

# Transition, Consolidation and Defective Democracies in the Balkans

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After the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, political scientists started to research newly established political systems in the region. In Greece, democracy was re-introduced in 1974, but post-communist countries faced the problems of democratisation from 1989–1990 on. Some countries became democracies relatively quickly, though not without problems (e.g. Slovenia), while authoritarian tendencies appeared in other countries (e.g. Croatia and Yugoslavia in the 1990s). This short chapter is not aimed at giving a full and comprehensive picture about the last 30 years but rather providing a framework to this book. In this sense, it is rather a literature review on transition paradigm, consolidation and defective democracies. The purpose of this paper is to help the understanding of the politics and the processes of Balkan countries detailed in the following chapters.

## A Brief Introduction to Transitology

Nowadays, it is common knowledge that all the countries in the Balkans took part in the third democratic wave started in 1974,<sup>1</sup> and they became democracies. In political science, however, the term ‘democracy’ is not as simple as it looks. Scholars developed numerous definitions of democracy, and it is a question of taste, which of these definitions is used in a research. This chapter does not aim at choosing one definition – it is almost impossible to find the perfect concept of democracy. Nevertheless, depending on the criteria of democracy, the number of countries belonging to this group can vary. On the one hand, Schumpeter (1942) argues that democracy is only a procedure where there is “free competition for a free vote”.<sup>2</sup> This approach means that fair election is a sufficient condition of democracy. In the Balkans, however, OSCE reports sometimes draw our attention to vote buying, allegations of electoral irregularities, even frauds, etc. Nevertheless, these events do not really influence the results of the elections, so most countries fulfil this minimalist criterion of democracy.

On the other hand, there are concepts, e.g. Dahl’s polyarchy,<sup>3</sup> which contain substantive elements (e.g. constitutional guarantees, participation). These definitions highlight very well the difficulties of creating a proper definition of democracy. In most countries, corruption

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<sup>1</sup> HUNTINGTON 1991.

<sup>2</sup> SCHUMPETER 1942, 271.

<sup>3</sup> DAHL 1971.

emerged as a huge problem, and there are worrying trends in relation to the rule of law, and in some countries minority rights have not yet been fully ensured. As the chapters show, procedural democracy exists in every examined country, but there are some insufficiencies in terms of substantive elements. Thus, it is necessary to review the literature on democratic transition and consolidation.

Dankwart Rustow is considered the father of transitology. According to his model of transition, democratisation has three stages: prolonged and inconclusive struggle, a decision phase and the habituation phase.<sup>4</sup> In the first period, a crisis of the system unfolds. The deepening of this crisis results in the second stage, when usually members of the political elite have to agree on the transition with the opposition forces. In the last phase, the rules of democracy are spread and become a habit. This book focuses on the third phase, namely, the consolidation of democracy, and draws attention to the successes and failures of this process.

Early works, e.g. one of the most important articles on democratic transition,<sup>5</sup> however, almost ignored the role of international political environment in regime changes. It is not surprising as the books concentrate on transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe. However, international politics played a significant role in regime changes in the post-communist bloc, particularly in the Balkans in the 1990s and early 2000s. Admittedly, the most important event was the crisis and later the collapse of the Soviet Union, which allowed the peaceful democratic transition in most countries. Later, Western countries were important players in the pacification of the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and in the democratisation of some countries of the region.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia led to civil war/independence war in which three successor states – Yugoslavia (made up by Serbia and Montenegro), Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina – were taking part for years. This war did not help in establishing democratic regimes in these countries, even though, some kinds of multi-party systems were founded. Other constituent parts of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, namely Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), gained their independence relatively easily. Following the end of the war, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina became independent states, though in the latter one, the formal and informal influence of the Western powers, mainly the European Union, has remained strong. Moreover, the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 helped overthrow the regime of Slobodan Milošević, and transform the country into a more democratic system. In parallel, after the death of Franjo Tuđman in Croatia, opposition parties won both the presidential and the parliamentary elections, and they established a parliamentary system. These events made the consolidation of democracy possible in these countries. The youngest countries in the peninsula became independent after the changes in Yugoslavia: Montenegro left the State Union in 2006, while Kosovo declared her independence in 2008, though it has not been recognised by many countries, e.g. Serbia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Greece from the Balkans.

As far as the literature on the democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe is concerned, one of the first and most important theories was elaborated by Offe (1991). Offe suggests that scholars and decision-makers have to deal not only with democratisation and

<sup>4</sup> RUSTOW 1970, 337–363.

<sup>5</sup> O'DONNELL et al. 1986.

economic liberalisation, but also with the question of stateness and state-building<sup>6</sup> which were ignored by O'Donnell et al. (1986). It was important due to the fact that post-communist countries inherited weak institutions. In some cases, the new independent states needed to establish an almost totally new political system. The most well-known case is probably Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her political system was founded by the Dayton Agreement in 1995. Nonetheless, the creation of an effective federal government is not a success story due to ethnic and/or religious tensions. On the other hand, lower levels of the state, mostly the two entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Serb Republic (*Republika Srpska*) – enjoy large autonomy, and this combined with the pressure from the European Union can keep the entities together.

Kuzio (2001) adds another important point of view which has emerged in the region, namely, the separation of stateness and nationhood.<sup>7</sup> This distinction has been clearly relevant in the Balkans. Multi-ethnic societies (e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and relevant national minorities (e.g. Albanians in FYROM, Turks in Bulgaria, Hungarians in Romania and Serbia) resulted in a lot of conflicts among political actors. Several governments in most countries of the regions tried to establish a nation state and sought for ethnic homogeneity. Nowadays, far-right nationalist parties still propagate the idea of a homogeneous nation state, and the problems of ethnic minorities have not yet been solved in every country.

The transformation of old institutions and building new ones, as well as the handling of ethnic diversity did not take place without disagreements, and some politicians sometimes danced on the edge of rules. This led us to the next question: Have democracies in the Balkans been already consolidated?

## What Is a Consolidated Democracy?

The political changes in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s resulted in a new way of research. Scholars started to concentrate on the results of the transition process instead of the process itself, namely, whether democracy survives in these countries, and if it does, for how long it will. During the 1990s, a new question was put into the limelight which focused on the consolidation of the established systems. The simplest definition of consolidated democracy was elaborated by Adam Przeworski: democracy “becomes the only game in town”.<sup>8</sup> It very well highlights the most important feature of a consolidated democracy, namely, that no one among the most important political actors questions democracy as a framework of the political competition. Following the Millennium, most parties and politicians accepted the democratic rules in their countries, and now, only a limited number wants to overthrow democracy. The economic crisis broken out in 2008 shook the developed countries, and anti-system parties appeared or became stronger, even in Greece where both the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the far-right Golden Dawn challenge some values of democracy and capitalism, so in this sense, the consolidation of democracy has not yet been finished.

<sup>6</sup> OFFE 1991, 865–892.

<sup>7</sup> KUZIO 2001, 168–177.

<sup>8</sup> PRZEWORSKI 1991, 26.

A bit more complicated, though a still very simple concept was developed by Huntington. According to his two-turnover test, democracy can be considered a consolidated one if there have been at least two peaceful democratic changes in a government.<sup>9</sup> This approach can be easily measured. For example, in Greece the first New Democracy-led governments were followed by socialist cabinets led by Papandreou between 1981 and 1989. Papandreou was replaced by Tsannetakis in 1989. These changes in the executive branch show that Greece is a consolidated democracy. These two very plain definitions and their different results underline the fact that establishing a proper concept of consolidation, if it is possible at all, needs further efforts.

Some more complex concepts of consolidated democracy were born during the 1990s. Linz and Stepan (1996), for instance, state that five conditions are needed to achieve a consolidated democracy.<sup>10</sup> These conditions have to exist in five arenas of democracy. According to Linz and Stepan, a strong civil society (1<sup>st</sup> arena) is the basis of a consolidated democracy because political society (2<sup>nd</sup> arena) has to be legitimised by the first arena. The political society and the state apparatus (4<sup>th</sup> arena) respect the rule of law (3<sup>rd</sup> arena) which originates in the civil society. The state apparatus gets a normative support from the civil society and a financial one from the political society. This latter is a result of a well-functioning economic society (5<sup>th</sup> arena) which creates the financial background via taxation.<sup>11</sup> This ideal type of a consolidated democracy, however, cannot be achieved easily.

In the Balkans, it is almost impossible due to the lack of a strong civil society because communist regimes suppressed them almost totally. As a result, civil societies in post-communist countries are not really able to play the role of a strong controlling mechanism. Moreover, the rule of law, and basically the proper functioning of the state apparatus were also undermined by the high level of corruption. Corruption and tax avoidance are also huge problems in economy.

Another approach was carried out by Larry Diamond at the end of that decade. Diamond argues that consolidation has to be examined at three levels along two dimensions.<sup>12</sup> At the level of the elite, the most important actors of public life and mainly the political leaders consider democracy the best political system, and the institutional framework is also supported by them. They “respect each other’s right to compete peacefully for power”.<sup>13</sup> All the relevant political organisations (e.g. parties, trade unions etc.) also support democracy and its institutional framework. It means that there is no significant group which wants to dismantle democracy and to use antidemocratic methods (e.g. coups). Finally, there is a level of mass public, where at least 70% believes in democracy and prefer it to other kinds of systems, while a maximum of 15% wants to replace it with an authoritarian regime. As a consequence, antidemocratic movements do not have a high level of support among the voters.<sup>14</sup>

As the chapters of this book show, most countries fulfil these criteria because the most important political players do not question democracy.<sup>15</sup> Although there have been several backlashes which have not necessarily strengthened democracy. In Greece, the Golden Dawn

<sup>9</sup> HUNTINGTON 1991, 266–267.

<sup>10</sup> LINZ–STEPAN 1996.

<sup>11</sup> LINZ–STEPAN 1996, 14.

<sup>12</sup> DIAMOND 1999.

<sup>13</sup> DIAMOND 1999, 66.

<sup>14</sup> DIAMOND 1999, 66–69.

<sup>15</sup> KRASTEV 2002, 39–53.

entered the Parliament in 2012, while the Communist Party of Greece has been present in the legislature since the fall of the military junta in 1974. Both parties question the basis of the current socio-economic system of the country. In Serbia, one of the strongest parties (Serbian Radical Party) opposed the whole system after 2000 until its split in 2008. It also means that the Serbian democracy made steps towards consolidation, as the new party (Serbian Progressive Party) has been in government since 2012 and seems to be committed to the European integration. In Macedonia, the opposition did not recognise the results of the elections and boycotted the Parliament.

Thus, Diamond (1999) finds the democratic deepening, the political institutionalisation, and the regime performance necessary. Deepening means that the existing formal structures have to be made more democratic (i.e. inclusive). Political institutionalisation refers to the process of channelling of various interests into politics through parties and interest organisations. It is important, as it causes stable support not only for the system but also for the parties. And finally, regime performance implies that the state “must produce sufficiently positive policy outcomes to build broad political legitimacy”.<sup>16</sup> Insufficiencies can be found in every country to some extent, such as the functioning of the federal level in Bosnia and Herzegovina, level of corruption in most countries or minority rights in some of them.

Another important concept was elaborated by Plasser, Ulram and Waldrauch (1998). They define consolidation as a competition for political positions in competitive, free and fair elections, where social pluralism is not limited by the state, and there is separation of powers and the system of checks and balances exists.<sup>17</sup> Ulram and Plasser (2001) later draw attention to other factors. They argue that along the institutional conditions, basic human rights and the rule of law are equally vital parts of a consolidated democracy.<sup>18</sup> It is another ideal type of consolidated democracy, and most of its features has already been analysed, however, it reflects another important part, namely, the separation of powers. Constitutions of the examined countries mostly guarantee the mutual independence of the executive branch, legislature and judiciary. However, political actors have attempted to influence or even control the judicial branch in various countries of the region several times, and have tried to use it as a political tool. Thus, a stronger executive and/or legislative branch can be usually observed in these countries, which phenomenon leads to the question of defective democracies.

But before turning to defective democracies, it is important to have a closer look at measuring consolidation. Dawisha suggests four tests:<sup>19</sup>

1. two-turnover test
2. low public support for anti-system parties
3. high commitment to democratic values
4. elite consensus about democratic norms

As it can be seen, Huntington's two-turnover test<sup>20</sup> is the first one, but it has already been detailed above. Dawisha also thinks that low public support for anti-system parties is a good indicator of a consolidated democracy. This is at least questionable due to the fact that Italy

<sup>16</sup> DIAMOND 1999, 76.

<sup>17</sup> PLASSER et al. 1998.

<sup>18</sup> ULRAM–PLASSER 2001, 115–137.

<sup>19</sup> DAWISHA 1997, 40–65.

<sup>20</sup> HUNTINGTON 1991, 266–267.

has been a consolidated democracy with the presence of a strong communist party and a small post-fascist party. On the other hand, anti-system parties are irrelevant in Albania which is not considered a consolidated democracy. The third and fourth points highlight the fact that democracy cannot work properly without the voters' approval and the supportive behaviour of politicians. The attitudes of voters towards democracy can be easily measured by opinion polls, and politicians' actions can also be observed. In the Balkans, both the most important politicians and the citizens support democracy as a desirable political system, however, voters are quite disappointed with the existing form of democracy in their countries.<sup>21</sup>

To sum up, most scholars agree that consolidation is not as simple as it seems at first sight. It contains not only democratic institutions but other important elements, such as the rule of law, commitment to democracy, strong civil society etc. Hence, consolidation has not ended yet in the Balkans due to some insufficiencies. Consolidation, on the other hand, has also been criticised by numerous authors. O'Donnell (1996) argues that consolidation is not a teleological process as it was considered by many scholars because some countries have been unconsolidated for 20 years, which shows that this teleological thinking does not work in every case.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas Carothers (2002) criticises the whole transition paradigm.<sup>23</sup> He criticises five assumptions of this paradigm. The first one is that every country which is on her way from a tyrannical rule can be considered a transitional country. Secondly, he mostly reinstates Rustow's stages: opening, breakthrough and consolidation. Carothers states that the path of democratisation is not straightforward as countries in transition can remain in one stage or even go backwards. Thirdly, he also draws attention to the role of elections. As he argues, lots of authors overestimated the importance of elections in these countries because "political participation beyond voting remains shallow and governmental accountability is weak".<sup>24</sup> The fourth assumption what he criticises is that conditions or rather the environment of the transition are not among the most important factors in the outcome of the transition process. Finally, he does not accept the assumption that the third-wave democratic transitions were carried out in functioning states. Thus, Carothers suggests to abandon this paradigm, as it was a product of the early 1990s, i.e. of the third wave of democratisation, but by 2000, things changed.

Transitions in the Balkans can easily reinforce the criticism made by Carothers. Yugoslavia and Croatia moved away from the communist rule in the early 1990s, however, the newly established systems can hardly be considered liberal democracies. As Krastev (2002) points out, societies (e.g. societies of the former Yugoslavia) prefer self-determination to democratisation.<sup>25</sup> These two cases also help reject the second and third assumptions. It is therefore more important to examine the fourth and the fifth one. Transitions in the Balkans clearly highlight the fact that underlying conditions play an important role in the nature of transition. The process not only differed in Romania, Bulgaria or in the former Yugoslavia: big differences can be observed among the transitions of the former members of Yugoslavia

<sup>21</sup> KRASTEV 2002, 39.

<sup>22</sup> O'DONNELL 1996, 34–51.

<sup>23</sup> CAROTHERS 2002, 5–21.

<sup>24</sup> CAROTHERS 2002, 15.

<sup>25</sup> KRASTEV 2002, 43.

(e.g. Slovenia and Croatia). Moreover, and it is related to the fifth criticism, democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not established on a well-functioning state.

Carothers' article became extremely relevant. Diamond, Fukuyama, Horowitz and Plattner also acknowledged its importance in a debate on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the changes of 1989.<sup>26</sup> Horowitz emphasises that small differences between countries can be exceptionally important, hence, scholars and democracy activists should not follow 'standard formulas'. Diamond agrees and, in addition, he points out that civil society needs to be helped on after the transition because the process can be turned back.

Another point of view has appeared in recent years, mostly represented by Ivan Krastev. He argues that populism in East-Central Europe is not a result of the failure of liberalism which overlaps consolidation in some cases but of its success due to the growing hostility of the public towards liberalism.<sup>27</sup> This argument implies that the region cannot be understood by using 'Western' concepts. Krastev sees the current situation in post-communist Europe as a crisis of liberal democracy itself instead of the failure of democratisation, which is related to the global economic crisis and the decline of the EU as a worldwide political actor.<sup>28</sup> It can be a consequence of the elite-driven, top-down nature of the transition and consolidation. Following Krastev's thread, it is clear that democratisation and consolidation in particular resulted in political systems not necessarily anticipated.

## Defective Democracies

Either transition paradigm is approved and in this case, consolidation has not ended yet or rather rejected, most political systems in post-communist Europe and in the Balkans in particular are not the best examples of well-functioning liberal democracies. But if they are not perfect liberal democracies, what kind of democracies are they? In the second half of the 1990s, when it became clear that newly established democracies are not perfect, interesting approaches appeared in political science about these defective democracies.

O'Donnell (1994) argues that newly democratised countries are not consolidated or are not institutionalised democracies.<sup>29</sup> O'Donnell's concept is based mostly on Latin American experiences (i.e. presidential systems), where the winning candidate in presidential elections sees accountability to courts or to the legislature as obstructions of her/his full power. As there are no presidential systems in the Balkans, this definition is barely useful, however, the attitudes of the heads of governments are similar to those of the presidents as they also feel other institutions as a threat to their full authority. Although some leaders would change the constitution of the country to remove these barriers, he/she has rarely had the necessary majority to amend or modify the fundamental law. Nevertheless, political leaders have been suspected of using courts for political purposes. In this sense, most countries in the Balkans can be considered delegative democracies.

Although there are mostly parliamentary systems in the Balkans, it does not mean that presidents have only a marginal role in politics. Heads of state in several countries of

<sup>26</sup> DIAMOND et al. 2014, 86–100.

<sup>27</sup> KRASTEV 2007, 56–63.

<sup>28</sup> KRASTEV 2016, 35–39.

<sup>29</sup> O'DONNELL 1994, 55–69.



Southeast Europe are elected directly by the people, hence, they have strong legitimacy and a large informal influence on politics. The clearest case is Serbia where the power of the president is relatively weak, still party leaders are usually presidential candidates, too. Boris Tadić became the head of state as the leader of the Democratic Party. He was later followed by Tomislav Nikolić who had been Chairman of the Serbian Progressive Party, and last time Aleksandar Vučić ran for the presidency not only as party leader but also as incumbent Prime Minister. The current President of Montenegro is Milo Đukanović who is considered the informal leader of the country.

Larry Diamond (1996) depicted the nature of Latin American democracies as ‘illiberal’ mostly because of the critical situation of human rights.<sup>30</sup> He later defined illiberal democracies as systems where individual rights and freedoms are restricted.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the level of human rights abuse in the Balkans is probably much lower than that of Latin America, and the violation of human rights is not the most serious problem in Southeast Europe, even if it is an existing phenomenon in some countries.

The most well-known concept of defective democracies was elaborated by Fareed Zakaria. Zakaria (1997) pays attention to constitutional liberalism which combines the rule of law and individual liberty.<sup>32</sup> In that sense, people have basic individual rights (e.g. the right to life or to property) which have to be secured by the state. On the other hand, the government shall limit its own power. This second condition is more problematic in the Balkans. Lots of governments try to widen their powers by changing the legal environment or rarely, simply breaking the law. Zakaria mentions some countries from the Balkans as clear examples of illiberal democracy. The first one is Romania<sup>33</sup> which was governed by Ion Iliescu from 1990 to 1996 (the article was published in 1997, right after the electoral victory of the centre-right parties). But the author also sees problems in Milošević’s Serbia (then Yugoslavia) and in Bosnia.<sup>34</sup> Nowadays, authoritarian tendencies are not common in the Balkans compared to the 1990s, however, there are still many problems with constitutional liberalism, such as minority rights or even free and fair elections.

A more detailed classification was created by Wolfgang Merkel.<sup>35</sup> In the first half of his article, Merkel details the pre-conditions of an embedded (i.e. liberal) democracy. According to him, embedded democracy is made up by five partial regimes, namely, “a democratic electoral regime, political rights of participation, civil rights, horizontal accountability, and the guarantee that the effective power to govern lies in the hands of democratically elected representatives”.<sup>36</sup> Merkel states that if the entire logic of constitutionalism changes due to the damage of one of these partial regimes, the democracy is no longer embedded. He differentiates four types of defective democracies. In exclusive democracies, universal suffrage is not ensured because a huge group is excluded from it. The most important feature of a domain democracy is that non-elected veto powers (e.g. military) take political domains mainly from the elected government. In an illiberal democracy, the judiciary cannot really

<sup>30</sup> DIAMOND 1996, 52–106.

<sup>31</sup> DIAMOND 1999.

<sup>32</sup> ZAKARIA 1997, 22–43.

<sup>33</sup> ZAKARIA 1997, 23.

<sup>34</sup> ZAKARIA 1997, 35.

<sup>35</sup> MERKEL 2002, 33–58.

<sup>36</sup> MERKEL 2002, 36.



limit the power of executive and legislative branches. It is similar to a delegative democracy where the power of the executive is only weakly limited by the judiciary and the legislature.<sup>37</sup>

Merkel's work is important because he also classified Eastern European countries. In the Balkans, the only liberal democracy was Slovenia right after the Millennium, as he did not examine Greece which is usually researched along with Portugal and Spain instead of the post-communist states of the region. The remaining countries taken into account in this article are categorised as illiberal democracies, which highlights the weak judiciary control. That was the case not only in Romania and Bulgaria, but also in Albania and in two successor states of the former Yugoslavia: Croatia and Macedonia.<sup>38</sup>

Merkel's classification has a clear benefit: it makes a distinction among the defective democracies. It seems to be also beyond dispute that there are no non-elected veto players in Southeast Europe. Civil control over the military is relatively strong and neither guerrillas nor landlords, entrepreneurs etc. can take the power. It is common, however, in some countries that entrepreneurs or tycoons establish their own party, and run in the elections as did Dan Diaconescu in Romania. Leaders have failed to dismantle the importance of legislature, that is the reason why delegative democracies are also rare in the Balkans. Most countries have a parliamentary or at least quasi-parliamentary system (e.g. Romania is somewhere between a classic semi-presidential and a parliamentary system) where the legislature is one of the key players in the political system, and to which the executive is usually accountable.

## What Is in the Balkans?

Krastev (2002) criticises the three leading paradigms dealing with the democratisation of the Balkan countries. Although he rejects these paradigms, he acknowledges some of their results. Firstly, Krastev analyses the 'bad legacies' paradigm and notes that by focusing on ethnic tensions, it failed to separate problems of post-communism from post-Yugoslav problems. Krastev basically agrees with Carothers' criticism related to the transition paradigm. The last paradigm is the integration paradigm compared to the second one by Krastev. He argues that this perspective sees democracy at its institutionalisation. Krastev suggests the establishment of a new approach that concentrates on citizens.<sup>39</sup>

Although Krastev's article is relatively old (2002), most of its questions are still valid. The status of Kosovo has not yet been solved restfully, some questions have not been answered in relation to the future of Macedonia, and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on the Dayton Agreement has not moved towards a stable and well-functioning state. Therefore, the most worrisome risk is not a war, but a state collapse.<sup>40</sup>

Ágh (1998) draws attention to the process of Westernisation and Europeanisation along with democratisation and consolidation. He argues that 'Return to Europe' as Europeanisation became one of the most important slogans and also a goal of the governments in East Central Europe and the Balkans.<sup>41</sup> As it can be observed, countries in the Balkans

<sup>37</sup> MERKEL 2002, 49–50.

<sup>38</sup> MERKEL 2002, 51.

<sup>39</sup> KRASTEV 2002.

<sup>40</sup> KRASTEV 2002.

<sup>41</sup> ÁGH 1998.

either joined the EU or they are on their way to the European Union. Greece is once again a special case in the Balkans, as she became a member of the European Communities in 1981. Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria took part in the first two waves of the Eastern enlargement in 2004 and 2007. But in parallel, the Western Balkans became one of the priorities of the further widening of the EU in 2003. The Western Balkans consists of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia except for Slovenia and Albania. Croatia joined the EU in 2013, negotiations are in progress with Serbia, and Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia are official candidate countries, while Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for EU membership, and Kosovo which has not been recognised yet by all the member states is a potential candidate. Europeanisation in the sense of ‘back to Europe’ seems to exist and work, although not without problems (e.g. the status of Kosovo).

However, Krastev (2002) argues that most analysts’ conclusion of the Balkans was wrong. The problems of democratisation originate not only in specific factors such as Balkan factors (e.g. ethnic tensions) and post-communist factors (e.g. the democratisation of the polity in parallel with restructuring the economy), but also in the growing gap between the elite and voters, and in this sense, it is a failure of representation. As Krastev concludes, international actors weaken democracy by punishing the elite who does not follow the line of the International Monetary Fund, however, excusing the elite who does not keep its promises to voters. Thus, Krastev recommends the re-thinking of democracy assistance along the change of the electoral system, role of referenda, and NGOs among others. He also emphasises the need of country-specific packages because politics in the Balkans are different.<sup>42</sup>

As Krastev (2017) states, post-communist states even within the European Union differ from the Western European ones. Cynicism emerged after the transition and liberal reforms, trust in public institutions is very low, and Eastern Europeans are disillusioned because their dream about welfare and security after joining the EU did not come true.<sup>43</sup> Krastev also explains the behaviour of Eastern European societies in the migrant crisis this way. This argument once again highlights the necessity of proper analysis of these countries.

One important factor has not yet been mentioned, however, Krastev also draws attention to it. And it is the problem of demography.<sup>44</sup> Most of the Eastern European societies are aging. Moreover, millions of people from these countries moved to Western Europe to work or to live. This process was reinforced by the EU enlargement. Although the amount of money transferred from the West to the home country is high, it does not replace the decreasing number of births. This can be the biggest problem which the region has to face.

## Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the most important paradigms, findings, and criticism of the literature on democratic transitions. The focus of researches moved from transition to consolidation and democratisation in the 1990s, however, this paradigm was criticised by some scholars. Thus, approaches have been refined by time, and now they concentrate more on

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<sup>42</sup> KRASTEV 2002.

<sup>43</sup> KRASTEV 2017, 49.

<sup>44</sup> KRASTEV 2017, 50.

country-specific issues. It became also clear, that democracies in the region have their own weaknesses, hence, various classifications of defective democracies also emerged.

Krastev was among the first scholars to pay attention to the fact that not all the problems of the Balkans can be explained by the schemes of experts, and a deeper understanding of the region is desired. Consequently, democracy assistance needs to be re-thought, and more country-specific policy packages are also needed. And this point of view leads back to Diamond's conclusion: it is extremely important to have the right analysis of each country because comparative and theoretical works must meet "facts on the ground".<sup>45</sup> This book ensures it.

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