

COMPARISON OF HUNGARIAN AND ROMANIAN ELITE THEORIES FROM 1990-2007

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Abstract

The present study examines the major differences of elite theory and research development in two Central and Eastern European countries, namely Hungary and Romania. It focuses on the relevant characteristics of prior regime types pointing out the major factors that affected the development of political sciences in the respective countries. It will focus on the literature which has been published after the 1989 revolution made on Romanian and Hungarian political elites, more precisely the overview of the “old” and “new” elite relation to each other. Nevertheless it studies the basic concept differences and similarities of the elite researches made, in addition describing the situation of elite theory before and after the transition to democracy.

Keywords: elites, elite theory, Romania, Hungary, transition, regime types

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Introduction

Political elites were playing a central role in East Central European countries in 1989, the year when they started their first steps toward a new political regime. With the domino effect of the regime fall in the area, also called the “third wave” of democratization by Samuel P. Huntington, after decades of dictatorship whole societies came to a turning point in their life. This brought the loss of legitimacy of the leadership, so the new elite had to differentiate themselves from the old ideology, legitimacy and also political structure, in order to gain the trust of the citizens.¹ Scholars more or less agree that the transition to democracy has been an elite driven process, which mean that they have been the actors of democratization. After the fall of communist regimes in East Central Europe elite theories were resurgence in these countries, several scholars started to focus on elites which helped the transition to democracy. Unfortunately elite researches many times interlock with transition researches and also with projects which had in focus party systems and political cleavages.

Western democracies showed several political models of democracy for the former communist countries to follow. The choices were made by the political elites, so this choice became one of the most important post communist processes; thus the elites got a central role in the process of democratization and consolidation of democracy. Studies of the elites vary on a large scale: some focus on the composition, transformation of the elites, others on the social background and personal biographies of the members of the elites, also on elite

¹ Irina Culic, “Social Actors in a Political Game. The Romanian Political Elite and Democratization, 1989-2000.” *Romanian Journal of Political Science* (2005)
http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/rjps/rjps_v5n1/rjps_v5n1_005.pdf

recruitment, nomenclature, economic, transition elites and so on. This means that elite research became multidimensional in Central and Eastern Europe. In the time of Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, who are considered one of the first elite theorists, elite had the meaning of something elevated, permanent characteristic; while today its meaning is referring to a temporal position, function. In this case the political elite are defined as persons who are able to influence societal decisions substantially mostly because of their positions in organizations. This group includes individuals who affect the political outcomes significantly, therefore with their decisions society's member's everyday life. The elite researches give the opportunity of better understanding of the post-communist societies; more or less they also help us to understand the power sharing's mechanism.

In Romania in the 1990s very few empirical researches were made on the issue of the political elites. Romania was definitely lags behind in this respect compared to other Central and East European countries.² This can be demonstrated by the review of the most important literature written on this topic in the area, Heinrich Best and Ulrike Becker. In their edited book "Elite Research in Central and Eastern Europe"³ they are describing the situation after the revolution in several countries: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Russia, the Baltic Countries, Ukraine and the Federal States of Germany with the exception of Romania. Some years later in a study run by Iván Szelényi and Donald J. Treiman⁴ called "Social Stratification in Eastern Europe after 1989: General Population Survey", sample surveys were conducted in 1993 and 1994 in six countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic,

² Stefan Laurentiu, *Patterns of Political Elite Recruitment in Post-Communist Romania*, (Bucuresti: Editura Ziua, 2004) 10

³ Heinrich Best and Ulrike Becker, *Elites in Transition. Elite Research in Central and Easter Europe*. (Leske Budrich, Opladen, 1997)

⁴ Szelényi Iván-Donald J. Treiman, *Social Stratification in Eastern Europe after 1989. General Population Survey*. (Los Angeles: UCLA, Department of Sociology, 1998)

Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovakia. Yet again Romania was not included in the study. Likewise in the early studies made on elites in Romania other countries were not used for comparative purposes. Hungary had much smoother transition compared to Romania, more or less because of the political plurality and of the round table talks which were between the old regime representatives and the fragmented opposition. Despite the qualitative differences these countries have quite similar elite fragmentation and communist elite reproduction as Irina Culic notes it.

The aim of this master thesis is to compare the development of elite theory in Hungary and Romania from 1990 and 2007 finding answers to the following questions:

- Does the elite theory in Romania differ from the one in Hungary?
- What are the differences in the elite's concepts of the elite theory in Romania and Hungary?
- What kind of similarities exists in the elite's concepts of the elite theory in Romania and Hungary?
- What kind of effect had the state regime type on elite theory and why?

To achieve the aim of this thesis I will describe the essence of elite theory, bring out the relevant characteristics of the regime types and give an overview of crucial turning points in history from the perspective of elite theory before and after revolution. I will focus on the literature which has been published after the 1989 revolution made on Romanian and Hungarian political elites, more precisely the overview of the "old" and "new" elite relation to each other.

The present paper consists of four parts. In the first part I will present elite theories that might give base to a discussion on the concepts on theoretical and practical relevance of political elite theory and give overview of the literature that might serve as a ground for

transition elite theorists. I will name the major works and findings on the field also describing the typology of regime types and its characteristics. The second and third chapter consist of the historical background of the communist Hungary and Romania, the development of political and social sciences and in addition the situation of elite theory before and after the transition to democracy. The final part of the thesis compares the findings of previous chapters.

This research uses the content analysis method to analyze the development of elite theory in Hungary and Romania from 1990-2007 from comparative perspective. Content analyse is widely used method in social sciences and also in political analyse that enables researches to include large amounts of textual material. The steps for the content analysis suggested by Wimmer and Dominick⁵ are following: formulate the research questions, define the population in question, select a sample, define a unit of analysis, construct the categories of content to be analyzed, code the content, analyse data and draw conclusions. Data collection in content analysis can be based on different recorder materials. The data used in this analysis are the books, studies, articles, websites and other textual information found on the elite theory in Romania and Hungary. Data analyze follows the categories found and is conducted from the comparative perspective by naturalistic interpretation. As the result the drawn conclusion of the research is given in the final part of the thesis.

⁵ Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominic, *Mass Media Research. An Introduction*. (Wadsworth Publishing, 2006) 154

Chapter 1: What is the Political Elite?

Classical elite theories accept the fact, that in every society there are people who have more power than others and there is one group of people in the population of a country that will take the major decisions for the whole the society. Basically society is divided into majority and minority, masses and elites, the former are ruled and the later are ruling. They own the cultural economic life's main positions and also the political one. Defining political elite is not the easiest task today, because during the past century the meaning of it have changed as well, nevertheless different theorists are using different definitions. Scholars connect the birth of the elite concept to the two Italian academics Vilifred Pareto and Gaetano Mosca who independently developed the concept. ⁶

One of the fathers of elite paradigm, Gaetano Mosca was primary interested in the relation between the elite and the masses, how do elites change and finally what are the major characteristics of the modern elite. His views were sociological, that means that he did not consider the elite change as the consequence of the elite's intellectual or moral decline that he believed are the products of the changing social relations. The archaic societies are static contrary to the modern ones which are more mobile; similarly the elite of the later one are much more open for change. The other important elite theorist Pareto who is using the concept of elite in two ways: first as the quality of a prominent human accomplishment, second as the leading group of a society. He is part of the elite theorists who have a critical thinking toward democracy, pointing at the universal law of the separation of the masses and elites; moreover he was criticizing the concept of democracy and evolution. The central

⁶ Marcus E. George, *Elites: Ethnographic Issues*, ed. Marcus E. Gorge (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 13-14

concept of his theory is the elite circulation. According to the theory the elites are changing each other; similarly the separation of the elites and masses remains the same. The cause of the elite change is based on individual factor while in the leading group the human quality is declining in the masses new, talented individuals are getting more power. Because of the raising number of the decadent persons of the leading group, the elite have two choices: either they will try to balance the power in the society by getting more new members from the masses, or if the elite is closed then the talented individuals coming from the masses will form a new elite groups and take the power.⁷ The political power, as Putnam puts it, can be seen as the “ability to influence other individuals” and also as “the ability to influence collective decision making”.⁸ This basically means that a person who has power can make another person act in a way that the second would not otherwise choose.

Elite theorists emphasize that the distance between elite and the masses is getting bigger because of the advantages that the elite has compared to the masses, arguing that this cleavage is ideological or due to interests. Robert Michels notes that mass parties sooner or later are willing to adopt oligarchical structures. The statement of Michels that mass parties are not able to become a democratic organization is basically based on three factors. The first is that an organization after a certain size will produce hierarchies among its members which are due to the fact that big organizations need experts who have skills to lead such an organization. Functional differentiation will be created between the party leaders and simple members, as long as the leaders will have only the power to control the party resources. The

⁷ Tom Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (London: Routledge, 1993) 35

⁸ Robert D. Putman, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1976) 5

leaders because of the control over the resources they can give rewards or even punishments. Michels argues that the functional division is leading to the elitization of the parties.⁹

According to Robert Putman the classical elite theory at the turn-of-the-century represented by Mosca, Pareto and Michels have some general principles in common. First is that political power is distributed unequally as any other social good, so it means that people can be ranked by their share of goods – by their political power as well. Second, people can be divided into two groups, the first group is which have political power and the second group is formed by people who have none. Third is that elite is homogeneous, unified and also self-conscious, nevertheless the elite is considered to be self-perpetuating and coming from a special part of the society, more from the wealthy segment of the society. Finally the authors believe that the elite are autonomous.¹⁰ Putman did not take in to consideration that in 1920s' and 1930s' the elite theorists did not use the concept of elite only in its sociological meaning, but they gave a moral aspect to the notion of elite. They were persuading that with the function of elite there is a moral obligation as well; more precisely they had to follow some kind of standard behavior, nevertheless they were responsible for the creation, maintenance and coverage of social values.¹¹

The third principle by Putman was summed by James Meisel who put together a formula which says that elites should be credited by the “three C’s”: group conciseness, coherence and conspiracy. Group conciseness meaning that the elites are thinking of themselves as a cohesive group, coherence meaning that they are belonging to the same

⁹ Robert Michels, *Political parties : a sociological study of the oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy / translated by Eden and Cedar Paul* (New York: Free Press, 1968) 56

¹⁰ Robert D. Putman, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1976) 3-4

¹¹ Kovács Gábor, “Eliték és társadalmak a globalizáció és az információs forradalom korában,” in. *Túl az iskolafilozófián*, eds. Nyíri Kristóf - Palló, (Budapest: Gábor Áron Kiadó, 2005) 356

social class, same socialization and also having the same values, and finally conspiracy meaning that they want to achieve more or less the same things.¹² One can argue that the elite principles can change in different political systems, meaning that they are not the same in democratic and totalitarian regimes. Furthermore in transition time there also can be differences, most probably because of the unstable situation of the regime and also the power sharing in the country can become fluid and people from other part of the society can come to power. I assume that in the case of Hungary and Romania there were some differences

After Mosca Mills was the first who strengthened the concept of elites, being one of the firsts who focused on the functions and relations of the American political and economical elites' in different localities. Basically he differentiates two kind of type of family in the elite circles, in the first the money and prestige was inherited by generation to generations, and in the second group we can find the previous family's lawyers and managers. In the 1950's Mills C. Wright in his book called *The Power Elite* is focusing on the leading groups of the American society argues that the elite is a group that has strong cohesion with similar ideology and the political positions are circulating within this group. In order for a person to become members of this circle had to be a family member or had to co-opt with the elite.

Mills can be considered as an exception, because after the Second World War the word elite had a negative connotation and it was considered as a "bad word". This actually has changed from the beginning of the 1980's when the neolite-theories started to appear different from its 1920's predecessor elite theories. The main characteristics of the new elite theories are that they are lack of moral aspects and the power elite becomes the centre of the

¹² James H. Meisel, *The Myth of the Ruling Class: Gaetano Mosca and the Elite*.(University of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor, 1958) p.4

attention (like at Mills). And this is the characterized by the most of the transition theories that began to gain more space within this field: power, informal influences, formality of the representative democracies, nevertheless on the widening gap between the ruled and rulers.

The search for political elites in the last century led to minor disagreement over the elite definitions. The elite definitions by Harold Lasswell, C. Wright Mills, Robert A. Dahl, James Meisel, T.B. Bottomore as Alan Zuckerman puts it have to main problems: different labels are used to refer to the same concept and different concepts are covered by the same label. The concept of political elite is used in various ways: ruling class, political class, power elite, elite, leadership group. Because of the unclear concept of power there are still empirical problems in indentifying the exact political elite – the individuals who are exercising political power in a political system. Robert Dahl is aware of this problem saying that the “real” political elite is hidden from the view.¹³

Finally I would like to use Highley and Burton’s definition of elite as persons:

“[...] who hold top positions in large or otherwise powerful organizations and movements and who participate in or directly influence political decision-making. So defined, political elites include not only the familiar ‘power elite’ triumvirate of top business, government and political leaders, but also top position holders in parties, professional associations, trade unions, media, interest groups, religious and other powerful and hierarchically structured organizations and sociopolitical movements. It is plausible to presume that all such persons participate in or directly influence political decision-making, even if some do so mainly by blocking or countering decisions. Put most simply, political

¹³ Robert A. Dahl, “A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model” reprinted in Edward Laumann, Paul Siegel and Robert Hodge, eds., *The Logic of Social Hierarchies* (Chicago: Markham, 1970) 290

elites consist of those persons who have the organized capacity to make real political trouble”

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1.1 PRIOR REGIME CHARACTERISTICS

In order to characterize the Hungarian and Romanian regime the typology of Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan¹⁵ is used. This typology is chosen because Linz and Stepan used a well developed theoretical framework to describe the democratization processes in post-communist Europe, more precisely the made case studies on Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia and Latvia. By the selection of the case studies they covered all Central European countries that began their transition toward democracy about the same time – with the fall of communism in the region. They are using a five-category typology of political systems that goes beyond the typical democratic, authoritarian and totalitarian political regimes, they are presenting as ideal type categories for the purpose of classification. The typology’s categories are: democracy, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, post-totalitarianism (divided into early, frozen and mature post-totalitarianism) and finally sultanism. The authors are trying to examine the effect of the “previous” regime type right before the democratic transition and democratic consolidation using five variables.

Linz characterized the regime types on four dimensions: first the degree of political and social pluralism, second either the regime is mobilizing or demobilizing the society – the level of citizen participation –, third whether the leaders have freedom in the exercise of

¹⁴ John Higley and Michael Burton ., “Elite Transformation in Democratizations’ Three waves” (paper presented at the XVIII World Congress of the International Political Science Association.. Research Committee on Political Elites. Quebec, Canada, August, 2000).

¹⁵ Juan J Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe.* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996)

power, the way that the elite is recreated and recruited, and finally whether the regime develops a unique ideology, using manipulative symbols or relies on a diffuse mentality. Nevertheless in order for a political regime to consolidate they need to create the following features: a free and lively civil society, an autonomous and valued political society, the rule of law, a relatively efficacious state bureaucracy, and an institutionalized economic society.¹⁶

Here are the characteristics of three regime types that are the closest to the two countries in this research, according to Linz and Stepan Hungary being a ‘mature’ post-totalitarian regime and Romania is somewhere between totalitarian and sultanistic regime types.

Table 1.1 Regime Ideal Types and Their Characteristics (after Linz and Stepan, 1996, pp. 44-5)

	1. Pluralism
Totalitarianism	No significant economic, social, or political pluralism. Official party has <i>de jure</i> and <i>de facto</i> monopoly power. Party has eliminated almost all pretotalitarian pluralism. No space for second economy or parallel society.
Post-totalitarianism	Limited, but not responsible social, economic, and institutional pluralism. Almost no political pluralism, because party still formally has monopoly of power. May have “second economy”, but state still the overwhelming presence. Most manifestations of pluralism in “flattened polity” grew out of tolerated state structures or dissident groups consciously formed in opposition to totalitarian regime. In mature post-totalitarianism opposition often creates “second culture” or “parallel society.”

¹⁶ Scott Mainwaring, review of *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*. By Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan. *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 112, No. 3 1997, pp. 507-509

Sultanism	Economic and social pluralism does not disappear but is subject to unpredictable and despotic intervention. No group or individual in civil society, political society, or the state is free from sultan's exercise of despotic power. No rule of law. Low institutionalization. High fusion of private and public.
	2. Ideology
Totalitarianism	Elaborate and guiding ideology that articulates a reachable utopia. Leaders, individuals, and groups derive most of their sense of mission, legitimation and often specific policies from their commitment to some holistic conception of humanity and society.
Post-totalitarianism	Guiding ideology still officially exists and is part of the social reality. But weakened commitment to or faith in utopia. Shift of emphasis from ideology to programmatic consensus that presumably is based on rational decision-making and limited debate without too much reference to ideology.
Sultanism	Highly arbitrary manipulation of symbols. Extreme glorification of ruler. No elaborate or guiding ideology or even distinctive mentalities outside of despotic personalism. No attempt to justify major initiatives on the basis of ideology. Pseudo-ideology not believed by staff, subjects, or outside world.
	3. Mobilization
Totalitarianism	Extensive mobilization into a vast array of regime-created obligatory organizations. Emphasis on activism of cadres and militants. Effort at mobilization of enthusiasm. Private life is decried.
Post-totalitarianism	Progressive lost of interest by leaders and nonleaders involved in organizing mobilization. Routine mobilization of population within state-sponsored organizations to achieve a minimum degree of conformity and compliance. Many "cadres" and "militants" are mere careerists and opportunists. Boredom, withdrawal, and ultimately privatization of population's values become an accepted fact.
Sultanism	Low but occasional manipulative mobilization of a ceremonial type by coercive or clientelistic methods without permanent organization. Periodic mobilization of parastate groups who use violence against groups targeted by sultan.
	4. Leadership
Totalitarianism	Totalitarian leadership rules with undefined limits and great unpredictability for members and nonmembers. Often charismatic. Recruitment to top leadership highly dependent on success and

	commitment in party organization.
Post-totalitarianism	Growing emphasis by post-totalitarian political elite on personal security. Checks on top leadership via party structures, procedures and “internal democracy.” Top leaders are seldom charismatic. Recruitment to top leadership restricted to official party but less dependent upon building a career within party’s organization. Top leaders can come from party technocrats in state apparatus.
Sultanism	Highly personalistic and arbitrary. No rational-legal constraints. Strong dynastic tendency. No autonomy in state careers. Leader unencumbered by ideology. Compliance to leaders based on intense fear and personal rewards. Staff of leader drawn from members of his family, friends, business associates, or men directly involved in use of violence to sustain the regime. Staff’s position derives from their purely personal submission to ruler.

CHAPTER 2: HUNGARIAN ELITE THEORY

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – HUNGARY 1956-1989

The 1956 uprising in Hungary occupies a central role in the causes of the implementation of liberal authoritarianism in Hungary that used to be called a spontaneous uprising against the Soviet government in Hungary and against Soviet policies. Right after the first public protests the secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party (MSZMP) Ernő Gerő appealed to the Soviet Union for military intervention, because the revolution started to be greater and more powerful. Within a week the Soviet Red Army invaded Hungary and crushed the revolution. Imre Nagy who was the most credible politician in the eyes of the revolutionaries concluded that it was more a popular uprising than a counter-revolution. On October 27th 1956 Nagy formed a government where he appointed some non-communist ministers as well. The defeat of the Hungarian revolution was one of the darkest moments of the Cold war period; moreover it was the first major opposition to the eastern bloc communism.

After the revolution János Kádár came to power who later on became the communist party leader of Hungary until 1988, also being twice prime minister from 1956 – 1958 and 1961 – 1965. Kádár got into power when the country was in a critical situation, the state was run by Soviet administration for months, there was a quite strong distrust from the party leaders and the country was in difficult economic situation. He had to re-establish his power, also reorganize the Communist Party that had been disintegrated during the revolution and

eliminate the institutions where the revolution was generated.¹⁷ The major aim's of Kádár's strategy were to depoliticize society and to keep the population happy through economic concessions.¹⁸ Post-Stalinist systems central idea was, as long as the system is supporting higher standard of living and also trying to increase the consumption, by this the social conflict would be very low. Bozóki calls this as a "paternal dictatorship".¹⁹ The Communist Party still had monopoly of power, but different from the Stalinist way, it was not an absolute one, but discretionary. Six years after the revolution the repression from the communist party stopped and Kádár declared the period of „consolidation of socialism”. The Hungarian resistance to the Soviet empire, basically forced János Kádár to produce, as later turned out the most liberal version of communist states of the region.²⁰ He was trying to improve the general life conditions of the people, so under the Kádár regime Hungary compared to the other Eastern bloc countries had a high standard living, they achieved general amnesty for most of the people that were involved in the 1956 revolution, traveling was more possible, Hungary was also building strong relationship with western Europe. The system became quite flexible in dealing with society, giving the power elite “wide-ranging discretion in exercise of power.”²¹ Moreover in the 1970s the official ideology lost its attraction and it was not replaced by a new ideology but by the ideology of power.

There are two very important characteristics that made a great impact on the Hungarian political elite researches. The first one is due to the characteristics of the Kádár regime. As Arpad A. Kadarkay argues in one of his article in 1973, the most important

¹⁷ George Schöpflin, “From Communism to Democracy in Hungary” in *Post-Communist Transition* eds. András Bozóki, András Körösenyi and George Schöpflin (London: Pinter Publishers, 1992) 96

¹⁸ Schöpflin (1992) 97

¹⁹ András Bozóki, “Post-Communist Transition: Political Tendencies” in *Post-Communist Transition* eds. András Bozóki, András Körösenyi and George Schöpflin (London: Pinter Publishers, 1992) 13

²⁰ Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans*. (Cheltenham:) 74

²¹ Schöpflin (1992) 97

characteristics of the Kadar regime was that the center of Communist power under János Kádár, was homogeneous and faction-free, which basically meant that there was no visible opposition, no anti-Kádár group who would offer alternatives for any political, social or economical goals.²² Even though the revolution and the Soviet solution demolished the possibility of a strong Communist party and it also dissolved Communist authority, in the same time these two: power restoration and authority recovery became Kádár's regime central tasks in the first part of his ruling.

Hungary was the “happiest barracks” in the eastern communist bloc, but by the 1980s' the country had to face serious economic difficulties, which was mainly due to the amount of western loans that the state was not able to pay back, moreover the country's productivity and export was not improving. While the communist leadership was denying the economic situation, among the public dissatisfaction and anxiety was in rise. In the 1980s in addition to the socio-economic liberalization there was also growing contradiction between the reforms and the political conservatism.

Mostly because of the worsening situation the marginalized opposition that Kadarkay was noting started to be active and by the end of the 80's a new alternative elite emerged.²³ József Bayer remarks that the strengthening (on organizational and also ideological level) opposition started to be an alternative competitor of the ruling party and even the possibility of an eventual power sharing came into consideration. The Communist party got into a legitimacy crisis. As the situation got worse the goals of the opposition became clearer at the same time a political pluralism started to emerge.

²² Kadarkay A. Arpad, “Hungary: and Experiment in Communism”, *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1973): 281

²³ Arpad Kadarkay, “Hungary: and Experiment in Communism”, *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2.(1973)

The regime was helping the intellectuals that later one helped the Kádár system, they wanted to incorporate the social-professional groups, believing that they will use their talents to achieve their own Party goals.²⁴ But the collaboration with the intelligentsia started to change by the late 1970s when a new, intellectual opposition group appeared, from a political subculture transforming to a counterculture.²⁵ As Bozóki notes this group basically was not trying to make reforms inside the party, but on contrary was trying to develop a democratic opposition style of behavior. The active opposition in Hungary got fragmented and cleavages between the opposition organizations and parties became visible by the end of the 80's. Bozóki differentiates 7 kind of political tendencies that could be observed already in 1990. The unique characteristic of fragmented opposition is one of the reasons that the elite theory had its own route in Hungary. More detailed description will be presented about the transition itself where the elites played a central role. Another important characteristic is due to the liberal feature of the authoritarian regime, more precisely the possibility of research in the field of sociology.

According to Linz and Stepan's typology Hungary in the Kadar regime can be considered as part of the post-totalitarian regimes category, where the official totalitarian ideology remains in place, but similarly it is discredited in contrast with the typical totalitarian regimes. If we apply the categories, more precisely the sub-categories of the post-totalitarian regimes on democratic transition and consolidation on three Central European countries: Hungary will fall in the 'mature', Czechoslovakia in the 'frozen' and finally Bulgaria in the 'early' sub-category.²⁶

²⁴ Schöpflin (1992) 98

²⁵ András Bozóki, "Post-Communist Transition: Political Tendencies" in *Post-Communist Transition* eds. András Bozóki, András Körösesnyei and George Schöpflin (London: Pinter Publishers, 1992) 17

²⁶ Linz and Stepan (1996)

2.1.1 Transition to Democracy

Hungarian transition to democracy can be considered a “pacted” transition which can occur through negotiation of tacit agreements on sequence of political change. In Hungary the period of transition was not dramatic, because of the economic crisis and the fact that the communist leadership did not want to acknowledge the need of urgent reforms, the communist leadership started to lose its legitimacy even from the intellectuals. It led to public criticism of the state bureaucracy, moreover even in the MSZMP (Magyar Szocialista Munkaspárt – Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party) an opposition started to be more active which was able to remove Kadar in May 1988.²⁷ The new leadership had low authority and it was suffering in lack of legitimacy. Between 1988 and February 1990, 65 political parties and movement organizations were registered.²⁸ In February 1989 the MSZMP accepted the principles of multiparty democratic system, which basically meant that free elections were held and a new political system emerged with six parties of representation. In 1990 the first elections were held after which three parties made a coalition in order to govern the country: the Hungarian Democratic Forum (Magyar Demokrata Fórum or MDF), the Independent Small Holders’ Party (Független Kisgazdapárt FKgP) and finally the Christian Democrat People’s Party (Keresztyendemokrata Néppárt KDNP). These three parties can be characterized by being nationalist and Christian fundamentalists together securing 60 percent of the seats in the parliament. The opposition was represented by the two liberal parties: Alliance of Free Democrats (Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége, SZDSZ) and the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége, FIDESZ) and also the leftist, so called

²⁷ George Schopflin, “The End of Communism in Eastern Europe”, *International Affairs* Vol. 66, No. 1(1990):3

²⁸ Tibor Huszar, “Elite Research in Hungary: 1985-1994” in *Elites in Transition. Elite Research in Central and Eastern Europe*. Eds. Heinrich Best and Ulrike Becker, (Leske Budrich, Opladen, 1997), 49

reform wing of the communist party the Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Part, MSZP).²⁹

With the new elections democratic constitutional state transparent conditions were created, leading to the changes in the ownership structure which increased the speed of the development of social market economy. The reformation of the political elite became the centre of attention of many scholars and numerous essays books started to deal with the interrelation between social and political structures, simultaneously describing the invariable elements of political group formations.³⁰ The basis of the new political elite was the state bureaucracy, as long as the power of it is legitimate and it makes the activities of political institutions accountable. Some scholars argue that new political culture was not established by the transition elites, but it made the traditional Hungarian culture stronger (at least some of its elements).³¹

2.2 ELITE THEORY BEFORE TRANSITION

Hereby is given overview of the situation of political and social sciences in Hungary during the communist time, which obviously had a direct effect on the publication of studies about the society, nevertheless on the political elite of the country as well. 1956 plays a milestone in the development of social sciences. After the revolution the leadership of the country was divided to “softliners” and “hardliners”, having different views about science

²⁹ Ivan Szelenyi, Szonja Szelenyi and Poster R. Winifred, “Interests and Symbols in Post Communist Political Culture: The Case of Hungary.” *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 61, no. 3(1996):467

³⁰ Tamas Kolosi et al. “Political Fields in the Epoch of Post-Communist Transition. Parties and Social Classes in Hungarian Politics 1989-1990.”(Politikai mezők a postkommunista átmenet korszakában. Pártok és társadalmi osztályok a magyar politikában 1989-1990) *Szociológiai Szemle* (1991/1):15

³¹ Mihály Bihari, “Crisis Management and Deepening Contradictions” in Magyarország politikai évkönyve 1996-rol eds. S. Kurtan, S Peter and L. Vass, Budapest: Demokrácia Kutatások (1997):5

policy. The former group was thinking about sciences as tools for social engineering, so they were trying to give researches and teaching as well “free hand”, trying to erase the borders raised by the party ideology and elite.³² Contrary to the effort made to give more autonomy to social sciences, most of the publications made by the research units were not in contact with Western science communities.

Two major institutes that gained recognition after 1989: the Institute for Party History and the Institute for Social Sciences. Well known political scientists were already active in the 1970s at the Institute of Social Sciences, a group that connected universities, research institutes, forming the main base of the Political Science Association. Scholars like: Mihály Bihari, Csaba Gombár, Péter Schmidt, László Lengyel, Béla Pokol, László Bruszt, János Simon, Zsolt Papp, and József Bayer³³ persons who became the most relevant political scientist after 1989, having an experience in teaching and research. A group of scholars like: Rudolf Tőkés, Iván Szelényi, Ágnes Heller, Mihály Vajda, Péter Kende, etc. had connections with dissidents who were important for the development of political science in Hungary. The dissident scholars could write freely about the Hungarian situation, without any limitations. Furthermore Western foundations were supporting the researches and the scientific enlargement, offering opportunities for scholars to participate in western education, conference grants, covering research costs and books, all with this helping in opening up the system.

The history of modern sociology is a bit more than 40 years old in Hungary, but first it appeared at the turn of the century with the creation of a journal which was dedicated to

³² Mate Szabo, “Political Science – Hungary”, in *Three Social Science Disciplines in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook on Economics, Political Science and Sociology (1989-2001)* eds. Max Kaase and Vera Sparschuh (Budapest: Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study, 2002) 258

³³ Szabo (2002) 260

social issues called “Huszadik Század” (Twentieth Century). Internationally well known sociologists were members of the association that was publishing the journal: György Lukács, Karl Manheim and Karl Polányi. After the First World War most of the sociologists died or were emigrating, with the result of lack of interest in sociology. The second era of Hungarian sociology was reborn only in the 1930s; however the discipline was limited to “qualitative, impressionistic surveys of the agrarian countryside”, moreover the group already disintegrated by the beginning of the World War Two.³⁴ The third attempt to create any kind of sociology was after 1945 by Sandor Szalai, obtaining a chair of sociology at Budapest University, but unfortunately because of his Marxists views in 1948, his chair was closed down.

Sociology finally appeared in 1960s when an institutionalized sociology was created, due to the characteristics of the Kádár regime, since it was willing to obtain the support of the intellectuals. Likewise as mentioned above the reformist wing of the party wanted to contribute to the renovation of socialism through science, nevertheless the regime was aiming international reputation and in order to achieve this goal they needed scientific institutions. Already in 1963 the Institute of Sociology was created at the Hungarian Academy of Science – the academy was collaborating with the Soros Foundation in the 1980s – and in 1972 the first university program was established. By the end of socialism the Hungarian sociology gained international results and also was able to create about one hundred of sociologists who had an internationally adequate level of theoretical and methodological knowledge.

Already by the 1980s the sociology was a quite developed and also up-to-date science. With the regime change the Marxism was officially disappeared even though it was

³⁴ Dénes Némedi and Péter Róbert, “Sociology - Hungary”, in *Three Social Science Disciplines in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook on Economics, Political Science and Sociology (1989-2001)* eds. Max Kaase and Vera Sparschuh (Budapest: Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study, 2002) 437

already quite insignificant by the time, moreover scholars were free to adopt Western paradigms, but altogether there was no need for the redefinition of the sociology, like in the case of Romania. In the case of Hungary it was somehow obvious that the scholars who were closer to the Communist Party elite lost some of their influence and those who were not favored because of their views became more active.

Several scholars began to focus upon the political elite during the communist time, some of them living on the territory of Hungary and some of them living abroad, collaborating through the political and social science institutes. Ivan Volgyes was one of the first scholars who focused upon the communist elites in Hungary, accordingly he wrote about the modernization and social stratifications' effect on the communist elite formation. He argues that the economical change and reforms in the 60s' had an effect on the elite formation, furthermore there was an increasing gap within the elite stratum distinguishing political, technocratic, intellectual and finally social elites.³⁵

Tibor Huszár a Hungarian sociologist who was first writing about the scholarly bibliography of Kadar, also interested in elite research in Hungary notes that elite research has been made since 1980 at the Institute of for Sociology of the Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE) in Budapest with the help of other institutions. The researches in the past already argue that the elite is not an un-changing entity and its formation types are more or less determined by the structure of the society and more importantly of the political system. Elites formation are different in an authoritarian regime than in democracy, different in their types, recruitment form.³⁶ The central question in a non democratic regime is that to what extent the

³⁵ Ivan Volgyes, "Modernization, Stratification and Elite Development in Hungary" *Social Forces*, Vol. 57, No2. Special Issue (1978)

³⁶ Tibor Huszar, "Elite Research in Hungary: 1985-1994" in *Elites in Transition. Elite Research in Central and Easter Europe*. Eds. Heinrich Best and Ulrike Becker, (Leske Budrich, Opladen, 1997), 41

nomenclature can be viewed as elite, namely the problem was to identify and differentiate the elite from the second or third row nomenclature.

Huszar is characterizing the nomenclature in the following three features: accumulation of high-ranking positions in organizations, transition through party's area of competence and finally the expansion of the encompassing character of the system. Furthermore, because of the high ranking positioning character of the system the numbers of the positions are exceeding the posts of traditional elite models.³⁷ Elemér Hankiss in the mid 80's tried to portray the first and second societies in the economic sphere and also focus the links and relationships between them. First the public and formal domain of the first society, more precisely the sanctioning ruling elite which also has ideological and political responsibility; second the hidden and informal domain of the first society, the sphere which is not seen by the public and on which the elite does not take responsibility; and finally the second society which is regarded more to the informal implementations of the interests among the members of the economic sphere, likewise the eagerness of conflict of these persons.³⁸

Gyorgy Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi were members of the intellectual elite, the group that Volgyes noted, sociologists who after the transition became central figures of elite research in Hungary. But already during the communist regime they published a study *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* in which they are looking at intellectual elite of the time, reflecting an ancient tradition of favoring class rule by the intellectuals which came to power almost two decades later. This means that the elite research already started in

³⁷ Huszar (1995) 43

³⁸ Elemer Hankiss, "Grand Coalition" in. *East European Alternatives* ed. Elemer Hankiss (Oxford: Calderon Press, 1990), 321

communist time and later elite theorists were already scholarly active before the regime change.

2.3 ELITE THEORY IN HUNGARY AFTER 1990

The discipline of political science did not have to be reborn after the fall of communism. It was characterized by continuity in a new political framework. One scholar argues that the Western Marxism and oppositional discourses, ideas that were characterizing the Hungarian political science development in communist times, led to a “society versus the state” paradigm.³⁹ He is also noting, that after 1989 the supposed fall in the references of Marxist practice did not mean a new beginning. Still in political science researches transitology was a central research area focusing on democratization, but it was highly oriented toward institutions and elites.⁴⁰ Transition was the major object of study after 1989 among many Hungarian scholars like Elemér Hankiss, László Bruszt who also became part of the international transitology discourses.⁴¹

The political science development in Hungary was affected mainly by American institutions or scholars. Firstly by the young scholars who had the possibility to continue their graduate or post-graduate studies at different American universities, second scholars grouped mainly around the Central European University (using methodology dominated by US and Western social sciences) András Bozóki, Zsolt Enyedi, Miklós Sükösd, and Béla

³⁹ András Körösenyi, “A magyar politikai gondolkodás főárama 1989-1995” (The main current of Hungarian political thought) in *Századvég*, no.3 (1996) 82

⁴⁰ András Bozóki, András Körösenyi and George Schöpflin eds., *Post-Communist Transito. Emerging Pluralism in Hungary* (London: St. Martins Press, 1992)

⁴¹ Szabó (2002) 264

Greskovits.⁴² Third American institutions like the American Political Science Association, Fulbright Foundation and other US-based institutions helped the development of political science, by organizing bilateral meetings between scholars and inviting the scholars to several conferences.

Most of the elite researches and studies were born right after the regime change. In the next section there is a short presentation of the most relevant ones. Pareto's elite circulation theory is based on the elite's qualities, as long as the power elite is not prepared enough, the new better elite will take away their places. But can we say the same thing today? Can we say that the elite are circulating in this way? At the beginning of the 90's Széleányi redefined the theory of Pareto and he concluded that elite change has two types: elite reproduction and elite circulation. According to J. Highley and Lengyel elite change, circulation can be two kinds: gradual and peaceful or quick and aggressive. In the last two decades we could see in many countries such radical social change that aimed to establish a liberal market economy based democracy. Analyzing the transition to democracy in East Central Europe we can talk about two main stages: 1989 – 1994 the transition time (in the case of Romania the ending year should be 1996) and the time after this.

As Highley notes "elites are the several thousand persons holding strategic positions in large or otherwise powerful organizations and movements, including dissident organizations and movements, who directly and regularly influence political decision-making"⁴³ Elite unity and elite differentiation are decisive elements in characterizing the stability of a political regime. Elite unity has two dimensions normative, shared norms of competition and

⁴² Szabó (2002), 264

⁴³ John Highley and György Lengyel, *Elites after State Socialism : Theories and Analysis.* (Oxford: Lanham Rowman & Littlefield, 2000) 1-4

interactional, contact through networks. Furthermore differentiation has also two dimensions: horizontal, meaning the heterogeneous and diverse elite networks and vertical, noting the freedom of the elite from different controls. The authors distinguish four groups: wide differentiation, strong elite unity will lead to consensual elite (stable democracy); wide differentiation, weak elite unity will lead to fragmented elite (unstable democracy); narrow differentiation, strong elite unity will lead to ideocratic elite (totalitarian regime); narrow differentiation, weak elite unity will lead to divided elite (authoritarian regime)⁴⁴

According to J. Highley and Lengyel elite change, circulation can be two kinds: gradual and peaceful or quick and aggressive.⁴⁵ In the last two decades in many countries there were such radical social changes that aimed to establish a liberal market economy based democracy. Analyzing the transition to democracy in East Central Europe we can talk about two main stages: 1989 – 1994 the transition time and the time after this. In Hungary we can find a quite complete analysis of the elite, András Csité's writings are concentrated on the erosion of the previous regime, writing about the probability of a slow elite change, but most of the transitology theories are pointing out the survivorship of the elites in the new regimes.⁴⁶

There are several elite theories that made a great impact on the contemporary scholars works, for example Pareto's⁴⁷ elite circulation theory is based on the elite's qualities, as long as the power elite is not prepared enough, the new better elite will take away their places. Is it possible to say the same thing today? Is the elite are circulating in this way? Simultaneously

⁴⁴ Highley (1998) 5

⁴⁵ Csité András, *Szociológiai Szemle* In. *Elite Structure and Ideology* eds. John Highley and G. Lowel Field (New-York: Columbia University Press. 2001)

⁴⁶ Csité (2001)

⁴⁷ Vilfredo Pareto, *Sociological Writings*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966) 249

with the political system transition which occurred in most of the Central and Eastern European countries the attention of many scholars focused upon the socialist elites in the new political systems. Can we talk about elite circulation? Where did the new elite come from and what happened to the communist leadership and elite? These are the questions that most of the elite theorists have tried to answer at the beginning of 90s'. Szelényi in his article published together with Szonja Szelényi in 1995 redefined the theory of Pareto and he concluded that there are two competing answers for these questions: *elite reproduction theory* which basically says that changes in Central and Eastern Europe did not bring big changes in the social composition of ruling elites, therefore the old nomenklatura was able to “survive” the transition and keep their central positions. And *elite circulation theory* says that the new political rule brought new political elite, and the transition to post communism ended in the structural change of the top of the ruling hierarchy.⁴⁸ The two authors maintain that the area is dominated by the elite reproduction theory, in the case of Hungary referring to Elemer Hankiss who noted that the old elite with the capitalization of economy will try to position themselves in the new bourgeoisie. Hankiss concluded that the privatization of the economy will help the old nomenklatura to remain in the pivotal position within the country without major problems. With this Hankiss formulated the first “power-conversion” hypothesis even during the years of communism.⁴⁹

One might ask why elite reproduction and not elite circulation is more characteristic in the post-communist countries, while in the case of Hungary there are two main reasons why one should presuppose that the old nomenklatura was able to keep their pivotal positions.

⁴⁸ Iván Szelényi and Szonja Szelényi, “Circulation or Reproduction of Elites during the Post-communist Transformation of Eastern Europe: Introduction”, *Theory and Society*, vol.25, no 5, (1995) 616

⁴⁹ Elemer Hankiss, “Grand Coalition” in. *East European Alternatives* ed. Elemer Hankiss (Oxford: Calderon Press, 1990), 324

The first is that the Hungarian regime was promoting the intellectuals in elite positions, so it had an affect on the system stability, because this gave a quite significant stability to the system. Moreover the number of the opposition elite was insignificant there was no alternative personal to occupy the positions of the power elite of the time. The findings show that there is a significant elite reproduction in the economical elite level, but among the intellectual elite there is a small amount of change, the elite circulation which is probably due to the normal retirement and not obviously to the political pressure.⁵⁰

Moreover, Ivan Szelenyi in 1994 built up four important hypothesizes; according to the first one there is a significant continuity between the communist and post communist elite, economic elite reproduction, more precisely in the positions of managers and technocrats. The second is that the political sphere can be characterized by elite circulation, another equally important is that the manager-technocrat elite was able to get the economical power but from the post communist societal structure the bourgeois is a missing as a social class. Finally he assumes that the new post-communist elites can be categorized into three groups: technocrats-managers, new politocracy and human-social science intellectuals.

Ivan Szelenyi as a coauthor in *Making Capitalism without Capitalists: The New Ruling Elite in Eastern Europe* is focusing more on the post-socialist transition to capitalism, differentiating it from the classical feudalisms' shift to capitalism which was a gradual transition. They are using in their book the sociological categories of Pierre Bourdieu, by redefining his concept of social capital to political capital which basically means a network of

⁵⁰ Iván Szelenyi, Szonja Szelenyi and Imre Kovács, "The Making of the Hungarian Post-Communist Elite: Circulation in Politics, Reproduction in the Economy. *Theory and Society*, vol. 24, no 5 (1995) 704

personal ties and not the institutional positions within a state.⁵¹ The political capital was in the hand of the nomenclature which was divided into ideologists and technocrats, in addition the cultural capital that was in the hand of intellectuals, who before the transition made an alliance with the technocrats in order to introduce capitalism, but after the transition they moved to political capital and at the same time technocrats occupied the industry. Nevertheless they note that the most of the new elite came from the professional and managerial classes, every fifth of political elite in 1993 was a member of the communist nomenclature.⁵² However the fact that technocrat were able to position themselves as elites was more because of their expertise and not because of their business shares (first being cultural while later economic capital). The halves of the new economical elites are owners in different businesses. Equally important is that they want to challenge the thesis of Elemer Hankiss about political capitalism that states that the communist nomenclature converted political into economical power in order to become the new political class.

Another important issue is elite reproduction theories which identify in the nomenclature and the communist cadres the new dominant class, which can capitalize political connections into wealth through sheltering so called common property from the previous regime and through the improvement they hold in gaining former state property⁵³. There are studies which highlight the importance of the elite recruitment and they note that it is possible to differentiate elites came from the market sphere and those who did not. Making the scale of studies even more colorful Erzsebet Szalai analyses the regime change and also the

⁵¹ Gil Eyal, Elinor Townsley and Ivan Szelényi, *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists: Class Formation and Elite Struggles in Post-Communist Central Europe* (London: Verso, 1998) 21

⁵² Eyal et al. (1998) 131

⁵³ Irina Culic, "Social Actors in a Political Game. The Romanian Political Elite and Democratization, 1989-2000." *Romanian Journal of Political Science* (2005)

http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/rjps/rjps_v5n1/rjps_v5n1_005.pdf

transition period from the perspective of the left. She believes that the biggest winners of the regime change are the late Kadar period's technocrats who were getting in conflict with the old ruling leadership during the critical period of the socialist economic; they became a ruling power of the revolution. She is analyzing the process of regime change as elite groups', more precisely informal power groups' confrontation and coalition making. She believed that the whole transition was the struggle within the communist higher hierarchy, between the old and the new technocrat elite.⁵⁴

Szalai maintains that the communist elite no longer existed as a uniform social group in the end of the 80's. Young technocrats became the centre of the new political system, which can be characterized by conservative-liberal pragmatic technocratic system of values. Szalai is separating three types of elites which have been playing an important role in the initiation of the new political regime:

- a) Late-Kadarist technocrats
- b) The democratic opposition
- c) Opposition and new reformist intellectuals
 - c') one part gathering around democratic opposition
 - c") nationalist writers.⁵⁵

The similarities between the three group are: strong sense of mission, committed to leftist ideas and also criticizing the regime from the inside, nevertheless the people's need for security helped the new political elite into power. "The regeneration of relations between the elites who changed the regime can only be temporary." In contrary with Hankiss she argues that the regime changing elite was not able to update the economic philosophies of the 80s'

⁵⁴ Erzsébet Szalai, *Post-Socialism and Globalization*, (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 1999) 13

⁵⁵ Szalai (1999) 14

and also points out that the new technocracy was not so successful politically.⁵⁶ Notwithstanding with Szelenyis' elite reproduction theory, Szalai maintains that even though the new technocracy achieved a victory over the old technocrats were not able to win against the new democratic opposition and being replaced by a "new ruling estate". The most important dividing line is found in economic life, because different attributes characterize the upper class and its second third rows which after the transition have been included in the new elite.

But Hankiss and Szalai agree that the person do not change only the rules by which they legitimate their authority.⁵⁷ The relationship between the 3 elite groups (right after the political change) was established during the MDF led coalition government and at the same time with the spheres of influence in the new power structures. At the beginning of the transformation the late-Kadarist technocracy cached the key role in the political system. Later on the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition took the leading force in the economic elite. This elite group dominated the elite sphere over the political and cultural elite; more precisely the banking sector was playing the special role in the dominant circles of the economic elite.⁵⁸

I would like to note Fodor who is studying the first political and cultural elites emerged right after the collapse of communism, trying to give an overall view upon the characteristics of the new political elites in Hungary. In their research they have in focus the occupation, social background. Although the aim of the paper is the comparison the size and

⁵⁶ Szalai (1999) 28

⁵⁷ Iván Szelenyi and Szonja Szelenyi, "Circulation or Reproduction of Elites during the Post-communist Transformation of Eastern Europe: Introduction", *Theory and Society*, vol.25, no 5, (1995) 618

⁵⁸ Erzsébet Szalai, *Post-Socialism and Globalization*, (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 1999) 34

character of the elite reproduction and circulation, the article became a more sociological paper, failing to give answers to the level of reproduction or circulation of the political elite.⁵⁹

Finally, the first table below contains the most important elite theorists and keywords of their studies. The second table the researches on political elite in Hungary, made by András Bozóki.

Table 2.⁶⁰

Elite researcher	Keywords
Konrád György és Szelényi Iván (1979)	Intellectuals, as techocracy: transcontextual knowledge
Kornai János	Elite studies in political and economical relation
Szalai Erzsébet (1994-96)	Elite transformation, transitional elite
Konrád György, Szelényi Iván (1991)	Intellectuals as polichracy
Lengyel György	Elite transformation, economic eliteresearch
Kovách Imre	Economic elites social background
Szelényi Iván	New class and managerialism
Vedres Balázs	Winners of transition

⁵⁹ Éva Fodor et al. "The New Political and Cultural Elite." *Theory and Society*, vol. 24, no 5, (1995) 783-800

⁶⁰ Júlia Vaida, "Elitek az átmenetben" (Elites in Transition) *Stúdium* (2006)

http://www.jakabffy.ro/magyarkisebbsseg/pdf/2006_X_1-2_28_Vaida.pdf

Table 2.1⁶¹

Scholar	Focus
Attila Ágh (1992)	Nomenclature and party elites
András Bozóki (1996, 1999, 2002)	Intellectuals, roundtable elite
András Bozóki, I. Javorniczky and I. Stumpf (1998)	Political leadership
József Böröcz and Á. Róna-Tas (1995)	Formation of economic elites
J. Böröcz and Caleb Southworth (1996)	Intellectuals
Tibor Huszár (1997)	Elite research
András Körösesny (1996, 1999)	Cleavage, nomenclature, intellectuals
György Lengyel (1989, 1998)	Economic elites and managers
Gy. Lengyel and A. Bartha (2000)	Managers
András Nyíró (1989, 1992)	Politbureau, nomenclature
Ákos Róna-Tas (1991, 1994, 1995)	New parliament, economic elites
Erzsébet Szalai (1994, 2000)	New technocracy, intellectuals
I. Szelényi, Sz. Szelényi and I. Kovách (1995)	Political and economic elites
Rudolf L. Tőkés (1991, 1996, 2000)	Communist and roundtable elites

⁶¹ András Bozóki, "Theoretical Interpretation of Elite Change in East Central Europe", in *Elite Configurations at Apex of Power* ed. Mattei Dogan (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2003) 234

CHAPTER 3: ROMANIAN ELITE THEORY

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – ROMANIA DURING CEAUSESCU REGIME

In this sub-chapter are shortly presented the most significant aspects of the Ceausescu regime in Romania, underlying the elements that were in relation with the political elite.

Ceausescu came to power in Romania right after Gheorghiu-Dejs' death in 1965. Shortly after being elected as the first secretary of the party, he started to strengthen his position within the party and among the citizens as well, using populist activities to promote nationalism. The concept of nation became very inclusive; nationalist sentiment later became the tool for the leader to achieve his goals. The liberal rhetoric of the 1960s was replaced in the 1970s with the attacks on intellectuals, journalists and people connected to mass culture in order to secure his position within the state. The Ceausescu era's repression affected many spheres of the society, intellectual and artistic freedom, worker's activism and also religious expression. Repression that started from the late 1960s, increased during the 1970s and 1980s. The offensives against the intellectuals and artist did not undergo to personal cases, but to institutions where these people were conducting their studies.⁶² The weakening of the research institutes was one of the first goals of regime and in addition to this the English programs at universities were stopped, the journals were eliminated and researchers became the tool of the state propaganda.

In the 1980 repression came through the public policies as well, mostly because of the weakening economy of the country. Romanian economic plan contrary to Hungary's

⁶² Daniel N. Nelson, *Romanian Politics in the Ceausescu Era*, (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1988) 12

economic plan during the Kadar era - which was sort of decentralization and also introducing semi-free market, - was governed by centralized allocation and utilization of resources. The slogan of the economic programming was: “bigger and more”⁶³ achieving remarkable growth rate, but more quantitative than qualitative production. In order to build up the heavy industries Ceausescu used the Western credit since the 1960s. Due to this the foreign debt in the late 70s reached 9 billion dollars, which obliged the regime to reschedule payments in the first part of the 80s. After Ceausescu decided to lessen Romania’s foreign debt, the regime started a new policy starting with reducing imports. The regime policy of the 80’s was affecting the daily life of all the citizens of Romania, there were reductions in the residential heating, street lighting and cutbacks even in the basic commodities with eliminating various number of public services.⁶⁴

One of the most controversial things in the history of the Ceausescu regime is that in the 1960s and 1970s he was considered one of the most enlightened leaders among the Eastern European communist leaders. Furthermore as Pavel Campeanu notes in the interview made by Alfred Stepan: “At the end of the 1968 Romania was the only country in Eastern Europe where the communist leader was strongly supported by intellectuals.”⁶⁵

The cult of personality which led the country to be characterized as a sultanistic regime was developed through the 1970s. This process had three basic characteristics:⁶⁶ first in order to keep himself safe from any kind coup d’état, Ceausescu was rotating the elite within the party, government and even in military, so nobody could gain enough power in a city or region to threaten the regime. This strategy led to the insecurity of the positions of the

⁶³ Nelson (1988) 13

⁶⁴ Nelson (1988) 14

⁶⁵ Linz and Stepan (1996) 348

⁶⁶ Steven D. Roper, *Romania the Unfinished Revolution*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000) 51

elites and also affected the development of individual expertise.⁶⁷ Second he tried to build up a familial regime by putting his family members in very high and central positions, for example his wife Elena was in charge of party cadres, basically becoming the second most important person in the party. Ceausescu's nepotism included also his brothers and brothers-in-law. The third cause why Ceausescu was able to build up a strongly personalistic regime is due to his own characteristic qualities.⁶⁸

Ceausescu with his repression strategies controlled all the institutions that could cause any threat to the regime or that could serve as the basis of organized opposition within or outside the party. Political elite rotation and the rank-and-file system in the ruling leadership made difficult for the members to divide the party, unlike in the case of Hungary where the Communist Party was divided to "softliners" and "hardliners". Another source for an eventual rebellion against the leader could have been the military where Ceausescu used the same method as in the party – rotation. In Poland the base of the opposition were the NGO-s, more precisely the Solidarity, but in Romania the intellectuals and the NGO-s were not an option, because the attacks against them started already in the 1970s, moreover the universities being the institutions of the state had no autonomy and the NGO-s were infiltrated with party members. According to Radio Free Europe research in Romania only two independent organizations existed, but without any publicly known personality – in Poland at the same time 60 independent organizations were registered.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the Romanian Orthodox Church autonomy was reduced to minimum, any priest who took some stands against the state-church cooperation was expelled. Because of the constant fear of the

⁶⁷ Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economics and Society: Political Stagnation and Stimulated Change* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1985) 73

⁶⁸ Roper (2000) 52

⁶⁹ Linz and Stepan (1996) 352

secret police of the state called Securitatea and the continuous repressions, the society became atomized, consequently the people did not have trust in each other and the possibility of any opposition was almost equal to zero.

In the following part will be described the main characteristics of the communist regime in Romania that might have an impact on the transition towards democracy and also the formation of the new political elite. In the typology of Linz and Stepan presented in the previous chapters, Romania can be placed between the totalitarian and sultanistic regime categories, but it also can be characterized as an anti-Soviet state. Sultanistic regimes can be distinguished by the authoritarian regimes by the low degree of institutionalization and also by the highly personalistic leadership style. Because of the nature of this kind of regimes it is difficult to establish the rule of law and expand the universalistic legal culture and also state bureaucracy that are basic features of a consolidated democracy. “Pacted” transition as was in Hungary was not possible in the case of Romania because in totalitarianism or in sultanism the two groups that are essential for pact formation are not present.

The effects of the totalitarianism-cum-sultanism on the transition to democracy are well described by Linz and Stepan. Romania was the last in beginning transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, at the same time it was the most violent, moreover was the country which was not ready at all for a round table talk.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Linz and Stepan (1996) 344

3.2 ELITE THEORY BEFORE TRANSITION

The development of political and social sciences in Romania during communist time is very different from the Hungarian one, the most important differences is due to the “closeness” of the political regime. Political science in the pre-communist Romania was unstable due to the triumph of sociology after the First World War. Right after the communist takeover political schools has become the tools that ensure the ideological control and later on the Communist Party’s monopoly over social sciences. Already in 1945 the institution named Stefan Gheorghiu Academy for Training and Advancement of the Leadership Cadres of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party was created, aiming to fulfill the task of ideological training of the Party activists, offering different types of curricula. Only in 1970 the Academy of Political and Social Sciences was established, but under the authority of the Propaganda Division of the Central Committee, with the task to “explore the procedures to be followed to translate an untidy ideological control into a tight scientific monopoly.”⁷¹ Not more than 4 years the Academy was able to control the entire research institute in sociology and other social sciences that were before subordinate to the old Romanian Academy. This basically means the change of the official science of politics.

Contrary to this controversial and party centralized background some outstanding authors were able to overcome the boundaries raised to political scientists. Vladimir Tismaneanu was one of these scholars who started his career in Romania as a liberal student of Euro-Marxism and later became a well known American political scientist, and right after

⁷¹ Daniel Barbu, “Political Science –Romania” in *Three Social Science Disciplines in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook on Economics, Political Science and Sociology (1989-2001)* eds. Max Kaase and Vera Sparschuh (Budapest: Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study, 2002) 324

the revolution becoming a role model of many Romanian political scientists.⁷² There are some other major scholars who have been active during communist time; two were innovative Marxists –Henri. H Stahl and Zigu Ornea- the third anti-communist who also headed the department of Radio Free Europe in Romania – the historian Vlad Georgescu. But these scholars were already toned by the works of Nicolae Ceausescu, whose books were mandatory for the scholars who wanted to publish an article or book, furthermore for the scientist mentioned above politics existed only in the shape of Romanian national interests. Finally Ovidiu Traznea a personality who was the chairman of the Romanian Association of Political Science (RAPS) a party-member-only institution set up in 1968, being the official political scientist of the Ceausescu regime.

During communism the belief that social life cannot be explained in political terms was very common and it was believed that the politics should be meaningless in the face of knowledge so political science should not have any legitimacy. On contrary the RAPS was still active, but the science of politics, as Barbu puts it, equals political action itself.⁷³ Political science became the self-consciousness of the government, which acts only for itself; studying party policies and language.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, research institutes and especially social sciences were dismantled. The installation of the communist regime meant the direct break in sociology didactic discipline and science. Maria Larionescu calls the 1950s and 1960s from

⁷² Barbu (2002) 325

⁷³ Barbu (2002) 326

the perspective of sociology the “...”ancillization” toward the Marxist-Leninist ideology, that is, their systematic control and manipulation by the communist party-state.”⁷⁴

The first important era of the professional Romanian sociology school developed in the last decade of the 19th century, continuing in the first part of the 20th century, it can be connected Dimitrie Gusti, the founder of the Sociological School of Bucharest. The marginalization of the discipline came in more waves, first in 1948 when it was officially banned, but there were still some scholars who continued practicing sociology, but under other disciplines. After more than 15 years the re-institutionalization of sociology began, and it lasted till 1978 when sociology was dissolved as a discipline. This era can be considered as the liberal period of the Romanian sociology, the time of reformist sociology. Western theories had impact on the fundamental Marxist ideologies aiming to perfect the social system of the regime, nevertheless research projects were made.⁷⁵ In these years eight series of students graduated summing around 500 sociologists, some of the contributing to the re-institutionalization of sociology after 1989.⁷⁶

Basically this means that because of the restrictions made upon the political social sciences, there were no publications about the political elite, or about the leading personalities of the society. In contrast with the Hungarian case where political and social sciences were quite developed already in the 1980s and it was not necessary to redefine the sociological endeavor, there was a need for a unified paradigm and a rise to scientific discipline in Romania. Social and political sciences had no roots in the educational system,

⁷⁴ Maria Larionescu, “Sociology – Romania”, in *Three Social Science Disciplines in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook on Economics, Political Science and Sociology (1989-2001)* eds. Max Kaase and Vera Sparschuh (Budapest: Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study, 2002) 502

⁷⁵ Larionescu (2002) 503

⁷⁶ Maria Larionescu, “Observatii Asupra Sociologiei Romananesti din Perioada de Tranzitie” *Romanian Journal of Political Science* (June 2004), http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/rjps/rjps_v3n1_lam01.pdf

being a newborn academic field of study and research, without any dialectic continuity in the field. The lack of history in teaching political science marked the development of paradigms and the process of institutionalization of the particular science.

3.3 ELITE THEORY IN ROMANIA AFTER 1990

Political science 1990 was a newborn academic field of study and research without any experts who were specialized in the field. Barbu notes that the members of the Romanian Association of Political Science basically changed their vocabulary without removing their understanding of politics from its Leninist core.⁷⁷ A major reproduction of the university staff is clearly visible even at the highest levels. For example Ovidiu Trăznea, the head of the Romanian Association of Political Science, right after the revolution was re-elected to the chair of the institution, at the same time his close colleagues served as advisors for the newly elected communist successor president Ion Iliescu. This kind of reproduction was contrary to the expectations, as long as it would be natural and logical that after the revolution the individuals who were in leading position during communist time would be removed from public life. In the case of Hungary where the regime change was not so powerful the educational elite even though it was not so politicized as in Romania was circulating in a way. The collapse of the Ceausescu regime did not even demolished the institutions that were connected to Marxism-Leninism, on contrary these institutions were simply renamed and reshaped their basic missions without even changing the personnel.⁷⁸ The reproduced

⁷⁷ Daniel Barbu, "Political Science –Romania" in *Three Social Science Disciplines in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook on Economics, Political Science and Sociology (1989-2001)* eds. Max Kaase and Vera Sparschuh (Budapest: Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study, 2002) 324

⁷⁸ Barbu (2002) 324

teaching staff was not questioned about their past, so they could easily position themselves in the leading positions at universities. In 1991 the Academy was renamed to National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, where Vasile Secșăreș, former secretary of the Party Academy became the president and Trăznea the chairman of the Political Science Department.

The “revolution” in political sciences at universities had to wait until 1995-1996. The first cause of the change, was in 1995 when in Bucharest the Department of Political Science was restructured, firstly by developing the directions of the major in political science, secondly the methodological base of the curricula was improved with methods used mainly in American universities. Furthermore Trăznea was removed from the chair of the department in 1996, by this giving the sign for change. Another cause was the establishment of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration in Cluj-Napoca in 1995, a department that did not accept to be chaired by Vasile Pușcaș a former communist, unlike the political science department from Bucharest the Transylvanian department had good relationship network with American Universities. In the next couple of years in other major cities started to teach political science at graduate level.

Daniel Barbu is differentiating three kinds of tendencies over the interpretation of politics. In the first group are scholars, who were trained at West European or North American Universities, not depending on any communist practice of political sciences, because there were no roots in the Romanian academic tradition. These scholars after getting into teaching positions at universities were working out their topics according to American formal analysis, German critical theory, French political sociology and Italian theoretical approaches, with the goal to give a balanced and also show the plurality of political science,

which will give an intellectual “extra” to the graduate students. But unfortunately it meant that there was no unique and also simplified officially approved political science teaching method in the country.⁷⁹ The second group is mainly formed by the members of the communist Party Academy that was reestablished as a research and teaching institution, basically evaluating a communist institution in a post-totalitarian regime. The lack of expertise of these people in political science is best reflected in their works. Vladimir Pasti⁸⁰ in his book about the Romanian transition is not using any kind of theories connected to politics; moreover it does not contain any references to any major findings of other political scientists working in the field, basically ignoring all the rules of the scientific writing. This kind of continuity of the research and teaching habits of the communist dialectic do not ensure scientific performance. Finally the third orientation is connected to the polls, poll commentaries, predictions, and not accurate research. They are considering that the academias in Romania are inexperienced intellectuals who are not cut off from reality. After the revolution couple of firms appeared who are active during and before the elections held and many of the members have achieved to be considered by the media “political analysts”, but in most cases these are only fiction writers, journalists who have a bit of theoretical or empirical knowledge.⁸¹

Another important process were going on at academic level, what had an effect on the Barbu’s first group mentioned above is the rehabilitation of the scholars who left the country legally or illegally during the communist Romania. There were some important scholars who were censored in Romania but reputed abroad different universities, who turned back or

⁷⁹ Barbu (2002) 330-331

⁸⁰ Vladimir Pasti, *The Challenges of Transition: Romania in Transition*. Translated by Fraga Cheva Cusin, East European Monographs no.473 (Boulder and New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

⁸¹ Barbu (2002) 330-332

visited frequently the country after the revolution: Vladimir Tismaneanu, Paul Stahl and others. At the same time the borders were open for students to go and continue or start their studies abroad; so many young Romanian students went to study in Western European and American universities. This fact also underlines a previous statement, more precisely that the political science in Romania had to wait until it gets more mature.

In Romania very few scholars were interested in the research of the Romanian political elite, and most of the articles written in the 1990s are concentrated upon the transition and transitional elites. This might be because of the fact that in the beginning of 1990s professors who were in leading positions during communist time were able overcome on the hindrances of the transition and occupy key position of the universities where political science departments were born. These departments were the primary possible institutions where researches could be made on the political elite itself and also on the reproduction of the communist nomenclature.

Vladimir Pasti's⁸² book offers a relatively complete political analysis on the political transition of Romania, covering the period from 1989 to 1995. As long as the book lacks of any documentation, references, citations, data, notes and bibliography, moreover it is written in an essayistic way hardly can be called even scholarly monograph. Although at that time it was the most complete and elaborated concerning the description of in power structures of the previous regimes and its leaders. Still, this book became important, most probably because of the still burgeoning transition researches in Romania. In the history of Romanian political-sociology Silviu Brucan's⁸³ a former dissident communist book is considered an important

⁸² Pasti (1997)

⁸³ Silviu Brucan, *Stalpii noii Puteri (The Bases of the New Power Structures)*, (Bucuresti, Nemira, 1996a)

one, but similarly to Past's book in some chapters there are no references - the study is concentrated on the social structures and its transformation.

In 1996 several scholars were collecting different studies and articles written by political analysts in different independent journals. The volume of Stelian Tanase⁸⁴ and Andrei Plesu can be considered the most relevant that are connected to elite theory. Stelian Tănase was the first scholar, who had in his studies the topic of elites, but only partly, because he wrote on a considerably big variety of themes: the evolution of the political class, also political culture, and economic evolution. According to Hurezeanu Emil⁸⁵ right after the revolution the cultural elite in a very short time was able to come close to power. As long as the most of the dissidents were part of this group they were able to gain legitimacy, and with this legitimacy they became important actors of the public opinion. Their biggest problem was that they ignored the economic and administrative sphere of the society; they were not able to get into contact with the working class or with the new entrepreneurs. Hurezeanu argues that because of these inabilities the cultural elite was marginalized and new trade union elite came to power who were not recruited from the members of the working class, but from the groups of technocrats. Andrei Plesu argues that the cultural elites did not leave politics because their incapacity but more importantly, because they were able to realize that “new times” require “new actors” so they quickly changed their profession.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Stelian Tanase, *Revoluția ca eșec: Elite și societate* (The Revolution that Failed: Elites and Society) (Iasi: Polirom, 1996)

⁸⁵ Political analyst who collected political essays that were published in 1996 and 1997. Emil Hurezeanu, *Intre caine si lup Cutia Neagra*

⁸⁶ Plesu (1996) 27

Dumitru Sandu⁸⁷ and Alina Mungiu⁸⁸ can be considered as exceptions in the group of scholars who were studying the democratic transition and the post-communist elite. They are the first who are using empirical methods in their analyses. In the next couple of years more and more studies appear about the elites focusing on a specific elite group: cultural, economic, minority elite, political elite or transitional elite.

After the turn of the century two very important books were published in the field of elite research in Romania. The first one was made by Irina Culic⁸⁹ who is focusing on the role of Romanian political elite from the regime change, through transition to consolidation of democracy. She gives a good overview of the Romanian elite performance with its difficulties and failures in the process of democratization of the country. Moreover she points out the lack of integrity of the elite during 1990-1992 and 1996-2000. In addition to other studies this book concentrates on the relation between the elite and non-elite in the context of democratization. There is a comparative part as well in the book, where Culic reveals the differences of Romanian and Hungarian transition, being one of the firsts who gives a comparative perspective of the Romanian regime change.

Another important scholar in the development of elite research in Romania is Laurentiu Stefan⁹⁰ who is concentrated on the political elite recruitment, the first who fully covers this area of elite research in Romania. The book examines the structure and the path

⁸⁷ Dumitru Sandu, *Sociologia tranzitiei. Valori si tipuri sociale in Romania* (The Sociology of Transition. Social Values and Types in Romania) (Bucharest: Staff, 1996)

⁸⁸ Alina Mungiu, *Romania dupa 1989. Istoria unei neintelegeri* (Romania after 1989. The History of Missunderstanding) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995)

⁸⁹ Irina Culic, *Castigatorii. Elita Politca si Democratizare in Romania 1989-2000*. (The Winners. Political Elite and Democratization in Romania. 1989-2000) (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2002)

⁹⁰ Laurentiu Stefan, *Patterns of Political Elite Recruitment in Post-Communist Romania* (Bucharest: Editura Ziua, 2004)

taken by individuals to summit party members and high positions in the parliament. The book starts with broad theoretical framework to the study, covering the most important theories in the field, and the second part is a systematic analysis on the data made on political elites. The most important part of the analysis is data of ROMELITE that stands for a database made on Romanian MPs between 1990 and 2003, focusing on political, socio-demographic and occupational background of the MPs. In addition to the MPs Stefan also deals with the substitute MPs, individuals who only appears in the party lists, but do not get into the parliament. The parliamentary mobility is another important topic in the book that serves as a novelty in Romanian elite researches and finally the recruitment patterns of ministers, prime ministers and presidential candidates.

In the 21st century the Romanian political science and elite research reached became a mature research. The fact that more and more studies appear in specific field within elite research, nevertheless conferences are held in this specific topic.⁹¹ Moreover with the establishment of commissions like the “Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania” researches have been made on the communist political elite. The Commission has been instituted in 2006 in order to investigate the communist regime in Romania, focusing on the activities of communist institutions and the role of political figures.

Finally, two tables the first presents the main elite researches made after 1989 in Romania and their keywords and the second a similar selection made by András Bozóki.

⁹¹ For example conference organized in 2006 “Mobilitatea Elitelor in Romania secolului XX” (Elite Mobility in Romania in the 20th century) <http://mobilitateaELITELOR.blogspot.com/>

Table 3.⁹²

Elite researcher	Keywords
Ilie Bădescu	Elite circulation, economic elite
Dumitru Sandu	Nomeklature, trade union elites
Vladimir Paști	Technocracy and trade union elites
Mihail Manoilescu	Romanian burgoise
Stelian Tănase	Revolution, elites and communist elites
Mattei Dogan	Political elites
Laurentiu Stefan	Post-communist political elite, recrutation.

Table 3.1⁹³

Elite researcher	Focus
Nándor Bárdi and Zoltán Kántor (2001)	Minority political elite
Silviu Brucan (1996)	Power elite
Irina Culic (1999, 2001)	Intellectuals, political elite
Florin Mirghesiu (1998)	Political elite, modernity
Alina Mungui Pipidi (1999)	Inellectuals, political culture
Vladimir Pasti (1995)	Transition and elite change
Andrei Plesu (1996)	Transition elites
Laurentiu Stefan (2001)	Political elite recruitment
Stelian Tanase (1996)	Elite and society
Gheorghe Tibil (1995)	Elite conflicts
Vladimir Tismaneanu (1998)	Transition, elite ideas

⁹² Vaida (2006) 354

⁹³ Bozóki (2003)

CONCLUSIONS

By the end of the paper it is obvious that there are differences between the Romanian and Hungarian elite theories. The differences of the elite theory in Romania and Hungary are rooted firstly in the type of the prior regime. The regime had a major effect on the development of political and social sciences, consequently on the individuals and their academic work made within the country. Hungary during the Kádár regime was a “mature” post-totalitarian regime,⁹⁴ a liberal version of state socialism. The political system compared to the surrounding states in the area, especially to Romania was a much “open” one, supporting intellectual activities at universities and institutions could help the development of the state socialism. In the regime was only one party allowed, there was no pluralism in the 1960s and 1970s, Kádár wanted to de-politicize the society but at the same time wanted to keep the population happy with different economic concessions, and with the introduction of market elements to the economy, a second economy and society was dynamically developing. Already 1980s Hungary achieved further socio-economic liberalization which promoted scientific education at universities. The moderate part of the Communist Party was strongly supporting the intellectuals, in this way the research institutions and universities were able to start scientific work already during the 1960s and 1970s with minimal limitations⁹⁵

In Romania the situation of the development of political and social sciences was different from the Hungarian case. Due to the regime type: a totalitarian-cum-sultanistic regime, which was taking away all the possibility of organizing an opposition. The system

⁹⁴ According to the Linz and Stepan typology. Linz and Stepan (1996)

⁹⁵ Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans*. (Cheltenham:) 74

type is centralized, at the same time using repression on whole society in order to ensure the “sultans” position within the country. Consequently all the institutions where an opposition could start organize itself was under strong state control: NGOs, research institutions, universities and even the churches lost their autonomy. The universities and research institutions were run and used by the Communist Party. The department of political science at Bucharest was replaced by the Academy of Political and Social Sciences, under the authority of the Propaganda Division of the Central Committee, with the task to discover the procedures that needs to be followed to translate an untidy ideological control into a tight scientific monopoly. Basically this means that there is no history of academic researches in political science in Romania.

The effects of the regime type on the selected countries are clearly visible. Because of the repressions in Romania political sciences in 1989 was a newborn discipline, while in the case of Hungary the Communist Party did not interfere to the development of political and social sciences, only to a certain level. The time shift of the development of political science in the two countries led first to quantitative differences, visible in the number of books and articles made on elites. The differences were bigger in the 1990s, as the table 2.1 and 3.1 shows there were more books published already in 1990 and 1991 in Hungary, while in Romania the first books on elite research appeared starting from 1995. In addition to the quantitative there are qualitative differences, most of the books appeared in the mid 1990s in Romania had serious methodological problems with lack of references to other scholars works in the field. In Romania well conceptualized elite researches appeared only in the 21th century focusing on one certain elite group, not mixing them. On the contrast Hungarian elite theorists were emphasizing more on elite’s social background and social circumstances.

Before the revolution there was no systematic overview of elite study about the communist leaders or important actors of the previous regime in the sultanistic Romania. After the revolution the political science departments in Romania was not adopting for a long time western paradigms, instead they were just taking some elements of it, not composing a whole system - American formal analysis, German critical theory, French political sociology and Italian theoretical approaches. The case of Hungary is different, where because of the continuity of the discipline the scholars were familiar with most of the western theories, and moreover in the Hungarian political science development there is an American predominance, because of the institutions founded or financed by American scholars (and individuals) and because of the scholars who were cooperating with Hungarians during communist times.

There are no significant differences between the concepts of the researches made the new elite theorists refer to almost the same basic elite theories written by Pareto, Mosca and Mills. Furthermore the studies of Szelenyi, Highley and Bozoki are books that are found in almost all the works written on transition. Some differences can be found at paradigm concepts, mostly because of the different transitions: in Hungary “pacted” transition, continuous, reform groups, while in Romania it was sudden revolution. The elite’s unity is considered strong in both countries but in Hungary there is a wide differentiation contrary to Romania.

We can find a distinction between the elite types as well. Hungary: technocracy, politocracy, managerialism, intellectual elites and political elites are the most common types presented in the works of scholars. In the case of Romania: bourgeoisie, communist party elites, trade union elites and political elites are the types mentioned. Finally while in

Hungary the studies on transitology were made between 1990-1995, in Romania they appeared only in 1995 and they are still in the focus of researches.

If we take into consideration the political elite, the number of elite researches made, or the quality of these studies the differences are significant between the two countries. There are very few similarities due to the different history, political system and political culture that developed. The similarities are visible at the references, while using new concept the theoretical framework is build up more or less by the same authors. In the case of Romania the development of the elite theories and researches speeded up in the 21st century, by the enlargement of the political science department across the country and also by the ROMELITE database that serves as a ground for the new researches.

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