post-totalitarianism. The leadership of Vaclav Havel will be examined and also the fact that it had no foreign debt which paradoxically became an asset in the democratic consolidation phase.

Furthermore, we will show some clues of the status of the post communist states and how they operate in the new international order. International relations affected in general the democratization of Eastern Europe and the end of the cold war was a starting point for the new international status and era.

Some criticism will also be provided in combination with articles and opinions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review aims to provide information about the situation in Poland and Czechoslovakia which later was separated in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

By analyzing the authors and the elements that can be traced in their literature we can separate the first section focusing in the case of Poland, where we find the pioneer in Eastern Europe who tried to move the democratization process in social, political, economic terms.

Thus, we move forward to the Czech Republic another different case of a former satellite state, where actually things proved to be somehow easier in this difficult process of democratization.

## **THE EUROPEANISATION OF THE EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN STATES**

In 1989, the miraculous year which is stigmatized by the collapse of the bipolar world System, opened the way for systemic change in the East Central European and Balkan regions.

This collapse was hailed by the west as a victory for freedom, a triumph of democracy over totalitarianism, and evidence of the superiority of capitalism over socialism.

The spring of 1989 saw the people of the Soviet Union exercising a democratic choice, albeit limited, for the first time since 1917, when they elected the new Congress of People's Deputies. As important was the uncensored live TV coverage of the legislature's deliberations – where the people witnessed the previously feared Communist leadership being questioned and held to account. This example fueled the limited experiment with democracy in Poland which quickly led to the toppling of the Communist government in Warsaw by the summer, which in turn sparked people's uprisings that overthrew communism in the other five Warsaw Pact countries before the end of a truly historic year.

In short this was the year when Gorbachev completely lost control of events – to his shock he discovered the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union did not support his drive to modernize and thereby save Communism, instead they wanted to destroy it.

The East Central European countries complicated the process of Europeanization with the Eastern “enlargement”.

The council of Europe has played the role of initiator in the Eastern transformations, by inviting in the late of 80s Poland and Hungary to join first. In a summit in Vienna 1993 many new states were accepted as members despite of having a democratic deficit.

**By the mid-1990s the EU already had ten associate members from former Eastern Europe:** Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **THE CASE STUDIES OF POLAND AND CZECH REPUBLIC**

#### **POLAND: Background, Historical Elements, Political-Economic-Social Transformation.**

Poland was the trendsetter and the pioneer in Eastern Europe as it concerns the democratization process after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Of all the Soviet bloc countries, Poland was the most rebellious with the emergence of Solidarity, which was the most significant opposition movement in communist Eastern Europe.

By analyzing the case of Poland we aim to demonstrate how an ex-communist country absorbed the democratic process in order to follow the path of the Western type of democracy and then we can make a certain comparison with the latecomer Czech Republic.

#### **HISTORICAL ELEMENTS AND SOLIDARITY**

Poland emerged first as a kingdom in the 9<sup>th</sup> century under the statue of Christianity. However an independent Poland re-emerged only after the WWI in an era that already had to face nation-building, which left its own impact on the national tradition. By that time, Catholicism was compatible with the nation, due to the fact that it was the only weapon against the imperial powers.

Despite the fact that other countries of the Soviet Union were quasi-totalitarian systems, Poland was always much closer to an authoritarian than to a totalitarian regime. However State socialism and Soviet rule actually had a stronger impact in Poland, but after the 80s it started to follow new paths under the democratic procedure with the resistance against state socialism, in a decade which was dedicated to resistance.

In the 80s an opposition movement emerged with **Lech Waleca** as a leader, named **Solidarity**. The purpose of its existence was the fight against Socialism.

Solidarity had three different functions and formations<sup>2</sup> :

1. First, it was a working-class movement which was fighting for better conditions for workers through the traditional means of strikes and demonstrations.
2. Second, it transformed to a political party in opposition to the socialist system.
3. Third, it gained the support of the national sentiment in order to restore Poland as an independent nation against the Russian rule.

The influence that Solidarity achieved in the 80s was quite remarkable but after that decade it lost its power over the Polish population. The failure of Solidarity to convert its social potential into party strength demonstrated the weaknesses of Party formation in Poland.

The economic situation in the late 80s was really bad in Poland and the new government of Mazowiecki had to handle immediately the economic crisis management. Balcerowicz the new minister of finance introduced the «**shock therapy**».

In words, it meant cutting state subsidies for enterprises following “a leap to a market economy” by privatization. The process proved to be highly divisive and Solidarity quickly lost the support of the working class. In fact there was no clear passage from the old system to the new in Poland and the new economic system constitutes a break with the past.

The result of the “shock therapy” was that unemployment and inflation climbed dramatically, while economic growth was negative, and shock therapy began to look as if it might have been a bad gamble. Solidarity soon split up and the party system in early post-communist Poland was highly polarized, making it difficult to reach stable deals that would have enabled effective and stable coalitions to form.

Polish population perceived the shock therapy as an elite-proposed, state implemented voluntarism. The shock therapy was necessary but the social cost was tremendous.

In the 90s the personalization of politics in Poland and the further fragmentation of parties can prove the failure of Solidarity, which finally could not achieve to unite the common people.

On the Solidarity side, all candidates were selected personally by Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. The Solidarity experience provided Poles with a heroic democratic legacy that could form the basis of the post-communist regime.

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<sup>2</sup> Frances Millard, “ *Polish Politics and Society*”, 1999, Routledge New York



Post communist Poland adopted a mixed presidential/parliamentary system and Walesa himself was elected president in 1990 until 1995, when he was defeated by the ex-communists, Alexander Kwasniewski.

In general according to two of the most famous and influential observers, **Linz and Stepan**, «the problem in Poland is that while inspirational Solidarity's opposition to the communist regime, became dysfunctional when it came to governing». <sup>3</sup>

## **THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, INTEREST GROUPS, MASS MEDIA AND THE ARMY**

As it happens in most countries, in Poland as well there are some significant actors that play roles in political processes and outcomes. Specifically, here we examine the Catholic Church, interest groups and the mass media.

The Catholic Church in Poland has been in the center of the political arena for decades, however in the Third Republic greater public skepticism existed more than ever before. Intervention of the church did not work positive but in contrast had a negative impact.

Another particular feature of Poland has been the role played by the army. In all the other countries in the group, armies have been passive politically in the communist phase and in the transition.

They were forces that lacked any real motivation because the States and societies were aware that their national security did not depend on the army. It depended on the Warsaw pact forces instead, and the Warsaw Pact forces essentially meant the Soviet Union forces.

During those years, the armies were badly paid and had very little social prestige, largely because, as said before, the people realized that they were not responsible for defending national security and independence. In Poland, however, the army did play a crucial part in political life, not only during the period of Martial Law between December 1981 and July 1983, but also after that, during the second half of the 1980s, when it acted as a driver of reform, pushing the PZPR forward on the reform track. Both elements –the exceptional role of the army and that of the Church– can be traced back to the peculiarity of Poland and its construction into a nation.

As it concerns the interest groups here we examine trade unions and business lobbies. Unemployment was central for them and general social problems which probably could have been better taken under consideration if the trade unions at that time were better organized.

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<sup>3</sup> Europe Juan J.Linz & Alfred Stepan, " *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation (Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist* " , 1996, The Johns Hopkins University Press

On the other hand there is wide recognition of lobbying in Poland, which indicates that politicians take the interests of the firms into consideration in their public service. Business and labor groups did not interact quite well in the political arena. The creation of the Tripartite Council which aimed to bring together workers, representatives of employees, employees proved to be weak.

But the strength of the Church also reflected a segmented reality because the rural population, which accounted for one third of the total in Poland, often had a very different approach to their Catholicism than their urban counterparts.

Essentially, the Poles living in rural areas held very conservative views on society and the economy and felt highly vulnerable about modernization. In Poland the free flow of political information after 1989 has made citizens more knowledgeable about their democracy, invariably leading to critical views about their leaders.

## **NATIONAL ROUNDABLE AND NEGOTIATED TRANSITION**

The re-emerging economic crisis in the 80s affected Poland at most due to the fact that the disastrous economic situation of the people led to periodic protests. By the 1988, when Gorbachev took the rule in Russia he reformed the character of the protests, which were mainly for economic reasons, in combination with calls for political changes, including the legalization of Solidarity.

Gorbachev suggested to Poland to change in power hegemony, to return to the situation before 1949 which actually was a power-sharing coalition with some moderate opposition.

At that time Poland was following the path of the transformation without fearing a possible military intervention. Political changes also occurred, when Rakowski became prime minister. Solidarity gained a legal status again and a whole series of agreements were reached, concerning the democratic transition.

The negotiations that occurred at that period were actually Polish innovations in generating democratic transition. The situation was that that the ruling party was no longer legitimate as well as the opposition side was not legitimized as well. In this case negotiations can take place in order to achieve political transition within the framework of constitutionality.

Of course the exclusion of violence was quite important leading to a peaceful transformation. The national roundtable and negotiated transition experienced in Poland provided a model for all East Central European and Balkan countries. It gave a

new age in development and transformations in general and it legitimized Solidarity which gained victory in elections in 1989. The first non communist government finally occurred in September 1989 with Mazowiecki being a prime minister.

The rapid changes in the international arena affected the tensions between institutions and actions. Western foreign policy became much more assertive in the entire East central European region.

## **THE FAILURE OF PRESIDENTIAL DEMOCRACY IN POLAND**

Linz uses the term “**failure of presidential democracy**” in order to warn that the presidential system may not be the optimal solution for the young democracies. Among other problems of democratization this occurred in Poland and the disintegration of Solidarity, demonstrated the weakness of the party-formation process.<sup>4</sup>

In the 90s the public opinion was ambivalent and pessimistic after a decade of emerging transformation with economic and social costs but meanwhile the “war on the top” among political elites was still emerging.

Walesa aimed to be an imperial president where in contrast Jaruzelski aimed to preserve the hegemonic status.

## **TWO PARTY FAMILIES AND THE REVIVAL OF THE LEFT**

In 1991 the alienation of the population concerning politics was remarkable and it was shoed in the elections. At this period the results demonstrated a turn to the reformed left since the post-communist Democratic-Left Alliance became the biggest political formation in the fragmented Sejm. The major legislative body is the Sejm elected through proportional representation. As a result of constitutional inheritance the roundtable accord and Polish political traditions, the new democracy was combining parliamentary democracy with a president. Two rival party families, the post-Solidarity and post communist parties occurred. The social democratization of post-communist parties was a fact and the transition to democracy was crucial. A second place at the 1991 elections was a relative victory for the reformed Left and represented a real return to the political life.

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<sup>4</sup> . Europe Juan J.Linz & Alfred Stepan, “ *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation (Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist* “ , 1996, The Johns Hopkins University Press

It is clear in Poland that the Right became further separated and the reformed left acquired much more influence preserving the needs of business community.

**FRAGILE COALITIONS AND PROTRACTED POLITICAL  
CRISIS**

Party	Sejm			Senate		
	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats
Democratic Union	1,382,051	12.3	62	3,764,156	32.8	21
Democratic Left Alliance	1,344,820	12.0	60	2,431,178	21.2	4
Catholic Election Action	980,304	8.7	49	1,995,866	17.4	9
Center Civic Alliance	977,344	8.7	44	2,071,045	18.0	9
Polish People's Party	972,952	8.7	48	1,691,566	14.7	7
Confederation of Independent Poland	841,738	7.5	46	1,071,364	9.3	4
Liberal Democratic Congress	839,978	7.5	37	1,497,718	13.1	6
Peasants' Agreement	613,626	5.5	28	719,778	6.3	5
Solidarity	566,553	5.1	27	2,219,160	19.3	11
Polish Beer-Lovers' Party	367,106	3.3	16	–	–	–
Christian Democracy	265,179	2.4	5	–	–	–
Real Politics Union	253,024	2.3	3	371,891	2.2	0
Labour Solidarity	230,975	2.1	4	–	–	–
Democratic Party	159,017	1.4	1	453,721	4.0	0
German Minority	132,059	1.2	7	–	–	–
Party of Christian Democrats	125,314	1.1	4	507,722	4.4	3
Party X	52,735	0.5	3	417,857	3.6	0
Democratic-Social Movement	51,656	0.5	1	–	–	–
Ludowe Porozumienie Wyborcze "Piast"	42,031	0.4	1	–	–	–
Silesian Autonomy Movement	40,061	0.4	2	–	–	–
Solidarni z Prezydentem	27,586	0.2	1	–	–	–
Związek Podhalan	26,744	0.2	1	–	–	–
Polski Związek Zachodni	26,053	0.2	4	–	–	–
Wielkopolsce i Polsce	23,188	0.2	1	–	–	–
Jedności Ludowej	18,902	0.2	1	–	–	–
Prawosławnych	13,788	0.1	1	–	–	–
Solidarność 80	12,769	0.1	1	–	–	–
Unia Wielkopolan	9,019	0.0	1	–	–	–
Sojusz Kobiet	1,922	0.0	1	–	–	–
Local lists and independents	820,108	7.3	0	3,708,344	32.3	21
Invalid/blank votes	669,347	–	–	413,019	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,887,949</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>11,887,865</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Registered voters/turnout	27,517,280	43.2	–	25,517,280	43.2	–

Source: Nohlen & Stöver

<sup>5</sup> Source : *Polish Parliamentary Elections 1991* , from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The 1991 elections created a multiparty system because it was too difficult to establish a stable coalition government. In the first freely elections the first government was formed by three major traditionally rightist post Solidarity parties. The main aim of this government was to support marketization and privatization in economic terms and also had to deal with the “decommunization” process.

In this sense the Olszewski government was the first anti-communist government when meanwhile the alienation of people from politics was huge, due to the fact that the gap between the elite and the general population has deepened.

In 1992 Hanna Suchoka formed a new government mostly with the support of the Right but it also included the traditionalist Left as well. In spite the fact that her government was not stable, it succeeded to make her acceptable to both the Roman Catholic Church and the Christian-National Union.

It is well known that the Catholic Church played a major historical role in the preservation of the Polish nation and culture. It really wanted to play a decisive role in Polish politics by incorporating its traditionalist terms.

The continued economic crisis and the social effects finally brought down the Suchoka government which could not deal with inflation, unemployment, and in 1993 lost for one vote.

## **THE GREAT CLEAVAGES OF AND THE LITTLE CONSTITUTION**

In 1991-1993 the road was open for full democratic institutionalization. However, the Polish parliament could not move on the constitution making process and at that period three great cleavages split Polish political life. What actually divided the Polish society were the economic, political and cultural contradictions.<sup>6</sup>

1. The first was the economic crisis management appearing in the form of the shock therapy and it was a shock for the Polish society, with tough measures, privatization and marketization in order to solve problems of social policy and unemployment.
2. The second was decommunization which makes the question whether the new regime could handle all the problems coming from the past and how this transition could be applicable to all the new formed political parties.

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<sup>6</sup> Frances Millard, “*Polish Politics and Society*”, 1999, Routledge New York

3. The third was cultural issues which rose, concerning the character of the state whether it would be religious or secular.

As a result, all this cleavages had a significant impact in the constitution making. In October 1992 after a lot of debates the Sejm adopted the final version of the Constitutional Act.

Although it was not complete it could sustain until a new complete Constitution would emerge an event which took place in 1997.

The president remained in power with work especially in foreign policy and national security and also in some domestic policies as well.

Several possible causes can be identified, therefore, to explain the centre-right's inability to become a stable, competitive party option.

The first one is the oft-mentioned heterogeneous nature of the Solidarity coalition as an opposition movement and the second one is the decidedly personal slant of the leadership contest.

That personality bias not only prevented the heterogeneous, mixed-bag movement from being pulled together behind a common program but also divided the coalition on the basis of a backward-looking anticommunist rhetoric, incapable of adapting to the new economic and social reality of the country and doomed, therefore, to fizzle out eventually not only as the previous regime dwindled into a hazy memory but also as the image of the Democratic Left Alliance took firm hold as a modern social democratic option, far removed from the old United Workers' Party.

### **THE RETURN OF THE POST-COMMUNIST VOTE AND STABLE COALITIONS**

The 1993 elections marked a new-turning point in Polish history. Specifically, party fragmentation eliminated, the electoral law was succeeded for the Sejm and it changed only for the Senate.

Nevertheless, the real political change was the "the return of the post-communist vote". The electoral victory of post-communist parties created a shock to the Western world. Some analysts consider the results of the 1993 elections as a return to the "communist" past. It was remarkable the Poland's role as a trendsetter to the region and was followed by Hungary and other nations.

Adam Michnik interpreted the “**return of the communists**” by analyzing it as a “**velvet restoration**”.

According to Michnik, this victory was a shock but it happened because of the inability of Solidarity to support transformations and to gain the general population. He mainly does not consider the velvet restoration as a return the past, but in contrary he sees it as a change within democratization.

After the 1993 elections the Democratic Left Alliance was closer to the mentality of the masses and to everyday problems and as it was proved it was supported by different interest groups.

Poland was also the trendsetter in the economic recovery because it left to the past the decade at the 80s with the huge economic problems and in the 90s it initiated the return to solid economic development. This recovery was the starting point for a new era in the economic, social and political landscape of the country.

The strength and the stability of the new government provoked positive thoughts for the future. Still, 1994 was the first year without a change of government but Walesa provoked controversies with the government and the parliament which could be fatal for the stability of the system.

This “war” between Walesa and the other forms of power is a typical example of “who takes it all” by meaning that power is the ultimate goal which would be solved only in the next presidential election, which Walesa lost. The competition took place in the local elections as well, demonstrating the role of power and in this area.

## **THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND THE PARTY LANDSCAPE UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1997 .**

In 1995 another conflict between the president and the government took place with Walesa and Pawlak arguing for the budget bill. Olesky became the prime minister after Pawlak’s dismissal. In late 1995 in the presidential elections the two party families challenged the future of the country. There were 8 candidates but Kwasniewski’s victory indicated a new era in Polish Politics whether it was a step back for the Western critics.

The Preparation for the 1997 elections found Polish opposition large blocks organizing themselves into three large blocks.

1. The moderates as liberal democrats
2. The radicals as national-populists



### 3. Christian-national forces

Finally the post-Solidarity parties with Christian-National forces won.

If you examine this sequence of events, it seems like the rationale of the economic vote during a costly economic transition means the systematic punishment of those in government, thus making it impossible for them to return to power and consolidate their work in government. But it is not quite as straightforward as that. Quite plainly, the organizational history and background of the social democrats, which initially dragged their credibility down and turned them into an easy target for the anticommunist rhetoric of the right-wing factions of Solidarity, endowed them with ample resources to survive election defeats and not just to successfully contest elections. They had discipline and expert leaders to their credit as well as local networks and access to a broad social base.

Another idiosyncrasy of Poland has been the failure of its process to consolidate a party system. Obviously, all the countries in the area started their democratic life with very weak party systems. They were weak basically because the parties were thrown together hastily, in an improvised fashion, without any real identity, without any clear proposals and without government programs. In most cases, they were parties put together in just a few short months. But in all or most of the other countries in the area, over the course of these years the party systems have gradually been consolidated.

## **THE PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN POLAND**

In 1997 elections with the win of post-solidarity parties the new prime-minister was Jerzy Buzek. The change between government and opposition took place smoothly, and in general Polish democracy is in good shape by the late 1990s.

The main disadvantages of Poland and its democratization process are that it was a pioneer and a trendsetter among the other East Central European states and it actually set a moral tone in the democratic transition in the landscape of chaos at the begging of 90s.

In this sense Polish people are keen to the Westernization of the country and they accept democracy and its values.

As **Michta** concluded, despite these difficulties and contradictions “democratic consolidation” is (still) in progress in Poland. –(Michta:1997).

To democratize the Polish political system, a whole set of new institutions and legal provisions had to be introduced to replace those inherited from the communist period.

1. Removing all the official symbols and names that indicated the previous system.
2. Creating the political institutions of democracy (the Senate, the presidency, the local government).
3. Replacing the Polish constitution with a new democratic one.
4. Creating electoral laws that would govern multiparty competition.
5. Creating a new constitutional law for economic activity.
6. Introduce principles for Civil Rights.
7. Strengthening the independence of the judicial branch of government.

Democracy is the best system of government. Poland is learning to be a democracy, and at that point elections were quite important.

The Polish factor of Civic Republicanism represents the most direct successor to the “politics of truth” pursued by Solidarity when it constituted the civil society in opposition to the communist regime. In fact Poland has a long history of republican theory and practice, dating back to the eighteenth century.

We can connect here **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** because he drew inspiration from Polish Republicanism, recorded in his “**Considerations sur le Gouvernement de la Pologne**”.

In advance this discourse is highly committed to the free market.

“Guided democracy” is also one of the Polish democracy elements which concerns the role played by the political parties, and even elections. As **Linz and Stepan** point out Guided Democracy’s hostility to party politics and approval of the idea of a government of experts is dangerously close to authoritarianism. Another Polish discourse demonstrates no need for a strong leadership but in contrast believe in the existing capabilities of the masses.

Disaffected majoritarianism shares the rejection of the communist past with the first two discourses. However it differs in its complete faith in majority rule. It highlights the problems with democracy in post-communist Poland, associated with the political influence of the Catholic Church, the power of money, and futile political game-playing.

Despite the fact that Poland seems to have a rebellious character one could argue that within limits such politics can be a sign of a healthy democracy. There were also signs of stabilization. Contemporary Polish discourses of democracy reveal continuity with

the Polish past, in terms both of the ethical and oppositional civil society represented by Solidarity, and for the deeper tradition of Polish republicanism.

Among the post-communist states Poland's democracy is closer to the Italian model.

Both quantitative analyses and quantitative studies reveal that such powerful cultural cleavages as secularism versus religiosity, on the one hand, and communism versus anticommunism, on the other, had at least much influence on Polish post-communist politics as the more "normal" economic cleavage separating liberals from social democrats.<sup>7</sup>

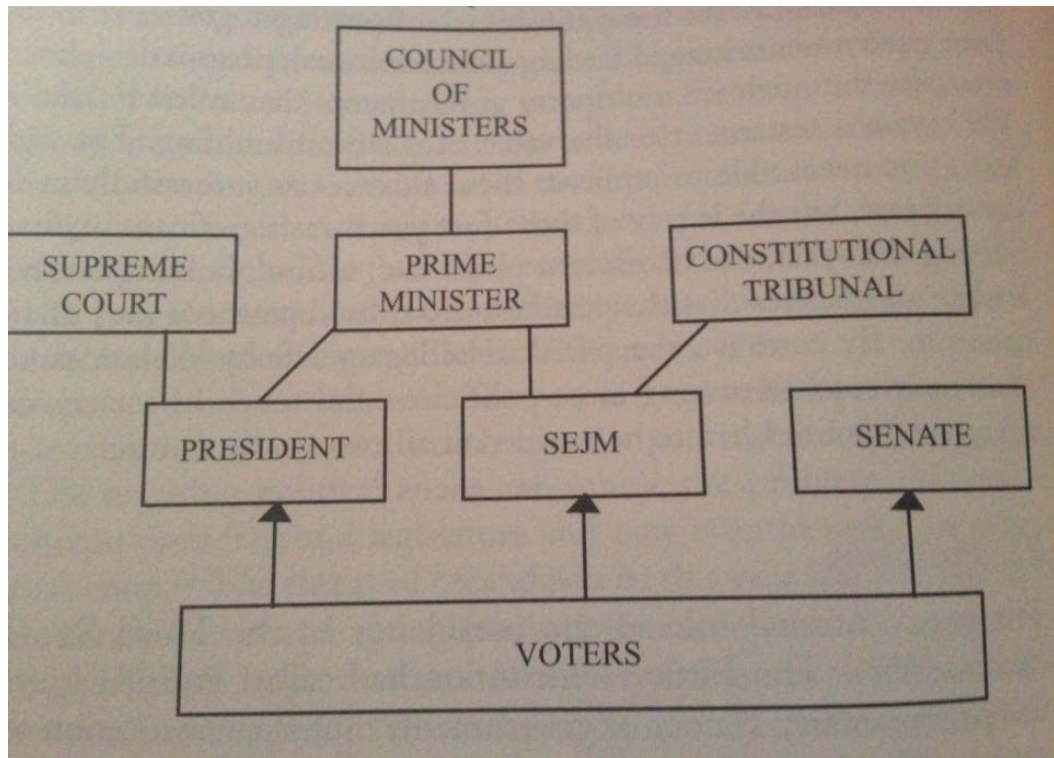
**Markowski** by analyzing the 1992-1997 periods concludes that in the Polish party system there was an increase of polarization on two dimensions: economic and cultural.

Ex communists became the most powerful and best organized political force in Poland by including considerable discourses inherited from the communist system and by maintaining the chronic fragmentation of their opponents- the post Solidarity camp.

### ***STRUCTURE OF POLAND'S POLITICAL SYSTEM***

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<sup>7</sup> Attila Agh, "Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans " , 1998, Edward Elgar



Source : Marjorie Castle and Ray Taras, " *Democracy in Poland* " , Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002

In this figure (table1) we can see how the political system of Poland is constructed for the low site of the community till the final form of political power of the country.

## **POLICY CHALLENGES SHAPING POLAND’S FUTURE**

The remarkable Poland’s journey to democracy is not complete due to the fact that still some challenges remain without an answer.

In the economic area Poland adopted the form of capitalism but a number of problems raised and we have to question how these economic inequalities are going to disappear.

In social terms the integration with the European Union means more than just adopting a certain direction in foreign policy. It represents a choice of civilization.

For Poland the key to European security was membership in NATO. However, in 1995 Russia reacted in this idea without being able to achieve any block in the

entrance of Poland in NATO which finally took place in 1998. NATO's membership significantly affected Poland's relations with Russia.

## **TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY IN POLAND**

Inflation was one of the most important problems in Poland. Back to the 90s the Balcerowitz's program produced positive results due to the fact that the trust in zloty as a medium of exchange restored.

The fight against inflation was less successful and there was a significant cost in the standard of living which for demonstrated that there would be social costs. The architects of the transformation had assumed that once the transformation package was implemented, spontaneous market forces would put the economy on the path of economic growth.

The first years of transformation can be described by monetary and fiscal policy. The restrictive monetary policy did not apply positive in Poland which plunged the economy into a deeper recession. However, the polish government went too far in its liberalization of foreign trade by reducing custom tariffs but still Poland had a huge international debt. Imports increased rapidly and Waleca accused foreigners of ruining Polish industry.

New exchange rates introduced in order to make a powerful incentive for the promotion of exports and thus to reduce unemployment.

## **REVERSAL IN THE GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY**

The recovery of the Polish economy was enabled by investment growth, expansion of exports and a rapid expansion on the private sector, which was quite extensive even before 1990.

Despite the good results in economic growth in 1993-7 and also in stabilizing the state budget deficit at an acceptable level, Poland still has to deal with many problems like inflation and the low rate of exports.

In 1993 the Democratic Left Alliance and the Peasant Party that took over power managed to give Poland a more stable government and reduce social tensions. The "Strategy for Poland" was a medium-term program for the years 1994-7. It was

actually an approach to certain important problems like the social costs of transformation and the improvement of the standard of living.

In recent years Poland has been quite successful, mainly if we disregard the situation in foreign trade. However it managed to put its economy on the path of fast economic growth. One of the main problems that still is one of the most important is the fact that Poland has the highest rate of poverty among the subject countries.

The future agenda of the Polish government is full of issues which are going to be dealt with the solution of ideology, causing probably a lot of disagreements.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC: Background, Historical Elements, Political-Economic-Social Transformation.**

### **FROM VELVET REVOLUTION TO VELVET DIVORCE (1989-1992)**

To begin with, we have to refer that Czechoslovakia emerged as an independent state in 1918 after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. During the war Czechoslovakia was the most democratic state among the Central European countries, however after the war all democratic efforts suppressed by the Soviet intervention.

Actually, Czechoslovakia moved belatedly, as one of the most rigid types of Soviet-type regimes, only after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In the last days of 1989 Vaclav Havel was elected president and Civil Society came into power. It was a new type of power different from both East and West based on morality and rationality. After the velvet revolution we can see in Czechoslovakia the deepest continuity under the surface of discontinuity, due to the fact that there were no alternatives to place the entire state apparatus.

We can observe loyalty to the new regime as a magical political transformation, following the collapse of the old regime which became known as a “velvet revolution”.

The advantages of the “latecomer” worked positive for Czechoslovakia as it did not happen in the case of Poland. The belated start of the democratization process led to

its too easy success but this does not mean that all the problems of transition would be avoided.

Some observers in the early 1990s saw the Czech Republic as “most likely to succeed”. It possessed both an industrialized capitalist economy and a flourishing liberal democracy before the communist era, more successful at that time than many West European states.

Czechoslovakia did not see anything like the mass movement that was Polish solidarity, but could still lay claim to an ethical oppositional civil society.

The divorce that was legislated by the federal parliament at the end of 1992 was as peaceful as the revolution of 1989, partly because of a clear ethnic dividing line and the absence of any disputed territory.

Though sometimes treated as a political failure, the Velvet Divorce in many ways smoothed the path of political and economic transformation for Czech Republic. The Czech lands also had a higher level of economic development than Slovakia, having industrialized earlier and emphasized less in the way of communist era heavy industry.

By the late 1990s Czech Republic’s economy had a higher proportion of private ownership than any other post-communist country in central and Eastern Europe except Poland. The lack of corruption had to be reconsidered in the mid 1990s when it became clear that the Czech lands were not as clean as many had believed.

Analysts influenced by liberal, polyarchal, and minimalist accounts of democracy see consolidated and stable democratic politics in terms of interaction of parties and other organizations representing the material interests of key segments of the population, such as workers, peasants and employers.

## **THE 1990 ELECTIONS AS THE FIRST STEP IN POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION**

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Civic Forum	3,851,172	36.2	68
Communist Party of Czechoslovakia	1,445,407	13.6	23
Public Against Violence	1,104,125	10.4	19
Christian Democratic Movement	644,008	6.1	11
Christian and Democratic Union	629,359	5.9	9
Movement for Autonomous Democracy–Party for Moravia and Silesia	572,015	5.4	9
Slovak National Party	372,025	3.5	6
Alliance of Farmers and the Countryside	360,779	3.4	0
Social Democracy	342,455	3.2	0
Green Party	332,974	3.1	0
Coexistence–Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement	296,575	2.8	5
Czechoslovak Socialist Party	201,532	1.9	0
Democratic Party	149,310	1.4	0
People's Democratic Party–Rally for the Republic	76,338	0.7	0
Free Bloc	64,070	0.6	0
Freedom Party	49,012	0.5	0
VSZS	47,971	0.5	0
Czechoslovakian Democratic Forum	23,428	0.2	0
Rómovia	22,670	0.2	0
HOS	22,165	0.2	0
Movement of Czechoslovakian Understanding	21,979	0.2	0
Friends of Beer Party	8,943	0.1	0
Invalid/blank votes	136,929	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,775,125</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>150</b>
Source: Nohlen & Stöver			

<sup>9</sup> Source : *Czechoslovakian parliamentary election, 1990*, from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The first half of 1990 was a period of harmony for Czechoslovakia but with party competition occurring and also economic and social problems appearing. The first free elections turned out to be more like a referendum on democracy. In the Czech part of the country Civic forum gained about half of the vote and in Slovakia the PAV received only about one-third.

Nevertheless, a very complicated electoral system, which was embodied in the federal structure of the Czechoslovak legislation, was introduced for the June 1990 elections. The already structure of this federal state maintained by the new electoral law, with



some changes. At that time the Federal Assembly elected the federal government and the National Councils elected the Czech or Slovak republican governments.

## **THE EMERGENCE OF THE CZECH AND SLOVAK PARTY SYSTEMS AND THE WAR AT THE TOP**

In 1991 president Havel focused on the economic crisis management. The Calfa government on 12 December 1990 adopted some drastic measures which include price liberalization and privatization but knowing the case of Poland they avoided the complete shock therapy. The early 90s were also a tough period for Czechoslovakia with the social costs of the economic transitions occurring which had an impact in the political development.

The gap that emerged in the political lives of the Czech lands and Slovakia were a premonition for the final divorce. The political dissatisfaction of the people was growing and the delay of economic reforms and ecological issues boosted the dissatisfaction in both sides. In this situation of political and constitutional paralysis Havel played a special role, two years after the end of communism.

Two major topics were the problems at that time. First “decommunization” as it was in all of the former Soviet Union Satellites and then the public corruption during the process of privatization.

## **THE 1992 ELECTIONS AS PRECEDENT OF VELVET DIVORCE**

Party	Votes	%	Seats	+/-
Civic Democratic Party-Christian Democratic Party	2,200,937	23.0	48	New
Movement for a Democratic Slovakia	1,036,459	10.8	24	New
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	926,228	9.7	19	New
CSSD-SDSS	648,125	6.8	10	New
Party of the Democratic Left	446,230	4.7	10	New
SPR-RSĎ	432,075	4.5	8	New
KDU-CSL	388,122	4.0	7	New
Liberal-Social Union	378,962	4.0	7	New
Civic Democratic Alliance	323,614	3.4	0	New
Slovak National Party	290,249	3.0	6	0
Civic Movement	284,854	3.0	0	New
Movement for Autonomous Democracy–Party for Moravia and Silesia	279,136	2.9	0	-9
Christian Democratic Movement	277,061	2.9	6	-5
Coexistence–Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement	232,776	2.4	5	0
Pensioners for Life Security	214,681	2.2	0	New
Czechoslovak Businessmen's, Traders' and Farmers' Party	166,325	1.7	0	New
Club of Committed Non-Party Members	129,022	1.3	0	New
ODÚ	122,359	1.3	0	New
Democratic Party	122,226	1.3	0	0
SKDH	106,612	1.1	0	New
NEI	89,817	0.9	0	New
SZS	81,047	0.9	0	New
MPP-MOS	72,877	0.8	0	New
SPP	68,985	0.7	0	0
D92	68,168	0.7	0	New
HSS	67,406	0.7	0	New
SPI	38,580	0.4	0	New
Roma Civic Initiative	33,576	0.4	0	New
ZKS	23,487	0.3	0	New
SRNDJ	10,335	0.1	0	New
SLS	10,150	0.1	0	New
NSS-ĀSNS	8,922	0.1	0	New
NALI	2,457	0.0	0	New
HZSP-SRÚ	1,576	0.0	0	New
Invalid/blank votes	167,542	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,750,978</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Nohlen & Stöver

<sup>10</sup> Source : Czechoslovakian parliamentary election, 1992, from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The 1992 June elections were the first real multiparty elections and they already overburdened with the Czech and Slovak controversy. The two dominating parties represented de facto the two nations and their opposite philosophies brought about the split of the country. These elections demonstrated that the political system was still in the making and the citizens still had an interest in participating. It also indicated that the early consolidation process was more or less complete. The technocratic elite in the Czech lands replaced the former top elite and in Slovakia this radical elite change has not yet occurred.

Furthermore, a new federal government was formed and it became clear that the two leading parties could not agree.

## **THE VELVET DIVORCE AND REASONS FOR ITS OCCURRENCE**

In 1993 Czechoslovakia split into its two major constituent parts and the reasons for this split were deeper than the nationalist feelings of Slovaks and Czechs to have their independent state.

These reasons have their source after the WWI and more specific the Versailles peace agreements to create satellite states.

The regime was found to be in crisis on several levels<sup>11</sup>:

- ***Economic stagnation*** – the socialist economy, in which practically everything was decided through central planning, was unable even to maintain living standards, let alone raise them;
- ***Political dissatisfaction*** – citizens were no longer willing to tolerate one-party rule; they demanded that the state observe its own laws, demanded pluralism of opinion, and the chance to freely and openly express their opinions;
- ***Social stagnation*** – the worst effect of the communist regime was on society itself; the absence of freedom meant that people kept to themselves, did not take interest in public affairs, and were not able to find satisfaction in their professions;
- ***Intellectual and cultural stagnation*** – Czech culture, science, and education stagnated under the communist regime; standards declined especially in the

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<sup>11</sup> Carol Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, Westview Press, 1997

humanities; the social sciences served, with honorable exceptions, more as tools of the official ideology.

Hence, the final dissolution would be seen by a different spectrum for these two states as it actually happened. Indeed, ethnic considerations were much important for political and economic reasons.

The Czechs always considered the national issue to be more or less settled despite the Slovaks concerns and worries. Cultural and historical differences also made the division more obvious which rose the national sentiment especially in Slovakia during the summer of 1990.

Therefore, the problems of the constitutional set-up and the federal decision-making mechanism were accompanied with issues of national pride and equity.

**Sharon Wolchik** analyzes the issues for the velvet divorce by explaining that the political situation in the first two years created fertile ground for the growth of ethnic tensions and extreme nationalism in Czechoslovakia.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

Political stability and socio-economic progress can describe the short history of Czech Republic. The political landscape has remained stable since June 1992 elections due to the fact that most of the parliamentary parties would continue to be the major political actors.

A great number of small parties and movements emerged; their political programs and ideologies were very diverse. But with the exception of the Communist Party, which was not outlawed, all of the parties had democratization in their programs.

The most important political force during the first phase of the Czech transformation was the *Civic Forum*. This was a unique organization that was more of a loose political movement than a political party. Similar types of political organization appeared and were active during the initial period of transformation in the other post-communist countries. Therefore, we refer to the Civic Forum as a typical *broad forum-type movement*.

The first years for this democracy have been a test because behind this stability a number of problems are revealed as well.

The party system in general and the new leading party in particular are quite questionable. The mass fluctuation among parliamentary factions was extraordinary high and it indicates the instability of the party system.

According to the Czech constitution, the Czech Republic is a *parliamentary democracy*. Parliamentary democracy, along with presidential democracy, is one of the basic types of representative democracy.

The only constitutional organ in the Czech Republic that has direct legitimacy according to the constitution (on the national level) is the *Parliament of the Czech Republic*. All other central organs, including the president of the republic, derive their legitimacy from the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

The new leading party of Klaus's Civic Democratic Party illustrated the attractions of a traditional political force with a strong membership base. Klaus strongly controlled both the government and parliament by concentrating several posts in his hands.

Czech Republic is one of the frontrunners of the European-Atlantic integration. Still, there are a lot of economic and political problems that have to be under consideration but the worst is over. Along with Poland, Hungary and Slovenia has shown the first signs of early consolidation.

In advance, still has to deal with minor problems like minority rights and compensation for the Sudeten Germans and some weakness of liberal democracy.

## **CZECH TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY**

Like it happened in Poland the neo-liberals that took power in the Czech Lands after the "velvet revolution", they could gain such influence only with the help of international financial institutions.

A moderate shock treatment introduced in Czechoslovakia in 1991 but with less radical components of the Polish therapy. In CSR knowing the model of Poland and the problems the transformation package was launched in a context of relative macroeconomic equilibrium.

Monetary and fiscal policies introduced in the pursuit of macrostabilization and in attempt to cope with inflation. Monetary policy was over-restrictive and contributed to the recession and fiscal policy was supposed to help the fight against inflation.

Wage control was restrictive and co-responsible for the decline in demand and output. As it concerns the foreign trade the aim was to ensure a stable exchange rate for favoring the liberalization of trade.

The performance of the economy in the first years laid down preconditions for a market economy. Positive results achieved but at a very high social cost. The rapid reorientation of foreign trade was a success, although the question concerned its own structure.

Generally, Czech products had difficulty competing in quality on Western markets and were expensive for the Third World Market.

The Czech Republic had certain advantages as it concerns economic growth compared of course to other economies. The low rate of unemployment, the continuous devaluation of its currency and the low debts to foreign lenders helped economic growth to boost even further.

In 1994-6 private consumption and investment were the main driving forces of economic growth. In 1995 the growth of GDP was driven by fast-growing manufacturing and the investment boom earlier in 1993 was the start of the reconstruction of the economy.

The monetary policy was introduced in order to reduce inflation. Attempts were made to sterilize foreign capital by open market operations. However this restrictive policy had a negative impact on economic growth.

In the case of inflation the problem was not as high as in other examples like Poland and more or less it was protected from large budget deficit. Also, the CR had a good record in balancing the state budget by having a small surplus and a tiny deficit.

In contrast the situation in foreign trade was somehow like Poland and Hungary. The increasing gap between imports and exports grew even more and there are several reasons like the increase in demand, increase in incomes, and the rate of inflation.

Analyzing the structure of exports, in 1995 the foreign trade deficit grew up by a great deficit in machinery and means of transportation. Needless to say, the Czech ambition to make exports of machinery the main focus, as they were in the old system, has not yet made great progress.

In 1997 Czech Republic had to deal with the economic crunch which was caused by these factors<sup>12</sup>:

1. False and slow reaction to the cumulating problems of the economy.
2. Czech exports have become less competitive on foreign markets.
3. It allowed the appreciation of the crown.
4. Many privatized enterprises do not have final owners.
5. It failed to establish institutions which would protect the system.

Others argued that the monetary policy was too restrictive, others that it should be combined with restrictive fiscal policy. The liberals claimed that it was the failure to complete privatization and to remove the “bank socialism”.

The worsening of the economic situation, combined with the sudden decline of the currency value, provoked a political crisis.

Until the 1997 economic crisis, domestic and foreign economists more or less agreed that the Czech economy had fared the best. The transformation process was undertaken well by the Czech leaders combining with the economic facts as well. All those advantages that the CR had until 1997 revealed its Achille’s heel which is foreign trade. Czech policymakers in particular were concerned with the need to make a break with the past. The economic restructuring effort required massive and technical reworking of every facet of the economy. None of the standard economic institutions worked under socialism as they did under capitalism.

Observers of the Czech Republic see traces of this technocratic style of economic reform in the arcane debates over economic policy and the attitude that the economy is too important to be subjected to detailed public scrutiny.

Generally marketization was making greater and less painful progress in the Czech Republic than in Slovakia due to the fact that there was greater entrepreneurial activity in the Czech Republic. The Czech economy had many of the advantages of post-communist economies and some additional ones as well. The Czechs well remembered their advanced industrial base of the pre-communist years and were quick to remind those who had forgotten that the Czechs had once been effective capitalists could be so again.

The pessimists in the economic community expect a major political and economic jolt to come when unprofitable plants go under or prune back their labor forces to survive. Others are more optimistic and believe that the Czechs may have postponed their rendezvous with high unemployment long enough to avoid it altogether.

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<sup>12</sup> Jan Adam, *Social Costs of Transformation To A Market Economy in Post-Socialist Countries: The Case of Poland, The Czech Republic and Hungary*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999

## **POST-COMMUNIST CULTURE: THE COMMERCIAL PRICE OF FREEDOM**

The regimented culture of the former communist state has given way to a new form of censorship of the marketplace and of what is commercially viable.

People at that time could read bold political messages in their daily newspapers. Education suffered special problems in adjusting to the post communist environment but it was the schools themselves that carried the greatest weight of responsibility for “socialization” to socialist values.

A question remains whether the Czech political culture has kept pace with the successful establishment of democratic institutions and the successful economic transformation. There are reasons for apprehension that Czech society has been delayed, mostly by the legacy of the country’s Communist past.

## **CZECH POLITICS AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

The Czech Republic has experienced great political stability since independence. However, several important challenges to Czech democratization remained unresolved. What came out in order to establish a democratic state was the character of legislation to introduce nonprofit status for public interest associations and churches, and the decentralization of the government.

The decentralization of the government was a still “tricky” issue. In fact, a much focused controversy about fuller democratization revolved around the fact that the Czech government argued the so-called “constitutional debts”: the unresolved issues of establishing and electing both a new Senate and the regional governments, both of which had been mandated by the 1992 constitution. The missing Senate posed a potential constitutional problem. Yet until a Senate was created, the lower house performed the duties of both houses and therefore could not be dissolved.

A challenge to the establishment of Czech democracy more provoking to the public has been the problem of drawing the line between proper political behavior and corrupt practices.

In the first years after the Velvet Revolution, bureaucrats and party officials operated largely free of constraint by conflict of interest laws or other legislative restrictions on behavior.



In early 1995 the Czech government succumbed to popular pressure and proposed a stricter campaign finance law, which may help to clear the atmosphere of suspicion.

Public scandals are not unique to Czech politics, all of the post communist states, including Slovakia, have experienced comparable scandals over the use of political power for personal or partisan interests.

Obviously the 1996 elections suggest that the Czechs do not yet have a fully formed party system and a well-established “electoral connection” with the voters.

## **INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL TRANSITION**

All aspects of the post communist transition in the Czech Republic have had important international dimensions. External involvement in encouraging democracy has been a defining feature of the post cold war era in Europe. Western research institutions and foundations have bankrolled an infusion of expertise in public opinion polling in order to improve the quality of surveys of public policy and electoral preferences.

A prime mover in external political influences on the reshaping of domestic politics has been the Council of Europe (CE). Membership in the CE was a normative structure that set standards and a monitoring structure that evaluated compliance to the standards. The membership was accompanied by specific, enumerated expectations as to which problem areas for democratic practice remained unresolved.

In the case of the Czechs the Western countries have expressed little general doubt about political stability thus far.

## **CZECH DISCOURSES OF DEMOCRACY**

Civic Enthusiasm’s ardor for citizen participation in the post communist polity is unbounded, though it recognizes that politicians and citizens can and should have different roles. Though supportive of liberal rights and freedoms, CE is actually more a republican discourse. Democratic consolidation in Czech Republic requires that the “politics of the truth” of the sort evident in Civic Enthusiasm should give way quietly to the “politics of interest”, a far more mundane affair in which pragmatism and negotiated compromises between powerful interests are the order of the day.

The communist legacy makes the current picture of Czech civil society even gloomier. The Czech Communist Party has been a stable parliamentary party on the

Czech political scene since 1990. The Communists were also successful in the 2009 elections for the European Parliament. The party receives solid support from elderly citizens who comprise a significant part of the electorate.

The growing social, economic, and political inequality demonstrated that the post communist political economy is not true a democracy. Disaffected Egalitarianism also perceives and condemns hierarchy, corruption and bureaucracy and in a more positive spectrum it sees equality as the central characteristic of democracy, in terms of the distribution of not just income and wealth, but also political power. The kind of democracy that seeks is participatory than representative, though it would contain more honest politicians who would better serve the people and the public interest, instead of themselves and their wealthy friends.

The discourses of democracy we have found reveal a strong continuity with the interwar democratic traditions of the Czech lands, and there is no need to condemn them in favor of either a one size fits all minimalist model of liberal polyarchy or the supposed legacy of the authoritarian communist past.

Although the political and economic transitions have been largely accomplished, democratization of Czech civil society is a road yet to be successfully traveled. This lecture primarily focuses on why this transformation from a closed to a truly open and autonomous civil society unburdened with the communist past has failed, been incomplete, or faced numerous roadblocks.

Unlike transition in the structures of government and politics, change in people's minds and cultural change requires more time. Such change is a long-lasting process that will be accomplished, perhaps, with future generations. There are several hindrances that help account for the incomplete transformation in Czech political culture. All of them stem from the nature of the economic transformation and the political emancipation.

Above all, the Communist Party of today serves as a direct reminder of the totalitarian past. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia—a follower of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia—has not explicitly and officially rejected the violence of Marxism-Leninism. At the same time, the members of the party could be said to behave as silent observers in Parliament.

# CRITICISM AND THE FUTURE OF THESE STATES

As it concerns Poland the areas key to resistance were the Catholic Church (especially given its formal organization and transnational base), which remained relatively autonomous (although the church agreed not to become overly involved in political activities), peasant cooperatives in agriculture, a degree of “collegial power-sharing”. Stateness is central to understanding how Poland was able to assume this character. First, the loss of Jewish, ethnically German and Byelorussian minorities “left the overwhelming majority of Poland’s citizens ethnically Polish and Roman Catholic. Second, the Red Army failed to support Polish resistance fighters in WWII, generating nationalist antagonism toward the USSR.

Also, the army, at critical moments, by their ambivalence and slowness to act, de facto checked the possibility of totalitarian state power. They would go on to control the country thus promoting an “authoritarian-bureaucratic, non-ideological army state.

As it concerns Czechoslovakia it is an example of “transition by the collapse of ‘frozen’ post-totalitarianism. There the regime “simply collapsed.” The provisional government had “strong anti politics tendencies and rejected an opportunity to develop statewide political parties”.

The regime was *frozen* because it was not moving in the direction of Hungary, but neither did the regime attempt to mobilize enthusiasm. The vast majority of people were “living a lie,” attempting to live in a “parallel culture”.

Even the dissidents in 1988/9 were comprised of small groups which did “not develop an articulated political approach.” Moreover, the hardline regime gave no space for moderates with whom any pact could be forged. The regime “collapsed” because the police, media, army and members of the government and the bureaucracy defected en masse.

Poland is one of the main countries pushing the European Union towards further economic, political and even military integration. Poland has been one of the most prominent voices of establishing a common European Armed Forces, with Poland's Premier along with Angela Merkel and F.Hollande. Poland has already built several commands of a common battle group with Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia with a total of 12,000 troops ready for deployment. Poland is seeking to build more battle groups with Lithuania and Ukraine. These battle groups have vowed to serve under the European Union, and not NATO.

Euroseptics criticize such moves as further unnecessary integration and a new major step towards a federalized European Union under one government. Military integration is judged to be the most significant step after a monetary union.

Poland now is a democracy, with a president as a head of the state whose current constitution dates from 1997 and he is Bronislaw Komorowski.

From 1991, the Czech Republic, originally as part of Czechoslovakia and since 1993 in its own right, has been a member of the Visegrad Group and from 1995, the OECD. The Czech Republic joined NATO on 12 March 1999 and the European Union on 1 May 2004.

The President of the Czech Republic was being selected by a joint session of the parliament for a five-year term, with no more than two consecutive terms and by 2013 it is elected by the public, not the parliament and is Milos Zeman.

Membership in the European Union is central to the Czech Republic's foreign policy. The Czech Republic held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first half of 2009.

## CONCLUSION

In this report an analysis was taken place in order to demonstrate how the transition to democracy in East and Central States of Europe finally occurred.

Before, meanwhile and after the collapse of the Soviet Union all former satellite states followed the path of constructing and building their own character by separating their status from Russia and its own rule.

From the end of the 80s until 2000 Poland and Czech Republic followed different patterns in order to complete the democratization process and leave behind the communist regime and culture which dominated their existence in the international arena for a number of years.

Actually, the world is changing and these states ten years ago can be traced as quasi-failed states but now they tend to be a part of the rest of the world by developing even further either their political behavior, either their economic and social appearance in general the world.

In Immanuel Wallerstein's "World systems theory" there is an analysis about developed, semi-developed and developing states. In these categories all former Soviet Union states could be categorized in the developing states, however in the case of Poland and especially Czech Republic we can see a high status of development where it could slowly move forward to the semi-developed states.

The following years are quite important for all these states which are trying to build their character and co-ordinate with the European Union by being a part of it or are still in this process.

Nevertheless, the world is changing and global politics nowadays can be considered as a vital process, so we cannot predict the future of these states. After a total full decade of transformation maybe the next 15-20 years are hiding even more changes in the international political arena.

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