

The Transformation of National Identity and the Remembrance during Post-Authoritarian Transitions: case studies of Spain and South Africa

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Abstract: The paper discusses a role of the remembrance policy in the reconstruction of national identity during the democratization. It includes unique theoretical consideration of this phenomenon and two case studies: post-authoritarian Spain and post-apartheid South Africa. Presented conclusions are a result of qualitative study of transitional politics of memory which focused on the use of remembrance narratives and interpretations of the past to support an establishment of new, democratic and inclusive identity. Considering these two cases, the paper offers an observation of the domination of future-oriented politics over the remembrance and dealing with the past during the transition.

Keywords: democratization, national identity, remembrance, Spain, South Africa.

Theoretical aspects of the transitional transformation of national identity

The Third Wave of Democratization has caused a commonness of the belief in supremacy of democratic regime within social sciences (Huntington 1991). However, a popularity of this regime does not determine its effectiveness – changing way how political relations are regulated is still dependent on a degree of national identity's reconstruction and a durability of links between contents of new identity and negotiated, transitional order (Lijphart 1992: 207-208). The establishment of new political realities requires new constitution of civic culture, and new ideas which bonds a community (Smith 1991: 11). It is possible only if an ongoing process of democratization is supported by popularization of modernized cultural interpretations of a group, its origins and future objectives, as well as its exceptionalism (Hodgson 2009, Łastawski 2004: 15, Wawrzyński 2011: 33).

There is no effective democratization without reconstruction of political culture. Of course, the future success of transformation is based on instituting new formal and legal norms of governance and civic engagement (Schattkowsky 2011), but it is also influenced by an outcome of transitional conversion of society's consciousness. This transformation determines shared definitions of community, vision of its future and inter-generational relations, it shapes an obligation to maintain unfulfilled hopes, unkept promises and unrealized dreams, as well as it constitutes understandings of shared values and goals for the future (Wawrzyński 2015). The authoritarian identity cannot be used to inform citizens about attitudes, behaviors and values that are preferred or rewarded in new, democratic conditions.

During a democratic transition, a new identity has to answer three main challenges. Firstly, it has to reflect change of preferred attitudes, behaviors and values (Finkel, Smith 2011: 417). Secondly, a new identity has to satisfy a need for new standards of public sphere and negotiating norms of political behavior (Unterhalter 2000: 72-73). Thirdly, a new identity is key for an establishment of road map for national reconciliation and overcoming past experiences, as well as for defining transitional meaning of the just and the justice (Eze 2004: 763-764, Marszałek-Kawa et al. 2014). Moreover, the reconstruction of community supports main transitional objectives: social inclusion, engagement of all social groups, and consolidation of the principle of equality (Mani 2005: 512).

The post-authoritarian transition in practice cannot be recognized as ended until a new inclusive and reconciliatory identity is constituted and a remembrance is no longer a fuel to the flames of sociopolitical divisions. Patrick Bond (2006: 141) noticed that it is connected with solving a tough dilemma of redistribution of influence and assets in new, democratic conditions, what is essential for both: realization of negotiated settlement and promotion of a new identity within a society (which expects observable benefits from a change). So, the outcome of transformation depends on an efficacy of reconciliation and replacement of antagonistic narratives by new interpretations of the past, a community and an inter-generational agreement (Theidon 2006: 456). Moreover, popularized new contents have to support imagination of the state's future (Crawford 2006: 226, Koczanowicz 2009: 31) and they have to subordinate dealing with the past to an establishment of new community, which is based on hoping (Boyatzis et al. 2013, Robbins, Bryan 2004, Leslie, Finchilescu 2013).

The key role in this process plays government's remembrance policy which is a strategy of social influence based on narrating and interpreting past experiences (Labanyi 2008). During the transition it has five main objectives: (1)

assessing previous regime, (2) punishing past violations, (3) legitimizing new elites, (4) rewarding heroes of a struggle, and (5) commemorating its victims [Wawrzyński 2013]. So, realization of the remembrance policy enables a government to control a degree, in which an establishment of inclusive community is based on politics of forgetting and society's future-orientation (Dudek 2011: 12-26). Moreover, it is able to regulate shared understandings of a negotiated settlement between new elites and authoritarian authorities, what makes possible both: commemorating of heroic struggle against oppression and granting forgiveness for human rights violators (Horne 2009, Tobin 2010). So, a transitional government has power to manage remembrance – its narratives, symbols and images – which, through collective identity, influences social attitudes and shared values, as well as patterns of preferred behavior and rules of political cooperation. It makes an alliance of power, memory and identity a unique and efficient instrument of government's social influence (Wawrzyński 2015).

In this paper, we discuss relationships between invalidation of an authoritarian identity, a construction of democratic identity and a path of democratization in a context of deep social divisions. Considering draft results of the comparative study on a role of remembrance narratives during the transition, we present links between interpreting past experiences, the democratization, and an establishment of political identities in two countries: post-authoritarian Spain and post-apartheid South Africa during their transitions. Using the qualitative analysis of the politics of memory and the sites of memory approach (Nora 1989), we verify the hypothesis on a significant role of the reinterpretation of past experiences as the justification of a new identity during post-authoritarian transformation.

The transformation of national identity in post-authoritarian Spain

The national identity in governed by General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde authoritarian Spain was based on the exclusion of a part of society (*rojos*). It was supported by state-sponsored interpretation of the past and manipulations of collective memory which mostly referred to the origins of regime and the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). The *Guerra Civil Española* was a result of the military coup d'état, that opposed the Second Spanish Republic's democratic government, and that was justified as a protection of the country against the threat of socialist revolution. However, generals' putsch intensified political violence in Spain, and it caused a long-lasting division of Spanish society into two antagonistic

sides: the whites and the reds.

In 1939 the civil war ended with the victory of nationalist generals and the collapse of democratic order. On the 1st April, 1939 General Franco announced his dictatorship which continued for forty years (Beevor 2009, Bolinaga 2009, Moa Rodriguez 1999, Preston 2006, Renzato 2006). The construction of new, authoritarian identity – from the very beginning – was founded on the exclusion of citizens who supported the Second Republic. Franco's government arbitrarily divided Spanish society into two groups to maintain political atmosphere of the conflict. The first group included Franco's supporters, recognized by authorities as true patriots and 'real Spaniards', while the second group contained *rojós* (the Reds) who were recognized by authorities as nation's enemies, traitors, and supporters of the 'godless Spain'.

In authoritarian conditions, the Reds became citizens of second category, only because of their political beliefs or their support for legal government (Beevor 2009: 542-547, Romero Salvadó 2013: 136). They were brutally repressed – the number of political prisoner of Francoist Spain is estimated as 500,000 individuals, and the number of casualties after the end of civil war exceeded 200,000 (Beevor 2009: 543-545). Spanish society was divided into the winners and the conquered, and this dichotomy became essential for the authoritarian politics – the guiding rule was to destroy all sides which could be recognized as real or potential enemies of the dictatorship (Ratke 2011: 337).

The exclusive, authoritarian identity was promoted by governmental interpretations of the past – liberal elites (teachers, academics, writers) were replaced by propagandists. The system of education was used to narrate the civil war as a liberation struggle against bolshevik revolution, and to present General Franco as invincible commander (*caudillo invicto*) who defended Spain from traitors. The hatred for the Reds was intensified by emphasis of their atrocities during the conflict, and thanks to forgetting nationalists' war crimes in official narratives – the remembrance of the 'red terror' was used as a groundwork for Spanish consciousness (Beevor 2009: 128-156). Moreover, the international context of the Cold War strengthened a mythical aspect of the civil war, and enabled the Francoist regime to present it as the very first victory of Western country in the struggle against the communism (Ratke 2011: 337, Romero Salvadó 2013: 231-232).

The death of General Franco in 1975 caused a necessity to choose new direction for Spain. There were three main possibilities: (1) progressive reforms of authoritarian institutions – *reformismo*, (2) an immediate democratization of state – *ruptura democrática*, and (3) a continuation of the dictatorship – *continuismo*–

which seemed to be impossible without an authoritarian leader (Marszałek-Kawa et al. 2013: 8, Corona Ramón 2010, Sanchez Soler 2010, Quirosa-Cheyrouze y Muñoz 2007). The fragile economic situation of country, the development of terrorist organizations, and the fear of another violent, internal conflict contributed to the popularity of vision of progressive democratization based on reforming authoritarian institutions.

Also, this choice strengthened the cooperation of King Juan Carlos de Borbón (designated by Franco in 1969 as his successor), the moderate opposition lead by Adolfo Suárez, the first democratic prime minister of post-authoritarian Spain, and reformative wing of Francoist regime. This alliance made possible a dialogue of political, civic, economic, social and cultural elites and negotiations of the settlement which could be gain social acceptance (Barrera 2002: 82-83, Clemente 1994: 167, Peña González 2013: 462-474, Morán 2009). The final result of this cooperation was the 1978 Constitution of Spain, accepted by the Cortes Generales and citizens in the constitutional referendum, and the 1979 Spanish General Elections which ended the democratic transition in this country (Marszałek-Kawa et al. 2013).

One of the main conditions of the national agreement was protection of interests of former regime's officials and representatives. The settlement included 'sunset clauses', based on passing over the past atrocities in silence and the lack of implementation of transitional justice procedures. The establishment of democratic Spain realized through the politics of forgetting was commonly accepted by political and social elites, and it deeply influenced the process of constructing new understandings of the community (Jackiewicz 2013). During the transition and the consolidation of democratic regime, elites recognized two main objectives of the post-authoritarian national identity: the forgiveness without retribution and the establishment of inclusive community.

The first goal was realized by the politics of forgetting and forgiving. During Spanish transition there were no political purges, lustration process or special courts, there was no destruction of monuments or significant change of the topography of memory. However, there were amnesty processes of 1976–1977, which granted amnesty for human rights violators from all sides of the civil war and General Franco's post-war regime. So, the forgiveness contained not only the Reds, but also the Whites and authoritarian wrongdoers. After liberation of all political prisoners, in 1977 the government guaranteed absence of judicial institutions which may be used to punish crimes committed by state's officers and agents during the dictatorship (Ratke 2011: 337-338). Moreover, the documentation of repressions was destroyed, but its aim was protection of the democratization, not concealing the truth.

Only radical left opposed the reconciliation based on forgetting. They criticized the decision to build new community without punishing human rights violators, exhumations of mass-graves and commemoration of victims of the dictatorship. But, the Spanish society supported reconciliatory interpretations of the past, and it agreed that the price for democracy was a collective amnesia and 'the pact of forgetting' (*Pacto del Olvido*). The cost of stability and freedom was lack of punishment for political criminals and the forgiveness without retributive justice. For almost three decades this agreement was kept by the state, political parties and citizens, regardless their political convictions. The politics of forgetting enabled Spanish authorities to present the society as united in realization of the main national goal: the establishment of a stable democracy (Romero Salvadó 2009: 240).

The democratization of Spain required not only reconciliation, but also engagement of all citizens and all social groups. The establishment of inclusive identity was possible only if the divisive past was not forgotten – instead of remembrance-oriented narratives Spanish authorities promoted future-oriented politics as a new idea for the nation. So, the second goal of transitional identity-construction was realized by a political turn into the future and a promise of better tomorrow. All main political parties recognized that essential are: development of the economy, accession to the European Communities and strengthening international position of Spain, as well as they agreed that realization of these goals was possible only if the future not the past was the basis of new, democratic identity (Ratke 2011: 338).

Considering the case of transitional Spain, we state that the use of government's remembrance policy in a process of national identity's reconstruction had two main aspects. Firstly, it included the strategy of reconciliation without retribution, based on forgiveness of violent and divisive past. Secondly, the essence of Spanish democratization was construction of common vision of the future, based on hoping and future-orientation of politics, not dealing with the past and punishment of human rights violators during the dictatorship.

The transformation of national identity in post-apartheid South Africa

Alike in the case of Franco's Spain, the South African identity during the apartheid was established on a basis of social conflict (Adam, Giliomee 1979). Already in 1920s, prime minister James B.M. Hertzog presenting his vision of the South African nation stated that its members can be only white citizens who share

Afrikaner values – so, the community (*die volk*) was constructed thanks to the introduction of racist ideology and the exclusion of Black majority, limitation of its rights, and using it as a slave labor (Welsh 2000: 396-397). Besides the racialism, the Afrikaner identity was established in terms of the belief in inevitability of the clash between European and African civilizations and the conviction that only white domination can protect Afrikaners from the Blacks' violent retribution. With the collapse of colonial world, South Africa became the very last stronghold of the European power in Africa, what caused consolidation of the racist identity and Afrikaners' contempt for other groups: the Natives, the Indians, and the Coloured (Wicomb 1998, Ramsamy 2007, Ruiters 2001).

Cynthia Kros (2008: 108-109) stated that the Afrikanerdom was constituted by national narcissism and the fear of Black majority. The identity was characterized by an essential dichotomy: on the one hand, it included remembrance of heroism and sacrifice, but, on the other hand it promoted violence, greed and persecution of other human beings. It was constituted on both protestant virtues as diligence, humility or responsibility, and racial prejudices, biases or hatred for the Black majority (Giliomee 2003: 13, Kros 2008: 112, Evans 2010: 309, Chipkin 2007: 59, Goodman 1999: 365). Remembrance narratives and the national mythology played a significant role in preservation of the exclusivity, the superiority, and the exceptionalism of Afrikaners, defending their independence and values against 'barbarians' (Grundlingh 1991: 22, Keegan 1996: 184-196).

Since 1960s and the collapse of separate development program, tensions between Afrikaner nationalists and democratic opposition, including the African National Congress, white liberals and socialists, started a slow erosion of the apartheid regime and its vision of South African nation (Welsh 2000: 11-21 and 43-52). The racist state was protecting itself using mass repressions and human rights violations, but it was not able to survive. However, apartheid policies and laws divided South African society into separate and hostile 'racial groups', defined by the 1950 Population Registration Act. Moreover, in late 1980s identity conflicts between Afrikaner nationalists, democratic movements, the Black Consciousness, and radical left endangered a stability of country and caused a risk of civil war. So, during the transition, new elites had to overcome two obstacles: the absurdity of citizens' segregation and the complete lack of South African national unity (van Zyl Slabbert 2000: 73-74).

The democratization of South Africa is commonly associated with the symbolic role of President Nelson Mandela, the heroic leader and fighter for freedom and equality, who thanks to his moral authority was able to introduce the

project of new, democratic and inclusive identity. Anthony Sampson (1999: 520) called Mandela “the founder of a new nation” who did not forced people to follow his lead, but who inspired them with his own example. Mandela at his inauguration as president stated that his objectives as nation's leader is to built new, inclusive society and to heal the nation after the sore experience of apartheid (Mandela 1994).

The construction and popularization of new South African identity was based on five essential narratives. The first was an image of the Rainbow Nations – a vision of non-racial, inclusive society of equal citizens without distinction of their ethnicity, culture and religion – promoted by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Møller et al. 1999). The second was a creation of imagined, democratic community based on shared heritage and past experiences (MacGinty 2001: 11). The third was a presentation of South African transition as the final stage of decolonization and the end of European forced domination in Africa, which delivered the empowerment for people. The fourth was a construction of the narrative on peaceful transformation that was a result of cooperation of the whole nation in terms of the equality. The last one was a vision of the reconciliation and fair transitional justice realized in South Africa through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's proceedings.

These five elements constituted new identity, and protected country from a risk of deepening intergroup hostility (Gagiano 2004). The only possible way was the agreement between Mandela's African National Congress and President F.W. de Klerk's reformative wing of the National Party, and the establishment of new political elite which promoted new understandings of the past and new identity (Pheko 2009: 40-42). The observable result of this cooperation was the Interim Constitution of 1994 which emphasized four pillars of new South Africa: the equality of all citizens, the equality of all social groups, the reconciliation and the renunciation of violence, hatred and vengeance. The goal was construction of the non-racial Rainbow Nation, the ideal self of South Africans and the reflection of their hopes (Boyatzis et al. 2012: 155).

The ideology of democratization was based on the hope and future-orientation, Tutu's project of the Rainbow Nation was a vision of reconciliation and unification of South Africans based on Christian values (Haws 2009: 481). Both, Tutu and Mandela emphasized that this process was not possible without the forgiveness and the renunciation of vengeance, which were sources of the hope for future (Evans 2010: 309, Haws 2009: 486-488). And this hope was used to popularize the idea of Rainbow Nation – a common chance for equality and non-

racial community of all South African citizens – which became the most important political narrative of Mandela-lead democratization (Nagy 2008: 101, Dwyer 1999).

The promotion of new identity was supported by the healing process of reconciliation through truth, based on peaceful transitional justice procedure: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Leebaw 2001: 267-271). The main goal of the process was presentation of norms and values which had been violated during times of apartheid (Leebaw 2001: 283). However, the introduction of amnesty procedures did not caused inclusion of former wrongdoers – against Mandela's hope, Afrikaner nationalists were not interested in joining new, non-racial community, but they maintained their identity based on own mythology and interpretations of the past and they separated themselves from the rest of society (van Zyl Slabbert 2006: 57-63, van der Merwe 2010: 314-316).

During the South African democratization the remembrance policy was reduced to a strategy of new identity's implementation. Dealing with the past was recognized as a topic which could strengthen ongoing political conflicts and increase a risk of violent struggle, so new elites decided to minimize its impact on the transition by promotion of the hope and the future-oriented politics. The establishment of new identity in South Africa cannot be recognized as a full success of Mandela's government, but after ten years 82% of South Africans expressed their pride in non-racial and inclusive Rainbow Nation (Chikwanha 2006: 4-8). Moreover, James L. Gibson (2004: 53-56) in his 2001 survey observed that 24,9% of all respondents claimed that being South African is their primary identity and 51,9% of them recognized it as their primary or second identity. So, if we consider the starting point of transition and post-apartheid divisions of the society, we may present the South African case as an example of successful establishment of new identity during the democratization.

Conclusion

The democratic transition requires an establishment of new national identity, which supports attitudes and behaviors, preferred in democratic conditions. The post-authoritarian transformation needs a strategy of dealing with the past, but it cannot dominate over future-oriented politics. The essential aspect of transition is construction of new interpretations of the national history which supports established inclusive identity, even if it often means introduction of the politics of forgetting. The need for reconciliation – as it was presented in selected cases – leads to limitation of interest in punishing former regime's wrongdoers, and

it causes a desire of the new beginning for all, including human rights violators.

In the paper, we considered examples of Spanish and South African democratization considering three research categories: a role of remembrance in identity-construction, a role of transitional justice and dealing with the past in an establishment of new identity and an impact of transitional objectives on contents of this identity. We presented essential elements of authoritarian exclusive identity in General Franco's Spain and Afrikaner nationalism in apartheid South Africa, and we compared them with democratic identities promoted by a government during the transition.

The results of our inquiry showed that during the transition, governments use both strategies of remembering and strategies of forgetting. On the one hand, new political elites try to legitimize themselves and to justify their leadership, but on the other hand, they focus on reducing political influence of dealing with the past and minimizing a desire for vengeance to avoid a risk of deepening post-authoritarian conflicts. Selected cases of Spain and South Africa offer a valuable image of this process, and they show how in the 20th Century, in two different parts of the world, the democratization caused the reconstruction of national identity and shaped interpretations of past experiences.

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