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Hybrid Regimes and Political (Dis)Order

Reżimy hybrydowe i (nie)porządek polityczny

• **Abstract** •

This paper studies the concept of "hybrid regimes", not so much in defining and authenticating their functionality but, above all, to exhibit them as so-called "partial" constitutional concepts. Articulating the tensions, divergences, and antagonisms characteristic of these regimes, as well as highlighting the blurring boundaries between democratic systems and authoritarianism "with adjectives", emphasizes the importance of the examined issues. The author introduces an alternative conceptualization and typology of hybrid regimes and a configurational approach. Instead of placing political regimes on a linear continuum – from authoritarianism to democracy – multidimensional solutions facilitating an alternative typology of the analyzed concepts have been exposed. The configuration approach, however, provides an analytically valuable way to evaluate and integrate hybrid regimes with other classification schemes. Such innovations, therefore, help alleviate conceptual confusion in the literature. Moreover, deepening the understanding of the concept of hybrid regimes, along with emphasizing its conceptual ambiguities and complexity – especially concerning the "politically correct" discourse on the current problems of fragile and politically unstable states – is necessary

• **Abstrakt** •

Zasadniczym celem podjętych przez autora analiz jest przedstawienie koncepcji „reżimów hybrydowych" nie tyle w kategoriach definiujących i uwiarygadniających ich funkcjonalność, ale przede wszystkim poprzez ukazanie ich jako tzw. „niepełne" koncepcje ustrojowe. Wyartykułowanie charakterystycznych dla tych reżimów napięć, dywergencji i antagonizmów, jak również wyeksponowanie zacierających się granic pomiędzy systemami demokratycznymi a autorytaryzmem „z przymiotnikami", podkreśla istotność analizowanych zagadnień. Autor wprowadza alternatywną propozycję konceptualizacji i typologii reżimów hybrydowych, wraz z zastosowaniem podejścia konfiguracyjnego. Zamiast bowiem umieszczać reżimy polityczne na liniowym kontinuum – od autorytaryzmu do demokracji – w artykule wyeksponowane zostały wielowymiarowe rozwiązania ułatwiające przyjęcie alternatywnej typologii analizowanych koncepcji. Z kolei podejście konfiguracyjne zapewnia analitycznie użyteczny sposób ewaluacji i integracji reżimów hybrydowych z innymi schematami klasyfikacyjnymi. Tego rodzaju innowacje pomagają złagodzić zamieszanie pojęciowe w literaturze przedmiotu. Co więcej, pogłębienie rozumienia koncepcji reżimów hybrydowych wraz z podkreśleniem ich

to better understand the complex and confusing nature of modern regimes of power frequently operating in the most politically unstable regions of the contemporary world.

pojęciowych niejasności i złożoności – szczególnie w odniesieniu do „poprawnego politycznie" dyskursu dotyczącego zwłaszcza problemów państw słabych i politycznie niestabilnych – jest konieczne dla lepszego uświadomienia sobie złożonego i zagmatwanego charakteru współczesnych reżimów władzy, działających często w bardzo niestabilnych politycznie regionach współczesnego świata.

Keywords: hybrid regime; democracy; authoritarianism; political transformation; civil society

Słowa kluczowe: reżim hybrydowy; demokracja; autorytaryzm; transformacja ustrojowa; społeczeństwo obywatelskie

Introduction

The rather vague and methodologically "fluid" conceptual boundary defining the differentiation between democratic and non-democratic regimes has been and yet remains the subject of many scientific debates and digressions. However, the third wave of democratization and the end of the Cold War dramatically increased the global number of political regimes emphasizing the priority nature of a pluralist political system, holding multiparty elections, with the declared full suffrage of citizens, etc. Nevertheless, these democratic attributes often remain only a facade to sustain authoritarian forms of government. In response to this problem, however, scholars have developed many model concepts to capture the mixed or "hybrid" nature of these regimes.

Attaching modifiers to predetermined types of political regimes has become an approved method in this field. Yet, in the 1990s, the democratic system served as a model from which new terms were derived, creating a convention commonly referred to as "democracy with adjectives" (Collier & Levitsky, 1997). The opposite trend emerged in the early 2000s as a reaction to the democratic resentments of the past. Thus, shifting attention to the non-democratic aspects of the institution of power in hybrid regimes, scholars replaced the term "democracy" with the phrase "authoritarianism", which is considered the central point of the classification of contemporary hybrid regimes. The conceptualization of hybrid regimes in this way, unfortunately, only deepened the methodological confusion. The proliferation of modified terms and conflicting definitions is straightforward and blunt evidence (Diamond, 2002; Armony & Schamis, 2005).

The earlier terminology, used in models ranging from "democracy with adjectives" to "authoritarianism with adjectives", instead of facilitating understanding

and resolving conceptual difficulties in classifying "partial regimes", has only added additional problems. However, earlier complications in this area were due to the vague terminology that made it impossible to clearly define the differences between the various forms of democratic and non-democratic regimes of power. Nevertheless, contemporary conceptual confusion results from the illegible and blurred line between authoritarian and non-authoritarian regimes.

Therefore, this article aims to present a broader range of hybrid regimes that fit into a vast agglomerate of political systems – from authoritarian satrapies to arrangements similar to liberal democracies. The term "hybrid regime" seems more justified concerning non-democratic or non-authoritarian political systems. Moreover, this paper proposes an alternative perspective rather than rejecting the concept of hybrid regimes, as some researchers have done (Brownlee, 2007; Armony & Schamis, 2005).

Following this approach, it is possible to redesign the conceptual field of contemporary political regimes. Most modern works analyzing hybrid regimes present the so-called "continuum perspective" (Diamond, 1999; Diamond, Linz, & Lipset, 1999). Yet, this research analysis refers to the concepts describing complex and multidimensional political regimes initiated by the research work of Juan Linz (Linz, 1970, 2000; Linz & Stepan, 1978, 1996). Nevertheless, the above perspective displays the diversity of types of political regimes, emphasizing primarily their generic differences and not the degree of advancement of "elements" typical of democracy or autocracy. However, applying the above methodology requires facing several diverse challenges directly related to the typology, systematic classification, and specificity of the various concepts. Since classification systems are, in this case, only theoretical constructions representing social interactions, they will always be imperfect in practice. However, despite these limitations, further clarification of the classification of political regimes is desirable and even necessary.

The political transformation of many countries, as well as the attributes, dominants, and characteristics contained in it, are crucial for developing the causal theory and formulating political practice. Therefore, an essential element of these analyses is: (1) Firstly, to present a way out of the conceptual confusion present in the contemporary literature on the subject. Therefore, the presented analyses show the diversity and specificity of the concepts of the hybrid system, emphasizing the discrepancy between them, despite the transition from adjectival variants of democratic political systems to authoritarianism. Next, attention is directed to the sources of conceptual confusion identified in the presented analysis. It is primarily about the overarching concept of electoral and non-electoral regimes. To clarify classification models, however, one advocates changing the definition of an electoral regime from one that holds multiparty elections to one that conducts competitive

votes. This paper discusses how and why this new definition highlights and systematizes the conceptual space occupied by hybrid regimes. (2) Secondly, this paper aims to develop innovative ways to conceptualize and organize regime types using a configuration approach. Thus, rather than placing political regimes on a single continuum – from authoritarianism to democracy – the configurational approach provides researchers with an alternative view of political systems, emphasizing the multiple forms and dimensions of the analyzed regimes. Based on a conceptual literature review, this article proposes that competitiveness, state welfare intervention, and civil liberties are the three principal axes along which contemporary regimes can be most accurately and efficiently classified. While an ideal model that takes into account all fundamental dimensions of conceptualization would allow for the proper classification and description of all political regimes, the possible combinations of these three dimensions provide a nuanced framework for defining the relationship between multiparty regimes and for explaining and organizing the conceptual space for hybrid regimes.

As a result, this article makes four significant contributions to the field of regime theory. (1) First, it reduces the conceptual confusion present in the classification of regimes by better theorizing the relationships between regime types at multiple levels. (2) Second, it revives the multidimensional and configurational method of conceptualizing regimes. As a result, more attention is paid to the various institutional features that distinguish different systems. (3) Third, the multidimensional method presented here sheds light on possible ways of comparing different regimes based on their cross-sectional institutional characteristics, opening new avenues for future empirical research. (4) Finally, this article sheds new light on the presentation of innovative relations between hybrid regimes, allowing one to explain abstract theoretical discussions in the dimension of political praxis.

The concept of the "hybrid regime": the difficulty and inevitability of term definition

the political regime means the totality of methods used by the state power in its relations with society, as well as the rules, regulations, and procedures it follows in these relations. In other words, political regime is an essential component of state institutions. It also includes the methods of operation of political parties, their links with the apparatus of state power, as well as the principles of operation of other critical socio-political organizations. In political science, the concept of a political regime is not evaluative. It only defines the principles, rules of the political game, and

the dependencies between the subjects of politics. Sometimes the political regime is equated with the political system. In fact, it covers all mechanisms regulating multidimensional relations in the state.

Hybrid political institutions combine traditional forms of governance with institutional mechanisms that, to a large extent, are more often associated with the political model typical of Western countries. Nevertheless, the above concept does not perceive the structures of a destabilized and fragile state as a dysfunctional organization of socio-political life. In the understanding of the West, though, countries that deviate from the Weberian model are considered weak, unstable, or rump. The concept of a "hybrid" political order undoubtedly differs from this point of view. It focuses its attention on such governance models, for which the order and stability of social life are based on traditional political structures adapted to the geopolitical specificity of a given country (Boege, Brown, & Clements, 2009).

In a hybrid political order, power in a state is significantly influenced by more than one entity or political structure. In this context, these may be entities operating locally, nationally, or internationally. They can also be customary institutions (e.g., local tribal authorities), non-governmental organizations (local or international), religious institutions, and, of course, state entities. The term "hybrid structures" is broad enough to cover various non-state forms of governance and governance of a traditional nature (from the neo-patrimonial formula to the so-called "acephalic"). They combine elements from different levels and spheres of socio-political life, guided by a different logic of political action compared to Weber's concept. In addition, the above spheres do not exist in isolation but interpenetrate each other. Consequently, a specific – albeit original – political order is formed, characterized by a uniquely "tangled" and interdependent organizational structure with different origins (Boege, Brown, & Clements, 2009).

The hybrid political order does not clearly distinguish between "state-owned" and "informal" institutions, which merge and borrow system elements from each other in this system. Therefore, a customary institution operating in a hybrid state usually adopts the language of the state as well as some of the functions of the state. In this context, speaking of a "weak" or "non-functional" state here is complex since the above terms imply that another political actor is stronger than the state itself. For that reason, it becomes more reasonable to consider the above factor as one of the actors of the political scene, which affects the entirety of the political reality of a given country.

Nevertheless, a more constructive approach to the hybrid political order would understand the concept as an "emerging state". In other words, instead of viewing the hybridization of the political order as an indicator of dysfunction, the above

idea can be considered a potential basis for a stable, legitimate, and contextually defined form of state political system. However, this requires a deeper analysis of the relationship between the state and society based on a hybrid model: first of all, defining their complementarity and dynamics that can model both development and stabilization, as well as generate contradictions and incompatibilities of the system. In this sense, hybrid models that genuinely form or combine traditional and modern norms and practices of political functioning are likely to provide a more effective form of legitimation of power precisely because they are based on a hybrid model that ensures the plurality of existing political orders (Clements et al., 2007, pp. 50–54).

Although the above concepts show many new aspects concerning – mainly the traditional – structures of functioning of fragile states, they also offer a lot of shortcomings. It is not only about analytical issues related to shaping the forms of statehood but, above all, about conceptual confusion caused by mixing different regularities. Critics of the hybrid political order emphasize that allegedly destabilized states tend to blur the influence of the private and public spheres, as well as the formal and informal spheres. In other words, in a hybrid political system, actors representing public (legal, in the Weberian sense) and private (non-state) institutions meaningfully influence the authorities. Moreover, the hybrid concept lacks an analytical reference. Thus, although hybridization aims to overcome ambiguous conceptual categories, it reinforces them. For example, one must accept the empirical existence of a "formal" type based on Weber's typical definition of the state to describe how formal and informal institutions come together in hybrid circumstances. Hence, a significant problem is an inability to distinguish the constructive pragmatic aspects of, among others, the theory of the "negotiated state" or "twilight institutions" from those that seem destructive or even dangerous. Besides, although the above concepts distance themselves from the neoliberal theories of state building, they often remain under their significant influence (Clements et al., 2007, p. 48).

In other words, the efforts of international aid organizations to "repair" failed structures of fragile states are primarily rooted in the theory of "pragmatic neoliberalism" (Bockman & Eyal, 2002, pp. 324–336). While diplomats of the Western world influenced political opponents of a different point of view to conclude power-sharing agreements and establish so-called "integrated political systems", international development experts proclaimed the ideas of liberal pluralism in order to replace the fragility of the states with more stable structures (Levene, 2000, pp. 20–21). The emphasis on pluralistic values is partly mirrored by a broad human rights agenda, as well as an increasing focus on so-called informal institutions and "traditional

power structures" in shaping the statehood of fragile states (Ubink, 2008; Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). The above procedures are pretty well correlated with the persistent criticism of Weberian, Marxist, and functional conceptualizations of the so-called "developing country", regularly accused of failing to implement heterogeneous and diverse forms of state institutionalization (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008; Migdal & Schlichte, 2005).

Moreover, the neo-pluralist approach, which emphasizes the problems of allocating state administrative structures rather than management and control, seeks to overcome this limitation. Drawing from the theory of neo-patrimonialism and diverse political reality (*mixed polity*) (Erdmann & Engel, 2007) and sharing similarities with the concepts of "twilight institutions" and "negotiated state", they shape the notion of "hybrid political orders". This concept, however, fits into the diverse and rich literature presenting "hybridity" (Pieterse, 2001; Roberts, 2008; Egnell & Haldén, 2013). It suggests that all complex forms of political praxis, as well as socio-political norms and visions that emerge from the interaction of various social groups, worldviews, and diverse political activities, are characterized by hybridity (Richmond & Mitchell, 2012). In this sense, the notions of hybridity oppose the contemporary conventional theories of state-building understood – especially by the supporters of hybridity – as the culminating stage in the evolution of liberal interventionism understood in the philosophical categories of Western thought. In this way, the assumption that the local political reality of fragile states is an almost void space that can be easily subordinated to the interests of the West has been undermined. Thus, the concept of hybridity significantly enriches the contemporary discourse on the issue of state-building (Roberts, 2008).

One of the positive aspects of this approach is the exposure of political actors and institutions operating in the "hybrid" space of fragile states, thus emphasizing the complexity and liquid reality of state-building. It also applies to questioning the previously clearly defined boundaries between the categories characterizing the processes of political change. It is also an invitation to pay attention to the vital role that all levels and dimensions of society, as well as local government agencies, perform in these processes (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012). This approach, however, provides the perspective of a more holistic and historically oriented vision of state-building – and thus realizes that state fragility can be both a "system" and an individual problem. It indicates the importance of the international context, which determines the systemic transformation processes and state reconstruction of fragile states (Haldén, 2013, p. 50).

Despite many positive aspects resulting from the previously cited theories, it should be noted that their practical usefulness seems quite limited – especially

in the context of complex state-building processes, as well as the legitimacy and delegitimacy of the structures of a local authority. Therefore, understanding the political conditions of fragile states, their historical and institutional specificity, as well as social and national identity, is a fundamental condition for constructively solving conflict situations and shaping stable foundations of statehood. In other words, institutional standardization – as the basis of state-building – is understood as a process leading to the emergence of a dominant political structure that combines within itself the leading relations of roles represented by numerous – minor – actors of the country's political scene. In this sense, the dominant structure would regulate the diversity of roles and relationships in the political dimension. A similar situation (institutional standardization) is related to the issue of building national identity. The above concept is defined as a process of integrating the "common cultural heritage", which aims to shape a common identity of various socio-ethnic groups (Migdal & Schlichte, 2005).

Institutional standardization underlies state-building and is understood as the process by which a single conglomerate of political 'rules and principles' gains dominance in a particular society. In other words, it is a state where the dominant organizational structure governs all major political relations. Similarly, the standard-ization of social identity lies at the heart of nation-building. It is defined as a process in which one common cultural agglomerate of "worldview and mentality principles" (world perception, religious traditions, morality, socio-cognitive elements, including language, common socio-cultural values, mentality, etc.) gains dominance and is standardized within a politically defined population. Assuming, therefore, that the emerging states are characterized by a kind of hybridity, within which actors and institutions combine various elements of different cultural origins, it can be suggested that shaping the foundations of statehood is characterized – above all – by a gradual standardization of the overarching "rules of the political game" within a given society (North, 1990).

In this way, the conceptualization of the dynamics of political processes, rooted in specific historical realities, may stimulate and enrich the development of the debate on shaping the state structures of states, not only through the analysis of specific – hidden or exposed – elements regarding the concept of hybridity, which are often ambivalent (Tamanha, 2000). However, it is also related to the "added value", which fills the analytical gap between the usually unrelated concepts of state-building and nation-building. Moreover, the conceptualization of the issue of state formation, understood as the process of "rule normalization", has important implications for understanding the complex political situation of fragile states, paying attention to the historical context determining the specificity of political processes and focusing

on appropriate forms of governance as an independent variable shaping the proper structures of the state (Kaplan, 2008).

Nevertheless, the concepts of hybridization of state structures also show many significant shortcomings. First, important issues remain unresolved in shaping statehood: what conditions or types of the hybrid political order are constructive and prioritized, and which are deconstructive? Moreover, hybridity is associated with reducing and resolving socio-political conflicts (Williams, 2010) and strengthening, creating, and deconstructing a politically unstable state. The fact that the concept of the hybrid political order is unable to distinguish "positive" views from "negative" aspects of hybridization makes it a widely held maxim rather than a functional and effective analytical tool. In many unstable fragile states characterized by hybrid institutional systems, the concept of the hybrid political order cannot explain the divergent specificity of shaping their statehood structures, which is aimed at promoting stable development and preventing conflict situations (Renders & Terlinden, 2010).

Moreover, by promoting institutional pluralism in destabilized but emerging fragile states, the concepts of hybridity glorify and fetishize what is "unofficial", usurped, local, customary, and often anachronistic (Roberts, 2008). This results in accepting past interpretations of non-state and often pathological orders as autochthonous means of state-building by legitimizing neo-patrimonial asymmetry, instability, inefficiency, and "decentralized despotism". More importantly, the above ideas support, perhaps unintentionally, the so-called pluralistic, i.e., multi-track, concepts of the development of state structures, particularly the liberal notion of a state based on broadly understood pluralism, which can be seen in various forms of hybridity (Mehler, 2002).

However, there is a definite lack of clarity on this topic: does "hybridity" mean a constellation of interconnected government institutions? Or is it contained in parallel in different institutions? Secondly, is the "hybrid" nature of the political structures of the state directly related to the "hybridity" of political imperatives (influence of alternative centers of state power) in force within the borders of the state, but taking into account the local diversity of customary political institutions and traditional centers of power? (Dunn, 2009).

The hybrid regime as a democratic subtype

The great interest in research on hybrid regimes is indicated by factors such as the growing number of research centers focusing their attention on hybrid regimes and the rich terminology used when describing them. Especially in the second half of the

1990s, hybrid regimes were perceived to a large extent as "weakened democracies" moving towards a consolidated democratic system. It means that they were perceived as "transitional" political systems ("Transition Paradigm of the 1990s") (Ekman, 2009). In this case, the term 'hybrid regime' refers to a democratic system understood as a basic concept. In this context, it touches on the blurred and fuzzy boundary between "full" democracy (liberal democracy) and "partial" democracy (incomplete democracy or minimal democracy).

In general, democracy is defined as: "a system for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide using a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter, 1947, p. 269). However, the ideal concept of democracy (polyarchy) includes seven systemic elements: (1) pluralistic electoral law; (2) free, transparent, and fair elections; (3) general ballot; (4) inclusive right to run for government office; (5) freedom of expression; (6) alternative sources of information; and (7) autonomy of associations and political parties (Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003). Yet, standard indicators defining the specificity of democracy depend not only on the conceptual dichotomy mentioned above but also on socio-political development and innovation. In other words, democracy is always a matter of degree (Bollen & Jackman, 1989).

However, there is no consensus in the contemporary literature on whether the term 'hybrid regime' can be attributed more to democracy or autocracy. Another "weakness" of the existing literature is a perceptible "democratic bias". Many scholars considered the analyzed hybrid regimes to be "partially" democratic systems. It is based on the premise that countries affected by the problem of hybrid administrative institutions will, after some time, "inherently" strive for democracy (Ekman, 2009). Recent geopolitical changes and often surprising developments have shown that while some hybrid states have indeed embarked on the path of democratization (e.g., Mexico, Vietnam, Taiwan), many others have gone in the opposite direction (e.g., Belarus) – and many stubbornly remain hybrid systems (e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia) (Bogaards, 2009).

However, due to the nature of diverse quasi-democratic systems (democracy with adjectives), the difference between the system specificity of individual countries is often blurred. A good example of this is El Salvador and Latvia (Levitsky & Way, 2002, p. 52). At the beginning of the 1990s, the states, as mentioned above, were included in the category of partially democratic, although the situation of both countries was fundamentally different. Latvia was placed in this category because, right after regaining independence from the former USSR, it began to create problems for its Russian-speaking citizens by denying them privileged positions and making it difficult to enforce their rights in various ways. In turn, El Salvador was almost

in a state of civil war, having lost civilian control over military. In addition, political opposition was exterminated, and numerous human rights violations occurred (Levitsky & Way, 2010). The above examples point to the elementary difficulties underlying the definition and distinction of hybrid political systems.

Particularly in this case, the term 'democracy with adjectives' (Collier & Levitsky, 1997) highlighted some thought-provoking aspects. Such expressions (such as defective democracy, twilight institutions, damaged democracies, etc.) (Bogaards, 2009) are created to describe the dynamic relationship between autocracy and democracy. It makes sense because diverse terminology and innovative research methodology are necessary to present the complex political transformation processes, their description, and their assessment of the causes and consequences of the relationship between democracy and autocracy (Abts & Rummens, 2007; Bogaards, 2018).

Contemporary discourse addresses the problem of defining democracy as a procedural minimum that helps to identify relatively reduced content (Schedler, 2013). Thus, to describe pluralist democracy, Robert Dahl coined the famous term 'polyarchy', which means 'multicentric power'. In this case, social pluralism guarantees that various actors on the political scene remain independent of each other as well. This kind of pluralism limits absolute power in five different ways: (1) through the freedom to form organizations; (2) through political rivalry within the state's administrative system; (3) through pluralistic competition allowing for the election of leaders able to compromise; (4) it provides alternative sources of information; (5) and thanks to this, socio-political pluralism can create a complex system of separation of powers (Dahl, 1982).

Thus, if the currently functioning democracies fail to adapt to the procedural minimum indicated here, then the above-mentioned political systems can be described as "damaged democracies". In practice, they lack the essential features of a fully functioning democracy. The above process can be observed primarily in some Latin American countries, where the legacy of authoritarian systems was institutional collapse and the inability of the government to exercise complete control over the military. Therefore, despite winning democratic elections, the government could not extend its control over the military, or the state could not wholly separate itself from patronage institutions. It can be seen in countries such as Chile, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Paraguay (Levitsky & Way, 2010).

Some studies on South America show that semi-feudal and authoritarian socio-political structures have caused such degeneration of the existing political system (including violations of civil rights) that these countries cannot be considered democratic. The inclusion of social issues as a definitional aspect may therefore be an essential complementary idea for some discourses of the typology of political

regimes. The main reason for this is the particular situation of Latin American countries, which are often characterized by such significant social inequalities that deprive some citizens of their rights and even affect the categorization of the state's political system. However, the above terminological novelty has not yet reached the consensus of researchers (O'Donnell, 1994; Levitsky & Way, 2010).

Unlike the previous notions, however, the term 'defective democracy' is more widely accepted. Its concept of democracy consists of three elements: vertical legitimacy, horizontal accountability, and the existence of effective governance. Vertical legitimacy concerns the relationship of citizens to power and is implemented through elections and the enforcement of civil rights. Yet, horizontal accountability establishes liberal constitutionality. Effective governance assumes that only well-chosen actors can make the right decisions (Merkel, 2004).

Democracies can therefore be considered defective if their essentially functioning democratic electoral system is insufficient to select the right decision-makers or if the dysfunction of the political regime results in the loss of vital lines of defense of the national raison d'état. Therefore, the institutions of power are deprived of social legitimacy and can no longer protect freedom, equality, and vital interests of the state, both internally and externally. Wolfgang Merkel identifies four types of defective democracy: (1) exclusive (democratic institutions are strong, but certain social groups are limited in their civil rights); (2) illiberal (elections are free, but civil rights are partially disregarded, constitutional norms have little or no binding effect on elected state administration officials); (3) delegated (after free elections, there is a transition to undemocratic forms of government, because the executive power becomes independent of other forms of power); (4) and domain (the executive disregards or neglects the processes of democratic transformation). The above typology of defective democracy systematizes and categorizes the most common forms of "imperfect democracy" (Merkel, 2004).

It should be noted that most of the emerging democracies in the world are flawed democracies that rarely evolve into pure autocratic regimes. Considering the above typology, the most common forms are illiberal and delegated democracy. The shortcomings of some quasi-democratic systems can develop over the years. Yet, regional trends can significantly impact their "defective" functioning. A good example is several Latin American countries that have followed the same path in recent decades (including Brazil, Nicaragua, Colombia, etc.). In addition to helping to define the systems that stretch out between democracy and authoritarianism, the concept of flawed democracy also brings us closer to explaining the various causes and consequences of "incomplete" democratic transitions (Levitsky & Way, 2010).

The hybrid regime as an authoritarian subtype

While democracy remains a critical term in the contemporary literature on the subject, many scholars suggest using the concept of authoritarianism as an important term for understanding the specificity of hybrid regimes. These include, among others, Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996), or Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way (2002, 2010), who used the concept of "authoritarianism" as a primary term in their research. In this context, Larry J. Diamond distinguishes four authoritarian systems: (1) competitive authoritarianism; (2) hegemonic authoritarianism; (3) electoral authoritarianism; and (4) politically closed authoritarianism (Diamond, 1999).

Each political system considers minimizing possible threats and uncertainties as one of its key goals. For this purpose, political and administrative institutions are used, providing both legitimacy and appropriate consolidation of a given power system. In this case, Schedler's typology of political regimes highlights four categories: (1) closed autocracy; (2) electoral authoritarianism; (3) electoral democracy; and (4) liberal democracy. Closed autocracy and liberal democracy are at opposite ends of a broader spectrum. However, this typology of political regimes rejects the idea of "mixed systems" and upholds the "democracy–autocracy" dichotomy (Schedler, 2013).

Graeme Gill identifies seven criteria of electoral authoritarianism: (1) control the electoral process; (2) constantly mobilize the population; (3) control the legislature; (4) maintain the elite's unity; (5) manage the succession and recruitment of those in power; (6) maintain extensive state control; finally, (7) conduct targeted distribution of state budgetary funding (Gill, 2012). Nevertheless, authoritarian leaders may allow for a multiparty election for two reasons: firstly, to yield to foreign pressure, i.e., to obtain the necessary domestic or international legitimacy. Secondly, an election may ensure the long-term stabilization of the authoritarian regime.

Electoral authoritarian regimes now account for nearly two-thirds of post-Cold War autocracies. This category includes, among others, countries such as Russia, Zimbabwe, the Megreb states, and Venezuela. Although parliamentary elections characterize these regimes, they are not truly competitive, where the objective function of elections is to legitimize the system through voting (Gill, 2012). While retaining the formal institutions of political representation, these regimes of power also introduce manipulative strategies into the operation of these institutions. It is to minimize the chances of multiparty competition leading to an unexpected outcome, which would be a disaster for autocratic leaders. Authoritarian electoral regimes assign an objective function to elections: they are significant for simulating the process of legitimizing power. This kind of electoral authoritarianism is essentially

a "facade", imitating the democratic principles and values of the electoral law, as well as the freedom and transparency of the electoral process itself. In other words, although elections are held by popular vote, state manipulation does so much damage to electoral competition that it cannot be considered democratic (Wigell, 2008).

In this context, seven criteria for electoral authoritarianism can be identified: (1) control of the electoral process; (2) social mobilization; (3) control of the legislature; (4) the unity of the political elite "holding power"; (5) managing the succession and recruitment of the "right" representatives in power; (6) maintaining extensive control of state institutions; finally, (7) targeted and "selective" distribution of funds from the state budget (Gill, 2012). In this sense, the permission for multiparty elections is dictated mainly by two reasons: (1) the pressure of foreign public opinion, i.e., the need to obtain the necessary legitimacy for the actions of the power apparatus in the national and international dimension; (2) elections can provide long-term political stability, which is fundamental to the long-term actions of an authoritarian regime.

As a result of potential "outside" pressure, authoritarian regimes, if they require international assistance, are interested in a military alliance, or are vulnerable due to existing trade relations and thus dependent on democratic countries, and then more likely to turn away from pure autocracies in an authoritarian electoral regime. The regional position of a given country or the political systems of neighboring countries can also be conducive to democratization, i.e., internal and external factors can have a significant – instrumental – impact on forming electoral authoritarianism. However, authoritarian electoral regimes can also arise from explicitly "democratic" motivations or economic interests (Dimitrova, 2018).

Not surprisingly, electoral autocracies have become dominant among authoritarian regimes. Since the end of World War II, 113 authoritarian regimes have held multiparty elections. At this point, mention should be made of four categories of political regimes in the typology of Schedler's system (closed autocracy – electoral authoritarianism – electoral democracy – liberal democracy), for which closed autocracies either have no electoral institutions at all, or there is no fundamental multiparty electoral law (e.g., now Laos and Eswatini). However, despite various disadvantages, multiparty elections can still help the opposition, even in the case of authoritarian regimes. Even in such political conditions, the political elites of power may be forced to leave their positions. It is what happened in Malawi in 1994 and in Mexico also in 2000. To prevent this situation, autocracies use various means of electoral manipulation: intrigue, manipulation, controlling media and campaign finance, arresting opposition politicians, fraud, etc. (Schedler, 2013).

"Competitive authoritarianism" needs to be distinguished from purely authoritarian regimes as well as from stable, functional democracies because modern

democracies have four characteristics that competitive authoritarian regimes do not have in their determinants and correlations: (1) free elections confer legislative and executive powers; (2) citizens are guaranteed universal suffrage; (3) political and civil rights are protected; (4) elected officials exercise power (Levitsky & Way, 2010). Of course, the power elites of a democratic state can also – from time to time – break the applicable legal rules, but such violations of norms are never of a systemic nature. In other words, they do not fundamentally change the arena of competition between the ruling powers and the opposition. On the other hand, violations of norms committed by competitive authoritarian regimes are significant and so frequent that the arena of political competition can be seriously deformed. However, in authoritarianism based on political rivalry, power can be attacked in four areas with the help of democratic institutions: elections, the legislature, the judiciary, and the media (Wahman, Teorell, & Hadenius, 2013).

The biggest challenge for competitive autocracy is dealing with the inherent contradictions of the system and the resulting uncertainty associated with the "integrated" coexistence of democratic rules and autocratic methods. Such sui generis uncertainty poses a severe dilemma for the power elite: suppressing these elements of the regime can be costly because existing norms are recognized as legal both domestically and internationally. On the other hand, leaving them intact may result in a potential loss of power. It can also lead to an acute regime crisis (e.g., Mexico in 1988, or Russia in 1993). In some cases, the system may successfully survive the crisis (Russia in 1996), while in other cases, the current leader may lose its status (e.g., Mexico in 2000). Moreover, a political regime can collapse after a short transitional period (e.g., Peru in 2000, or Serbia in 2000) (Geddes, Wright, & Frantz, 2018).

In the 1990s, competitive autocracies typically emerged in three different ways: (1) through the collapse of genuine autocracies. In this case, combined – external and internal – pressures often forced autocratic regimes to create formal democratic institutions or to give fundamental functions to institutions shaping the democratic order in the country. Nevertheless, due to the weak opposition, the political transformation of the state did not usually lead to democracy. Instead, the political elites "holding power" perfectly adapted to the rules of democracy. The above phenomenon can be observed in sub-Saharan Africa. (2) Competitive authoritarianism can emerge after the fall of a genuine autocratic regime. Because after the fall of autocracies, weak electoral systems are usually formed. In turn, the lack of democratic norms and the weak integration and political commitment of civil society allow elected leaders to continue to rule the country in an authoritarian manner. Such a situation appeared in Armenia, Ukraine, post-Soviet countries of Central Asia, and Romania in the 1990s. (3) Competitive authoritarianism can also develop after the collapse of

a thoroughly democratic system. Deep and widespread socio-political and economic crises can lead to situations in which elected government administration undermines democratic institutions without intending to dismantle them completely. A good example is Venezuela or Peru in the 1990s (Levitsky & Way, 2010).

At that time, competitive authoritarianism developed in countries where conditions were not conducive to consolidation, neither democracy nor autocracy (e.g., former post-Soviet republics). Nonetheless, the emergence of the above requirements does not necessarily lead to competitive authoritarianism. Sometimes the democratic system is consolidated in unfavorable conditions (e.g., Mongolia, Mali). Often, the fall of an authoritarian regime is followed by a rapid collapse of the state's administrative structures, civil war, and even anarchy (e.g., Libya, Somalia).

Thus, the differences between the typologies of political systems are pretty significant. The concept presented by Andreas Schedler offers a tetrachotomy expressed in four subcategories: (1) closed autocracy; (2) electoral authoritarianism; (3) electoral democracy; (4) liberal democracy (Schedler, 2013). In turn, the variant presented by Steven Levitsky shows a trichotomy: authoritarianism – hybrid regime – democracy. In the first case, party pluralism or electoral law referring to democratic standards are not sufficient arguments for democratizing state institutions. On the other hand, Levitsky emphasizes that hybrid regimes are inherently competitive because they take into account multiparty electoral law. Moreover, informal administrative procedures, political actors, as well as unofficial support groups (domestic and foreign lobbying) determine the essence of a political regime (Levitsky & Way, 2010). On the other hand, Schedler's concept emphasizes the role of formal institutions in shaping the political system of the state (Schedler, 2013).

The "hybrid paradox theory": toward an institutional and identity-standardized model

Although the idea of a "hybrid" political order has revived the contemporary discourse on shaping the stability of fragile states, it is difficult to accept the theoretical diversity and pluralism of concepts. Nevertheless, a better capture of the specificity of forming the statehood of fragile states seems to be possible thanks to the so-called theory of "institutional and identity standardization". Rooted in the existing concepts of shaping statehood, the analytical idea of "standardization of rules" is original because it combines the issues of building statehood with shaping the foundations of national identity, as well as the problems of state-making and state-breaking, corresponding to the constructive transformation of the political transformation

of fragile states and conditioning stabilization of their socio-political situation of the country (Balthasar, 2015).

Because the hybrid political theory seems to be a historical norm rather than a sensation or even an exotic anomaly, both past and present concepts of shaping structures of fragile states and state projects are endogenous. What is more, they are much more similar to each other than is commonly believed. So if hybridity is not a factor distinguishing contemporary concepts of political transformation and reconstruction of state structures, what does distinguish current theories from those of the past, and what is the common feature that connects them with the present?

In the case of the hybrid political theory, a significant difference between the past and present concepts of shaping state structures in the context of fragile states is related to the appreciation of normative pluralism, which largely opposes the classical approach to state formation. However, the classic approach emphasizes the need to subordinate the population living in the territory of the state to the superior structure of power and its homogeneous rules defining the legal order. Historically, even multi-ethnic superpowers such as the US, China, and the Russian Federation, or regional powers such as Germany and France, have traditionally been characterized by ethnic domination, not by "pure" ethnic pluralism. In this sense, for example, "Americanization" or "Germanization" was a long and officiated process of forced adjustment and, as a consequence, a specific conformism inscribed in the strategies of building an integrated and highly effective state structure (Schwartz, 1995).

The main contentious problem is, therefore, not the claim that state institutions are negotiated – and therefore open to debate, negotiations, and compromises consisting in mixing institutional elements with different cultural and political patterns and origins – which makes today's unstable fragile states little different from historical processes of state-building in Europe or elsewhere in the world. However, the proposal to adopt normative pluralism is controversial, as is accepting the existence of parallel – albeit often not very compatible – political orders as the essential elements conditioningthe creation of a statehood strategies, especially within politically unstable fragile states.

Conclusions

The view popularized in the 1970s and 1980s that political transformation and liberation from authoritarian regimes meant that the end of such authorities was pure phantasmagoria and a myth. Later political events showed that it was not, as Francis Fukuyama proclaimed, the "end of history". Moreover, the dynamics of

geopolitical changes display that hybrid political systems in the global dimension are constantly evolving. In addition, the prevailing belief today is that the authoritarian regime and democracy are two opposite extremes of the political spectrum, defining the specificity of contemporary political systems. However, concerning the above analyses, the most significant and common innovation of the political transformation of the 1990s was the hybrid regime model. In turn, the literature on the subject contains a substantial source base on the theory of democracy, the methodology of research on democratization, as well as non-democratic political regimes. However, the scientific analysis of the above issues based on the indicated source base indicates a lot of terminological confusion. As shown above, presenting, explaining, and interpreting the origins of each political regime always requires considering both the historical context and the specificity of the conditions of a particular country and region.

This study aims to define the various forms of hybrid regimes to better understand the principles of their functioning in heterogeneous geopolitical conditions. It is particularly noteworthy because hybrid regimes – as a rule – do not seek to achieve consolidated power in the state. The local political elites are instrumentally using their "quasi-democratic" institutions to secure their state power. Since they can demonstrate long-term stability, hybrid regimes should be considered well-assembled political systems. Therefore, they are not temporary but are focused on long-term activities. Thus, despite many democratic facade institutions, hybrid regimes can be defined as particular political systems characterized by high dynamics of action, which allows them to adapt to local socio-political conditions.

The classification of political regimes has always been a challenging and complex undertaking. There are many undemocratic political regimes and a vast range of their mutual correlations. Democracy also often appears – to some extent – imperfect and unclear in its assumptions and political practice. Undoubtedly, however, the complex realities of political life will always pose severe challenges to the conceptualization and classification of types of political regimes of power. Therefore, the configuration approach is well suited to solving many complex issues, providing a multidimensional view of hybrid regimes.

After presenting the source of many conceptual misunderstandings in the contemporary classification at the level of electoral regimes, this article advocates a redefinition of the overarching concept of hybrid regimes: electoral and non-electoral. This redefinition makes it possible to realize the significant contribution and importance of generations of researchers involved in classifying contemporary non-democratic regimes. At the same time, this approach shows a theoretical gap in older studies, thus creating a conceptual space for non-democratic and non-authoritarian hybrid

regimes. Emphasizing the possible multidimensional configurations that may include various regimes, one can postulate the need to organize mutual relations in democratic, hybrid, and authoritarian regimes. Therefore, while the modern classification of political regimes is based mainly on a one-dimensional continuum, this article emphasizes the importance of a multidimensional conceptualization of regimes based on competition, "protective interference", and civil liberties. As a result, such a conceptual perspective can help unify the meaning of the hybrid regime and alleviate the conceptual confusion in contemporary literature on the subject.

In addition, this article innovatively incorporates elements of political pragmatics into the theoretical discourse on the types of hybrid regimes. The theoretical concepts presented here can play an essential role in better understanding the specificity of the analyzed ideas of political regimes but also allow to shape a common ground on which scholars can constructively engage in a debate focused on new research perspectives. In other words, this article opens up a potential perspective for further analyses, disjunctions, and opportunities for future research. By emphasizing the importance of the typological multidimensionality of political regimes, the previously largely unnoticed similarities and differences between the prospects of political transformation of countries characterized by diverse geopolitical conditions were highlighted. Based on competitiveness, civil liberties issues, and state interference in important socio-political issues, the proposed tables illustrate ways of grouping countries for comparative research. Therefore, the above distinctions make it possible to undertake new and innovative cross-regional analyses. It also allows us to answer several important questions regarding heterogeneous administrative structures, as well as the heterogeneous apparatus of power characteristic of them, functioning in the paradigm of a hybrid regime defining the most important dimensions of state institutions.

To sum up, in-depth studies on the issue of undemocratic political regimes are necessary for several fundamental reasons: (1) analyzing the functioning of hybrid regimes is not only for a theoretical understanding of diverse ideologies but is essential for political praxis; (2) a fuller insight into the shaping of non-democratic regimes enables a fuller insight into the specificity of their functioning, which allows answering fundamental questions concerning, among others: the effectiveness of state administration, the effectiveness of the power apparatus, methods of resolving socio-political conflicts, as well as their often very prolonged durability together with the causes and issues of socio-political stability and economic development prospects; (3) the scope of scientific research should be expanded to better understand the political alternatives available for political transformation, especially for fragile and destabilized countries of the modern world.

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