

# FEATURES AND MODELS OF SPANISH AND POLISH DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS: MODERN INTERPRETATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS FOR UKRAINE

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## **Abstract.**

The article analyses systematic, historical and comparative approaches to the preconditions, progress and positive results of democratic transitions in Spain and Poland and outlines the possibilities and recommendations for the Ukrainian community for creative utilizations of the experience and lessons of transitive practice in Spain and Poland. The starting points of these countries in the run-up to the transition to democracy, the causes and factors that led to peace, through negotiations and pacts, and the democratic transformation of Spanish and Polish societies, are examined. The reasons for Ukraine's systemic lagging behind in implementing a full-fledged systematic democratic transition are summarized and systematized in a comparative way.

**Key words:** *“The Third Wave” of Democratization, Democratic Transit, Moncloa Pacts, “Negotiation Revolution”, Ukraine.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Transition to democracy is the overarching trend of modern world processes. According to S. Huntington, Spain, Poland and Ukraine belong to the group of countries that in 1974-1975 started their “third wave” of global democratization, and that the democratic revolutions of the late 1980s - early 1990s in Eastern Europe, the collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia and the emergence of a number of new sovereign states on their territories are the end of this wave [Huntington, 13, 52, 179]. True, the question of the end of the “third wave” of democratization is under active discussion. Over a

quarter of a century, since the beginning of the “third wave” of democratization, the number of democracies in the world has increased, in fact, it has more than tripled. While in 1974 there were only 39 democratic countries in the world (27.5% of all the states), by the end of 2015, their number had increased to 125 (64%) [Radchenko, 2009].

The Spanish and Polish experiences of a peaceful and successful transition from authoritarian political systems to full-fledged democracies, in addition to unprecedented historical conditions, are, in our view, unique and of not only theoretical but also primarily practically applied interest to countries that are still in a state of democratic transition. This directly concerns Ukraine. Ukraine needs to use creatively the experience of transition in Spain, which is considered to be a textbook example, and its neighbour Poland, whose start-up transit opportunities have been compared to Ukrainian ones. The state of uncertainty, which currently characterises the Ukrainian society is interpreted by the Ukrainian scholars in various ways: some see it as a continuation of a prolonged, non-linear transition period, which so far has produced the hybrid regime with the prevalence of authoritarianism at some stages and of electoral democracy at others; some see it as the placement of a country into a so-called “grey zone”, whose representatives have vague perspectives for completion of transition to democracy; some see it as the establishment of a regime that meets the criteria of an electoral, defective, manipulative democracy; and some simply see it as some kind of authoritarianism [Kolodij, 2010].

On the background of the painful and contradictory nature of the process of forming the civil society and the implementation of post-communist institutional and liberal economic reforms, it is important for an independent and sovereign Ukraine to clarify and study, both theoretically and practically, the reasons and preconditions of Spain’s and Poland’s successful and effective democratic transit. Thus, the purpose of our scientific study is to compare the preconditions, course, reasons behind the successful results of democratic transition in Spain and Poland, whose experience and lessons can become a significant foundation for Ukraine in its implementation of constructive tasks of modern democratic state-building.

## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Foreign and Ukrainian historiography of democratic transitions, their peculiarities and models is quite wide. Among foreign, Spanish, Polish and Ukrainian scientists, the theoretical and applied research of these issues was carried out by D. Rastow, S. Huntington, L. Diamond, P. Schmitter, H. M. Maraval, R. Kotarelo, M. Kasiagli, A. Przeworski, A. Antoshevsky, E. Vetr, A. Romaniuk, V. Kobylnyk, A. Kolodiy, G. Zelenko, T. Silver, S. Vonsovich, O. Tkach, O. Radchenko, K. Nebrat, I. Zadorozhny and others. Ukrainian scientists are actively pursuing scientific theoretical and applied research of the issues of democratic transitions. First of all, they have made a significant contribution to the development of the theoretical aspects of this issue. Thus, O. Ro-

manyuk and A.Kolodiy specify a number of changes in the categorical and conceptual apparatus used in the context of democratic transitions: legitimacy of such terms as transit, transformation, transition; outline the methodological principles for developing transformational models; characterize the various tried and tested models of democratic transition (direct transition model, two-phase transition model, reverse development model); suggest the periodization (stages and stages) of democratic transformations in Ukraine, etc. [Romaniuk, 2006:35-49; Kolodij, 2010].

T. Byelska explored different concepts and approaches in the interpretation of the term “democratic transit”, understanding it as a temporary process, as a way of moving to a goal, as a route that does not exclude straight and smooth segments of the path, as well as patchy, winding, interrupted. The author emphasizes that the practice of “democratic transit” requires the establishment of a number of criteria, which can be attributed to reasons, duration, periodization, foreign policy aspect and results [Byelska, 2013: 78-83].

V. Kobylnyk devoted his research work to the peculiarities of starting positions of democratic transition in Ukraine and Poland. The scientist compared the conditions in socio-political and economic spheres of these two countries in the process of post-communist democratic transformation. As the starting points in his research V. Kobylnyk includes the level of public’s readiness for political, economic and ideological changes; the level of dependence of the old communist elite on the imperial centre; level of political and economic liberalism allowed by the communist regime during the last years of its existence; the size of the new elite and its political will to make a decisive transition to democracy; degree of social consolidation around the idea of transformation; development of civil society institutions; financial and economic situation of the country, etc. [Kobylnyk, 2010: 72-82].

I. Zadorozhnyi and O. Babkina studied the transformation processes in the political system of Poland in conditions of transition to democracy, the preconditions and risks of a transitional society [Zadorozhnyi, 2010: 74-178; Babkina, 2015: 3-11].

O. Bezruk and I. Denysenko analysed the theory and practice of democratic transition in the Ukrainian society, using the known theoretical constructs of democratic transformations presented in the Western scientific community (from D. Rastow to S. Huntington) doing that in the context studying the level of and prospects for further democratization in Ukraine. In this respect, scholars consider K. Offe and T. Kuzio’s model of democratic transformation to be the most expedient and promising one as it presupposes the establishment of political democracy; approval of principles and mechanisms of market economy functioning; formation of a national state and of a political nation [Bezruk, Denysenko, 2013:13-27].

Despite the considerable achievements of Ukrainian scientists in the field of studying the peculiarities and specifics of the Ukrainian democratic transition, finding out its shortcomings, miscalculations and causes of imperfection in comparison with Polish transitive practice, which were outlined as the purpose of our article, is not yet properly developed.

## **2. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH**

### **2.1. ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SPANISH DEMOCRATIC TRANSIT MODEL**

The Spanish version of the transition from Franco's authoritarian regime to a full-fledged parliamentary democracy that took place peacefully on the basis of a negotiated consensus between the leading political forces (the conclusion of the Moncloa Pacts) is considered to be a textbook one. This "new Spanish model" has become a dominant model of democratic transition in many countries of the world: from South America to Eastern Europe.

The question naturally arises, what contributed to the implementation of this classical model of transition by the Spanish society? First and foremost, the Francoist political system, which has made several fundamental transformational innovations that ensured Spain's peaceful and rapid transition to democracy, played a historic role in the implementation of this unique democratic transit. Firstly, the fact that the head of state F. Franco chose the monarchical form of government after his death was of historic importance for the future of Spain. A serious political struggle ensued around the post-Francoist state institutions. Passing the Law of Succession to the Headship of the State (July 6, 1947), the authoritarian Francoist regime resolved a number of problems: ending internal disputes and debates that had erupted in the Francoist political camp (between the Francoists and the opposition) around the issue of government after the death of *epy caudillo*; determined the time and order of the transition of power to the representative of the royal dynasty. Juan Carlos I, who was proclaimed King in November 1975, began his rule by turning the monarchy into an institution of reconciliation and a mediating force that exerted itself over all social conflicts [Marin et al., 2001:146-154; Preston, 2004:354-397].

Another factor that determined the uniqueness of Spanish democratic transit is the economic policy pursued by Franco. The activities of the Francoist state in the field of economy testify to the phenomenal economic and social changes in Spain during 1939-1975, its transformation into an industrialized country, raising the material well-being of the Spaniards to the Central European level and, most importantly, formation of the middle class, which became the pillar of democratic and political reforms of the Spanish state in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy [Payne, 1987:477-651; Marin, 2001:172-183].

Spanish democratic transition was aided by cultural and educational modernization implemented by the Francoist state. In the late Francoism, there were different spheres of public life, associations, public and professional organizations, opposition, and an atmosphere of political debate that were not controlled by the state. In the late 1970s, before the beginning of the democratic transit, many class, party and economic conflicts were resolved. Thus, in the depths of authoritarian Francoism, a civil society was formed, which made it possible to achieve reconciliation and unity of

the nation (except Basque Country).

Given the role and place of the military in the past history of Spain, Spanish caudillo largely disciplined and depoliticized military institutions, deprived the army of the right to corporate interference or to vote, insisted that Prince Juan Carlos acquired a military education, thus securing high authority of the future king in the military environment, subordination and apolitical nature of the soldiers during the transition to democracy (this determined the failure of the anti-state coup-de-tat (February 23, 1981) [Vilalonga, 2003:172, 175,181-210; Davydov, 2006:42].

The peculiarity of the Spanish democratic transition was that the Francoist laws and structures were gradually dismantled, they existed for some time parallel to the newly established democratic institutions, and the bureaucracy of his times was not persecuted. Democracy in Spain was introduced from above, legally and also with the participation of statesmen of the Francoist era.

The idea of signing a comprehensive treaty between all the major political forces (right and left), in which all important national problems of the transition period could be settled, was becoming more and more popular within the Spanish community. It came about as a result of the roundtable talks in Moncloa (Madrid government residence) and the signing of the Moncloa Pact in October 1977, which provided for mutual commitments and assurances from political forces to implement a range vitally important steps for the state. Signing of this Pact ensured social cohesion and an opportunity to overcome the crisis, demonstrated a high degree of responsibility of Spain's major political forces, their willingness to make a reasonable compromise in the name of their country's future. The Moncloa Pacts are the "testimony to the politics of co-operation and concession of major political parties, the intelligence and moderation revealed by F. Gonzalez (leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)), S. Carrillo (Communist Party of Spain (PCE)) and other opposition leaders." "The Moncloa Pacts are an example of pragmatism and a will to compromise on the part of political elites," that is how specialists in the field of Hispanic studies assessed this historic document of Spain [Powell, 1995:194-237, 238-266; Ivanytska, 2016:395-404].

The signing of the Moncloa Pacts, despite their palliative nature in the short term perspective, played a key role in overcoming the risks of the transition period, helped to avoid the collapse of the Spanish economy at a key stage of the transition to democracy, to create an atmosphere of "civilized coexistence" of the country's leading political forces, and subsequently, after adoption of the Constitution, to affirm Western-style parliamentary democracy. All in all, the Spanish democratic transition ended in an unprecedented time, in 1982, when PSOE led by F. Gonzalez won the parliamentary elections and formed a government that continued further democratization of the country.

## **2.2. ANALYSIS OF THE PECULIARITIES AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SUCCESS OF THE POLISH VARIANT OF TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY**

Democratic, anti-totalitarian revolution of 1989 in Poland was the first revolution of its kind in Central and Eastern Europe. Specifying the features and forms of similar revolutions of the late 1980s - early 1990s in this region, we note that they differ significantly in this characteristic. Thus, in Poland, as in Hungary, the transfer of power took place peacefully, in a civil way, without public shocks. They are sometimes called “negotiating revolutions”, “round-table revolutions” or “coming to power through the establishment of a pact”, when the reformist wing of Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR) agreed upon revolutionary changes through negotiations with the democratic opposition [Nebrat, 2016:34; Ivanytska, 2017:281-282, 306-308].

The communist regime on the territory of Ukraine, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, was marked by the extreme cruelty with which they destroyed everything Ukrainian and by total imposition of communist ideology. Instead, a number of factors in Poland became fundamental to the victory of the peaceful (negotiation) model of the democratic transit. First of all, Soviet socialism with communist ideology was introduced to Poland from outside and was not accepted by a large part of the Polish society. This was reflected in numerous crises, mass anti-government protests in 1956, 1968-early 1970s, the 1980s. The mass protest movement of the Poles forced Moscow to allow the Polish government to pursue more liberal policies in various spheres of public life, especially in economy, science and culture. The Polish society, under the control of the USSR, retained many pre-communist institutions and traditions, in particular, the Moscow-based collectivization collapsed in the Polish village and the Polish independent peasantry became a powerful private-owned sector.

The moderate liberal PZPR policies contributed to the creation and effective functioning of the open democratic political opposition and other civil society institutions in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which were powerful enough to lead the country’s reform process during the democratic transit. In fact, the emergence and activity of new opposition political forces in Poland was the beginning of democratic transformations. However, in Ukraine any attempts to structure and organize political opposition were immediately suppressed and severely punished.

An important role in initiating democratic transit is played by the national political elite. Even within the Polish ruling elite, a powerful group of reformers was formed, who challenged the communist ideology and practice of socialist construction, and who, along with the political opposition, would take the lead in building up the parliamentary democracy. In 1995, Polish opposition forces gained full power as a result of parliamentary elections. In Ukraine, the “new” political opposition was small in number and under-supported by the community. Therefore, the democratization of the country was headed by the old communist-party nomenclature, which did not seek any socio-political or economic changes [Kobylnyk, 2010:72-82; Antoszewski, 2002].

## CONCLUSION

A concise comparative analysis of the preconditions, progress and results of the Spanish, Polish and Ukrainian democratic transitions allows us to draw the following parallels and conclusions, and to note their peculiarities in the transition process:

1. Spain made the transition to a democratic society from an authoritarian political system of stabilization and reformation; Poland had a hybrid, authoritarian-totalitarian system; Ukraine had a Soviet-socialist, totalitarian system;
2. During the years of late Francoism, a market economy and an influential middle class were formed in Spain which both served as a stabilizing basis for democratic transformation; mostly similar innovations occurred in Poland; as for Ukraine, at the time of transition it had a planned, controlled, state economy and deformed structures of the post-Soviet society;
3. Spain, after the death of the Head of State, Caudillo F. Franco, carried out only political modernization. Even under the communist regime, Poland did not lose its independence, and transition to democracy was not combined with issues of state formation; in Ukraine, in the absence of a state ideology or civil society institutions, the need for a radical transformation of both the foundation and the superstructure arose; Ukrainian democratic transition has been combined with the need to build an independent statehood;
4. Political changes, which occurred in Spain and Poland, were in conditions of a consensus (Moncloa Pacts, Roundtable), of joint decisions between the reformist wing of the Francoist regime and the main political forces of the democratic opposition, between the PZPR and Solidarity and other opposition movements. In Ukraine, in the absence of a well-formed and structured democratic opposition, the old communist-party nomenclature, which was not replaced by the new democratic political elite, continued to occupy leading positions in the state; the Spanish only amended the national aspects of their own self-identification, strengthened by Francoism; Poland was characterised by a strong national identity; the Ukrainians are forced to rebuild their national spirit and self-identification that were ruined by the Soviet Anti-Ukrainian policy;
5. In Spain and Poland, there were authoritative national leaders capable of making non-standard decisions: King Juan Carlos I, Adolfo Suarez, Santiago Carrillo, Felipe Gonzalez; in Poland - Lech Walesa, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Adam Michnik; there were no such leaders in Ukraine;
6. An important role in the success of democratization was played by the religious factor: Catholic countries, including Spain, Poland, were close in mentality to the Western social model, while this was not in line with the mentality of Eastern Orthodox civilizations, to which Ukraine belongs to;
7. The Spanish nation was already an integral part of a united Europe during the liberalization of the Franco regime; the Polish nation was at its doorstep; the Ukrainian nation is only now returning after long isolation to the European world.

Summarizing the above, let us turn our attention to the existing gaps in the comparative studies of democratic transitions in the Ukrainian political science: there is an urgent need for a broader, more comprehensive, analysis of the world practice of democratic transitions, to clarify different interpretations of their models, stages and conceptual foundations for the study of the transition to democracy, the identification of development scenarios; development of theoretical and practical recommendations and improvements to the methods of comparative research in political science in accordance with the standards of modern worldview.

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