Assessing the Regimes of Post-Soviet Transformation Countries through Political Discourse: Possibilities and Challenges

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The article explores the prospects of political regimes assessment based on political discourse in attempt to increase the accuracy of assessment results. The urgency of the issue is conditioned by the decrease in the efficiency of classical assessment methods. This is the result of new challenges stemmed from deepened rivalry within the process of new world order formation and the flawed practices of democratic political discourse. The results of the research show that regardless of the case studies on all three types of regimes based on political discourse, they do not reveal the features and patterns of political discourse used for assessing the regimes of post-Soviet transformation countries. To this end it is proposed to assess them based on political discourse with full range. The accuracy of the results can be best evaluated while comparing them with those obtained using classical assessment methods.

The struggle for new world order formation has considerably strengthened the impact of the mercenary factor on social processes, particularly on the assessment and classification of regimes established in post-Soviet transformation countries. It can be best minimized using new, extremely accurate approaches and methods. The problem becomes even more complicated in case the object of assessment is defined not only by the legal norms and structural mechanisms of the political system, its institutions and the organization of power, but also by the values, behavior, etc. J. Linz and A. Stepan propose three dimensions for the assessment of consolidated democracy: behavioral, attitudinal and

constitutional[1]. Whereas the first two dimensions are exclusively conditioned by the various manifestations of political culture, the constitutional one – only significantly; it refers not only to the appropriate norms enshrined in the Constitution, but also to society's attitude towards them. It is no coincidence that the political legacy (culture) – the society is determined by – is among the major factors having predetermined the nature of new regimes established in post-Soviet transformation countries[2]. Thus, the assessment mechanisms and principles of political culture are of particular importance in terms of the assessment accuracy of social systems and regimes.

Approaches to the Research and Assessment of Political Culture

There are various approaches to the research and assessment of political culture among which institutional, comparative, attitudinal, systemic, communicative, behavioral, etc. They address the political institutions, processes, values, consciousness, behavior, etc from different perspectives. The founders of the theory of political culture – G. Almond and S. Verba – stress the importance of political orientations in political culture classifying them into two major groups – cognitive (rational) and sensual-emotional (affective). The first implies the knowledge about and understanding of political system, its institutions, and the relationship between them, while the latter – the attitude and evaluative orientations towards the elements guaranteeing the functioning of political system and its institutions, i.e. the beliefs based on the values, knowledge and emotional orientations[3]. The authors consider a set of these orientations to fully describe the political culture in a given society. W. Rozenbaum identifies three groups of political orientations that enable to assess political culture: (1) orientations toward government structures, (2) orientations toward other political systems, (3) orientations toward one's

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[1] **Linz J., and Stepan A.,** *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1996.

[2] **Torosyan T.,** Post-Soviet Transformation of Social System, Yerevan, Tigran Mets, 2006, p. 94 (in Armenian).

[3] **Almond G., Verba S**., The Civil Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963, p. 14.

own political activity[4]. To formalize the assessment of political culture he proposes to single out the elements that are pivotal in the establishment of "nation's political order" and make up the core of political culture. Another principle of assessing the elements of political culture is introduced by V. Kravchenko who believes that different elements have different degrees of stability and functionality regardless of being in a certain collateral subordination[5].

The approach of M. Kaase is also worth mentioning in terms of the political orientations. According to the author, the political orientations (state-national identification, attitude towards political institutions, elite and political order) – directed to the determination of legitimacy/non-legitimacy of political system – make up the core of the political culture in democratic states. He also distinguishes orientations towards current politics, expression of political will, political participation, one's own rights and duties and political knowledge[6].

Attempts are frequently made to reveal the essence and character of political culture using the structural analysis method[7]. E. Batalov views political culture as a sum of the culture of political behavior and that of the functioning of political institutions[8]. He determines the overall nature of political culture by a behavioral approach regarding political behavior as one of the key elements attributed to political research. P. Sharan identifies three interrelated and interacting components in the structure of political culture – value preferences, emotional relations and empirical beliefs[9]. In addition to attitudinal and emotional elements, the

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[4] **Rozenbaum W.,** Political Culture. New York, 1975, pp. 1-7.

[5] **Кравченко В.,** Политическая культура как отражение политико-коммуникативной реальности общества, Сборник научных трудов "Актуальные проблемы теории коммуникации", Изд-во СПбГПУ, СПб, 2004, сс. 135-153.

[6] **Kaase M.,** Sinn oder Unsinu des Kouzens Politische Kultur liir die vergleihende Politihforschung, *Kaase M., Klingemann H.-D. Wahlen und politisches System. Opladen,* 1983, pp. 145-171.

[7] **Зимин В.,** Структура политической культуры в оценках ученых, *Теоретические вопросы социально-гуманитарных наук 7, Вестник ВЭГУ,* 4 (48), 2010, 7-12.

[8] **Баталов Э.,** Политическая культура современного американского общества, Наука, М., 1990.

[9] **Шаран П.,** Сравнительная политология: пер. с англ., ч. 2, М., 1992, сс. 154-155.

author also places the beliefs based on emotional experience in the structure of political culture. He considers them to be more stable and durable than the emotional ones.

The comparison of the structural elements of political culture demonstrates that the types of political orientation and other structural elements mostly correspond to each other. This implies that the structural approach to the assessment of political culture has undergone the necessary processing; and, thus, one can rely on it as a scientific research method. It enables assessing political culture based on its constituent elements and the comparative analysis of their correlation.

R. Inglehart relates the assessment of political culture to the economic and social changes and development. The author maintains that the political culture of every society is reflected in its economic development. Economic development, as well as cultural and political changes are taking place in parallel and in the same sense. This creates bases for making reasonable forecasts regarding the cultural and political changes. Inglehart believes democracy to be more stable in the countries ensuring real conditions for the citizens to feel themselves prosperous, be satisfied with their lives and trust each other[10].

Political culture is often examined and evaluated through political regimes[11] with a focus on the ways of their organization. M. Strezheneva notes that the political regimes defined by a strong socio-cultural individualism (liberal regimes) stand closer to the majoritarian or aggregative model in the organizational terms. The majoritarian form of political organization is characterized by two relatively equal and, meanwhile, confronting social groups. The representatives of this or that group more or less regularly replace each other at the helm of government, therefore getting a chance to accomplish their political projects. The alternative is a permanent compromise reached between two unequal groups aimed at finding satisfactory solutions for the whole society. This approach is known as consensual or integrative, and it is

[10] **Inglehart R.,** Modernization and Post-modernization. Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in Societies. Princeton, 1997, p. 325.
[11] **Lijphart A.,** Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries. New Haven-London, 1984; **March J., Olsen J.,** Rediscovering Institutions. The Organizational Basis of Politics. New York, 1989.

more typical to democratic regimes defined by a strong egalitarian culture, i.e. democratic regimes focused on a social dimension. The majoritarian approach is mostly common to the societies with homogeneous cultural relations, while consensual – to those with varied cultural relations[12]. It should be noted that the assessment of political culture within the framework of political regimes also incorporates the typical traits of the state structure. Unitary state structure is mainly typical to the states with homogeneous cultural value system, while federal one – to those with multicultural value system. Hence, homogeneous and heterogeneous cultural elements are of particular importance within this approach to political culture assessment.

The work of R. DeLeon and K. Naff based on the comparative analysis of identity stands out among the recent approaches to the research and assessment of political culture. It lies in the hypothesis that the elements of identity – race, religion, social class, gender – influence political reality in specific ways, therefore, shaping specific political culture. Accordingly, the political behavior of a man belonging to some race, religion, class and gender differs from that of the one belonging to other race, religion, class or gender. Therefore, they pertain to different political cultures[13]. Based on this methodology, one can assert that the social factors defining the society form the basis of the peculiarities the above-mentioned structural (identity) elements of political culture are characterized by. Thus, a particular set of religious, racial, class-related and gender factors can be of crucial importance among the factors determining political behavior of the society.

The research conducted by B. Silver and K. Dowley also focuses on the elements of identity for the research and assessment of political culture. The work regards the measurement of political culture in multi-ethnic societies. The authors measure value differences in political culture based on ethnic differences through the analysis of World Values Survey data. Political culture is measured via the comparative analysis of

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[12] **Стреженева М.,** Политическая культура в различных интерпретациях: анализ специального понятия, *Общественные науки и современность,* 5, 2002, сс. 141-155.

[13] **DeLeon Richard E., Naff Katherine C**., Identity Politics and Local Political Culture: The Politics of Gender, Race, Class and Religion in Comparative Perspective, San Francisco State University, 2003, p. 3.

10 fundamental democratic values in 16 countries[14]. However, this makes the measurement or assessment of political culture rely solely on value orientations of ethnic units without considering the importance and impact of other factors in the perception and adoption of democratic values. Meanwhile, the approach makes political culture measurement limited to democracy perception in terms of the ethnic features leaving out the necessity of measuring political cultures typical to other political regimes.

S. Kuhn suggests assessing political cultures relying not merely on value orientations, but, rather, on more durable measurement tools capable to promote the consolidation of democratic culture. The author thereby means the instrumental support provided both under the democratic and non-democratic regimes[15].

Drawing upon his studies on the American political culture, D. Elazar identifies three types of it: moralistic, individualistic and traditionalistic. Moralistic culture encourages the government interference in political, economic and social affairs for general welfare. Individualistic culture, by contrast, stands for the restriction of any state interference as it hinders the private initiatives and entrepreneurship. Traditionalistic culture is based on the necessity to preserve the established social order[16]. Addressing Elazar's research question of whether the individuals discriminate themselves along the political culture dimensions, E. Dran suggests using behavioral approach and organizing the research relying on three hypotheses:

1. Political culture, measured at the individual level, can best explain political behavior
2. The direct measurement is a better indicator of political culture than is a regional one

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[14] **Silver B., Dowley K.**, Measuring Political Culture in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Reaggregating the World Values Survey, Forthcoming in Comparative Political Studies, 2000.

[15] **Kuhn S**., Unmasking Instrumental Support for Democracy: A New Approach for Measuring the Political Culture of Democracy (July 7, 2014), available at http://ssrn.com/abstract=2531713 (14.04.2015).

[16] **Elazar D.,** American Federalism: A View from the States. New York: Harper and Row. 1984, pp. 115-119.

3. Political culture enables to explain individual political behavior and attitudes beyond that of socio-economic characteristics[17]

Still, the classification mode suggested by D. Elazar can be of a limited use since it is solely typical to the American culture and cannot be applied for the full assessment of political culture in those societies where political culture is based on the other principles and value systems[18].

Thus, regarding the basic approaches to the research and assessment of political culture it is possible to assert that they are largely based on sociological research methods prevalent in political science. Both quantitative and qualitative sociological methods – data analysis, surveys, interviews, expert examinations, etc – serve as the instruments contributing to the reliability of political culture research and assessment on mathematical bases.

The above discussed theories and classifications, when taken separately, explain only characteristics or features of political culture peculiar to a particular society. It is no coincidence that some authors suggest generalizing various approaches of political culture measurement within the theory of culture in the light of the changes of the historical and political realities[19]. Language is the only element typical to all cultures. The result of its operation is discourse; in case of political culture – political discourse. The latter exists in any political reality, bears a direct impact of political culture, meanwhile influencing itself the development of political culture. Hence, political discourse reflects the state of political culture in a given period, and the process of political culture development – in dynamics. Thereby, it enables to study, assess and measure political culture. Political discourse directly reflects the political culture of the society for the changes in political culture are

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[17] **Dran, Ellen M.,** Measuring political culture: An operationalization of the Elazar typology. Northern Illinois University, 1991p.
[18] **Zoellick T.,** Daniel Elazar, Bogus or Brilliant: A Study of Political Culture Across the American States, *Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research,* **5**, 1, 2000, available at http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/respublica/vol5/iss1/9 (17.04.2015).
[19] **Kiss S.,** Measuring Political Culture and Values in Comparative Perspective: Operationalizing Group-Grid Cultural Theory, Montreal, 2014, available at http://ecpr.eu/Events/PanelDetails.aspx?PanelID=4173&EventID=94, (12.04.2015).

manifested in political discourse. Thus, political discourse can be used as a tool of assessing political culture.

The culture is shaped and developed due to communication – a bilateral process. For someone else to address your visions, you need means of communication available to respondent, i.e. a gesture, sound, sign etc., in general – the language. Therefore, political culture is shaped and developed in the process of political communication by means of political language which produces political discourse.

Political Discourse as an Assessment Tool of Political Culture

According to E. Benveniste, discourse is a language put into action; a speech uniting language and those who master it[20]. It serves not only as a cultural environment for human activity, but as a factor closely related to the political life of the society. The formation, impact and transmission of political information are all achieved through the language. Political culture relies on the multiple forms of language. It serves as an objictification tool of ideas, ideological structures and concepts. Language is the basic means of political culture existence and development; and as a fundamental component of political culture, like historical and political experience, political consciousness and behavior, it unites all structural elements of political culture[21]. Political discourse (oral and written speech) is the language of political culture. As a precondition to the formation of political culture and its outcome, political discourse interconnects various political processes and the visions of them in human consciousness through the linguistic signs.

T. Van Dijk defines discourse not merely as a coherent text, but as a complex communicative phenomenon with the social context giving an idea about the participants of communication, as well as the process of perception and articulation[22]. In the second half of the 20th century the

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[20] **Benveniste E.,** Problèmes de linguistique générale, Paris, N.R.F., Bibliothèque des sciences humaines, vol. 1, 1966.
[21] **Зимин В.,** Op. cit.
[22] **Ван Дейк Т.,** Язык. Познание. Коммуникация, М., 1989, с.13.

paradigm of discourse acquired revolutionary nature in social sciences[23]. Various political processes and phenomena alongside with traditional philosophical paradigms started being examined within the paradigm of discourse. The theory of discourse began to take shape after the French social crisis of 1968 as a critical analysis of structuralistic and post-structuralistic concepts focused on the studies of society and culture[24]. Later, political discourse started to be perceived as an important component of political phenomena[25].

J. Habermas was the first to systematically apply the theory of discourse for the interpretation of democracy and the theories of law. In his "The Theory of Communicative Action" Habermas defines discourse as a special form of communication aimed at making objective analysis of reality, as well as critical discussion and justification regarding the views and actions the participants of communication hold. According to his theory of communicative action, "Discourse is a reasonable means of dialogue to reach a general consensus. Here we seek to reach a common understanding – achieved in communicative action – by a reasoned argument"[26]. Habermas views discourse as a means of obtaining "valid" scientific knowledge[27]. Thus, the analysis of political discourse can ensure the credibility of political culture perception and assessment. Based on his theory of communicative rationality and discourse, Habermas developed a model of democracy uniting democratic legitimacy and deliberative politics. His theory of discourse expands from moral to democratic theory which stresses the importance of

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[23] **Петухова А.,** Возможности дискурс-анализа для изучения политической культуры властных элит Российской империи к. XIX - н. XX вв., доступен http://discourse-pm.ur.ru/avtor6/petuhova.php, (24.03.2014).

[24] **Ордуханян Э.,** Политический дискурс как средство политической коммуникации, Философия, политика, культура, М., 2011 сс. 222-236.

[25] **Howarth D.,** Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance. *Basingstoke:* Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 316-350; **Bourdieu P.,** Language and Symbolic Power, Cambridge, 1991; **Фуко М.,** Интеллектуалы и власть, *Слова и вещи. Археология гуманитарных наук,* СПб., 1994; **Хабермас Ю.** Теория коммуникативного действия, М., 1981.

[26] **Хабермас Ю.,** Моральное сознание и коммуникативное действие, СПб, 2000.

[27] **Habermas J.**, The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society, Beacon Press, 1985.

popular sovereignty. Hence, political power derives from the communicative power of citizens under the conditions of democracy[28]. According to Habermas, discourse gives rise to the principle of democracy when applied to the law. Only those laws may claim legitimacy that can meet with the assent of the citizens in a discursive process that in turn has been legally constituted[29].

D. Franz stresses the importance of political discourse in democratic political culture from other perspective, "discourse is central to the democratic vision of justice and peace"[30].

E. Segale maintains that the relations between subjection and domination (power) and their agents are key to political discourse. Political communities, agents, traditions, rituals, norms, ideology, and, in general, political culture constitute political discourse and are defined by their belonging to the social sphere[31]. Moreover, D. Green notes that the ultimate goal of a politician is not so much the clarification of the conceptual content of key terms as the provocation of recipients' desired reaction[32].

The research on the ruling and enforcement power of political discourse – as a powerful resource – and – thus, an object of desire, fear and control – is in the same dimension. As M. Foucault notes, "Within every society the discourse is at once controlled, selected and redistributed according to certain procedures whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous materiality[33]. The author notes that all types of discourse have political coloring for being dispositives of power.

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[28] **Flynn J.,** Communicative Power in Habermas's Theory of Democracy, *European Journal of Political Theory*, 3, 2004, 433-454.
[29] **Habermas J.,** Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy, tr. William Rehg. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1996, in n. 1, p. 107.
[30] **Franz D.,** Discourse and Democracy /Bibliographic Review, *The Hedgehog Review*, Fall 2004, pp. 85-92.
[31] **Шейгал Е.,** Семиотика политического дискурса. Гнозис, М., 2004, с. 53.
[32] **Green D.,** The language of politics in America: shaping the political consciousness from McKinley to Reagan. – Ithaca: Cornell Univ.Press, 1987, p. 2.
[33] **Фуко М.,** Воля к истине: по ту сторону знания, власти и сексуальности/ Работы разных лет, М. 1996, с. 51.

Nowadays the analysis of political discourse (R. Bart, T. Van Dijk, D. Austin) is increasingly used in political science, mostly as a tool for studying the relationship between the symbolic systems (text) and the social processes (institutions). Political discourse serves as a mechanism which de facto shapes the symbolic systems established in politics to transfer a set of symbols to the whole society[34].

The suggested approaches view the analysis of political discourse in terms of the semiotic and communicative approaches. Ilyin describes politics as the object of the analysis of political discourse for being a semiotic phenomenon and a perceived cooperation to achieve the goals set. It is the case when politics turns into a contact, a communication and, in terms of its nature – into a language[35]". Hence, politics is reflected in political language or discourse which is an important component of political culture and a means of its assessment.

From methodological perspective the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stands out among the methods of discourse analysis (contextual, cognitive, ideological, intent, descriptive, etc) in terms of the assessment of political culture. As an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of discourse, the CDA views language as a form of social practice. This method combines social and linguistic practices. It is focused on how the relationship between society and government is established and the extent to which they are dependent on the language[36].

The CDA primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are reproduced and resisted by the text and speech in the social and political context[37]. This is explicitly linked to the political culture. Thus, the following tenets of critical discourse analysis can be used for the assessment of political culture:

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[34] **Петров К.,** Роль политического дискурса в политических изменениях, автореферат диссертации, М., 2009, с. 4.

[35] **Ильин М.,** Политический дискурс как предмет анализа, *Политическая наука*, 3, 2002, 9-21.

[36] **Fairclough N.**, Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language. Routledge; 2 edition, 2010.

[37] **Van Dijk T.**, Introduction: What Is Critical Discourse Analysis? *Critical Discourse Analysis*, pp. 352-365, available at:
http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Critical%20discourse%20analysis.pdf
(19.05.2015).

- CDA method addresses social and political problems,
- Power relations are discursive,
- Discourse constitutes society and culture.Discourse does ideological work,
- Discourse is a historical phenomenon,
- The link between text and society is mediated,
- Discourse analysis is explanatory,
- Discourse is a form of social   action.[38]

Since 2000's the analysis of political discourse has been used for the assessment of political regimes based on the above-mentioned tenets.

Political Discourse as a Means of Studying Political Regimes

The differences of regimes are also manifested by the peculiarities of discourse that directly affect the formation of political behavior and value system.

Drawing upon various manifestations of political culture under various political regimes, one can reveal the peculiarities of political discourse according to the forms of regimes. This will enable to define the standards necessary for assessing the regimes and political culture correspondent to them through political discourse.

In the Soviet totalitarian discourse described by the prevalence of a subject political culture, the society was divided into "friends" and "foes", according to the differences in social class and ideology. The "foes" could turn to "people's enemy"; and all those who opposed ruling political system were viewed as "dissidents" and were subjected to the

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[38] **Fairclough N., Wodak R.,** Critical discourse analysis. Glasgow University Media Group. 1997; **T. A. van Dijk** (ed.), Discourse Studies. More Bad News. London: Routledge A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Vol. 2. 1980; **Kegan P.,** Discourse as Social Interaction Glasgow University Media Group. 1982, pp. 258-284.

most violent means[39]. This is a key feature of totalitarian discourse which stands out for its unilateralism, lack of interaction and coercive nature.

L. Lams, G. Crauwels, H. Serban suggest a comparative analysis of totalitarian and authoritarian discourses and their aftermath based on the case studies of the former East Germany, Yugoslavia, Romania, Lithuania, China, North Korea, the Philippines, Burma, Cuba and Tunisia. The authors study political discourse using cognitive comparative method from both geographical, and chronological perspectives. This enables a comparison between the past and present discourses. Various manifestations of discourse are presented in culture, education, media, power structures and politics[40]. The cognitive comparative method enables to identify the characteristics of political discourse and to compare them with the actual policy of the government, i.e., what is said and what is done. Does the "speech" of political power de facto correspond to its "functionality"?

S. Hall studied the authoritarian political regimes in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine based on the comparative method of discourse analysis. The author used cognitive mapping techniques of discourse analysis, i.e., the disclosure of the similar elements of discourse in different societies and the comparative links between them in terms of the socio-political processes. Drawing upon the use of this technique, Hall noted that the above-mentioned states learn from each other and exchange their authoritarian practice with each other building similar institutions; and that these processes are mediated by political discourse[41].

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[39] **Коровкова О.** «Свои чужие» в дореволюционном политическом дискурсе большевиков и советском тоталитарном дискурсе, *Политическая лингвистика*, 4, 2011, доступен
http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/svoi-chuzhie-v-dorevolyutsionnom-politicheskom-diskurse-bolshevikov-i-sovetskom-totalitarnom-diskurse#ixzz3XZT0GPsy, (17.04.2015).

[40] **Lams L., Crauwels G., Şerban H.,** Totalitarian and Authoritarian Discourses: A Global and Timeless Phenomenon? Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien, 2014.

[41] **Hall S.**, Can Authoritarian Regimes Learn? The cases of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine, 2014, available at:
http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/5502/, (17.05.2014).

Among various approaches to the assessment of authoritarian political culture that of D. Lewis is also worth mentioning. The author notes that the current authoritarian regimes are mostly characterized by a range of non-governmental organizations thereby contradicting to the principles of the theory of democracy stating that the non-governmental organizations are typical to democratic regimes. The author relies on Young's dualistic approach to civil society to explain such political interaction[42]. The approach stresses the discursive role of civil society which is of key importance in the dynamics of coercion and cooperation faced by non-governmental organization under the authoritarian rule[43].

The authoritarian discourse has specific expressions in case of Singapore. It is characterized by the suppression of civil rights and liberties exercised by the state authorities drawing upon the laws and the legitimacy of power. The primary feature of Singapore's authoritarian discourse is the ability of the government to preserve balance between legitimacy and rights suppression paradox under a subject political culture. The stability of political order (when the government enjoys broad social legitimacy) is the key of Singapore's economic development within authoritarian discourse. Within the authoritarian discourse the productive functioning of political institutions – which the cultural factor also contributes to – is among the major characteristics defining Singapore's system. S. Wilson views Singapore as an authoritarian legal state in which the legitimacy of government constitute the basis of a system stability[44]. Singapore stands out for its model of government in which the authoritarian discourse does not hinder but, moreover, contributes to the stability of political order and economic development.

J. Liu and T. Shi[45] studied the ideological and discursive struggle in authoritarian China in pre-democratic transition period. The

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[42] **Young I. M.,** Inclusion and Democracy. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

[43] **Lewis D.,** Civil Society and the Authoritarian State: Cooperation, Contestation and Discourse, *Journal of Civil Society*, **9**, 3, 2013, 325-340.

[44] **Wilson S.,** A Review of Authoritarian Rule of Law: Legislation, Discourse and Legitimacy in Singapore by Jothie Rajah, *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies,***21,** 1, 2014, 297-301.

[45] **Jie Lu, Tianjian Shi,** The Battle of Ideas and Discourses before Democratic Transition: Different Democratic Conceptions in Authoritarian China, *International Political Science Review*, **36**, 1, January, 2015, 20-41.

government of China (a country with a limited democratic experience) seeks to disguise its authoritarian nature using a guardianship discourse – an indicator of flawed discourse. The authors used national survey mechanisms. Based on the results of the survey held among the people they revealed that the Chinese government uses education and media systems, as well as the Confucian and Leninist ideologies to indoctrinate its people with the guardianship discourse. This may be defined as an authoritarian discourse for its reliance on flawed interaction. However, the Chinese people perceive it as a more or less democratic one. This demonstrates that the controlling and manipulative functions of political discourse have deeper roots in authoritarian political culture. Therefore, one can unequivocally state that under authoritarian political regimes political discourse generally has a flawed multilateral nature based on the simulation of interaction. Although the Chinese believe that their government is democratic, the authors maintain that it actually represents an illusion of democracy[46]. Under authoritarian regimes political discourse with its various expressions may be defined as flawed democratic, while the applied policy – as manipulative and controlling therefore amounting to the discrepancy between political discourse and applied policy.

D. Johnson and R. Johnson note that under democratic regimes political discourse is aimed at strengthening democracy. The authors view political discourse as a decision making method in democratic states through "constructive controversy" mechanism. This implies that under democratic regimes the positions of citizens may contradict each other which is possible to overcome through constructive discourse. It enables to create a positive attitude towards opposing positions. Here political discourse relies on the premise that the rights of the political minority are protected until it is possible to make a new decision. A constructive debate between those having opposing positions creates favorable environment for the rights of the minorities to be respected and protected[47]. Therefore, political discourse stands out in democratic

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[46] **Jie Lu, Tianjian Shi**., Op. Cit.

[47] **Johnson David W., and Johnson Roger T.,** Civil Political Discourse In A Democracy: The Contribution of Psychology, *Peace & Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 6(4), 2000, 291-317.

culture for its constructivism, multilateralism and interaction. To put it differently, there is a strong feedback between the government and the society and a real political participation of people. Meanwhile, political discourse and applied policy are consistent with each other. The work of C. Knutsen and H. Nygard is also worth mentioning among the studies on the assessment of political regimes through political discourse. Studying the institutional characteristics of regimes the authors conclude that semi-democratic (authoritarian) regimes are less durable than the totalitarian and democratic ones. They use operationalization of the form and model of political regime based on the "average life span (1800-2000) by regime types" model – the measurement mechanism put forward by Gates et al[48]. The researchers also note that semi-democracies are particularly unstable political regimes[49].

The above discussed studies regarding the assessment of regimes based on political discourse enable specifying three groups of political discourse and political regime type in compliance:

- Political discourse is totalitarian and implies a patriarchal and subject political culture (totalitarian regime) when unilateral, monological, without an interaction and with a coercive nature
- Political discourse is authoritarian and implies a flawed participatory or a subject political culture (authoritarian regime) when based on flawed pluralism and interaction, and characterized by the mismatch of the applied policy and presented discourse
- Political discourse is democratic and implies a civic and participatory political culture (democratic regime) when based on pluralism and constructivism, and accompanied by a comprehensive communication guaranteeing the compliance between the applied policy and political discourse

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[48] **Gates S., Havard H., Mark P. J., and Havard S.,** Institutional Inconsistency and Political Instability: Polity Duration, 1800–2000. *American Journal of Political Science,* 50(4), 2006, 893–908.
[49] **Knutsen C. H., Nygard H. M.,** Institutional Characteristics and Regime Survival: Why Are Semi-Democracies Less Durable Than Autocracies and Democracies? *American Journal of Political Science*, **59,** 3, July, 2015, 656–670.

Still, the results of the studies indicate that in different states, even when assessing the same type of regime, two additional factors – regional and national – should be taken into account out of the above-mentioned criteria. Obviously, this approach should as well be applied with regard to post-Soviet transformation countries for they have undergone a unique path – a shift from the communism to other regimes. Hall's previously mentioned study on the cases of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine confirms this claim. Here the author reveals both the commonalities and the differences of the political discourse typical to these countries. Comparing the results registered in these countries with those of the above-mentioned non post-Soviet countries essential differences can be deduced, many of them common to all post-Soviet transformation countries. Thus, when studying the regimes of post-Soviet transformation countries through political discourse, one should also consider the factor of specific circumstances. Otherwise, we can witness the experience of the 90s of the 20th when the ignorance of this factor caused fundamental inaccuracies and flaws both when studying the regimes of post-Soviet transformation countries and when making forecasts and adjustments regarding the ongoing developments[50]. The comparison between the results of regime study based on classical methods and those based on political discourse is of particular interest. Regarding the first, one can use the research conducted by T. Torosyan and H. Sukiasyan[51] in which the authors identify three groups of post-Soviet transformation countries with a major focus on the characteristics of political regimes, as well as the three stages and three paradigms of that process.

Conclusion

1. The struggle for new world order formation as well as the frequent use of flawed democratic discourse under the current

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[50] **Torosyan T., Sukiasyan H.,** Three Stages, Three Groups and Three Paradigms of Post-Soviet Transformation, *Armenian Journal of Political Science*, 1, 2014, pp. 51-61.
[51] **Torosyan T., Sukiasyan H.,** Op. Cit.

authoritarian regimes significantly affect the social processes. This creates a need for improving the mechanisms of political regimes assessment to ensure more accurate results.

2. To overcome the new challenges facing the assessment and classification of political regimes, classical approaches need to be revised and the alternative ones, particularly those based on the study of political culture, need to be applied.

3. Whereas the studies of political culture for addressing democracy consolidation and development issues have been carried out since the 80s of the 20th century, it is only recently widely used for the assessment and classification of political regimes.

4. Although the works on the studies of political regimes through political discourse address the authoritarian, totalitarian, and democratic regimes among them some cases of post-Soviet transformation countries, there is still no comprehensive study regarding this issue. Therefore, the common and specific features typical to that group of countries have not been revealed yet.

5. A comprehensive study on the regimes of post-Soviet transformation countries should consider both the results of the research obtained through classical methods – as the basis of comparative study – and the previous attempts. The latter reveals that while the post-Soviet transformation is subjected to a number of general principles of transitology, it also has a number of specific features. Their ignorance may bring forth fundamental inaccuracies and flaws both when studying this phenomenon and when making forecasts and adjustments regarding the ongoing developments.