

ON A STATE OF DEMOCRATIC EMERGENCY

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Abstract

Due to the spread of the third wave of global democratization from southern Europe to more distant countries and cultures, many authors have begun to address the paradoxical trend that reflects the fact that although democracy has become the norm in the world, i.e. the most common and generally legitimate form of government, it often works in a way that reduces real freedom. The main goal of this study is defining a space between functioning democracy and the failing one, identifying the most important highlights based on results of empirical researches published during 2016-2019 to identify the most current trends in liberal democracy that we originally call „a state of democratic emergency“ occurring due to the untouched „near misses“.

Key words: *democracy, illiberative democracy, near miss, freedom, election*

INTRODUCTION

Functioning democracies exhibit a wide range of institutional arrangements, forms of government and governmental institutions (presidential or parliamentary systems, republics, constitutional monarchies, executive and representative heads of state, unicameral and bicameral legislatures, centralized or decentralized governments, federal and unitary states, written and unwritten constitutions and so on), but decisive for the classification of democracy is the form of the political regime.

Therefore, it is often assumed that it is not possible to speak of the term “democracy” as a single concept that expresses a uniform definition of the requirements imposed on a democratic regime.

The word "democracy" means "government of the people". Although this definition says that citizens of democracy run their own nation, the main objectives on which a democratic government is generally based are the protection and promotion of citizens' rights, interests and welfare. Democracy requires that every individual be free to participate in the self-government of the political community. That is why political freedom is at the heart of the concept of democracy. The overall concept of modern democracy consists of three basic parts: democracy, constitutionalism and liberalism. In order to call a political regime a democracy, each of these parts must exist and function in the political system. There are several definitions of the concept of democracy in academic environment in particular. They range from Schumpeter's minimalist competition for votes to broader definitions, including a reference to political freedoms and a specific institutional set-up, e.g. parliament, independent judiciary, etc. The broadest definitions of democracy even include the concept of economic rights.

In 2003, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution containing seven "essential elements" of democracy:

- respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, freedom of association, freedom of expression and opinion;
- access to and exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law;
- holding regular free and fair elections by universal vote and secret ballot as an expression of the will of the people;
- a pluralistic system of political parties and organizations;
- independence of the judiciary;
- transparency and accountability in public administration for a clear division of powers;
- the work of free, independent and pluralistic media. (UN Human rights 2002/46)

In general, the different approaches to democracy research can be divided into two main groups, namely:

(a) **procedural definitions** aimed at organizing the regime, ensuring political legitimacy and representing the interests of voters (such as Schumpeter, Dahl, Schmitter and Karl, but also Diamond); and

(b) **substantial definitions** that address the problems of ensuring the well-being of the population, focusing on the value and specific objective of the democracy in question, such as Jacobs and Shapiro or Tilly.

Liberal democracy is experiencing a crisis of confidence, and this development, which we call the "state of democratic emergency", is confirmed by the recent polls from various sources. Based on data from transnational surveys by the Pew Research Center, data from FreedomHouse or Eurobarometer, it follows that while democracy as a way of governance is traditionally popular in general, there is still a surprisingly high degree of public openness to non-democratic governance in many countries. [Wike, Fetterolf 2018] Not only the third- wave countries are exposed to this trend, but stable democracies are also exposed to a certain degree of dissatisfaction. Surveys, also in the EU environment, show that although respondents (i.e. residents of countries with democratic regimes) identify respect for a wide range of democratic

rights and freedoms as crucial to their lives, their actual activity, within the opportunities offered by the civil society to them, does not entirely correspond to this attitude. Moreover, civic activities and mobility are generally narrowed many times to the election period or when a serious situation occurs in the country, but this may already be a manifestation of the regime's shift to its undemocratic forms. Events (not only) in Slovakia over the last year pointed out, among other things, the necessity of not ignoring such "quiet" places of civic life by political sciences, as these may result in a critical state where the reparation of the various components of power towards democratic expressions is already quite complicated and complex. Recently, a number of experts have identified a sharp deterioration in democracy in countries such as Hungary, Turkey and Venezuela. Political sciences have also responded to these facts, and several authors (even those presented here) have turned their attention to examining how this gradual death of democracies is coming, what are the indicators and circumstances of this phenomenon. This is essential for future political science and practise, in our opinion, mainly because of creation of so-called early warning system. This is not possible without defining so-called near misses, not only by examining the failing democracies, but also by examining established democracies to identify their eventual deviations. The aim of this study is to draw attention to the necessity of exploring such a situation between democracy and other non-democratic forms, as we argue that the framework established by the political sciences so far (for example by defining hybrid regimes or failing states), in particular in the field of transitional research, does not sufficiently reflect the current developments. As evidenced by the findings of the studies of the renowned experts presented in this study, this state of "emergency" or threat to democracy applies not only to the countries being under transition process, not only to the third-wave transition countries (which are expected to have already established a state of consolidated democracy), but also to the long-term permanent and traditional democracies.

1. INDICATORS OF STATE OF EMERGENCY

Scott Mainwaring and Fernando Bizzarro (2019) report that, based on the results of their research released in January 2019 published in an article entitled "The Fates of the Third-Wave Democracies", few countries have succeeded in establishing strong liberal democracies. Their research included data concerning 91 new democracies. The authors refer to the new democracies as political systems, which originated between 1974 and 2012, i.e. that were in the process of democratic transition.

Based on the processed data, the authors report that in 34 cases the breakdowns occurred, many of them in a rapid succession. In 28 cases, they experienced stagnation of democracy after the end of the transition, which, according to the authors, achieved a relatively low level of democratic practice. The authors have identified only 23 countries in which they have seen a progress in democracy compared to the starting point. Based on these data, the authors assume that the success of democratic transition is closely linked to two essential background determinants. Based on the authors' conclusions, the issues related to the consolidation of the economies of the transit countries can be identified as the first group of determinants.

The second group is associated with an important geopolitical determinant, namely the number of neighbouring countries and the nature of their political regimes. The findings of their research confirmed that regimes that prove the following features -

started transitions at a higher level of liberal democracy, geographically surrounded by democracies, and having recorded better economic growth rates – are less likely to disintegrate.

„Regimes that started off with a lower per capita GDP and those that experienced lower economic growth, as well as regimes that started off with a higher level of liberal democracy, were less likely to deepen democracy.“
[Mainwaring, Bizzarro 2019:1]

Based on current developments (until 2018), Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) identify in their book two groups of causes of the fall of democracy saying that “Democracies can die with a coup d’état - or they can die slowly. This happens most deceptively when in piecemeal fashion, with the election of an authoritarian leader, the abuse of governmental power and the complete repression of opposition”. [Levitsky, Ziblatt 2018:1], that is, after insufficient treatment of so-called state of democratic emergency. They note that the circumstances of changing the regime to a non-democratic regime have changed considerably as nowadays „... military coups and other violent seizures of power are rare. Most countries hold regular elections. Democracies still die, but by different means” [Levitsky, Ziblatt 2018]. And according to Mainwaring and Bizzarro's research, such countries can also be called illiberative democracies. [Mainwaring, Bizzarro 2019] Conclusions by Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) are confirmed also by research conducted by Tom Ginsburg and Aziz Huq. (2018) Their research was focused on identifying the space between functional and dysfunctional democracy, which they originally call a “**near miss**” (this term of “near miss” is used for example in the OHS context denoting "a dangerous incident that almost resulted in a serious injury"). The studies, which comprise the base of this debate on current tendencies jointly identify that democracies can “collapse” gradually, and there may be a gradual deterioration in the quality of democratic institutions where it is extremely difficult to reverse this situation. The results of the researches carried out by these authors and the conclusions drawn from them confirm us that such near misses have received little or no attention in democracy studies, and little has been paid also to the question of why democracies die (or survive).

As Aziz Huq and Tom Ginsburg put it in their study titled “How to Lose a Constitutional Democracy” (2018), „...slow erosive processes have replaced fast collapses as the most common form of backsliding in recent decades“ [Huq, Ginsburg 2018: 18]. Zhaotian Luo and Adam Przeworski (2018) also argue from this statement (and from the previous works of other researchers) in their study of these near misses when they claim that the erosion that is gradually weakening democracy in steps, some of which are legally defensible, is an attraction for future autocrats, because it can, by its very nature, produce the same outcome as an open attack on democratic institutions, but with less risk. The opposition often finds that by the time they notice the threat, it is too late to coordinate any effective response. These conclusions are to be key ones for the presented conclusions on democratic emergency. These authors, in their next study, define this state as "near misses". The study focuses mainly on the use of the case study method. The authors focused their research on three major countries over a period of time: Finland in 1930, Colombia in 2010 and Sri Lanka in 2015, examining the dynamics of such developments. The authors justify the choice of these countries to explore how elites of political parties and the judiciary and bureaucracy can play a decisive role in preventing democratic erosion. Similarly, such

a study of political science is currently supported by the results of research by Tom Ginsburg and Aziz Huq, who conducted their research in the period of 2017-2019 in the form of case studies. [Ginsburg, Huq 2018: 29]

The methodology of the authors is quite interesting and is based on the assumption that it should include two identified groups of countries. The first is made up of the countries in which democracy has been seriously threatened but has survived without serious disturbances and malfunctions. The second group consists of those countries that may have fallen below the minimum threshold of democratic quality and could have evolved towards competitive authoritarianism, but this has been finally reversed. To name these tendencies, authors use names like "true near misses" and the "quick comebacks". [Ginsburg, Huq 2018: 17] We agree with the authors that it is quite difficult to determine the boundaries between these categories and to identify the risk indicators of an unsuccessful return, as „...erosion’s effects on the possibility of democratic retrenchment are complex: While the gradual nature of this process increases the coordination costs of mustering a prodemocratic response, the longer timeframe involved also creates windows during which some institutions and political forces can mobilize to mitigate or even undo backsliding.“ [Ginsburg, Huq 2018: 18].

This process of complicated return in current political theory is also called the "U-turn", which explains the process in Hungary (for example by János Kornai in his article “Hungary's U-Turn: Retreating from Democracy”) or in Mexico (as for example by Sergio Aguayo’s “U-Turn: Guide to Understand and Reactivate the Stagnant Democracy”), but is also mentioned in the context of Brexit developments in the UK. These authors point out that, in the case of the U-turn, it is necessary to explore different spheres of the society, such as political institutions, the rule of law and the mutual influence of state and market, as well as the spiritual world, such as ideology, education, science and art and this is the only way how to assess the impact of this developments on such society.

2. ILLIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY – A MISSED „NEAR MISS“?

At the present time, we can identify quite a significant disagreement in the current discussions not only how to investigate these phenomena, but also about the seriousness of the extent of the current democratic decline. The group of authors who do not deny this phenomenon and the risks of not solving it, focus on causal questions, which are extremely important for defining the causes of these phenomena and thus setting ways of an appropriate solution. Such researches focus mainly on identifying the main actors (forces) in society that are most involved in the erosion of democracy. Here, it is necessary to focus on whether the forces are of an economic, institutional, ideological or social nature. For this reason, the current research and studies focusing in the recent years on obvious examples of the "decline and fall" of democracies need to be appreciated. The importance of these researches lies mainly in the clarification of the interactions between institutional structures, the decisions of political actors and economic and social development. In this environment, political science research also addresses the issue of illiberal democracies.

Fareed Zakaria analysed the emergence of such an illiberal democracy, and his work titled "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy" published in 1997 reinforced this debate and argued for it. From the our research point of view, it should be noted that since their very beginning, the theories of democracy have addressed a number of serious

questions regarding the correct understanding of political systems that combine elements of democracy with autocracy (e.g. situations where institutional constraints exist at central authorities in conjunction with systematic violations of political and civil liberties) and which is referred by Zakaria to as "illiberal" democracy. [Zakaria 1997] This type of system is quite difficult to grasp because it challenges expectations in the sense that concrete changes in the government's structure will be accompanied by some improvements then reflected in the way the citizens participate with government in power (see e.g. Dahl 1971, Russell 1988). As Davenport states, states may show the features of democracy on the outside, but they also have major shortcomings in their daily practice, and he even calls them "liberal autocracies". [Davenport 2000] Both of these approaches are based on understanding and exploring these regimes as hybrid regimes. These studies are crucial for this research, as they point out that there are political regimes that also show some aspects of the autocratic regime (e.g. elections do not bring any restrictions to the executive) but on the contrary they show a significant dimension of democracy, such as respect for political and civil liberties. For this reason, the basis for the study of these democratic distortions (whether illiberal or autocratic) is the data published for example on the Freedom House portal available for each of the countries under survey.

The research strategy applied in this study is a quantitative research based on a theoretical model of hybrid regimes and failing states, in accordance with which we determine the overall research problem defined above. Quantitative research is based on data obtained from the primary sources, namely analyses and evaluations of the selected organizations. One such organization whose data is used in our research is the Freedom House Index, which reports annually on the state of freedom and democracy in the world. Overall, the reports focus on a number of areas such as media freedom monitoring, web freedom monitoring, transit country monitoring, monitoring of transit countries and so-called countries at the crossroad (which contains 70 countries). In this study, this index replaces the field research focused on the collection of empirical data, which would be time- and methodologically demanding due to the time and geographical scope of our research. The information provided in this Index in the form of questions and answers in individual areas of research in a given country, with the help of processed statistical data from the environment of the countries themselves makes it possible to verify the claims and processing of this data. The long collection time of these available data thus acquires a time-lapse character and makes it possible to identify possible variations in individual countries using a comparative method. Other sources of data are the reports from the Multinational Observer Group and the Democracy Indexes by The Economist Intelligence Unit.

The most frequently explored aspects of the current policy changes include democratization in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc and changes in totalitarian countries in Latin America, Asia and parts of Africa, and more recently in Arab countries that have been affected by the so-called "Arab Spring" (e.g. in Egypt or Tunisia). This transition between successive political regimes is known in the academic world as transitology or transition theory.

The **transition process** itself begins with the initial and growing crises of the authoritarian regime, which bring some forms of political openness and greater respect for the fundamental rights of citizens, and consequently the formation of a government elected in free elections with identified guarantees of respect for democratic rights and freedoms. The second stage follows the creation of a new

democratic government and ends with the creation of a well-consolidated democratic regime that shows all the required characteristics. The theoretical discussion of these two stages is often illustrated by examples such as Spain, Egypt or countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

However, it is also necessary to address other problems encountered in the process of democratization by distinguishing the tasks of liberalization and democratization of societies. While liberalization in this process means easing oppression and expanding freedoms and moving towards democracy, it in turn brings a change in the whole political regime. In this context, it is crucial to deal with the institution of national elections during the transitional period, with a focus on shaping electoral competition rules, creating democratic elections, i.e. to address the state of the elections in the transitional period, as elections are considered a decisive factor in the democratic transition. However, the paradigm of hybrid regimes cannot be overlooked, as they deny elections as a key element in the transition to democracy (e.g. Fiji). For this reason, the theoretical approaches to the role of elections in the transitional process, which analyse selected electoral design models adapted to the new democracies, must also be explored when examining the challenges that these political regimes resist. The rationale behind these issues is that research on democratization processes is currently a systematic effort to analyse the transformation efforts of new democracies, including elections, and their impact on the democratic transition process.

The most common name for many of them is the designation “**hybrid regime**”, the **transitional regime** or their classification within the sub-category of **failing states**. The research assumption is that it is not possible to apply one classification to any of the world's region. We also argue that, in this respect too, it is necessary to examine each country on its own, albeit adhering to a common framework for their existence, i.e. a regional characteristics and pre-conditions. The world's smallest countries, many of which are located in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, represent an anomaly for experts dealing with democracy and democratization processes.

For its followers, democracy is a universal good whose instrumental virtues illustrate the achievement of a "democratic peace," among others. [Burnell, Schlumberger 2010] For critics, any interventions undermine state sovereignty to maintain such a political order. [Hameiri 2007] Taking these normative discussions, the argumentation is based on attempts to explain why some countries and regions are more likely to be non-democratic. On the one hand, some authors judge them stubborn and disproportionately democratic. [Anckar 2011; Srebrnik 2004; Levine 2009] On the other hand, as a group that does not respect the standard prerequisites for developing and sustaining democratic institutions and institutes - economic growth, educated middle class, social homogeneity, etc. [Przeworski et al. 2003; Diamond 1996]. And they address the need for modernization, which is needed for lasting democratic manifestations. [Veenendaal 2013]

3. NOT LOOSING THE DEMOCRACY

Transition is characterized by the fact that during its course a political game is not defined by rules. Therefore, a specific type of regime cannot be defined in the countries in transition, because it is a process that depends on the organization of actors and institutions and has far-reaching implications for the future organization of the state. A typical feature of the transition is the adjustment of the regime by the

authoritarian government itself (for whatever reason) to ensure more protected rights of individuals and groups, including elections and voting on new representatives. The holding of elections and the establishment of new legislative assemblies are generally considered the end of the transformation process. [Lindberg 2009]

The concept of Western democracy suggests some forms of political participation by citizens. In this context, people must be provided with decision-making procedures that are binding on all members of society. [Lindberg 2009] The choices, which are seen as a means of legitimacy, are presented in this context as a **stability factor**. One of the stability factors of any political regime is the people's loyalty to the regime, so unless members of society show support for ideas embodied in a democratic government, it is difficult to enforce any of the democratic principles. Based on these arguments, Lindberg has created three instrumental dimensions that are needed to implement any sovereign government that ensures the long-term stability of a democratic society. This is the idea of legitimacy (elites) associated with equal political participation under conditions of competition. [Lindberg 2009] As Lindberg explains, the role played by the elections here is critical, because if these dimensions are ensured in society, the recurring elections concern the legitimacy of voters and political elites, thus promoting the stability of the whole system. [Lindberg 2009] There are many cases in which the survival of democracy could be "explained" by the absence of any probable threat to a given democratic system. These cases could shed light on the general social and economic conditions in which democracy flourishes, but are unlikely to talk about factors that may repel the threat to a participatory government when it occurs. We are rather of opinion that we should pay particular attention to a smaller group of near missed democracies, i.e. countries in which democracy is exposed to social, political or economic forces that can catalyse backsliding, yet somehow overcomes those forces and regains its position. Focusing on "near misses" helps to identify institutional mechanisms or situational conditions that will contribute to the benefit of democracy in times of crisis. It allows us to identify those balancing social, institutional or political factors that increase the chances of a democracy under stress to survive. [Ginsburg, Huq 2018; Klučiarovský 2018: 110-114]

The authors rather agree that investigated cases of endangered democracies could clarify the general social and economic conditions in which these democracy thrives. Even in our opinion, it is much harder to anticipate factors that may pose a threat, and therefore it is necessary to pay attention to those countries in which democracy has been exposed to social, political or economic forces that can catalyse a departure from democracy and examine how the country has acquired back her democratic character. Therefore, focusing on these "near misses" helps to reveal some conditions effective for any democracy in times of crisis. Political science so „allows us to ascertain the countervailing social, institutional, or political factors that increase a democracy's chances of survival under stress.” [Ginsburg, Huq 2018: 17]

The process of transition and the form of government constantly evokes the question of defining the criteria of democracy. At this point, the research problem is starting to focus on systems that do not show precise criteria for democracy on their way to democracy. Due to the ambiguity in the definition of such a regime, this dichotomy can be referred to as a **hybrid regime** and is usually illustrated by examples in the mentioned Arab countries, in some Latin American or other transit countries with regard to the exact practical implications of power distribution or impact on system development.

Such regimes are not new in political theory, for example Robert A. Dahl called them "polyarchy-like regimes" in an attempt to name the existence of forms of government that may not be described as undemocratic, even though they are not yet true polyarchies, stating that in this regard, free and fair elections are the culmination of this process, not the beginning thereof. [Dahl 1992] In fact, unless and until other rights and freedoms are firmly protected, free and fair elections cannot be held. Except for countries that are already approaching democracy. It is therefore a grave mistake to assume that it is sufficient to convince the leaders of a non-democratic country to hold elections, and then complete democracy would follow. (1992)

Another term is a delegative democracy, used by O'Donnell and Schmitter in the so-called concept of 'precarious regimes' to indicate the existence of different types of regime that occur as a result of a partial, unfinished transition. [O'Donnell, Schmitter 1986]

The current discussions on the nature of hybrid regimes have been maintained in recent years, especially when examining democracy and democratization (due to turbulent developments in many cases outside Europe). So the development has also brought about studies and approaches that sought to see elections as a prerequisite, but not as the only condition for claiming that the regime was democratic, as Diamond confirms that

“Contemporary minimalist conceptions of democracy - what I term here electoral democracy, as opposed to liberal democracy - commonly acknowledge the need for minimal levels of civil freedoms in order for competition and participation to be meaningful. Typically, however, they do not devote much attention to the basic freedoms involved, nor do they attempt to incorporate them into actual measures of democracy”. [Diamond 1996: 21].

It follows from Sartori's theory of electoral democracy that democracy requires an autonomous public opinion supporting elections approved by the government that responds to public opinion. Options of choice and elections are an institutionalized process of recording public opinion. [Sartori 1993] Electoral democracy does not have some attributes of liberal democracy (such as a system of checks and balances, bureaucratic integrity, impartial judiciary), but the regime organizes free and fair elections, which are thus a crucial point for defining the boundary with electoral authoritarianism. [Schedler 1998] One such theoretician is Carothers who questions the fundamental premise of democratization efforts at the end of the 20th century by questioning the position of the elections in the democratization process and underlining the need for other factors that are necessary to be run as they have a particular impact on the success of the transition. [Carothers 2002]

According to Freedom House, a country must meet “certain minimum standards” to qualify as “electoral democracy”. Freedom House sets out the following four criteria: a) Competitive multilateral political system; b) Universal suffrage for all citizens; c) Regular elections conducted by secret ballot and in the absence of major fraud with voters; d) widespread public access of major political parties to voters through the media and through a generally open political campaigning. Based on the Freedom House, a conceptual and methodological framework thus defines that every liberal democracy is also an electoral democracy, but not every electoral democracy qualifies as a liberal democracy [Freedom House 2008].

As pointed out by Lührmann, Mechkova, Dahlum, et al. in their study entitled “State of the World 2017: Autocratization and Exclusion? Democratization”, the results of their research provided an evidence of a global trend of autocratization. Elections are

the most visible feature of democracy and, according to the authors, their position remains strong and even improves in some places. As noted in this study, autocratization mainly affects electoral aspects of democracy such as media freedom, freedom of expression and the rule of law „yet these in turn threaten to undermine the meaningfulness of elections. While the majority of the world’s population lives under democratic rule, 2.5 billion people were subjected to autocratization in 2017.“ [Lührmann, Mechkova, Dahlum 2018: 1]

The reason is that the essence of the hybrid regime lies in the presence of established democratic institutions, but the social and political elite is in the hands of a higher oligarchy, so that elites come to power in a democratic way, but their exercise is essentially authoritarian. Due to the culmination of power, these are mostly semi-presidential or presidential regimes with significant powers. Their policy usually deliberately excludes some parts of society from political life. The basic declared objective of the regime is political stability and resistance, and practical policy is dominated by concerns about economic efficiency. As Ratuva states, attempts to apply classical literature on political party taxonomy to the democracy-developing world are complex [Ratuva 2006]. The relevance of such research is also underlined by security experts, as such reverse democratic developments can be suppressed while more lasting changes take place, for example, if international actors anticipating the risk of reverse take action in time. At that time, it is possible that there will be no visible deterioration in the quality of democratic institutions. Such a case may be Solomon Islands, because the situation in that country required international military-police intervention, the RAMSI mission. The international community thus ranked the country among the failing states (the intervention took place also in Fiji, but it was a less extensive and complex mission). This mission has been classified as so-called state-building mission, i.e. mission to build democratic institutions in the country. Therefore, in the context of this study, the main concepts for understanding the security challenges of democratization, namely the hybrid regime and the failing states, can be cited in cases such as Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and others. The analysis of the current situation also requires to have a look at the past conflicts and the current security challenges of the democratization of these countries, as the reasons for the conflict are always multiple, ranging from socio-economic status to the individual ambitions of politicians or leaders of armed groups.

Referring to the characteristics of the hybrid regime in the framework of transition approaches, it should be noted that the hybrid regime is a regime that is located at the interface between democracy and authoritarianism, incorporating elements of both. Characteristics of hybrid regimes include low civic engagement, limited political pluralism, and poor accountability of politicians and political parties. The existence of hybrid regimes shows that democratization is rather a long-term process of gradual development. [Zinecker 2009] Hybrid regimes, sometimes called semi-authoritarian regimes, can become fully closed authoritarian regimes, evolve into full democracy, or remain hybrid. [Brownlee 2009]

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to draw the attention of contemporary political science to the fact that the study of democratic decline should not start and end with the cases where democracy has failed to return and totalitarianism has been established in the

country in various forms. Directing research solely in this direction (or only to successful transitions and consolidations) would be a serious methodological mistake, since such research would significantly limit or exclude the study of a wide range of variables of different strengths operating in different societies at different intensities. It is extremely important to examine the third group of countries, countries that have stabilized the democratic transition despite the crises. Thus, it is possible to derive constants and variables or causes of the whole process in a certain geopolitical space.

The importance of this research, to which political science should pay an increased attention nowadays, is that the crisis of confidence in liberal democracy and its effectiveness is currently being struggled (in varying intensities) by model and traditional democratic systems such as the United States or the United Kingdom. And the instruments that helped the failing countries to be directed back to democracy can help traditional democracies find the causal context of their democratic failure, and thus find their way of dealing with the crisis.

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