

UDC 316. 323. 73 (498 + 497. 2)

Asst.Prof.Dr. Mevludin IBISH***POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITION PROCESSES IN POLAND AND BULGARIA**

Abstract: After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, systematic political changes were happening in all communist societies. This moment, triggered new political developments, challenges, as well as democratic approaches through negotiations and new democratic political party organizations, in all Eastern European countries. The beginning of this post-communist political period (the transition period) it was introduced through ideas of democratization, rule of law, freedom of speech and economic developments for all societies that were captured previously by the concept of socialism and planned economy. The

concept of transition from communism and planned economy towards democracy and free market economy was expected to bring fast and visible changes through economic progress and freedoms but we have to admit that individual and political freedoms were not achieved with an immediate economic progress, as somebody would have assumed. Economic progress will be visible quite later due to the economic and political culture, human resources capacities related with low educational frames, corruption and state and institutional building capacities.

In this essay, I will try to elaborate the initial processes of democratization and political changes after the fall of communism in both countries of Poland and Bulgaria, while investigating the process of preparation via different civic activities, new political parties, negotiations for their future democratic institutions, elections and their political culture. This, will help us to show and reveal not only the democratic initiations in the both countries, but will capture the democratic initiatives triggered in all communist societies, of course through different actors and contexts.

The case of Poland

Trying to analyze the democratic processes in Poland after 1989, will immediately lead us towards two possible questions: Why the state of Poland remains a unique political and transitional case study? Which factors were involved

*International Balkan University / Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (mevludinibis@yahoo.com)

in the Polish transition process? In fact as Linz and Stepan conclude: “*In particular, we believe that Poland always had a significant de facto degree of social pluralism*”⁶⁵⁰. Actually, the social pluralism increased the ability of the civil society to resist the regime’s ideology and its political institutions. This helped to force a systematic mobilization from an ideological perspective and from my point of view this was not, the beginning of the anti-communist approach initiated from the civil society regime, but it was only an organized continuation from the past. Speaking about these democratic initiations in Poland obliges us to mention the key role of the Catholic Church as the most striking example and the role of Gomulka as a policy maker.

The Catholic Church always had a relative autonomy, and this created specific circumstances in the process of rejecting and challenging the totalitarian regime established in Poland. For example, in April 1950 the government agreed to allow religious education in public schools and not to interfere within the church press activities. In return, the church agreed to refrain from political activities and to restrain priests from active opposition.⁶⁵¹ This type of formal and informal agreements that the church in Poland was able to initiate and frame, speaks loudly that the Catholic Church in Poland played a unique political and social role and can be certainly distinguished in Eastern Europe.

Many times the regime in Poland tried to control the church in 1953-1956 but as an exception the cardinals were not sent on trials or jails, instead of that, they had had been under house arrest. From this point of view, a huge difference of state activity in this domain was applied in Hungary, Croatia and other regimes compared to the case of Poland. For example, in Albania, after 1969, no religious affiliation and institution was not allowed in the public and private space as well. As Joseph Rothchild summarizes, “The Polish Catholic Church than recouped its post-war material losses through its flock’s renewed fervor...social groups that had been indifferent or even anti-clerical gave trends”⁶⁵². An additional indicator of limited pluralism as opposed to monism was agriculture. Nationalization of agriculture by means of collectivization or cooperatives was soft-pedaled even by the Polish Stalinists in the late 1940s. Gomulka’s consistent rejection of forced collectivization was an essential component of his “Polish road to socialism”, which was branded heretical and then visionary by Moscow.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵⁰ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The John Hopkins University Press(1996) p,254-256

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p,256-261.

⁶⁵². Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The John Hopkins University Press(1996) p,260-261. quoted from Joseph Rothchild, *Return to Diversity* (New York:Oxford University Press,1989), 87

⁶⁵³ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The John Hopkins University Press(1996) p,257.

Another example is that the army did not fire upon the Poznan strikers in June 1956. Very often, the army played a key role in party struggles. Wiatr argues that in October 1956 when the USSR tried to blackmail the Polish leaders to slow down the process of de-Stalinization, the Polish military threw its support to the new Party leadership headed by Wladyslaw Gomulka, showing also its determination to resist Soviet intervention.⁶⁵⁴ This indicates that the communist regime in Poland had a big resistance from many sides and in particular from the civil society as a key player during this period.

Political changes in Poland

In the mid-1980s when the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and his *perestroika* policy revealed the political and economic crisis of the Communist system and the need for a new approach and changes, it was inescapably the introduce of reforms in the entire system. Therefore, in this kind of circumstances from all East European states Poland had the most favorable conditions for creating and surviving some opposition structures, created directly from the people. Although the Church had a permanent activity in this group of resistance but also we can partly include the role of the army after the political autonomy. Normally, during these new moments and structural changes in the civil society the Communist Party in Poland was well informed and well prepared, for any kind of situation. Despite this fact, the Communist party in the beginning was so sure in their own power and mechanisms. Hypothetically, we can assume that in the beginning there was no expectation for any kind of negotiations between the *Communist Party and the democratic opposition*.

The first Polish game between the Communist Party (officially, the Polish United Workers' Party, PZPR) and the Solidarity movement in 1980-1981 did not lead to a durable agreement outcome. The formal interaction between these two actors started after series of strikes at the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk, which spread and got involve over 150 thousand workers.⁶⁵⁵ Solidarity's power position in the economy and the polity was so strong that in August 1980 any claim of the party-state to be the sole representative of the people was not an acceptable outcome and this prepared the institutional-legal road, so that Solidarity will be the first independent trade union legally recognized in Poland.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁴ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The John Hopkins University Press(1996) p.260. quoted from Jerzy J.Wiatr, *Four Essays on East European Democratic Transformation* (Warsaw: Scholar Agency,1992), 62

⁶⁵⁵ Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Ed) *The Challenges over new Trends in Transitology* Social Science Monographs, Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York 2000, p.211

⁶⁵⁶ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The John Hopkins University Press(1996) p.262

The Polish government agreed that the future appointments in factories will be made based on qualification and not on party membership.⁶⁵⁷ In our opinion, this can be considered as commitment for new political and economic reforms that helped directly the political culture. As a result, when changes in the leadership of the Soviet Union and other factors induced the Polish Communists to abandon the merely repressive formula to remain in power, they overestimated their strength and promoted an agreement on political reforms, which finally cast them from power.

These half-truths and cases of misinformation were the main sources of the ‘Polish surprise’ in the spring of 1989.⁶⁵⁸

Round-Table negotiations and agreements in Poland

Several factors contributed to changing some key aspects of the interaction between the Party and the opposition. In the beginning, the Polish communist leaders had to find some new reforms in the economic sector because the economy was in bad shape. After this, few months later in May and again in August there were new outbreaks of labor strikes. Additionally the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev encouraged the Polish Communists to undertake a new process of economic and political reforms.

All of this induced a real preference change towards a moderate soft-line alignment on certain Communist leaders, including Jaruzelski himself. Jaruzelski began to suggest that the declaration of martial law in 1981 had been a ‘lesser evil’ to avoid a Soviet invasion, as if he had thought on promoting openness with anticipation.⁶⁵⁹

The first contact between the Communist Party and Solidarity as initiative for breaking to an agreement was held at the end of August 1988 between the Minister of the Interior, General Kiszczak, and the secretary of the Communist Central Committee, Stanislaw Ciosek, on one side, and the top Solidarity leader, Lech Walesa and the Bishop Jerzy Dobrowski, on the other side.

The process which led to formal negotiations between delegations of the two parties, really started with a meeting between Kiszczak and Walesa on January 25th, 1989.⁶⁶⁰ The best part in these agreements was not the initiation of new changes or proposals nor some economic reforms, but it is the moment when the opposition created important political circumstances and found legal positions for an agreement with the Communist Party.

The Round-Table negotiations between two parties led to some agreements, so we can summarize some of the compromises. On March 9th were presented their agreements and proposals in a document of more than two-hundred

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 262

⁶⁵⁸ Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Ed) *The Challenges over new Trends in Transitology* Social Science Monographs, Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York 2000, p.216-217.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 217

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 221

pages in length. The most important conclusions were, in the beginning to start the legalization of Solidarity and its parallel rural and students' organizations, with freedom of association and expression 'within the democratic constitutional order', some economic measures: and parliamentary semi-free election and non-competitive allocation of seats called for 4-18 June.

The parliamentary seats were allocated as follows: in the Sejm of 460 seats, a national list and a number of local seats were reserved for the Communists and their traditional allies, with a total of 65%, while the remaining 35% was reserved for the opposition: in the Senate (a chamber without legislative initiative), 100 local seats were open to competition. The Communists, at that time were so sure in their power that are going to win and to have at least 53% of two-chamber joint session, enough to elect Jeruzelski as President with strong powers.⁶⁶¹ However, after the elections, according to the results in the first round, Solidarity crashed the Communist Party. For the Communists this was not a pleasant political situation and this created a huge democratic opportunity and a great amazement for the old establishment.

The results after the elections were undreamed: The opposition candidates running for a minority number of seats got about 16.5 million votes, while the Communists-backed candidates to a majority number of seats got only about 9.1 million votes. At the Sejm, only 2 of 35 Communists on the national list and 3 Peasant candidates (Which mean only 5 of 299 reserved seats) got enough votes to win the seat in the first round, whereas 160 opposition candidates out of 161 reserved seats did. Also at the confrontational elections to the Senate, 99 out of 100 seats were won by Solidarity candidates and the other by an independent millionaire.⁶⁶² After all Jeruzelski was finally elected for President. The results breached the arrangement negotiated at the Round Table. However, we can say that this put Poland on the path toward new changes and political periods.

Political party developments in Poland

The Democratic Union was established in December 1990 by groups supporting the candidacy of Teudeusz Mazowiecki in the presidential election. These were: the Forum of the Democratic Right, Civic Movement-Democratic Action and Mazowiecki's Electoral Committees. Its leader was Mazowiecki and it was composed of three fractions identified as socio-liberal (left-oriented),

⁶⁶¹ For the agreements between Solidarity and the Communist Party see more in Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Ed) *The Challenges over new Trends in Transitology* Social Science Monographs, Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York 2000, p. 211-227, and Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan ,*Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The John Hopkins University Press(1996) p,264-269

⁶⁶² For the results, see more Tomas Kostelecky, *Political Parties after Communism. Development in East-Central Europe*, John's Hopkins UP, 2002, p.152-168; Gordon Wightman (Ed), *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: (Studies of Communism in Transition)*, University of Liverpool, England, 1995; and Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998, p.150-157.

democratic right (liberal-Christian) and Green. Many of the party members came from the intelligentsia and also had been members of Solidarity. The Union presented itself as a center force, pragmatic and not wedded to a single ideological view, aiming to maintain the separation of church from state.

The Democratic Left Alliance combined reformed elements of the previous communist establishment in an especially electoral alliance. Its core was the Social Democracy which was formed in 1990, after the dissolution of the PUP (the Polish United Workers' Party). Led by Aleksander Kwasniewski and Leszek Miller they had the main idea was to have political pluralism and parliamentary democracy and opposed the clericalization of social life. Often they included the youth movement, and cooperative and women's groups. In 1999, the Social Democracy was disbanded and the Democratic Alliance was registered as a political party in its own right, with Leszek Miller as its chairperson.

The Freedom Union (UW), founded in April 1994 by a merger of the Democratic Union with the Congress of Liberal Democrats (KLD), and continues to represent a political current that combines strong features of economic and political liberalism. The party Leader was Leszek Balcerowicz.

Catholic Election Action was mainly the face that the Christian National Union presented to the electorate. The party was formed in October 1989 by combining diverse Solidarity groups and elements of the independence movement. Led by Wieslaw Chrzanowski, the main idea was to build an independent democratic state founded on the principles of the Catholic faith. The party favored state intervention in the economy and as main interest for the party was the agriculture. This part led them to work in close with the Peasant Accord.

The Polish Peasant Party-Programme Alliance, led by Waldemar Pawlak, was formed by the union in May 1990 of the successor to the United Peasant Party of the communist period and its rival for the Peasant Party name, set up by representatives of the former *émigré* party. Their commitment was for regulated market economy and state intervention. The interest was to maintain the 'third way' between liberalism and collectivism.

The Confederation for Independent Poland founded in 1979. Its leader, Leszek Moczulski, had been imprisoned during the 1980s and displayed a sustained record of political dissidence. The party had a distinctive economic policy combating the effects of recession by strengthening the domestic market, raising income levels and increasing enterprise profitability.

The Civic Centre Accord was a slightly amended version of the Centre Accord and had been a major player for Walesa's placement to presidency and played an important role for the dissolution of Solidarity. The party identified itself as a Christian Democratic party and emphasized its origins in the Solidarity movement. As for the economic issues the party was for state intervention at the appropriate time, also this party engaged for speedy privatization of state assets and the 'de-communization' of the state.

The Congress of Liberal Democrats was a small group founded in Gdansk during 1990 the leader was Jan Krzysztof Bielecki. Its policy was dedicated for 'democratic capitalism' and the rule of law in particular was interested in the development of civic activity and the growth of a property-owning middle class. Even though the party was for the privatization processes but also was dedicated for the care of schools, universities the health service and social security funds.

The Peasant Movement-Peasant Accord represented the electoral coalition of two further peasant parties, The Polish Peasant Party 'Solidarity' and the Polish Peasant Party (Mikolajczyk), with the Solidarity Union of Individual Farmers it remained attached to the agrarian principles and Church-based social programme of the previous party and supported the idea of a modified market economy which assured the continuing development of family farming.

The Independent Self-Governing Trade Union 'Solidarity' was the famous trade union presenting itself in electoral context as a political and social movement.

The Polish Beer Lover's Party was founded in the autumn of 1990 by actor and television satirist Janusz Rewinski and had 10.000 members. Declared to be non-ideological, centrist grouping devoted to the principle of live and let live. It promoted beer and beer-drinking as a more civilized habit than indulgence in the national proclivity to vodka: 'Better to enter Europe slightly tipsy than stoned out of your mind'. The party increasingly became a vehicle for entrepreneurial interests and a broader social vision.

Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP) was registered in November 1995 by supporters of Jan Oszewski in his unsuccessful bid for the presidency in the election of that year.⁶⁶³

Parliamentary elections in Poland 91'

As we can see from 89's and during the 90's in Poland political groups and associations created a special background and started to be crucial players in the society. By April 1989 over 1200 associations of a general character had been registered in Warsaw and around 2000 were estimated to be operating at national level. New legislation that permitted registration of political parties only took effect in August 1990, though, and under its guidelines, 42 organizations had been

⁶⁶³ For the Party formation in Poland see more in Paul G. Lewis, *Political Parties in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, London and New York, Routledge 2000, p.164-170; Tomas Kostelecky, *Political Parties after Communism. Development in East-Central Europe*, John's Hopkins UP, 2002, p.139-141; Gordon Wightman (Ed), *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: (Studies of Communism in Transition)*, University of Liverpool, England, 1995, p.29-47.

registered by the end of January 1991.⁶⁶⁴ Later, according to institutional records, 103 parties could be identified.⁶⁶⁵

This can show us that in particular political parties and other organizations were spread so fast, so their number enlarged in few years. This is another fact for the people's involvement in the social, political and economic processes in Poland. It is very interesting and needs to be mentioned that during the elections in 1991 there was registered a *low turnout*. After the elections in Poland, the results were as the following: Democratic Left Alliance gained 60 parliamentary seats, only two behind the Democratic Union, which gained 62 seats. Seven other groups-Catholic Election Action, the nationalist Confederation for Independent Poland, Civic Centre Accord, the Congress of Liberal Democrats, Peasant Accord, the Solidarity trade union and the Polish Beer Lovers' Party-each of them obtained 16 or more parliamentary seats in the 460-place parliament (SEJM).

Table 1 Ten most successful parties in the October 1991 Polish elections⁶⁶⁶

Political Party	% of votes	No. of Seats	Effective Representation	% of Electorate	Party members
Democratic Union	2.31	62	13.48	5.02	15.000
Dem. Left Alliance	11.98	60	13.04	4.89	60.000
Catholic Elec. Act	8.73	49	10.87	3.66	5.000
Polish Peasant Party	8.67	48	10.87	3.76	150.000
Conf. Indep. Poland	7.50	46	11.09	3.62	20.000
Civic Centre Accord	8.71	44	9.57	3.55	40.000
Cong.of Liber. Dem.	7.48	37	8.04	3.05	3.100
Peasant Movement	5.46	28	6.09	2.23	28.000
Solidarity	5.05	27	5.87	2.06	2.000.000?
Polish Beer Lovers	3.27	16	3.48	1.33	10.000

Nevertheless, in 23 December 1991, Olszewski had succeeded to create the political cabinet by receiving the Sejm's endorsement (from which 60 voted against and 139 abstaining). Unfortunately in June 1992 the Olszewski government collapsed. After some political circumstances a new prime minister came in the Polish political scene. The prime minister was Hanna Suchocka from (the Democratic Union).

⁶⁶⁴ Gordon Wightman (Ed), *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: (Studies of Communism in Transition)*, University of Liverpool, England, 1995, p.32-47.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.40.

The case of Bulgaria

The Bulgarian political transition history is less rich than it is in other East European countries and we state this, having in mind the political history literature and the opinion of many scholars who had more chances to deepen in their transition studies. As in every communist society also in Bulgaria the opposition existed but the conditions for their existence in the beginning were equally to zero.

Deyan Kiuranov was the leader of Bulgaria's most influential opposition group, *Ecoglasnost*, founded in February 1989. Kiuranov argues that before 1988 there were some individuals acts of resistance but "unfortunately these truly heroic acts did not have any social effect at the time...we knew literally nothing about them when they were committed."⁶⁶⁷ However small support groups grew up in the country. These groups "were constantly arrested and harassed; they were effectively prevented from meeting organizationally, not speak of doing something together. In fact, the police forced them to revert to the tactics of the pre-group period: individual action. However, unlike previous "martyrs" they were heard (due to Radio Free Europe and B.B.C). This made all difference."⁶⁶⁸ During the Zhivkov's rule from (1954), the state of Bulgaria in every aspect was progressing very weakly. Actually, Zhivkov's rule was very systematic and any political activity different than the Communist party was deeply suffering. According to this, party reformists and dissident intellectuals were not the only ones to suffer under Zhivkov regime in the late 1980s.

Many ordinary citizens were suffering from the mismanagement of the economy, as evidenced by food shortages as early as the winter of 1987-8.⁶⁶⁹ Also in addition to this, we can say that the authorities were very aggressive against the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Because of this in May 1989, there were clashes between the Turks and the police. After this over, 250 Turks were deported.⁶⁷⁰ This encouraged large numbers of Bulgarian Turks (well over 300.000 by August 1989) to leave Bulgaria for Turkey.⁶⁷¹ One of the closest friends of Zhivkov was Petar Mladenov he was a politburo member and foreign minister. He started to get along from Zhivkov about his leader's handling of issues, including also the problem with the Turkish minority. After this, he resigned from the post foreign minister. After this and one week later after the huge demonstrations in Sofia Zhivkov was replaced by Mladenov.

In that climate, nine of the leading opposition groups (including *Ecoglasnost*) banded together in December 1989 to form an umbrella organization,

⁶⁶⁷ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The John Hopkins University Press (1996), p.335, quoted from Kiuranov, "Political Establishment of the Bulgarian Opposition," 7.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁶⁹ Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998; p.86

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.87.

the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). The (UDF) leader was Zhelyu Zhelev and he organized large rallies in many towns. Even though Mladenov was more liberal in his ruling, but they were still in the old path. Large numbers of Turks, for instance, joined the demonstrations, demanding the right to revert to their Islamic names (over 800.000 Turks had been forced to ‘Bulgarianize’ their names since 1984 as part of government’s assimilation programme) and to be allowed to practice their religion freely.⁶⁷²

Round-Table talks in Bulgaria

After this strange political atmosphere, the Politburo called for starting the Round-Table talks with the UDF. The Round-Table talks started in the middle of January 1990 and lasted until April. From all the talks, they agreed for the new free elections, which would be held during June 1990. For this, the UDF had doubts on their organizational ability, considering the time issue.

It is important to be noticed that in Bulgaria, it was not the opposition who started and called for talks as it was in Poland, actually the initiative came from the Communist Party. We can hypothetically assume that this act from the Communist Party was taken from many reasons, but the main one it could be framed while realizing that the time was against them, so as soon they change as better it is for their existence in the political scene. In addition to this, the transformational process from the Communist to Socialist Party happened and started to act (exist) as a new political player.

During this period, Bulgaria had many political changes and in relation to this, we can say that in the beginning interesting changes were made in the Bulgarian government. Georgi Atanasov and his team resigned at the beginning of February. The new prime- minister was Andrei Lukanov.⁶⁷³ However, this situation had been very peculiar because for the first time only ‘with pure communists’ he had announced the government and comprised only BCP members formed this government. Therefore, the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU) was not included. Another important historical fact that we mentioned before, is that the BCP renamed itself the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in early April.

Bulgarian parliamentary and presidential elections in June 1990 and January 1992

As a result, in the first parliamentary elections in Bulgaria the UDF won 36 per cent of the votes or 144 parliamentary seats. This was a very good performance despite of numerous tactical mistakes, poor organization and as we mentioned before short time available for the election campaign. The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) gained 47 per cent of the votes, or 211 seats from 400

⁶⁷² Ibid., p.88.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

possible, the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU) gained 8 per cent and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms 6 per cent. However, the opposition refused to join the government formed by Andrei Lukanov.

The opposition played an important role through key actions, which contributed for the replacement of the cabinet in December 1990 by a government of experts (actually a coalition government) headed by a non-party prime minister Dimitar Popov.⁶⁷⁴ In this kind of circumstances, the UDF had chances to influence the political processes in Bulgaria.

Table 2 Bulgarian parliamentary elections, June 1990

Groups	Votes	%
Union of Democrat.Forces	2.216.127	36.20
Bulgarian Socialist Party	2.886.363	47.15
Bulg. Agr. National Union	491.500	8.03
Movement of Rights Freed.	368.929	6.03
Turnout 91%		

The emergence of new political parties in Bulgaria

The Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) for the beginning of this party we have already mentioned briefly some information but it is very important to see what happened after the elections in 1990 with this group. Immediately there was a big differentiation within the UDF between radical wing which wanted total power as soon as possible and allowed no compromises with the Socialist Party and a moderate, centrist wing. So for the next elections ctober 1991 from the old (UDF) were formed four major formations: the UDF (Movement), the UDF (Centre), the UDF (Liberals) and BANU-Nikola Petrov.

BANU (United) was found from the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU), the former partner of the Communist Party they managed to take part of the oppositional BANU-Nikola Petkov and some émigré groups returning from outside Bulgaria formed the so-called BANU (United).

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms was formed from the Turkish ethnic minority.

There were also formed the monarchist parties, nationalistically-oriented parties, three new communist parties and two business parties. But these were very small parties without any electoral effect.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷⁴ For the election results see more in Gordon Wightman (Ed), Party Formation in East-Central Europe: (Studies of Communism in Transition), University of Liverpool, England, 1995, p.160-161, and Leslie Holmes, Post-Communism: An Introduction, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998; p.88.

⁶⁷⁵ Gordon Wightman (Ed), Party Formation in East-Central Europe: (Studies of Communism in Transition), University of Liverpool, England, 1995, p.162-166.

Table 3 Results from the Parliamentary elections, 13 October 1991

Party (coalition)	Votes	%	Seats
UDF (Movement)	1.903.567	34.36	110
Bulgarian Social.Par	1.836.050	33.14	106
Mov.Right.Freedom.	418.168	7.55	24
BANU (United)	214.052	3.86	–
BANU-Nikola Petrov	190.454	3.44	–
UDF (Centre)	177.295	3.20	–
UDF (Liberals)	155.902	2.81	–
King.of.Bulgaria.Confed.	100.883	1.82	–
Bulgarian Business.Bloc	73.379	1.32	–
Bulg.Nat.Rad.Party	62.462	1.13	–
Turnout 84% (5.540.837)			

In January 1992 were held the presidential elections in Bulgaria and there were three main actors: Zhelyu Zhelev he was supported by the UDF and the centrist parties and organizations, the second candidate was Velko Valkanov he was supported by the Socialists and the third candidate from the business bloc was George Ganchev. In the end for President of Bulgaria was elected the first candidate Zhelyu Zhelev with 53%.

Conclusion

The democratic and the post-communist transitional political processes in Poland and Bulgaria were developed via different political mechanisms and what makes this comparison very important, is the very fact, that it show the difference between both civil societies and gives a high mark for the Polish civil society preparation and its systematic support from the Catholic Church. Presumably, this shows the level of the political culture that was developed before the communist structures to be established in both cases and the development of the civil society and their political awareness.

The Polish civic culture was more durable and existential which led the Polish state to act differently and created a more positivist political environment for the creation and existence of opposition groups, movements, political parties and other associations.

The Bulgarian state pressure, defined a more strict ideological and controlled society, so that the fear led to a less developed civil culture. This did not stop the process of the opposition political parties' formation, but it developed a more controlled democratic progress, highly observed by the communists, which later transformed their party in the so-called Bulgarian Socialist Party.

This is a very small picture for the post-communist development in both countries, but I hope that will help the reader to grasp a bit for both countries

Copyright of Vizione is the property of Intellectual Association Democratic Club and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.