

**ROMANIA, BETWEEN TRANSITIONAL SOCIETY AND CONSOLIDATED
DEMOCRACY**

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Abstract: The fall of communism in East Europe gave birth to a complicated and multileveled transformation process. The evolution from the totalitarian order to a new democratic state architecture was marked by a set of pathologies such as: lack of political activism, deformed electoral mechanism, corruption, apparition of social exclusion groups. The main scope of the research is to identify the essential features of the Romanian transition mechanism and to highlight some structural factors that could threaten the equation of a consolidated democracy.

Keywords: *post-communism, political order, modernization, consolidated democracy, transitional society*

Introduction

The general crisis of the communist system at the beginning of the 90 has triggered a complex transformation process. The Eastern Europe landscape became the subject of a profound modification, mostly determined by a sudden clash of the previous political, social and economic scaffolding. The dissolution of former totalitarian structures and the development of new democratic institution were not two simultaneous phenomena and the transitional process often triggered dysfunctional features. In an unexpected manner, the general climate of the changing societies was depreciating, the transitional process becoming the source of structural and, very often, chronically pathologies. The passing from the communist authoritarian rule towards a democratic ensemble was exerting an adaptive pressure and the new born societies were constrained to support contradictory processes. The transitional phenomenon is also linked with the apparition of a “political gap”, which generated a deficit of governability¹. The crucial difference between the totalitarian rule and the transitional ensemble was located in the sphere of institutionalization of power². The dissolution of the communist internal structure and the retard in constructing new institutional equations pushed the transitional societies in a generalized crisis.

The process of reconstructing the political order inside the transitional society was also strongly influenced by the intervention of a subsidiary phenomenon. The democratization process experimented by former socialist states was doubled by a modernization movement. The communist model was promoting a fragmentary modernity and the evolution of the East European socialist countries was segregated by historical breakdown. The collapse of the communist order brings to light some influential cleavages, which previously were hidden by the institutional pressure of the totalitarian order. The resurrection of these internal breeches inside the transitional societies and the reactivation of other pre-modern cultural and ideological vectors, such as conservative nationalism, affected in a decisive way the

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political order in changing societies*, Yale University Press, London, 1973, p. 3.

² *Idem*, p. 5.

evolutions of transitional societies, and in many cases, postponed the installation of a consolidated democratic formula.

The paper intends to explore the key features of reconstruction of the political order inside the post communist regimes with a focus point on the Romanian case. The research is located in at the intersection of two main theoretical fields, combining the analytic frame of political philosophy with the evolutionary theories of historic analysis. The study evolves around two major work hypotheses. The first one claims that the democratization process was containing an implicit modernization phenomenon, while the second one signalizes the decisive influence of this aspect over the post totalitarian transformations. The presence of a dual process inside the transitional societies is generating a specific set of derivate consequences which could be correlated with an increasing vulnerability of the new political and social establishment. The research intends the explore the evolution of the transitional process in order to obtain some explanatory elements for the structural malfunctions that affect an extended spectrum of post communist societies, using the tools of comparative analysis and conceptual reconstruction. The Romanian case tends to prove its relevance not only by the specific virulence of its communist experience, but still trough the presence of multiple shades and contradictions inside its democratization process.

The modernity project as a communist legacy

The fall of communist rule and paradoxically, its emerging point, are strongly connected with the dynamic of modernization. Seen as a complex and multilevel phenomenon, modernization can be connected with a set of essential features, which tends to action in a correlative logic: urbanization, secularization, increasing literacy and growing political participation³. Despite the presence of an extended variety of argumentative axes, the modernization theories share a common ground. The fundamental premise of modernization theory is linked with the presence of a profound change inside two essential societal dimensions: the political organization and the economic structure⁴. The apparition of this two triggering vectors is responsible for the debut of a collection of subsidiary phenomena, which in the end conclude to the edification of new forms of social cohesion. The insertion of communist rule in Eastern Europe was produced in the presence of a favorable political, economical and structural environment. Communism was graft on a space strongly engraved by a traditionalist political and economical structure. At the begging of the 50, East Europe was confronting with acute economical and political cleavages, which stimulated deep social disparities. One key factor that influenced the structural misbalance of East European pre-communist states was the deepening breach between the urban space and the archaic peripheries of the rural sphere. The contradictions between the rural economy and the changing urban paradigm could be considered as an essential element in initiating a modernization movement. The presence of the communist paradigm deformed the modernization process, but still created the presuppositions for some important social and economical evolution.

³ Daniel Lerner, *The passing of traditional society*, Free Press, Virginia, 1958, p. 63.

⁴ Richard Sawka, The Soviet collapse: Contradictions and Neo-Modernization, *Journal for Eurasian Studies*, n. 4, 2013, p. 71.

At the beginning of the 60s, the theories about modernization were aiming to explain the evolutionary dynamic of new born democratic states, located in great majority of the cases in the Middle East. The evolutions of these changing societies towards a functional democratic model was envisioned in a simple, linear and ascending model. The general theory about modernization was not concentrating at that point in placing a diagnostic to the soviet democracy's model, which didn't disclose yet its whole negative effects. Given these considerations, the modernization was seen as an irreversible process, with unitary manifestations and with a well defined ending point. The gravitation centre of the modernization phenomena was connected with the process of rebuilding the political order⁵. The transition from former authoritarian regimes to democratic structure was accompanied by a set of malfunctions and contradictions, generated especially by the disparity between the political institutions and the new social vectors⁶. Despite the positive features such as increasing literacy or growing political participation, the modernization phenomenon was triggering also some contradictory evolutions.

Modernization was a syndrome of social change, connected with the decisive process of industrialization⁷. The industrialization was exerting a structural pressure over the former social and economical pattern, deepening the gap between the city and the rural dimension⁸. The migration of labor force to the city and the unequal restructuring of the social vectors were placing the rural area at the periphery of the changing society, pressing for an adaptive mutation. The apparition of new social groups with increasing level of political participation was not sustained by a similar institutional evolution. One of the key features of the changing societies was the crises of the political institutions in front of an accelerated growth of political participation. The masses entered into politics without a political culture and they solve the lack of institutional support through the tools of direct interactions with the leaders. The absence of an institutional filter in order to regulate the delegation of power stimulates in most of the cases the creation of a mass society.

The changing mechanism becomes thereby catalyst for social instability and even successive revolution⁹. The presence of a political gap determined simultaneously, by the cryptic survival of former social structures and by incomplete edification of new political institutions and social norms, can not be overpassed without the intervention of a new social organization. Otherwise, in the absence of an institutional frame, elites become accessible to masses, and also masses have the power to negotiate directly with new emerged elites.¹⁰ This elusion of the institutional mechanism created the starting conditions for a derived pathology of the changing societies, the praetorian state¹¹. This form of classical corrupt society has as an essential trait the dominance of isolated social group's interests, which directly prejudice the public good. The deficit of institutional frames and the presence of isolated social layers, especially inside the rural peripheries, increase the vulnerability of changing societies and

⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political order in changing societies*, Yale University Press, London, 1973, p. 8.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 9.

⁷ Ronald Inglehart, Cristian Welzer, *Development and Democracy, What we know about modernization today?*, *Foreign Affairs*, march, 2009, p. 2.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

could action as an aggravation factor in direction of a chronically malfunction. The resolution of those internal contradictions generated by the process of recreating the political order is strongly influenced by the problem of rural gap. The confirmation of a genuine and complete modernization cycle is the creation of a bridge between the rural social vectors and the urban sphere. The *Green Up Rising*¹² represents a political activations of the rural space, which succeeded in assuming the profound changes promoted by modernization. Through the activism of the rural space, the changing society regain its institutional coherence and rebalance its internal cleavages. The new political institutions, previously exclusively connected with the urban space become active in the rural space, and the industrialization process began to action in the field of traditional economy.

The essential characteristics of the modernization movement experienced after the Second World War were dependent by two central triggering vectors: the profound modification generated in the economic dimension by industrialization and the reconstruction of the former political order, through the mechanism of democratization. The consequences of these interdependent phenomena in the field of social and institutional were complex, but still could be recollected in a few key elements: apparition of new social vectors, broader political participation and aggravation of the centre-peripheries cleavage. At the beginning of the 60, the modernization theory was not challenged yet to offer any explanatory arguments for the non-specific model of East European communist regimes. The initial definition of the modernity which was including landmarks like industrialization, increasing literacy and urbanization apparently accredited the idea due to communism was functioning as a real modernization phenomenon. Nevertheless, communism developed a particular pattern of modernization that excluded from its equation the democratization quest. The evolution of East European space after the assertion of the communist rule was engraved by the presence of a fragmentary modernization process. The evolutionary and linear theories of modernization were pressed to adapt and to formulate a response for the communist experiment. From this point, the modernization process becomes a dual model that excluded the linear evolution. The multiplication and diversification of the images and typologies of changing societies had as a determination factor the insertion of the communist system, as a whole. The new configurations of modernity and their hybrid post-totalitarian evolution can be assumed and explain only taking in account the essential moment of modernity fragmentations.

The relations between economic modernization and political democratization was challenged¹³, given the fact that socialist democracies were authoritarian projects, with economies in an accelerate development. Still, the great picture of the socialist archipelago was hidden some provocative paradoxes. The industrialization project represented a core ideological commandment of the socialist sisterhood and determined essential transformations inside the traditionalist societies from Eastern Europe. The forced urbanization become a related image of the industrialization program, and generated an aggravation of previous breaches between the urban centers and the isolated rural paradigm. Under its deceitful unity

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 81.

¹³ Richard Sawka, The Soviet collapse: Contradictions and Neo-Modernization, *Journal for Eurasian Studies*, n. 4, 2013, p. 74.

and progressive claims, communism was changing the political order, but not in an authentic modern equation. The conservation of previous cultural and economical cleavages and the incapacity to bridge the gap between the urban and rural was divulging a pre-modern social structure. In the same time, the tremendous mobilization of new social vectors, created through the economical tool of industrialization, the increasing access to education and even the presence of a declarative emancipation of gender roles, were pleading in favor of a modern evolution.

This collection of paradoxes generated by the fragmentary modernity induced by communist regimes requires a broader analysis, in order to identify their influence over the transitional societies. It is important to assume, as a key work hypothesis, that the post-communist societies were not authentic modern ensembles¹⁴. Communist regimes did not modernize the East European space in a complete and stable pattern, and remained the promoters of a hybrid model of change. The failure of communist modernity project was determined by a set of complex elements, but the fundamental cause remains structural. The natural modernization process is essentially an evolutionary phenomenon, which implies the slow development of new institutional frames. The evolution from a progressive social and economic centre to a uniform modern society is producing in a gradual¹⁵ concentric model. The absorption of peripheries and their integration inside the new economic and social design is the sign for the installation of a genuine modern paradigm. The final inclusion of the edge economy could also be correlated with the process of rural emancipation, formerly invoked by the classical theories of modernization.

Nevertheless, communist project of modernity rejected the incremental change¹⁶ and instead choose to transform all the social landmarks. Through the destruction of former elites, the communist regimes implicitly dissolved all the social groups which could become real promoters of a modernization¹⁷. The deficit of elites transformed in most of the East European countries in a deficit of identity, and after the clash of the system, in a deficit of memory. The disparities of the progressive classes exerted a profound influence over the hybrid modernization process triggered by the communist states. The persecutions of intellectuals and the abolish of private property were in an essential manner an anti-modern manifestation, but the most influential measure remains the destructions of rural economic stratification. The violent and intrusive measures in the field of agriculture were deepening the urban – rural gap. Also, the communist project of modernization strike the rural economy in a dual perspective. Through the policies of forces urbanization and by the elimination of efficient rural actors, the agriculture become an “edge economy”, a secondary branch, subordinated to the industrialized city. The Green Up Rising was never triggered under the communism, and the constitutive factors of modernity were not fully reunited. Nonetheless, communist transformations brought some essential improvements for the rural space. The increasing access to education, medical services and the disappearance of subsistence economy were important steps, but those changes do not involve a genuine modernization

¹⁴ Richard Rose, *Understanding post-communist transformations: A Bottom Up Approach*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 19.

¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 19.

¹⁶ *Idem*, p. 19.

¹⁷ *Idem*, p. 19.

process. The elimination of efficient independent agriculture by persecutions and the assertion of the quotas system did not create the proper circumstances for a real rural evolution. Communist-style modernization was functioning, both politically and economically, but in a fragmentary matrix¹⁸. Despite the official positive result, communist economies remained traditional structures, hiding profound cleavages and contradictions. The exclusion of the rural space and the dominant policies of industrialization left a difficult to manage heritage. The transitional societies were lacking the compulsory coherence of the totalitarian state, and they are pressed to confront with structural malfunctions. The deficit of modernity created by the communist experience in Eastern Europe was disclosed after the official collapse, but its influence did not cease in the early years of transition. The essential disparities of the communist modernization were connected with two fundamental levels: the presences of and “edge economy”, strongly engraved by inefficiency and the lack of political expression of the new social vectors, generated by industrializations and urbanization. This dual deficit influenced in a decisive manner the evolution of post-communist societies. Communism experienced can be labeled as a modernization project which failed in reaching modernity¹⁹.

Following this argument, the transitional societies will be forced to deal with a fragmentary resurrection of modernity which will engage some influential result. The set of phenomena invoked below as subsidiary effects of the modernization process will be reactivated and they will become the essential landmarks in reconstructing the social and political order. Thus, the results of the neo-modernization²⁰ processes will be complex, and the social and political landscape of Eastern Europe will remain engraved by multiple shades and contradictions.

Exploring the transitional mechanism. The Romanian case.

The short inquiry sketch below showed the presence of a contradictory legacy of the communist era. The dual composition of the communist project, reuniting simultaneous modern elements and anti-modern paradigms, created a difficult political heritage in Eastern Europe. As a consequence, the transitional phenomenon is strongly dependent by a subjacent modernization process. Also, the interactions between this two essential levels, modernization and transitional processes, become responsible for the extend variety of evolutions inside the post-communist landscape. The fragmented modernity exerted a major influence over the transitional evolutions, and the post-totalitarian configurations were in great lines the result of this hidden deficit. The history of transition in Eastern Europe could be divided in two major branches: a category of light transition, marked by gradual evolutions and a category of complicated transitions, defined by multiple slippages and vulnerabilities.²¹ The separating line of those two levels of transitional experience is the generated also by the contours of the former communist legacy. One of the most provocative and interesting cases of complicated

¹⁸ Richard Rose, *Understanding post-communist transformations: A Bottom Up Approach*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 21.

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 22.

²⁰ Richard Sawka, The Soviet collapse: Contradictions and Neo-Modernization, *Journal for Eurasian Studies*, n. 4, 2013, p. 75.

²¹ Grzegorz Ekiert, Jan Kubik and Milada Anna Vachudova Democracy in the post-communist world: An Unending Quest, *East European Politics and Societies* 2007; 21; 7, p. 23.

transition is represented by the Romanian post-communist society. The lack of political and public consensus and the presence of contradictory social reactions, also stimulated by the reactivations of strong cultural vectors such as nationalism, transform the Romanian transitional society in a space dominated by strong economical and social cleavages.

The post-totalitarian evolutions were continuing, very often in a cryptic manner, the communist structural legacy. The transfer of power from the former communist elites to the new political power structures was dysfunctional, and the post-totalitarian society was reorganizing in new frames, old political groups²². The capacity of former communist elites to cease power in post-communist countries is determined by the specificity of their totalitarian experience²³. The case of Romanian transition remains paradigmatic through its violent mechanism of change. As it was already advocated before, the communism had in its constitutive paradigm, a deficit of modernity. These essential disparities become visible long time before the official breakdown of the system. The attempts of reformations triggered by Gorbachev doctrine at the beginning of the 80 aimed to balance those structural disparities and created the presuppositions of the future velvet revolutions. The history of modernity under communism was marked at this specific point by a new breach. The socialist countries which embraced the Gorbachev doctrine engaged themselves to a slow liberalization process, which culminated with the abolishing of the final ruins of communist bureaucratic structures, while the conservative communist states remained trapped in an anachronistic model. It is the very case of Romanian society, where the Ceausescu's regime refused the two key concepts of Gorbachev doctrine: *glasnost* and *perestroika*²⁴. Instead, Romanian communism remained the exponent of a hybrid project, combining nationalism with a personalized dictatorship²⁵. The resurrection of traditionalism in Romanian last two decades of communist generated essential effects over the modernization process. If in the case of progressionist states such as Poland or Yugoslavia, the modernization process began in the 80, for states of isolationist communism, like Romania, the modernization process started only at the beginning of the 90. This delayed project of modernity had two essential types of consequences. First class of effects is referring to the reissue of classical features of the modernization, while the second class is relegated to the hybridization of these phenomena.

The fragmented modernity which becomes the mark of the communist project as a whole had more acute accents in the Romanian case. The Romanian transitional society had a double deficit of modernity and was pressed to adapt in a short horizon of time. The Romanian pre-communist society was sharing an extremely traditional economic and political configuration, which was partially conserved through the totalitarian era. The emergence of a "third wave democracy"²⁶ was in this key an attempt to complete a modernization process. The lack of modernity before the communist stage and the low level of modernization under

²² Seymour Martin Lipset, The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited: 1993 Presidential Address, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Feb., 1994), pp. 1-22 P. 13.

²³ *Idem*, p. 14.

²⁴ The terms could be translated as "openness" and "restructuring". Brian McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika and the Soviet Media*, Routledge, London, 2006, p. 74.

²⁵ Klaus Müller, Andreas Pickel, *Varieties of Post communist nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Global Politics, Trent University, Peterborough, P. 6

²⁶ Samuel Huntington, *The third Wave. Democratization in the Late 20th century*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012, p. 297.

the communism reinforced inside the Romanian transitional society some influential trends. The second part of the research intends to isolate the main elements that contributed to the reconstruction of the political order of the Romanian transitional society and to identify the influence exert by the modernization process over the democratic finality of transition. The central hypothesis of the research is concerning the effects of the delayed modernity over the democratization process, and especially its influence over the consolidation of the political system. The study is grounded also by two derivate hypotheses. First one claims the existence of a deceitful evolution inside the Romanian transitional society which remained trapped in hybrid political and economical structures, while the second hypothesis is linked with the subject of general crises of modernity in the new context of globalization.

As already was concluded before, Romanian communism secluded its self from the liberalization and slow modernization movement inaugurated by the Gorbachev doctrine. Also, the presence of local dysfunctional background, with strong social and economical fractures, contributed to the conservation of some structural misbalances. At the end of Second World War Romania was a country dominated by an agrarian economy²⁷, with a certain delay in assuming the modernization that begun to change the European landscape. One of the major difficulties of the pre-totalitarian society was to manage the strong disparities appeared between the urban dimension and the archaically rural sphere. The cleavage between the center and the peripheries was a constant and the communist industrialization only aggravates this aspect. The presence of a radial configuration of modernity inside the transitional society was inherited from a pre-totalitarian stage. The rural sphere and its economic expression remain an excluded layer of the Romanian society, previous and after the communist experience. The clash of the system in the early 90 placed Romanian society in a structural dilemma. Lacking any alternative power landmarks, the former nomenclature found a favorable ground for confiscating the new institutional frames. Still, the evolution of transitional society remained one very similar with the one experimented the soviet block at the begging of the 80. Romanian political institutions were underdeveloped and the new coagulated social vectors become trough the elusion of the institutional formulas. Also the edge economy and the rural space did not recover their deficit of modernity in a genuine manner.

The emancipation of the rural sphere was dysfunctional and very often become the basis of electoral pathologies. The startling success of former communist elites was based by their capacity to develop parallel political structures and to negotiate directly with the masses. One of the main features of Romanian first stage of transition was the hybridization of the state. The partial reforms induce by the new political elites created the grounds for important social and political mutations²⁸, but essential components of the totalitarian state remained untouched. The hybridization of the state allowed some modernization trend to action, but most of the old cleavages remained frozen.

Romanian transitional society was exposed to malfunctions very similar with ones described by the modernization theories in the 60. The hybrid state and the uncompleted

²⁷ Keith Hitchins, *A Concise History of Romania*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 1.

²⁸ Grzegorz Ekiert, Jan Kubik and Milada Anna Vachudova Democracy in the post-communist world: An Unending Quest, *East European Politics and Societies* 2007; 21; 7, p. 26.

modernization manifest as promoting vectors for an inverted democratization. The violent expression of new social vectors and their seizure by the new political elites transformed Romanian transitional society in a instable environment. The communist legacy was still exerting an essential influence, especially trough the sphere of economic patterns. Romanian communism promoted as a central economic aim, the industrialization and eliminated from the economical priorities the light industry and the rural economy. The refusal of the *Gorbachev doctrine* only deepened those structural cleavages and eliminated any adaptive process of the communist economy. The presence of strong social layers with could not found a way to integrate inside the dysfunctional economical relations of transition gave birth to violent social confrontations. The miners' violent pressure exerted in the early days of Romanian democracy indicates the strong fractures between the social groups. The social vectors which was activated by the incomplete modernity of the transition, triggered important vulnerabilities.

The main consequences of the modernization process which accompanied the transitional mechanism were located in the sphere of political participation. The reconstruction of the political order was produced under non favorable auspices and the communist legacy continued to exert a major influence. An analyses over the participation trends and party choice in urban in rural areas, in the 1992 and 1996 disclose the presence of an acute breach. The incontestably winner of the first free election, the conservative faction of FSN, had its central voting basis in the rural area (35% rural voters and 19 % urban)²⁹. The elections of the 1996 showed a slow activation of the urban space, but the dominant voting trends were still strongly connected with the rural sphere (the first two parties electoral score, FSN and progresionist CDR, had a dominant rural expression, 34% and 26%). The persistence of an electoral gap inside Romanian transitional society avert about the structural paradoxes of the modernization process. New electoral categories become active, but without creating a common political culture. The electoral strong manifestation of the rural sphere was doubled by an economic involution. The rising political activism of Romanian rural dimension was not equivalent with the presence of an authentic movement such as *Green Up Rising*, invocated by modernization classical theory.

The Romanian transitional society remained engrave by a strong cleavage between the center and the peripheries. The source of this internal fracture has in the same time an economic ground. The economic structure of the peripheries was decimated at the end of the 80, trough the refusal of Gorbachev attempt of reformations. The central aim of *perestroika* was to create a balance between the hard industry, hypertrophic, and the neglected layers of light industry, agriculture and industry of consumption goods. The edge economy was abandoned by the transitional state which could no longer sustain those inefficient branches. At the beginning of the 90, the rural economy encountered a major breakdown, the level of official labor force dropping from 1 000 000 to les then 30%³⁰. Also, the grey economy had a worrisome escalation, occupying more then a quarter of the whole economic space. The

²⁹ Kay Lawson, Andrea Römmele, Georgi Karasimeonov, *Cleavages, Parties, and Voters: Studies from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999, p. 267.

³⁰ Ancuta Vamesu, Cristina Barna, *Romania Country Report*, European Commission, <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/socialinnovationeurope/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/romania%20country%20report%20for%20social%20innovation%20europe.pdf>

aggravation of the rural urban cleavage continued also in the medium period of Romanian transition. One of the key elements of rebuilding the institutional and political order was connected with the problem of multiple shades of modernity. After the central cleavages created in the relations of the urban sphere with the rural dimension, Romanian economy encountered a secondary breach. Inside the urban economy appeared also strong disparities, generated mostly by the general decline of light industry and by unequal state support for the dependent economic space.

The slow economic growth of transitional Romania was doubled by a dysfunctional evolution in the institutional frames. An analysis of the electoral participations in the secondary stages of transitions, between 2000 and 2007, the essential moment of entering inside the European project, shows the presence of some interesting recurrences. The activism of the rural sphere is constant, but remains tributary to a negative political culture. Studies demonstrate that even in the end cycle of the transitional experience, the electoral behavior of the rural sphere remains essential. The rural sphere continued to remain the central vector of constructing the majorities. The winning party in the 2000 and also in 2004, benefit from the crucial support of the rural voters and by a new emerged category, the semi-rural populations (voters placed at the peripheries of the urban space)³¹. The electoral behavior of the urban sphere remains fragmented and paradoxically, the spaces where modernity was already installed become less representative. In the same time, the evolution of the transitional economy remains engraved by a chronically disparity between the rural and the urban economic potential. The dynamics of democratization was apparently superior to that of economic reform, Nevertheless, the inverted relations between political participation and economic evolutions created the basis for strong structural pathologies. The vicious negotiations of votes and the lack of political culture pushed Romanian transitional society very close to the spectrum of a *praetorian state*.

The interactions between the political configurations of the transitional society and the economic evolution are complex and hard to subsume to one particular model. This short inquiry in the subject of Romanian transitional experience had as a central purpose to demonstrate the existence of a deficit of modernity, which affects the society in its entire structure. The presence of a complicated communist legacy and the lack of permeability of economic model in the late 80, pressed Romanian transitional society to manage a dual process: an accelerate modernization phenomenon and resurrection of a cultural and political traditionalism. The force exerted by the modernization process generated associated effects, with important consequences over the reconstruction of the political order. The most influential aspects of Romanian transitional modernization are linked to the emergence of new social vectors and by the aggravation of the centre – peripheries cleavage. The conservation of this social fracture also put in discussion the general hypothesis of finality of transitions. As it was demonstrated below, the relation between democratization and modernization is a multivalent one. The modernization of Romanian transitional society is concrete, but it generated severe losses in the field of democratic evolution.

The electoral vulnerabilities of the economic peripheries and the seizure of political institutions by the former communist elites were structural malfunctions that started to loose

³¹ Sten Berlung, *The handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013, p. 379.

in intensity in the last decades of transition. Still, the participation inside the European project did not solve the fundamental problem of Romanian transitional and post-transitional society. The presence of a chronically economic and political gap between the urban area and the rural space threaten the equation of economic consolidation. The definition of the consolidated forms of democratic ensembles has as a central argument the existence of a stabile balance between the social forces and the institutional frames, which exclude the reversibility to dictatorship or any other form of authoritarian rule³². The consolidation of democratic environment can occur only at the end of the transitional process, the later being defined by the presence of hybrid structures. In the Romanian case the end of transition is the result of a cultural and symbolic armistice, against a genuine transformation.

The interactions between the political configurations of the transitional society and the economic evolution are complex and hard to subsume to one particular model. This short inquiry in the subject of Romanian transitional experience intends to demonstrate the existence of a deficit of modernity, which affects the society in its entire structure. The presence of a complicated communist legacy and the lack of permeability of the economic model in the late 80, pressed Romanian transitional society to manage a dual process: an accelerate modernization phenomenon and resurrection of a cultural and political traditionalism. The force exerted by the modernization process generated associated effects, with important consequences in the reconstruction of the political order. The most influential aspects of Romanian transitional modernization are linked by the emergence of new social vectors and by the aggravation of the centre – peripheries cleavage. The conservation of this social fracture also put in discussion the general hypothesis of finality of transitions. As it was demonstrated below, the relation between democratization and modernization is a multivalent one. The modernization of Romanian transitional society is concrete, but it generated severe losses in the field of democratic evolution.

The electoral vulnerabilities of the economic peripheries and the seizure of political institutions by the former communist elites were structural malfunctions that started to loose in intensity in the last decades of transition. Still, the participation inside the European project did not solve the fundamental problem of Romanian transitional and post-transitional society. The presence of a chronically economic gap between the urban area and the rural space threaten the equation of democratic consolidation. The definition of the consolidated forms of democratic ensembles has as a central argument the existence of a stabile balance between the social forces and the institutional frames, which exclude the reversibility to dictatorship or any other form of authoritarian rule³³. The consolidation of democratic environment can occur only at the end of the transitional process, the later being defined by the presence of hybrid structures. In the Romanian case the end of transition is the result of a cultural and symbolic armistice, against a genuine transformation. The conservation of the pre-modern social cleavages excludes the hypothesis of an authentic consolidated democratic structure and also may raise questions about the future vulnerabilities in front of an authoritarian slippage. The presence of a concentric economical map, with dysfunctional peripheries, that

³² Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, JHU Press, 2011, p. 21.

³³ *Idem*, p. 21.

also determines certain electoral pathologies and malfunctions, can become the emerging point of an inverted evolution. The presence of modernity does not function anymore as a guarantee for democratization. The multiple shades that accompanied modernization in the last three decades constrain to multiple reconsiderations.

Nowadays, the existence of “multiple modernities” is creating new formulas and scenarios of evolution. Modernization can trigger paradoxically results, including the reversibility of the democratization processes³⁴. The consolidated forms of democracy were not only modernizes societies, they were in the same time ensembles with functional institutions, and benefiting from stabile economical and social balances. The evolution of Romanian transitional society towards a consolidated form of democracy is conditioned by the edifications of new social equilibriums and in decisive manner, by the over passing of its influential cleavages.

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