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Olena Podolian
PhD student, Political Science and Baltic and East European Studies, Sodertorn University
olena.podolian@sh.se

The challenge of ‘stateness’ in post-Soviet democratisation:

Theoretical and conceptual framework

Life’s a drag. It does not fit my theoretical framework (anonymous author)

By virtue of introduction: research problem, questions and design

This research project takes as its empirical starting point an apparent inconsistency within trajectories of development of stateness within post-Soviet states. Most of them run against earlier predictions of the 1990s about stateness problems such as issues of citizenship and political community, political fragmentation and state disintegration, interethnic conflicts and violence. Namely, by 2011, these predictions have largely come true neither in the Baltic States nor in most other European post-Soviet states, e.g. Ukraine. These states remain integral, stable, and, formally in case of Ukraine, democratic. This experience differs from other post-Soviet states with comparable institutional legacies and multiethnic composition such as Georgia and Moldova, where state integrity has been challenged.

This divergence between successful and failing state-building is puzzling against the backdrop of the shared institutional design and a multiethnic composition characterised by large Russian minorities at the outset of regime change after the dissolution of the USSR. In the research project, an attempt is made to analyse and assess the varying ways in which the ‘stateness’ problem has been addressed within the post-Soviet European states, 1991-present day, in two representative cases: Estonia and Ukraine. The primary aim of the project is to identify, analyse, and contrast internal (domestic) and external (international) factors influencing policy-making and hence - handling of the ‘stateness’ problem in the two case-study region. The empirical basis for both types of factors is the policy areas of citizenship, national minorities and language.

Stateness is considered a crucial component of democratic consolidation. In the postcommunist space, state- and nation-building and democratisation are parallel and intersecting processes within a context of triple/quadruple transition. Studying stateness as a necessary condition for democracy is chosen against the background of the link between ‘stateness’ and democracy’ established by J. Linz and A. Stepan (1996). The research questions are generated by ultimate interest in preconditions for democratisation.

The main research question is: How to explain the similar outcome of maintaining ‘stateness’ - in the sense of state integrity and ethno-political stability - in the two different cases? In other words, how has the ‘stateness problem’ been mitigated during the subsequent quarter of a century since the late Soviet period?

Arguably, in the most of post-Soviet European space, except for the cases of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova, stateness has been achieved – but democracy has not, apart from

the Baltic States. This invites reflection on the initial nature of the stateness 'problem' and the nature of Soviet legacies.

The second research question consequently is: To what extent, on the basis of current evidence, can the 'stateness problem' be considered resolved in either case? If one accepts that this is not the case and the stateness situation in the two countries is better characterised as 'continued challenge of stateness', then what potential implications does this carry for democracy (democratisation, democratic consolidation, quality of democracy)?

Finally, what might this state of affairs reveal about the external influence on democratic state-building? First, what evidence - if any - of continued trend towards democratic consolidation, broadly defined, is to be found within Estonia's post-EU accession context? In particular, what is the capacity of the EU, post-accession, to mitigate or resolve continued issues relating to stateness? Second, what are Ukraine's prospects of resolving these issues within the framework of existing state institutions? What leverage are the Council of Europe, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the EU, through European Neighbourhood Policy and other instruments with no clear membership perspective, able to exert?

Estonia and Ukraine are deemed similar cases according to the 'dependent variable' of stateness. Why? Both have maintained 'stateness' in the sense of state integrity and an absence of irredentist/separatist challenges; more broadly, both have demonstrated ethno-political stability – i.e. a lack of any sustained ethnic challenges to the state order. This belies many of the predictions made at the start of the 1990s by authors such as Rogers Brubaker (1996) who implicitly reified ethnicity as a factor in post-Soviet transformation.

The research design is qualitative in nature. It embraces the most-different comparative analysis of two cases, made from historical perspective.

Hence, the selection of cases of Estonia and Ukraine is principally determined by belonging to the post-Soviet 'universe' of transitions. A further rationale behind the selection of Estonia and Ukraine is that are both representative of correspondingly the Baltic States, the only post-Soviet region where democratic consolidation and European integration occurred (also see Petsinis 2010: 311), and the European part of the USSR, the countries relatively open politically and for the EU's policies, with notable exception of Azerbaijan and Belarus; therefore the stalled democratisation in them may be indicative of the shortcomings of democracy promotion and Europeanisation. The Soviet past implies sharing similarities, including state capacity, yet also demonstrating difference, the most important of which is the outcome of post-Soviet regime change. In this project, the 'most-different system design' is to be applied.

A methodological framework to be applied in the project is qualitative data analysis, defined as 'systematic analysis of documentary data' (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 47). They qualitative methods will embrace: first, the text analysis of primary documents and archival sources in the policy areas of citizenship, national minorities and language (the Constitutions, relevant legislation and state policies (language and education); the EU policy documents, the OSCE, including High Commissioner on National Minorities letters to the Estonia's and Ukraine's governments and Council of Europe; surveys of public opinion and election results (which are examples of further integrating quantitative data into research); interviews: semi-structured expert interviews, including phone interviews, in capitals of target countries and Brussels, and elite interviews with policy makers and focus groups with minority NGO representatives in capitals of target countries (the latter - if feasible); the analysis of secondary literature (past research and evaluation; printed mass-media materials with focus on party press).

For analysis of collected qualitative data, triangulation between the three sources above will be employed.

Contextually, this project is situated within the field of democratisation studies. Therefore, the paper is started by briefly touching upon the question of broad theories dominating the field and outlining why they are not considered for the project. Thereafter, the main theory with embedded models is presented, followed by outline of the conceptual framework.

Before proceeding, a brief consideration of specificities of post-communist state-building and implications for its analysis is in place.

Postcommunist state formation: what we need to know before applying a theory

In their article entitled ‘Reconceptualizing the State: Lessons from Post-Communism’, Anna Grzymala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong argue for shifting ‘the analytical focus of the study of post-communism from “transitology” to state-formation’ (2002: 531). The critique of transitology is briefly presented in the next section. Here, the main features of post-communist state-building that are important for theorising are outlined. Whilst post-Communist state-building shares similarities with state-building elsewhere, analysed mostly in mainly Western Europe, which are taken for granted in the mainstream literature, it also has important differences.

First and foremost, the post-communist state-building should be recognised and analysed as an ongoing process rather than a consolidated outcome, i.e. established state, because the postcommunist states are neither stable nor consolidated (Grzymala-Busse and Luong 2002: 531-532). Second, contrary to the view of a state as a unitary – and established – actor, postcommunist state is characterised by multiplicity of domestic, formal and informal, and international actors interacting over public authority and state formation (Grzymala-Busse and Luong 2002: 532-533). Finally, the distinct feature of postcommunist state-building is influence by unique international pressures, both regional and global, which ‘has had a profound effect on the very nature of state-building by changing the formal institutional requirements for becoming a full-fledged member of the international system’; however, influence of international factors is mediated by domestic ones (Grzymala-Busse and Luong 2002: 531; 536). On basis of these assumptions, authors develop an analytical framework for analysis of postcommunist state-building, which is placed in the discussion of rational choice institutionalism below. As Grzymala-Busse and Luong themselves point, these specific features have been largely ignored by the previous approaches (2002: 531). Let us briefly consider the main perspectives predominant in the field.

Along with processor trajectories rather than an outcome of state formation, domination of informal structures and practices and pre-existing state institutions and informal practices (2002: 9) along with formal institutions;¹ influence of international pressures such as the EU (2002: 2), Grzymala-Busse and Luong specify further features as defining post-communist state-building: the speed of change and the initial contingency and contestation of public authority. On this basis, they reconceptualise a state as (re)emerging from the post-communism characterised by features that are in contrast to assumptions of the theories of the state drawn from Western European experience (Grzymala-Busse and Luong 2002: 3-9).

¹ In the current version, this is a limitation of this research project: the informal dimension is not accounted for by the suggested level of analysis and material.

Hence, the frame of analysis of post-communist state-building can be suggested to include following dimensions: present/preceding, formal/informal, domestic/international (Grzymala-Busse and Luong 2002: 9).

Previous theory

It has been argued that democratisation research, in particular transitology, has been biased in favour of domestic factors neglecting international ones (Pridham 1999: 3; Pravda 2001: 1; Silander 2005: 61; 78). One of the most coherent critical accounts of transitology is produced by Howard J. Wiarda, who criticises transitology for incompleteness of its theorising on Latin America and Southern Europe – and thus limited theoretical, not only empirical, use for Central and Eastern Europe (2001: 80). In particular, he emphasises the oversight of the role of political culture, political economy of, and international influence on, transition at the expense of focus on institutions and elites and pacts between them. The focus on political transformation was possible only because fundamental ‘economic, social, cultural, even psychological transitions have already occurred’ and provided the basis for it (2001: 85). Regarding international influence, Wiarda identifies gap of ‘the role of international influences both on the process and outcome of democratization’ (2001: 87-88). He defines the international influence as ‘direct, overt, often covert intervention by outside actors in promoting their interests – in this case, stability through democratization – in the internal affairs of other nations’ (2001: 89). Even though acknowledged also by broader criticism of transitology, this gap might be a result of focus on, and credit to, internal forces (2001: 88-89).

The treatment of internal factors by transitology is critically assessed by Thomas Carothers. Whilst not addressing its lack of attention to international factors, he identified five core assumptions of transition paradigm that need reassessment. One of them, directly relevant to this project’s topic, is ‘that the democratic transitions making up the third wave are being built on coherent, functioning states’ (for the rest of assumptions, see Carothers 2002: 6-9). He concludes by rebutting an assumption that ‘state-building is a secondary challenge to democracy-building and largely compatible with it’ and emphasizing importance of promotion of democracy by international actors (2002: 17).

The specific difference between transitology and Europeanisation, another analytical approach to study democratisation, regarding their approach to the role of external factors, is elaborated by Theodor Tudoroiu. In particular, he specifies that whereas transitology, as a sub-field of comparative politics, treats international factors as ‘conjunctural’ and only ‘contributing’ to democratic reform (2010: 83), Europeanisation ‘convincingly explains the importance of external factors’ at a price of marginalising internal factors (2010: 85). He argues for shift of focus of studying postcommunist regime change very much in line with conceptualisation of postcommunist state by Grzymala-Busse as presented above and even stronger emphasises the determining role of international factors.

An emerging underlying consensus can be observed in the literature that the analysis of state-building in the post-Soviet context must embrace an interaction of both internal (domestic) and external (international) factors. In particular, Alex Pravda argues in favour of studying the impact of interaction of internal and external factors on policy-making: ‘In as complicated a process as democratization, ... a more realistic approach... is to try and illuminate the role international factors have played, where and how they have interacted with domestic factors, which remain the ultimate determinants of developments within states’ (2001: 6). In Europeanisation literature, this is expressed by H eritier et al. who interpret European policies

‘basically as input into the domestic political process’ (2001: 288). The interrelation of external and internal factors is confirmed in recent study by Michael Carlsson, whereby domestic conditions, such as path-dependency and domestic politics, influence upon the external pressures and cause different outcomes (2012: 16).

Therefore, in this paper, an argument in favour of studying the impact of interaction of internal and external factors on policy-making is developed (Pravda 2001). More specifically, the focus of this research project is to analyse the impact of external link on the interaction of internal factors in state-building. Against the background of state-building in Estonia and Ukraine being an object of analysis, the empirical basis for both external and internal factors is the policy areas of citizenship, national minorities and language.

Main theory

As mentioned in the overview of the role of the theory, the institutional theories are meso- level theories (Peters 1998: 117). According to Lapalombara (1968) and Macridis (1986:22, both quoted in Peters 1998: 117), advantages of developing theories of this level is their function as building blocks for larger theories, more appropriate scale for concept formation and area specialisation (Peters 1998: 117).

The main theoretical frameworks for analysing post-communist state-building have been a rational choice institutionalism (Elster, Offe, Preuss 1997), in particular actor-centred institutionalism (Scharpf 1997), and historical institutionalism (Thelen 1999, Pierson 2004). Following Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse, Marcin Zaborowski argues that ‘the theoretical perspectives best suited to address these processes [external influences on post-communist transitions – O. P.] are either traditional rational choice institutionalism or sociological institutionalism, or both’ (2006: 27). This research aims to combine both perspectives that have often been ‘unnecessarily separated’ (di Palma 1990) adding the sociological institutionalism under an umbrella of new institutionalism. In so doing, another often named omission of transitology – historical factors (Pridham 1999: 3), or Soviet legacy in this case – is addressed.

As Graziano and Wink put it, ‘new institutionalist literature is generally seen as characterized by three variants: rational choice (or rationalist) institutionalism (RCI); historical institutionalism (HI) and sociological institutionalism (SI) (Hall and Taylor 1996; Aspinwall and Schneider 2001b; for a different classification see Peters 1999)’.

Since a detailed presentation of each theory would go beyond the scope of this paper, only a brief outline of assumptions of each relevant to the purposes of this project follows. Historical institutionalism defines institutions as ‘the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity’ (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938). It seems to be particularly relevant because first, it looks at the state as ‘a complex of institutions capable of structuring the character and outcomes of group conflict’ (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938). Second, it emphasizes path dependence and unintended consequences in institutional development (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938). Third, along institutional it considers other factors such as diffusion of ideas (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938; 942). This last feature in particular makes it compatible with sociological institutionalism. Its main concern, that of why organisations adopt ‘specific sets of institutional forms, procedures or symbols’ (Hall and Taylor 1996: 947), is crucial to state-building.

Sociological institutionalism defines institutions broader than the other two approaches, including, along with formal rules, procedures and norms, 'the symbol systems... the 'frames of meaning' guiding human action', which overcomes a traditional political science's distinction between 'institutional' and 'cultural' explanations (Hall and Taylor 1996: 947). It also explains origin and change of institutional practices by the means of the social legitimacy for a broader cultural environment (Hall and Taylor 1996: 949), in my case, international; also known as a 'logic of social appropriateness' (Campbell 1995, quoted in Hall and Taylor 1996: 949), it differentiates it strongly from the rational choice approach, which, among other political phenomena, studies the development of political institutions and ethnic conflict (Hall and Taylor 1996: 944) which render it relevant.

Skipping its more central (behavioural) assumptions about the actors' fixed sets of preferences against a background of collective action dilemmas, for the purposes here it is important to point that first, rational choice institutionalism emphasises 'the role of strategic interaction in the determination of political outcomes' (Hall and Taylor 1996: 945); second, it explains the origin of institutions by specifying their functions and their value to the actor affected by the institution, which is why they create the institution in question (Hall and Taylor 1996: 945).

Börzel and Risse point to the exact differences between two approaches in addressing the external dimension of post-communist transition. According to rational institutionalist perspective, there is a 'misfit' between the international, e.g. EU, and domestic level, which provides domestic actors with new opportunities and hence they facilitate change; in this process, formal domestic institutions have the decisive role. According to sociological perspective, socialisation and collective learning are important; they are transmitted through norm entrepreneurs such as actors and networks (policy experts and academics NGOs) and informal networks or institutions, i.e. collective rules of appropriate behavior, which influence how domestic institutions respond to external influence (Zaborowski 2006: 27-28). Börzel and Risse conclude that there is no contradiction between the two approaches, but difference in highlighted mechanisms of externally initiated domestic change, in particular, of relationship between external pressures and domestic responses. Namely, they present two opposing hypotheses: the rational institutionalist assuming that the greater pressure from Brussels, the higher chance of domestic change, whereas the sociological arguing that high pressures for adaptation are 'likely to meet strong domestic resistance as long as the exported norms are not comparable with pre-existing ones'¹ (Zaborowski 2006: 28).

Finally, in a similar vein, Hall and Taylor argue convincingly for possibility and analytical desirability of combining a few perspectives (1996: 955-956).

Furthermore, in order to address the above mentioned problem of disregarding the external factors, especially short-sighted against the growing recognition of their role in the democratisation (Wiarda 2006, quoted in Tudoroiu 2010: 84), including transitology, literature, the theoretical body created for study of Europeanisation can be engaged.

The basic and important difference between the two countries is that Estonia is the EU's member and Ukraine is not, therefore along with this difference being taken into consideration, the impact of other European-wide organisations is to be taken into account, which raises a question of limits of Europeanisation (as opposed to EU-sation).

Regarding conceptualisation of Europeanisation, since the concept is new to political science and has been used in international relations more often, it is ambiguously defined in the academic literature. Moreover, the range of meanings is wide, up to opposite ones: on the one hand, it can be defined as ‘the emergence and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance’ (Mair 2004: 339). On the other hand, as rules, procedures, common beliefs and norms which are first developed at the EU level and then applied at the domestic one (Mair 2004: 339). In line with latter definition, Christoph Knill and Dirk Lehmkuhl define Europeanisation as the impact of European policies on national policies and institutions (2002: 256), which I intend to apply. Since the EU has enlarged to include the countries of the former socialist bloc, this definition in particular seems appropriate for analysis of post-socialist transition.

Still, generally, distinctive about Europeanisation is interdependence of domestic and supranational levels. As Peter Mair (2004: 340) points, Europe is an external order only from the perspective of international relations; but from that of comparative politics, Europe combines hardly separable features of national political systems as well as of a political system ‘in its own right’. More particularly, problematic to the analysis of Europeanization is different extent to which different policy sectors in different countries are prone to it. This creates a need for explanatory framework to be able to operate with different cases of the European integration at the nation-state level; Knill and Lehmkuhl investigate also this problem. They define three different mechanisms of Europeanisation: institutional compatibility of European and domestic arrangements; influence on domestic opportunity structures and interest constellations; finally, cognitive impact on domestic actors (2002: 256).

The first of the mechanisms named above is a prescriptive one, which presupposes institutional requirements mandatory for introduction at the domestic level instead of domestic regulatory adjustments. Policies of ‘positive integration’ viz. of creating common policies in various areas (environmental protection, health, consumer protection and social policy) constitute a part of this mechanism. Second mechanism is aimed at change of domestic ‘rules of game’ (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 258): since distribution of power and resources at the national level is dependent on domestic opportunity structures, it is a way to reinforce pro-European local forces. Policies of ‘negative integration’ (creation of common market) are part of this mechanism. The third mechanism, ‘framing’, is an indirect and ‘moderate’, since it is used to pave the way to later policies of negative and/or positive integration. Nevertheless, it can result into fundamental policy reforms through its strategy of changing beliefs and expectations of domestic actors in member states (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 273). It is designed to aim not only outcomes but also the process of domestic reforming and is analytically different from the first two mechanisms (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 274, 275). There is a rational choice element in the mechanism, where providing complete information in the game can be equated with cognitive influence. The outcome of the famous prisoners’ dilemma can switch in long run from mutual defection to cooperation-cooperation, given that both players are aware of their optimal payoffs when using such a strategy. Likewise, domestic actors are prone to change their beliefs and therefore to switch their initial preferences in the result of European policies and/or legislation, e.g. railway reform in Germany (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 274).

Besides mechanisms of Europeanisation, analytical framework of Knill and Lehmkuhl takes into consideration the domestic circumstances in member states as another independent variable, responsible for different outcomes of uniform EU policies in each member state. Generally, these conditions can be either favourable or unfavourable for European policies to be

successfully implemented; they include level of support for Europeanisation (high or low) and opportunity structures (inclination to veto use) (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 263). Within each type of circumstances, positive or negative, from the point of view of European integration, conditions can be singled out. Domestic conditions are very likely to favour European influence given that: firstly, there already exists a consensus on necessity of reforming. Secondly, there is a competitive constellation of interests at the national level, in which connection it is important that opponents to Europeanization do not exceed proponents significantly (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 273). Quite to the contrary, Europeanisation is unlikely to occur under conditions of both different administrative/legal traditions embedded in the given policy area and unfavourable alignment of political forces at the national level (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 266, 273). Therefore, even resistance to reforming should be interpreted carefully, since it is either 'positive' (generally in accord with Europeanisation) or 'negative' (unambiguously opposing it) as well.

An alternative model developed by Héritier et al. 2001 for studying the Europeanisation of domestic politics is close to the third mechanism by Knill and Lehmkuhl. They combine a rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism in studying either unitary or multi-actor perspective on Europeanisation. The analytical starting point is the same as followed in this project: studying 'European policies basically as input into the domestic political process' (Héritier et al. 2001: 288).

	Unitary actor perspective	Multi-actor perspective
Rational choice institutionalism	Europeanisation as strategic calculation	Europeanisation as preference aggregation
Sociological institutionalism	Europeanisation as norm diffusion	Europeanisation as deliberation/persuasion/learning

Source: Adopted from Héritier et al. 2001: 288.

If to take into consideration the ambiguity and complexity of Europeanisation, we can not anticipate that one single framework can explain the whole process of interference of policies at national and the EU level. Rather, we would look at strengths and weaknesses of each framework, at raised problems and answered questions. Particular advantage of framework by Knill and Lehmkuhl is in clearly stated problem, i.e. different developments of adaptation the EU policies in different policy areas and in different countries. It consists in assumption that reason for above-named differences is a particular type of Europeanisation mechanisms, three of which were developed by authors, and is supported by empirical evidence (European Union's environmental, road haulage and railway policies, accordingly). Concerning weaknesses, authors acknowledge that mechanisms of Europeanisation are often not concrete, but rather from hybrid constellations. In practice this means that researchers must look very carefully at reasons of success or failure of some policy in order to identify Europeanisation mechanism behind it correctly.

Next, mentioned above analytical framework developed by Grzymala-Busse and Luong for analysis of postcommunist state-building contains the following elements: first, institutional resources, providing opportunities and constraints; second, institutional legacies as sources of

institutional resources: voluntary organisation of society and existence of a central state apparatus; third, external factors such as time (pacing) and international context which reinforce opportunities and constraints (2002: 537).

Finally, the most recent and focused specifically on international factors model is developed by Tudoroiu, which he defines as ‘an international relations-based approach’ (2010: 85). Within the framework of international socialisation, it foresees the following socialisation mechanisms: strategic calculation; role playing; normative suasion (Checkel 2005: quoted in Tudoroiu 2010: 87). This model also includes strategy level as applied by an international actor: incentives-based strategy relates to the first two mechanisms and persuasion-based – to the last one (Tudoroiu 2010: 87).

To locate these analytical frameworks within a broader theoretical context, they fit new institutionalism as described by Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor (1996) and Guy Peters (1999). Namely, the analytical frameworks combine assumptions and features of rational choice and sociological institutionalisms. At the same time, they take into account the external factors when studying internal political processes. Whilst only one model, Grzymala-Busse and Luong, inclines towards rational choice - and historical to an extent that historical legacies are considered - version of new institutionalism, other three models – by Knill and Lehmkuhl, Héritier et al. and Tudoroiu – clearly follow sociological version with elements of rational choice, especially visible in Knill and Lehmkuhl’s model. (Interestingly, this version is applied by the path-breaking work in the field by Claus Offe et al., not considered here for reasons of parsimony). Tudoroiu points that international socialisation is used by both rational and constructivist approaches (2010: 87).

On this basis, it seems logical to conclude that, as argued elsewhere in the literature (Hall and Taylor 1996, Peters 1998), one theory cannot produce a full explanation and a combination is desirable. The exact format of this remains a question, with an option applying for instance rational choice and sociological versions separately, with historical institutionalism always being part of the analysis as a source of either resources and constraints or institutions and norms.

In which regard, before proceeding to the final section on the conceptual issues, it is worth reminding of a warning put by Graham T. Allison in the classical study of application of institutional theories to the Cuban Missile Crisis: ‘each frame of reference is... a “conceptual lens”. By comparing and contrasting the three frameworks, we see what each magnifies, highlights, and reveals as well as what each blurs or neglects’ (1971: v).

Conceptual framework and issues

The importance of the link between stateness and democracy seems to have been latently assumed or actively recognised by scholars of regime change during the two following decades. One of the first mentionings goes back to Linz and Stepan who introduced the concept into study of democratic transition and consolidation: ‘From once being neglected in the literature on democratic transitions, stateness problems must increasingly be a central concern of political activists and theorists alike’ (1996: 366). However, much later analysis registers the same problem: nearly a decade later, an absence of a ‘productive dialogue between scholars of post-communist transitions and of the state’, or of state-building from studying post-communist regime change, is seen as one of the continuously missed opportunities in comparative politics (Grzymala-Busse and Luong 2002: 1).

For the topic of the research project, it is of principal importance to define the central concept of ‘stateness’ and delineate the criteria of cases’ comparison as based on it. Therefore, in this section first, a conceptualisation of stateness with an attempt to include external factors is

discussed, and second, a look at empirical attempts to apply the concept, in particular, in the (more controversial) case of Ukraine is provided.

The starting point of defining ‘stateness’ taken here is that it was introduced by Linz and Stepan (1996) and is broadly defined as a congruence between territorial definition and the right of citizenship in the state. On this basis, Linz and Stepan define a ‘stateness’ problem as ‘profound differences about the territorial boundaries of the political community’s state and profound differences as to who has the right of citizenship in that state’ (1996: 16). However, in a decade and half since the debate about the relationship between democratic consolidation and stateness was started by Linz and Stepan in political science, there have been new views on its definition. One of the most coherent accounts has been presented by Møller and Skaaning (2011), the essence of meaning of which for re-working of the definition above is summarised below. In addition to the state of current research, another reason for a need for qualification of concept of stateness stems from analysis of quantitative data, as discussed below.

There are three key conceptual problems with ‘stateness’ outlined below which I would like first, to briefly address on the basis on latest debate in the literature, and second, to explain how I (am going to) apply it in this doctoral project.

The basic problem with conceptualisation of stateness is delimitation of it from other related concepts, foremost state capacity, but also state strength, administration and even rule of law. State administration (and related to it issue of corruption) is a concept at the intercept of these two – ‘stateness’ and ‘state capacity’. It is related to ‘stateness’ because it is part of Linz and Stepan’s definition and to state capacity – because it can be characterised as more or less ‘capable’ (Fortin 2012: 906). Møller and Skaaning emphasise the difference between the concepts of ‘stateness’ and ‘state capacity’, the latter called ‘closely related but broader concept’, implying a state’s ability to implement its policies’, as well as between ‘stateness’ and ‘rule of law’, defined as an attribute of democracy (2011: 2). In other words, whilst stateness as defined by Linz and Stepan could be seen as a basis, state capacity would be a superstructure. They argue that including the rule of law in definition of a state would imply a “thicker” definition of democracy, including a conceptual slide from the regime to the attributes of the state’ (2011: 3). Although they support considering this dimension as a defining attribute of democracy, they see it as separate from “stateness” in Linz and Stepan’s sense’ whereby stateness is a prerequisite of democracy (2011: 3).

In contrast to this debate in political science, definition of stateness developed by Francis Fukuyama (2011) and used by World Bank, is located within domain of ‘thick’ definition of democracy. It includes two dimensions: strength of state institutions and scope of state functions, both of which in the above definition by Møller and Skaaning belong to state capacity rather than stateness.

Another concept frequently confused with stateness, that of ‘state strength’, as D’Anieri points out, even though ‘defined differently by different scholars’, refers to ‘the ability of the government to adopt a policy and implement it in the society’ (1996: 84), or state capacity in relation to its own society. It may denote both ‘the state’s ability to remain impervious to pressure from society and in terms of its ability to enact its programs within society’ (1996: 85). This understanding of ‘state’ is close to that of Linz and Stepan’s in the state that, as d’Anieri explains further, control of the territory, which is the basic component of stateness, is also a criterion of strength of a state (1996: 97). However, in general it is a broader concept of state capacity. Even though this concept and based on it distinction between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ states

have practical implications for the case selection in this research proposal, its further discussion will be left out for the purposes of this paper.

Finally, the question persists what components stateness embraces as based on Linz and Stepan's seminal definition and subsequent work on the concept. As with the concept of democracy, notions of minimalist and maximalist definition are in order (as also underlined in the literature, see Fortin 2012: 909).

This brings us to the second problem with defining stateness: of causality, a widespread in the literature statement that stateness is a necessary condition or democracy (e.g. Fortin 2012: 904-908). It is problematic because it is very strong and needs qualification. Therefore, the nature of the concept - whether it is dichotomous or continuous - should be analysed.

Møller and Skaaning specify that along with an agreement about citizenship, the second defining property of a state is the monopoly 'of the state on the use of force within a sovereign territory' (2011: 1). They set off by supporting hypothesised by Linz and Stepan relationship of stateness as a necessary condition for democracy and further specify it. Namely, they indicate that out of four attributes of democracy: electoral rights, political liberties, rule of law and social rights, only two latter depend on stateness (2011: 1). On this basis, they differentiate their definition of stateness from that by Linz and Stepan: whereas the classics see it as 'logically prior to the creation of democratic institutions' (1996: 26, quoted in Møller and Skaaning 2011: 5), - assertion supported by later scholars (Kuzio 1999: 6), - Møller and Skaaning argue that this would be possible only under two conditions: if stateness were a dichotomous variable and countries were closed systems isolated from an external influence, neither of which holds in modern world (2011: 5). Therefore, they first, restrict the definition of stateness to a necessary condition for four attributes of democracy, and second, specify that it is more important for social rights and the rule of law (2011: 6).

The analysis of 'Quality of Government' (QoG) dataset (2012), which is a collection of cross-national comparative data on quality of government and its correlates, indicates that states under consideration (only internationally recognised states are considered) always demonstrate some degree of stateness; in other words, there are no states scoring '0' on dimension of stateness. For example, even states recognised as 'failed', such as Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Cote d'Ivoire, Yemen and Myanmar, to name a few out of 'twenty worst' according to the 'Failed States Index' (2011) published by the think-tank 'Fund for Peace' and the magazine 'Foreign Policy' (US) since 2005, score 1,8; 3,5; 5,0; 3,3; 4,8; 4,5; 4,0; 4,8; and 4,3, respectively. Three states conventionally considered as partly 'failed', or fragile, in former Soviet Union: Georgia, Moldova and Turkmenistan, score 6,3, 8,3 and 7,0, accordingly.

State	Stateness indicators: 1.BTI	2. Failed State I
Armenia	8,5	72,2
Azerbaijan	7,5	79,8
Belarus	8,5	76,6

Estonia	9,5	47,5
Georgia	6,3	84,8
Latvia	9,5	51,9
Lithuania	10	44,2
Moldova	8,3	78,7
Russian Federation	7,8	77,1
Ukraine	8,8	67,2
Central Asia	Ave: ca. 7	Ave: ca: 78,5

[fuller discussion of the table to follow]

Likewise, all other states demonstrate rather positions on a continuous scale than clear-cut categories of ‘presence’ or ‘absence’ of stateness. Furthermore, such an absence of cases of clearly, i.e. completely, ‘failed’ states might be insightful for unproblematised meaning of difference on ‘stateness’ scale. In this sense, it seems that there is a problem of conceptual precision similar to that with the concept of democracy (cf. ‘democracy with adjectives’). This parallel means that once perceived as achieved, questions raised are rather about its quality rather than presence, and measurement issue starts to ‘rule’. Probably this conceptual parallelism is not a coincidence if some degree of stateness is a necessary condition and hence a part of definition of democracy. However, a need to express this relationship more precisely remains.

Therefore, it is argued here that the nature of the concept is continuous rather than dichotomous (Fortin 2012; 907), hence a statement about it being a necessary condition for democracy should always be qualified about a degree of it or consideration of other factors.

The third problem identified regarding a concept concerns timing of any causality that is argued to exist between stateness and democracy should be discussed.

There are three main views on timing of causality. The one developed by Linz and Stepan is that stateness precludes democracy (1996). The second view holds that they occur more or less in parallel, or simultaneously (Fortin 2012: 922). Finally, a recently suggested view is that stateness follows democracy (Fritz 2007; Grzymala-Busse 2007, and Hellman et al. 2000, quoted in Fortin 2012: 920, although they referred rather to state capacity and Hellman in particular – to development of civil society before state capacity/capture).

However, it is fair to state that the first view is still predominant in the literature. Even though a proponent of the second view, in her conclusion Fortin lists a number of factors (going up to 27, according to Huntington (1991), of democratisation and democracy consolidation. As one of them, she lists ‘feelings of national unity and ethnic strife’ (2012: 921), which is a

component of stateness according to Linz and Stepan. Earlier in the text, she refers to ‘the role of the EU’ and ‘country-specific variables’ amongst factors explaining regime along with state capacity, where the focus of this project also lies.

For the purposes of this project, the stateness is defined as based on Linz and Stepan’s definition but furthered to reflect later work on the concept such as that by Møller and Skaaning (building on Linz and Stepan’s definition too) and Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI). In line with Møller and Skaaning’s definition, stateness is considered to be ‘a necessary condition for the four democratic attributes of electoral rights, political liberties, the rule of law, and social rights’ (2011: 1). Therefore these factors are not considered as causal for stateness, and all their measures in QoG dataset are not considered.

In line with broader literature, in BTI codebook stateness is considered to be a necessary condition of democracy. In its turn, stateness is seen to be comprised by measures of the following factors:

- 1) state monopoly on the use of force: to what extent the state’s monopoly on the use of force covers the entire territory (stateness challenged if contested);
- 2) nationhood: to what extent all relevant groups in society agree about citizenship and accept the nation-state as legitimate (stateness challenged if disputed);
- 3) religious dogmas: to what extent the state’s legitimacy and its legal order is defined without inference by religious dogmas (stateness challenged if interfering) and
- 4) the basic administrative infrastructures: to what extent they exist (stateness challenged if absent) (QoG codebook 2011: 26, BTI codebook 2012: 5).

Interestingly, all constituent factors of stateness are internal. External as well as economic factors, such as an amount of population below national poverty line, are not included.

This debate highlights the problematic areas in definition of stateness and introduces the broad definition for external involvement – democracy promotion. This is a second concept analysed in this section.

Democracy promotion can be defined as ‘an active prodemocratic pressure towards actors’ which ‘may result in a change of political structures and values in the targeted state’ (Silander 2005: 83). Since the end of the Cold War, democracy assistance, defined as ‘aid explicitly designed to promote democracy abroad’ (Carothers 2000: 200, quoted in Bicchi: 61), has become an essential element of the EU’s external policy. Whereas ‘democracy assistance’ is characteristic of the USA’s external democratisation discourse, ‘promotion of human rights and democracy’ is a mainstream term of the EU’s external relations (Řiháčková 2001).

In terms of analytical framework, democracy promotion can be conceptualised as comprised by actors in a specific setting having interests, applying methods to pursue them through some channel towards impact on domestic actors.

The external actors can be divided into global (UN, IMF, World Bank), international and regional (EU, Council of Europe (CoE), OSCE and NATO), state, sub-state and transnational and non-governmental organisations (the Socialist International, the Christian Democratic International, the Catholic Church, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International) (Pravda 2001: 7, Silander 2005: 90-91).

Of crucial importance to democracy promotion are the western actors, with ‘western project’ defined by Smith as aimed to ‘politically transform states into western standards of democratic institutions and values’ (Smith 2001: 31, quoted in Silander 2005: 143-144). Western

actors' influence has been the most important in Eastern Europe (Pravda 2001: 7). In particular, in the postcommunist Europe their role, especially of international actors such as the EU, CoE, the OSCE and NATO has been growing. Some scholars hold that the EU and NATO pursue the most policy-making power in Europe; they have 'set out their models of what constitutes a modern European state and ... conditions that must be adopted to become accepted' (Silander 2005: 143). Others single out the EU, the OSCE and the CoE as key international organisations influencing democratisation in Eastern Europe (Hyde-Price 1999: 221). At large, orientation towards the EU is recognised as a common denominator of external factors in Eastern Europe (Pridham 1994: 15). In particular, Batt emphasises the interdependence between internal and external dimensions of postcommunist state transformation, identifying specifically the European Commission as a crucial actor for states aspiring for membership in the EU even in the statehood issues such as territorial-administrative reform (2002: 9).

As Pravda summarises, although NATO, often referred to regarding democratisation, has the potential for democratisation, it is not its direct goal. Even though it is one of OSCE's, it is commonly recognised 'a weak organization with few resources' (2001: 11-12). In contrast, the EU 'has the most powerful integrated set of resources for promoting democracy of any Western organization' (2001: 12).

The EU influence is one of the crucial exogenous factors of state-building and regime stability/change in the post-Soviet European space. Like other European states, they are recipients of the EU governance, 'rule-making, monitoring and discourse' (Jacobsson 2006: 205), even if it arguably is in odds with their internal weakness. In particular, requirements for the EU candidate states to be, among other, democracies and administrative systems capable of implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, mentioned in Jacobsson's discussion of scriptedness of states (2006: 212) indicate the link between the two. Therefore it is commonly argued that although 'the EU's transformative power' is mostly observable in its member states, it stretches beyond its borders (Grabbe 2006; Jacobsson 2006: 205-20). Also, even though democracy used to figure 'more centrally in the EU's constitutional order than its enlargement strategy' (Pravda 2001: 12), this might have changed with Lisbon Treaty. A shared evaluation in the literature is that the Lisbon Treaty 'introduces the most significant institutional changes since the 1950s' and offers an opportunity for more coordination and coherence of the EU's external action (Kaczyński et al. 2010: 190; 158). In line with the amendments introduced by the Article 8(1) of the Treaty on EU (TEU), addressing the EU's relationship with its neighbourhood, the 'special relationship [is] founded on the values of the Union,' including inter alia democracy, the protection of human rights, the free market economy and the rule of law (Emerson 2011: 8). In particular, one of the problems to be mentioned here would be the EU financial assistance, including budget support, provided to such states. Arguably, as long as a structural problem of state capacity of the latter stays unaddressed, any prodemocratic help will have only relative leverage.

In a nutshell, the EU's role in transforming own member and neighbouring states is acknowledged in the literature. Out of three main directions of EU foreign policy – national, the Community system (economic policy embracing trade, aid and development policy and externalising the internal market) and the EU system, or Common and Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) (Silander 2005: 145), the focus of the project is on the latter.

Building on the discussion of the EU role, the notion of systems, or fields, of organised governance suggested by Bengt Jacobsson (2006: 206) is another important exogenous factor to be included in the analysis of state's and regime's transformation. For this project, international organisations' such as CoE and OSCE impact, as well as rankings as e.g. the rankings of

different aspects of stateness in 'QoG,' are relevant. The argument that states' identities and structures are influenced and even formed by transnational processes – rule-making and others (Jacobsson 2006: 224) - is of particular importance for this project. Finally, the tendency towards fragmentation of states with which Jacobsson concludes his analysis of trends of state transformation implies an environment's influence on states' activities and identities (2006: 215), with environment in this project being the EU, international regional organisations and Russia.

Conclusion

Like a lot of other social scientific concepts, 'stateness' was developed in the Western context. Initially contested concept, it becomes even more difficult to delimit and operationalise when applied in the postcommunist context, different in some important respects. However, the concept is crucial to studying the regime change in general and democratization in particular. Therefore, the task of qualification and systemic definition of the concept, applicable throughout the region, is important.

All institutional theories seem to display characteristic weaknesses that need to be considered when applying them to study of the postcommunist state-building. First of all, all of them view state as a consolidated entity and actor whose behavior can be assessed and measured (Peters 2005: 144). As demonstrated above by Grzymala-Busse, whilst valid for Western states, this approach is of limited value towards postcommunist ones (2002: 533). Further complication is represented by a need to address informal institutions, structures and practices which have been studied less than formal ones due to theoretical bias (applying theories developed for analysis of state formation in Western Europe) and which institutionalism is arguably less equipped to analyse. For instance, even though historical institutionalism considers institutions to include informal procedures and norms, it is still more focused on rules of a formal organization (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938).

Regarding the 'advantage' of one theory over another, it is easy to observe that all models that address Europeanisation, which arguably is a case of international institutionalism², use assumptions and mechanisms of rationalist and sociological institutionalisms. This clearly demonstrates the problem of lack of distinct mechanisms within international institutionalism, this is why in this paper it is ascribed a role of an alternative theory.

Nevertheless, though these weaknesses are significant and should be clearly outlined and seriously considered in the course of analysis, the institutional theories allow for analysis of state-building as the process, illuminating both domestic (rational choice, sociological and historical institutionalisms) and international dimensions of this process.

² Categorized by B. Peters as separate from new institutionalism.

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