

New Europe College Yearbook 1994



IRINA NICOLAU
H.-R. PATAPIEVICI
DOREL ȘANDOR
NICOLAE-ȘERBAN TANAȘOCA
SORIN VIERU

New Europe College
Yearbook 1994

IRINA NICOLAU
H.-R. PATAPIEVICI
DOREL ŞANDOR
NICOLAE-ŞERBAN TANAŞOCA
SORIN VIERU

Foreword

ANDREI PLEŞU

Afterword

WOLF LEPENIES



HUMANITAS
BUCUREŞTI

Cover design
IOANA DRAGOMIRESCU MARDARE

Editor
VLAD RUSSO

© Humanitas & New Europe College, 1996

ISBN 973-28-0717-2

New Europe College can be found at
Str. Tache Ionescu 1, 71100 București 1
Tel/Fax: + (40) 1 2107609/6592565
e-mail: nec@ap.nec.ro

Contents

New Europe College. A Short Overview

7

ANDREI PLEȘU

New Old Europe

9

IRINA NICOLAU

Moi et les musées du monde

13

H.-R. PATAPIEVICI

A Theory of the Internal Medium

43

DOREL ȘANDOR

Political Risk in the Transition of Post-Communist Societies

93

NICOLAE-ȘERBAN TANAȘOCA

La construction européenne et le byzantinisme des pays de l'Est

123

SORIN VIERU

Faits historiques et histoires: une approche logique

143

WOLF LEPENIES

Complaints of a Reader, Freezing for the First Time in the West

169



DOREL ȘANDOR

Born 1950 in Bucharest

Studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest

Prepares a doctor's degree in the comparative analysis of the social systems

Has taught social and political sciences,
and has done researches in the same field

Has been secretary of state

and chief of the Department for Social and Political Structures Analysis
in the Romanian Government between 1990 and 1992

Is now Director of the Independent Center
of Political Studies and Comparative Analysis

Has attended several symposia on the transition processes in Eastern Europe
and has published papers on the dynamics of the socio-political systems
in Romania, electoral processes, crisis management in the transition period

Address: Centrul Independent de Studii Politice și Analiză Comparativă,
Aleea Modrogan 22B, sector 1, 71274 București
tel: +(40) 12122549, e-mail: cspea@kappa.ro

Political Risk in the Transition of Post-Communist Societies

1. The collapse of the Soviet block and the massive decline of the communist pattern of political-economical order do certainly represent an authentic historical catastrophe. Unexpectedly triggered and marked by dramatic developments, it shall continue to be dominated by ambiguities, crises and uncertain perspectives. It is this great challenge for the contemporary world with major implications for both the political-military balance and the world economy that generates a shocking variety of facts, events and protagonists within a world until recently characterized by a rigid balance and a monolithic structure.

The traditional views on Eastern Europe set-up in the middle of the 20th century on either side of the "iron curtain" are thus devoid of content and the finality of the evaluation and prediction effort is being radically re-oriented. That is why the re-evaluation of the meanings acquired both by the political risk and by its dynamics under the conditions of transition come into focus as utmost controversial topics of the present political analysis. Considerable opportunities for trade and investment, for free circulation of people and information, for integration of international security structures, open now perspectives one could hardly have hoped for a decade ago. At the same time, an unexpected transformation of the traditional threats related to the "communist danger" takes place. And it is paralleled by the proliferation of new sources of internal and regional instability.

Having escaped from the domination of the authoritarian communist-type regimes, East European societies have not thus automatically acquired that inner capacity of using their liberties through elaborating and supporting viable alternatives. Contradictory performances in reconsidering the State's institutions and fundamental economic relations, the fluctuating character of the policies meant to reinstate the social-political balances have brought about, in time, the installations of transition specific mechanisms which generate "negative dynamics." Although communism's bankruptcy did impose the necessity of change, that change does not ensure, by itself, the route the post-

Contents

Definition and prejudice
Re-assessment of convergence
Convergence matrix
Surpassing the challenges of transition
Matrix of asymmetric distribution of values
Towards a methodological reconciliation

communist societies could follow. Actually, the gap between the suitability of change and the low level of material, institutional and cultural resources, indispensable to its accomplishment acutely marks the first stages of transition.

The procurement of resources and the control of the mechanisms of change become from the very beginning the obsessive themes of the internal political competition and of the external influence upon transition. Hence, derives at the same time the vulnerability of the reforms, mainly of the liberal orientated ones. Another characteristic consists in maintaining and, in some respects, even *amplifying the role of politics* versus the civic society and the requirements of a market economy in formation. Because politics is unable to secure, from the beginning, the system of institutional guarantees of the irreversible separation from communism. On the contrary, by preserving in the foreground the political factors, these would become sources of instability, postponement, or misappropriation of the change processes.

The experience of the last years systematically shattered the illusion of a rapid transfer of property towards the private sector through governmental policies. It also highlights the electoral ambivalence of the new democracies and the possibility of neo-communist forces returning to power. The excessive politicization of transition simultaneously offered favorable conditions for the components of the former regime to be freed from the "post-revolutionary quarantine" and for them to be re-launched in the self-salvaging variants of post-communist populism. On the other hand, the removal of the great communist powers from the position of "adversary to the death" gradually gives way to the interest in the *reintegration* of the former block into the global economic environment and the new international security systems.

It is this re-orientation of priorities which induces a spectacular re-evaluation of the region from the external point of view. The large involvement of the West and of Western patterns in the transition of post-communist societies leads to a reconsideration of the magnitude of interests, initiatives and administration of relationships with these societies. A great historical wager emerged in less than a decade, but its outcome will remain over the medium term under the sign of incertitude.

Definition and prejudice

2. The complexity of the context in which during the last years the terms "country risk" and "political risk" have been used when analyzing the transi-

tion of post-communist countries, has disturbed the "technical peace" settled during the last decades at the level of some institutions which are prestigious within political environments or the business world of the West. From the very beginning (the crisis of the external debt in the seventies), the evolution of this new discipline has not been deprived of moments of maximum interest and of skepticism as well. The usefulness of this analytical effort imposed itself as one of the largest and most generous markets intellectual activity could ever imagine. Both foreign investments and strategic decisions in international relations have maintained a significant level of demand for risk services. That is why the empirical development of this kind of research with some academic institutions or private companies seconded from the "shadow" by governmental units for political analysis constituted a fertile basis for the accumulation of a considerable professional *experience*. On the other hand, the permanent exposure to the actual developments at the economic, social and political-military levels have furnished restraints and a certain caution on the part of the users, regarding the predictive power of the risk studies.

Here, to a great extent, the "paradox of counseling," manifests itself: an alarming prediction, taken into consideration triggers off precautions which limit the exposure to risk and implicitly, the negative consequences whose subsequent re-evaluation disaffirms the exaggerated character of the prediction. As the reciprocal is also valid, there results a permanent confidence deficit and at the same time a reciprocal dependence between counseling and users. Without reaching a high degree of conceptualization and even less of scientific systematization, the risk analysis has still gained *theoretical multi-disciplinary instrumentality* (i.e. economics, political sociology, institutional analysis, comparative politics, international relations, social psychology, management, etc.) and mainly the capacity of concentrating the evaluation effort upon some themes with strategic significance in historical intervals most often defined by the turning points. The comparative dimension, crucial to the logic of the political game and economic competition, tops off the complexity and relevance of this interpretative approach of contemporary reality.

Nevertheless, it is this very approach of a new "target" — the tradition of post-communist societies — especially after 1990, which has increasingly revealed the comfortable trap which the risk analysis had already entered. On the one hand, the re-evaluation of the West's interest in the countries of the ex-Soviet block opened up a large and spectacular area for the analysis, and on the other hand, the coefficient of adequacy and relevance of the models of analysis have continued to be relatively reduced. The West's stage fright in re-launching the offensive towards the East after the downfall of the Soviet

empire, the inertia as regards the updating of strategic concepts, the reinstatement of the *fear of Russia* in new forms, as well as the predisposition towards the morbid interpretations of the crises within the post-communist societies are based, to a great extent, upon the deadlock of the risk analysis in front of this *terra incognita* which appeared overnight.

The main reason for the establishment of this handicap consists in preserving a reference model constituted during the seventies adequate only for its purpose in that period. And its basic problematic was centered on, if not even reduced to, the domain of reimbursement of the external debt of the developing countries to the developed ones. A decisive role in this vision was certainly played by the strategic approaches specific to the post-colonial epoch; because the risk analysis defined its methodological presuppositions through the conceptualization of the economic and social-political disparity between the metropolis and the former colonies.

Outlining its *analytical paradigm* upon simple/complex or underdevelopment/development relationships, the risk analysis used to consist in the assessment of difficulties of the crises which could impact upon the capacity of the external debt service being performed. Acquiring and maintaining such a capacity was conditioned by a series of structural reforms which, jointly considered, imposed extensive modernizing processes. The unavoidable tensions between modernization and traditional structures could be described, interpreted and possibly mastered by their degree of adequacy to the Western model. Thus it is not by chance that the stalemate induced by major crises, such as the ones in Iran and Nicaragua during the late seventies, sometimes troubled the analytical routine, thus imposing re-evaluations and beneficial systematization.

3. Still, maintaining the view made on this horizon, even if it enjoys the prestige of an almost two decade old professional exercise, proved to produce confusions and surprises when applied to post-communist societies. Bewildered by the downfall of the dictatorial regimes, the economic bankruptcy as well as the regional security system based on the Soviet Union's supremacy in these countries, a series of structural characteristics impose themselves. These differentiate themselves clearly both as regards the initial data of the transition, the models of development and the nature of the crises and as regards the relations between these societies and the West.

Here are just a few of the structural characteristics which sooner or later demand the rethinking of the analysis schemes by which the political risk specific to the transition of the post-communist societies may be assessed and

prognosticated. Firstly, it should be considered that the Central and East European countries have plunged into transition through *the abrupt cessation of a historical process* initiated on a large scale some 50-70 years ago by applying the Marxist-Leninist model. Its collapse and the relative general orientation towards democracy and market economy does not yet signify the abrupt, complete and permanent dissolution of an institutional system with a redoubtable political-military and social-economic presence. In close connection with the above, it is worth mentioning the survival of some *important components of the old regime* at the level of the political apparatus, of the organizations, and influence centers within the new institutional system, which tend to surpass the critical stage of the crises around the year 1989.

Moreover, regaining important positions or the reinstating of some temporarily suspended components will evidently emphasize *the heterogeneity of the political systems* in these countries and it will, in the long run, complicate the processes of political modernization. This indicates the fact that it is premature to reduce the political transition to a linear evolution towards *democracy*. In fact, the competition between these two systems is being re-launched, moving from the level of international relations to the national or regional one. Both the Yugoslavian crisis and the long term instability within the ex-Soviet Union have here their origin and sources of reproduction.

A similar factor refers to the *population* characterized in most of these countries by a high level of educational. On the other hand, the same population will be, at least in the medium term, strongly marked by the communist egalitarianism and the models of social-political obedience specific to the totalitarian systems. Emancipation, through experimenting with new liberties, with the diversification of consumption and with some new behavioral patterns, takes place at a slower pace under the conditions of economic crisis and direct bearing of the economic restructuring costs. As regards *economic modernization*, the processes are slower yet — even in those countries with a higher degree of impetus relating to restructuring and privatization such as the central European ones. Maintaining a *substantially bureaucratic administration*, which is difficult to replace or control in the medium term, moderated or even compromised the reformist policies aimed at communist étatism. Simultaneously, the administrative apparatus, vulnerable in the perspective of democratization and expansion of the non-governmental sector, goes on being a redoubtable support for the authoritarian tendencies or it can be turned, easily enough, to nationalist demagogy.

But the process allowing for the least incorporation within classical schemes and Western current views is represented by the emergence of *new*

interest-groups that is exactly the future structure meant to ensure internal stability and the legitimacy of the post-communist political regimes. Reconstitution of private property, appearance of tendencies towards social stratification, as well as the diffuse but substantial resistance against instituting social inequality, draw us nearer the core of some changes both acute and novel. Assessed from this standpoint, the sources of social post-revolutionary convulsions, of extremist tendencies as well as the alarming growth of social aggressiveness can be understood in more detail and more comprehensively.

Fragmentation of a monolithic society frees social energies that are hard, if not impossible, to control. Under such circumstances, there is an unexpectedly short distance between totalitarian temptation and anarchic tendencies. The downfall of the monopoly of the political leadership over the economy gives way to some "opportunities of disaster." That is why, in most instances, typical processes of a market economy, such as privatization and liberalization, mean under the conditions of the post-communist societies an authentic "prey sharing." In this general ambiance the macro-economic difficulties of some aberrantly developed industries can no longer be treated in a strictly technical and national manner. They are inextricably associated with the new challenges and frustrations bearing a social impact, such as price increases, the proliferation of unemployment, the phenomena of marginalization, mass emigration, and others.

The often improvised character and the heterogeneous components of post-communist modernization, as well as the chaotic manner in which its consequences and costs appear, are far from being perceived as simple misdemeanors according to Western common sense. *Redistribution of the national wealth* actually constitutes the basic process of transition. The agony of some aberrantly developed industries, which socialist planning amplified, while ignoring the continuous development of science and technology represents only the strictly material half of the problem. The other half, more obscure and full of unpredictability, refers to the reactions of individuals, groups and communities directly involved in this turnabout of roles and priorities. It is ever more obvious, as time is passing by, that both the material implications and the social reactions specific to transition greatly surpass both the external assessment methods and the internal governing capacity. This is because the *new political institutions*, reconditioned according to the principles of the multi-party system and the division of powers, are far from producing concomitantly legitimacy, efficacy and pluralism. Their greatest difficulty consists in maintaining their credibility and authority amongst the population confused by an unprecedented social experience. The orientation of social energies, as

stimulated by convulsive changes, remains a performance difficult to attain and almost impossible to maintain on a medium term. Post-communist societies are navigating at the limit of governability between *super-involvement* and *apathy*.

There is also a fact ignored during the first years, but which has gradually imposed itself as a major tendency of transition in post-communist societies. And it refers to *the capacity of active adjustment of some structures and interest groups deriving from the old system* under the very conditions of market economy and pluralism. Owing to the advantage of the administrative routine, as well as the access to significant informational and material resources, these forces are more rapidly restructuring themselves as compared to the civil society or the alternative political tendencies. That is the reason why political competition, electoral processes, and relations between power and opposition are marked by a high degree of heterogeneity, fragmentation and confusion. Under such conditions the assurance of *the strategic initiative* becomes a matter that is both delicate and exposed to influence of some conservative tendencies. *The tension between reformism and conservatism will be, in the long run, the essential contradiction of the new democracies.*

"The Wild East" is by far not just a simple prairie in which political civilization and an economy are built from scratch.

4. *Transition in post-communist societies proved to be actually a process between two situations of high complexity based on fundamentally opposed principles.*

From a rational point of view, it would obviously be much easier to prove the impossibility of success within a strategic context with so many contradictory coordinates. This is why the application of some routines of analyses centered on types of fundamentally different processes obliges the investigation to formulate some problems insufficiently focusing on the real core of the changes.

To all this, one should also add the maintenance of some important components of the reciprocal perception specific to the "cold war" period. A whole generation of analysts and politicians, having been acknowledged during the sixties and the seventies, go on influencing the decision-making processes, entirely different in content mainly as regards bilateral relations. Paradoxically, even if everyone recognizes the system discontinuity between "real socialism" and post-communist societies, the new structures and tendencies are often interpreted in keeping with some visions which have remained traditional. Thus, what represents discontinuity appears as part of a wholeness. What is

“classical,” and thus intelligible, in conforming with tradition incorporates the new facts and tendencies. Although the latter comprise the true openings towards the future, their interpretation is subordinated to the old criteria and hierarchies. On the one hand, the stubbornness of saving the “communist ideal,” and on the other hand, the clearly more refined dogmas of conformity with the models of partial reform applied successfully in societies which differ as regards their situation and level of development.

To a great extent, the risk analysis is meant to supply a correct and systematic perception of the changes within other societies by relating them to their own interests and policies. Whenever significant disparities appear between the rhythm of changes within the framework of the different societies, the main difficulty posed is to maintain the objective character of the assessments. Yet, the historical experience of transition from the Soviet-type socialism to Western-type capitalism comprises essential dimensions without equivalent for the political and economic culture specific both to the West and to the East. Even if, at least on a medium term the basic structures of a market economy and a pluralist democracy do not have to be re-invented, but only up-dated by the East-European societies, their reproduction within the post-communist context is marked by novel moments of defiance and intermediary stages with a high content of unexpectedness and ambiguity. For the risk analysis it actually represents a *turning point*, since the risk analysis could be reduced to the evaluation of the degree of conformity of the transition processes with elements of the Western status-quo or it can be extended by taking upon itself the confrontation of a veritable leap in the dark. That is why defining the political risk should consider at the same time the structural heterogeneity of the analyzed environment, the inevitable tension of the new relations between the factors and the actual components, and the variety and dynamics of certain new tendencies for the management of development.

Re-assessment of convergence

5. The reconstitution of the referential of risk presupposes, therefore, the identification of the main types of change which influence the course of transition. It is worth mentioning that transition was marked, from its very beginning, by a plurality of models of change. Their confrontation or complementarity constituted one of the chief sources of impetus and often of risk. The forms under which these models of change objectivized represent the very variety of the reforms. And yet, this variety has been dominated by three types

of reform with different degrees of relevance and influence, depending upon the situation present at a given moment in one country or another. Such types can be named: the spontaneous reform, the institutional reform and the restoration tendencies.

A vital element in differentiating among these main types, and especially in pointing out the possible tension in their confrontation, is represented by the “value horizon” on which they settle both their legitimacy and strategic options. In general outline, one can estimate that the most influential *directions of strategic orientation* are the following:

— *traditionalism*, most frequently expresses the need of national emancipation, cultural emancipation, or the up-dating of the social-political experience prior to the setting up of communism;

— Western-type modernization, most poignantly expressed by the *liberal vision*, is based upon the interdependence between the developments scored on the internal level towards democracy and a free market economy on the one hand and the Euro-Atlantic integration on the other hand;

— *neo-communist restoration*, as initiated by Gorbachev’s “perestroika” but which is actually inspired by the experience during the sixties (the Kadarization in Hungary) and the seventies (socialism with a human face of the “Prague spring”).

It is noteworthy that the most redoubtable conservative communist type tendencies are based upon the very reformisms of the sixties and seventies within the ex-Soviet block.

Coming back to the reform’s patterns we shall be able to understand them more accurately through the identification of the influences of these orientations. It is also worth emphasizing that their influence is crossing along the social hierarchy and is playing a role both on the level of political thought and as regards the formation and manifestation of social reactions. Thus, when attempting to assess *spontaneous reform* we shall detect not only the preliminary components of the civic and private initiatives but also the “balkanic” traditions or the experience of the underground economy from the epoch of socialist étatism. There exist also “pragmatic combinations” between the important components of the private sector and the leftist political forces. Also, we are witnessing the gradual expansion of “peaceful coexistence” between the large permeation of the foreign investors and the nationalist leadership interested in acquiring and consolidating the autonomy from the former centers of power of the Soviet block.

The *institutional reform* was subjected, in its turn, to the joint pressures of Western-type orientations, among which the most widespread are those relat-

ed to the International Monetary Fund or the European Institutions and populist and nationalist internal factors. Whenever the control over transition has been maintained by the "survivors" of the former system, the international concessions made as regards NATO integration will be counterweighted by leftist or nationalist internal alliances.

If we go back now to the political risk reference background, from the Western analysts' perspective, both the progress in the perception of transition and the still persisting limits and exteriority degree become more visible. This is because the view prevailing in the Western perception related to transition is mainly connected with the convergence matrix. It is based upon the hypothesis of the dominance of the Western pattern of the market economy, of the success of the pluralist system in political life, as well as of the integration of the ex-Soviet block countries within the common security system ensured by the North-Atlantic Alliance.

Under these circumstances, the risk analysis would have as its subject matter the assessment of the internal structural convergence and the regional integration of the Russia's former satellite states with the Western world.

This is certainly a realistic and productive hypothesis both for the political and business environments and for "a new grammar" of political risk. But the validity of this hypothesis depends on considering both the limits and heterogeneity of the processes within which this mega-trend manifests itself. In other words, *the convergence matrix* points out the variety of situations and typical modes by which we can consider that post-communist societies' transition is managed at the levels of institutions, social-economic structures and current activities in accordance with Western models. It is in this way that new institutions, decision mechanisms, roles and economic relations, practices, patterns of behavior and rules of action compatible with "the free world" are established. Conversely, the same matrix shows the variety of situations where these developments are only partial, bearing an intermediary nature or being actually incorporated within traditional structures, enduring the pressure of the policies and practices specific to the old regime. In the evaluation of the political risk, it is essential to create those analytical instruments which will prove efficient in revealing both the programs and the barriers and vulnerabilities.

The combination of the three prevailing dimensions of convergence (institutional, structural and that of policies) chiefly renders the inevitable imbalances and the real situations, but also the diversity and dynamism of transition.

The six basic situations (Q, W, A, S, Z, X) have already their correspondence confirmed by the first transition years.* The description of this typology actually indicates, in fact, analysis instruments and points for comparison of different critical moments. The diversity of the stages the East-European countries are presently in may also be grasped in this way. Concomitantly, the convergence matrix can be employed in the assessment of the potential risk of the re-orientations at the level of policies or of the modification of relations between institutional efficiencies and structural pressures.

Convergence Matrix

COMPONENTS

Institutions	0	1	1	0	1	0
Policies	0	1	0	1	0	1
Structures	1	0	0	1	1	0
	Q	W	A	S	Z	X

Q

Institutions	0
Policies	0
Structures	1

7. The Q combination corresponds to the situation in which the structures of the market or pluralist economy have survived as marginal domains under the conditions of the communist system and constitutes a prerequisite of transition within the very first stages. Noteworthy examples might be the high weight of the private sector in Polish agriculture as well as in the service sector in Hungary and the Czech Republic. Another instance refers to the situations when, at a certain moment, both the state institutions and the reformist liberal-inspired policies come to a standstill. Either due to some internal crises (the September 1991 crisis in Romania) or due to the electorate's re-orientation, there also takes place a re-orientation of policies, disfavoring the liberal structures that have just been constituted. This re-orientation brings with it the taking over of the control over the new democratic institutions by groups with conservative interests.

* Identification of the situations by means of Q, W, A, S, Z, X letters corresponds to the keys located on the left side of a computer key-board and their utilization under this conventional formula was experimented with in the software CAT-PM/88 (Comparative Analysis of Transition. Compared policies) designed by the author of this paper in 1988.

The specific risk of this situation refers to the vulnerability of the market economy structures in formation, or to their position subordinated to some institutions which are influenced by étatist or even authoritarian visions. It can also be estimated that the very pluralist system and the electoral mechanisms might impose changes as regards the electorate's options, owing to which the oscillating character of the State's policies in relation to the private sector is consequently marked by a restrictive or even inhibiting character.

W

Institutions	1
Policies	1
Structures	0

8. This situation is typical in the first stages of some transitions explicitly oriented both through the content of the policies and the institutions' nature towards structures compatible with the West. The fragility of this situation derives from the slower system of constituting the basic structures (economic and social). The development, be it rapid (by "shock therapy") or slower, is confronted with the difficulties of preserving an active balance between stability and consensus for change. There is also present the danger of instituting "a governing without object" and without a sound social basis, thus enabling the consolidation and takeover of the initiative by other political forces, mainly populist ones.

The typical profile of such a government is that of "a wooden horse rider," where the reformist government is in the paradoxical situation of formulating strict policies of reducing the state's role and of consolidating the non-governmental sectors. The typical model of the policies in this instance is "reform from top down," and the experience gained during the first years of transition has proved that such governments are not able to last for a medium term. That is why, "courageous but incomplete" projects do emerge frequently. Political risk consists either in their subsequently being compromised by conservative governments or in their weak resistance to the deterioration because of crises and social reactions.

A

Institutions	1
Policies	0
Structures	0

9. The preliminary character of this situation is mainly due to the previous communist regimes which have eradicated any structural diversity at the economic and social levels or to the fact that their operability had been inhibited for a long period of time. The new democratic institutions emerging after the downfall of the communist system may rely, to a slight extent, on the pre-war democratic tradition or on the entrepreneurial experience of the population. The reduced capacity or the lack of interest by the existing bureaucratic apparatus as regards the application of certain reforming policies can drastically diminish the chances of some reformist governments to use the favorable intervals due either to the international scene or to the initial interest of the population for significant changes.

The extension of the interval required for consolidating a real governing capacity determines intervals with significant political risk. Once the revolutionary enthusiasm has burnt out, the population expects concrete solutions for the inherited crises. On the other hand, a typical disparity as regards mentalities manifests itself, namely almost everyone is in favor of the reforms but actually there is a low level of acceptance of their inherent costs. At the same time, the main difficulty of the new institutional system consists in the renewal of the internal consensus referring to the content and direction of change. Under these circumstances, it becomes extremely difficult to ensure on the medium term public support for reform policies. In these intervals alternative political offers with a conservative content push forward, chiefly populism and nationalist demagogy.

There are certainly some deeper causes, mainly owing to the disparity between the reform as regards liberties which offer a multitude of formal opportunities and the reform as regards the economic and social fields, which call for sacrifices. The imposed costs secure only medium or long term structural transformations. Only a few post-revolutionary governments have survived the inherent disparities of this period which ends most frequently by reaching a turning point.

S

Institutions	0
Policies	1
Structures	1

10. Change of the force ratio at the level of institutions disfavoring convergence may emerge (as it did) either by social crises or by free elections as a cost of the structural changes through reform policies. Nevertheless, the new

orientations at the institutional level (the leftist or nationalist ones) are obliged to maintain and are sometimes even interested in maintaining some substantial reform measures. At the same time, a part of economic and administrative management moves towards the new private sector or even towards the local administration.

Under these conditions, the influence of foreign investments or of external pressures aiming at the observance of international agreements proved to be a buffer factor. Certainly, it greatly depends on the geopolitical coordinates of that very country as well as on the strategic interest at stake. Anyway, this type of situation (*S*) becomes characteristic only within more advanced stages of transition or within countries where liberal-type reforms have started under conditions and from an experience previously gained under more pragmatic communist regimes, such as the Central Europe ones used to be.

Still, in political risk assessment, this situation imposes a highly delicate topic of transition, namely the *irreversibility of convergence*. The question is linked to the nature of institutional and structural guarantees that might preserve the course of modernization, even if modifications in the composition of the parliaments or whether the reform policies are restricted. Internally, it has turned out that the most redoubtable guarantees are related to the degree of consolidation of the private sector, of the middle class to the reform of justice, as well as to the level of civic competency attained by the population.

Z	
Institutions	1
Policies	0
Structures	1

11. The decline at the level of reform policies and of the Euro-Atlantic integration emerges either because of the pressure of some social disfavoring reactions stimulated by high costs of transition or by the deadlock caused by ethnic relations (the scission of the federal states) or because of other factors which yet do not modify the democratic character of institutions and do not affect the free market relations, the competing environment or the investment opportunities.

Such a situation might periodically occur within the long term sinuous development of the Central and East-European societies. It shows the overtaking of the transition's preliminary stages towards the direction of convergence and it actually remains within a tolerable risk. Nevertheless, it still comprises a potential risk for crises and significant reorientation provided the corruption

phenomena expands significantly within the public administration or if serious splits occur within the parties forming the government. That is why a compensating role is played by the effects of the modernization of public management by the changes of generation at the level of the political elite as well as by the increase of the population's exigencies regarding the internal political environment.

Conversely, the action of some aggravating factors, such as the oscillating character of decision-makers, the syndrome of procrastination and half-measures when performing structural changes, bears profound risk implications. Since these factors bring about the loss of some favorable moments and the waste of some resources, thus decreasing both the institutions' credibility and the value of pluralist and market economy structures.

X	
Institutions	0
Policies	1
Structures	0

12. Apparently impossible in practical terms, the matrix of this situation is typical for the orientation of some conservative groups in the post-communist countries (such as the case of Romania after the '92 elections). The policies negotiated with international financing institutions (The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund, PHARE, etc.) or with the Western governments comprise reforming measures as a result of external negotiations. Still, this does not express the political will at the level of power, and consequently, their application fails through an artificial relating to the inchoate, fragile structures of a market economy. The populations of those countries have no choice but to pay the costs of some hesitant, long postponed measures.

Moreover, this *unilateral external support* of modernization policies, besides not being able to end with viable and persistent structures, is often used by nationalistic forces as an argument against liberalization. It will be introduced as a *forced westernization*, as estrangement from the country's own traditions and values or even as a new form of colonization. Typical of Russia's sphere of influence, this version evidences, after a few years, a globally significant fact. The Soviet empire having collapsed, the actual stake of the strategic game derives from the confrontation between the interests of the West to dissolve the position of the East as an adversary block with the price of the individual acceptance of the states from the former Russian dominated zone. On the other hand, the interest of the conservative forces in these coun-

tries is to make use of the economic and political-military advantages of the integration in order to reinstate their dominant positions under profitable forms internally.

It is one of history's ironies that the representatives of the communist regimes, which have installed themselves, have proliferated and survived for several decades in Eastern Europe owing to the political-military power of the Soviet Union, are now re-entering the competition for power, and are consolidating their chances through a strategic compromise with the West. And yet, the influence exerted upon the constitution of the new institutional system and of the structures of the market economy by external support of modernization policies should be neither underestimated nor limited on the short term. But the effects of stabilization and liberalization may neither be acquired, nor preserved by a mere partnership at the governmental level. If we speak about political-military questions, or about free and fair elections or privatization, Western influence will remain sterile or will only induce transient effects, unless it involves at the grass roots the new interest groups, unless it stimulates and supports the free circulation of information and people, and unless it directly connects with the new tendencies of a civil society in the process of rebirth.

Under these conditions, the transition assessment from the perspective of the convergence enables for a better and more detailed understanding and it certainly represents a noteworthy progress in reformulating the approach manner of the country risk. Both the diagnosis and the anticipation of internal developments gain significance in so much as they are integrated into a wider process in which a major role is played by regional and international inter-conditionings.

And still, political risk re-assessment in the transition of post-communist societies would remain incomplete if the risk referential matrix were exclusively based upon the convergence of the internal processes with the structures and values of "the free world." It may be estimated that from the perspective of the convergence it is especially the tendencies of a certain type of modernization and integration prevailing globally at the end of the 20th century that can be reconsidered. At the same time, it is from this perspective that the decisional processes and strategic options in East-West relations can be more effectively synchronized, considering the massive movement of initiative favoring the Western world. In other words, it is convergence that shows poignantly enough *what* is going to be transformed and *which* are to be the main intervals of Western-type modernization through which the states of the ex-Soviet block are devolving from communism towards the liberal system.

But for a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the political risk, analytical instruments meant to respond to the question *how* such changes do take place, are required. Identification of change mechanisms, pointing out their multiple implications, are crucial for the very mastering of the transition processes on the whole and mainly for perceiving the specific differences on a national level.

Surpassing the challenges of transition

13. *Under the conditions of transition the ambivalence of the changes constitutes the main challenge.* Political risk assessment focuses on the negative potential of this ambivalence.

Since the purpose of the risk analysis is dedicated to the operating and directing of decision mechanisms, there is a tendency to diminish the interest for methodological firmness versus operational effectiveness. Once acknowledged, the assessment criteria turn into an analysis routine supported by the vastness of the data and the promptness of their being empirically combined. Gradually, the basic presuppositions of the analysis and the reference model of the comparative approaches are lost sight of.

Being a synthetic approach, the risk analysis must maintain a balance between the *logical validity* of the statements related to causality, connection, and phenomena significance on the one hand, and the *operational relevance* of diagnosis or predictions on the other hand. Thus, clarifying the components of this reference background shall be a central theme. Interest for risk assessment is accounted for by the fact that under the conditions of transition, both decisions and actions are related to the field of *values distribution* macroeconomically and macropolitically, as well as to their social implications. Whether we speak of resource allotment in the economy, social protection, or turning to account the sources of legitimacy within political institutions, both the elaboration of strategic options and the political competition face the *asymmetric distribution of values*. This constitutes the social challenge of transition.

Actually, on a medium term, the central stake of transition acutely influencing social and political life is represented by *re-distribution of the national wealth among the new interest groups*. And this is accomplished by joining two utmost complex processes: a) social-political competition for taking over control of the new institutional system and b) redistribution of resources among the interest groups.

Matrix of asymmetric distribution of values

VALUES	0	1	1	0	1	0
Symbolical	0	1	1	0	1	0
Structural	0	1	0	1	0	1
Material	1	0	0	1	1	0
	Q	W	A	S	Z	X

The manner in which this redistribution process is taking place accounts both for the internal motivation of the transformations and for the actual basis of the orientation and re-orientation of policies. That is why the variety of situations resulting from the asymmetric combination of the main value structures (symbolical, structural, material) describes both the variety and the internal dynamics of the political risk specific to transition. Hence, we can construct the *interval referential of political risk*. It is constituted by the complementary utilization of the *convergence matrix* and of *asymmetric distribution of values*.

Coming back to the latter, we have to stress the fact that, at the same time, it makes possible the construction of some qualitative indicators for the political risk assessment. And it actually represents one of the most delicate and complex topics of the risk analysis for the societies with rapid changes. Although economic indicators are easier to perceive and, at a first glance, are much more convincing in projecting and adopting some strategic decisions, they most frequently emerge as post factum information. Moreover, the rate of economic processes imposes a disparity between the maturation of structures and the evidence of effects. Under the conditions of transition within post-communist societies, this gestation is often highly dependent upon political decisions and the management of an administration ambivalent regarding the reform. That is why there appear significant deformities within the transformations, deformities due to the action non-economic factors. Under these circumstances, *it is crucial that the analysis instrumentation should reveal the correlation among the material, structural and symbolic components of the process of redistribution values*. For the often exaggerated influence of the political factors and of the social reaction regarding the emerging autonomy of the structures of the market economy must be revealed as clearly as possible.

On the other hand, the diversity of the six situations also makes possible the description of discontinuities within transition, the oscillating developments and even regresses. Moreover, the matrix produces inciting suggestions for the description of the process pathology, since within a relatively short

period of the social-political and economic life in the former communist countries also revealed the "hidden part of the iceberg."

Practically, few surprises have occurred during the past five years. The structural potential of disfunction, incidents, crises and aberrant evolutions has been, to a large extent, pointed out. The repertoire of risks to which stability, reform and social consensus are being exposed within the transition period can already be systematically and almost exhaustively assessed. The very mechanisms of the production of crises, of deforming the change process up to the point of stagnation or restoration have not only been anticipated but also practiced.

One may estimate that the list of key-words of the phenomena and events with risk effects upon the internal political environment or on the economic and social stability in the Central and East European countries is already sketched in its general outlines. But the asymmetric character of the distribution of values becomes the main source of instability and developments with risk potential mainly due to the dominant tendency of the transition to promote and consolidate the *new competitive environment* at the economical, political and social levels. This very incorporation of new mechanisms based on competition, diversification and inequality represents the great challenge of the liberal reform by which the societies of the ex-Soviet block might be reintegrated within the free world. For this interval a relatively defined range of critical states resulting mainly from the asymmetric distribution of values is characteristic.

The country risk represents under these circumstances the very configuration within a given interval, taken by the prevailing state of the distribution of values. That is why the "political price" of the change is constituted by the assumption of some *reasonable imbalances* which on the one hand trigger the decline of the old structures and on the other hand create concomitantly opportunities and resources for the new competitive environment. Or, it is this very ambivalence of the changes under the conditions of transition which permanently complicates this process due to long term maintenance of the structural heterogeneity.

In conclusion, it can be said that the possibility of the distribution of values to contradict the objective demands and expectations of the population remains high during the entire course of transition, namely as long as it secures the prevalence of the private sector and of the pluralist democracy, as well as of the state of law.

14. Assessment of country risk consisting of the very identification of these states is possible in the short and medium term, starting from a given situation in relation to which either new policies of reform or international initiatives or assistance and cooperation projects are being drafted. The open and questionable character of the transformation processes is, in the case of the post-communist societies, amplified by the *tension between the complexity of the two systems between which transition is occurring*. Certainly it is applicable only in the cases in which the respective society is at least, from the strategic point of view, oriented towards the Western model. Which is far from being a rule. On the contrary, even in the cases in which the options have been coherently expressed and such options were accompanied by consistent efforts paralleled by a marked foreign support, surprises do not cease to appear.

Transition from socialism to capitalism does not represent by far any strictly administrative process. This fact is striking even in the case of ex communist Germany, namely "*in the best of the post-communist worlds*" as regards resources effectively invested change. On the other hand, what seemed to have been mostly lacking during the first years of transition within the majority of the post-communist countries proved to be the rationality and the spirit of governing in the name of public interest. The prevailing type of the public choices has been far from the logic of a market economy. Emerging election systems have partially converted the initial consensus towards change or have been turned upside down by the social reactions of populations still traumatized by former dictatorial regimes. Under these conditions, the somehow kaleidoscopic dynamic of the situations and more often than not, the oscillating character of general policies have consecrated in the long term the sui-generis mechanisms of asymmetric distribution of values.

An ever increasing role has been played by the appearance and installation of *some secondary processes of transition*. Their "secondary" character does not necessarily and definitely signify a marginal location within the body of the typical phenomena of this period. On the contrary, through both causality and content they derive from structural changes. Their origins, as well as the factors involved, are to a great extent either the continuation of processes specific to communism or the expression translated into the market economy language of their reminiscence. Parallel economy, corruption, organized crime, direct influence of the secret services upon political structures, prostitution, monopoly over and aggressive manipulation of the press, disregard for personal liberties and safety, the marginalization of minorities, etc., are not, as is often insisted upon in the commentaries of those nostalgic for communism, consequences of "falling into [bourgeois] sin." They are processes which

either have never been absent from the East European societies or do spectacularly proliferate through the provisional dilution of totalitarian coercion.

For the time being, it is difficult to estimate to what extent the present increase of aggressiveness within the social and political life and in the economic behavior of the post-communist societies is actually the result of the awkwardness inherent in the exercise of fundamental human rights, or rather the release of tensions having been inhibited under communist conditions. And it would not be totally inconceivable that with some of the East European countries, the first years of what is now being termed as "transition," might be only *the recovering of the structural balance* within societies which, marked by the global failure of "classical" communism, will continue to remain for many years from now within the limits of a *historical surrogate, populist authoritarian in character*. That is why the most delicate question of transition keeps on being the one related to the irreversibility of the transformations.

In this case we can speak of a veritable *historical risk*. To what extent does the bankruptcy of real communism in Russia and of its satellite states represent a regional deadlock in the process of "historical overtaking of capitalism through a better and fairer world"? To what extent is the crisis of real communism only an inherent stage within the more complex development of the contemporary world, and could it be followed by the re-launching of an alternative system to the contemporary capitalistic models during the decades to come? To what extent was communism a model of society and experience of the East merely an authoritarian utopia being consumed within the limits of the 20th century, and to what extent does return to the normality of the model of Western development now being termed as transition actually mean a kind of "historical therapy"?

This short parenthesis of "macro-historical" reflection is only meant to suggest another sensitive topic but also crucial to redefining the risk analysis referential background when assessing post-communist societies. And it considers the definition and accomplishment of the *national consensus regarding the historical meaning of transition*.

Although this matter seems to be self-evident, between '89 and '90 when communist regimes fell one after another in an irresistible succession, it was only after the settlement of the structural change processes that problems became complicated and passed beyond the limits of conjectural evidence. Thus, the preliminary consensus for change, both on the level of the population and on the level of the forces interested in reform was being consumed during the very first two years of transition. Its increasingly diluted re-emer-

gence has gradually yet consistently become the main barrier against the reformist amplification of the reformist policies of liberal orientation.

Most of the electoral events showed the tendency towards the decrease of public support for a high level of the social costs of changes. The rapid coming out from the post-revolutionary quarantine of the representatives of the old communist regime and their adjustment to the conditions of pluralist competition have re-arranged the internal social-political environment in most of the post-communist societies. *At present, transition from "real communism" to "authoritarian populism" is proving to be the typical transition path.* The basic political goal of this strategic orientation is represented by re-gaining control over the institutional system. Even if the disappearance of the unique party system seems to be a historical fact consummated both at the constitutional level and at the level of the new international political-military interdependencies, acquiring some dominant positions in the interest of the new democracies was a relatively easy operation for the authoritarian populist block (i.e., crypto-communists, nationalists, bureaucrats).

Towards a methodological reconciliation

15. The methodology of the risk analysis employed by Western analysis institutes and the assessment reports of the main banks and international institutions carrying out projects in Eastern Europe (World Bank, IMF, PNUD, etc.) now have at their disposal an analysis framework that is both consistent and equally vulnerable. It is essentially based upon the comparison, from the convergence perspective, of some highly dynamic realities with a set of parameters and restrictions expressing the image of the stability, democracy and efficiency of Western civilization. This is mainly explained by the scope of the risk analysis made in West-European institutions. The expectations and efficiency criteria of potential investors represent inevitably a basic component of the reference terms of such analyses. And it is also justified by the fact that both foreign investments and international projects are actions being performed within the limits of certain interests relations and negotiating procedures.

Due to this unquestionable peculiarity, the risk analysis is dependent on the connection of viewpoints of perspectives regarding the post-communist societies. The assessment of the actual states or possible developments acquires varied significances, or similar situations may be approached differently depending on the value criteria or the strategic options. These prerequisites

bring about a *latent dilemma of the risk analysis*, ever more delicate when the targets of analysis are more problematical. As long as risk analysis is restricted to consultancy regarding a certain project, the tension between assessment objectivity and user's interests is minimal. From the point in which analysis asks for a level of generalization indispensable to comparative assessment, the dependency upon the customer's viewpoint becomes counter-productive. The implications turn out to be even more "costly" when diagnostic analysis is taken to prediction and strategic recommendations.

This "fidelity paradox" represents one of the present vulnerabilities of the country risk analysis on the transition of the post-communist societies. There are at least three analysis fields which through their novelty and "local" superficiality have been consistently more difficult to master owing to this very paradox. They refer to *the anticipation of crises, the evaluation of governmental policies and the assessment of the new political elite potential.*

That is why the somewhat spectacular character of the content endangers the very scientific value, and the pragmatic relevance of the effort of assessing and interpreting. The intellectual chance of deciphering the agony and surpassing the political and social system closed-up by its very essence, is equally unexpected and baffling. It is being marked by the deforming effects of fluidity, ambiguity and unpredictability brought in by the post-communist age. Both as regards the deceptive forms of the actual evolution and through the structural tensions derived from the economic crises and social costs of transition, the countries of the ex-Soviet block are notably distinguished within the risk assessments. Under these circumstances, political risk analysis is again scrutinized from a multitude of directions. Reduction of disparities between the external perspective dominated by the vision of convergence and the internal one marked by the implications of the asymmetric distribution of values becomes thus a priority and, at the same time, a possible re-launching. Here are a few of the "critical areas" of this required methodological reconciliation.

16. *Theoretical — pragmatical.* The shock made by communism's historical failure upon the change theory is being amplified by the transition complexity. This tension between an expanding experience marked by controversial events and spectacular overturns on the one hand, and a new grammar of change on the other hand, generates a veritable "theoretic risk". The capacity of systematization, explanatory construction and prediction is questioned. Apparently paradoxical, *the larger the opportunity of analysis, the more improbable the consistency of its explanatory process.*

The breakdown of the communist system and the large scale of the initiated transformations provoke not merely a chance for structures to be opened towards theoretical investigation. The subject matter of analysis is placed by its nature on the edge of chaos. By its very essence transition produces and destroys invariants. The predominantly ephemeral character of the situations and structures is responsible for the diversity to end often in dispersion. The reciprocal annulment of the intermediary states makes the take-off towards the concept difficult, if not impossible. *Practice turns out to be so creative in itself that it stifles the theoretical approach.*

For political sociology this ambivalent challenge is running at present. The situation is also similar for the social sciences in general, for "reinventing politics" presupposes and is concomitant with reinventing not only economics but also morals, management sciences and law. The general reconsideration of the social system, given the downfall of communism, places the intellectual discourse in the central zone of the change processes. Interrogation and public polemic proliferate due to democratization but mainly under the conditions of economic reconstruction. Interest towards understanding and particularly towards the production of solutions induces an unexpected "piercing" of the wall which divided the theory from the practices of authoritarian governing. The experimentation of the new institutional structures, the gradual appearance of new political elites, but mostly the pressure upon the governing structures impose a new political cultural and also totally novel expectations for political analysis.

The dynamic relations among crisis-change-legitimacy on the one hand and among reform-social reactions-effectiveness on the other hand, acquire surprising dimensions in the East European countries. Being within the proximity of the current public debates, of the internal decisional mechanisms, behind the scenes of the international investment market, and last but not least, at the very core of global strategic games, political sociology is in the position of re-considering both its theoretical support and its analytical tools. Thus, political theory is sentenced to be left behind by circumstances, or whenever influenced by political partisanship, it is merely reduced to critical utopias, moral radicalism or nostalgic conservatism. Concomitantly, current policies touch upon instead groundless ambition, adventure or the routines of the old étatism.

The subsequent impasse resulting from here for all those within the decision making process continues to be at a highly critical level, while social costs, wasted opportunities and progressively accumulated tensions constitute a new *inertial factor* which is increasingly a burden on the chances of irre-

versible escape from the residual structures of the former totalitarian system. Suspended between theory and immediate action, risk analysis is being re-defined in progress.

Being by its very nature both empirical and prospective, the risk analysis of the transition in post-communist societies is presently facing several groups of issues. Thus, a necessary clarification refers to the identification criteria of the significant facts to be interpreted, since the heterogeneous character of the internal political environments, the inherent disorder of transition, as well as the conflict between mentalities and some behavioral models provoke a permanent confusion not only at a pragmatic level.

A novel symptomatology is being diffused within an utmost dynamic kaleidoscope where the spectacular events often camouflage the long term tendencies. *Conceptualization of the new tendencies* is a preliminary condition for the reform of theoretical language. If on the level of political discourse confrontation between "new speak" and the cosmopolitan formulations of liberal extraction ends by confusing the population, then on the level of analysis the substantiality of the terms waits for the validation of strategic hypotheses.

A second group of topics regards the relation *between strategic hypotheses and the development of political systems in the post-communist societies*. In this case also, the abundance of facts has attained so far neither the historical threshold needed to clarify the great tendencies nor the threshold of the overall stability so much required by these rapidly changing societies:

- reconstitution of the national consensus for change as public support of transition beyond the preliminary period of breaking away with the communist-type dictatorial regimes;
- reproduction and consolidation of the new democracies by means of pluralist electoral processes;
- retrieval of historical memory as an essential dimension of accomplishing national reconciliation;
- formation of a political elite both legitimate and efficient in reformulating the national interest and international reintegration;
- decentralization of the state structures and the establishment of local autonomy;
- ensuring dynamic and stimulating relations between public interest and the new interests deriving from the expansion of the private sector;
- harmonization of ethnic diversity in pluralist political, cultural and administrative structures;
- ensuring governing transparency closely linked to the freedom of expression, etc.

This list of strategic hypotheses is meant to suggest how complex the reference background of risk analysis actually is. Compared to these reference dimensions of transition, the evolutions of the post-communist systems are problematical in all cases, and the bottom line result most often proves to be negative. Nationalism, corruption, new forms of centralism and authoritarianism, scissions, occultism, charismatic conflicts, etc., are widely spread phenomena within post-communist societies. Their proliferation is significant both as related to the institutions and to the interest groups they are referring to. Their correlated influence questions the general meaning of political development and maintains in the medium term the uncertainties at the level of the system as regards the viability of the modernization and democratization processes within these societies.

However, the structural tension between the tendencies of modernization, of emancipation from the communist totalitarian system on the one hand and the counter-tendencies of restoration on the other hand, complicate the validity of the hypotheses of substantial analysis which are indispensable for the risk assessment. The prevailing area of risk analysis is defined by this discrepancy between the tendencies assumed at the system level, supported, at least initially, by massive social reactions and conservative tendencies which parasitize, degrade or even deter the general evolution.

17. Regional — global. It is quasi-unanimously admitted that the collapse of the communist system did not represent a mere and random sequence of national downfalls in the East European countries. Concomitantly and performing a catalyzing role, the regional decline of communism within the area of its origin, defined by the ex-Soviet empire, deeply transformed the relations between the internal and external processes. Later on, regional stability, and particularly the delicate process of Russia's reinsertion into the new structures of international security, have imposed, given the constancy of combining national and even local factors, the ebbs and flows of transition on large areas between the Vistula and the Urals. On the other hand, the transfer of organizational models of structures and economic mechanisms of Western inspiration, the re-opening of some traditional trading routes between the West and the East in transformation, made gradually way for other criteria and norms of change assessment.

The relative synchronization of these processes with the European integration might bring about an enhancement of institutional accuracy at the level of policy between transition in the East and growing convergence of these states with continental status-quo. But the uncertain character of the process of sepa-

rating from communism, the phenomena of relapse and the tendencies of restoration a few years after abandoning the "unique model of real socialism," emphasize the interest for the assessment of the relevance of the East's re-westernization.

The specific rhythms of reform within post-communist countries, as well as the constantly increasing visibility of competition among these states, have also increased the differentiating tendencies. This is more so the case as the fragmentation of the former political-military block and of its regional cooperative economic structures evidenced tensions and discrepancies frozen by "pax Sovietica" or compensated by an artificial balance between the economic, the political and the military. The decline and even the dissolution through violence of the federal states of the Soviet block took the tension among the national, the regional and the international to the verge of military confrontation.

Eventually, it was shown that in most cases *the convulsive character of the changes*, the violence or just the destructive manner in which the new balances were reconstructed, represents the price of the *artificiality of the communist system*, both internally and within the former "camp." Identification of the inner mainsprings belonging to the intrinsic peril of transition differentiates the risk analysis for this area in relation to the one having become "*traditional for global assessments.*"

Geopolitically speaking, the scission of the old Soviet block into zones with different development grades and with divergent orientations regarding the West appeared as already having been validated in the case of Central Europe due to the organic dependence on the tradition of the German Empire, and in the case of Russia due to the re-launching of its vocation as a great power at the border of the continent. Still, especially in the case of the other states, in fact the majority of them, this strategic hypothesis is lacking heuristic force. Moreover, it substantiated political options and initiatives supporting fragmentation, hostile competition and instability. Furthermore, discriminatory assessment of the former Soviet block countries poses great difficulties particularly, as regards European integration. The relation between these two types of transition represents one of the major domains pertaining to risk analysis.

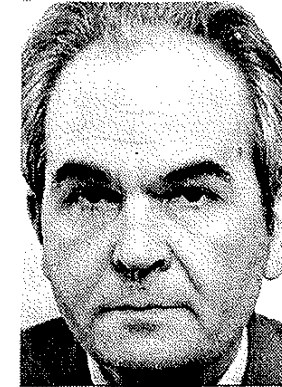
18. Present — future. The time dimension is essential for risk analysis due to the effort of anticipating evolutions. Even if this aspect mainly confers the "commercial" value to this kind of activity, at the level of analysis the explanatory mainsprings indispensable to political prognosis are to be found at

a more profound level. In fact, the essential characteristic of historical intervals of transition consists in the *system's structural heterogeneity*. Institutions and factors with diverse temporal origins co-exist within a dynamic conglomerate.

Identification of the fundamental tendency and of oscillations or rhythm changes related to this strategic tendency represents a basic target for risk analysis. Political risk with post-communist countries in transition expresses the very configuration of relations inside this dynamic conglomerate. The discontinual nature of the changing processes, initiation of different tendencies within a succession of sequences, as well as the most often unpredictable combination of the effects do provoke a state of specific "temporary disorder." *Management of this disorder constitutes, in fact, the crux of governing transition.*

In the medium and long term, a major part is played by the inevitable disparity between the high speed of social reactions (in societies with mentalities in change) compared to the slower change rhythm of institutional operability (specific to democratization) and particularly the slow pace of the processes involving the reconstruction of fundamental structures at the level of both the economy and the community. The perpetual fluidity maintained by the internal environment of the post-communist societies particularly in the first years, derives from the temporal complexity of public life settled. The paradoxical economic phenomena, the "perverse effects" of some continental economic policies mixed up with mass experimentation of the new behavioral and consumer models, make up the inexhaustible raw material for confusing a public life in which politics is re-invented and tested.

An immense improvisation is destined to do away with an artificial system. Under these conditions, the dynamics of risk constitute one of the most revealing dimensions.



NICOLAE-ŞERBAN TANAŞOCA

Né à Bucarest en 1941

Études de philologie classique à l'Université de Bucarest

Docteur ès lettres de la même université

Diplômé de l'École internationale de langue et culture néogrecques
de Thessalonique

Conduit des recherches de byzantinologie, balkanologie
(histoire de la romanité balkanique surtout)

Travaux de philologie grecque classique et néogrecque

Maître de recherche à l'Institut d'Études Sud-Est Européennes de Bucarest

Maître de conférences à l'Université de Bucarest

(enseigne la byzantinologie et le grec ancien)

Nombreux ouvrages (personnels ou en collaboration)

sur l'histoire de Byzance, des Pays Romains

Traductions de textes du grec ancien (Platon)

et du grec médiéval (Anne Comnène), ainsi que de textes néogrecs

Communications à de différents colloques sur l'histoire des Balkans
et sur la philologie grecque

Adresse: Institutul de Studii Sud-est Europene, Universitatea Bucureşti,
Bd. Republicii 13, 22159 Bucureşti, Romania, tel. +(40) 16144996.