

Democracy: 'There is something wrong in Denmark'

The Case of Bulgaria in the Second Decade of XXI Century

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Summary

There are now expanding debates on the disappearance of the political social configuration and the emergence of a post-political or post-democratic one. We explore this post-democratization in the light of the South East European and Bulgarian experience. We argue that the contemporary democracy in Europe, especially in South Eastern Europe (SEE), represents a mixture of top-down and bottom-up systems with complex network dynamics, as well as incremental policies that are partially overlapping and partially independent. As a result, this process leads to a greater publicity than politics and contributes to a very slow but simultaneous change in the way actors operate.

We proceed in several steps. *First*, we discuss the configuration of post-democracy. The political has merged with techno-managerial governance. However, this drives manifestations of discontent and instability as was the case in Bulgaria with protests in 2013 and 2014. *Second*, we propose theoretical models that help us frame the dimensions and the factors of the process. *Third*, we present evidence from the latest massive street protests and the political and bank crises in Bulgaria. The paper explores the tension between politics (as something contextually dependent) and global corporate interests

which capture the democratic procedures regardless of context.

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Paradoxes of democracy

The *first paradox* of democracy is that this form of governance has expanded over a significant territorial scope, and at the same time there is a serious stagnation in the developed countries because of a significant apathy among voters (Kursar, 2013). The same process is observed also in the newly emerged democracies in SEE. What is more, some of the problems are more visible, such as the domination of elites over citizens (Kalev, 2011). In the region these questions are have been persistent on the political agenda of societies because of the long process of transition to market economy and a democratic political system, including accession to and membership in EU and NATO.

The *second paradox* of democracy is that, at the present moment, advanced European democracies and transitional European democracies are encountering the same problems and transformations of democracy. Whether their roots can be traced to post-communism (Ágh, 2010) or to the cartelization of politics (Katz and Mair, 2009), the challenges to democracy have become remarkably similar.

To understand these paradoxes, we first define contemporary democracy as post-

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democracy and then try to identify the policy making models that are most appropriate for this type of governance. The concept of post-democracy (Crouch, 2004) refers to a political system which has democratic characteristics but is experiencing a lack of real democratic participation and content. The problem is the poor state of democracy prompted not only by the transition in the SEE region, but also by globalization, the deregulation of financial markets and the interdependence between corporate and political logic of management.

The interest in defining the concept of post-democracy has increased since 2008 as a consequence of the global crisis. Its origin is usually attributed to Crouch but the ideas are familiar from earlier. The gap between voter expectations and government opportunities are discussed also by Habermas and other public choice authors. Cartel parties are explored by Katz and Mair. Hay examines political participation with clear empirical indicators. Sørensen analyses the adjustment of government and democracy to globalization (Dryzek and Dunleavy, 2009, pp. 100-128; Katz and Mair, 2009; Hay, 2007; Sørensen, 2004).

Post-democracy was introduced by Rancière in the 1990s. He understands post-democracy as the 'rule of experts' or the governance of 'the most intelligent' (Rancière, 2007, p. 35). Rorty considers post-democracy in the context of a strengthening of public security abolishing the democratic institutions, for example the rule of law, the authorities' responsibility, court independence and media freedom (Rorty, 2004). The democratic institutions remain in place. In some areas, such as government transparency, citizens' associations, and other new forms of participation, the democracy has been expanding in scope. However, the decline has taken place with regard to citizen-based politics that turns into power play between elites (Kalev, 2011). Thus democracy has been transformed into a kind of despotism

which is imposing an inherited nomenclature (Rorty, 2004).

In general, post-democracy is a system in which the oligarchy makes use of the democratic procedures to drive people away from politics while directing them towards private and social media activities, internet and consumer society, which exposes the unstable nature of democracy. That means the problems of post-democracy are not new. According to Crouch, post-democracy is based on parabola that peaked in the second half of the 20 century, when the social welfare was assumed to be the key element for achieving the optimum state of economy. That period of democracy started fading with the subsequent rise of the service sector in the 1970s. The transition period in SEE in the 1990s multiplied the effects and gives some specific manifestations of them though it is not the root cause. The crisis was caused by the economic evolution which democracy failed to address (Kursar, 2013).

Within the advanced democratic countries, politicians enjoy less respect from the public and mass media than ever before. Today they are afraid to set the political agenda and tend to rely on the findings of market research and opinion polls. There are successful cases of more transparent governance and reforms. However, there are two types of active democratic citizens. On one hand, the positive citizenship encompasses groups and organizations that develop collective identities and formulate demands based on them, which they pass onto the political system. On the other hand, there is the negative activism of blame and complaint, where the main aim of political controversy is to force politicians into taking responsibility. *Democracy needs both approaches to citizenship, but at the present time the negative is receiving more emphasis than the positive.* The negative model represents the passive approach to democracy, the idea that politics is essentially an affair of elites, who accordingly become

the target of public blaming and shaming. Paradoxically, every time when there is a failure or disaster, when a minister or official resigns, this enforces the understanding that governance and politics is a business of small groups of elite decision makers (Crouch, 2004, pp. 4-5).

In addition, there are other democratic forms of political participation, not only the electoral, such as pressure groups, NGOs, social media and digital media initiatives. However, we need to distinguish between cause activities which are seeking an action or legislation by public authorities, and those which tackle tasks directly and ignore politics. The latter have grown considerably in recent times. *However, they cannot possibly be regarded as indicators of the quality of democracy because they are turning away from politics.* More complex are the politically oriented lobbies which directly affect government policy. This is evidence of a strong liberal society, though it is not the same as a strong democracy. Democracy requires certain equality in the possibility to affect political outcomes by all citizens (Crouch, 2004, p. 5). However, this is not the contemporary case. There is imbalance between corporative lobbyism and the interests of all other social groups. Governments try to imitate global firms as a role model and try to rationalize their activities using the same principles. This often means outsourcing many services and activities (Kalev, 2011).

Institutions of post-democracy

Colin Crouch defines three key institutions of post-democracy. The *first* post-democratic institution is the so called *global firm* (Crouch, 2004, pp. 12-20) with two main manifestations: (a) the tendency for firms to change their identity rapidly through takeovers, mergers and re-organisations; (b) the growing fragmentation of the workforce through temporary contracts, franchising and the self-employed status. Having a core business itself becomes rigidity. The most advanced

firms outsource and subcontract more or less everything except their strategic financial decision making capacity. That determines the phantom nature of firms which now comprise short-lived and anonymous financial accumulations. Invisibility becomes a weapon.

Entrepreneurs and company managers gain privileged access to politicians and civil servants. The power that they already possess within their firms translates into political power. These things happen in societies which have lost the sense of a distinction between the public interest guarded by public authorities and private interests for personal gains. The main problem here is that the concentration of huge power in the corporate sector ultimately impacts government activities, given that corporate employees not only dominate the economy but they have acquired the status of a class which rules over the state (Kursar, 2013). In this new context, there is no longer competition between state and corporations but rather between different corporations vying for influence over the state and its subsidies (Wolin, 1996, pp. 31-45). This new economy offers a sovereignty of consumers, as compensation for the deficit of democratic participation.

Lobbies on behalf of business interests always enjoy an advantage and increase profits to businesses, so the costs constitute investment. Non-business interests can rarely claim anything and the success of their lobbying does not yield financial gains, so such costs represent expenditure (Crouch, 2004, p. 6). Institutions become a matter of profit. As a result, we are living and exploring the so called "inverted totalitarianism" which is based on the depolitization of citizens who live in an atmosphere of fear (Wolin, 1996, pp. 31-45). A good government presumably manages to look like an oligarchy to oligarchs while being a democracy to ordinary people (Rancière, 1999, p. 74, 113).

The *second* key institution is the *political party*. In its pure form, the democratic party

it has the shape of concentric circles: the leaders are selected from the activists, who are selected from the party membership, which reflects the interests of those parts of the electorate which the party represents. A major function of the intermediate circles is to link political leaders to the electorate in a two-way interaction.

Recent changes have had major implications for the concentric model of party. There is an extension of circles of advisors and lobbyists around leaderships. Also, due to the lack of a well-functioning system of political party funding, parties are inclined to seek funds from 'grey sources' and criminal businesses. Large and legitimate companies have no incentive to offer financial support unless some special privileges are promised in return (Bezlov and Gounev, 2012, p. 34). The firms which gather around party leaderships can offer money to be used in national and television campaigns which have largely replaced local activities. From the point of view of a party leadership, relations with the new tight circles are easier. Their expertise is of more use than the enthusiasm which the ordinary party activist can offer.

While elections exist and can change governments, public electoral debate is a controlled spectacle, managed by teams of professional experts in the techniques of persuasion, and considering a small range of issues selected by those teams (Crouch, 2004, p. 4). Politics is replaced by champions and prophets (Rosanvallon, 2006, p. 228). The public management of consensus relies on popular views, fear, crises and the suggestion of pending catastrophe. For instance, there is similarity in the discourses about problems like competitiveness, environment, immigration, terrorism etc. The rise of radical groups and violent urban eruptions become arena of social conflict (Swyngedouw, 2011).

Post-democracy also makes a contribution to the character of political communication: brief messages requiring low concentration;

the use of words to form high-impact images instead of arguments appealing to the intellect. Advertising is not a form of rational dialogue. You cannot answer it back. Its aim is not to engage in discussion but to persuade to elect a politician. Promotion of the claimed charismatic qualities of a party leader, and pictures of his or her person striking appropriate poses, take the place of debate over issues and conflicting interests. What occurs is that politicians promote images of their personal integrity and populist tactics focusing the emotions of people on enemy images and on security instead of freedom (Todorov, 2014, pp. 91-93. pp. 128-130). Adoption of advertising methods has helped politicians cope with the problem of communicating to a mass public; but it has not served the cause of democracy itself.

The *third* main institution is the *social class*. The contemporary political discourse that social class no longer exists is itself a symptom of post-democracy. It is difficult to tell the class story of contemporary society: diverse and heterogeneous groups of professionals, administrators, office and sales workers, employees of financial institutions and of public bureaucracies. As individuals they are the most likely to be found as active members of interest organizations and cause groups. But they are spread across a wide political spectrum, and therefore do not confront the political system with a clear agenda of demands.

In summary, it occurs that post-democracy is not just phenomena of our age. The challenges addressed via the notion of post-democracy cover the periods of transition from totalitarianism to democracy, from nation states to globalization, from transnationalism or postmodern identities to multi-level or global governance (Kalev, 2011). It is important to understand the forces of disordering the democracy and to adjust the approach to political participation. That is why Colin Crouch has called his essay 'coping with'

post-democracy, not reversing or overcoming it (Crouch, 2004, p. 4).

In the following sections we try to match the post-democracy to the political models of decision making, proving them through empirical evidence from the Bulgarian context.

Post-democracy in political models

The earliest models assume the policy making is a linear and consistent process, an assumption that is widely represented and criticised in the literature. Lasswell is one of the main researchers in this field (for more details see May and Wildavsky, 1978; Smith, 1976; DeLeon, 1999, pp. 19-35). There are also other stage models as these of Brewer, Howlett and Ramesh, Pressman and Wildavsky, etc. (for more details see Howlett, and Ramesh, 2003, pp. 12-13).

According to these models, government and institutions formulate a series of policy steps that help clarify the process through which observers monitor how a political system responds to public demands. Such a model allows focusing on various connections between different institutions, not solely to approach the issue from a legislative standpoint. This kind of process is based on the traditional idea of democracy and is not so compatible with the characteristics of post-democracy.

Pressman and Wildavsky offer more realistic assessment about contemporary democracy implementation as decision-making process (Pressman and Wildavsky cited in John, 2012, pp. 21-24). They argue that every policy has good chances for successful implementation at the initial stage. The main problem originates in the management chain – if the process involves many stages of decision-making and agencies with executive competencies, the less likely it is to implement the intended policies successfully. Thus, despite its limitations, this implementation model highlights the role of the agents and their mutual adaption which shows that

communication and political will are more important than the structure and institutions themselves (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981). That could explain the expanding marketing strategies and the multiply effect of the post-democracy type of communication, analysed in the previous sections.

Lindblom suggests an alternative approach. By focusing not on the structure but on the incrementalism of the decision-making process, he introduces the concept of *muddling through*, which consists of successive limited comparisons in situation of existing policy. The model offers limited comparisons corresponding to implemented policies; it is additionally simplified as some of the effects and values are not included (Lindblom 1959, cited in Parsons, 1995, pp. 84-85; 286-287). Policies do not follow formal theoretical models, instead, negotiations' and lobbying outcome can be a result of an accident or a conscious choice made for a specific politics - made by one (or both) of the participants. The criterion for a good decision is not the achievement of the goal but the consensus and the process to it. So, it reinforces the consensual logic, ignoring the political debate of the post-democracy. From this perspective, post-democracy is logical and rational. The inconsistency, the overlapping of competencies, the lack of reaction at time, and the co-existence of incompatible analytical frameworks is obvious and there is no better way to design them. The nature of the democracy is out of the responsibilities of the government or the corporations and the outbreak of a crisis situation cannot be a criterion for the quality of democracy. The democratic process from the point of view of incrementalism represents the institutions as a form of political power that defines the outputs and the outcomes of the policies as well as the difference between the institutions by their activities (March and Olsen, 1989). These institutions depict a relationship between the informal (economic) and the formal mechanisms of policy making. They

may stimulate certain patterns of behaviour and limit others. Such an approach is helpful in analysing the mechanisms of post-democracy because it places the political and corporate elite in a social context.

Next, *Kingdon's* multiple-stream model offers a more comprehensive framework that includes the political system, the importance of specific agents, ideas, institutions and external processes. His main idea is to study not the stability of policies but the permanent changes and interdependence between the elements of the political process. Kingdon's model identifies three main streams: problems, policies and politics. (1) *problems* represent data and explanation about different political issues (for example, in our analysis these are the political participation, the emergence of corporate-political elite and the emergence of cooperation); (2) *policies* includes struggle between different decisions and their supporters (for example, in this paper these are the relationships driving cooperation, and the institutionalisation) (3) *politics* addresses the decision-making process, the political responsibility and the official competencies of different agencies (for example, in this paper, we attribute the third stream to the outsourcing and privatisation of public services). The streams may be independent from one another or may interact with each other and could interrupt or force policies and agendas. Unexpected events or urgent problems may serve as political windows for new policies (Kingdon, 1984, p. 21). After possible policies are discussed, decision-makers move onto other problems. However, the initial decisions create a new set of problems, which consequently leads to the inclusion of a new group of decision-makers and results in a chaotic decision-making process as those who make decisions operate in a changing set of problems and solutions. Thus, Kingdon's model expands beyond the "garbage can" metaphor referred

in the organisational choice literature (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972, pp. 1–25). It applies the idea to the wider political process that has characteristics of an organised anarchy. As a result, the process leads to constant change and periodic intervention of all actors associated with the decision (John, 2012, p. 159). The multiple-stream model explains the existence of democratic procedures with post-democratic content. While the politics and problems *swim* in the political *primordial soup*, the political system applies a strong influence in shaping the agenda, thus leading to transfusion effects from one policy sector to another by establishing precedents, new principles and procedures and learning approach for policy communication (John, 2012, p. 160).

Finally, *Baumgartner and Jones's* approach about the punctuated equilibrium (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) rests on an analogy with the evolution theory, according to which evolutionary changes are characterized by long periods of stability interrupted by episodes of fast development (Sabatier, 1999, p. 9). It gives some clues as to why post-democracy is not a revolution but is expanding across different political systems and countries (transition, advanced, weak countries).

To sum up, the mechanism of post-democracy cannot possibly be explained with a single policy making model. While these models deal with different levels of governmental, economic and social agents and issues. Instead, we argue that the post-democracy in Europe, especially SEE and Bulgaria in particular, represents a mixture of top-down and bottom-up systems with complex network dynamics, covering incremental policies that partially overlap or are partially independent. As a result, this process leads to a greater publicity than politics and contributes to a very slow but simultaneous change in the way actors operate.

Empirical evidence

The empirical base of the analysis is the political protests and the bank crisis in Bulgaria in the period 2013-2014 (for useful review of the political development in Bulgaria 2009-2013 see Hadzhiev, 2015). We focus on the protests held in February 2013 and in June-November 2013, given that they are the recentest and expose most closely the very problems of post-democracy. The bank crisis in Bulgaria in the summer of 2014 shows how the patterns of post-democracy are reinforced by actual mechanisms and models of policy making.

In relation to the analysis of the Bulgarian case of post-democracy, we should bear in mind the relatively small size of the economic, political and professional elites in Bulgaria. In 1990 only about 8 percent of the adult population held advanced degrees, and the top economic and political elites numbered a few hundred individuals. This number extended with the democratization but the common pattern is the same. Most members within formal or informal professional social networks (e.g. legal or finance professionals) and within the regional sub-networks know each other (Bezlov and Gounev, 2012a, p. 94), which empowers our theoretical assumptions provided in the previous paragraph.

The *first* protest was in the winter of 2013 and covered more than 30 cities in Bulgaria, reaching over 100 000 people on a daily basis. Bulgarians working and living in many places abroad also protested in solidarity with what was happening in Bulgaria. Initially it was caused by high electricity bills for December 2012 and January 2013 and it was targeted at electricity distribution companies. These are private companies that have a monopoly in the state-regulated electricity market. During the protest, people were expanding their demands and directed them against the political system and the political elite from the entire post-1989 transition period.

The rallies escalated into full-blown civil disobedience. Key roads and highways were blocked; various objects were thrown at cars of the police, buildings of energy distributors, the Ministry of Economy and the Parliament. Active participants in the protests were extreme leftwing activists, anarchists, communists, football supporters, students, people close to the group of "Anonymous", patriotic organizations.

Violence broke out between police and citizens, and there were cases of spontaneous self-immolation of protesters that conditioned the resignation of the government of Boyko Borisov in February 2013. The resignation was accompanied by a demonstration of support for the government which became characteristic of the follow-up protests in Bulgaria. These are the so-called counter protests, organized usually by ruling party's headquarters, much smaller than the anti-governmental one but widely covered by the media.

Economic demands of protesting citizens were related to the nationalization of the electricity distribution companies; eliminating all negotiators between the National Electricity Company (NEC) and consumers through individual contracts; declassification of all contracts in the energy sector and the liability of the signatory parties; termination of nuclear electricity exports to meet the needs of the domestic market. Political demands included implementing a majoritarian electoral system; reducing the number of deputies in Parliament; and tackling poverty and demographic crisis.

Consequently, the protest had a particular trigger, but there was no clear focus and responsible institutions because the contracts of electricity distribution companies were legal. It was rather against social injustice and the feeling of the people that they were excluded from political decision making while nevertheless paying the price of policy decisions. Public mistrust was toward the entire political class and the whole Bulgarian

elite, because too often the transition had been used for private not social interests.

A relevant aspect of the protest was the public desire to explicitly to distinguish from all political parties. The political as such was rejected and ignored, making it difficult to formulate specific demands which are simultaneously political and non-political and to implement them in a democratic system but without political parties. The government took advantage of the situation and made attempts to downplay the protesting citizens, describing them as people who were unaware of what they wanted.

The *second* protest continued several months beginning in June 2013 until November 2013 and was directed against the government's non-transparent appointments to senior posts, especially that of the media mogul Delian Peevski to the post of head of the State Agency for National Security, and links of government and political elite with the oligarchy and organized crime.

The question of who exactly nominated Peevski for chairman of the State Agency for National Security remained without a formal reply and was the main question of protesting people (*Who?* became the hashtag of the model of post-democratic governance in Bulgaria). On 19 June 2013, Delyan Peevski nomination was withdrawn. However, protests continued demanding that the government should resign, even though it had just been formed following the early election held on 12 May 2013.

The protest was driven by values and called for moral renewal and placement of new value fundamentals of the Bulgarian political system. It was defined also as the protest of smart, beautiful working and educated young people in Bulgaria. There were no economic demands or motives. The protest took place primarily in Sofia and in the different days encompassed 10 000 to 50 000 participants, although media reported much lower numbers.

The scope of the protest and the profile of protesters were used by the government to pit the capital city against the other part of the country, dividing the population into the educated working people who had time to walk around and to demonstrate versus poor uneducated people who only want lower electricity bills.

The main demand was for resignation of the government and new elections. Protesters were willing to keep the protest peaceful and this goal was largely achieved despite the excesses with the leader of Ataka – the party occupying the radical end of the political spectrum that informally supported the government and the use of power against the people in its attempt to drive the Assembly deputies out the occupied Parliament.

Again, protesting citizens strongly distinguished from all political parties and refused to negotiate with the government, as was the case in February 2013. There was no clear idea as to how to reform the political system without parties but only with NGOs. There were also numerous counter protests organized by the ruling party. The government would not resign in the hope that amid the summer vacation protesters would ultimately grow weary.

As for failing to achieve the sense of justice and legitimate political system, in October 2013 the protest escalated into students' occupation of Sofia University and other universities in the country. The occupation lasted about a month and student protests were held every day. The demands were the same – pertaining to morality in politics and about demolition of the oligarchic governance model. In November there was occupation of Parliament, coinciding with the celebration of 24 years since the fall of totalitarian regime (10 November 2013), when the police used violence against the people. Yet again these events failed to bring down the government. This created a sense of powerlessness and inability to reform the system among the

disillusioned citizenship. Ultimately on 23 July 2014, the government resigned, after 405 days of anti-government's protests. As a result of this protest, extra-parliamentary political projects and movements were launched to actively participate in the country's political agenda.

Both protests expose the key dimensions of post-democracy discussed in previous sections of the paper. These include the importance of the global corporation such as electricity distribution companies, the government's failure to regulate the market, the lack of agents to take on the responsibility, the media's role as a platform for the elite rather than a mediator between government and citizens, society's ignorance with regard to seeking solutions to political problem and formulating demands for civil alternatives, low voter turnout despite protests. Other significant aspects of post-democracy pertain to protesters' social/class division, the institutional bias to wait for things to happen by themselves, to control information and gain political benefits and to make controversial decisions about taking out loans or making important appointments, among other problems. However, civil society in Bulgaria recognizes the root causes of problems in the post-1989 transition period rather than in the patterns of post-democracy or the institutional models reinforcing it. The problems are seen as stemming from the specific Bulgarian context or culture, rather than as a global transformation of democracy.

In the following paragraphs we will look at the bank crisis in summer of 2014, which indicated the network dynamics of post-democracy, the opacity in the actions of institutions, the lack of public trust in them and how the collision of economic interests could bring about the redistribution of political power.

Corporate Commercial Bank (CCB) was a Bulgarian bank founded in 1994. It grew rapidly in the period between 2007 and 2014

and subsequently went bankrupt. Within this the financial institution became the fourth largest bank in Bulgaria in terms of assets, third in earnings and first in growth rate of deposits. With the increasing importance of the bank, its owner Tsvetan Vasilev was widely reported as one of the backstage figures in Bulgarian politics. According to *The Kapital* weekly, the bank enjoyed political protection which allowed it to attract public resources and channel them for the acquisition of private assets. The bank had a stake in companies such as Bulgartabac, BTC, Technopolis, Petrol, Dunarit and others. There was interconnection and confluence of media, political, regulatory and judiciary power in a system controlled by Tsvetan Vassilev and his partner Delyan Peevski (*The Kapital*, Special edition, 2015). Some media set Tsvetan Vassilev and CCB as informal coalition partner of all governments in Bulgaria (Popov, 2013). The bank concentrated a big share of public funds and in return the owned media channels provided comfort to the government and thus impacted Bulgarian political life (Stoyanov, 2013).

In the spring of 2014, economic tension started mounting between the two partners Vassilev and Peevski. The media attributed the conflict to the dispute over Bulgartabac (*The Kapital*, Special edition, 2015). CCB had funded many common projects and it was then that Tsvetan Vassilev insisted that Peevski should return part of the money. The institutions were involved through their mechanisms of action and inaction. An investigation was launched by the Prosecutor's Office whereby the CCB offices were closed. Another investigation was launched into the attempted murder of Peevski.

In June 2014 the press started publishing negative news related to the CCB (*The Sega*, 16 June 2014). Depositors began to withdraw their money which conditioned a bank run. The CCB management informed the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) of the impending running

out of liquidity and suspension of any payments or bank transactions (BNB, June 20, 2014). The Central Bank put CCB under special supervision and appointed supervisors, promising CCB to open on 21 July 2014, which never happened. In the summer of 2014 another bank incurred liquidity problems – First Investment Bank. However, in this case the Central Bank reacted in different way and saved the bank from bankruptcy. On 6 November 2014 BNB withdrew approval of CCB to carry out bank activities with grounds that the bank had violated the law by indirectly funded payments on loans to itself (BNB, 6 November 2014). On 4 December 2014 the Deposit Guarantee Fund began to pay the guaranteed deposits to CCB's clients.

In the case of CCB, public institutions were blocking each other and some of the symptoms of post-democracy were: media campaigns, information leaks, the lack of prompt and decisive action on the part of the BNB, the transfer of responsibilities between state institutions and the contradictory signals from their official representatives. The CCB was initially rated by the Central Bank as well capitalized, liquid and stable. The subsequent review of the bank's loan portfolio showed a potential write-off of assets of BGN 4.5 billion. The reported irregularities were so large and obvious that it was highly unlikely that the BNB and the law enforcement authorities had not taken heed of this situation earlier in the years. Subsequently, the newly elected Bulgarian Parliament was trying to rescue CCB, despite the fact that BNB has provided evidence that CCB should be declared insolvent, and so violating the authority of BNB and showing a lack of trust between the institutions. There was a feeling that the Bulgarian institutions were used to promote specific private interests, regardless of the public and social good. (CSD, 2014, pp.53-55).

For a year and a half there were three governments, two mass protests, and a bankrupt bank. These events cast light upon

the *Who?* model that symbolized the Bulgarian post-democracy and exposed its strength. At the end of this period in the fall of 2014, the model was undergoing transformation and acquiring new dimensions.

Our analysis has shown that the paradoxes of modern democracy are due to a combination of factors that have more objective organizational and institutional nature than ideological one. Greed in the developed countries and the transition from totalitarianism to democracy in Southeast Europe are accelerators of the process, though not their root causes. Rather, the adaptation of the institutions of the modern democratic state to the network and risk society allows the agents of post-democracy to gain decisive relevance. In the Bulgarian context, the economic oligarchy's plundering of the state has political and historical implications that provoked the reaction of civil society, which was not targeted at post-democracy itself. People attribute the lack of morale to personal factors pertaining to incompetence or the past of political leaders and not to economic factors and motives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, post-democracy is not just a contemporary or an exclusively Bulgarian phenomenon. Transition periods and transition countries reinforce this phenomenon. Yet it is worth noting that post-democracy has much deeper roots which have invariably been connected with attempts to abolish the belonging of people to the public sphere. Acknowledging the problems of the longer decision-making chains enables us to address and tackle them. Likewise, identifying the causes of the weakening of citizen's political activity provides for the development of strategies to improve the situation. The challenges addressed via the notion of post-democracy reflect the major contemporary transition, the adjustment of state and society

to economic development. This is a fruitful field that requires extensive further research.

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