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# **Political Transformation and Changing Identities in Central and Eastern Europe**

**Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, VI**

Edited by  
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## Table of Contents

Introduction	1
<b><i>Part I: Identity</i></b>	
Chapter I. Identity, Relation, and Self-Production <i>Tania Nedelcheva</i>	9
Chapter II. European Origins and Identities Vessela Misheva	35
Chapter III. Institutionalizing Nationalism <i>Zoltán Kántor</i>	57
Chapter IV. The Origins of the Power Elite in Lithuania with Regional Comparisons <i>Ramūnas Janušauskas</i>	85
Chapter V. The Left-Right Dimension in Lithuanian Politics: Facilitation or Complication of Political Choice? <i>Artūras Valionis</i>	101
<b><i>Part II: Politics in Transition</i></b>	
Chapter VI. Post-Communist Democratization: Explaining the Differences <i>Diana Janušauskienė</i>	131
Chapter VII. Intellectuals in the Political Arenas of Post-Communist Countries <i>Ingrida Gečienė</i>	155
Chapter VIII. The Europeanization of Romania: A Tentative Assessment <i>Manuela Lataianu and Gabriel Lataianu</i>	187

Chapter IX. The Hungarian Semi-Loyal Parties and their Impact on Democratic Consolidation <i>András Bozóki and Borbála Kriza</i>	215
Chapter X. Lustration/Decommunization as an Instrument to Enhance Legitimacy: The Influences of the Past on the Present Rules of Politics <i>Artur Wolek</i>	243
<b><i>Part III: Changing Values and Vanishing Trust</i></b>	
Chapter XI. Voluntary Work: Our Way Back to a Civil Society? Specifics of Volunteering in a Post-Communist Milieu <i>Aida Savicka</i>	281
Chapter XII. Values of Contemporary East European Culture: A Cross-Cultural and Developmental Approach <i>Krassimira Baytchinska</i>	299
Chapter XIII. The Need for Trust in Post-Communist Lithuania: An Institutional Perspective <i>Inga Gaižauskaitė</i>	325
Chapter XIV. Trust: A Still Deficient Cultural Resource in Post-Communist Lithuania <i>Algė Makulavičienė</i>	343
Chapter XV. System Support and Trust in Elites in Bulgaria 1992-2002 <i>Vassilka Mireva</i>	375
Index	397

## **Introduction**

The post-communist democratic transformation in Europe continues to be one of the most widely examined topics in the social sciences, even after the recent wave of European Union expansion. Numerous attempts have been made to describe and explain the changes that have taken place in Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union, both in respect to the collapse of the Soviet-style system, and concerning the so-called "Europeanization" that different countries have greeted in markedly different ways. The collection of articles presented here comprises a further contribution to this on-going discussion that involves empirical studies of particular states in the region, a comparative investigation of certain shared problems, as well as an exploration of theoretical questions connected with the issues of identity and change. In addition to focusing on questions of importance in specific countries, the discussion endeavors to raise issues that are relevant to the region as a whole as it has undergone the experience of system change with the resulting need to forge a new identity on the basis of history, culture, and aspirations for a better future.

The volume is divided into three chapters consisting of fifteen articles that represent the work of sociologists and political scientists active in today's intellectual life in Central and Eastern Europe. Chapter One, "Identity," begins with Tania Nedelcheva's sophisticated theoretical analysis of the rich but ambiguous concept of identity, which has come to be a central concern with people throughout the former Communist bloc as they struggle to find a secure meaning for their lives in their radically changed societies. While Nedelcheva approaches the question in a primarily abstract fashion against the background of European philosophy after Kant, she also draws specific references to the process of identity change that Bulgaria has undergone since 1990. The result is a multi-layered discussion that seeks to describe the principal factors characterizing the process of identity change on the part of societies, social groups, and individuals.

Vessela Misheva investigates the complex question of Balkan identity in respect to how the meaning of European civilization has been transformed since it first emerged in South-Eastern Europe. The main thrust of Misheva's argument is two-fold. First, identity is formed through interaction with the other. No nation or group can be pointed to as the source of European civilization insofar as identity is comprised of a difference that cannot take shape without the participation of those who reside on the other side of the boundary of meaning. Second, multiple European identities exist in the central

Balkans such that the countries in question may be said to suffer from too much meaning in their histories. This problem is compounded by the fact that those nations who have come to consider themselves as the primary carriers of European civilization have often sought to decide the manner in which other nations are to participate in "Europe." This generates only instability since no nation or society can be identified by a meaning that arises from beyond its boundary.

Zoltán Kántor focuses on the question of national identity, examining the role of nationalism in the new democracies, particularly the two types of nationalism that characterize Hungary and Romania. He argues that the policy of "nationalizing" the state, along with the concomitant problems that arise from the existence of national minorities, will remain important in the politics of Central and Eastern Europe for at least the foreseeable future. Kántor supports the view that the relationships between neighboring states strongly correlate with the situation of minorities and the respective titular nations. He states that a certain level of separation could paradoxically diminish the potential of conflict, and draws the conclusion that national minorities should be allowed a greater degree of autonomy within the framework of treaty agreements between neighboring countries.

Ramūnas Janušauskas examines the identity of the current Lithuanian political elite in respect to its stability. He investigates why it embraces primarily "survivors" from the Soviet period and the Sajudis movement, with generational change beginning to appear only in the run up to the 2002 presidential elections. Janušauskas argues that the current Lithuanian power elite in fact have their roots in the Soviet past. The many factors that contribute to the slow rate of change in the membership of the elite include the small size of the country, the ethnic homogeneity of the population, and slow upward mobility within political parties.

Artūras Valionis then discusses the left-right dimension in politics. He demonstrates that the left-right identity of political parties is not only viewed as superficial in contemporary society, it does not motivate a deeper commitment to participation in politics on the part of the populace. Valionis also observes that political parties themselves are not greatly concerned with left-right commitments and readily form coalitions across the political spectrum. This further serves to render left-right distinctions irrelevant.

The first chapter in Part Two, "Politics in Transition," is Diana Janušauskienė's analysis of differences between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in terms of post-communist development. She identifies a number of reasons why certain have been successful to various degrees in creating stable democracies while others have failed to do so. The key reasons for this unequal development include the pace of institutional transformation, the level of political rights and civil liberties, the extent of economic and social

development, and public commitment to democracy. The take-off point for change, which involves a given country's geopolitical situation, previous experience/non-experience of democracy, values, and existing level of modernization, is also of crucial importance in this regard. In general, those countries that were initially more economically and socially developed, possessed a traditional Christian value system, and previously had democratic regimes to some degree have been more successful than others in making the transition to democracy.

Ingrida Gečienė's investigates the role of intellectuals in the fall of communism and in subsequent democratic developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. After discussing the issue of intellectuals and intelligentsia as it has been addressed in sociological literature, she examines how the political role of intellectuals has changed over time. Gečienė points out that they still play various important roles in the political arenas of their transforming societies regardless of the common view that their political power and influence have declined. They continue to be active in critical discourse, political debate, and are also personally involved in politics. Intellectuals also comprise the group from which the political elite are recruited.

Manuela Lataianu and Gabriel Lataianu discuss the Europeanization of Romania. After an examination of the concept of Europeanization, they select the two examples of reform of the public administration system and social policies concerning child protection in order to illustrate the specific character of process of Europeanization in Romania. They provide a sober but generally optimistic appraisal of the situation in light of the fact that the requirements placed upon Romania by the European Union serve as intervening variables that shape the process of transformation.

András Bozóki and Borbála Kriza examine the problem of semi-loyal or anti-system parties in post-communist democracies, particularly the rise of populism and other undemocratic tendencies in both society and political parties in Hungary. They analyze in detail the increasing tendency within the population to desire a strong leader who will tell them in a clear, simple, unambiguous, and yet knowledgeable manner what they need to do in an apparently chaotic, irrational, and decadent world that is filled with enemies of the country and permeated with deception.

Artur Wołek discusses lustration and decomunization as an instrument for enhancing legitimacy in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary. Wołek argues that lustration/decommunization has been used to change the rules of politics in those post-communist countries that built their democracies upon the foundation of evolutionary regime change. In particular, it has served as a means to change the informal rules of secrecy and privilege and overcome the legitimacy crisis that is inevitable in such a situation. A central argument in Wołek's discussion is that lustration policies have comprised efforts to change

rules rather than further justice in both Poland and in the Czech Republic insofar as their primary aim has been to demonstrate the lack of continuity between the old and new regimes. The transformation in Hungary was, in contrast, built upon a consensus between communists and non-communists regarding the period of transition and the rules that would pertain to the new democratic regime.

Chapter Three, "Changing Values and Vanishing Trust," provides a discussion of two of the most important characteristics of societies in transition. It explores the point that although an atmosphere of trust is necessary for the very existence of civil society, the post-communist societies have been typified by an absence of trust in almost all spheres of life. It begins with Aida Savicka's analysis of the role of voluntary organizations in the development of civil society. She supports the position that active voluntary organizations are a characteristic feature of a consolidated civil society. Savicka's comparative analysis is based on the results of the European Value Study, which reveals significant differences between the various European countries. She selects Lithuania as a case study and demonstrates that the underdevelopment of voluntary organizations and public passivity reflect not only poor financial support, but also the absence of a tradition of volunteer activities.

Krassimira Baytchinska also utilizes results obtained in the European Value Study to analyze similarities and differences between values in East and West European cultures. Her basic hypothesis is that there are two different structural models of values in European culture, that of the West and that of the East. Baytchinska examines how value conflicts in respect to autonomy versus conservatism, hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony are resolved in ways that reflect the basic cultural alternatives each culture faces in accordance with their differing value priorities. Special attention is given to modernizing tendencies in the Eastern European value system, particularly in Bulgaria. She argues that the process of European integration on a cultural level depends not only on similarities between East and West European value patterns, but also on the variations in specific countries.

Inga Gaižauskaitė argues that trust is necessary both to sustain an effective democratic system as well as to foster economic growth. Gaižauskaitė also examines how trust in institutions is perceived by the institutions themselves on the basis of her qualitative research. She presents various means to increase public support for institutions, such as expanding active public involvement in decision making and in the formulation and evaluation of policies. Gaižauskaitė devotes special attention to the way in which interpersonal trust provides a basis for trust in institutions. Insofar as the mass media play a very important role in forming and maintaining public attitudes, the constant repetition of institutional shortcomings may be dangerous to the development of stability in new democracies. When people are beset by the



feeling that they cannot control their environment and that institutions are not capable of helping them, any sharp disturbance may generate a significant social problem.

Algė Makulavičienė explores the importance of trust as a cultural resource and social value that is necessary in all societies. Her comparative analysis of Lithuania in respect to other European countries shows that a true civil society is still in the making in Lithuania, where the culture of distrust still prevails. Insofar as Makulavičienė views the construction of trustworthy institutions as more likely to happen from the bottom up than the top down, she finds it to be particularly important for governments to pursue rational policies designed to fight the climate of economic insecurity and political inconsistency and to reeducate society for trust.

Finally, Vassilka Mireva analyses support for the democratic system along with public trust in elites in contemporary Bulgaria. Mireva describes how Bulgaria's period of ineffective governance during the 1990s generated a growing threat to democratic stability, and also addresses such other important issues as protest voting, commitment to democracy, and preferences for undemocratic alternatives. Mireva concludes that Bulgarian democracy remains a work in progress even as the country moves toward EU membership.

The editors and contributors to this volume hope that their research will help the reader to gain a new insight into the transformation from communism to market economy and democracy that continues to unfold in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Their changing membership in various international organizations is but one step among many yet to be taken on the road to a redefinition of national identity and the reorganization of both private and public life.



## **Part I**

### **Identity**



## Chapter I

# Identity, Relation, and Self-Production

*Tania Nedelcheva*

### THE ONTOLOGICAL LABYRINTH OF IDENTITY

The theme of identity has long been discussed, perhaps to excess. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that the accumulated discussion is connected in the greater number of cases with the availability of a large amount of empirical data that utilize working theoretical conceptions and *ad hoc* methodologies. Such a situation presents us with the task of appropriating a rich theoretical and methodological foundation and attempting to construct a higher order theory.

Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, which explicitly promotes the idea that the social system is autopoietic in nature, is perhaps at the forefront in this respect, although it is hardly consonant with the postmodern accent on fragmentedness and difference. But as Robert Merton called for the creation of middle-range theories during the period of scientism's dominance, when all "ivory tower" theorizing came to be considered outdated, it has now become necessary to go beyond primarily working conceptions of identity and seek a more general view. Moreover, it has now become necessary to lay the foundations for a conception that may be defined as philosophical-sociological in nature, and which should have not only a regulative function in respect to existing knowledge, but also a constitutive function insofar as it generates particular "object" schemata.

The theme of identity has no strictly sociological, socio-psychological, or psychological layers insofar as it very substantially involves purely philosophical themes, issues connected with social philosophy and social ontology, as well as particular logical questions. One of the first levels of discussion in this regard concerns the manner in which the concept of identity has itself taken shape.

Utilizing the method of idealization makes it possible to outline three approaches and a number of corresponding strategies for investigating identity. The first view, of which there are several different versions, is that identity acquires its truth to the extent that it attains unity with some type of totality or universality. In the Hegelian version, for example, authentic identity is attained when an individual, as s/he develops, sublates his/her own determinancy and assimilates the pre-given conditions of the Absolute Spirit, System, or Great Narrative. In other words, the truth of the individual resides in the attainment of

unity with such totalities and supra-individual formations. An important issue from this perspective is that authentic identity is primarily cognitive in character, whereby the individual attains his/her identity only insofar as the Totality is attained in thought. Only through thought can the particular within the individual, or that which renders his/her identity non-authentic, be overcome. This technology for attaining identity is historically determined, but it also provides a means for acquiring identity that is particularly valid today insofar as it is determined by that mass of internal "thinghood" which relates the individual to a group. So-called authoritarian identity falls under this category.

The second approach places a greater emphasis on individualism. Identity is here viewed not as residing in relatedness to some system of values and norms outside the individual, but rather as an internal coherency and stable invariant that creates the bearing structure of the personality. Even though this type of identity is established upon internal rather than external relatedness, it may be viewed as a derivative of the first to the extent that it also is aimed at the creation of systematicity, monologism, and a type of centeredness, regardless of whether the latter are external and have been interiorized or internal and coordinated with some principle of personality.

The third approach takes identity to be "evasive." Identity in this view does not reside upon some stable invariant, but rather consists of an extreme changeability that refuses to become "ossified" in one or another location. This type of identity, which is centered by neither external nor internal vectors, approaches what Gellner referred to as "modal personality." It takes shape independently of attempts to establish a single totalizing construction that can be described in a single narrative, and it emphasizes the movement of separate fragments without being fully identified with any particular moment of this movement. While it is a moving mass of elements without center or periphery, it does possess a variety of meanings in respect to which the personality identifies itself.<sup>1</sup>

These three general idealized ways in which identity is constructed may also be thematized using purely ontological categories. For example, the first can be said to involve substantialistic ontology insofar as identity is taken to be an attribute of a thing in itself. The second is based on relation, more precisely on reflexive relation, that nevertheless is frozen. The third is described most adequately by the category of situation, that is, it is a dynamically

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<sup>1</sup> This approach makes it possible to utilize a variety of means for describing identity in respect to the relationship between world and person. Husserl, for example, focuses upon intentionality as an element in the appropriation of part of the world by the individual, while Heidegger emphasizes the world as it reveals itself to the personality and forms its internal construction.

understood relational conception. The present discussion will put forward a theoretical outline of identity that points to the heuristic value of a methodological strategy that is both relational and autopoietic.

We should note in this regard that Pierre Bourdieu states in *Practical Reason* that while the philosophy of modern science is relational, it is very seldom used in the social sciences since it is very directly opposed to the routines found in ordinary (or semi-scientific) thinking about the social world. This latter type of thinking much more readily lends itself to substantial "realities," individuals, and groups than objective relations, which one can neither point to, nor touch. They must instead be mastered and validated through scientific effort.<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant also emphasize the effectiveness of relationalism in the "Introduction" to *Réponses: Pour une anthropologie réflexive*. This position can be made concrete by being tied to autopoiesis as the first stage in a description of identity as a specific self-producing social system, which in a certain sense is the first "species" characteristic of identity.<sup>3</sup>

The way in which the notion of relation intersects with the idea of autopoiesis in an investigation of identity becomes evident from Maturana and Varela's definition of a closed operational system, or an autopoietic system. They speak of this type of system, which is defined as a unity, as a network of productions of components that recursively, through their interactions, produce the network that produces them. In addition, the components constitute, in the space where they exist, the boundaries of the network as components that participate in the realization of the network. Although an operationally closed system experiences external perturbations and reacts to them by changing its structure, it nevertheless preserves the invariability of its organization. It must be emphasized, however, that these structural changes do not result from actions of the environment upon the system insofar as it is the structure of the system that determines precisely which configuration of outside actions play the decisive role in the process of structural change.<sup>4</sup>

When these ideas are expressed in the language of historical philosophy, our attention is drawn to Paragraph 65 of the *Critique of Judgment*, which addresses questions concerning the development of the organism as a whole. These issues are developed further in Schelling's philosophy, and they

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<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu 1997, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant remark that identity resembles a magnetic field, which consists of a system or relational configuration structured by objective forces possessing a specific gravitational force that affects every object and agent that enters it. See Bourdieu and Wacquant 1993.

<sup>4</sup> See Maturana and Varela 1980, pp. 79-81. Also see Buehl 1987 and Lipp 1987.

reach their definite conclusion in the Hegelian system. Hegel remarks, for example, that reflection in action or reaction as well as action or reaction in reflection comprise the unity of the organic, which is equivalent to organic reproduction.<sup>5</sup>

Kant maintains in a similar vein that each part of a product of nature is thinkable only as existing through and because of every other part and of the whole as well, in which sense it is an instrument or organ. It must be emphasized, however, that each part in this sense does not have itself as a goal, as would be the case with a work of art, but rather produces every other part. Only as such, as an organized and self-organizing entity, may a product of nature be termed a natural goal.<sup>6</sup> Schelling adds that the basic characteristic of organization is that it itself exists as cause or action, and insofar as of itself it is simultaneously both cause and action, it exists through itself.<sup>7</sup>

There is a continual change of subject and object positions in the reflexive relation of self-reproducing systems to themselves. Self-development results from this movement of self-reference. The formation of the system whole is achieved through the establishment of inner system formations (qualities) that create the conditions for the transformation, in Hegelian terms, of thing-in-itself into thing-for-itself. The aim of this activity is not the self-preservation of the system whole within the limits defined by its functions and within unchanging ontological parameters, but rather development as self-creation, which in its broadest sense is the reflexive relation of the system to itself. That is to say that an autopoietic system involves self-production and not simply self-regulation, which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for its existence.<sup>8</sup> For this type of behavior to be possible, however, it is necessary from a diachronic point of view for an organic system to be in relation to something else in its initial stage of development.

The intersection of ideas of relationalism and self-creating systems thus provides the following points that clearly outline the basic parameters of such systems as well as of identity: 1) Complexity is an internal state of systems based on self-reference. The attributes of such a system depend on an individual past, and they are defined synthetically, not analytically. 2) The complexity of such systems is reducible; they are not "black boxes." 3) Self-reference expresses the operational closure of these systems, that is, their

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<sup>5</sup> See Hegel 1969, p. 242.

<sup>6</sup> Kant 1980, p. 273.

<sup>7</sup> Schelling 1983, p. 225.

<sup>8</sup> Bushev observes that it is common in contemporary theories of self-organization for the spontaneous formation of structures to be equated with self-organization. He adds, however, that this is unacceptable. See Bushev 1987, pp. 5, 51. See also Bushev 1992.



closure in respect to "self-creation" and their openness in respect to energy, matter, and information. 4) System parts are hetero-hierarchically, not hierarchically, organized. 5) Such systems are autonomous insofar as relation and interaction do not depend on other systems, but they are dependent on the environment in regard to such factors as information and energy.<sup>9</sup>

The heuristic nature of an approach to identity that incorporates these issues resides in the fact that identity is not associated with some substantial quality that is present only in itself, but is rather connected with qualities that manifest themselves only insofar as the given individual or group is self-related. Moreover, the group functions through them as self-reproducing both in itself and in its "encounters" with other identities.<sup>10</sup>

Identity is also a relational *invariant*, that is, a bundle of relations that remain unchanged within specific limits and conditions throughout all transformations. However, this characterization of identity as a relation does not express its specific difference insofar as a significant complex of social and socio-psychological phenomena share this same philosophical-sociological nature. Stereotypes, for instance, are also examples of relations that appear in particular social conditions and environments. In addition, relations of identity have the particularity of being reflexive, that is, they in fact express a relation of equality of the object with itself. To the extent that this object is dynamic, its equality with itself is an invariant which has a specific period of validity that in most cases is known to exist even if it cannot be precisely defined.<sup>11</sup>

Identity relations have a particular degree of complexity since they involve the consciousness of people and individual subjects as well as the purely material-social environment. Identity as a relational invariant, which

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<sup>9</sup> This theory remains completely within the spirit of what is known as radical constructivism, which has taken shape in a number of scientific disciplines concerned with such concepts as self-reference, self-organization, operationalism, organizational closure, structural determinism, neural networks, evolution, and so forth. This must be distinguished from Lorentzen's constructivism, or so-called German constructivism. For a discussion see Erpenbeck 1989, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Sergei Averintsev figuratively observes in this respect that without his friends from other nationalities, such as Jews, Latvians, Germans, and Englishmen, he would not understand that he is a Russian. Indeed, it is precisely such differences that make understanding possible and permit one to enter more deeply into both oneself and others. See his "When the Hand Isn't Folded into a Fist" in Averintsev 2005.

<sup>11</sup> In respect to so-called deprogramming, it is anticipated that a change in identity, or at least an identity crisis, can be brought about through the application of certain techniques, although the conditions and period of time needed to carry this out cannot be indicated in advance. See Barker 1997 for a discussion of this issue.

cannot be reduced to such particular elements as consciousness, emotions, or morals, is an expression of the specific integrity of the personality as a whole. This means that identity is a multi-layered reality, or multi-layered invariant, that has a specific vertical and horizontal structure, each element of which has a specific functional significance in the various moments of spatial localization.

Another specific feature of identity as an invariable collection of relations is that the latter are not unidimensional (A is greater than B), but are rather always in a state of interaction. Identity as a reality is expressed in interaction, which as a specific feature of identity relations provides the basis for the self-reproduction, or autopoiesis, of identity. Identity is consequently an invariant collection of relations that takes place as an interaction based on self-reproduction. Even though it is consequently relative stable, it manifests itself in different life situations with one or another set of qualities. It thus becomes necessary to thematize otherness insofar as identity is both identical to itself as well as that which gives rise to difference. Difference in this sense is not an alien difference but one's own otherness, which is the very otherness of our own life world. Identity is thus "homeless" in its own dwelling.

This type of identity formation, which is common today, has an essentially tragic character. That is to say that by its very constitution it possesses an existential spirit of tragedy since it moves in the contradiction between, on the one hand, the practical needs of every being to manifest itself within particular parameters and, on the other, the mosaic-like character of identity, which permits identity to manifest itself in a greater number of dimensions. This contradictory nature may also be expressed as a tension between being embedded in a concrete time and the sense that timelessness is the essence or authenticity of identity. Temporality is the phenomenon or external form through which the "truth" of identity, which is beyond all limitation, manifests itself. The most adequate category in this regard is dwelling. Identity is always in the situation of dwelling or persistence, which means that identity is something changeable which remains constant and, conversely, that it is something constant which always changes. The persistence of identity is its dynamic unchangeability, and identity in its pure form is in fact duration as a dynamically changing diversity, but precisely as such it possesses an open systemicity. This is the point at which the idea of identity as an autopoietic system arises insofar as identity is the recreation of the different and not merely the confirmation of the same. Identity as an autopoietic system is the birth of the confirmed different. One could here paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari and say that identity as an autopoietic system is an endless experimental device. Desire machines and judgment machines form the complex human space, in which identity is responsible for the social structuredness of human individuality.

## **TRANSCENDENTAL VIEW OF IDENTITY**

The classic opposition of appearance and essence may be utilized to figuratively express the different poles of identity. If movement towards the appearance of identity leads to various modifications determined by psychological, social, and other factors, then movement towards the essence of identity requires the thematization of transcendental identity. The transcendental is in fact the ultimate thinkable field in which identity may be embedded. The transcendental necessitates acceptance of those structures that are not connected with the empirical being of psychic states, but which make possible every empirical experience or identity that appears. In order to avoid confusion, we will adopt solely as a working hypothesis the view that the transcendental is a logical condition that makes every identity possible. The situation indeed becomes very complicated if the logical must be viewed as the ontological, but this type of thematization is not necessary. We will thus here discuss primarily matters that have a logical and not empirical existence.

From this position the personality may be viewed in two different ways. On the one hand, the personality with its identity is oriented towards the empirical; on the other, there are structures within the personality that maintain the latter as a strict unity with itself independently of the diverse modifications that arise from empirical factors. Kant observes that the pure unity of apperception, or the self-identity of the ego in respect to every possible phenomenon, resides a priori at the basis of all empirical consciousness.<sup>12</sup> That is to say that every empirical consciousness is necessarily related to the knowledge of itself as primary apperception, which may be described in terms of the present discussion as proto-identity, or as that which comprises the final and indivisible "substantiality" of each and every identity. The transcendental unity of apperception is the absolute logical condition for every factual identity. The analogy between proto-identity and Kant's transcendental apperception may be extended in respect to the role of imagination. If pure apperception makes possible the synthetic unity of diversity in all respects, then proto-identity forms its nucleus, and the productive power of the imagination is that which calls forth diversity. Here emerges the multiplication of proto-identity insofar as the productive capacity of the imagination provides the specific difference of actual consciousness, or the formal logical condition of pure apperception. One could say in line with Kant that one is conscious of oneself in the transcendental synthesis of diversity in perception, and thus in the synthetic unity of apperception, not as one appears to oneself, nor as one is in oneself, but only that one is.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kant 1992, pp. 198-199.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

The transcendental view of identity involves yet another a heuristic moment, namely, the thematization of the problematic of identity in respect to time. Kant is once again useful in this respect insofar as the realization of knowledge as a synthesis of thought, categories, and images takes place through the transcendental schemata. Schemata in general are the determination of time according to rules, while in respect to proto-identity, or the "I am," they are essence and the embedding of the "I am" within the context of time. Identity as that which is given to itself occurs through time, and for precisely that reason the structure of identity as subjectivity is realized in and through time. Identity contains present, future, and past around a permanent center, which at the same time has a finite character. This center must not be thought of only in its cognitive aspect, or as "I think", but rather as an existential being that expresses itself with "I am" and has a unique intuition of embeddedness in the totality of being. The latter is not merely social being, but being in general. Time for Heidegger and "I think" for Kant are identical. That is to say that, on the one hand, transcendental and the "I am" as pure apperception and, on the other, time may be identical and may be termed proto-identity.

Proto-identity is located on the pre-reflective level of consciousness. In Husserl's terminology, proto-identity may be observed after we have bracketed traditional reflection and the usual objective weighting of consciousness as intentionality, thereby becoming able by virtue of a phenomenological reduction to "palpate" its thingness. Proto-identity, which is supra-empirical in character and renders me included in both the world and in being, is a necessary condition for the realization of the identity of the empirical ego. But by means of this proto-identity, I also know that I am present there and am able to thematize myself as an "I am" that overflows in time. It may be said in this regard that Husserl's phenomenological analysis is directed towards the specific being that is in a process of continuous self-construction, and which manifests itself through its own directedness towards itself. Proto-identity is a unity that is enclosed within typologically differentiated intentional horizons, whereby empirical identity, which is an object of sociological, social-psychological, and psychological analysis, is connected with the transcendence of proto-identity. This specifies the basic modes of self-reference and self-constitution.

It is necessary, however, to alter the traditional understanding of transcendence and go beyond the sense in which Kant uses it insofar as the validity of this concept is not restricted to the sphere of cognition but encompasses being itself appropriated as personal or subjective. That which exists is being-in-itself constituted in the process of self-construction or, in the terminology of Maturana and Varela, autopoietically self-constructed. In this sense proto-identity is being itself constituted and self-constructed through subjectivity. Every proto-identity is within the horizon of a particular ego that appears with a particular self-relation or objectness. In this sense proto-identity

is a particular duality from its very inception; it is related to the ego, but only to the extent that the ego is determined by being or, more precisely, self-determined.

Proto-identity is always dualistic and temporal. It also has another characteristic that is related to the fact that temporality is known through reflection. The ego is temporal to the extent that it is reflexive, that is, to the extent that reflection is a primary ability. Reflection is temporality precisely in the tension that it reveals between "I was" and "I am." The distantiating of the self from itself, which does not sublimate its identity, is nothing other than its temporality, and for this reason reflexivity is an inner possibility of the self to reveal that its original being is temporal being. Identity is that structure which is able to "look at itself" and thereby recognize itself. Reflection creates the possibility by means of time for the ego to "see" itself by turning its attention towards its intentional content. Proto-identity is in itself capable of being reflected, and this relatedness of the self to itself is the ultimate condition for the persistence of the self in the "now." The self in this sense is the maintenance of the past in the now, or of my being present in the world, and it is filled with meaning only insofar as it is "turned" towards being. It not only fills but also provides a new horizon, new possibilities for the thematization of the self, and a new definition of its identity. Here resides what may be termed the transcendental condition for the proto-identity of an anticipatory identity.

In contrast to Kant, the ego for Husserl is not that which creates the possibility for a synthesis of apprehension because it must first be a thing that exists before it creates temporality as its own reflexivity. Self-ness is given as a pre-reflexive presence that carries the various forms of reflexivity. This is the essence of proto-identity, and it is the foundation of the various intentional horizons of the ego. It is always pre-given, and everything constituted as an apperceptive unity coexists with it.

Proto-identity resides in the present, which is actuality. As the primary present, it is present in every directionality of consciousness and is the basis of the synthesis of every intentionality. Synthesis is not simply a bringing together of different acts of the ego, but primarily comprises vectors that are united in a number of relative but fragmentary totalities that create the "thingness" of the actual as the other of proto-identity. The ego is thus always located in a now, but it also manifests itself as always new. Time, which for the individual is transformed into a linear movement within which s/he remains one and the same, is a mechanical representation since this is where the self-renewing ego, which preserves its invariability only as a general model for proto-identity, always is.

As such, the ego inherits itself and is woven into the totality of psychic experiences. The ego is thus not only an external presence, but something given

that is now which is also given for its previous acts. Consequently, the latter belong to the ego itself.

Proto-identity is the primary structure which, as situated in time, makes it possible to either reveal or conceal the secondary identity that appears in its intentional orientation towards the objectivity and everydayness of the life world. Proto-identity is the maintenance of an original ego in the present, which is a condition for the thematization of intentionality in various vectors. This makes it possible to uncover the horizon of proto-identity.

Identity thereby comes to life, becoming an element of the lived dynamic. Two poles may be distinguished here that center diverse manifestations, namely, the Transcendental Ego and the everyday human self. In appearance they are united, and only through reflection can they be separated and "anatomically" examined. Husserl remarks that the Transcendental Ego is integrated only in the universal unitary form of a flow in which all singularities are accommodated.<sup>14</sup> It is the principle of the constitution of the whole as a dynamic interweaving of past, present, and future. The ego is phenomenal, object burdened, filled, and fulfilled. It is historicity and social phenomenality, extending from the individual particulars of the movement of life and everydayness to the social role dimensions of the personality. This ego envelops within itself the horizon that presents itself as transcending insofar as it possesses the universal structures of the eidetic, apodictic contemplation of meaning. Only in this way can any given fragment of transcendence be understood since meaning appears as an eidetic horizon that logically precedes every facticity, providing the possibility to see its facticity. The identification structure of the ego may also be considered as a constituted transcendence. Husserl states that the ego is not constituted as the ego itself, but as it is reflected in my own ego or monad. Moreover, the ego is constituted as alter ego, whereby my ego as a moment of the alter ego is nothing other than the ego itself in my uniqueness.<sup>15</sup>

This is not only a cognitive procedure since it is connected with the body, which is not merely a thing or thingness, but rather a specific spatial center that constitutes my sensual field. In addition, the movements of the body transpire in the mode of "I act" and are subordinated to my "I can."<sup>16</sup> In this sense, the complex structure of identity is based on the complex dialectic of the ego and environment. Husserl maintains that the reduced anthropological ego, or psychic ego, is consequently constituted as a part of the world, with a variety of things that are external in relation to it, but that it constitutes the world and carries it intentionally within itself. He further observes that if it is necessary to

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<sup>14</sup> Husserl 1996, p. 213.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

demonstrate that everything as the constituted and consequently reduced world belongs to the concrete essence of the constituting subject as internal determinations that are inseparable from him, then my own world falls within the framework of the self-explication of the ego and, on the other hand, the ego that penetrates this world will itself appear as a part of its externality, whereby it distinguishes itself from the external world.<sup>17</sup>

Identity is not a formal unity, but rather a living, pulsating invariability filled with energy and meaning. In this sense identity is presence and capability. Husserl emphasizes that the person as a living unity holds itself within itself, thereby being present in the world.

### **THE TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY**

Intersubjectivity and identity concern the givenness of consciousness, and the acts and relations of consciousness are the most important and determining elements in respect to both. Identity is a reflexive relation, but as such it is interaction. Intersubjectivity, however, is above all the establishment of relations between subjectivities, while identity is a relation not only between subjectivities, but also between collective consciousnesses. Moreover, identity contains an active, practical, material moment, and while identity is intersubjectivity, it is not only intersubjectivity. On the other hand, intersubjectivity is a condition of possibility for identity (which, like historicity, also consists of factual relations) since personalities and communities must first have been united by intersubjectivity in order for there to be active identity. Intersubjectivity may be viewed in this regard as a pre-identity condition. It presupposes a unity of subjects, and in this sense it is the "primary" identity. Every other identity is a modification of it, and this primary identity is a condition for those that follow. Intersubjectivity in fact shapes the typical internal consciousness of sociality and, as a consequence, every member of the community lives the world in a similar way. Alfred Schütz describes intersubjectivity by means of two idealizations. The first is the rule of interchangeable points of view, which means taking for granted the fact that I and every other person perceive our common world in the same way, even when we change places such that mine becomes his and the converse. The second is the coincidence of systems of relevance, which I and every other person take for granted. That is to say that regardless of our unique biographical situations, the differences between our various criteria for significance are insubstantial from the point of view of goals at hand. As a consequence, you

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 236.

and I, or we, in practice interpret, either actually or potentially, objects and subjects in the same ways.<sup>18</sup>

This logic leads us further into classical philosophy and actualizes conceptual complexes that at first appear to lie outside the framework of the present discussion. This is particularly the case with transcendentalism as a theoretical presentation of those structures in spiritual life that are not dependent on the empirical being of psychic states and make empirical experience in general possible. It could be said that it is precisely these structures which comprise the architectonic of the fundamental primary identity that we have described as reflexive in nature insofar as the self itself has a dual nature. On the one hand, it is an accumulation of a series of empirical events. On the other, transcendental structures maintain identity as well as the entire flow of empirical, lived experience that is ascribed to one and the same subject. This aspect of the self has no obvious parameters. Intersubjectivity is a specific transcendental structure.

Identity may also be characterized as a specific dynamic field of relations that preserves personal and group invariability in the face of everyday transformations. Identity is an invariant, but this does not mean that it is some "ossified" system of relations, constants, and unchangeable interrelations and interactions. It is maintained precisely as dynamically changing accents, fluctuations, and dominations, which is to say that it is living or self-reproducing. This is a further step towards the concretization of identity that makes it possible to enter the "lower" levels of social actuality and describe empirical givens. From a methodological point of view, empirical parameters can be utilized to indicate orientations in this field and to thematize and conceptualize it in such a way that heuristic hypotheses are formulated for investigating the process of the modification and transformation of identity.

The relational pole of identity is located in time, and there are three basic ideal types of identity depending on its temporal organization. The first is oriented towards the past and is primarily conservative; the second is oriented towards the present and is primarily dynamic; and the third is oriented towards the future and is primarily optimistic. In this sense identity can be connected with the tempo of change, which involves the regrouping of elements in the mental field of relations and the formation there of new internal structures. It may be said that the more identity is oriented towards the past, the fewer are its possibilities for transformation and, conversely, the more it is oriented towards the future, the more it is inclined to transformation. Identity may also be spoken of as open or closed in this regard. Open identities, or those which are oriented towards the future, are not burdened with constants to such a degree that they are unable to change. However, orientation towards the past can be just as

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<sup>18</sup> Phillipson 1978, p. 214.



significant for the transformation of identity as orientation towards the future. For example, Markus and Nurius maintain that past self-concepts can serve as the basis for the constitution of new self-concepts if an individual accepts the possibility that they may reappear in the future.<sup>19</sup> This view may be extended by the conception that the group's nature in the past and its potential membership are important elements of possible social identities. It is always possible for such representations of the past to activate the constitution of social identity in the present and the future. For example, ethnic groups may rediscover or reactivate what may be termed "latent" social identity through archeological or historical investigations.

Orientation towards the past, which is typical for many national and ethnic identities, is often maintained by social perceptions or myths of a past "golden age" that has been preserved in folklore, national festivals, and museums. Cinnirella, in his study of national and European identities in Great Britain, puts forward the thesis that British national identity is often oriented towards the past, in part because of Great Britain's former strength as a colonial power and previous domination of world affairs. He adds that this acts as a potential barrier to the acceptance of European identity insofar as Britain's past is connected to a great degree with the threat of European integration.<sup>20</sup>

Bulgarian national identity when compared with that the British may be taken as unfinished and oriented towards the future, not least of all because its orientation to the past primarily encounters such traumatic events as foreign domination, national catastrophes, treason, and so forth. This serves to explain the intensified search for the proto-Bulgarian roots of our identity, which could supposedly provide us with a sense of past importance and greatness. This in fact is one of the most powerful modifications of contemporary Bulgarian national identity, entailing a noted Russophobia, the restoration of the cult of the proto-Bulgarians, and either the elimination of the role of the Slavs in the formation of the Bulgarian nation, or its restriction to an element of secondary importance. It has become more or less clearly accepted that the historical tragedy of the Bulgarian nation was predetermined by the introduction of Slavic Christian culture that destroyed the traditional culture of the proto-Bulgarians, an independent non-Mongoloid national group whose homeland was the territory between the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush. But while the importance of the proto-Bulgarians in the formation of the Bulgarian nation may be viewed as a legitimate topic of historical research, the recent growth of interest in this issue is connected with what may be termed "hidden nationalism," that is, an attempt to reformulate the traditional national identity that has been based on Orthodox

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<sup>19</sup> See Markus and Nurius 1986.

<sup>20</sup> Cinnirella 1998.

Christianity and Slavic culture.<sup>21</sup> The latter is also connected with the re-emergence of one of the old dilemmas in Bulgarian society, that of "philia" versus "phobia." Indeed, it can be said that crises in Bulgarian identity have always arisen through an actualization of this opposition.

Historical experience has shown that an emphasis on the proto-Bulgarians as a constituent element of Bulgarian national identity, including both statehood and culture, is connected primarily with an emphasis upon one particular pole of the East-West opposition. Such a change in the "image" of the past is in fact connected with a search for possible images of future identity, and a lack of correspondence between them may lead either to a collective rejection of change, or to a reinterpretation of the past in order to create a revised, coherent group memory. An important implication in this regard is that every adequate theory of change concerning social identity must take into account the degree to which reaction to change is conditioned by social representations of a group's past. A relevant example in this regard is the Third of March holiday, which has been renamed from "The Liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish Slavery" to simply "The Liberation of Bulgaria." In addition, the phrase "Turkish slavery" is gradually being replaced by "Ottoman slavery" in the language of journalism, school books, as well as everyday life. However, not only do such changes mark a tendency to avoid the use of terms with negative connotations, they in fact reflect a new value orientation towards Bulgarian historical identity, including attitudes towards other nations.

Another dimension of the new culture now taking shape is indicated by the fact that such holidays as the Execution of Levski have come to be used to emphasize the tolerance of the Bulgarian nation and the heritage of great Bulgarians in this respect. This reveals a change within the historical memory of Bulgarians as well as a reorientation of the value system of Bulgarians in the direction of a greater openness towards the world. However, there is a danger that this tendency, if not carefully realized, may simply lead to the formation of a citizen of the world and the loss of a sense of being specifically Bulgarian. That is to say that such changes may lead either to the complete destruction of historical memory, or to the formation of a new vision of the past that will promote a more optimal and effective adaptation on the part of Bulgarians to the new realities of the times. The modernization of Bulgarian statehood and the mobilization of Bulgarian citizenry need not mean the rejection of the invariants in our historical memory, a point that has been emphasized in various ways by such scholars as Nikolai Genchev, Andrei Pantev, Hristo Genchev, and others. For example, the resolution of the Bulgarian church question during the National Revival is the essence of the radical choice of our national and cultural identity in our new history. By virtue of the re-establishment of the Bulgarian

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<sup>21</sup> See Nedelcheva 1999.

Exarchate, the nation acquired its own face among the nations of the Ottoman Empire.

The second great step in the confirmation of our legitimacy was the restoration of statehood, although the irony is that the Russian victory over Turkey led to the loss of half Bulgaria's ethnic space. Bulgarian identity itself is comprised of three major layers, namely, Slavic civilization, Orthodox Christianity, and European culture in opposition to Asian culture, as represented by Turkey. During the Middle Ages there were no specialized diplomats representing the nation in other countries, their numbers instead being comprised of close relatives and friends of the ruler. But certain basic principles of diplomacy, whose validity is still preserved today, were confirmed at that time. The first is that Bulgaria should take advantage of contradictions between East and West, which is a direct consequence of her geopolitical location in South-Eastern Europe. Bulgarian leaders during the Middle Ages were guided by the maxim that just as there are no eternal friends, there are no eternal enemies, the important point being that there must be no anti-Bulgarian coalitions in the Balkans. And while the neighboring Byzantines had a relatively negative image of Bulgarians as barbarians, which proceeded from their own sense of superiority, there is hardly a Byzantine writer who does not emphasize the proud character of Bulgarians, bordering on superciliousness, stubbornness, and perseverance in the pursuit of their goals. The thirteenth century Byzantine historian Georgi Pakhimer commented on the behavior of Tsar Georgi-Tertter by stating that the Bulgarian nation is inclined to treason and would sooner believe in the vagaries of the wind than in loyalty. Nikifor Grigora wrote something quite different in the fourteenth century, remarking that Bulgarians do not like anything new, even if the angels themselves preach it.

Cinnirella provides an example of the role played by the group's temporal orientation in respect to the 1996 European football championship semifinal between England and Germany. Certain media used images and discourses from World War II in order to encourage readers to take the game as a new episode of past military conflict. They relied on stereotypes and possible social identities oriented towards the past, including images of the English players dressed in military uniforms. This orientation towards the past reveals that the group prototypes that were then actual and accessible are substantially different from those that would have been actual if the temporal focus was on the present or the possible future.

British reactions during the football championship indicate that an orientation towards the past suggested by images of World War II encouraged an acceptance of Germany as an outside group and the activation of social memories in which Germany was the military opponent of England. This indicates that when group members focus on past possible social identities, they

are able to reactivate latent social stereotypes and draw comparisons with outside groups as they were in the past or with outside groups from the past as they are today. Through individual differences and the general sphere of personalities and social identities, inner group members may adopt qualitatively different perspectives in respect to the group depending on the specific temporal orientations they accept.

Transformation of identity is connected with the latter's duration in time and with the intensity of the narratives within the group with which the coherence and stability of the concept of self are maintained. Culturally established traditions for telling stories and repeating narrative structures affect the ways in which individuals present their own lives. Individuals utilize narratives when they reconstruct the group's inner history, that is, possible past social identities, or speak about the group's possible future, that is, possible future social identities. Social groups create common histories or narratives about their lives that connect past, present, and the anticipated future in a coherent representation. Inner group members are motivated to reinterpret and reconstruct past and present possible social identities, as well as those oriented towards the future, such that the experienced temporal duration is accepted as existing. In addition, certain social groups have relative stable temporal orientations while others accept variation. The temporal orientations of most groups undergo variations that depend on such contextual factors as reactions to mass-media depictions of the group, encounters with former inner group or external group members, and visits to places important for the group. Any of these may serve either to activate past or future social identities, or make them more accessible.

The basic element that generates invariants in the mental field of identity is the self-image, and modifications in a self-image underlie possible transformations of identity. When self-images are conceptualized in terms of cognitive representations, they may be viewed as elements of self-schemata, which are organized cognitive structures that exist in long-term memory, including information related to one's self-conception. This especially refers to those traits that the individual accepts as most basic to his or her self, or self-schema.<sup>22</sup> Individuals have an horizon of the possible self-images that are accessible to them, and those which are currently dominant are part of what may be termed the working or actual self-conception, or that part of the cognitive self-system which is currently activated.

These notions are similar to Turner's model of self-categorization theory, which expresses the view that elements of the self can be conceptualized as a cognitive schema, and that these cognitive structures are distinct from each other by virtue of their visibility such that at any moment

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<sup>22</sup> See Markus 1977 for a discussion of this issue.

only a sample or fragment is in the foreground of personal and social "attention."<sup>23</sup> Socio-cognitive approaches to the self are at times criticized as overly individualistic and insensitive to social construction, but there is a definite connection between self-conception and the horizon of possible social identities. It is more important to note, however, that the difference between possible *personal* self-images and possible *social* identities depends on the socio-cultural context insofar as possible personal self-images express individual perceptions and unique traits and attitudes while possible social identities emphasize group membership. The relevance of this distinction clearly varies between cultures. Individualistic cultures more often place an emphasis upon possible personal self-images, while possible social identities become more important in collectivistic cultures, a distinction which parallels Tajfel's notion of personal and social identities.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the character of identity transformation depends on the specific nature of how the expectations of individuals as group members correspond with their expectations as independent persons. Such notions are useful for the present discussion in that an emphasis on personal priorities presupposes a more rapid change in identity. Identities also share the general orientation of the given culture, emphasizing either the self or the collective depending on whether the culture is collectivistic or individualistic.

These theoretical statements assume a visible concrete form through the changes in identity that have taken place in Bulgaria in recent decades during the last fifteen years. The fabric of immediate life that surrounds us as persons in the here and now has become subordinate to a particular postmodern rhythm in which various forms of social life coexist, such as patriarchal (which has been actualized in recapitalization), socialist, typically early capitalist, individualistic, and authoritarian. Although socialist rationalism and optimism no longer exist, remnants that are organically connected with the vacuum of ideas typical for a period of transition still remain. The irrational that has already begun to appear as the foundation of our lives is thus connected with the departure of rationalism. The marked anti-historicity of postmodernism finds its concrete social modification in the disruption of the continuity of totalitarian society and entrance into the timelessness of post-totalitarian society, where social time is some type of extended "now" rather than a succession that provides a sensation of historical flow. The elimination of the totalitarian state pyramid, in which a hierarchy of values and positions was given, introduces various centers of power into lived space that generate their own separate elites, styles, multiplicities of images, and norms. The transition of the last fifteen years has torn apart the peaceful life of the totalitarian

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<sup>23</sup> See Turner 1984 for a presentation of the theory of self-categorization.

<sup>24</sup> Tajfel 1984.

"Middle Ages," chaotically ushering in a variety of meanings and existential paradigms that are merely present in the phenomenal field of the personality without any of them being dominant.

The peculiar multifaceted character of the transition eliminates the specific character of things such as they are and ascribes particular values to them that are valid only for given social contexts, only for specific momentary cross-sections of movement. This pulls identity up by the roots. Office workers no longer feel like office workers, and workers no longer feel like workers, but rather like something different that is still unclear and undefined. A mosaic-like type of identity has taken shape that appears to be dominant among people living in post-totalitarian societies. Even money, which increasingly provides the meaning of what people strive for and through which they realize themselves, is not a secure criterion. The collapse of a long list of values has radically the existential topology and the social space and time of the personality, imposing a changed set of coordinates and forces. The entire normative-axiological constitution of people has come under attack, being more or less abandoned to powerful economic and political pressure. While this leads certain persons to increased adaptability, it may also place others in quite a different type of situation. External pressure and historical vanity always leave their mark on a person, and even on the unconscious level they either actualize or repress certain archetypes. In this way they very profoundly alter one's entire personal strategy.

Because of a certain deeply ingrained inertia and still functioning but outdated models on every level of Bulgarian society, it is as if the reactions of ordinary people continue to be dominated by some vague expectation that a shining future will come about through the building of democracy and a market economy, and that the needs of workers will be ever more fully satisfied.

But just as the centralized economy is not an abstraction that has been exhausted with all its negative qualities, so too is the free market economy not a fully completed mechanism for organizing economic life. The protests that accompany the meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are sufficiently revealing examples. Not only does the market not function smoothly, it involves a process of development that demands personal change, psychic adaptability, and particular personal qualities that correspond to a society with a high degree of complexity.

The transition to a market economy imposed new personal strategies that comprise a different personal identification. The stress generated by changes in ownership, which in fact amounted to the pouring of state property into the hands of a specific minority, led to substantial transformations in group membership, a crisis of identity, and a search for new social groups in respect to which a sense of belonging cohesion might take shape. If the social and political crisis of the 1940s confirmed the problem of identity, today's rapid

social change presents the individual with the serious task of becoming aware of, understanding, and explaining being as it has been thoroughly problematized. The abrupt transition and the absence of a normal rhythm of life have presented the ordinary person with a challenge of extraordinary proportions.

From a socio-psychological point of view, the main change in social being involves the introduction of new interpersonal semantics and altered communication codes as well as a restructuring of the social continuum and of a person's immediate surroundings that is not always obvious. Moreover, the latter may well change a person's place in the hierarchy and alter her/his status in a very short period of time, ushering in different horizons of life. The change of signs in everyday life leads to the destruction of traditional communication, which predisposes an individual to be closed and cautious in their actions. In addition, ever more common behavioral strategies for dealing with inner concern are to be either passive or aggressive, and increasing numbers of people have been drawn to one or the other of the two poles of this opposition. The increase in criminality is evidence of the mass scale of the process, which intensifies the reflex of obedience and social fear. In this situation of transition, old behavioral and object-spatial symbolism is woven together with worn out semantic ensembles such that the distance between psychological and social time is increased and a different vector is applied to its movement. There is thus a marked increase in the layers of meaning and value in social being as a whole that not only potentially but also in fact intensifies differentiation and stratification. This determines a completely different ethos in the Heideggerian sense.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the individual becomes fragmented by this multiplication of layers in social substance. The sense of disruption in historical continuity, of the absence of universals underlying subjectivity, and of linearity and synchrony in social and individual being creates the postmodern as a style characterized by a peculiar weightlessness, powerlessness, and movement on the social surfaces of the growing numbers of subcultures. And this gives rise to the two diametrically opposed "ideologies" of optimism and pessimism as pre-reflexive strategies in values and meaning. It is as if heightened irrationality provides a peculiar "rationality" adequate to the situation that alone is capable of interpreting what has taken place. Knowledge in the sense of enlightenment is no longer accompanied by the optimism that it is able to grasp the dense and disconnected fragments of life today that render behavior both modern and archaic at the same time. The very dynamic of life, as the personality is "wedged" into the future, thus shapes the postmodern as an actual ethos or

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<sup>25</sup> On this point we have relied on Heidegger's noted attempt to establish his position in France in the late 1940s. See Heidegger 1949.

personal-social practice that generates tension, frustration, and the sense that one's perspectives are unclear. In such a social context, both personal and group identity organize and center the fragments of life they find around the possible future.

### **ANTICIPATORY IDENTITY**

The transformation of identity is also connected with another vector that crosses the relational field, namely, the distance between possible and actual identity. When individuals as well as communities attempt to adopt a desired new social identity and leave the old behind, so-called anticipatory identification frequently appears to some degree. One may say in the terminology of rationalism that anticipatory identification is a "readiness" for change in the dominant "gravitational" orientation of the relational field, including an emphasis on completely new elements of the associated mental field.<sup>26</sup>

Group borders must be accepted as open, however, for anticipatory identification to take place insofar as this process substantially depends on accessibility to the desired social identification and on the awareness that it can be attained. This increases the possibility for individuals to accept the norms and stereotypes of the desired social identity prior to having accepted that social identity itself. In this way, the concept of anticipatory identification may shed light on how desired social identities can facilitate changes in the construction of social identity and group membership. In addition, through the incorporation of possible social identity into a consideration of anticipatory identification, the acquisition of the ability to predict and develop a model of how and when anticipatory identification is present should be possible.

Cinnirella's study of European integration shows, for example, that part of the British population accept their future European identity with regret, as if it were being forced upon them by higher powers. According to standard quantitative measures of social identity, these individuals display signs of an anticipatory identification as "Europeans" that nevertheless is, at the same time, devoid of emotional connotations or epistemological significance for the self. This process may also be considered from another point of view. That is to say that an orientation towards the present and the future creates a greater degree of readiness for change in that it is based on potential possibilities for identification. Possible social identities involve conceptualizations of the social

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<sup>26</sup> Ellemers and Van Knippenberg have experimentally demonstrated the existence of this type of identity. They state that anticipated future concepts of self can give rise to a search for information and a preparation for a change in identity. See Ellemers and Van Knippenberg 1990.



categories and groups in which the individual could have been a member in the past or might become a member in the future. They also involve predictions of how existing social group membership can be changed with time as well as ideas of how they have been in the past. Possible social identities can thus be concerned with both past and future *potential* group membership as well as with present group membership, including ideas about how groups were different in the past and how they might develop in the future. These facts indicate that individuals are capable of fantasizing not only about what might happen in the present group to which they belong, but also about what it might be like if they were members of another group in the future, as well as about what it might have been like to have been members of another group in the past.

Possible social identities exist in respect to both individual and community relations. That is to say that when individuals are involved in the process whereby acceptable identities and reputations are "negotiated," they do so in part within a context that is suggested by the mass media, implied by other social institutions, determined by possible social identities that are discussed by various group members, and so forth. It is especially important for the social psychology of group processes to conceptualize how "shared" possible social identities may be connected with the *collective* experience in which social identities are maintained. When the members of a group prepare to avoid a concrete possible social identity, it is possible for them to undertake concrete actions. For example, if the dominant social representations in the mass media present possible European identity as something undesirable that may even threaten national identity, then individual and group support for such representations may lead to collective action in the form of a vote against further European integration.

If groups are relatively closed, stable, and do not easily accept new members, then it is more difficult to change identity since possible social identities are determined by projections of the current rigid group membership, which serves to insure the domination of existing holistic values. In contrast, group boundaries are more open and the horizons of anticipatory identity more broad in communities where there is a high level of individualism. Movement between groups is then more acceptable, the frequency of evaluations of the current identity is greater, and the field of possible social identities is wider. This also presupposes a greater agreement concerning what *might* happen if other social groups come to be admitted to the community. For example, individuals can "expand" the horizon of possible social identities by focusing upon what it might be like to emigrate and establish other national identities.

Both individuals and social groups seek to manipulate the image of the group, one aspect of which concerns the manipulation of the possible identities that are accepted within the group. For example, group members are interested

in convincing individuals outside the group to support possible social identities that the group desires, that is, to accept "visions" or alternative constructions of what might happen to the group that the latter evaluate in positive terms. The degree to which group members are interested in how their group is accepted by outside persons varies with the size of the group (it is more important for large groups); the degree to which the maintenance of identity is based on inter-group comparisons (groups which are not engaged in frequent comparisons are less likely to be worried about outside perceptions); and the degree to which the group is "in the public eye" (groups presented in the mass media are more concerned with their images in the eyes of outside persons).

The social identity of the inner group may come to be perceived in a negative light when it places itself in the focus of the mass media, the possible social identities associated with it enter the public space, and group members do not have power over the generation of unsolicited positive social representations of the group. For example, a category such as nationality understood as "imagined community" may be interpreted in various and at times contradictory ways, and it may also be associated with a heterogeneous pool of possible social identities from which the individual makes some type of selection.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly, British citizens with a pro-European orientation are able to accept quite different possible social identities in comparison with those who are sharply opposed to European integration, a situation which depends on the fact that the size of a given social group influences the presence of competing possible social identities. This can be demonstrated empirically by comparing the contents of the differing processes that affect the possible social identities of small and large social groups. It may be assumed that individuals involved in large groups will have a greater number of possible, and at times competing, social identities than those in small social groups, such as co-workers at the office.

Just as possible self-concepts may have a direct influence on goal-oriented behavior, so may possible social identities influence the behavior related to the maintenance of social identity on both individual and collective levels.<sup>28</sup> Whenever individuals endeavor to attain a desired social identity, they must to some degree attract other members of the group to their position in order to render that identity valid and legitimate and demonstrate that it is shared. For example, an individual who views a given possible identity in strongly positive terms will find it difficult to have that view accepted as valid by others if the broad majority of group members take it to comprise a threat to the group's future. In this case, the latter view it as a negative anticipatory identity.

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<sup>27</sup> This concept is developed in Anderson 1998.

<sup>28</sup> See Turner 1984 for a discussion of the notion of self-concept.

Although cognitive representations of social categories and group members include relevant episodic memories, norms, models, prototypes, stereotypes, and possible selves, the latter exercise perhaps the greatest influence among these elements. For instance, possible social identities that are visible and striking will influence the various models and stereotypes that are significant within the group. Both possible selves as well as possible social identities have a perceivable source, such as the self, other inner group members, external group members, the mass media, public leaders, and so forth, and views associated with that source imply a varying degree of visibility that exerts an influence upon both the acceptance of possible social identities as well as the selection of a given identity through a comparison of alternatives. These associations include feelings about whether a given possible identity is desirable or threatening; a level of visibility, including its current actualization and inherited accessibility and attainability; and whether a possible identity can come to the awareness of group members. That is to say that the suitability of the source and the existing mechanisms of social influence have an affect upon both individual and group reactions concerning accessible possible social identities.

The following aspects of an anticipated identity become evident whenever an attempt is made to operationalize it: 1) The degree to which knowledge of a possible social identity is distributed within the group and is relevant to other groups; 2) The degree to which a possible social identity is accepted within the group; 3) The affect associated with a possible social identity, such as whether it is desired, held to be a threat, or viewed in neutral terms; 4) The perceived probability that possible social identities oriented towards the future can be realized; 5) The perceived source of a given possible social identity, such as whether it is internal or external to the group; 6) The visibility and accessibility that characterize a possible social identity; 7) The temporal focus of a given possible social identity, such as whether it is oriented towards the past, present, future, or some combination of the three; 8) The qualitative nature of a given possible social identity, such as whether it describes specific past or future scenarios, together with the discourses and rhetoric utilized by the group's inner members in respect to it.

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## Chapter II

# European Origins and Identities

*Vessela Misheva*

The countries in the Balkans, which until recently were identified as communist countries, today face the greatest obstacles in acquiring a new European identity. In addition to the generally acknowledged political and economic factors, the rest of Europe encounters certain more subtle, "non-modern difficulties" whenever it endeavors to identify itself with the countries in question. But the problem involves more than the mere absence of a European recognition of their sameness. The real problem is that not only a European identity, but any identity whatsoever cannot be "granted."

To have an identity means to know who you are and whom you resemble. This means to be able to identify yourself with someone in whom you see yourself and with whom you share one and the same observation position in respect to the world. This in turn means to be enclosed with someone in one and the same universe of meaning, and to feel and understand the other as yourself. But what is the identity of the observation position located in the Central Balkans? What in the other European observation positions does it resemble? And what is the specificity of the "universe of meaning" that they share with the rest of Europe insofar as they have a millennia-old history of identification with virtually all of the most important European universes of meaning?

The impression is that there never was a European identity that these countries were not ready to accept, for in each of them they somehow always succeeded in finding a part of themselves. A paradox thus emerges. While those places in the Balkans from which the civilized European world once differentiated itself have no competition in respect to the number of European identities that they either voluntarily assumed or had imposed upon them without any great resistance, they still remain in the undefined state of "searching for a European identity."

### **DEFINING THE IDENTITY PROBLEM**

If the Central Balkans are to be identified from a standard European perspective, then this identification seems more plausible in terms of "negative identification" insofar as this particular location seems to have always had the gloomy reputation of being the place where European "troubles" have arisen. We could even say that it is the place where social order never succeeded in its

eternal battle with social chaos and disorder, something that Herodotus reported was typical for it even in ancient times. But while the Central Balkans do not seem to be the most desirable member of a world that longs for stability and sustainability, it nevertheless has been one of the most colonized places throughout the history of Europe, even long after its rich gold and silver resources were exhausted for the sake of civilization. "Social stability" is indeed one thing that this place lacks, instead being a place of endless redefinitions and new divisions, where every "miracle," as Balkan people say, "lasts no more than three days."

No European place has a longer history of being simultaneously "inside" and "outside" of Europe in respect to the way Europe has chosen at any given time to define itself. No European place has a longer experience of social integration and social disintegration, of simultaneous European *presence* and *absence*, of endless differentiation and consequent reintegration through further differentiation.

It is therefore no surprise that *identity* has always been one of the most acute questions for the countries that today exist on the soil of the Central Balkans. In was in this place, where the external boundary of European civilization once emerged, and where Europe successfully separated itself from other civilizations, that some of the most important internal European boundaries - linguistic, geographical, ethnic, political, and religious in nature - came to be situated in the further course of European history. Different languages, cultures, and religious traditions have existed here not only side by side, but on top of one another, influencing, suppressing, and interacting with each other. Yet none of them was ever safe from being challenged, redefined, or oppressed by some new line of division. Accepted identities thus become something quite similar to the different parts that a choral singer might sing in different choirs. Each is somehow appropriate to his/her voice, and yet none allows the full expression of its potential richness.

This place now finds itself once again in "identity transition," which appears to be merely the newest link in a chain of transitions, from East to West and West to East, from South to North and North to South.

## **THE TWO TYPES OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

The initial hypothesis of this paper is that the relationship between the individual and his society concerning identity formation is not much different from the relationship between either groups of peoples or sovereign nations, on the one hand, and, on the other, a world-whole that can be identified as "the modern world," regardless of whether or not we are speaking of European countries. Another level on which the relationship between "European parts" and the "whole" can be discussed concerns the cultural belonging of these



countries, namely, that they belong to what is known as European culture. European culture can here be defined within a sociological framework as an all-embracing universe of meaning capable of giving identity, thus separating the countries involved from the rest of the world.<sup>1</sup>

In this sense we may speak about two types of *European identities*. One is the modern European identity that is required today for membership in the modern European unity. We may refer to this as a *social identity* to the extent that this identity grants admission to Europe as a social system. It presupposes the acceptance of a particular type of interaction roles, role-repertoires, and profiles that the members of a given social union can sustain.<sup>2</sup> This modern identity does not necessarily depend on any particular location or geographical position, but rather is a type of identity that any country may acquire provided that it has the particular knowledge and specialization needed for performing such roles.<sup>3</sup> The acquisition of such an identity comes about not only by virtue of European education, but also by virtue of participation in European interactions. A given country, regardless of the economic and political parameters of its development, will thus not be able to acquire a European identity if it does not enjoy the status of an equal-rights interaction partner in the process of European communications.

The second type of European identity is the *cultural identity* that marks a given country as a member of *Europe as a cultural unity and language community*. The recognition that a given country is European, or "the same," takes place on the basis of its interaction presence in the intellectual history of Europe. This identity is what standardizes the initial natural diversity of European peoples, who thereby become products of a more or less similar cultural pattern. This identity is the realization of the *dialectic* that exists between the diverse European biological substratum and culture as a social substratum. Unlike social identities, European cultural identities are something that no country can choose, change, or influence in any significant way by its present actions.<sup>4</sup> To a great extent, this type of basic European identity simply

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<sup>1</sup> Therborn 1994, pp. 287-88.

<sup>2</sup> Goffman has distinguished two types of identities that he finds relevant to sociology, namely, the personal and the social. See Goffman 1990, pp. 80-82.

<sup>3</sup> Although it can be said that there is a fixed repertoire of modern European identities that is available to any given country, a national "mark" or "style" can nevertheless be seen in almost every *social role* that European countries play. Furthermore, each European country is partly responsible for its social identity to the extent that the latter is always the result of more or less voluntary national choices.

<sup>4</sup> These two identities must not be confused with each other since the European Union is not a cultural union but a modern union in which all countries

"happens" to a given country by virtue of its "place of birth," that is, the place where it acquires its (European) consciousness and participates in cultural interactions and encounters with other European peoples.

Cultural identities are always attached to a place. This is so regardless of the fact that the place today designated as belonging to European culture has been extended far beyond its initial place of origin, and even far beyond the geographical borders of the old continent. Social identities, on the other hand, result from a process of European education that may take place in any corner of the world. We may even say that it is acquired and practiced in social systems that realize themselves in space. While modern European identity can be reproduced or "taught" outside the most extended boundaries of the continent, even in a world that is far from being modern, the cultural identity of, say, a Northern European cannot be acquired in Southern Europe or in any other "North." On the other hand, since North European cultures are all European cultures, they will always have much more in common with each other than with those in Southern Europe. By the same token, the countries of Eastern Europe will always have much more in common with each other than with the countries of Western Europe. All of these identities are legitimate European identities, and none is better or worse, more European or less European, than any other. They are just different.

But where on this map of cultural identities should the Central Balkans be located? All European identifications - East, West, North, and South - seem to have applied to it in different European times depending on where the European center was located. However, as long as this place exhibits the quality of a "sunflower," always following the "light," the acquisition of a culturo-geographical identification seems impossible. The problem of acquiring a modern social identity thus comes to be somehow related to the problem of acquiring a basic European cultural identity.

It thus appears that the question which concerns us has come to acquire the form of an ancient riddle: What is the identity of a place that is neither quite-South nor quite-North, neither quite-East nor quite-West, neither quite-inside nor quite-outside, that is European, but whose traditional and modern cultural and social European identities are still challenged?

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have social roles. No country should be subject to discrimination on the basis of its cultural "otherness." This truth serves as a political premise that can finally make it possible for the "same" and the "other" to shelter under one and the same European roof. Not only is cultural identity not "modern," it also is the identity that the modern world suppresses so that no cultural peculiarity may interfere with the performance of modern social roles. While cultural identity refers to what the people are as individuals or particular types of human beings, social identity rather refers to what they do.

## CULTURO-GEOGRAPHICAL POLES AS PATTERNS OF CIVILIZATIONAL ROLES

This "riddle" becomes even more complex when we realize that geographical poles have never been merely "geographical" within the context of European civilization, but have always been *culturo-geographical poles*.

Historians have often pointed to the division between inside and outside, civilized peoples and barbarians, *polis* and household, citizens and slaves as the basic pattern of civilizational division in which the modern practices of social exclusion and inclusion are perhaps rooted. What has remained unobserved, however, is that this repertoire of division patterns has two no less important members, namely, the two seemingly purely geographical divisions between North and South and East and West. These geographical notions have had a certain enigmatic cultural background since ancient times, constituting basic culturo-geographical divisions that have been reproduced in all places to which the civilizational center of Europe has shifted. They can be found in even the most modern history of European civilization as practices that divide any systemic whole whatsoever, whether it be political, religious, scientific, and so forth, into two incompatible poles separated by insuperable differences. The pattern of this type of civilizational division can be traced in all great European wars, beginning with the Peloponnesian War in classical antiquity. If such wars have not been between North and South, then they have been wars between East and West.

In the most general descriptions of these European poles, the North is presented as modern and progressive while the South is traditional and conservative, and the West is taken as rational and clever while the East is emotional and wise. But these European poles do not seem to be manifestations of some type of geographical peculiarity that can be found in each and every corner of Europe. On the contrary, the constant reproduction of such polar differences is apparently connected with the very pattern of the social development of European civilization, whereby geographical poles come to represent particular *civilizational roles*. The definitions of these roles does not depend on the particular qualities of the peoples who assume them, but can rather be seen from a symbolic interactionist perspective as emerging in the process of interaction between peoples.

Stated otherwise, the designation of geographical poles with cultural meanings is neither contingent, nor deliberate. These poles are not simply geographical in nature, but have been transformed into cultural poles that symbolize *the four possible civilizational identities* that a given European country may have. European countries can thus be either Southern, Northern, Eastern, or Western European, and they are such not in respect to their intrinsic

properties, but rather because they have learned to be such and to define themselves in the process of interacting with each other.

But the Central Balkans has a peculiar history, and it is this which seems to be the reason why this place falls outside the compass of European identifications. No European division is adequate to define its boundary, which should divide it from something identified as its "other." The Central Balkans can simultaneously be pointed to as what Europe is and is not, as what is typically West and typically East, as what is typically North and typically South. This is so because such identifications are relational in nature, being acquired in civilizational relations rather than being inherent geographical properties.

And there is one more symbol to which a cultural meaning can be attached that can be used in order to describe the quality of the Central Balkans. This place can be viewed as the center of a magnet, which belongs to neither of its poles and yet belongs to both, thereby uniting them.<sup>5</sup>

#### **BETWEEN THE NORMAL AND THE PATHOLOGICAL**

It thus seems legitimate to speak about some type of "identity crisis" that the countries in question are experiencing even today. But when one considers the surprising frequency and persistency with which the questions "Who are We?" and "Where do we belong?" have been raised, one may indeed wonder whether the identity crisis is in fact the "normal state" of these countries.<sup>6</sup> Take for example the fragility of all current Central Balkan borders. No less than it was the case a century or millennium ago, today it seems impossible to do justice to all the peoples living there by drawing lasting boundaries between them upon which all would fully agree. This fact is an indication of the degree to which it is impossible for these peoples to construct lasting and unchangeable identities for themselves.

The problem is not that they have no identities whatsoever, but that they have too many, and that none has the quality of being all-embracing or "total." For example, the Bulgarians are not only Bulgarians, but at one time or

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<sup>5</sup> The idea of using such images is not new. It suffices to recall Kardiner's idea of "the forces that hold society together," whereby he distinguished between the *centripetal* and *centrifugal* forces that operate between individuals. Kardiner argues that the one force binds individuals together while the other tears them apart. It is interesting that he connects his "binding force" to Freud's "ability of one individual either to identify himself with or to love another." See Kardiner 1947, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> As Lynd maintained, only "the individual man living through periods of transition is impelled to a fresh questioning of himself in relation to the world." See Lynd 1958, p. 14.

another have also identified themselves as Slavs or even Thracians. And while being Bulgarians, some would still identify themselves as Macedonians or Turks. The Macedonians are Macedonians, but during different periods of their history they also have been identified as Greeks, Bulgarians, or Serbs. Which of all these legitimate and possible identities is the one that should be paramount is a question that has no absolute answer.

At the same time, these people without a stable identity demonstrate an extremely high receptivity to the imposition of external identities upon them, as if they were incapable of discriminating against some European identity that comes from beyond the boundaries of this place. But recognizing all European identities as legitimate and equally possible definitions of the self, or recognizing a part of oneself in every people outside of oneself, is tantamount to a *lack of identification*, or to a rejection of all possible identities as not quite the right one. Trying to be everybody and remaining *not-quite-everybody* is even worse than being *not-quite-somebody*. No "choirs" in which the voice is trained succeeds in eliminating the traces of previous schooling and preceding "choral experiences." What can be observed today is thus the continuing, agonizing impossibility of assembling all previously imposed identities into one whole, even while it seems equally impossible to suppress or erase them.

In such a case it is more appropriate to speak of a peculiar process of *prolonged identity formation*, which has not yet been completed even though it began before the beginning of European history. In terms of Erikson's analysis of identity formation, we could say that these European peoples have remained in a state of prolonged childhood caused by a long history of dependency and unattained maturity. This state is marked by a painful lack of knowledge of who one is or where one is going, by a feeling of not being at home in one's own country,<sup>7</sup> and by an acute awareness of the absence of an "assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count."<sup>8</sup>

As Erikson's identity formation theory suggests, the acquisition of a *negative identity* is one of the possible outcomes of a crisis caused by the impossibility of identifying with any of the available positive identities that have not been fully internalized because they contradict each other. Such a negative identity can be accepted precisely because even a negative identity is

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<sup>7</sup> This is a reference to the well-known phenomenon of "internal emigration" in the post-communist world.

<sup>8</sup> Erikson suggested that there is a connection between a prolonged process of identification and the impossibility of assembling previously acquired partial identities. It appears that what is responsible for such processes on the individual level can also be true for entire peoples, for it was Erikson himself who referred at times to both individual and group psychology when discussing the question of identity. See Erikson 1980, p. 127.

better than a partial identity or no identity at all.<sup>9</sup> It is "the lesser evil" because it has one advantage, namely, nothing can prevent it from becoming a *total identity*, thereby bringing about psychological relief. This it can do by virtue of satisfying *the basic human need for total identification*, something impossible for any partial, albeit positive, identification. Erikson saw this "periodical need for a totality without further choice or alteration, even if it implies the abandonment of a much-desired wholeness," as equally typical of both individuals and groups.<sup>10</sup> Events in the Central Balkans suggest that Erikson's reasoning may be quite successfully utilized for elaborating a socio-psychological explanation for the ethnic violence that has transpired there in recent years. For example, the acquisition of a negative identity in the eyes of the observing world may not have produced any economic or political advantage, but it nevertheless attracted the attention of the Western world to this forgotten post-communist and not-yet-capitalist world - precisely as if to confirm the conclusions of socio-psychological theories concerning the "advantages" of and reasons for the acquisition of negative identifications.

#### **THE CIVILIZATIONAL TECHNOLOGY FOR KNOWING YOUR SELF**

Neither the most modern, nor even the most ancient European history can provide answers for why this place experiences such great difficulties in attaining a positive total identification. This is all the more surprising because, apart from its tendency for negative identifications, the Balkans are nevertheless the place from which European civilization derived its origin. The Central part of the Balkans, however, has never shared in this fame, instead

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<sup>9</sup> Negative identity is "an identity perversely based on all those identifications and roles which, at critical stages of development, had been presented to the individual as most undesirable or dangerous, and yet also as most real." Erikson further describes negative identity as a refuge from an identity crisis, from an experienced continuing diffusion, "a desperate attempt at regaining some mastery in a situation in which the available positive identity elements cancel each other." Embracing a negative identity is most immediately caused by the impossibility of attaining reintegration into a relative 'wholeness'" in a "struggle for a feeling of reality in acceptable roles which, however, prove to be unattainable with the available inner means." In such situations it seems better to be "*somebody bad, and this totally, or indeed, dead-by free choice - than be not-quite somebody.*" See Erikson 1980, pp. 142-143. Modern studies of nicknames also show that it is better in the social world of interactions, where everyone has a name and thus a role, to have a derogative nickname than to have no name at all. See Harré 1979, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Erikson 1980, p. 184.

remaining excluded from and "not belonging" to both European geography and history. What thus needs to be discussed here is the unity of this place as a source of both good and evil precisely in terms of a *sociological peculiarity of all places of civilization's origin*.

One of the theories that is useful for dealing with *what lies beyond modernity* is Giddens' *theory of modernity*. The legitimacy of this contradictory choice can first of all be seen in the fact that social theory in principle has no means for considering what lies on the other side of civilization's history, even though it can be reconstructed as civilization's *mirror image*. The problem with this "mirror image" is that our observations need to have both a mirror as well as a frame in order to have any form. Although we could otherwise construct an endless number of mirror images of the endless number of knowledge segments produced by the modern social sciences, we would still not be able to know the other side as a "totality" or in respect to its essence. For this reason, we need no less than grand theories that themselves represent a paramount synthesis of knowledge segments in order to construct such mirror images.

Giddens argues that one of the most distinctive features of modernity is the *separation of time from place and of place from space*.<sup>11</sup> According to this definition, the world beyond the modern world would be one in which time could never be separated from place and place never separated from space. Such a world should therefore represent a *unity of time and place*. However, this type of place is paradoxically identical in its basic features to the description of Greek tragedy that Aristotle emphasized in his *Poetics*, whereby tragic action is characterized by the unity of time and place. Any place that exhibits such features would thus be not only non-modern, but also tragic.

It is then reasonable to assume that tragedy itself is a product of this unbreakable unity, where all actions are bound to the place, and where all history matters because there is no way to "run" away from it or leave it "behind." "Tragedy" itself thus has a birthplace from which it cannot depart. If it would succeed in doing so, it would cease to be tragic and lose its own identity understood not as being the same as someone else, but as being the same as itself.

This perspective provides the possibility of seeing the most essential feature of European civilization itself while looking at its place of origin. Expansionism and an urge to conquer, subordinate, and rule other peoples have always been acknowledged as some of the most typical features of European civilization. From a socio-psychological point of view, however, and in immediate relation to the present discussion, what previously has been seen as aggression and expansion can now be explained as having quite rational and legitimate reasons. That is to say that the only way in which to interrupt the

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<sup>11</sup> See Giddens 1990.

tragic experience of being "bound" to a place as a second Prometheus is to break the initial unity of time and place. The sociological meaning of breaking this union is the birth of *social space*, which has no need to be enclosed within any visible or geographical boundaries. As modern sociological theories have pointed out, social boundaries are invisible, as are all communication boundaries.

There are also other socio-psychological reasons for the aggression and colonization policies of European empires. When one is bound to a place by the primordial natal bonds of one's ancestors, he can know neither himself, nor what he is doing, and, just like Oedipus, is condemned to remain "blind." Attaining identity, or coming to yourself, requires stepping outside of yourself, observing and analyzing yourself from without. While the individual cannot leave his own body, he can nevertheless step out of the social "body" of which he is a part. Not only individuals, but entire peoples come finally to understand both themselves and the whole to which they previously belonged by leaving their places of origin and wandering "homeless" in the world. This they can do better than any social member who remains "at home." But because cultures are always rooted in a place, every separation of a part from this place amounts to a painful process of "dis-identification."

The important point here is that any such part remains uprooted, for it loses its belonging to the larger cultural whole as it loses its primary identity because it cannot "grow" new roots. Even though it continues to be inside a universe of understandable cultural meaning, such a part is also thus outside of it in a most immediate way. The advantage of such an "inside/outside" position is that it thereby becomes possible to observe from without the system that was previously viewed only from within. The objective observer, regardless of whether he was ostracized, excluded, stigmatized, or simply the curious member of the community who was not content to gain knowledge by sitting at his hearth in his place of birth, has always fit this type throughout the history of European civilization, from the time of Thrace and Greece to today.

But it is not enough merely to leave your home and see the wider world in order to acquire knowledge and experience and grow to maturity, even though this might be sufficient for "becoming a prophet in another town." Attaining self-identity only partly coincides with attaining social knowledge and experience by running ever further away from "home." Its main essence is not simply to see the world or the other and thus know yourself, but rather *to see yourself, or the place of your own origin, from without*. The knowledge of both sides thereby acquired is a *total knowledge* of both self and the whole to which the self belongs.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This is something that can be learned from a countless number of Bulgarian folk tales. For example, the young inexperienced member of the community, even



## THE TWO "SPIRITS" OF CIVILIZATION

Attaining self-identity demands that the point of departure and the point of arrival finally coincide. Unless the dis-identified social part, which is thus a *no-person* or no more than a *spirit*, returns home "to itself," it is condemned to remain a "spirit" that comes to know neither itself, nor "the body" from which it originated and where it belongs. It is perhaps symptomatic that old philosophical conundrums have today begun to assume sociological form, as if they must finally return to their place of origin in the tragic complexity of social life.

But the question is whether this place of origin can acquire a modern identity and thus become "non-tragic" when its civilizational role has in principle been to remain imprisoned in space while being free to move in time? Could such a place of origin simply abandon its civilizational role, which is *to interpret and accumulate social change*, while itself remaining unchanged? Or could the people who have inhabited it for centuries simply "migrate" to other continents or lands? Could they have entered the stage where action takes place and become immediate participants in it? It seems that these questions cannot be answered without first challenging the myth in which both sociology and history believe, namely, that real life has only participants and no observers. If this were in fact the case, then how could we possibly have not only history, but also philosophy, self-consciousness, identity, and meaning, none of which make any sense without observers? The most characteristic feature of European civilization and its system of education is precisely that it introduced the observer and granted him a social place and role on stage, something which, to our knowledge, no other civilization did.

However, this observer cannot be an external observer who does not belong to that which he observes. The observer within the context of the present discussion is one who belongs to the whole but does not participate in its interactions. This type of observation has nothing to do, therefore, with Herodotus' observation of other peoples. It is rather connected with Herodotus' observations of the Greeks themselves, whereby he opened up to them the path to non-tragic existence.

Europe then has not only two types of observers and two types of observations (self- observations and other-observations), but also apparently

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the fool held up to ridicule, leaves his home and travels the world. But the meaning of this journey is not that he becomes a "hero." On the contrary, this traveler as a rule does not succeed in finding what he is searching for, even when he reaches "the end of the world." The meaning of his journey rather resides in his eventual return to his place of origin, where he now understands both who he is and where he belongs.

two observation positions, two civilizational centers, and two *spirits*. Apart from *observations in physical space* at the origins of civilization, we also find the enigmatic poetic practice of *observations in time*. Using the terminology of modern science we can designate these different types of inquiries (*histories*) as *synchronic* and *diachronic analysis*. The one type of analysis requires a mobile spirit who conquers new territories, in each of which it leaves traces of its unique creations, and who builds new worlds where history always begins from the very beginning. But this spirit is bound to its own time and can never leave the *present*. It thus lacks *continuity*, whereby its creations become a collection of unique pieces that can never be brought together into a whole.

There is, however, another even less visible "spirit," who has remained enchained in its body of origin. This spirit has no technology for traveling through space, but it does possess a unique technology suitable for traveling through time.<sup>13</sup> While it cannot leave its place of origin, go out of itself in space, break the chain of its own history and thus begin from the very beginning, it nevertheless is able to take its own unique journeys, for it travels while it remains at home. This is a spirit that lives within an oral tradition that cannot be learned from books, where the other spirit lives.

Most of civilizational analysis has missed the fact that this poetic spirit, whom we see at the time of origins, along with its practice of observing in time, never completely vanished, even though it was left out of the field of observation by Plato's followers. The latter were never able to comprehend the way in which poetry and its charming Muses could be taken as the most serious enemies of Logos and the advancing spirit of civilization.

### **WHO HAS NO IDENTITY?**

Herodotus' discovery, the sociological significance of which can hardly be over estimated, was that different peoples who share one and the same geographical location live neither in one and the same space, nor in one and the same time. In other words, the revolution that his history carried out in people's minds was due to the astonishing awareness that people, even neighbors, are different precisely because they do not live in the same social present.

The civilized world has never stopped arguing either for or against the moral legitimacy of this initial division. Objective as it was, Herodotus' history was written with an eye fixed upon what is different, as if it had never been trained to notice what is the same.<sup>14</sup> Noticing what is different and not paying

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<sup>13</sup> These two symbols are used to designate written and oral cultures, which use different type of technologies for communicating their messages.

<sup>14</sup> In this sense, Herodotus did not share the tolerant relativism promoted by the sophists, who were no less aware of the existence of a plurality of social worlds

attention to what is the same is in principle immoral in respect to other "selves," but it nevertheless is legitimate and moral when we consider solely the interests of the self. Furthermore, even if today we criticize this type of observation as immoral, we still must admit that this is the only way of knowing the self that European civilization has taken to be legitimate since the time of Plato. The poets' ways of knowing the self, painful excursions in time rather than in space, were rejected early in the history of European civilization as untrue and irrational. One was instead driven to look at the other in order to know himself.

If that which is good for the individual or a group of people cannot also be good for the whole, then it appears that we have once again encountered the eternal sociological dilemma of the impossibility of combining individual interests with those of the whole to which the individual belongs. But as is always the case, problems with impossible theoretical solutions often happen to have a practical one.

Goffman presented social life as a theater in which all people have interaction roles and are divided into interaction parties. The difference between this theater and the real theater is that there are no observers in the former since an individual always belongs to one or the other interaction party. And there is another particularity of the theater of life that must be added to Goffman's image. Unlike the situation in the theater, where no action is real, volunteers to perform tragic or negative roles are seldom found in real life. This is especially the case in the civilizational theater of European life, where identities should be total and real and can never be lost because they have been hammered onto living faces. But since that which is impossible to do in full consciousness can be done when one is not self-conscious, negative or tragic roles should rather be viewed as played by those who have either lost their sense of identity, or never attained one. When one does not know who he is, he cannot join the action, and if one has no self-consciousness, he can have neither a role, nor a place on the stage of conscious actors. However, the problem is not that such a person has no role at all, but that he is unaware of the role he is playing, namely, that of an

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and social presents. It is interesting that the type of vision which is incapable of concentrating on what is the same and rather seeks and emphasizes what is different has been recently condemned by modern symbolic interactionism as intrinsically immoral and the source of all evils, such as the disappearance of a sense of social solidarity. Rorty's modern moral imperative may be stated as follows: To increase the sense of solidarity is to develop and teach the ability to notice and see similarities as more important than differences with respect to pain and humiliation. "Not moral" is thus his verdict on those who instead concentrate on the different. Emphasizing that which is the same is, according to Rorty, the new moral code of liberal democracy and the way in which to overcome the inherent ethnocentrism of civilization. See Rorty 1989.

observer. Sociological theory has only recently begun to recognize the fact that being an observer is also a role, and that not all action is social.<sup>15</sup>

We can speak in this sense of two basic types of social roles that express yet another basic European division. Unlike in the image that Goffman suggested, the social world can be seen as a theater in which there is both action and observation separated by an insurmountable but invisible (communicational) dividing line.<sup>16</sup>

In order to become an actor, an observer must first become conscious of his own role as the observer of an action in which he does not participate even though he is physically present. More importantly, however, this observer neither belongs to any of the interaction parties involved in the action, nor is he a stranger. He rather belongs *to none of them and yet to all*. But the acquisition of consciousness of both self and other never occurs in a Greek tragedy before the completion of the action or the end of the play. It is in this respect that the educational role of Greek tragedy can be seen, namely, it is a technology that helps people to know themselves and thus acquire identity and self-consciousness.

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<sup>15</sup> That which is proposed here constitutes an important correction of modern socio-psychological theory. People do not acquire self-consciousness by doing or acting. By doing they may acquire certain practical skills, but not self-consciousness, and one must first be conscious of what one is doing in order to act. People instead acquire self-consciousness as the result of a long process of non-participation or observation, and the first consciousness of self is the consciousness of an observer, not that of an actor. The educational tradition of European civilization has therefore reserved the place of "observers" for its children, who as a rule do not work. In the "tragic role" of chorus singers and dependents, they acquire the opportunity to repeat the miracle of gaining self-awareness and discovering themselves, and thereby preserve the line of continuity insofar as this is something that their ancestors did long before them. But since the growing complexity of the world has made this "miracle" increasingly difficult, perhaps even improbable, one of the most typical features of European education has come to be the constant extension of the amount of time permitted to remain the observer of a social action in which one does not participate.

<sup>16</sup> The issue in this theater is that those who observe are not conscious of being observers, and that those who act have no consciousness of being observed. Both are thus unconscious, but in different ways. While the one has no consciousness of his presence in physical space, being unaware of the fact that what he observes is the same as or identical with himself, the other has no consciousness of his emergence from and unchangeable presence in physical time. A total consciousness comprising both observers and actors can apparently emerge only in rare moments of mutual encounter.

## DEALING WITH SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

The Balkans have always been described as a place where political events often surprise the world. Not only do their motives quite often remain unintelligible, their consequences may also be unpredictable. This is one of that places to which the term "*social complexity*" best applies.

Different sciences in different periods of time have been challenged by the task of explaining from whence this social complexity of the Balkans arises. Some, for example, have sought biological and genetic reasons that can be held responsible for the genius of good and evil that this place seems to harbor. Others have investigated the psychological peculiarities of the peoples living there and the systems of education and socialization that produce them as human beings and social actors with a particular type of mind and self. Yet others have directed their search in an ever more thorough examination of the histories of the different peoples involved, or pointed to the geographical character of the place as a crossroads between two continents that necessarily determines it as a center of cultural and civilizational encounters. Modern rationalists, on the other hand, who think of human nature as always being the same, put forward economic reasons as the cause of even the most complex social events, even when they remain concealed from the eye of any external observer.

But social complexity itself cannot be explained by any of these various reasons. It rather demands an *interdisciplinary approach* in which culturo-geographical, socio-historical, socio-psychological, and sociological approaches complement each other. The problem is, however, that such an approach must be grounded in a *sufficiently complex theory* that is capable of dealing with social complexity, something that does not seem to reside in the field of competence of any of the mentioned above social sciences.

Another aspect of the problem is that the Balkans still have the reputation of being a "dark spot" on the map of Europe, even though they are one of the most studied places on the continent. But what in fact has been studied comprises only one particular part of the Balkans, namely, that part which European civilization regards as its place of origin. An investigation into the history of this place, known also as the primary of European civilization, faces unusual difficulties that are both historical and methodological in character. For example, all previous approaches have endeavored to explain the phenomenon by concentrating on the nature, behavior, history, or actions of particular peoples against the background of an environment comprised of other peoples. Specialized studies of the Balkans, however, have demonstrated that this approach brings us no closer to any understanding of the roots of our civilization since it can reconstruct the history of civilization only as it is seen

from one side of the border of civilization.<sup>17</sup> This situation gives rise to the feeling, well-known to classical scholars, that there is a important missing "half" which has remained in a "darkness" impenetrable even to the means of modern science.

This issue can also be approached from another angle. Provided that science has at its disposal some idea of the place as a whole, then it may always be possible to reconstruct the meaning of a part as derived from the context of the whole. But even this now seems to be denied to science. On a methodological level we can say that the Balkans as a place of origin have always been studied as a "totality," not a "wholeness," even though they apparently have never been a "totality."<sup>18</sup> The history of their "origins" is still only partial, and studying none of the pieces now known can compensate for the absence of a knowledge of the whole. This is the case because the place of origins can never be described or observed from only one side of the border, not least of all in that it was the location in which an interaction between two sides was initiated. The beginning of the civilization process cannot be conceived of as coinciding with the construction of a communications boundary that excludes "the other" from civilizational space. Civilization must rather be viewed as emerging from an interaction process with the "other" in which the distinction between "self" and "other" was finally attained. Modern sociological theory, including both symbolic-interactionism as well as macrosociology, would insist that this division can never be total. That is to say that no "self" that does not contain within itself some part of the "other" can ever exist.

While contemporary science is aware of this problem, it faces substantial obstacles in at least two respects. First, it is difficult for science to construct wholes from the various knowledge-parts that it has methodically

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<sup>17</sup> It should be made clear that this problem did not emerge simply because civilized people were surrounded by intellectually inferior people who could not match their brilliance in self- and other-observations. The problem rather should be viewed as residing in the inferiority of the means that these "other" people used to communicate their knowledge.

<sup>18</sup> Erik Erikson provides the distinction between "wholeness" and "totality" in his discussion of the problem of identity. While "wholeness connotes an assembly of parts, even quite diversified parts, that enter into fruitful association and organization," totality "evokes a Gestalt in which absolute boundary is emphasized: given a certain arbitrary delineation, nothing that belongs inside must be left outside; nothing that must be outside should be tolerated inside." That is to say that totality is as "absolutely inclusive as it is absolutely exclusive." See Erikson 1980, pp. 183 ff. Nothing can be more distant from the spirit of the Balkans, where hardly any boundary is not subject to future correction.

produced and accumulated. This involves not only missing links and incompatibilities between the research results of the separate disciplines, which speak different languages and cannot communicate with each other, but also the lack of theories needed to organize the great amount of empirical knowledge and other results obtained from the most diverse observation perspectives, at times within one and the same scientific discipline. Second, even greater difficulties face attempts to resolve the problem of how to conduct social observations from both sides of the border, which alone can provide us with a knowledge of the whole. How can one become an objective, non-biased observer of both the "self" and the "other" if all observations are necessarily carried out from only the one side? How can an observer cross the boundary that encloses the world to which he belongs and equally become a part of the "other" world without losing his primary identity? And if this possibility is still theoretically inconceivable, how could we ever hope that society, whether ancient or modern, be known as a whole?

Most sorely missing in this regard is a theory that provides a holistic perspective upon the social world such that the meaning of all parts is no longer derived solely from their own "properties," but rather from their places and functions in the social process as an interaction whole.

### **SOCIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY AS A PUZZLE-SOLVER**

Modern systems theory in macrosociology is one theory in the arsenal of the social sciences that appears to be capable of dealing with questions of social complexity and offering a holistic perspective on the social world.<sup>19</sup> This theory explains the organization of the social as setting off from a type of undifferentiated social whole possessing the quality of an interaction system. World society as an all-embracing social system eventually emerges through a process of gradual inclusion into this uninterrupted communication process and through growing functional differentiation. But while this theory discusses at length questions dealing with social space, it needs to be complemented by the addition of an equally developed theory of social time. As Luhmann himself pointed out, however, the theory of social time, which should apparently begin where Mead leaves off, remains the greatest obstacle to any further progress in the field of sociological theorizing.

The main function of the social system conceived of as a type of social organization is to reduce the complexity of the environment. This also means that a system may collapse if it proves incapable of controlling an extremely complex environment. But any given system has both an external as well as

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<sup>19</sup> See Luhmann 1982, 1984, 1986, and 1990 for presentations of system theory.

internal environment insofar as the social system in its very nature and design is based on a difference-relation. This is the difference between the system and its "other," between that which belongs to the system and that which does not. The social system from its very beginning thus envelops within itself both that which is "the same" and that which is "different."

Our aim here is not a lengthy discussion of the theory of autopoietic systems. Our interest rather concerns how this theory can be utilized to provide a systems identification of the place where European civilization originated. The point is that the conundrum formulated above concerning this location closely resembles the sociological paradox depicted by Luhmann as "the paradox of observation," the term that he uses to designate the theoretical impossibility of observing as a whole the modern social system with communicational (not physical) boundaries.<sup>20</sup>

Luhmann claims that this type of observation could only be conducted from a type of center that provides an objective perspective upon the whole. This is impossible, however, in functionally differentiated systems since any functional system can do no more than describe the world from its own (subjective) observation position. Another possibility might be for the observer to conduct observations from both sides of the system boundary by crossing and re-crossing it, but this is a utopian dream. No mortal being is capable of leaving society and observing it from the outside while not belonging to it only in order to return to it and describe his observations from both sides.<sup>21</sup> One either is inside or outside, and there is no mediating "third position."

Nevertheless, I would like to argue that a further analysis of this paradox, especially in the light of Mead's theory of self and time, just as Luhmann suggested, may lead to the conclusion that it does have a systems solution. Luhmann's systems theory is not simply one sociological systems theory among others. It is rather a theory on such a high level of abstraction that it is properly applicable only to the analysis of civilization itself. By investigating the concrete culturo-historico-geographical facts concerning the development of civilization, along with their various sociological and socio-psychological interpretations, we may thus hope not only to discover additional grounds concerning the validation of this grand sociological theory, but also uncover clues for the resolution of other theoretical problems.

First of all, Luhmann's theory, which distinguishes three systems level of social organization (interaction, organization, and society), suggests that it is not impossible to assume the existence of a third type of European identity that is neither cultural, nor even social, but rather a supra-social or "*civilizational identity*." This identity would best apply to times of great civilizational, cultural

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<sup>20</sup> See Luhmann 1992 for a discussion of this paradox.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



and, professional "migrations," in respect to which neither cultural, nor social identities prove to be sufficient or exhaustive. In this type of situation, when the individual becomes an object of a great variety of cultural or social identifications, the formation of a new type of social identity seems to be only natural. For example, those increasing number of European nationals who have homes in more than one country, and even on more than one continent, could be relieved of the pangs of an otherwise impossible total identification through the acquisition of the modern civilizational identity of "Europeans," if not simply "citizens of the world."

This type of development would be especially gratifying in places of great social complexity, such as the one we have been discussing, which has never succeeded in identifying itself with any other part of Europe and has never attained any total European identity. If such places have not been identified with any other place or system part for centuries and even millennia, they could nevertheless be identified with the system's whole.

This solution is not original in respect to systems terms. It is simply the revival of an old truth in which rationalists have always stubbornly refused to believe, namely, that there can be a part in every social system which, precisely as a part, stands for the whole. But in order to imagine how this could be possible, we must abandon certain of our previous systems biases and presuppositions, such as the assumption that all systems parts are necessarily products of systems differentiation. This would amount to the acceptance of the truth that there is a "part" which is not a systems product precisely because it was already there before the system emerged and systems history began. Such a part would in fact be in immediate relation to the system's emergence, which could not emerge in any other place. No other parts of the system resemble such places or "systems parts," and the latter cannot be identified with any other part. They are identical only with themselves or, stated otherwise, with the system as a whole that they have produced.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, tackling this question leads to a plausible systems resolution for the sociological riddle presented above. The system has two types of boundaries - external and internal. Theoretically speaking, the internal system

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<sup>22</sup> One of the basic assumptions of the theory of autopoietic systems is that the system produces itself by itself, and that the system produces all parts which it has and needs. But this theory deals neither with the question of the emergence of the system itself, nor with the question of its reproduction. To discuss such questions means to discuss what lies beyond the system in space and time. After the millennia-long efforts of European civilization to prove that it emerged in itself by itself, perhaps it is finally time to realize that this is something which cannot be achieved by any system whatsoever. It is rather much more plausible and wise to assume that every system is produced by its "other."

boundary resides in the place where the systems difference between "inside" and "outside" is accumulated. One feature shared by the two systems boundaries is that they both serve to separate the system from its "other." Luhmann postulated that it is impossible to observe modernity when looking at the external system boundary. I wish to propose that we must instead direct our attention to the internal system boundary. While the external systems boundary is extremely inconvenient for holistic observations, the internal systems boundary can always be crossed and re-crossed provided that we know where it is. This is all the more possible when we realize that the internal and the external boundaries are in their very essence identical. We can therefore claim with certainty that the identity of the place where the internal system boundary resides is exactly the same as that of the system as a whole.

In this sociological analysis of the identification troubles of the countries situated on a most troubled European landscape, we have arrived at the conclusion that their great complexity is the reason why they can be identified with no less than Europe as a whole. On the other hand, our systems analysis has shown that the great complexity of this place arises precisely from the fact that the countries in question are located in no other place than the internal systems boundary of Europe, where the systems difference is accumulated and preserved. There is nothing wrong with this place except for the fact that it happens to be entrusted with the tragic role of one who can neither leave home and see the world, nor live entirely in the present.

The internal systems boundary is the location of civilization's origin. This place cannot be identified with any of the available European identifications, including any modern European identity, because a large portion of its "self" would thus remain unidentified. Nor can it be identified with Modern Europe as a whole because a large part of it is non-modern. Nevertheless, the place of civilization's origin is no less European than any other place in Europe. The only difference is that it is identical only to itself as long as we talk about "civilization" in the singular as the only and most grand tragic theater we have ever known.

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## Chapter III

# Institutionalizing Nationalism

*Zoltán Kántor*

### INTRODUCTION

The article focuses on the general aspects, mechanisms, and processes of what is called "nationalism in East-Central Europe," and it seeks to illustrate the differences between the nevertheless interdependent Hungarian and Romanian nationalisms. Although nationalism may not be central in gaining an understanding of transition in East-Central Europe, salient features of the ongoing process of social transformation cannot be understood without an analysis of the differing types of nationalism. I here use nationalism as a value-free and descriptive concept in the sense of politics based on the nationality principle.

The first part of the discussion describes the characteristics shared by Hungarian and Romanian nationalism. I then turn to an analysis of the different types of nationalisms involved in the relationship between Hungary and Romania. This involves an examination of the nationalizing politics of the Romanian state, the homeland politics of the Hungarian state, and the politics of the Hungarian national minority in Romania. I will finally focus on the role played by the European Union in respect to nationalism in East-Central Europe.

The analytical framework relies in part on Rogers Brubaker's triadic nexus, which is applicable to basically all situations in which there is a nation-state, an external national homeland, and a politically active national minority.<sup>1</sup> Brubaker's concept of "nationalizing state" captures the dynamics of the politics of the nation-state. I will argue that using "nationalizing minority" instead of "national minority" facilitates an analysis of the interplay of nationalisms insofar as it enables one to see the common features of the parallel and usually

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<sup>1</sup> Brubaker 1996 and 1998 present basic features of his position. In addition to the particular example analyzed in the present discussion, the same model could be applied to other Hungarian minorities in neighboring states or to the Russians in the Baltic states. It is obvious that no other situation is similar to that which is analyzed, but resemblances can nevertheless be easily detected. However, the model has only limited applicability to the nationalisms of stateless ethnic groups, such as the Roma, or to national minorities/ethnic groups that have only cultural, and not political, aspirations, such as the Bulgarians in Romania, the Armenians in Hungary, and so forth.

conflicting nationalizing processes. This makes it easier to understand national politics easier.

In the early 1990s a number of authors observed that nationalism replaced communism. Some went so far as to state that the "ideology that made the defeat of communism possible was nationalism,"<sup>2</sup> while others maintained that nationalism had returned, and that throughout Europe "the Cold War's end has unleashed nationalist sentiments long suppressed by bipolar competition and, in the east, by communist coercion."<sup>3</sup> Such explanations are false, however. One may argue either that nationalist rhetoric replaced communist rhetoric, or that certain communist leaders suddenly became nationalists, but this type of change would be no more than a continuation of politics from the past within a new, more or less democratic framework. For example, nationalism as an ideology, sentiment, and principle of social organization has been a facet of modern European history since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One may in fact interpret the history of modern Europe as, in part, a history of nation-based institutionalizations insofar as all European states are based, in a way or another in different places and different periods of time, on the principle of nationality. The rhetoric of communism may have stated that communism was not based on the ideology of nationalism, but the truth is that communism not only institutionalized nationalism in another form, it often used nationalism in order to legitimize the system (or the leaders of the system).

Walker Connor observes that "Marxists not only learned to accommodate themselves to an expediential coexistence with a world filled with nationalisms, but they also developed a strategy to manipulate nationalism into the service of Marxism."<sup>4</sup> The explanation for this state of affairs is simple, namely, communist (socialist) ideology and/or legitimation, which had been supported by the secret services, suddenly became vapid. After a certain point in time no fraction of the population could have been mobilized by invoking socialism or communism.<sup>5</sup> Stalin and Lenin based their conception concerning the national issue generally on the ideas of Marx and Engels, but they also learned much from the Austro-Marxists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner. Their underlying assumption was that socialism/communism would resolve the national question, and that national values would lose their salience, but this view proved to be false. Indeed, nationalism is much more deeply rooted today

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<sup>2</sup> Sugar 1995, p. 429.

<sup>3</sup> Kupchan 1995, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Connor 1984, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> It is needless to mention that, without the totalitarian or authoritarian control of society, even before 1989 the population was not enthusiastic supporters of the communist regimes.

than it was then, and it is highly questionable whether European integration will ever succeed in creating a new non-national identity.

## **NATIONALISM**

Tom Nairn indicates how central nationalism is in the contemporary world:

[Gellner] demonstrated how industrialization produced modern political nationalities; yet did not go on to suggest that the true subject of modern philosophy might be, not industrialization as such, but its immensely complex and variegated aftershock – nationalism.<sup>6</sup>

Most scholars maintain that nationalism came into being in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and that societies have been organized on the basis of the principle of nationality ever since. Indeed, the invocation of "nation" has perhaps been the main principle for legitimation during this period. In addition, insofar as nationalism is inherently related to culture, it comes into being when culture replaces structure.<sup>7</sup> As George Schöpflin states,

All cultures are collective; they include and exclude; they give us a particular set of identities; they allow us to make sense of the world; they offer us collective regulation and collective forms of knowledge; and they are bounded. These boundaries may shift but they will not vanish. They protect the culture in question and act as a filter through which new ideas are received and integrated. And all cultures rely on broadly similar mechanisms to keep themselves in being. If threatened, they will redouble their efforts to protect cultural reproduction.<sup>8</sup>

Nationalism in Western Europe first emerged as a consequence of major transformations, which have been explained in different way by the various major authors. For example, Gellner views nationalism as the outcome of the transition from agrarian society to industrial society, while Benedict Anderson detects the emergence of national consciousness, i.e., the nation as an imagined community, as resulting from the "convergence of capitalism and

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<sup>6</sup> Nairn 1997, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> See Gellner 1983.

<sup>8</sup> See Schöpflin 2001.

print technology on the fatal diversity of human language."<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the precise mechanisms at work in particular cases, the institutionalization of nationalism brought about a new legitimation of the state. And not only did nationalism establish itself as the principle of state organization, it also came to serve as the principle of organization for societies. In this respect, we may consider every European society as being nationalist in character. Indeed, in the age of modernization states have tended to ethnically homogenize their societies in various ways. Eugene Weber provides an outstanding example in *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914*, in which he describes how France linguistically (and nationally) homogenized the inhabitants of the country. Similar processes can also be observed in other parts of Europe.

States, societies, and cultures have become ever more institutionalized, and the standardization of language, the creation of high culture, the introduction of compulsory education, and the nationalization of culture have served the titular nation. In these circumstances, non-dominant ethnic groups have sought to create their own nations with their own leaders and their own states as well. Their (nationalizing) programs for nation-building have typically been formulated in opposition to dominant groups/nations and other nationalizing processes, which is one reason why it is possible to speak of ancient hatreds and lasting conflicts. And as state authorities and borders changed, creating new frameworks of power, the former masters became servants and often experienced treatment similar to that for which they were responsible when they had been masters. That is to say that the breakup of empires and states reconfigured political power and provided new arenas for nationalist politics.

Walker Connor argues that the only two ethnically homogeneous states in Europe are Ireland and Portugal.<sup>10</sup> Not only do all other European states include national minorities or ethnic groups, the peculiarities of European history also mean that the majority of them have nationals living in other states. Virtually all of these have adopted policies that support these minorities financially, culturally, or even politically, support which is based on the idea of the nation as an ethno-cultural entity, not as a political conception. The assumption that co-nationals have a special relation with the titular state can be easily explained by the historical process of nation formation that began in the eighteenth century. For example, nations have been formed and institutionalized, and a sense of national identity has emerged within their populations, typically due to the often painful and aggressive process of nation-building itself. Scholars use such concepts as "forging the nation,"

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<sup>9</sup> See Gellner 1983 and Anderson 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Connor 1994.



"nationalizing culture," and "fabricating heritage" in order to describe the process of national/ethnic homogenization.<sup>11</sup> The French process of making Frenchmen from peasants, the Scandinavian culture-builders, and the politics of the Polish nationalizing state all reflect such state-driven nationalizing processes.<sup>12</sup> It was this type of politics that created the modern European nation-states during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which led to a strong sense of national identity developing within national groups. Language standardization, the establishment of an official culture, mass-education, and ethnic cleansing have led to further homogenization and strengthened the significance of national identity.

Certain scholars argue that western nationalism differs from eastern nationalism.<sup>13</sup> Alain Dieckhoff summarizes the two corresponding conceptions of civic and ethnic nationalism as follows:

It has become usual in the growing literature devoted to nationalism to oppose two conceptions of the nation. The first type is presented as the result of the free association of citizens and as a rational and voluntary political construction. This civic, contractual, elective nation is the basis of the French idea of the nation, conceptualized by the philosophers of the Enlightenment and realized by the Great Revolution. In contrast, the second type is seen as the concretization of a historical community, the expression of an identity feeling, the reflection of a natural order. This cultural, organic, ascriptive nation is the basis of the German idea of the nation, nurtured by romanticism and embodied by the Second and the Third Reich.<sup>14</sup>

While this distinction may be conceptually valid, what in fact matters are the specific types of politics that are implemented on the basis of one or the other of these conceptions. Moreover, no single state employs only one of them. For example, it is typical for an ethno-cultural conception to be employed in respect to the titular nation and its minorities abroad, while a political

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<sup>11</sup> On these concepts see respectively Colley 1992, Löfgren 1989, and Lowenthal 1998.

<sup>12</sup> The first of these processes is discussed by Weber 1979, and the second by Frykman and Löfgren 1987.

<sup>13</sup> Representative examples are Meinecke 1970, pp. 9-22; Kohn 1994, pp. 162-165; and Plamenatz 1973, pp. 23-36.

<sup>14</sup> See Dieckhoff 2003.

conception is employed in regard to the national minorities and ethnic groups living within a given state.

While various viewpoints have been advanced in an effort to explain the phenomenon of nationalism in East-Central Europe, a very large proportion of the literature has no theoretical grounding.<sup>15</sup> In order to correct this shortcoming, I wish to argue that the history of such nationalism can be best understood if we analyze the different nation-building or nationalizing processes that pertain to majorities and minorities respectively. In respect to the former, one important role in the nationalizing process of a given national minority is played by the external national homeland, and insofar as state borders have frequently changed, different groups have experienced at different times the assimilationist or dissimilationist politics of the titular nation. Stated otherwise, they have been the suffering subjects of nation-building processes, not infrequently with disastrous outcomes. Michael Mann provides a description of such policies, while John McGarry offers a theoretical account of the primary mechanisms utilized, including the settlement of majority groups in peripheral regions inhabited by minorities, the relocation of minority groups within the state, and the expulsion of minorities from the state.<sup>16</sup> Virtually every national minority that either once was a component of the majority nation, expressed nation-building goals within the new state, or at least represented a danger in the eyes of the nation-building/nationalizing majority has undergone one or more of these processes.

One possible approach to national conflicts in Eastern Europe is to stress the parallel and often conflicting processes of nation-building, not least of all because once the ideal of the nation has become important, there appears to be no indication that it will lose its significance. Nationalism may be transformed, but it remains an important organizational principle in our world. Nationalist politics today is oriented in part towards a strengthening of the boundaries of the titular/majority nation, and also by more or less hostile politics against national minorities. It should be noted in this regard that Brubaker distinguishes between four types of nationalism, namely, those of the nationalizing state, of the external national homeland, of the national minority, and populist nationalism. The discussion below will consider only the first three of these.

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<sup>15</sup> Brubaker has provided us with a collection of the various myths and misconceptions of those scholars who have presented us with simplified, poorly argued descriptions. These include the architectonic illusion, the seething cauldron, the return of the repressed, ancient hatreds, the major methodological failures of groupism, and the Manichean view. See Brubaker 1998, pp. 272-305.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the former see Mann 1999. The theoretical framework indicated is presented in McGarry 1998.

It is a mistake to view the current outburst of nationalism in East-Central Europe as novel insofar as nationalism has been the basic organizational principle in this region as well since the nineteenth century. Every major transformation, whether it be the breakdown of communism or the peace treaties after the two world wars, has triggered a reorganization or reconfiguration of the state. Against this background, nationalism neither emerged, nor reappeared after 1989, but only became manifest in a new form. Indeed, different writers have drawn similarities with different, older processes. Miroslav Hroch, for example, argues that post-communist nationalism, especially the nationalism of national minorities, resembles the process of nation-formation of non-dominant ethnic groups in the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Brubaker sees commonalities between the post-1918 and the post-communist periods,<sup>18</sup> while Katherine Verdery emphasizes the similarities between post-colonial and post-communist nationalisms.<sup>19</sup>

The emergence and strengthening of nationalism in East-Central Europe have followed a different pattern than in Western Europe. While nationalism in Western Europe was the consequence of modernization, East-Central European nationalisms have mainly proceeded by adapting the established and successful Western model. A number of nations that exist in the region today, most of which were encompassed within the Tsarist, Ottoman, and Habsburg or Austro-Hungarian empires, were still only aspiring to become nations in the Western sense in the nineteenth century. And with the collapse of these empires at the end of World War I, a new geo-political situation emerged, the map of Europe was accordingly redrawn, particularly in Eastern Europe, and new state structures were established for the nations that had been created. Hroch summarizes the means that had been used by these formerly non-dominant ethnic groups to eventually become nations:<sup>20</sup> (1) The further development of a nascent national culture on the basis of a local language that had to be used in education, administration, and economic life. (2) The creation of a complete social structure, including their "own" educated elites and entrepreneurial classes. (3) The attainment of equal civil rights and a certain degree of political self-administration.<sup>21</sup> In Hroch's words, "the process of nation-forming acquires an irreversible character only once the national movement has won mass support, thereby reaching phase C."<sup>22</sup> But although one can determine that a nationalizing process has started, it is impossible to

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<sup>17</sup> Hroch 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Brubaker 1996, pp. 63-67. See also Brubaker 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Verdery 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Hroch 1993.

<sup>21</sup> Hroch 1995, p. 66.

<sup>22</sup> Hroch 1998, p. 98.

decide when it has reached its goal since there are no criteria that define the successfully accomplished process. Moreover, even if the elite (politicians, intellectuals, and so forth) consider that the process has reached its end, one nevertheless has to continuously maintain the nation, which at times may involve "rebuilding," and "refurbishing" it as well. In such circumstances, nationalism has indeed become the central ideology of the state, especially in Eastern Europe.

Regime change, revolutions, and transitions are typically accompanied by the redefinition and re-institutionalization of the nation and by the reconfiguration of the state as well. The nationally-mixed territories of East-Central Europe were no exceptions in this regard. Indeed, it was only a few short weeks after the breakdown of communist systems that a reconfiguration of power, interests, and institutions began, which came to determine national politics in the region. As Mark Beissinger has noted, however, "the goal of nationalism is the definition or redefinition of the physical, human, or cultural boundaries of the polity."<sup>23</sup> And when one actor redefines the polity in national terms, the other actors will most likely react and take similar steps. But insofar as transition also involves the redistribution of power, titular nations often framed their new constitutions in complete disregard of, or even in opposition to, the claims of national minorities.

Irina Culic has demonstrated in this respect that the primacy of titular nations determines the central values of states:

In the preambles of the Constitutions, as well as the public political and cultural discourses, and in the substance of other state policies, the evidence and elements of the historical existence and continuity of a Nation state represent the most salient and powerful arguments.<sup>24</sup>

In reaction to such developments, national minorities immediately formed ethnic (ethno-regional) parties. In addition, external national homelands expressed their concern regarding their kinsmen who were living as minorities in other states. In order to ensure the stability of the region that has thus come under threat, which at times involved open conflict, the European Union placed high the issue of minority rights on its agenda. Furthermore, the protection and monitoring of national minorities became an element in the process of EU enlargement. Consequently, the EU (and also NATO) assumed significant roles

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<sup>23</sup> Beissinger 1996.

<sup>24</sup> Culic 2002. Only states that did not have politically active national minorities refrained from framing exclusivist constitutions and laws.

in the national politics of the countries involved. This will become more evident in the analysis below of the international aspect of the status law.

Let us now turn our attention to the politics of the nationalizing state, the nationalizing minority, and the politics of the external national homeland.

## **HUNGARIANS AND ROMANIANS**

To put the question very simply, the origin of the problem in Gellner's terms is the incongruence of the boundaries of both states and both nations.<sup>25</sup> As a rule, the titular nation has practiced a nationalizing policy hostile toward the minority. This was true of Hungarians until 1918, and has been of Romanians from 1918 until the present day.

Hungary lost a great deal of her territory after World War I, with approximately three million Hungarians becoming national minorities in neighboring states. The situation of Hungarian minorities abroad has been an ongoing concern for Hungarian governments ever since. Hungarian nationality politics, as is fundamentally the case with every nationality politics in Europe, is based on the assumption that the state is responsible for Hungarians living abroad. Between the two world wars, for example, the shock of the Trianon Peace Treaty deeply influenced Hungarian domestic and foreign policy, with the latter being characterized by irredentism and zealous support for Hungarian minorities abroad.<sup>26</sup> Although the second Vienna Award on 30 August 1940 had granted Hungary the northern part of Transylvania, the end of World War II saw the redrawing of Hungary's borders to virtually what they were before 1938. In addition, insofar as the Soviet system was based on the assumption that socialism would resolve the problems of national minorities, and that minority issues appertain to domestic affairs, there was no discussion during Hungary's communist period of such matters as minorities living in other states. The breakdown of the socialist/communist system thus brought to the surface long unresolved tensions between the titular nation and national minorities, which could not help but give rise to tensions between neighboring states. This has clearly been the case with Hungary and Hungarian minorities abroad.

When Romania acquired Transylvania following World War I, a sizable Hungarian population became a national minority in Romania. That is to say that a large part of an already formed nation, which had been involved in the process of nation-building, suddenly became a national minority. Until 1918, Hungarians had considered themselves the rightful masters of Transylvania and acted accordingly. After 1918, with the ideological backing of the revisionist

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<sup>25</sup> All Hungarians lived in one state only between 1867 and 1918, and the Romanians did so only between 1918 and 1940.

<sup>26</sup> Zeidler 2002.

politics of the Hungarian state, the leaders of the Hungarian national minority in Romania organized their political and cultural organizations upon an ethno-cultural foundation and promoted a policy of self-defense in regard to the nationalizing thrust of the enlarged Romanian state. The essential point here is that the ethno-cultural basis of organization, which had increasingly characterized Hungarian nation-building politics after the Compromise of 1867, continued to prevail after a part of the nation became a national minority. Although the framework had changed dramatically, a politics based on the ethno-cultural conception of the community remained dominant.

The nationalizing process of the national minority has characterized Hungarian social and political life in Romania since 1918. In addition to striving for various forms of autonomy and self-government, the political elite, with the help of the intelligentsia, has been engaged in the establishment of separate Hungarian institutions. The idea behind this practice is that without such institutions Hungarian culture cannot be preserved and promoted. The nationalizing process of the national minority has thus been influenced by both the "nationalizing state" and the "external national homeland."<sup>27</sup>

Following the events of 1989, a parliamentary democracy based on a multi-party system has slowly developed in Romania, whereby we can say politics was more or less dominated by the legal successors of the Romanian Communist Party between 1990 and 1996.<sup>28</sup> This period was characterized by slow reform and a consolidation of the political system. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), which participated in political life as an opposition party, worked for the development of internal pluralism as well as an Hungarian system of institutions. However, the parties in power up to 1996 showed little willingness to satisfy Hungarian demands, with anti-Hungarian and anti-DAHR rhetoric being characteristic features of political discourse.<sup>29</sup>

Following the electoral victory of the Democratic Convention in November 1996, the mere fact of the DAHR's participation in the new

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<sup>27</sup> Brubaker 1996, pp. 63-67. See also Brubaker 1998.

<sup>28</sup> This party was first named *Frontul Salvării Naționale* (National Salvation Front), which was later changed to *Partidul Democrației Sociale din România* (Party of Social Democracy in Romania). It is currently known as *Partidul Social Democrat* (The Social Democratic Party). Its leadership has consisted primarily of those who came to power immediately after Ceaușescu's fall and governed until 1996.

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that although the DAHR has never been officially registered in Romania as a political party, it functions as a party in practical terms and will be considered as such in the present discussion. It also represents a certain range of political opinion from both sides of the political spectrum.

Romanian government was of great importance, and also set a precedent, insofar as the party thereby became acceptable as a political partner. We could say, however, that cooperation between the parties in power and the DAHR became a reality only when the Romanian political establishment needed the legitimation abroad that doing so would bring. During this period, the representatives of the DAHR in the legislature sought to support those draft bills that were aimed at reforms, and their activities were also focused on protecting the interests of Hungarians living in Romania. The Social Democratic Party, after its electoral victory in 2000, negotiated an agreement that the DAHR would support the government in parliament in return for obtaining certain rights for the Hungarian minority in the country.

Following the revolution of 1989, the relationship between Hungary and the Hungarians living in neighboring countries entered a new phase. Official politics had been characterized during the communist period by the fiction of the ethno-culturally neutral state, and it was often asserted that questions regarding nationality belonged to the internal affairs of the respective country. Consequently, Hungary exhibited no official interest in Hungarians living in other states until the mid-1980s, but the problem of Hungarians living abroad, especially in Transylvania, was brought to the center of attention only a few years later. And the situation in this regard changed even more radically after the fall of the communist regime. At this point in time, concern for Hungarians living in neighboring countries became materialized in legislation and governmental politics.

For example, a paragraph was introduced into the Hungarian constitution that declared the state was responsible for caring for the interests of those Hungarians living abroad.<sup>30</sup> On the basis of such "ethno-cultural" responsibility now written into law, successive Hungarian governments established a number of governmental institutions and foundations designed to support Hungarian political, educational, and cultural institutions in neighboring countries, with specific budget items for this purpose.<sup>31</sup> Substantial financial assistance was also provided to students, pedagogues, and artists studying in Hungary, with the aim of creating the future Hungarian intelligentsia.

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<sup>30</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, Article 6(3), states the following: "The Republic of Hungary acknowledges its responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living outside of its borders and shall promote the fostering of their links with Hungary." See *A Magyar Köztársaság Alkotmánya*, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> The primary example is *Határon Túli Magyarok Hivatala* (Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad - GOHMA). Significant amounts of funding were made available to *Illyés Foundation*, *Segítő Jobb Foundation*, *(Új)Kézfogás Foundation*, *Apáczai Foundation*, and others.

We will now turn our focus to an examination of nationality politics in the Romanian-Hungarian context. The three major actors are the Romanian state, the Hungarian state, and the Hungarian national minority in Romania. I will first briefly present the historical antecedents, followed by an analysis of the post-1989 period.

### **NATIONALIZING NATIONALISM: THE ROMANIAN STATE**

While virtually all nation-states in Western Europe pursued nationalizing policies in the nineteenth century, this type of politics did not become characteristic of Eastern and Central Europe until the inter-war period in the twentieth century. The states newly formed or substantially reshaped at that time viewed themselves as nation-states, and they intended to create themselves as ethnically homogeneous nation-states. With this aim in mind, governments practiced both exclusive and inclusive policies regarding the various national groups.

In respect to the nationalizing state, Brubaker has identified the typical elements of its policies as follows: 1) The existence of a "core nation" or nationality, defined in ethno-cultural terms, which is sharply differentiated from the citizenry or permanent resident population of the state as a whole. 2) The idea that the core nation legitimately "owns" the polity, with the latter being viewed as the state *of* and *for* the core nation. 3) The conviction that the specific interests of the core nation have not been adequately "realized" or "expressed" in spite of its rightful "ownership" of the state. 4) The notion that specific action is needed in a variety of settings and domains to promote the core nation's language, culture, economic welfare, demographic predominance, political hegemony, and so forth.<sup>32</sup>

Romania as a state was formed in 1859 through the unification of the principalities of Moldova and Wallachia, and it gained its full independence in 1877. Greater Romania, which came into being after the World War I, was a nation-state that encompassed all Romanians, many of whom indeed had lived in other countries prior to 1918. In addition, however, 28 percent of the population were members of national minorities, including Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Russians, and others as well. Since the very existence of such minorities hindered the state's project to achieve the status of a homogeneous nation state, a nationalizing process was begun with the aim of creating a state dominated by the titular nation.<sup>33</sup> Romania in fact implemented an intense nationalizing policy after 1918.

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<sup>32</sup> Brubaker 1996, p. 83.

<sup>33</sup> An excellent description of this process is provided by Livezeanu 1995.



Although the Paris Peace Treaties of 1947 overturned the Vienna Awards and returned the northern part of Transylvania to Romania following. Romania herself lost the eastern territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina to the Soviet Union, along with a considerable Romanian population. In the first two decades of the communist period Romania followed the Leninist principle of national self-determination and, under Soviet pressure and military presence, granted a degree of autonomy to the counties inhabited by Hungarians. However, following the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965 and the rise to power of his protégé Nicolae Ceaușescu, the nationalist turn that had already begun in the Romanian Communist Party was markedly accentuated.<sup>34</sup> The consequence was that nationalism became institutionalized within the communist system. While the main enemy in the 1950s had been the Germans, many of whom were eventually deported,<sup>35</sup> the Hungarians later bore the brunt of this nationalizing drive, especially after the German and Jewish populations left the country. This reached its peaks in the 1980s, when the communist regime was able to implement its national politics without any domestic or international control.<sup>36</sup>

The breakdown of the Romanian communist system in December 1989 created a new environment for the various processes of national institutionalization, which then began to take place within a democratic framework. The continued nationalizing policy can perhaps be best observed in respect to the framing of the new constitution insofar as Romania was defined as a nation-state. A number of laws then reinforced the national character and national orientation of the Romanian state, all of which served to create a situation in which the national projects of the titular nation and the Hungarian minority could not help but be at loggerheads. Such newly-created nationalist parties as the Greater Romania Party and the Party of National Unity of the Romanians, which were tacitly backed by the post-communist party that was then in power, came to be the major promoters of state-directed nationalism in the early 1990s. Nationalism played a lesser role, however, after the Democratic Convention came to power and invited the DAHR to participate in the government.<sup>37</sup> Although tensions were still present, their expression was under more strict state control. But the elections in 2000 again reshaped the political sphere in Romania. The Social Democratic Party, supported in parliament by the DAHR, clearly realized that Romania's only hope was to join

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<sup>34</sup> Katherine Verdery argues that Ceaușescu realized he could obtain the support of the intellectuals for his regime only in this fashion. See Verdery 1991.

<sup>35</sup> See Vultur 1997, Vultur 2000a, and Vultur 2000b.

<sup>36</sup> See Boia 2001 and 2002 for an account of the course taken by the national politics of the Communist Party.

<sup>37</sup> See Kántor and Bárdi 2002 for an analysis of the 1996-2000 period.

both the EU and NATO, and the the criteria put forth by these organizations forced the Hungarian and Romanian parties to cooperate.

The policy of the Romanian nationalizing state questions the legitimacy of the claims formulated by the Hungarian elite as essential for its nationalizing process, namely, the decentralization of power and the establishment of institutions that reproduce the Hungarian elite. If we look more closely at this policy, we can observe that the Hungarian minority obtains from the state only those rights that minimally affect the Romanian nationalizing process. From an Hungarian perspective, the Hungarians in Romania do not enjoy the rights they need to fulfill their national institutionalization, such as administrative decentralization, a state-sponsored Hungarian university, a degree of autonomy for the regions inhabited by Hungarians, the return of church property, and so forth.

### **A NATIONALIZING MINORITY: HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA**

It is necessary to develop an interpretative framework appropriate for studying the national minorities that facilitates a grasp of ongoing developments and also explains the nationalizing process of the national minority. While many possible frameworks could be employed in analyzing a national minority, one must focus on those questions related to nations and nationalism to understand the essence of the matter insofar as national minority politics epitomize politics based on the principle of nationality. In addition, their organizations are based on national or ethnic grounds. Furthermore, one must analyze both the process through which a particular group became a national minority, as well as the institutionalization of that national minority on an ethno-cultural basis, in order to understand the nationalizing policy of a national minority. One should not commit the mistake of essentializing national minorities insofar as national minorities are constructed and imagined in the same way as nations.

Of particular interest in the present discussion are those situations in which a given national minority was once part of a larger nation within the framework of one and the same state. For example, one consequence of the dissolution of empires that occurred in Eastern and Central Europe was that certain members of a given ethno-cultural nation became a national minority living in a different state than their fellow nationals. Such minorities often did not accept the new situation and continued the nation-building process in which they had previously participated, albeit in a different form. But although their nation-building processes were somewhat changed in respect to the former, their mechanisms are similar. And not only did ethno-cultural bonds not lose their strength, they were generally invigorated. That is to say that a strengthening of the internal boundaries of national minorities was a logical

consequence of the fact that the nation-building of majorities challenged the nation-building of national minorities.

In a manner analogous with Brubaker's conceptual transformation of *nation-state* into *nationalizing state*, I propose that the concept of *nationalizing minority* replace that of *national minority* in that it captures the internal dynamics of the national minority and permits the analysis of long-term processes.<sup>38</sup> These processes are slightly different from those of the nationalizing state, but the mechanisms are similar.<sup>39</sup> For example, national minorities engaged in a nation-building process are *nationalizing minorities* and, as such, are distinct from non-nationalizing ones.<sup>40</sup> They possess the following characteristic empirical features: (1) A nationalizing minority is sufficiently numerous to have the real possibility of attaining a number of its goals. (2) Nationalizing minorities express political as well as cultural goals. The creation of institutions that resemble those of a state is essential, as is the establishment of a minority "life-world," since their aim is to both institutionalize as well as preserve their national/cultural identity. (3) Nationalizing minorities attempt to transform the political structure of the state and strive for political representation on the state level.

The claims of national minorities are also made in the name of a core nation or nationality, defined in ethno-cultural terms, and are not related to citizenship. The difference in this case is that the "core" of the ethno-cultural nation is localized in the nation living in the "external national homeland." In institutional terms, however, the national minority is distinct from the ethno-cultural nation since it has no state of its own. Consequently, the leaders of the national minority create a "surrogate state," a system of political representation of the national minority, which is established on an ethno-cultural foundation.

A national minority is typically defined without reference to an external national homeland, and the issue of the ethno-cultural nation, including all the members of the same ethnic group, is in fact marginal. The emphasis is normally placed on the fact that it represents a minority in relation to the titular nationality. This is due, on the one hand, to legal and political definitions that emphasize the rights of the national minority within the given state and, on the other, to the practice of social scientists who, as they analyze the transition to democracy, nationalism, and ethnic conflicts within a given country, discuss

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<sup>38</sup> This theoretical framework is developed in Kántor 2000.

<sup>39</sup> The resources of national minorities cannot be compared to those of the state, but they are often substantially augmented by the external national homeland.

<sup>40</sup> For example, Hungarians in Romania constitute a nationalizing minority while Bulgarians in Romania and Hungarians in Austria do not. In Western Europe, the Northern Irish are a nationalizing minority. Albanians in Kosovo can also be considered a nationalizing minority in light of events during the last twenty years.

only short-term processes and concentrate on the situational setting. In order to avoid these narrow approaches, one must instead focus on the national minority itself and analyze such questions in an historical perspective. In order to do so, one must search for a different approach, and Brubaker's definition is useful in this respect:

A national minority is not simply a "group" that is given by the facts of ethnic demography. It is a dynamic political stance, or, more precisely, a family of related yet mutually competing stances, not a static ethno-demographic condition. Three elements are characteristic of this political stance, or family of stances: (1) the public claim to membership of an ethnocultural nation different from the numerically or politically dominant ethnocultural nation; (2) the demand for state recognition of this distinct ethnocultural nationality; and (3) the assertion, on the basis of this ethnocultural nationality, of certain collective cultural or political rights.<sup>41</sup>

One should also consider Brubaker's definition of the nationalism of a specific group:

Minority nationalist stances characteristically involve a self-understanding in specially "national" rather than merely "ethnic" terms, a demand for state recognition of their distinct ethnocultural nationality, and the assertion of certain collective, nationality-based cultural or political rights.<sup>42</sup>

It is certainly true that members of a national minority still consider themselves as belonging to the larger ethno-cultural nation, emphasizing their common culture and language, and they continue to perceive themselves as one nation, regardless of changed state boundaries. However, they also perceive themselves to be a national minority within a different state than where their fellow-nationals live. These two complementary but nonetheless competing images characterize national minorities. That is to say that while national minorities are institutionalized on the same ethno-cultural basis as the nation in the external homeland, the framework and resources for this are different. Moreover, since the particular principle of nationality is identical, there is no reason to seek other explanations for why a national minority is engaged in a nationalizing process.

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<sup>41</sup> Brubaker 1996, p. 60.

<sup>42</sup> Brubaker 1998, p. 277.

The politics of a nationalizing minority is oriented toward the strengthening and maintaining of ethno-cultural boundaries. This is done by the creation of institutions with an exclusive, ethno-cultural character for the purpose of attaining the above-mentioned goals, which involves the creation of a parallel social and political system as well as efforts to guarantee a legal setting in which nationalizing can continue in more favorable conditions. In a manner analogous to the nationalizing state, the nationalizing minority is confronted by competing goals that are channeled by its institutions and public sphere, and their goals and policies are obviously constrained by a number of internal and external factors. For example, although a nationalizing minority acts within a specific political arena, not all of their political activities can be subsumed under this process. Furthermore, the results of political action are not necessarily what nationalist politicians and intellectuals might expect insofar as the conflict between and within both nation-state and minority projects often leads to unexpected political results.

The concept of nationalizing minority is thus useful for establishing a general grasp of the politics of national minorities, but it is also necessary to operationalize the concept if one wishes to conduct a meticulous analysis. This becomes possible through an examination of the principal actors involved, namely, the elite of the national minority and the respective ethnic party, who are the main promoters of nationalizing processes.<sup>43</sup> Ethnic political parties are formed in societies that are organized along ethnic or national cleavages, and it is almost certain that the elite of the national minority will form such a party in those cases where nationally relevant conflicts exist, such as in times of revolution or regime change. The major task facing an ethnic party is to ensure that members of the corresponding ethnic group vote for it. Convincing members of other ethnic groups to do so is less important since it is very unlikely that they would in any case. At the same time, the elite must persuade their fellow nationals that they should act in the interest of the group as a whole. In this respect, an ethnic party is very different from non-ethnic parties in the sense that the national minority usually has a program that is oriented toward securing the individual and collective rights of the members of that particular national minority.

In general, the main concerns of a national minority as expressed through the goals and policies of their ethnic party are to preserve their culture and promote the interests of the members of the group along with the perceived interests of the group as a whole. In order to attain these aims, the minority must both secure a legal and political framework on the state level and also establish institutions and an internal organization that make it possible for them

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<sup>43</sup> I use the concept of “ethnic party” as synonymous with such terms as “national minority party,” “minority party,” and “ethno-regional party.”

to form a distinct society. The ethnic party is thus both an ethno-political party and an ethnic organization, and it must thereby simultaneously act as a political party and also represent and promote the interests of its community. It must also work to strengthen the internal boundaries of the community, organizing them into an *ethno-civil society*.<sup>44</sup> The key differences between these various function turns upon the political arena in which the party acts at a particular moment. Stated otherwise, the ethnic party in its capacity as a political party acts in the political sphere of the state, but its sphere of action is the ethnic political subculture in its capacity as a minority organization.

The program of an ethnic party typically focuses on decentralization, subsidiarity, freedom of the press, freedom of association, political pluralism, human dignity, and so forth. While all of these are democratic and liberal principles that may be considered as representing the common good for the population of the state as a whole, they are particularly valuable for the nationalizing process of the national minority. However, the program as it refers to the national minority itself is not only less liberal than these principles would indicate, it is often exclusionary. Indeed, the democratization of the respective state is viewed as important primarily as a means for facilitating the creation of the national minority's own system of institutions.

The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) was formed as a political organization in December 1989 on an ethnic basis, and it is supported almost exclusively by voters drawn from among ethnic Hungarians living in Romania. DAHR's program specifically states that its aim is to represent the interests of the Hungarian minority in the country. It considers itself to be the sole representative of Hungarians in Romania, and is indeed viewed as such by the other actors in Romanian politics.<sup>45</sup> DAHR is organized and functions in the political arena as any other party, participating in elections and taking part in parliamentary life in opposition or as a member of the governing coalition. Insofar as it has supported decentralization, the development of a functioning market economy, and the Euro-Atlantic

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<sup>44</sup> This concept implies that Hungarian civil society in Romania cannot be interpreted as the civil society of a state. Insofar as it is organized on an ethnic basis, the concept of *ethno-civil society* better suggests its particular nature.

<sup>45</sup> The program of the DAHR defines the organization as follows: "The DAHR is the community of the autonomous territorial, political, social and cultural organizations of Hungarians in Romania. Its main objective is to protect the interests and rights of the Hungarian minority. The DAHR fulfills the task of representation of the Hungarian population both at local and national levels." Further information can be obtained at <http://www.udmr.ro>, the DAHR's official website.

integration of Romania, it may be classified as a modern liberal parties.<sup>46</sup> As an ethnic party, however, DAHR also fulfills a double role in that it works to organize the Hungarian community. That is to say that it undertakes efforts to organize the civilian, non-governmental sphere, or what may be taken as such, of the Hungarian community in Romania, and for this purpose it strengthens various organizations and institutions, not entirely without the intention of maintaining and, if possible, expanding its voting base.

On the state level DAHR strives for the creation of smaller units within the state by advocating administrative decentralization, federalism, and territorial autonomy in order to create structures within which the Hungarian minority will form a relative majority so that they may be able to influence the decision-making process. It also endeavors to create separate ethnically-based institutions in which the minority will have decision-making power over salient issues. The goal of these activities when taken together is no less than the institutionalization of the Hungarian "sphere" in Romania, or, in other words, the creation of a parallel Hungarian society.<sup>47</sup> This is precisely what I term minority nation-building, which may also be described as the creation of a parallel society on an ethnic basis. The fact that the DAHR utilizes both of its two faces to work towards its goals indicates an attribute that it shares only with other ethnic political parties, not with political parties in general.

### **HOMELAND NATIONALISM: THE HUNGARIAN STATE**

Hungary as the external national homeland supports this process with significant political and financial resources. Indeed, after 1989 Hungary openly expressed its concern about the fate of Hungarian minorities abroad, including those in Romania. It thereby influences the self-perception of members of the national minority and plays an important role in the power relations within that minority. The Hungarian state may thus be viewed an external factor in the nationalizing process of the Hungarian minority in Romania. One of the most important aspects of this relationship is the law concerning Hungarians living in neighboring states, which the present discussion will now examine.

Hungary as a state concerned with the fate of Hungarians living abroad considers that it has a political as well as a moral duty to particularly help those

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<sup>46</sup> However, we can identify a consolidated and conservative value system in those elements of DAHR's program that refer specifically to the Hungarian community.

<sup>47</sup> In contrast to much current opinion, this does not involve territorial separation. Hungarians in Romania, particularly after 1945, have accepted the existing state of affairs, promoting a policy that seeks the resolution of their problems within the framework of the Romanian state.

Hungarians who live in bordering countries. Throughout the 1990s this concern was expressed primarily through support of the institutions of these Hungarian national minorities. However, in 2001 the then conservative Hungarian government proposed a Law Regarding Hungarians Living in neighboring countries, which political and scientific discourse refers to as the Status Law.<sup>48</sup> The government considered that the enactment of this law would both encourage these Hungarians to refrain from emigration and also moderate the process of assimilation in the countries in question.<sup>49</sup>

The intention of both the Hungarian government and the leadership of the ethnic parties was in fact to further the nationalizing process by strengthening the minority communities. In this regard, two issues are important on a theoretical level, namely, 1) the Status Law defines the relationship between Hungarian individuals and the Hungarian state and 2) it also both redefines and re-institutionalizes the Hungarian conception of the nation. The expressed goal of the law is explained as follows:

While promoting the national identity of Hungarians living in neighboring countries, the Law obviously ensures prosperity and staying within the home country. According to the scope of the Law, the codifier applies different provisions to encourage living within the home country and does not support resettling to Hungary. Most forms of assistance will be applied within the home countries of Hungarians living in neighboring countries; the institutional structure needed for any assistance for the Hungarian minorities in the neighboring countries is established through this legal norm.<sup>50</sup>

The associated debate concerning the objective and subjective criteria for belonging to the Hungarian nation brought to light an old, and irresolvable, dispute involving the definition of the nation. While the opposition would accept only self-definition (self-identification) in respect to being Hungarian, the governmental parties argued that it is necessary to include "objective

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<sup>48</sup> Adopted by the Hungarian Parliament on 19 June 2001. Available at <http://www.htmh.hu/law.htm>.

<sup>49</sup> Hungarian membership in NATO, the European Union, and the Schengen agreement has created a certain additional problem for Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries associated with travel restrictions. This situation affects the various countries in question to varying degrees, but there has been a certain fear that Hungarian minorities will become separated from their fellow nationals living in the homeland if greater European integration does not come about.

<sup>50</sup> See the *Law on Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries* (Act T/4070).



criteria." Moreover, the Hungarian state also plays an important role in the redefining of Hungarian national minorities in ethno-cultural terms, even though those minorities are involved in nationalizing processes within the framework of their respective states. The Status Law serves to strengthen the symbolic boundaries of Hungary to include those minority communities in neighboring countries.

The Status Law in fact binds together all the members of the Hungarian ethno-cultural nation regardless of the neighboring state in which they live, thereby exerting a decisive influence on the politics of the national minorities. Hungary will thereby come to play a decisive role in the life-strategies of Hungarian individuals living in those groups. Intellectuals and the political elite will become even more dependent on Hungary, and Budapest will become the focal point for every Hungarian (as is intended). However, this connection is mediated by Hungarian organizations in the countries where the minorities live, and it is through this mediation, supported by Hungarian financial resources, that they realize their nation-building project.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the benefits and facilities accorded to Hungarians abroad by the Status Law, the latter also plays a major role in strengthening the boundaries of Hungarian minority groups within their respective countries. The Romanian government responded to this consequence of the law by referring it to the European Parliament for examination.<sup>52</sup> After recommendations from the Venice Commission, the prime ministers of the two states signed an agreement in which the Romania consented to the application of the law in Romania, but requested that non-Hungarian spouses of Hungarians in Romania should not receive a "spouse card."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The theoretical question that then arises is whether there are many parallel processes of Hungarian nation-building or only one. The situation existing prior to the Status Law suggested the former, while the post-Status Law situation indicates the latter.

<sup>52</sup> The motion for resolution concerning the Law Regarding the Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries, adopted on 19 June 2001 by the Hungarian Parliament, was presented by Representative Prisăcaru and others. See Document 9153 of the Parliamentary Assembly, 28 June 2001.

<sup>53</sup> The Venice Commission adopted the report entitled *Report on the Preferential Treatment of National Minorities by Their Kin-State* at its 48th Plenary Meeting, 19-20 October 2001, in Venice. Romania and Hungary signed the *Treaty the Republic of Hungary and Romania on Understanding, Cooperation, and Good Neighborhood* on 16 September 1996 in Timișoara. It is interesting to observe, however, that only some months after the agreement Adrian Năstase, the Prime Minister of Romania, edited a book that challenges the Status Law. See Năstase et al. 2002.

As the decade of the 1990s approached its end, the Hungarian government stated the following goals regarding its nationality policy:

The Government's policy on ethnic Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries aims to build and develop political, cultural, and economic ties between Hungary and Hungarian communities abroad as part of the general process of European unification, as well as to help Hungarians living in neighboring countries to live and prosper in their own homeland.

In order to achieve this, the bonds between ethnic Hungarian minorities and Hungary must be settled within a framework of legislation and government, so as to preserve the organic ties of Hungarian communities to Hungary, even after its accession to the European Union.<sup>54</sup>

This program reinforces Hungary's special relationship with the Hungarian minorities in the neighboring countries, but emphasizes the importance of settling this relationship within the framework of legislation. In addition, it is clearly stated for the first time expressed that the *organic ties between* Hungary and the Hungarian minority communities are of primary importance.

The official argument underlying the *Law on Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries* is stated as follows:

The main aim of this Law is to ensure special relations of the Hungarians living in neighboring countries to their kin state, the promotion and preservation of their national identity and well-being within their home country; therefore to contribute to the political and economic stability of the region, and through this to contribute to the Euro-Atlantic integration process of Hungary in particular and the Central and Eastern European region in general. In this context the Law promotes the preservation of the cultural and social cohesion as well as the economic consolidation of Hungarian communities abroad.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See the 1998 Government Program: For a Civic Hungary on the Eve of a New Millennium, available at <http://www.htmh.hu/govprog.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> See the *Law on Hungarians Living in Neighboring Countries* (Act T/4070).

Stated otherwise, the law seeks to preserve and foster the special relations that exist between Hungarians living in the region, regardless of their state allegiances, and to convince those who live in neighboring countries to remain in their home countries. The Status Law was initially intended to accord preferential national visas to those in possession of an Hungarian Identification Document, but the public debate came to be focused on the effect this law would have on controlling the immigration of Hungarians from neighboring countries.

## **CONCLUSION**

The nation as a central value will not lose its significance in the foreseeable future, and the politics of nationalizing states and nationalizing minorities will continue to determine political agendas in East-Central Europe. I thus maintain that the model presented here is essential to an understanding of national politics in the region.

The policies of Romania as a nationalizing state directly challenge the claims that the Hungarian elite considers to be essential for their nationalizing process, namely, the decentralization of power and the establishment of institutions which reproduce that elite. Hungary as an external national homeland strongly supports this nationalizing process with political and financial resources. It also influences the self-perception of members of the national minority and plays an important role in the power-relations within that minority itself.

Although European Union and NATO membership has created a framework for enforcing the individual and/or collective rights of national minorities in East-Central Europe, at present we can only say that although conflicts and tension have diminished, the various projects and intentions to strengthen and institutionalize group boundaries have nevertheless remained the same. Nationally relevant issues cannot be resolved by signing treaties, as the EU and NATO implicitly suggest.<sup>56</sup> Kinga Gál's conclusions in this regard appear to be correct:

[R]espect for the rights of national minorities in a given state is primarily a matter of political will is the most obvious conclusion reflected by the bilateral treaties... "Bilateralism" can become an effective form of minority protection only if both sides refrain from blocking the realization of the principles enshrined, and in particular if they are ready to

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<sup>56</sup> A relevant example of such a treaty is the 1996 Timișoara agreement between Hungary and Romania.

apply the implementation mechanism... [I]t would be desirable to include the representatives of minority organizations in the work of the joint intergovernmental committees with full mandate.<sup>57</sup>

Through decentralization, units with their own authority can be created such that national minorities may participate to a greater degree in those decision-making processes that primarily concern their own political, cultural, and economic interests. It is an open question, however, whether this would in fact foster or decrease conflict. My own view is that a certain level of separation most likely diminishes the potential for conflict in the case of Eastern Europe. On this point my argument is consistent with Daniele Conversi's observation that "The catalyst of many nationalist upheavals was the state's failure to decentralize its institutions, not to concentrate them."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Gál 1999, pp. 18-20.

<sup>58</sup> Conversi 2000, p. 423.

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## Chapter IV

# The Origins of the Power Elite in Lithuania, with Regional Comparisons

*Ramūnas Janušauskas*

### INTRODUCTION

The present discussion intends to examine the Lithuanian power elite, i.e., the movers and shakers within political parties, the media, business, intellectual circles, and all branches of government, in the light of the legacies of the communist period. For example, why has the current elite been so stable, with a change of generations appearing on the agenda of political parties only in the last few years? Why does the elite include very few trade union leaders (one MP), minority leaders (two-three MPs), Soviet-era dissidents (one MP), and those closely connected to the Catholic Church (only a handful)? Why does it consist primarily of "survivors" from the Soviet period, including the leaders of Sajudis, which comprised the national liberation movement and was the predecessor of the current center-right. Why were the Sajudis' leadership primarily intellectuals, several of them direct descendants of the inter-war elite? Why does the power elite consist almost exclusively of those who joined prior to 1991, with most of the younger members being too young to have been active in Sajudis? The answers to such questions could very well serve to explain the character of the Lithuanian power elite today.

The shake-up of 1989-1991, the emergence of political parties, party politics, and the first multi-party elections changed the composition of the political elite considerably. But in spite of the frequent cabinet changes that have been typical for the new Central and Eastern Europe democracies, the new Lithuanian elite was quickly consolidated, with familiar faces moving in and out of the government on a regular basis. Lithuania's power elite is small, closed, and cohesive, as was evidenced by their common efforts to join NATO and the European Union.

President Rolandas Paksas, impeached in 2004, served twice as both Mayor of Vilnius and Prime Minister. Current President Valdas Adamkus also served as president 1998-2003 before being defeated by Paksas. The current Prime Minister, Algirdas Brazauskas, is a former President as well as former head of the Communist Party of Lithuania (CPL). All other former Prime Ministers remain highly visible in either politics or business. President Adamkus is a newcomer from a certain point of view, but he and many of his

Lithuanian-American advisers may also be viewed as members of the pre-war elite. New faces included certain members of the New Union and Liberal Union parties in the 2000 Seimas elections, a few individuals from the Liberal Democratic Party in the 2002 municipal and presidential elections, and a few radical politicians. But their attempts to break into the ranks of the elite have been only partially successful.

One reason why leadership change has been so slow is that the majority of political parties in Lithuania lack a sufficient number of party members qualified for high level positions in the government. In addition, there is no institutionalized system to educate prospective as well as serving state officials. However, conventional political analysis alone can hardly answer the type of questions posed above. It must instead be combined with a degree of historical research.

### **THE SOVIET SUB-ELITE AND ITS POLITICS OF NATIVIZATION**

Lithuania's new elite in the inter-war years consisted of a tiny group of people concentrated in Kaunas. These were mainly ethnic Lithuanians who shared basic convictions concerning the core aims of their nation-state. This elite was swept away during the Soviet take-over and WWII, with some its members killed or repressed by the Soviets and most of the others forced to emigrate.<sup>1</sup> The communist *aparatchiks* and *nomenklatura* filled the void, forming what could be termed a sub-elite of the Soviet power elite who were concentrated in Moscow. This Lithuanian sub-elite, who included both locals and emissaries from Moscow, resided primarily in Vilnius, which was returned to Lithuania by Stalin in 1940 after having been previously occupied by Poland.

Along with their direct (and willing) involvement in the Stalinist repression of Lithuania, the leadership of the CPL understood very well that their power position vis-à-vis Moscow ultimately depended on the survival of the Lithuanian nation. They thus worked to increase ethnic Lithuanian membership in the party, taking advantage of the existing institutions of Soviet federalism and the system of *nomenklatura*, which was facilitated by the struggle of succession after Stalin's death in March 1953. Trends in Poland and in Lithuania were similar in this respect. Party membership more than doubled from 34,500 to 86,400 between 1945 and 1965, reaching 197,000 in 1986 (15.25 percent of the 1984 population). Lithuanians comprised only 38 percent

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<sup>1</sup> In 1944 some 64,000–70,000 Lithuanians fled to the West with the retreating Germans. These numbers consisted of a very large percentage of professionals, other skilled population groups, and the intelligentsia in general. The refugees also included 250 priests, four bishops, and about 60 percent of all members of the Lithuanian Writers' Association. See Vardys 1990 for a discussion of this point.

of the total in 1954, climbed to 61.5 percent by 1965, and finally reached 70.7 percent in 1989.<sup>2</sup> The number of Russian members (17.1 percent), however, continued to be greater than their share of the population (9.3 percent).<sup>3</sup>

As was the case in Poland, the regime in Lithuania gradually succeeded in mobilizing a relatively high level of public support and Party membership subsequently grew, particularly in light of the restrictions placed on career advancement for non-party members. For example, 49 percent of adults were party members in 1970, which increased to 63 percent by 1982 with the majority of newcomers being Lithuanians.<sup>4</sup> In addition, younger Lithuanians who had technical backgrounds and less ideological exposure began to replace old revolutionaries during the 1960s. The linguistic isolation of Lithuanians also played a vital role in fostering the view that the CPL provided native leadership.<sup>5</sup> However, the proportionally higher number of Russians, especially in leadership positions, and the repeated purges of the cultural establishment in the form of anti-nationalist campaigns served to camouflage the "nativization" of the party.

A similar pattern could also be observed in the Komsomol and Pioneers youth organisations, which were integral parts of the system of education and socialisation. 28 percent of Lithuanian students had joined these organizations by 1950, and by 1964 Komsomol membership stood at 209,000. Not only was this double the 1957 membership, it also included 40 percent of the Komsomol-aged youth (14–28 years). A non-Komsomol high school student was indeed a rarity by the late 1980s.<sup>6</sup> Even though the Komsomol as a support and recruitment organisation for the CPL in fact became transformed into an ideologically hollow façade headed by cynical and rationally minded career-makers, the regime's penetration of the youth in Lithuania was nevertheless much deeper than in Poland.

The Soviet *nomenklatura* system in Lithuania differed from that in Poland to the extent that the Kremlin always controlled, and not merely approved, the appointment of the First and Second Party Secretaries. As a rule, the First Secretary was a Lithuanian and the Second Secretary a Russian, except in the period 1954–1956. The First Secretary had limited general powers of

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<sup>2</sup> In Lithuania there were 24 party members per 1,000 population in 1965 in comparison with 58 per 1,000 in Russia. The figures for 1982 were respectively 50 per 1,000 and 77 per 1,000. See Keep 1996, pp. 145, 431; Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> Vardys 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Keep 1992, p. 311.

<sup>5</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, pp. 147, 156, 179.

<sup>6</sup> See Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, pp. 114, 148, concerning details of membership trends in the 1950s and 1960s.

local leadership in this system of power dyarchy, while the Second Secretary was responsible for organizational and personal matters. The latter thereby controlled the cadre policy of the First Secretary and acted as Moscow's representative whenever necessary.<sup>7</sup> Within this context, nativization politics in Lithuania were somewhat unique in all the USSR. For example, Moscow performed several purges of national cadre, such as in Latvia in 1959 and later in Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the three Central Asian Republics, but nothing of the sort happened in Lithuania.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the CPL First Secretary Antanas Snieckus, who had praised the "collective leadership" initially installed after Stalin's death, utilized Moscow's "nativization" campaign to tilt the balance within the CPL in favor of Lithuanians.<sup>9</sup> This was so effective that in 1971 some 85 percent of scientific workers were ethnically Lithuanian and only one of the nine Central Committee members, Second Secretary Popov, was Russian.<sup>10</sup> Such changes served to moderate the ever-present nationalist sentiments as well as insulate Lithuania from outside influences, such as the Lithuanian Diaspora, that Moscow considered to be undesirable.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the Lithuanian leadership gained greater control over appointments to *nomenklatura* positions during the last years of Snieckus' rule. Only the highest

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<sup>7</sup> See Miller 1992.

<sup>8</sup> See Keep 1996, p. 176, concerning the purges of party national elements. The Lithuanian Communist Youth Union (the Komsomol) was also an exception in this regard. In contrast, 24 percent of all Estonian Komsomol members were dismissed between December 1963 and March 1966 for refusing to accept Moscow's candidate for Second Secretary. See RL 1967/09/20.

<sup>9</sup> A decision taken 20 May 1953 by the Presidium of the CPSU stated that all officials who did not know the local language were to be recalled from Union republics. The order was countermanded after Beria's fall in June 1953, but it had already been widely implemented in Lithuania. See Keep 1996, p. 43.

Snieckus, a political twin of the Polish leader Władysław Gomułka, joined the Bolsheviks in 1917 and became the First Secretary of the underground Communist Party of Lithuania in 1936. He managed to survive party purges while in a Lithuanian jail. Snieckus began working for the Komintern in Moscow after being exchanged for Lithuanian clergy who had been jailed. He became the head of the official CPL on 25 June 1940 after the Soviet occupation of the country and assumed the top position in the Lithuanian security department at the same time. After initially retreating with the Red Army in 1941, he was parachuted into Lithuania to head the Red partisans. Snieckus' tenure as party leader came to be longer than that of all other Communist leaders in the world, including Mao. This honor was later passed to Kim Il Sung and is now held by Fidel Castro.

<sup>10</sup> See Harned 1975, p. 134, concerning the increased numbers of ethnic Lithuanians in scholarly and scientific institutions.

<sup>11</sup> Willerton 1992, p. 160.

level of leadership, i.e., the leaders of the Supreme Soviet and above, still had to be approved by Moscow.<sup>12</sup>

After Snieckus' death in 1974, the Kremlin chose not to disturb the delicate "national" balance that he had created and agreed to a compromise.<sup>13</sup> It is also possible that the center thought there was no need for a major re-shuffle at the time. For example, Keep argues that those supporting Snieckus' position were in fact much fewer in number than those who had supported Shelest and Mzhavanadze, the Ukrainian and Georgian party bosses who had been dismissed by Moscow in 1972 for having adopted an overly independent/nationalistic stance.<sup>14</sup>

In general, the peripheral elites throughout the USSR did succeed in consolidating their positions vis-à-vis the center in the 1970s, protecting their vital interests and expanding their domination of the core ethnic groups. The resulting *de facto* weakening of central authority was instrumental in inspiring demands for economic self-sufficiency within the republics. But while the CPL leadership had worked silently in this direction, the popular national movement born of Gorbachev's top-imposed/bottom-induced *perestroika* brought such demands into the open.

#### **SUB-ELITE LEGITIMIZATION**

Although there were only 1,500 communists in Lithuania in 1940, they had a much larger base of support, including many prominent left-oriented members of the intelligentsia who were dissatisfied with the course taken by the national dictatorship. Altogether some 15 percent of the population viewed the Soviet Union as a counter-balance to the expansion of radically nationalist Germany, and they supported the country's incorporation into what seemed to be a progressive, non-fascist, "socialist people's democracy." The new Soviet regime after the war also found support (and certainly met no resistance) among youth with peasant and worker backgrounds, elements of the poor peasantry, workers, minorities, and careerists, all of whom had been granted new avenues of vertical mobility by the political reorientation of the country.<sup>15</sup> However, changes in attitudes began occurring among Lithuanians concerning collaboration with the regime when no hot war between the Soviet Union and

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<sup>12</sup> Liekis 1996, p. 106.

<sup>13</sup> This decision was apparently promoted by Politburo member Mikhail Suslov, who had been one of Snieckus' close associates from his period of service in Lithuania after World War II.

<sup>14</sup> Keep 1992, pp. 159–160.

<sup>15</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, p. 79.

the United States developed, especially following the moderation of the regime after 1953.

Similarly to the Polish communists, the CPL sought to legitimize the communist regime by propagandizing its economic and social achievements (including the conquest of space), territorial gains, and lasting peace. But a major segment of the power sub-elite during the Soviet era succeeded in transforming themselves into the post-communist power elite for a quite different reason, namely, the CPL had become a genuine Lithuanian national party in composition, mentality, and goals. A remarkable demonstration of this fact was provided by Snieckus' speech at the 50th anniversary celebration in Moscow of the 1922 founding of the USSR, in which he referred to the "Soviet peoples," not the "Soviet people." Snieckus and the Azerbaijani leader Aliiev were the only speakers to do so.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Snieckus was widely popular in Lithuania due to his ability to maintain a certain independence from Moscow and promote national cadre, and by the time of his death he had become a symbol of ethnic ascendancy to many Lithuanians.<sup>17</sup> The post-Snieckus leadership even attempted to capitalize on his popularity by naming a new city after him.

By the 1980s, CPL members had largely been legitimized in the eyes of the local population by virtue of (a) defending local interests vis-à-vis Moscow and (b) nurturing nationalism. It should be noted that during the *perestroika* period the CPL under Brazauskas' skilfully exploited the growing nationalism for their own benefit. In addition, the "irreparably romantic" members of the pre-war intelligentsia who had become incorrigible realists after the Soviet takeover also won back their legitimacy by nurturing regionalism and a "controlled nationalism." They and their descendants later formed the intellectual milieu for Sąjūdis and became some of its most active members.<sup>18</sup>

It should be noted that leading political figures in the various regions of the USSR were equipped with extensive *nomenklatura* rights over appointments to thousands of lower-level jobs within their territories. This produced strong group bonds that were often reinforced by ethnic identities and national feelings. In post-Stalinist times, central actors sought support against their rivals by nurturing regionalism through the beneficent expansion of patronage to both cronies and potential allies alike. Moscow sought to reassert its domination of regional elites when it recognized the fact of such regional power consolidation, but these elites closed ranks and systematically deceived

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<sup>16</sup> RLR 46/73/02/15.

<sup>17</sup> See the discussion in *Akiraciai*, no. 3 (1974).

<sup>18</sup> Stromas 1991, pp. 80–81, discusses the roles played by the pre-war intelligentsia and their legacy in Sąjūdis.

the central authorities concerning the actual state of affairs in their respective bailiwicks. This further deepened the problem of central control and reinforced the power of the local elites.<sup>19</sup>

The CPL and the other republican parties gradually built up domestic power bases in this manner, trading the loyalty of the local population and successful economic development for more centrally distributed resources (Union funds). In addition, their long tenures in office generated strong institutional bonds as well as loyalty to those in charge, who in Lithuania were first and foremost the local party bosses rather than those in the Kremlin. And the local party bosses were careful to affirm their positions within the local patronage system.<sup>20</sup> But since the party machine no longer functioned as a reliable communication channel between the center and periphery by 1980, Moscow came to rely on KGB information and on letters from ordinary citizens and rank and file party members.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the security forces (KGB and the Interior Ministry) comprised those institutions that were the least penetrated by local party machines. This meant, however, that the KGB later collapsed much more easily than could ever have been anticipated since it never enjoyed popular support and itself relied on other power structures, such as the army and the Interior Ministry.

But national feelings were deeply hurt by what came to be viewed as foreign domination. Moreover, people with a native command of Russian had clear advantage in terms of professional and social opportunities that other ethnic groups were relatively deprived of. The large investments made in the teaching of Russian as a second (and even native) language may well have minimized this problem for the sub-elites across the Soviet Union, but this policy encountered major resistance among the non-Russian populations and local communists.<sup>22</sup>

While the nativization of internal politics somewhat strengthened the bond between the elite and the ethnic Lithuanian population, it also made it possible to press cultural and linguistic demands. Many Lithuanian nationalists believed that their nation was most threatened by linguistic Russification, the destruction of national and historic consciousness, and low birth rates, which weakened the very foundations of the nation.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, central economic planning in the multinational Soviet empire strengthened national dissent throughout the USSR. All national elites, including Yeltsin's counter-elite faction in Moscow, found a common interest in undermining the position

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<sup>19</sup> Urban 1989, pp. 59–60, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Willerton 1992.

<sup>21</sup> Cappelli 1988, p. 257.

<sup>22</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, pp. 115, 197.

<sup>23</sup> Girnius 1989, p. 119.

of the Union center in Moscow, which served to channel potential ethno-political conflicts between neighboring republics into a struggle against the empire system as a whole. Local elites could rely on the local population when bargaining for more resources from Moscow until the point when the regime was no longer worth fighting for. And when the counter-elite that was emerging from the new national intelligentsia forged an alliance with local party leaders, it became possible for Lithuania to pursue the path of independence from the Soviet Union.

In summary, the thirty-plus years of nativization and industrialization policies created a modern Lithuanian society in which Lithuanians formed the absolute majority in all social structures, including the elite.

### **THE SUB-ELITE'S ADMINISTRATIVE MONOPOLY**

The transformation of the Soviet sub-elite into the Lithuanian national elite was facilitated by their monopoly over administrative functions, which gave rise to a lack of administrative skills among the members of the non-communist elites who became concentrated in Sajudis.

After brief revolutionary periods of 1940-1941 and 1944-1953, elite changes proceeded slowly.<sup>24</sup> Necessary adjustments were ensured by periodic "house cleaning" and by the Soviet "patronage system," which enabled each new CPL leader to replace the old gang with his own. However, there were only two CPL leaders between 1944 and 1988.<sup>25</sup> Willerton argues that the various governing coalitions that were based on patronage connections in fact came to link key institutions and interests within an administrative unit. Furthermore, not only was a unified team in a better position to implement the broad policy programs that were hammered out in Moscow, they were also thereby able to guarantee a measure of political stability at the republican level. This assured the local leader's good standing in Moscow as well as his local authority.<sup>26</sup>

Lithuania's governing structure was a copy of the all-Union structure, comprising a tightly knit patronage network subject to Moscow's scrutiny. There was a very high degree of party-state inter-penetration, with some 85 percent of decisions taken by the Council of Ministers articulating the decisions

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<sup>24</sup> Insofar as the militant underground struggle against the Lithuanian regime bore the clear hallmarks of a civil war, the term "revolution" may justifiably be used. This was similar to the case in Poland. See Stromas 1991, pp. 82-84)

<sup>25</sup> The last re-shuffling at the top took place in 1988 under First Secretary Algirdas Brazauskas. The CPL broke away from the CPSU under his leadership and competed for popularity with Sajudis.

<sup>26</sup> Willerton 1992, pp. 175-176, 182.



of the Central Committee of the CPL.<sup>27</sup> Out of necessity state institutions were more pragmatically oriented than those of the party, which were more ideological, but the latter also dominated the strategy of decision-making. It was only to be expected, however, that party and state functionaries had similar interests and loyalties in that they spent their careers either within party, the state, or both, and they together formed the Lithuanian power sub-elite.

Gleason argues that the local leader could pursue a certain degree of autonomy in exchange for the orderly satisfaction of central demands, and that this served to increase his legitimacy at home. In addition, his authority to nominate the local *nomenklatura* established patronage networks that in part rested on ethnic cronyism and nepotism.<sup>28</sup> The national leader had to develop and utilize such political resources in competition with other republican leaders while, at the same time, routinely understating them to the center. The local leader had to avoid conflict within his republic, make arrangements that discredited local whistle-blowers, restrict discussion, pursue compromise rather than overt confrontation, and display one face to the national population while displaying another to the center.<sup>29</sup>

Snieckus' successor Griskevicius redrew the patronage system within a few years to fit his own needs by transferring six of Snieckus' most trusted associates from top party to top state positions and replacing them with younger leaders. He sought in this way to bring more energy into efforts to resolve the economic slowdown and encourage national re-awakening.<sup>30</sup> In later years the party and administrative sub-elite pursued policies that encouraged the continued development of Lithuanian ethnic identity and mobilized the social and economic potential of the country. The members of the elite eventually took advantage of *perestroika* in the late 1980s, joined the mass national liberation movement, and ultimately won full independence for Lithuania. They also thereby won a new enhanced status for themselves as well.

### **SAJUDIS: A DIFFERENT FISH FROM THE SAME BUCKET?**

In addition to the CPL, Sajudis has supplied the bulk of members of Lithuania's current power elite. Sajudis, the main engine of national revival, was born in the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in May and June 1988 with

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<sup>27</sup> Liekis 1996, p. 115.

<sup>28</sup> See Cesevicius 1995. Since this situation was quite analogous to the institutionalized pattern of power arrangements in pre-war Lithuania, it perfectly well suited the views of many Lithuanians concerning how power should be exercised in a small country.

<sup>29</sup> Gleason 1990, pp. 71, 96–98.

<sup>30</sup> Willerton 1992, p. 167.

the establishment of a commission to further the aims of *perestroika*, democratization, and *glasnost*.<sup>31</sup> Half of the 500 founding members were also CPL members, most of them being scholars, scientists, writers, painters, and other representatives of the largely ethnic Lithuanian intelligentsia. Sajudis was modelled on the Estonian example, and it developed into a mass movement after a series of organizational and "ecological" meetings. The reform program it put forward was based on national independence, respect for human and civil rights, social justice, economic development, protection of the environment, and education in national awareness and culture. This meant that its broad political program and overall goals were similar to those of Solidarity in Poland. One of the initial goals of the Sajudis' leadership was in fact national autonomy, and they judged that the separation of the CPL from the CPSU was a realistic first step in this direction. It is significant that such demands were supported by elements within the CPL leadership as well.<sup>32</sup>

The CPL had proceeded reluctantly with *perestroika* between 1985 and 1988. Party conservatives, who sought both to seize the initiative and eventually take charge of the Sajudis program as well, began working on a program of economic autonomy. At the same time they denied Sajudis access to the state-owned mass media and denounced it for encouraging national hostilities. As tensions grew, Gorbachev sent Aleksandr Yakovlev, his closest ally in the Politburo, to Vilnius on 11-13 August 1989 to sort things out in favor of *perestroika*, and he succeeded in forcing the CPL leadership to speed up reforms and satisfy a number of Sajudis' demands. This visit, which was widely publicized, also served to encourage the growing opposition, including certain radical groups. For example, a crowd of some 200,000 gathered in Vilnius on 23 August under the leadership of the underground Lithuanian Freedom League in order to commemorate the loss of Lithuania independence because of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939.<sup>33</sup> The demonstrators also called for the Lithuanian flag to be raised on the Gediminas Tower, the castle in the center of Vilnius, but they were assaulted by the police and the military. This violence angered the public, Sajudis, and even certain CPL leaders, who all demanded an investigation. In order to appease the public, the tradition national flag was officially raised at the castle on on October 7 before a crowd of 100,000, and

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<sup>31</sup> Sajudis was formally established on 3 June 1988 under the leadership of Vytautas Landsbergis, a professor of music. Landsbergis, who eventually became both Speaker of the Parliament and head of state, succeeded in guiding Lithuania to independence from the Soviet Union. He now serves as a member of the European Parliament.

<sup>32</sup> Liekis 1996, pp. 7, 11, 15–16.

<sup>33</sup> The Sajudis newsletter had published the Pact together with its secret protocols on 8 August.

the law was also changed to approve other national and religious symbols. Nevertheless, the CPL leader Songaila had by then lost authority both within the party and in Moscow and was replaced by Algirdas Brazauskas. Brazauskas, who would later serve as both President and Prime Minister, took over much of Sajudis' rhetoric and adopted many of its recommendations.<sup>34</sup>

Brazauskas, a man of personal charisma who was able to win popular support and also work with Sajudis and other political challengers, realized that major political change was necessary, but he also understood that such change depended on the dismantling of traditional patronage politics. Consequently, in less than 18 months he succeeded in replacing all CPL Secretariat members except himself, 11 Central Committee department chiefs, 16 ministers, and 32 regional first secretaries. Most of the newcomers were from the post-Stalin generation and not part of the Griskevicius network, coming instead from mid-level or regional positions. Certain of them also came from outside the mainstream party apparatus, such as Kestutis Glaveckas, the leader of the Lithuanian Center Union, and Justas Vincas Paleckis, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. Brazauskas' authority came ultimately to reside upon his own popular standing, which, being greater than that of any other politician or organization, rendered the "old boys network" rather less important.<sup>35</sup> The latter was nevertheless instrumental in his and the reformed socialist party's return to power in 1992.

The Sajudis conference in October 1988 was attended by 1,121 delegates that represented 1,000 professional, political, cultural, and social groups.<sup>36</sup> Nearly 60 percent of the newly elected Sajudis leadership were CPL members.<sup>37</sup> But while some 50 percent of CPL members were workers and peasants who were not active in politics, most of the Sajudis membership were extremely active, highly educated, and affluent, essentially representing the upper and upper-middle strata of Lithuanian society.<sup>38</sup> By November 1988 there were more than 100,000 active members and supporters of Sajudis, and the race for leadership between Sajudis and the CPL had begun. This competition with the Communist Party for popular support, along with the existence of much more radical groups, radicalized both Sajudis and the

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<sup>34</sup> Liekis 1996, pp. 24–25.

<sup>35</sup> Willerton 1992, pp. 185–186.

<sup>36</sup> More than 77 percent of the delegates were university graduates, 96 percent were Lithuanian, 0.8 percent Russian, 0.6 percent Jewish, 0.9 percent Polish, and 1.1 percent from other ethnic backgrounds. See Vardys 1992, p. 447.

<sup>37</sup> Liekis 1996, p. 28.

<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that the CPL's cautious responses to changes in the popular mood constituted an important factor in the growth of Sajudis' popularity. See Liekis 1996.

Lithuanian elements of the CPL, resulting in concerted demands for greater independence. Following a series of massive Sajudis-organized meetings in the summer of 1989, many CPL members shifted their support to Sajudis. The danger that they would lose all authority eventually forced the CPL to support Sajudis' claim for full independence, which was strengthened by the growing public knowledge of the history of the Soviet take-over in connection with the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact.

However, the CPL acted cautiously under pressure from Moscow and the more intractable segment of the party, refusing to declare Lithuanian law sovereign, as had been done in Estonia. At this point it lost the support of Sajudis, who radicalized public opinion as its membership realized that success in Moscow's efforts to reform the Soviet Union would undercut its demands for autonomy. This change forced the CPL to adopt a more radical position as well. Sajudis, recognizing that there would be only limited benefits in further conflict with the CPL, came to utilize the latter as a buffer in negotiations with the Kremlin.<sup>39</sup> A new consensus emerged that finally led to the adoption of laws concerning legal sovereignty, citizenship, immigration, and full civic rights and freedoms. This brought Lithuania to the threshold of independence, which was eventually declared on 11 March 1990.

#### **OUTSIDE THE ELITE: NGOS, FORMER-DISSIDENTS, AND MINORITIES**

One of the questions asked in the *Introduction* above was why so few trade union, Church, minority, and anti-Soviet dissident leaders are members of the current power elite.

Unlike the situation in Poland, there was no co-ordinated worker/trade union-based reform movement in state-dominated Lithuanian society. Economic conditions were rather good, expectations high, workers' self-organization low, and strikes very rare. And when strikes did occur, they were easily brought under control by the authorities in a peaceful manner. In addition, the state-controlled trade unions had largely been discredited and independent unions did not yet exist. Nor did the Lithuanian reform movement develop around the Church. And while the Church supported the reform movement as well as the reformers inside the CPL, it did not participate in political struggle. The Catholic Church once again became a normal member of society beginning in autumn 1988, following the changes in the CPL leadership, the rise of Sajudis, and the radicalization of popular opinion. Churches were returned to congregations, priests came back from exile, and

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<sup>39</sup> Liekis 1996, p. 324.

masses were broadcast on television and radio.<sup>40</sup> However, the Catholic Church had no opportunity to play the role of a mediator in society as it did in Poland since the new, non-*nomenklatura* elite as well as the various counter-elite factions had become thoroughly secularized under the Soviets.

The low number of minority leaders among the elite can also be explained in part by historical events, primarily the breakup of the CPL in late 1989. Two factions emerged from this breakup, namely, a larger and mostly ethnic Lithuanian group who chose to separate from the CPSU and a smaller mostly non-Lithuanian group who chose to maintain organizational ties with the latter. The pro-Lithuania members had been represented by 855 delegates at the Twentieth (and last) CPL Congress, while the pro-Soviet group, who called for "harsh measures" in support of unity at a CPSU conference and later acted as a fifth column in the country, were represented by only 160 delegates.<sup>41</sup> The Lithuanian Komsomol severed its ties with the all-union Komsomol at the same time, but it eventually disappeared without a trace. Its former leaders either joined the reformed CPL, entered government, became Sajudis members, or entered the business world.

The CPL leaders in support of separation defended their position at the CPSU conference held in Moscow on 25 December 1989. Brazauskas, for one, argued that the party had no chance to stay in power if it did not secede from the CPSU, and that it was necessary to implement true equality between the various national parties.<sup>42</sup> The pro-Soviet segment of the CPL gained support from Vienybė-Jedinstvo-Jedność (Unity), the counter-Sajudis mass movement consisting primarily of Russians and Poles who feared being politically dominated by Lithuanians. Unity followers opposed the law that established Lithuanian as the official language of the country, and they went so far as to demand the formation of an autonomous territory for the Polish minority in southeast Lithuania. However, the pro-CPSU Unity block lost all legitimacy after the failed coups in Vilnius and Moscow in 1991. This entire series of developments beginning with the breakup of the CPL meant that non-Lithuanians came to be poorly represented in the post-Soviet power elite within the country.

Finally, the official intelligentsia who formed the backbone of the Sajudis leadership considered Soviet-era dissidents to be both extremists as well as anachronisms. It must also be said that many long-time dissidents

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p 28.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 282. The smaller, so-called "platform" group claimed to have 35,000 members in 1990.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 67, 74.

initially viewed Sajudis as a communist-dominated organization whose leaders could not be trusted.<sup>43</sup>

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The current Lithuanian power elite has its roots in the Soviet past. Many Sajudis leaders emerged from (or near) the CPL, and many former CPL leaders have successfully continued their careers in politics and business. Stability at the top in Lithuania obviously does not depend solely on the legacies of the communist period, but the latter help to explain the success of the post-communist transformation, which itself is also partly responsible for slow upward mobility within the political parties. (Why change successful leaders?) There are also a number of other determinants of continuity and stability within the elite, including the small size of the country and the ethnic homogeneity of the population. It must also be said that while the power elite's reliance on family networks and status has greatly decreased over the last century, this has not lead to instability. On the contrary, the old elitist stability mechanism has been replaced to a great degree by stability mechanisms that developed during the Soviet period, which have been adapted to the new situation during the post-Soviet period. These involve client-patron relations and *esprit de corps* connections, such as professional networks (or clans) of politicians, doctors, lawyers, law enforcement officials, the military, and so forth. A completely new element in the elite stability mechanism that has emerged since independence involves business-to-business and business-to-government ties. It must be noted, however, that a substantial part of the old *nomenklatura*, above all factory directors, have successfully transformed their political-administrative capital into economic influence. Stability at the top has remained, but elite power connections have become more diffused.

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<sup>43</sup> Krickus 1993, p. 171.

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## Chapter V

# **The Left-Right Dimension in Lithuanian Politics: Facilitation or Complication of Political Choice?**

*Artūras Valionis*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Two main issues will be discussed in this essay. First, do the electorate and political actors recognize the left–right axis as an important element of the Lithuanian political system? Second, if the electorate in fact do so, how are we to investigate its content, dynamics, and significance? Stated otherwise, the main question to be discussed concerns the role performed by the left-right (L-R) axis in Lithuanian politics, namely, does the L-R dimension simplify political reality and structure the political preferences of voters, or does it rather confuse and complicate the political decision-making on the part of citizens?

The empirical aspect of this study is based on the data file of the *European Value Survey (EVS)*, which was conducted in 32 European countries, including Lithuania, in 1990 and 1999.<sup>1</sup> Some additional data published in *Political Culture Survey Report 2000* have also been utilized.

### **THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LEFT-RIGHT DIMENSION**

The concepts of "left" and "right" appear to perform important functions in modern democracies:

Classifying political statements and beliefs based on political left-right distinctions... allows citizens to orient themselves in a complex political world... [I]t acts as a code in the system of political communication.<sup>2</sup>

The Left-Right dimension, as a political concept, is a higher-level abstraction used to summarize one's stand on the important political issues of the day. It serves the function of organizing and simplifying a complex political reality,

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<sup>1</sup> The original EVS questionnaire includes more than 300 questions. The particular questions analyzed in this essay are listed in Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Klingelman, 1995, p. 191.

providing an overall orientation toward a potentially limitless number of issues, political parties, and social groups.<sup>3</sup>

The question is whether the concepts of "left" and "right" that are widely used in political discourse in the continental democracies are applicable to the East-Central European reality. One could argue, for example, that since the political contexts, social structures, and dominant cultural patterns in East-Central European countries are very specific, "external" concepts that are appropriate to the particular social order in Western democracies may not be able to describe the reality of countries experiencing systemic transformation.

This type of criticism is also supported by the argument that even in the consolidated Western political systems the L-R dimension seems to be ever less important in determining one's political preferences:

The idea of a single dimension underlying people's attitudes and behaviors seems to challenge the characteristics of modernity or post-modernity. People living in such a society are assumed to be fragmented in their value orientations, which indicates that a coherent patterning of values is lacking. If that is indeed the case, then it becomes problematic to trace the political and social values back to one single dimension.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, recent comparative political science research has seriously challenged the idea that the political importance of L-R classifications and distinctions is diminishing.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, empirical evidence has not supported the hypothesis that "*The more modern a country is, the less are political and social issues grounded in the left-right polarity. Left and right will still serve as guiding principles underlying social and political issues primarily in less modern countries.*"<sup>6</sup> Even though the importance of the social bases of political cleavages has diminished, the issues that derive from these cleavages continue to influence voting choices.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, 37 political parties were registered in Lithuania for the Parliamentary elections that were held in 2000. When there is such a large number of political parties, it might be expected that the L-R dimension may

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<sup>3</sup> Inglehart 1990a, pp. 292-293.

<sup>4</sup> Halman and Heinen 1996, p.35.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Klingelmann 1995; Fuchs and Klingelmann 1989; Klingelmann and Fuchs 1990; Van den Broek and Heunks 1993; and Van der Eijk and Niemoller 1983, as referred to by Ester et al. 1997, p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> Halman and Heinen 1996, pp. 53-54.

<sup>7</sup> Dalton 1996, p. 337.

play a significant role in making party choices. This matter should thus be tested empirically.

### **DO EUROPEAN POPULATIONS STILL LOCATE THEMSELVES ON THE LEFT-RIGHT AXIS?**

The readiness and ability of people to locate themselves on the L-R scale is an informative indicator of one's political preferences. In this respect, two functions of the L-R measurement may be emphasized, namely, not only does it indicate a willingness to locate oneself on this scale, it also displays the ideological identification (self-location) of the respondent if they recognize the terminology.<sup>8</sup> It is assumed that those who are able to position themselves in terms of the L-R dimension have indeed understood the terminology, and that they actually know what is meant by the terms "left" and "right" (in the local context).<sup>9</sup>

In fact, the *European Value Survey* data for 1999 support the above-mentioned view that L-R concepts are still important in European politics insofar as the majority of respondents were able to locate themselves on the L-R axis. In none of the West European countries did the proportion of respondents unable to place themselves on the L-R scale exceed one-fourth of the sample, and in certain societies, such as Malta, Netherlands, and Sweden, nearly all respondents were able to do so (Table 1).

Significant differences can be observed in this respect between the new democracies of East-Central Europe and Western countries. For example, the proportion of non-identifiers in the Vysegrad countries and in the former-Yugoslav states is similar to that observed in the West, while the L-R continuum seems to be less accepted in the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia), where approximately one-third of the population refuse to identify themselves on the L-R axis, in South European countries (Bulgaria, Romania), and in the Slavic post-Soviet states (Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus). Romania and Belarus, in which nearly half of the population did not identify themselves on the L-R axis, appear to constitute cases in which the L-R axis does not perform its function of simplifying the political process. In all other East-Central European countries, the proportion of individuals not accepting the L-R distinction is no more than one-third. Consequently, one can argue that the L-R division is both institutionalized and important in structuring people's political preferences in East-Central Europe, although apparently to a lesser extent than in Western Europe.

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<sup>8</sup> Halman and Heinen 1996, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> Fuchs and Klingelmann 1989.

Nevertheless, one should keep in mind the peculiarities of self-placement on the L-R scale. Since the ten-point scale used in the *EVS* by design has no medium point, individuals are forced to adopt a stance on one or the other half of the continuum. However, the option "5" prevailed among those who identified their positions on the scale in all countries except Malta and Bulgaria, where greater proportions of respondents chose "6." This fact supports the argument that the respondents may have viewed this particular option as the medium-point. Therefore, in order to more carefully evaluate the level of institutionalization of L-R categories in a particular country, attention should be directed to the proportion of respondents who have clearly indicated their positions on the scale. In other words, it is necessary to calculate the number of those who can be identified as "clearly left" (options 1-4) or "clearly right" (7-10).

Table 1. Self-placement of Respondents on the L-R Scale in European Countries in 1999, in percent.<sup>10</sup>

	Unable to indicate their position on the L-R axis	Left	Center	Right
Malta	3	12	61	24
Netherlands	4	34	39	23
Sweden	4	32	32	32
Denmark	10	24	38	28
Iceland	10	26	30	34
Finland	12	21	35	32
Greece	12	26	34	28
Germany	17	24	40	19
Ireland	18	12	52	18
Belgium	18	22	43	17
France	18	31	34	17
United Kingdom	19	21	47	13
Austria	19	16	49	16
Northern Ireland	21	15	42	22
Italy	22	25	32	21
Portugal	23	27	30	20
Spain	24	31	31	14
Luxembourg	26	20	38	16
Czech Republic	8	20	37	35
Slovakia	16	27	39	18
Croatia	20	19	50	21
Poland	22	21	36	21
Hungary	23	18	49	10
Slovenia	28	18	44	10

<sup>10</sup> The data are taken from the *European Value Study* for 1999.

Lithuania	32	17	34	17
Estonia	32	8	39	21
Latvia	33	9	37	21
Bulgaria	33	17	26	24
Russia	36	19	33	12
Ukraine	37	17	27	19
Romania	45	10	27	18
Belarus	48	8	29	15

As is evident, the proportion of people who clearly identify their positions on the L-R scale, as well as non-identifiers, is greater in most Western countries. The percentage of respondents that are either "left" or "right" is greatest in Sweden (64 percent), Iceland (60 percent), Netherlands (57 percent), Greece (54 percent), Finland (53 percent), Denmark (52 percent), France (48 percent), Italy (46 percent), Spain (45 percent), Portugal (47 percent), and Germany (43 percent). Of the East-Central European countries that participated in the study, the Czech Republic (55 percent), Slovakia (45 percent), and Poland (42 percent) (the Vysegrad countries) display results similar to Western Europe. In respect to Lithuania, the L-R axis comprises a continuum along which a significant part of the population is divided insofar as "leftists" and "rightists" comprise roughly one-third of the sample (34 percent). It thus performs a particular political function.

In summary, the L-R dimension, if not reduced to traditional class conflicts, can be regarded as an important factor determining one's political preferences. The notions of "left" and "right" are functional in East-Central Europe since they are used in the self-definition of a significant part of the population, although to a lesser extent than in the Western countries. The *EVS* data analyzed here support the argument that the L-R space is the dominant dimension of party competition in almost all national systems.<sup>11</sup>

However, since the content of the L-R dimension is context-based, it is now necessary to investigate what these concepts might mean and whether they simplify political reality and structure people's political preferences in the Lithuanian context.

### WHAT DO "LEFT" AND "RIGHT" MEAN?

The meaning of L-R concepts in a particular society depends on the historical context, with "left" originally being associated with the nobility and "right" with the clergy.<sup>12</sup> With the coming of industrialization, both notions

<sup>11</sup> Sani and Sartori 1984, as quoted in Thomassen and Schmitt 1999, p. 205.

<sup>12</sup> Halman and Heinen 1996, p. 36.

became associated with the cleavage in society between labor and capital, particularly the class conflict. In the European tradition, "left" is identified as progressive, i.e., in favor of social change and equality, whereas "right" is identified as conservative, i.e., in favor of retaining the status quo and against greater social equality.<sup>13</sup>

Both notions have become more associated with issues like the (re)distribution of income and wealth and the role of the government in the economy and society. Left represents that part of society that favors a more just distribution of income and wealth and welcomes state intervention to achieve this, while the right part of a society stresses a class society and the principles of a free market economy and independent individuals, and thus strongly favors the minimizing of state control.<sup>14</sup>

In this definition, "left" and "right," as two opposed standpoints in respect to the idea of justice in society, are primarily focused on the organization of the economic system in general and on the distribution of income and the role of the state in particular. However, the L-R dimension can be applied not only to economic issues, but also to other politically relevant problems. Consequently, a distinction must be drawn between "old" and "new" types of "left" and "right." This is especially the case in economically advanced societies, where the dominance of economic issues as a basis of political conflict has decreased, leading to the emergence of a "New Left" and a "New Right" that have a changed content. Within this context, issues not associated with traditional class conflicts, including such moral and ethical issues as abortion, euthanasia, nuclear energy, and environmental pollution, have been politicized, and "left" and "right" are used to express fundamentally different views in this regard.

Left is regarded to take the sides of the poor, the disadvantaged, the deprived and minority groups; they are most concerned about the environment and opposed to nuclear energy and arms, and in moral issues left represents the liberal stances. Right is commonly seen as the suppressor, nationalistic and sometimes even racist, and commonly associated with the conservative and traditional standpoints.

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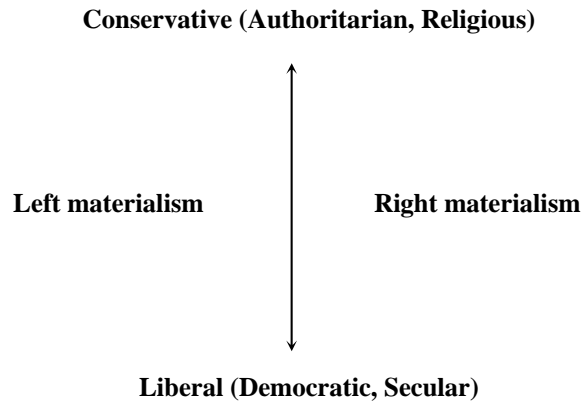
<sup>13</sup> See Lipset et al. 1954, p. 1135.

<sup>14</sup> Halman and Heinen 1996, p. 37.

They are the strongest proponents of authority, order, maintaining the status quo, and a restrictive moral society.<sup>15</sup>

That is to say that both "old" and "new" L-R dimensions indicate different aspects of how the more general notions of "justice" and "social order" are perceived in a particular society. In order to distinguish between these "old" and "new" notions, and to see which describes political cleavages better, a two-dimensional axis will be used to assist the analysis of the attitudes and party preferences of L-R identifiers. One dimension will indicate "traditional" L-R distinctions and will primarily concern the economic sphere. A second axis, which may be termed the conservative-liberal or authoritarian-democratic axis, will reflect attitudes towards moral issues. To the extent that a religious-secular dimension may be assumed to correlate with the authoritarian-liberal dimension, the former can be considered as an element of the authoritarian-liberal axis. In addition, it must be emphasized that the vertical dimension in the diagram concerns not only "post-material" issues, but also other moral and value problems that are potential sources of political debate. Dalton remarks in this regard that the "new left support a sustainable society and libertarian values, and a new right represent conservative social values and advocacy of more structured life choices."<sup>16</sup> This clearly extends the meaning of the terms "new" "left" and "right."

Diagram 1. Two-Dimensional Combination of "Old" and "New" L-R notions.



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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Dalton 1996, p. 333.

Since this two-dimensional scale does not restrict issues to economic matters, it is possible to locate L-R identifiers on this scale in respect to the "package" of views, evaluations, and attitudes they have concerning various politically relevant issues in a particular society. The discussion below will analyze whether the concepts of "left" and "right" have meanings in Lithuania that are similar to those in Western European traditions, or whether they have acquired content specific to the Lithuanian political context.

### **THE FORMATION OF THE LEFT-RIGHT AXIS IN LITHUANIA**

Some authors argue that L-R terminology has resulted from the specific types of political conflict that dominated the institutionalization of L-R symbolism in the sphere of politics.<sup>17</sup> The principal task at this point of our investigation then becomes to identify the content that was attached to the concepts of "left" and "right" when they first appeared in political discourse in Lithuania and how their meaning has changed over time. Particular attention will be directed to the question of whether the population shares one or several perceptions of L-R notions. Another important issue is whether today's newly emerging social structure has any significant impact on the self-placement of the electorate on the L-R axis and, consequently, upon their political choices, or whether value commitments are instead more important in determining political preferences and political identification.

The *European Value Survey* data of 1990 and 1999 make it possible to analyze the essential differences between "left" and "right" identifiers, and to see whether value and moral commitments or economic attitudes distinguish between them. Additionally, analyzing the dynamics with prevailing attitudes of both left and right identifiers over a period of ten years makes it possible to investigate whether the content of "left" and "right" has incorporated new meanings or remained static and stable. This is important since a potentially new basis of political division is established whenever citizens reorient their L-R framework to reflect new values and interests in new issues.

[A] change in the content of left-right orientations therefore involves a more fundamental transformation of mass politics than a simple change in issue interests, because it affects how citizens evaluate politics and orient themselves to the political process.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Fuchs and Klingelmann 1989, pp. 232-233

<sup>18</sup> Dalton 1996, p. 333.



We may summarize this point by saying that, first, we must identify the specificity of the L-R axis and how it functions and, second, establish the extent to which it determines political relations and voting preferences.

If the L-R dimension was institutionalized at the beginning of the process in which the political system took shape, and if all subsequent conflicts are integrated into this already existing dimension, the conflicts that had formerly been the basis for distinguishing between people along the L-R axis may come to be replaced by the new ones that emerge as social and political realities change. For this reason, the L-R dimension, once it has emerged and been institutionalized, may in the long run prove to be dysfunctional, thereby contributing to an increase in complexity instead of performing its central task of reducing complexity. In order to discuss this problem, it is first necessary to examine how the L-R axis has been introduced into political discourse.

#### **THE ON-GOING COMMUNIST--ANTI-COMMUNIST LEGACY IN LEFT-RIGHT CONCEPTIONS**

L-R discourse emerged on the political agenda in Lithuania during the first stage of transition from the communist regime. Within that context, in which "leftist" became a synonym for "communist," the L-R conflict was primarily based on attitudes towards the former regime. "Rightists" supported a radical break with the communist past, which they evaluated in extremely negative terms, while those individuals and political actors who viewed the past more moderately and sought to identify its positive aspects as well were labeled as "leftists." The L-R distinction was thus originally based on value commitments that "rightists" expressed in terms of national sentiments. They also accused "leftists" of their supposedly weaker sentiments in this respect.

The results of the *European Value Survey* conducted in Lithuania in 1990 support the argument that the L-R axis was already functional at that time since nearly two-thirds of respondents were able to identify their positions on the L-R scale (Table 2). It is also significant that the two main actors on the political stage in 1990 were the Communist Party of Lithuania and the national movement, with the newly-emerged and still weak political parties operating under the umbrella of the latter. Not only did a rough L-R division thus reflect support for one of these two political forces, it in fact preceded the formation of the party system.

Table 2. People Speak of "Left" and "Right" in Political Matters How Would You Place Your Views on a Ten-point Scale, Generally Speaking?<sup>19</sup>

	1990	1999
Left	13	17
Center	27	34
Right	21	17
Unable to locate themselves on the L-R axis (don't know, no answer)	39	32

Which attitudes and value commitments were crucial when making a distinction between "leftists" and "rightists" in 1990? As the results presented in Table 3 below indicate, the distinction between left and right identifiers in 1990 may be viewed in terms of the religious/secular and national/cosmopolitan value dimensions. Right identifiers are both more religious and more committed to the idea of "nation" as based on ethnic identity rather than on civic principles (a German *volk* rather than a French *nation*).<sup>20</sup> They tend to place the interests of the nation before those of society or the individual, more strongly identify with Lithuania as a whole, are more proud to be citizens of Lithuania, and God is important in their lives. In 1990 neither the L-R Materialism, nor the Liberal-Authoritarian (LIBAUT) indices were correlated with L-R self-placement, and the same was true of items concerning economy and the liberal-authoritarian dimension.<sup>21</sup> It is thus no surprise that right identifiers, who have strong national sentiments and religious commitments, were more interested in politics, more mobilized, and more politically active. This was primarily due to their value commitments, which are of a totalizing nature and not subject to compromise.

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<sup>19</sup> The data are taken from the *European Value Study* for both 1990 and 1999.

<sup>20</sup> The principle of ethnicity was even emphasized in the Constitution, which was prepared largely under the influence of rightist politicians. For example, the Second Article of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania states that the Lithuanian state is "created by the Nation" [*volk*], and that sovereignty "belongs to the Nation."

<sup>21</sup> The Left-Right Materialism index and the LIBAUT index were constructed following methodology used by Knutsen in his analysis of similar issues. See Knutsen 1996, pp. 323-326. In order to compare the 1990 and 1999 data, the Left-Right Materialism index was constructed in a manner that differs slightly from Knutsen, and four items were instead of five. Six items were used to construct the authoritarian/libertarian index (LIBAUT). The relevant items are presented in Appendix II.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for a Number of Items Concerning L-R Self-Placement.<sup>22</sup>

	1990	1999
Left-right materialism index	,	-,188**
LIBAUT index	,	-,093*
v123. Importance of God in life	,278**	,263**
v5. Importance of politics	-,184**	-,144**
v184. Freedom or equality more important	,	-,152**
v186. Individual versus state responsibility	,	-,117**
v188. Competition: good or harmful	,	-,132**
o18. Equalizing incomes?	,096*	,
o19. Private-government ownership business?	,	-,149**
o20. Individual or state is responsible for one's pension?	-	,
o21. Individual or state is responsible for one's housing?	-	-,161**
o24. Readiness to fight for country	,	-,120**
o32. The task of government: order or freedom?	-	,
v68. Life satisfaction	,	,091*
v213. Satisfaction with the development of democracy	-	-,231**
v214. Rating present government	-	,288**
v215. Rating communist system	-	-,437**
v216. Whether it is good to have strong leader	-	,
v217. Whether it is good to have experts making decisions	-	,
v218. Whether it is good to have the army rule	-	,
v251. Identify with Lithuania as a whole	-,100*	,
v255. Proud to be a Lithuanian citizen	-,232**	-,250**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

"- " – not included in questionnaire

", " – no significant correlation

The number of individuals in Lithuania unable to place themselves on the L-R axis decreased from 39 percent to 32 percent between 1990 and 1999, with the numbers of "leftists" and "rightists" remained roughly the same while those those identifying themselves with the center increased (Table 2). What changes took place in the meaning of the L-R axis during this ten-year period? The question is whether, as was hypothetically stated above, the conflicts that dominated in 1990 when the L-R dimension was institutionalized continue to be the main determinants of the L-R, or whether there has been a shift from value-loaded to interest-loaded notions of "left" and "right"?

<sup>22</sup> The data are taken from the *European Value Study* for both 1990 and 1999. The numbers next to the individual items are their identification numbers in the *EVS* questionnaire.

In this respect, the EVS data for 1999 support the hypothesis concerning the initial stage of transformation. That is to say that although the distinction between L-R identifiers appears to have been based on a number of different dimensions, with the notions of "left" and "right" incorporating new and diverse meanings, the strongest correlate of L-R self-placement continued to be attitudes towards the communist regime. (This item was not included in the 1990 questionnaire, but it supports the argument that the initial notions of "left" and "right" from the late 1980s primarily involved attitudes towards the communist system.) This was followed by religious commitments, nationalist sentiments, and the strength of national identification. Authoritarian items, including both the LIBAUT index and the "need for a strong leader," proved to be unrelated to the L-R axis.

With the formation of a new social structure, however, the L-R axis began to incorporate a new dimension that involved attitudes concerning the re-distribution of wealth and the role of the state in the economy. In this respect, "left" indicates those who favor equality above freedom and support state intervention, while "right" indicates those who favor of private property and maintain that the role of the state in the economy should be minimized. These definitions are consistent with the classical L-R distinction. But although economic attitudes are related to the L-R continuum, they are weakly correlated with L-R self-placement (Table 3).<sup>23</sup> First, there is almost no difference between the attitudes of "centrist" and "rightist" respondents concerning economic issues, with "centrist" voters being even more pro-market oriented in some cases. Second, the need for state protection and state interference radically increased within society after the initial wave of optimism and expectations about a rapid economic recovery. A quite substantial proportion of "center" and "right" identifiers also express attitudes that could be clearly identified as "leftist," such as support for the re-distribution of wealth and for state intervention in the economy rather than market-oriented, meritocratic, and liberal economic views that would minimize active state involvement. Similarly, a rather large percentage of "leftist" respondents hold views concerning the economy that could well be defined as "rightist" (Table 4).

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<sup>23</sup> The correlation between the L-RM index and L-R self-placement is 0,19\*\*.

Table 4. Attitudes of Respondents towards How the Economic System Should Operate, 1999 (entries are column percentages).<sup>24</sup>

	Left	Center	Right
<b>Individual vs state responsibility</b>			
Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves	22	42	40
Middle options	38	30	29
The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for	40	28	31
<b>Competition – good or bad</b>			
Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas	59	64	69
Middle options	17	23	22
Competition is harmful, it brings out the worst of the people	24	13	10
<b>Control of firms</b>			
The state should give more freedom to firms	46	54	54
Middle options	20	24	21
The state should control firms more effectively	34	22	25
<b>Equalizing incomes</b>			
Incomes should be made more equal	49	37	41
Middle options	18	20	20
There should be greater incentives for individual effort	32	43	39
<b>Private vs government ownership</b>			
Private ownership of business and industry should be increased	37	51	51
Middle options	25	28	25
Government ownership of business and industry should be increased	38	21	24
<b>Responsibility for pension</b>			
Each individual should be responsible for arranging his or her own pension	12	19	19
Middle options	15	16	21
The state should be responsible for everyone's pension	73	66	60
<b>Responsibility for housing</b>			
Each individual should be responsible for arranging his or her own housing	20	32	32
Middle options	30	33	38
The state should be responsible for everyone's housing	50	35	30

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<sup>24</sup> The data are taken from the *European Value Study* for 1999. The respondents were asked to rank their views concerning the alternatives presented on a 10-point scale, with options 5-6 grouped as "middle options." Concerning L-R self-placement, the respondents were grouped into "left" (options 1-4 on a 10-point L-R axis), "center" (5-6), and "right" (7-10).

### THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LEFTISTS AND RIGHTISTS

The view that the definitions underlying the L-R distinction which emerged at the beginning of the Lithuanian transformation are still the most relevant is supported by the correlation of certain social-demographic characteristics of the respondents with their L-R self-placements (Table 5).<sup>25</sup> The impact of the ethnic backgrounds of L-R identifiers appears to reflect the division in respect to the nationalist-cosmopolitanism dimension or, more broadly, the anti-communist/pro-communist dimension. For example, not only do the majority of Russian respondents define themselves as leftist, they could hardly locate themselves on the right since the national idea presented by rightist leaders was based on the principle of Lithuanian ethnicity. In addition, Polish respondents apparently do not acknowledge the L-R axis insofar as an absolute majority either do not locate themselves on this continuum, or choose the center. This can be partially explained by the fact that the L-R dimension is generally less recognized in rural areas, where most of the Polish respondents live. However, the inability of Poles to place themselves on the L-R continuum also supports the argument that L-R self-placement and the formation of political preferences are inter-related. That is to say that voter turnout is consistently the lowest in the country in those electoral districts inhabited mainly by Poles, where even the Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles, the political party established by ethnic Poles, has failed to attract potential voters, and that those who do not vote tend not to identify themselves in terms of the L-R dimension.

Table 5. L-R Self-Placement and Social-Democratic Characteristics, 1999 (entries are row percentages).<sup>26</sup>

	Left	Moderate left	Centrist	Moderate right	Right	Na+Dk
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Lithuanian	5	11	35	10	8	30
Russian	20	15	23	5	2	35
Polish	4	6	30	4	2	54
Other	5	10	30	5	0	50

<sup>25</sup> Only those social-demographic characteristics that proved to be significantly correlated with the L-R self-placement of respondents are discussed here.

<sup>26</sup> The data are taken from the *European Value Study* for 1999. The 10-point L-R scale was recoded into a five-point scale: Options 1-2 were recoded as "left," 3-4 as "moderate left," 5-6 as "centrist," 7-8 as "moderate right," and 9-10 as "right."

<b>Age</b>						
<24	5	10	30	7	5	44
25-34	6	7	46	6	3	33
35-44	3	13	42	9	5	28
45-54	6	16	37	8	6	28
55-64	14	9	24	19	12	22
65>	5	13	16	11	19	37
<b>Education</b>						
Incomplete elementary education		12	8	4	8	69
Completed (compulsory) elementary education		7	16	14	20	43
(Compulsory) elementary education and basic vocational qualification	11	10	19	6	6	49
Secondary, intermediate vocational qualification	11	12	16	9	9	42
Secondary, intermediate general qualification	6	8	39	6	9	31
Full secondary, maturity level certificate	8	12	36	9	4	30
Higher education - lower-level tertiary certificate	3	22	28	22		25
Higher education - upper-level tertiary certificate	2	12	46	12	9	18
<b>Income per household members</b>						
Less than 250	8	9	32	7	7	38
251-500	5	14	34	11	8	30
501-750	4	11	44	16	8	17
751-1000	8	11	31	11	17	22
Greater than 1000		12	59	6	12	12
<b>Personal monthly income</b>						
Less than 250	5	12	31	6	7	40
251-500	8	11	29	12	10	30
501-750	5	9	39	13	6	29
751-1000	7	10	43	10	8	21
Greater than 1000	4	13	46	12	6	19

<b>Size of town</b>						
Under 2000	7	12	27	7	7	40
2-10000	10	12	36	8	3	31
10-50000	5	15	37	6	6	31
50-100000	3	7	40	10	17	23
100-500000	7	8	39	14	9	23
500000 and greater	4	12	36	12	7	28

There are also certain differences between respondents of different age groups in respect to self-placement on the L-R axis. While most younger respondents either tend to choose the center or are unable to place themselves on the L-R scale, the older generation chooses extreme options more often, thus being more clearly divided. This again serves to explain the retrospective nature of the L-R distinction insofar as the L-R "conflict" based on the attitude towards the communist past is more relevant to the generation above 55, who include people born before the Soviet occupation as well as those born before the end of WW II. This group spent most if not all of their socially active lives under Soviet rule, and the issues and problems they find relevant are not very relevant to the younger generation. In addition, the self-placement on the right of the oldest respondents (those above 65) on the right, of whom 10 percent can be classified as moderate right and 20 percent as extreme right, supports the idea that the definition of "right" entails value commitments first and foremost. For example, insofar as most retirees are suffering material privation in a country attempting to establish a market economy, their self-identification as "right" can hardly involve support for minimizing state involvement in the economy. The central importance of value commitments is also supported by the fact that the intelligentsia, one of the most economically vulnerable groups in the transformation period), voted for the right in the 1992 Parliamentary elections.<sup>27</sup>

People with different levels of education are not clearly divided along the L-R continuum. Nor are the levels of personal income and income per household member strong determinants of self-placement on the L-R scale, although certain moderate differences between groups with differing levels of income were detected. However, since people with different levels of education and/or income differ significantly in their social status, personal interests, and attitudes, the only determinant capable of unifying them as "rightists" is their commitment to all-inclusive national values.

The main implication of these findings is that while the L-R scale is still able to structure people's views, substantial changes may be expected in the near future. The present meaning of the L-R distinction and of the value cleavages upon which it is based are relevant primarily for the older generation.

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<sup>27</sup> See Clark 1995.



Old cleavages can still play a role when the youth are politically more passive and disinterested while the older generation are politically mobilized due to their value commitments. Nevertheless, new cleavages should form as the younger generation replaces the older since the existing value cleavages are not congruent with new social and political realities precisely because they are related to the previous system. As Eckstein states, "in the process of cultural reformation considerable age-related differences should occur. In fact, age, in cases of pronounced discontinuity, might even be expected to be a major basis for subcultural differentiation."<sup>28</sup> In addition, while one-third of respondents could be classified as clearly left and right in both 1990 and 1999, a move towards the center might be expected in the future, with the L-R scale losing its relevance when structuring political preferences, since the majority of the respondents under the age of 45 either locate themselves in the center, or are unable to identify their locations.

In summary, the political conflicts that were incorporated in the L-R axis at the beginning of the shift from communist system remain powerful. These include religious-secular and nationalistic-cosmopolitan divisions, but above all involve different evaluations of the communist past. Socio-economic interests are only weakly related to the L-R distinction and, consequently, to electoral behavior. They have not replaced value conflicts concerning the previous regime, but have rather been added to existing L-R notions. This increasing multi-dimensionality of L-R notions within society appears to complicate the political reality instead of structuring and simplifying it.

#### **LEFT-RIGHT IDENTIFICATION AND PARTY PREFERENCES: IS THERE ANY COINCIDENCE?**

When discussing the role of the L-R scale in making political choices, it is necessary to see whether the popular perceptions of parties as leftist or rightist is congruent with their placement on the L-R axis according to the mean L-R self-placement of their electorates.<sup>29</sup> Although the scales used to measure

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<sup>28</sup> Eckstein 1988, p. 798.

<sup>29</sup> 45.5 percent of *EVS* respondents indicated a "party choice" in 1999. Those who indicated no such choice were omitted from the present analysis. In addition, only parties that received at least 2 percent of the votes from those who indicated a party choice were included in the analysis. There were 9 such parties: the Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives), the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party, the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, the Lithuanian Center Union, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, the New Union (Social-Liberals), the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Union, the Lithuanian Liberal Union, and the

these two items differed slightly, this indicator reveals a clear tendency and a relative congruence between these two items appears to be established.<sup>30</sup> This implies that a "leftist" or "rightist" party image facilitates party choice. As we can see, however, the two poles on both charts are occupied by the former communists and the former national movement party (DPL and HU). This fact provides an additional argument in support of the claim that the conflict dimensions inherited from the first period of transformation still play a crucial role in Lithuanian politics (Charts 1 and 2).<sup>31</sup>

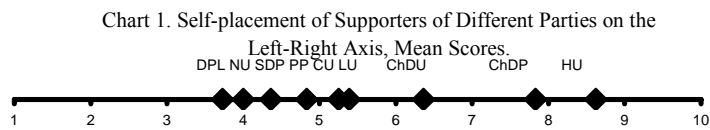
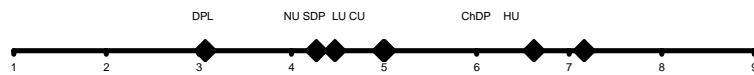


Chart 2. Popular Perceptions of Parties as Left or Right, Mean Scores.



- DPL – Lithuanian Democratic Party of Labour
- NU – New Union (Social-Liberals)
- SDP – Lithuanian Social Democratic Party
- LU – Lithuanian Liberal Union
- CU – Lithuanian Center Union
- PP – Peasant Party
- ChDP – Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party
- ChDU – Christian Democratic Union
- HU(LC) – Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives)

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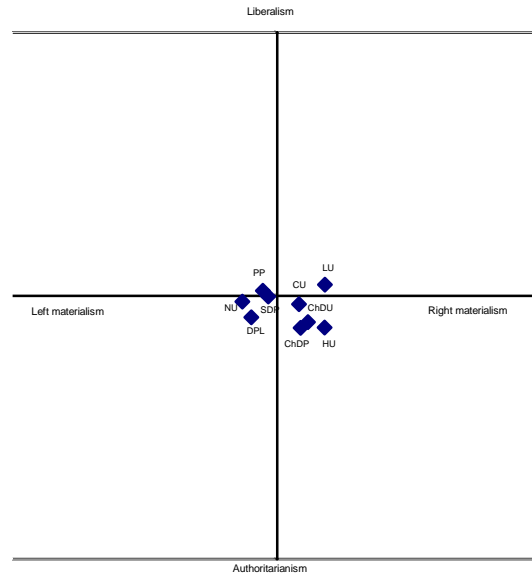
Peasant Party. Parties with less than 2 percent of the votes were grouped together as "other parties."

<sup>30</sup> A ten-point scale was used for individual self-placement, with a nine point scale being used to place parties. Data for the Peasant Party and Christian Democratic Party were not included in the *Political Culture Survey Report*.

<sup>31</sup> The data in Chart 1 are taken from the *European Value Study* for 1999. Chart 2 is based on *Political Culture Survey Report*, p. 56.

As we can see from Chart 3, the parties are *not* well diversified in terms of their supporters' attitudes towards the economic and liberal-authoritarian items, which was assumed to be the case. The mean scores of party supporters concerning the Left-Right Materialism (LRM) and Liberal-Authoritarian (LIBAUT) indices indicate that all parties are concentrated around the center on both dimensions. *All* parties analyzed are distant from the center of these two ten-point scales by *less than one point*, thus being very similar to each other on both the vertical and horizontal axes (Chart 3).

Chart 3. The Placement of Party Supporters along the LIBAUT and LRM Axes (mean scores).<sup>32</sup>



The religious, anti-communist, and, to a lesser extent, national dimensions are better determinants of party preferences than the economic and liberal-authoritarian dimensions, and parties are more clearly differentiated in respect to their supporters' views in terms of these dimensions. This is similar to the manner of L-R self-placement on the part of respondents. The supporters of parties located on the "right" are the most religious, share negative views

<sup>32</sup> The data are taken from the *European Value Study* for 1999.

towards the communist system, and express their national identity more clearly (Charts 4, 5, and 6).<sup>33</sup> But while the data indicate that a clearly "leftist" or "rightist" party image facilitates party choice to a certain extent, there are also cases in which a rather surprising party choice indicates the presence of confusion in respect to the existing L-R axis. The Liberal Union, for example, which is acknowledged as having the most consistently liberal program in regard to both economic and value dimensions, is one of those parties that have the most religious voters. The fact that it is popularly perceived to be "moderate right" facilitates its choice by "rightist" voters who are dissatisfied with their previous party preferences, such as the Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives). Religious voters are thereby paradoxically able to choose a liberal party. Evaluating two different parties merely in respect to the fact that they both are popularly perceived as "rightist" makes it possible to rather surprisingly change loyalties from a neo-conservative party that emphasizes conservative social values to a liberal party that emphasizes libertarian values.

Chart 4. Importance of God, Mean Scores of Party Supporters.



Chart 5. Rating the Communist System, Mean Scores of Party Supporters.

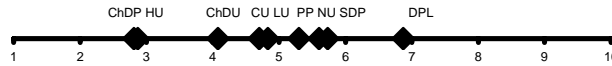
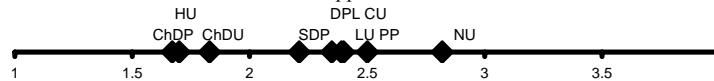


Chart 6. Whether Proud to be a Lithuanian, Mean Scores of Party Supporters.



<sup>33</sup> The data in Charts 4, 5, and 6 are drawn from the *European Value Study* for 1999.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS: WHAT COULD WE EXPECT IN THE FUTURE?**

It is evident that the transformation of the social and political systems in Lithuania has not yet translated into a strong interrelation between the two. In addition, the available data do not support the assumption, at least in the Lithuanian case, that the structural changes taking place in East-Central Europe, which primarily involve the emergence of a new social structure in which individuals can define their places more clearly, should bring about a structural increase in partisanship. Models of representation, axes of conflict, and L-R notions were institutionalized in Lithuania at the very beginning of the formation of a party system. And as is the case in Western Europe, where "'old' parties erected on the class and religious cleavages still enjoy the advantages of the institutional entrenchment,"<sup>34</sup> the communist-anticommunist cleavage and the religious dimension still play the most significant roles both in L-R self-identification, and in the party preferences of the electorate. The situation in this respect is similar to that observed in the consolidated democracies, where there has been "partisan dealignment," "volatility," and the "unfreezing" of party systems beginning in the 1970s. This may be spoken of as a structural decline in partisanship brought about by social change, in which the old order of cleavage politics is being displaced by conflicts centered around value orientations. Moreover, "class" and "value" have become dissociated in the process of individualization, with value commitments becoming the personal concern of the individual.<sup>35</sup> Value cleavages are also central in the Lithuanian case, but the absence of relatively stable party preferences and the personalization of politics continue to pose a threat to the stability of the system since the political system is still undergoing consolidation. This is not the case in the West.

Although the concepts of "left" and "right" should incorporate new meanings in accord with ongoing social and political changes, these notions in Lithuania have been static rather than dynamic and they have yet to structure newly emerging political conflicts. The specific features of the L-R axis in Lithuania, primarily its retrospective nature, have directly contributed to an increase in complexity and confusion regarding political choices instead of performing the basic function of reducing the complexity of political reality and structuring political preferences. In addition, the lack of congruence between the institutionalized L-R axis and the new social reality indirectly contributed to an increase of fragmentation in the political system during that period when

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<sup>34</sup> Knutsen and Scarbrough 1995, p. 521.

<sup>35</sup> See Inglehart 1990b for a discussion of such change in the system of political parties.

shortages and disruptions within the new socio-economic structure made it possible for political actors to deny the functionality of the L-R dimension and thereby attempt to reject it. Consequently, the importance of the L-R axis should not be overemphasized, even though it may be considered as a structural determinant of party choices for at least one-third of the electorate, namely, those who identify themselves as "left" or "right."

Attempts by certain political actors, such as the New Union (Social-Liberals), to reject what their leader Artūras Paulauskas has termed this "old-fashioned left-right distinction" have introduced an additional confusion into the political system.<sup>36</sup> For example, the voter support of the New Union, along with that of the Peasant Party, include the largest percentage of those who are either unwilling or unable to identify themselves on the L-R continuum (Table 6). This may be considered to some extent as indicating a decline in the popular acceptance of the L-R scale.

Table 6. Party choice / whether or not party supporters locate themselves on the L-R scale, in percent.<sup>37</sup>

	Identify	Do not identify
Homeland Union	94	6
Christian Democratic Party	83	17
Democratic Labor Party	89	11
Center Union	81	19
Social Democratic Party	82	18
Christian Democratic Union	92	8
Liberal Union	82	18
Peasants party	55	45
New Union (Social-Liberals)	59	41
Other parties	65	35
No party choice	59	41

But a diminishing role for the L-R dimension would in fact make the emergence of a structured political reality even more problematic in Lithuanian

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<sup>36</sup> Paulauskas has been Speaker of the Seimas since October 2000. He also served as acting President of Lithuania from the impeachment of Rolandas Paksas in April 2004 until the swearing in of Valdas Adamkus in July 2004 following elections.

<sup>37</sup> The data are taken from the *European Value Study* for 1999.

case insofar as it could well lead to a growth in the role of "personalities" and situational factors in party preferences. This would generate a high degree of fluidity and volatility among the electorate.

The present "artificial" nature of the L-R axis due to its lack of congruence with social reality may be illustrated by the following example. The activity of political parties in coalition-making after the 2000 municipal elections contributed to the popular recognition that the L-R axis was no longer an adequate tool to distinguish between parties. The population instead came to regard parties as primarily concerned with pursuing their own interests, which first and foremost involved gaining access to power. "Left" and "right" images came to be viewed as merely superficial, with no indication of any deeper commitments, not least of all because coalitions were formed according to strictly arithmetic criteria with no consideration given to the ideological positions of particular parties. There were a host of cases in which so-called "leftist" and "rightist" parties that had expressed sharp disagreement on virtually all national issues easily formed governing coalitions at the municipal level. This meant to many voters that distinguishing between parties in terms of the L-R axis not only provided no indication of actual political divisions, but was in fact senseless. This unfortunately introduced additional confusion concerning the continuation of a popular acceptance of the L-R axis, rendering the further institutionalization and functioning of the L-R dimension very problematic in Lithuania. The L-R axis, a tool that was expected to simplify political reality, now paradoxically contributes to its ambiguity and further complexity.

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## APPENDIX I

v5 Please say, how important politics is in your life (4-point scale: Very important, Quite important, Not important, Not at all important).

v68 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? (10-point scale, where 1 means 'Dissatisfied', 10 – 'Satisfied').

v123 And how important is God in your life? (10-point scale; 10 means 'very important' and 1 means 'not at all important').

v162 Which of these two statements do you tend to agree with? (Code one answer only)



Regardless of what the qualities and faults of ones parents are, one must always love and respect them.

One does not have the duty to respect and love parents who have not earned it by their behaviour and attitudes.

v164-174 Here is a list of qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five (Code 5 only).

Good manners; Independence; Hard work; Feeling of responsibility; Imagination; Tolerance and respect for other people; Thrift, saving money and things; Determination, perseverance; Religious faith; Unselfishness; Obedience.

v184 Which of these two statements comes closest to your own opinion?

I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important, that is, everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance.

Certainly both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider equality more important, that is, that nobody is underprivileged and that social class differences are not so strong.

v185 In political matters, people talk of 'the left' and the 'the right'. How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking? (10-point scale, where 1 means 'left', 10 – 'right').

o24 Of course we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country? (A-Yes, B-No).

v213 On the whole are you very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country (4-point scale)?

v214 People have different views about the system for governing this country. Here is a 10-point scale for rating how well things are going: 1 means very bad; 10 means very good.

v215 Where on this scale would you put the political system as it was under communist regime? (10-point scale, where 1 means 'Bad', 10 – 'Very good').

o32 If you had to choose, which would you say is the most important responsibility of government? To maintain order in society/To respect freedom of the individual.

v251 Which of these geographical groups would you say you belong to first of all? Locality or town where you live; Region of country where you live; Your country as a whole; Europe; The world as a whole.

v255 How proud are you to be a Lithuanian citizen? (4-point scale: Very proud, Quite proud, Not very proud, Not at all proud).

*Now I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on the 10-point scale?*

- v186 Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves (1).  
The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for (10).
- v188 Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas (1).  
Competition is harmful, it brings out the worst in people (10).
- v189 The state should give more freedom to firms (1).  
The state should control firms more effectively (10).
- o18 Incomes should be made more equal (1).  
There should be greater incentives for individual effort (10).
- o19 Private ownership of business and industry should be increased (1).  
Government ownership of business and industry should be increased (10).
- o20 Each individual should be responsible for arranging his or her own pension (1).  
The state should be responsible for everyone's pension (10).
- o21 Each individual should be responsible for arranging his or her own housing (1).  
The state should be responsible for everyone's housing (10).

*I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country?*

- v216 Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections.
- v217 Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country.
- v218 Having the army rule the country.

*Please tell me, if it were to happen in the near future whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind?*

- v196 Greater respect for authority.

## APPENDIX II

The Left-Right Materialism index and the LIBAUT index were constructed following methodology used by Knutsen in his analysis of similar issues. See Knutsen 1996, pp. 323-326. In order to compare the 1990 and 1999 data, the Left-Right Materialism index was constructed in a manner that differs slightly from Knutsen, and four items were instead of five. Six items were used to construct authoritarian/libertarian index (LIBAUT). The relevant items are presented in Appendix II.

### *1. Economic Equality*

Incomes should be made more equal.

There should be greater incentives for individual effort.

### *2. Nationalization*

Private ownership of business and industry should be increased.

Government ownership of business and industry should be increased.

### *3. Individual versus Public Responsibility*

Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves.

The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for.

The respondents were asked to place themselves on a ten-point scale (1-10).

### *4. Freedom/Equality*

Which of the two statements comes closest to your own opinion?

a. I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important; that is, everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance.

b. Certainly both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to choose one or the other, I would consider equality more important; that is, that nobody is underprivileged and that social class differences are not so strong.

Response alternatives were: 1) Agree with statement A, 2) Agree with statement B, 3) Neither.

The Left-Right Materialist index was constructed as follows:

*Freedom/equality* was recoded as follows: 'a' = 1, 'b' = 10, 'Neither' = 5.5.

Missing data was recoded in 5.5. The variables of *Economic Equality* were

recoded so that leftist responses were assigned the highest scores. Missing values were replaced by the mean score on the specific variable. The four recoded variables were added and re-configured in an eleven point scale ranging from 0 to 10.

Six items were used to construct authoritarian/libertarian index (LIBAUT).

1. Which of these statements do you tend to agree with?
  - a. Regardless of what the qualities and faults of one's parents are, one must always love and respect them.
  - b. One does not have the duty to respect and love parents who have not earned it by their behavior and attitudes.

2-5. Here is a list of qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five (11 qualities were mentioned). Good manners; Independence; Imagination; Obedience.

6. Here is a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it might be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind? (seven changes were mentioned).

e. Greater respect for authority.

The libertarian alternatives were given the score 2, and the authoritarian alternatives the score 0, while don't knows were assigned the value 2. The final LIBAUT index was obtained by adding the scores on these items and re-configuring the data in an 11-point scale from 0 to 10.

## **Part II**

### **Politics in Transition**



## Chapter VI

# Post-Communist Democratization: Explaining the Differences

*Diana Janušauskienė*

### INTRODUCTION

Post-communist democratization, which began in the early 1990s, ushered in a tremendous change not only in politics and economics, but also in the lives of ordinary people in the countries involved. As democratization proceeded, however, differences in democratic development in these countries became ever more evident. Certain of the post-communist countries carried out a fundamental turn towards modern liberal democracy, while others either transformed themselves into limited democracies, or remained authoritarian regimes.

The present discussion is intended to explain such differences in post-communist development and analyze the spread of modern liberal democracy in post-communist Europe. In light of the growing literature concerning theories of democratization, the focus is on factors that contribute to unequal political change, and the discussion explores the importance of the initial conditions of transformation, later development, and mass preferences for democratic regime. The behavior of national elites is not addressed here, but it is believed that the actual decisions of particular elites play a crucial role. In addition, special attention is given to the factors at work in developing or failing to develop stable modern liberal democracy.

For methodological purposes, the countries to be analyzed are divided into two groups. The first group includes those countries generally considered to be modern, liberal, post-communist democracies, while the second group consists of those that either have not succeeded in developing modern liberal democracy, or have become non-democratic regimes. This division allows for a broader analysis of the differences in post-communist development in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

### A FEW REMARKS ON DEMOCRATIZATION THEORIES

The majority of the theories of post-communist democratization stress the importance of democratic consolidation as a goal of democratization. Democratic consolidation is considered to be a major consequence of

democratic transformation that ensures the stability of a democratic regime, and many authors emphasize that procedural democracy alone does not guarantee the implementation of democratic procedures and the stability of the regime. Such issues as a multi-party system, free and fair elections, political competition, and the existence of democratic institutions do not necessarily result in stable, modern, liberal democracy. Indeed, certain writers indicate that "a key to the stability and survival of democratic regimes is... a substantial consensus among elites concerning rules of the democratic political game and the worth of democratic institutions."<sup>1</sup>

As Putnam *et al.* observe, the unity of the elite, differentiation, and relative autonomy are thus crucial determinants of a stable democracy, and transformations "from above" bring stable democracy in most cases:<sup>2</sup>

The modes that have most often resulted in the implementation of some type of democracy are "transitions from above." In these cases, traditional rulers remain in control even if pressured by from below, and successfully use strategies of either compromise or force, or some mix of the two, to retain at least part of their power.... Where democracies that have endured for a respectable length of time appear to cluster is in the cell defined by relatively strong elite actors who engage in strategies of compromise. This category includes the historical cases of Venezuela (1958) and Colombia (1957), and the recent redemocratisation in Spain (1975) and Uruguay (1984). What unites these otherwise diverse cases is the presence of foundational pacts, that is, explicit (though not always public) agreements between contending elites, which define the rules of governance on the basis of mutual guarantees for the "vital interests" of those involved.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, a consolidated democracy should involve substantial mass participation in democratic institutions and processes. A democratic regime should be legitimized in the sense that it is perceived to be the best option, and democratic institutions and procedures must be beyond questioning. In addition, authors such as Morlino stress the importance of political parties for the successful development of democracy, arguing that the stabilization of political parties and party systems, electoral stabilization, the successful structuring of

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<sup>1</sup> See Burton, Gunther, and Higley 1992, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Higley, Pakulski, and Wesolowski 1998, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Karl and Schmitter 1997, p. 191.



relationships between parties and civil society, and regime legitimization are major prerequisites of democratic consolidation.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Inglehart identifies interpersonal trust, subjective well-being, reasonable levels of income inequality, low levels of extremism, a large tertiary sector, an educated population, relatively high levels of political participation and organizational membership, well-developed organizational networks, and post-materialist values as variables closely correlated with stable democracy.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the well-being of citizens, the development of modern society (middle class, education, secularization), as well as a certain value system contribute to the development of stable democracy.

Dahl emphasizes that such internal and external conditions as control of the military and the police by elected officials, the absence of foreign control hostile to democracy, a modern market economy and society, weak sub-cultural pluralism, broadly accepted democratic beliefs, a democratic political culture, free, fair, and frequent elections, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, associational autonomy, and inclusive citizenship are also essential.<sup>6</sup> Diamond views a reduction in uncertainty, the liberalization and rationalization of the economy, social and political order, the control of corruption, a reduction of fragmentation in the party system, and the invigoration of civil society as being particularly important.<sup>7</sup> In a similar fashion, Linz and Stepan argue that a consolidated democracy exists when

- ... No significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a non-democratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state;
- ... A strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs;
- ... Support for anti-system alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces;
- ... Governmental and non-governmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subject to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic regime.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Morlino 1995, p. 316.

<sup>5</sup> Inglehart 1997, pp. 194, 214-215.

<sup>6</sup> Dahl 2000, pp. 85, 147.

<sup>7</sup> Diamond 1997, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>8</sup> Linz and Stepan 1996, p. 6.

The essential prerequisites for democracy that Dahl indicates in his theory of polyarchy provide a basis for classifying countries as democracies and non-democracies. The countries in the first group of Table 1 below clearly satisfy the majority of Dahl's requirements, while those in the second group fail to satisfy several, if not most, of them.

Table 1. Democracy in Post-Communist Countries in 2001-2002.<sup>9</sup>

Group	Country	Political rights (Scale from 1 to 7, with 1 the highest and 7 the lowest)	Civil liberties (Scale from 1 to 7, with 1 the highest and 7 the lowest)	Status
Group I Modern liberal democracies	Czech Republic	1	2	Free
	Estonia	1	2	Free
	Hungary	1	2	Free
	Lithuania	1	2	Free
	Latvia	1	2	Free
	Poland	1	2	Free
	Slovakia	1	2	Free
	Slovenia	1	2	Free
	Bulgaria	1	3	Free
	Romania	2	2	Free
	Croatia	3	2	Free
Group II Countries that have not developed modern liberal democracy	Moldova	2	4	Partly free
	Yugoslavia	3	3	Partly free
	Albania	3	4	Partly free
	Armenia	4	4	Partly free
	Georgia	4	4	Partly free
	Macedonia	4	4	Partly free
	Ukraine	4	4	Partly free
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	5	4	Partly free
	Russia	5	5	Partly free
	Azerbaijan	6	5	Partly free
	Kazakhstan	6	5	Not free
	Kyrgyzstan	6	5	Not free

<sup>9</sup> See the various country ratings published in the *Freedom in the World* series for the period 1972-73 to 2001-2002.

	Belarus	6	6	Not free
	Tajikistan	6	6	Not free
	Uzbekistan	7	6	Not free
	Turkmenistan	7	7	Not free

Variations in the extent to which democracy has been attained within the second group are clearly very great. Turkmenistan, e.g., fails to fulfill the majority of the requirements, while Albania, Moldova, and Russia satisfy many of them. However, none of these countries has achieved democracy to a degree similar to any of those in the first group. Even if such democratic procedures as free and competitive elections and a political party system exist in countries like Russia, this does not mean that democracy has been implemented. Modern liberal democracy first of all demands freedoms that render democratic institutions meaningful.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, Russia is only a minimalist democracy, or, to use Levitsky's and Way's terminology, a "competitive authoritarian regime."<sup>11</sup> In Russia, "the existence of formally democratic political institutions, such as multiparty electoral competition (often, in part, legitimate), masks the reality of authoritarian domination."<sup>12</sup> Democratic rules in fact are manipulated using bribery, alternative sources of information are repressed, and the rights of national minorities are regularly ignored. The clearest example of such competitive authoritarianism is Belarus. This regime is much more authoritarian than Russia, albeit in a different manner, while free competition for power is completely restricted. Indeed, democratic freedoms do not exist in Belarus. Alternative sources of information are suppressed, members of the opposition are jailed or exiled, the results of elections are manipulated, and there are instances of election-related and political killings.

The gap between the group of liberal post-communist democracies and other post-communist countries became even more substantial after the majority of countries in the first group were invited to join the European Union and NATO. Only Croatia of the eleven post-communist liberal democracies has not been invited to join both NATO and the European Union, while Romania and Bulgaria were not included in the first wave of EU enlargement.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INITIAL SITUATION**

Differences in post-communist development depend to a great extent on the existing situation in a given country immediately to the beginning of

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<sup>10</sup> Diamond 2002, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, in Diamond 2002 p. 24.

transformation, such as the level of modernization, the particular type of economic and social development, previous experience/non-experience of a democratic regime, and the geopolitical situation. While in general there are a variety of interpretations and possible analytical approaches, path dependency theory, which emphasizes the evolutionary character of democratic institutions and the incorporation of past legacies, with the strategic choices and actions of national elites that shape the actual path of transformation comprising additional important factors, appears to be particularly appropriate in regard to the present discussion. When used jointly, these two methods of investigation form a good basis for analyzing differences in post-communist development between particular countries.

Pridham and Lewis summarize these two approaches in the following way:

[The functionalist approach] concerned with long-term developments of a socio-economic kind, has given paramount attention to structural or environmental determinants of political system change. It has inclined to the view that the regime changes are predetermined by conditions like economic development or cultural patterns or simply modernisation. On the other hand, the genetic school has given priority to conjunctural factors and strategic choice - and more clearly political determinants. It has preferred to emphasise the importance of political choice and strategy by actors during the actual transition approach.<sup>13</sup>

Countries in the first group identified above, namely, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania, enjoyed much more favorable initial conditions at the beginning of transition in comparison with the other post-communist countries. First of all, the majority of them had experienced some degree of democracy in the inter-war period. Second, they are close to the West in geographical and cultural terms, and cultural and economic exchange with western countries is much more developed in these countries than in those of the second group. Although this tends to encourage the growth of democratic practices and institutions, it alone is not sufficient to establish a stable democracy, as becomes obvious from, for example, events in Albania or the former Yugoslavia. Third, all countries in the first group are Christian and share similar values. Fourth, these countries are modern, urbanized, and economically

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<sup>13</sup> Pridham and Lewis 1996, p. 4.

developed societies. Fifth, democratic institutions are not alien to their political cultures.

In contrast, the post-communist countries that have not yet become modern liberal democracies, namely, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Albania, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, shared many initial factors that do not foster democracy. First, many of them were economically less developed. Secondly, the majority of them neither had any previous experience of democracy, nor provides the foundations necessary for democratic institutions. Third, a number of them suffered through ethnic wars or separatist conflicts. Fourth, the majority of these countries are located far from the West. Fifth, the Asian countries of the former Soviet Union had no experience as independent states. In terms of path dependency theory, it could be said that favorable starting conditions which were present in the first group of countries and absent in the second determined the direction of development to a significant degree.

## **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Economic and social development is one of the conditions for building a stable democratic regime, and there were huge differences in this regard between the first and second groups of countries. Dahl in fact argues that a market economy and a modern society is crucial for the development of a stable democratic system:

A highly favourable condition for democratic institutions is a market economy in which economic enterprises are mainly owned privately, and not by the state, that is, capitalist rather than socialist or statist economy.... Market-capitalism not only resulted in higher economic growth and well-being but also fundamentally altered a country's society by creating a large and influential middle class sympathetic to democratic ideas and institutions.... Polyarchal democracy has endured only in countries with a predominantly market-capitalist economy; and it has never endured in a country with predominantly nonmarket economy.<sup>14</sup>

It is obvious that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were characterized by a very low level of market relations prior to the democratic political changes. Extensive privatization followed political

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<sup>14</sup> Dahl 200, pp. 158, 164, 166.

liberation, not the reverse, and the implementation of a market economy became one of the key elements in preserving stable democratic institutions and practices.

Table 2 below demonstrates that the private sector has grown tremendously in the countries in question after more than a decade of changes. It is significant, however, that market economy is much better developed in the countries of the first group.

Table 2. Private Sector Share of GDP in mid-2001 in 27 Post-Communist Countries, in percent.<sup>15</sup>

Group	Country	Percent
Group I  Modern liberal democracies	Croatia	60
	Slovenia	65
	Romania	65
	Bulgaria	70
	Latvia	70
	Lithuania	75
	Poland	75
	Czech Republic	80
	Estonia	80
	Hungary	80
	Slovak Republic	80
	Group I average	73
Group II  Countries that have not developed modern liberal democracy	Belarus	20
	Turkmenistan	25
	Yugoslavia	40
	Bosnia and	45
	Uzbekistan	45
	Tajikistan	50
	Moldova	50
	Macedonia	60
	Kyrgyzstan	60
	Azerbaijan	60
	Georgia	65
	Ukraine	65
Kazakhstan	65	

<sup>15</sup> See *Transition Report 2002. Agriculture and Rural Transition*.

	Armenia	70
	Russia	70
	Albania	75
	Group II average	54
EU average		80

The worst situations are to be found in Belarus and Turkmenistan, with the private sector comprising only one-fifth of GDP in the former country and one-fourth in the latter. At the other end of the spectrum are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, and the Slovak Republic, which have already attained the European Union average (80 percent). The process of privatization is also well advanced in Lithuania, Poland, and Albania (75 percent).

Better economic development in the countries of the first group contributes to the stability of their democratic regimes. As Table 3 below shows, per capita GDP (PPP) in the countries of the first group varied from 3,870 USD in Bulgaria and 3,970 USD in Latvia to 10,380 USD in the Czech Republic and 11,880 USD in Slovenia. The average per capita GDP (PPP) in this group is 6,352 USD, while the average for the second group is only 2,482 USD.

Table 3. GDP Per Capita in 1997, in USD (Purchasing Power Parities).<sup>16</sup>

Group	Country	GDP per capita (PPP)
Group I Modern liberal democracies	Bulgaria	3,870
	Latvia	3,970
	Lithuania	4,140
	Romania	4,270
	Croatia	4,930
	Estonia	5,090
	Poland	6,510
	Hungary	6,970
	Slovak Republic	7,860
	Czech Republic	10,380
	Slovenia	11,880
		Group I average
Group II	Tajikistan	1,100

<sup>16</sup> *World Development Indicators 1999* pp. 12-14.

Turkmenistan	1,410
Moldova	1,450
Azerbaijan	1,520
Georgia	1,980
Ukraine	2,107
Albania	2,170
Kyrgyzstan	2,180
Armenia	2,540
Macedonia	3,180
Kazakhstan	3,530
Russia	4,280
Belarus	4,820
Uzbekistan	No data
Bosnia and Yugoslavia	No data
Group II average	2,482

Even though the GDP (PPP) is almost equal in, on the one hand, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and, on the other, Russia and Belarus, the levels of social prosperity are different. Furthermore, countries with a per capita GDP (PPP) lower than 2,000 USD dominate the second group. Tajikistan has the lowest (only 1,100 USD), followed by Turkmenistan and Moldova.

Table 4 indicates that there are obvious differences within the countries of the first group, with data for 2001 revealing a large gap between Bulgaria and Romania and the rest of the countries. Slovenia in particular is much more developed than the other post-communist countries.

Table 4. 2001 Per Capita GDP (PPP) in the First Group of Countries, in Euros.<sup>17</sup>

Country	GDP (PPP)
Bulgaria	1,808
Romania	1,848
Latvia	3,527
Lithuania	3,619
Slovakia	4,189
Estonia	4,272

<sup>17</sup> See *EU Enlargement Monitor*, July 2002.



Poland	5,107
Hungary	5,766
Czech Republic	6,041
Slovenia	10,487
EU average	23,269

Similar tendencies could also be observed in gross monthly wages, which were twice as low in Bulgaria and Romania than in Latvia, the Slovak Republic, and Lithuania. Wages in these two countries were three times lower than in Hungary and the Czech Republic, and six times lower than in Slovenia.

Table 5. 2001 Gross Monthly Wages in the Countries of the First Group, in Euros.<sup>18</sup>

Country	Gross monthly wages
Bulgaria	132
Romania	163
Latvia	274
Slovakia	286
Lithuania	302
Estonia	377
Hungary	425
Czech Republic	426
Poland	531
Slovenia	981
EU average	1,895

In addition, the proportion of the population living below the poverty line is very large in the second group of countries. Indeed, some of them are comparable with the least developed countries of the world.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Table 6. Population below the Poverty Line in Selected Countries of the Second Group.<sup>19</sup>

Countries	Survey year	Population below the poverty line, in percent
Azerbaijan	1995	68.1
Belarus	1995	22.5
Kazakhstan	1996	34.6
Kyrgyzstan	1993	40.0
Russia	1994	30.9
Ukraine	1995	31.7

In summary, the level of economic development is important for establishing and sustaining democracy, but this does not mean that all economically developed countries necessarily develop democracy. Economic prosperity in, for example, Kuwait or Saudi Arabia does not automatically usher in greater democracy.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MODERNIZATION

Dahl argues that modern liberal democracies, which he terms polyarchies, are most likely to develop in modern and dynamic societies where people are educated, urbanized, prosperous, and healthy. This point has been emphasized by many other authors, and by Inglehart in particular.

Various aspects of modernization characterized the vast majority of the countries we have been discussing by virtue of communist social policies. For example, data supplied by the Unesco Institute of Statistics indicate that rates of illiteracy were very low in all post-communist countries analyzed. These rates include 0.2 percent of the population in Latvia, 0.3 percent in Belarus and Ukraine, 0.4 percent in Russia, 0.7 percent in Croatia and Hungary, and 1.6 percent in Bulgaria and Armenia. Albania is the sole exception, with 15.3 percent of the population as a whole and 23.0 percent of the female population suffering from illiteracy.<sup>20</sup> These data reveal that rates of literacy in the countries in question were generally similar to those in the developed Western countries. However, other measures of modernization, especially the infant mortality rate, reveal huge differences in the social development between countries in the first and second groups.

<sup>19</sup> *World Development Indicators 1999*, pp. 66-68.

<sup>20</sup>

Table 7. Infant Mortality Rates in the Post-Communist Countries in 1997.<sup>21</sup>

Group	Country	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
Group I Modern liberal democracies	Bulgaria	18
	Croatia	9
	Czech Republic	6
	Estonia	10
	Hungary	10
	Latvia	15
	Lithuania	10
	Poland	10
	Romania	22
	Slovak Republic	9
	Slovenia	5
	Group II Countries that have not developed modern liberal democracy	Albania
Armenia		15
Azerbaijan		20
Belarus		12
Bosnia-Herzegovina		13
Georgia		21
Kazakhstan		24
Kyrgyzstan		28
Macedonia		16
Moldova		20
Russia		17
Tajikistan		30
Turkmenistan		40
Ukraine		14
Uzbekistan		24
Yugoslavia	14	

The level of urbanization, another important measure of modernization, is quite high in the post-communist countries, although differences do exist between the European and Asian countries (see Table 8). It is significant that

<sup>21</sup> *World Development Indicators 1999*, pp. 16-18.

rates of urbanization in the countries of the first group do not differ much from Western countries.<sup>22</sup>

Table 8. Urbanization in the Post-Communist Countries in 1997.<sup>23</sup>

Group	Country	Urban population ( percent of total population)
Group I Modern liberal democracies	Bulgaria	69
	Croatia	57
	Czech Republic	66
	Estonia	74
	Hungary	66
	Latvia	73
	Lithuania	73
	Poland	64
	Romania	57
	Slovak Republic	60
	Slovenia	52
Group II Countries that have not developed modern liberal democracy	Albania	38
	Armenia	69
	Azerbaijan	56
	Belarus	72
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	42
	Georgia	59
	Kazakhstan	60
	Kyrgyzstan	39
	Macedonia	61
	Moldova	53
	Russia	77
	Tajikistan	32
	Turkmenistan	45
	Ukraine	71
	Uzbekistan	42
Yugoslavia	58	

<sup>22</sup> In 1997, for example, 64 percent of the population in Austria, 40 percent in Canada, 74 percent in Norway, 83 percent in Sweden, and 89 percent in United Kingdom lived in urban centers. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>23</sup> *World Development Indicators 1999*, pp. 28-30.

The European former-Soviet Republics and the countries in Central and Eastern Europe are the most highly urbanized post-communist societies, with the least urbanized being located in the second group. For example, only 32 percent of the population in Tajikistan, 38 percent in Albania, and 39 percent in Kyrgyzstan lived in urban centers.

The data indicates that more favorable conditions for democracy are present in countries of the first group. The second group also includes countries with a good level of economic and social development. However, social and economic development alone does not form an environment conducive to the emergence of democracy. In addition, the absence of democratic rules and the isolation of these regimes restrict their social and economic development.

### **LEGITIMACY OF THE NEW REGIMES**

The legitimacy of a political system may be understood as "its capacity to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society."<sup>24</sup> The legitimacy of a democratic regime is usually associated with a successful transformation to democracy and with social and political stability. In general, the examination of a democratic regime's legitimacy addresses such factors as the institutionalization of the regime, the implementation and acceptance of democratic procedures, public acceptance, the performance of elites, and so forth. Favorable conditions for such legitimation involve a negative attitude towards a previous authoritarian regime, a widespread mass preference for democracy, the deliberate decisions of elites supporting change, the non-existence of extreme and anti-system parties, a recognition of the unity of the country by regional nationalist parties or the non-existence of such parties, and, as is the case in post-communist Europe, a moderation in the position of the Communist Party.

In the strict sense, one may speak about established democratic legitimacy only in respect to the first group of post-communist countries. Nevertheless, a number of countries in the second group that Freedom House considers to be partly free to the extent that democratic procedures have been established there (Moldova, Yugoslavia, Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Macedonia, Ukraine, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia, and Azerbaijan) could also be included in an analysis of democratic legitimacy. Even if these procedures are dysfunctional to varying degrees, public support for democratic institutions and procedures indicates that democracy has penetrated society. As sociological surveys reveal, however, the correlation between an objective evaluation of democracy (such as Freedom House data) and a subjective evaluation of democracy (measured by various public opinion polls) is rather weak.

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<sup>24</sup> See Lipset in Beetham 1991, p. 9.

Let us now consider certain examples in this regard.

According to data provided by the 1999 European Value Study, the percentage of people who felt that human rights were degraded in their country was higher in Lithuania than in Belarus (see Table 9).

Table 9. The Belief that Human Rights are Degraded in the Country, in percent. Question: "Are Human Rights Respected in the Country?"<sup>25</sup>

Country	percent of people responding that human rights are not respected or not at all respected in the country
Czech Republic	10
Slovak Republic	41
Hungary	43
Poland	43
Croatia	44
Latvia	46
Estonia	46
Slovenia	59
Belarus	64
Bulgaria	66
Romania	76
Ukraine	77
Lithuania	77
Russia	84

According to subjective evaluations, human rights are degraded in Romania, Ukraine, and Lithuania to an equal degree. The same is also true of Hungary, Poland, and Croatia to an equal but different degree. However, such statements are not congruent with other indicators which reveal that human rights are safeguarded differently in all six of these countries. One possible explanation for this lack of congruence is that people in different countries have different expectations of how their rights should be protected and utilize different criteria for evaluating their respective situations. In addition, citizens of many post-communist liberal democracies are pessimistic or skeptical about the new situations in which they are now living. This has been especially true for Lithuania, where the rates of pessimism (or skepticism) have been among the highest for the countries in question. The positive attitudes towards the socialist past that are typical of many Lithuanians may in fact express disappointment with the contemporary situation as well as a belief that the

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<sup>25</sup> Valionis 2001, p. 101.

previous system was better.<sup>26</sup> People may also tend to evaluate the past better because of their personal experiences insofar as they were then younger and generally more optimistic. However, this assumption does not explain why Lithuanians and Estonians, for example, have differed so greatly in their subjective evaluations. One plausible explanation may be that since Lithuanians are a nation of pessimists with one of the highest suicide rates in Europe, they tend to evaluate the present situation pessimistically and look to the past for "stability." Lithuania in fact attained a certain stability during the final decade of the communist regime since there was nothing like the martial law regime in Poland, which to a great extent led Poles to negatively evaluate their socialist past. Another important factor in explaining the positive evaluation of the socialist past in Lithuania is the national accommodation of communism that took shape during the latter decades of Soviet rule, along with an acceptance of the Communist Party, and the regime itself, as something internal rather than externally imposed. According to a 1996 sociological survey, for example, there was no statistical difference between the responses of former Communist Party members and their families and those of the rest of the population concerning attitudes towards the Soviet system, the contemporary system, and the former status as a constituent republic of the Soviet Union. These results reveal the conformist and non-ideological participation of Lithuanians in the Communist Party.<sup>27</sup>

It is thus rather difficult to find any correlation between the objective evaluation of democratic development and subjective public opinion. One possible interpretation of why certain post-communist countries are pessimistic or skeptical in evaluating recent developments concerns their economic and social stability and relative prosperity during Soviet times.

Table 10. Estimated Level of Real GDP in 2001 (1989 = 100), in percent.<sup>28</sup>

Group	Country	Estimated level of Real GDP in 2001 (1989=100)
Modern liberal democracies	Lithuania	72
	Latvia	75
	Bulgaria	80
	Romania	84
	Croatia	85
	Estonia	90

<sup>26</sup> Gaidys 1999, p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> See *Transition Report 2002. Agriculture and Rural Transition*.

	Czech Republic	106
	Slovak Republic	110
	Hungary	112
	Slovenia	121
	Poland	129
Group II	Moldova	37
Countries that have not developed modern liberal democracies	Georgia	37
	Ukraine	46
	Yugoslavia	50
	Tajikistan	56
	Azerbaijan	62
	Russia	64
	Kyrgyzstan	71
	Armenia	74
	Macedonia	77
	Kazakhstan	84
	Belarus	91
	Turkmenistan	96
	Uzbekistan	105
	Albania	116
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	na

This data may indeed provide a very good explanation of the Lithuanian case. As has been mentioned, many sociological studies have revealed high rates of pessimism in Lithuania in spite of the good work done in building democracy and a market economy. Nevertheless, in 2001 Lithuania attained only 72 percent of the GDP level it enjoyed in 1989, which is the lowest rate among the countries of the first group. It should thus be no surprise that Lithuanians tend to negatively evaluate recent achievements in light of their better material lives in the last years of communism.

It is significant that the general tendency in post-communist countries is to rather positively evaluate the communist past, especially during the first years of the transformation, with only a rather moderate evaluation of their new democratic regimes.

The sociological surveys of the post-communist countries taken in 1996 (in the Baltics in 1995) show a relatively high acceptance of the socialist system as such. Latvia and Lithuania demonstrated the highest rates of approval, while the Czech Republic and, especially, Poland evaluated the communist regime most negatively. There was a negative difference between



positive and negative responses in only three countries, Estonia, the Czech Republic, and Poland.

Table 11. Attitudes in Post-Communist Countries in 1995-1996 towards the Previous Socialist System. Difference between Positive and Negative Responses, in percent.<sup>29</sup>

Country	Percent
Latvia	66
Lithuania	61
Bulgaria	55
Slovakia	50
Hungary	47
Romania	16
Slovenia	15
Estonia	-2
Czech Republic	-5
Poland	-17

These data correlate very well with those provided by New Democracies Barometer. For example, Romania, Poland, and the Czech Republic are characterized by a very low approval of the communist past, and large percentages of people stated that they had hoped the communist regime would some day disappear.

Table 12. Feelings about the Former Communist Regime in 1998, in percent.<sup>30</sup>

Country	percent of people saying that communist regime was bad and they had been waiting for it to disappear.
Romania	69
Poland	64
Czech Republic	63
Slovakia	43
Bulgaria	43
Hungary	41
Slovenia	38
Belarus	31
Ukraine	24

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<sup>29</sup> Gaidys 1999, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> Rose and Haerpfer 1998, p. 10.

More recent sociological studies indicate similar tendencies. In addition, the European Value Study reveals a tendency for differences in evaluating the communist past among different countries to diminish. The Czech Republic remains the country that evaluates the communist past most negatively.

Table 13. Mean Evaluations of Recent Political System and Previous Communist System in 1999 (scale from 1 to 10 with 10 the highest).<sup>31</sup>

Group	Country	Evaluation of Communist System	Evaluation of Recent Political System
Group I (selected countries)	Czech Republic	3.59	4.30
	Croatia	3.83	3.37
	Latvia	4.28	4.37
	Estonia	4.37	4.68
	Poland	4.42	4.04
	Romania	4.56	3.66
	Slovenia	4.70	4.39
	Bulgaria	4.79	4.65
	Slovak Republic	5.26	3.81
	Lithuania	5.36	3.18
Group II (selected countries)	Hungary	5.48	4.00
	Ukraine	4.98	3.39
	Belarus	5.37	4.38
	Russia	5.75	2.59

Bulgarians are as positive as Estonians in their evaluations of the recent political system, and more positive than Czechs, Poles, or Slovenians. Lithuanians remain the most pessimistic post-communist nation.

It is noteworthy that the data published in *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer* indicate that satisfaction with the development of democracy is lower in most countries than satisfaction with the development of the market economy, of the country in general, and of human rights. Poland and Lithuania are exceptional cases in this respect insofar as the proportion of people who were satisfied with the development of democracy was higher in certain years than those who were not. In addition, Lithuania was the only country among the ten studied in which satisfaction with the development of democracy did not

<sup>31</sup> Valionis 2001, p. 113.

receive the lowest evaluation. The evaluation of human rights and the direction of country in general have consistently been more negatively evaluated in Lithuania than the development of democracy (see Table 14).

Table 14. Satisfaction with Democracy in 10 Post-Communist Liberal Democracies 1990-1997. Differences between Positive and Negative Responses.<sup>32</sup>

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Bulgaria	-23	-6	-17	-49	-87	-67	-81	-54
Czech Republic	-16	-25	-19	0	-9	-4	-21	-22
Estonia	no data	-21	-35	-15	-26	-20	-16	-13
Hungary	-54	-29	-50	-54	-43	-57	-51	-34
Latvia	no data	-9	-58	-31	-42	-38	-44	-43
Lithuania	no data	23	5	-20	-31	-40	-31	-13
Poland	1	-21	-24	-14	-40	12	-2	24
Romania	no data	-11	-40	-26	-36	-21	11	-11
Slovakia	-42	-55	-53	-59	-62	-40	-53	-49
Slovenia	no data	no data	-4	-23	-28	-24	-11	-18

It could be argued that expectations concerning democracy among Central East Europeans had been very high. On the other hand, the notion of democracy itself is rather unclear and has been perceived in a number of different ways. In addition, many people still experience difficulties in accommodating themselves to the new situation. Such personal dissatisfaction can well influence the general evaluation of the situation in the country.

According to the *Eurobarometer publications*, the level of satisfaction with the development of democracy was low in the EU candidate countries. Similar tendencies have also been evident in the consolidated democracies of Western Europe (see Table 15).

Table 15. Satisfaction with Democracy in the European Union, in percent. Question: "On the whole, are you satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union?" ("don't know" not listed).<sup>33</sup>

Country	Satisfied (very satisfied + fairly satisfied)	Not satisfied (not very satisfied + not at all satisfied)	Difference between positive and negative responses
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<sup>32</sup> See *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer 8*.

<sup>33</sup> See *Eurobarometer 56.2*.

EU average	44	38	6
Ireland	65	15	50
Spain	56	27	29
Belgium	55	33	22
Luxembourg	55	35	20
Netherlands	48	36	12
France	45	37	8
Greece	46	40	6
Italy	43	37	6
United Kingdom	39	36	3
Denmark	48	46	2
Austria	44	43	1
Germany	42	41	1
Portugal	37	46	-9
Sweden	36	53	-17
Finland	32	54	-22

People are the most satisfied with the development of democracy in Ireland and the least so in Portugal, Sweden, and Finland. As is also the case in respect to the post-communist countries, there is a weak correlation between satisfaction with the development of democracy and the level of economic development.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this discussion was to analyze and explain differences in post-communist development in the countries affected. The application of certain theoretical postulates to the analysis of empirical data made it possible to identify and discuss a number of factors that contribute to uneven development. These include institutional transformation, political rights and civil liberties, the initial situation (such as geopolitical situation, previous experience/non-experience of democracy, value system, economic and social development, and the level of modernization), later economic and social development, and mass preferences for democracy.

The data reveal that the countries of the first group (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania), which are more economically and socially developed, modernized, have a Christian value system, and share a previous experience of a democratic regime, were more successful in creating stable democratic regimes in comparison with the countries of the second group (Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Albania). One important issue that arises

later in the discussion is a weak correlation between the subjective evaluation of the situation and the objective measurements. As the data show, people of less economically and democratically developed countries in certain cases demonstrate a greater satisfaction with post-communist transformation.

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## Chapter VII

# Intellectuals in the Political Arenas of Post-Communist Countries

*Ingrida Gečienė*

### INTRODUCTION

The events of 1989-1990 in East Central Europe once again placed the question of intellectuals and their relation with new political constellations at the center of sociological and political discourse. Their active participation in the political changes coupled with their obvious collapse as a social group soon after the collapse of communism provides the motivation to re-examine the role and future of intellectuals in the political arenas of post-communist countries. Moreover, such an examination may reveal certain specific characteristics of the process of post-communist transformation as a whole.

When discussing intellectuals in post-communist countries it is difficult to avoid the notion of "intelligentsia." Traditionally the definition of intelligentsia in this region is broader than that of intellectuals, including all those with a high education who, as such, held a comparatively more prestigious position in society because of their higher level of knowledge and influence. Nevertheless, it is not adequate to define the intelligentsia strictly as a stratum, either in terms of the materials with which they deal (ideas, values, cultural goods), or in terms of their standard of education, because it is necessary to take into account their special "position and functions within the socio-political structure of society."<sup>1</sup>

The most frequent pattern in sociological discourse for distinguishing between "intelligentsia" and "intellectuals" may be summarized as following: intellectuals are involved in the generation of values, ideas, alternatives, and critiques concerning the existing state of affairs, while the intelligentsia, or the bearers of technical knowledge, are involved in the administration of those values and ideas.<sup>2</sup> However, it could be justifiably argued that this type of distinction is both artificial and also inapplicable concerning Eastern and Central Europe, where the notion of intellectuals was not in use and certain members of the intelligentsia performed the role of producers and keepers of ideas and values as well. With this in mind, there is a much smaller difference

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<sup>1</sup> Gella 1976, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Schopflin 1993, p. 29. See also Bauman 1987.

between this typically politically and socially active section of the intelligentsia and so-called "political intellectuals" or "French intellectuals." The present discussion will in fact focus upon these members of the intelligentsia and view the remainder as the main reserve for new candidates. But in order to avoid confusion, the notion of "intellectuals" will be used, particularly since this will reflect one of new tendencies in the self-identification of the former intelligentsia in Eastern and Central Europe.

In addition, by making use of Gouldner's insight into the dual character of intellectuals, along with Bourdieu's theory of the accumulation and conversion of different capital assets, the present discussion will endeavor to study the impact of intellectuals during the process of transformation in East-Central Europe and trace the paths they have followed afterwards. It will thus not only analyze the impact of intellectuals upon the fall of communist regimes, but also address the widespread decline in their political role as well as shed light on their attempts to adapt to the changed situation by changing their own identity as intellectuals and seeking new places in society for themselves. It will be argued that, in spite of such turbulence, intellectuals in post-communist countries are still the most dynamic and influential actors in making the new democracies work through their culture of critical discourse, involvement in political debate, active political and social participation, and the formation of the sphere of civil society, all of which are necessary for improving the ongoing practices of democratic life.

### **GOULDNER'S AND BOURDIEU'S INSIGHTS CONCERNING INTELLECTUALS**

The theoretical insights of Alvin Gouldner and Pierre Bourdieu concerning intellectuals together comprise one of the most productive approaches for investigating the situation of intellectuals today, including their relation with the political field. Their ideas have also been widely reflected in post-communist transformation discourse, including the work of such sociologists as Ivan Szelenyi, George Konrad, Marian Kempny, Andras Bozoki, and others.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of certain limitations, Gouldner and Bourdieu provide theoretical tools of great power for explaining the dynamic changes and developments that can be observed in post-communist countries.

Gouldner offers one of the most comprehensive theoretical perspectives concerning intellectuals as a new knowledge class in his *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*. His analysis of the emergence of this "new class" echoes the famous ideas of Daniel Bell on post-

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<sup>3</sup> Prominent examples are Szelenyi 1979, 1991; Kempny 1996, 1999; and Bozoki 1999.



industrial society, or knowledge society. Bell maintains that the rise of the knowledge society was brought about by means of crucial improvements in technology such that the "manual and unskilled worker class is shrinking in society, while at the other end of the continuum the class of knowledge workers is becoming predominant."<sup>4</sup> But Gouldner does not consider the New Class as being neutral in its interests. On the contrary, in its essence it is highly elitist, at least insofar as it defines itself as responsible for and "representative" of society as a whole.<sup>5</sup> Gouldner also views the New Class as clearly "self-seeking," using its "special knowledge to advance its own interests and power, and to control its own work situation."<sup>6</sup>

This "new class" is contradictory in nature insofar as it may be viewed both as the cultural bourgeoisie and as a speech community. As a new cultural bourgeoisie, intellectuals possess cultural capital, i.e., control over valuable cultures, not money. As such, they give rise to a new ideology which maintains that "productivity depends primarily on science and technology." The utilization of science and technology thus serves as a legitimizing ideology for the New Class, leading to praise for the functions it performs, the skills it possesses, and the educational credentials it owns. This strengthens its claim to generous income within the status quo.<sup>7</sup>

As a speech community, the New Class is characterized by the culture of critical discourse. This is in fact the key concept in Gouldner's theory since it constitutes "the common feature and quality of knowledge shared by Marxist radicals, professionals, the technical intelligentsia, and adversary or counter-cultural intellectuals."<sup>8</sup> The culture of critical discourse is characterized by speech that is relatively more situation-free as well as relatively more reflexive, self-monitoring, and capable of greater meta-communication. It also requires that the validity of claims be justified without reference to the speaker's societal position or authority.<sup>9</sup>

Gouldner argues that the culture of critical discourse may also serve to unite the New Class and comprise the source of its political activity, such as when intellectuals were broadly united during the anti-fascist movement of the 1930s and also in their opposition to the war in Vietnam. The culture of critical discourse is also radicalizing to a certain degree because those who participate in it experience themselves as distant from conventional culture. For example, Gouldner claims that "the deepest structure in the culture and ideology of

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<sup>4</sup> See Bell 1973, p. 343.

<sup>5</sup> Gouldner 1979, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Szelenyi 1994, p. 726.

<sup>9</sup> Gouldner, 1979, p. 28.

intellectuals is their pride in their autonomy," and that such autonomy is "an expression of the social interests of the New Class as a distinct group."<sup>10</sup>

However, this also leads to the "alienation" of the New Class from the rest of society insofar as it is conducive to cosmopolitanism, which distances persons from local cultures such that they feel themselves to be alien to particularistic, history-bound places as well as ordinary, everyday life.<sup>11</sup> It also renders all claims to authority potentially open to challenge since it itself claims nothing less than "the right to sit in judgment over the actions and claims of any social class and all power elites." Traditional authority is thereby stripped of its ability to define social reality and, consequently, to authorize its own legitimacy. The culture of critical discourse thus comprises both the means for the New Class to legitimate itself as well as a motivation to political action.<sup>12</sup>

The political strategies of New Class in pursuing its interests are of two basic types, namely, revolutionary strategy and reform strategy. The first is characterized by the cultivation of "an alliance with a mass working class, proletariat or peasantry, to sharpen the conflict between that mass and the old moneyed class."<sup>13</sup> The second may be further divided into a "welfare state" strategy and a "socialist state" strategy. One essential difference between the latter two is that the hegemony of the New Class is more complete and its control over the working class greater in a socialist state. In Western states the new and the old classes mutually limit one other and share control over the working class, although the New Class may at times ally itself with the working class in order to improve its own position against the old dominant class.<sup>14</sup>

These strategies determine the different paths to power of the New Class. One follows the Marxist pattern, in which intellectuals provide ideology and perform the role of leadership as the vanguard. Szelenyi states that Gouldner here identifies certain features of intellectuals "that make it possible for Marxist intellectuals to pursue self-interested goals while pretending to represent universalistic interests." This enables the revolutionary intelligentsia to "substitute itself for the proletariat and emerge from the revolution as a new dominant class."<sup>15</sup> Gouldner observes, however, that the position of the vanguard itself becomes precarious after the capture of state power: "in Russia it was pulverized by Stalinism; in China by the Cultural Revolution."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Szelenyi 1994, p. 726.

<sup>16</sup> Gouldner 1979, p. 79.

Euro-communism is one path that may be followed by the New Class in democratic states. On the one hand, it remains committed to the extension of the state's sway over the economy, thereby removing career obstacles for the New Class. On the other, it renounces the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and commits itself to a pluralistic democracy, thus limiting the threat of censorship.<sup>17</sup> However, the fact that certain members of the New Class became involved in the Nazi movement reveals that the New Class does not necessarily move "towards the left and towards solidarity with the old working class."<sup>18</sup>

Gouldner notes that the New Class in today's democracies is unlikely to behave in a revolutionary fashion: "its rise will more nearly be like that of bourgeoisie than like revolutions made in the name of the working class."<sup>19</sup> While the latter is indeed a "revolution-in-permanence" that is grounded in the culture of critical discourse, a significant shift from criticism to a new public discourse can be observed. For example, new areas of interest for the New Class in democratic countries include the advocacy of academic freedom, the protection of consumers' rights, the development of public policy and of an "independent" Civil Service, and participation in various other new movements, such as international environmental protection.

One of the most important ideas that Gouldner emphasizes is that the behavior of the New Class manifests a crucial contradiction. Stated otherwise, if the New Class is characterized by its commitment to the culture of critical discourse, how can it also join a vanguard party, which limits and acts inimically towards such discourse? The answer rests upon the dual nature of the New Class, namely, "it has both an ideology of the culture of critical discourse as a disposition to freedom and interests in its cultural capital that make it an elite concerned to monopolize incomes and privileges."<sup>20</sup>

Bourdieu's theoretical assumptions concerning intellectuals echo many of Gouldner's insights, but they also provide us with a more detailed explanation of the ambiguous character of contemporary intellectuals. Bourdieu continues the French tradition of viewing intellectuals as detached and critical figures who play significant roles in political life, but he reveals certain of their more hidden features. He argues, for example, that as intellectuals seek to "maximize the profit they can draw from their cultural capital and their spare time," they are in fact actively participating in the struggle for power.<sup>21</sup>

Power relations lie at the heart of Bourdieu's theory. According to Bourdieu's definition, the main structural unit of society is not Gouldner's

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>21</sup> Bourdieu 1994, p. 287.

"class" but rather a "social field" that can be characterized as "a network or a configuration of objective power relations imposed on all those who enter this field, relations that are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or even direct interactions between agents."<sup>22</sup> Such social fields are fluid insofar as both agents and resources may vary. For example, within today's dominant class, which has more total capital than the popular classes, the bourgeoisie has a higher admixture of economic capital while intellectuals enjoy greater cultural capital.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, the social field is systematically constructed such that it includes relations between different social positions, including a type of hierarchy of values, and also involves a struggle for limited power resources. Bourdieu insists that any field "presents itself as a structure of probabilities - of rewards, gains, profits, or sanctions."<sup>24</sup> This means that social fields are not stable. Not only do they unfold and develop with changes in power relations and the exchange of capital, new social fields may also develop while others disappear. There is also a measure of mobility between different capital assets that Bourdieu analyzes in terms of capital conversion, implying that an individual or group of individuals exchange a certain capital asset for another, such as when intellectuals seek to convert their cultural capital to economic capital. Indeed, social changes in the structure of society can be explained through the prism of this theory in terms of the redistribution of different types of capital, such as economical, cultural, symbolic, and social capital.

But there is no doubt that Bourdieu views the struggle for power in contemporary societies as having more that an invisible or "symbolic" character. According to Bourdieu's definition, "symbolic power is a power of constructing reality." That is to say that it is an "invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it."<sup>25</sup> But symbolic power is also a subordinate power. It is in fact a transformed, transfigured, and legitimated form of other types of power that is analogous to the transmutation of various types of capital (economic, cultural, or social) into symbolic capital. Bourdieu also describes these types of capital as resources of power. Power is thus something that can be possessed and, as such, symbolic power can be both accumulated and lost. Bourdieu remarks that "agents possess power in proportion to their symbolic capital, i.e., in proportion to the recognition they receive from the group."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

From this perspective, power implies a certain claim to symbolic authority as "the socially recognized power to impose a certain vision of the social world, i.e., of the divisions of the social world."<sup>27</sup> Bourdieu emphasizes in this regard the role of knowledge, particularly scientific theories, as he argues that "social science must include in its theory of the social world a theory of the theory effect which, by helping to impose a more or less authorized way of seeing the social world, helps to construct the reality of that world."<sup>28</sup> This manner of viewing the social system involves the use of what Bourdieu terms "symbolic systems," including systems of mental structures, systems of classification, and principles of hierarchy.

These "symbolic systems" serve as political instruments that "help to ensure that one class dominates another (symbolic violence) by bringing their own distinctive power to bear on the relations of power which underlie them."<sup>29</sup> Bourdieu thus employs in his theory of symbolic power the perspective of conflicts and class interests. He states that "the different classes and class fractions are engaged in a symbolic struggle properly speaking, one aimed at imposing the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests."<sup>30</sup> These classes engage in this struggle either directly, in the symbolic conflicts of everyday life, or at the level of conflict between their respective specialists in symbolic production. This process operates such that "the dominated fraction (clerics or 'intellectuals' and 'artists', depending on the period) always tends to set the specific capital, to which it owes its position, at the top of the hierarchy of principles of hierarchization."<sup>31</sup>

One of the main features of this symbolic struggle is that "the ideological stances adopted by the dominant are strategies of reproduction which tend to reinforce both within and outside the class the belief in the legitimacy of the dominance of that class."<sup>32</sup> The field of ideological positions thus reproduces in transfigured form both the field of social positions and also the established order that is "largely secured by symbolic violence [the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity], a process of cultural reproduction."<sup>33</sup> Bourdieu maintains that ideologies are always "doubly determined, that they owe their most specific characteristics not only to the interests of the classes or class fractions they express, but also to the specific interests of those who produce them and to the specific logic of the field of

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>33</sup> Jenkins 1992, p. 147.

production."<sup>34</sup> This provides us with a means of avoiding the Marxist reduction of ideological products to the interests of the classes that they serve.

For Bourdieu, therefore, intellectuals are in the contradictory position of being both dominant and dominated in terms of their class location. They are members of the dominant class because they enjoy the power and privileges that come with the possession of considerable cultural capital, a power which derives from their capacity to provide or withdraw legitimation for the social order. But they are also dominated in their relations with the holders of political and economic power.<sup>35</sup> In contrast with Gouldner, Bourdieu does not view intellectuals either as constituting a social class, or as developing anything like class-wide consciousness, organization, and mobilization. He in fact views intellectuals as "highly differentiated by their participation across different fields requiring different configurations of capital and by their stratification within particular fields," not least of all in respect to differing interests, beliefs, strategies, and political conduct.<sup>36</sup>

Bourdieu also indicates two basic political strategies that typify intellectuals, as does Gouldner. The first, which comprises opposition to the dominant class, is usually attributed to the willingness of many intellectuals to support groups who are dominated because of their own dominated status within the field of power. Bourdieu states, nevertheless, that this intellectual posture "derives more from a situation of privilege and its specific professional interests than from a genuine solidarity with the working class."<sup>37</sup> The basis of this statement resides in Bourdieu's theory of the relationship between cultural capital and economic capital: "the greater the investment in cultural capital and the greater the incongruity between cultural capital and economic capital, the more likely individuals are to contest the established order."<sup>38</sup>

The second strategy, which comprises efforts to maintain the status quo by reproducing existing power relations, derives from the fact that intellectuals are cultural capitalists, who gain a great reward in the struggle for power. Insofar as the scope of their political commitment is consequently tied to market share, they tend to conserve and reproduce the established social order. The spread of this strategy among intellectuals is connected with changes in the conditions of intellectual production, such as the increasing integration of intellectuals as salaried employees within large bureaucratic organizations and a decrease in the number who are self-employed. Intellectuals as wage earners become more attentive to the norms of "bureaucratic reliability" at the expense

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<sup>34</sup> Bourdieu 1994, p. 169.

<sup>35</sup> Swartz 1997, p. 223.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

of being guardians of the "critical detachment from authority" that is possible through the relative autonomy of cultural fields.<sup>39</sup> It is this ambiguous location within the field of power that underpins the ambiguity of consciousness and political practice and introduces a hesitation concerning the choice of "participation" or "revolt" that Bourdieu finds to be characteristic of salaried intellectuals.<sup>40</sup>

Russel Jacoby discusses the same tendency of intellectuals towards conformism, elitism, and cultural reproduction in his *The Last Intellectuals*, in which he emphasizes the great decline in the involvement of intellectuals in public debate, whereby they abandon the role of providing society with a critical discourse. He claims that independent public intellectuals, such as writers and thinkers who address a general and educated audience, "have been supplanted by high-tech intellectuals, consultants and professors - anonymous souls, who may be competent, and more than competent, but who do not enrich public life."<sup>41</sup>

Jacoby's central argument is that the public role of the cultural elite, especially left intellectuals who mainly support democratic principles, is in decline because their energy is now expended in theoretical discourse and academic careerism instead of public activity. He argues that the expansion of universities has created a situation in which "younger intellectuals, whose lives have unfolded almost entirely on campuses, direct themselves to professional colleagues but are inaccessible and unknown to others."<sup>42</sup> In addition, "their jobs, advancement, and salaries depend on the evaluation of specialists, and this dependence affects the issues broached and the language employed."<sup>43</sup>

The need to connect intellectual work with everyday experience and with social movements, which was expressed with such urgency in the 1960s and the early 1970s, thus appears to have been replaced by an urgent need to be recognized by fellow intellectuals. Moreover, the sense that politically engaged intellectuals might form and sustain the communities in which they live has faded as they have become ever more integrated into their disciplines, departments, and campus administrations. Consequently, the professionalization of intellectuals, whereby they desire such benefits of academic life as job security, regular salaries, grants, research funding, long vocations, and the freedom to write and teach what they want, has replaced free and vital public activity.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Swartz 1997, p. 239.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>41</sup> Jacoby 1989, x.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

Christopher Lasch addresses a similar issue in his *The Revolt of the Elites*, where he reveals certain other negative aspects of alienation among intellectuals today, especially the cultural elite. Lasch observes that the growth in the numbers of well-educated people at the end of the twentieth century has in fact resulted not only in the triumph of elites, but also in a disdain for the working and even middle classes, who have "failed to share the vast fortunes accumulated in real estate, finance, and manufacturing."<sup>45</sup> This general tendency "runs more and more in the direction of a two-class society in which the favored few monopolize the advantages of money, education, and power."<sup>46</sup> Although these professional and managerial elites have come to constitute almost 20 percent of the population of the United States, they can be spoken of as "a new class only in the sense that their livelihoods rest not so much on the ownership of property as on manipulation of information and professional expertise."<sup>47</sup> In a manner reminiscent of Bell, Lasch doubts whether this group, who comprise a wide variety of occupations, are capable of carrying out any political role because of the fact that they lack a common political outlook.<sup>48</sup>

The new element in Lasch's argument is that he defines the new elites, apart from their rapidly rising income, by a new way of life that distinguishes them from the rest of the population.<sup>49</sup> This way of life first of all involves the cosmopolitan character of both their work and their new ideology. Their loyalties - if the very term is not anachronistic within this context - are international rather than regional, national, or local. They have more "in common with their counterparts in Brussels or Hong Kong than with the masses of Americans not yet plugged into the network of global communications."<sup>50</sup> Their ties to an international culture of work and leisure - of business, entertainment, information, and "information retrieval" - make many of them deeply indifferent to the prospect of American national decline.<sup>51</sup>

While Gouldner speaks only of the positive features of cosmopolitanism, Lasch here clearly indicates its negative aspects as well. And Lasch is not alone in this line of thinking, for many other writers have made significant contributions to the critique of this type of cosmopolitanism. Friedman, for example, blames the global culturally hybridized elite for embedding the new source of both political and economic power in a world system, an action which reveals their fragmented political identities and

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<sup>45</sup> Lasch 1995, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 45.



allegiances. Pels also criticizes the increasing rootlessness of intellectuals, and especially the new fashion of being proud of this, as nomadic narcissism.<sup>52</sup>

But there is also a more positive approach towards the future of Western intellectuals according to which Lasch's and Jacoby's diagnoses are overly pessimistic. As Flacks points out, a sizable number of academics and professionals have continued the struggle to dedicate their work and energy to change-oriented projects. Indeed, the activist core of locally based peace, environmental, feminist, human rights, and social justice projects includes a high proportion of academics. One of the possibly relevant frameworks for connecting cultural elites to democracy is thus provided by social movements.<sup>53</sup>

Flacks argues that the problem of the post-1960s generation is that it has lost the sense of a shared project and vision, not that it has produced too few "stars" or that its members have become politically disaffiliated. A generation that once possessed a collective identity now finds itself dispersed into thousands of fragments. The diversity of social movements, however, also "compels a quest for new models of political action, new relations between intellectuals and the grass roots." This generates the possibility that intellectuals may find a new common ground that is needed to gain "sufficient social leverage to achieve needed change and in order to create the basis for democratic mutuality."<sup>54</sup>

This general theoretical framework for the present discussion provides a powerful instrument for revealing the dual character of intellectuals, whereby they are, on the one hand, innovators of new ideas and critics of the existing order and, on the other, endeavor to preserve their status and protect their own interests. But even as they protect their own interests, intellectuals may also create the basis for more progressive developments in society, such as the spread of democracy and improvement in the situation of the disadvantaged. Swartz straightforwardly remarks that "by defending their own interests of protecting critical inquiry, intellectuals establish the grounds for debunking the legitimacy of dominant power relations and thereby actually advance the interests of subordinate groups."<sup>55</sup>

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTELLECTUALS TO THE FALL OF COMMUNISM**

Observers of the "velvet" revolutions in Central and East European countries solidly agreed that intellectuals played the crucial role in the fall of

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<sup>52</sup> See Friedman 1997, pp. 84-85, and Pels 1999, p. 71.

<sup>53</sup> Flacks 1991, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Swartz 1997, p. 264.

Communism. Goldfarb claims, for example, that "a small group of intellectuals fundamentally transformed the geopolitical world" in the former Soviet bloc.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, it would be misleading to state that it was precisely intellectuals who began the process of change. This fact was particularly evident in the case of Poland, where workers began the activity of self-organization by forming the Committee in Defense of Workers with aim of helping "those workers, and their families, who were victimized by the authorities after the 1976 strikes and demonstration."<sup>57</sup> Intellectuals were not among the earliest organizers of the Solidarity movement in terms of practical political actions, but rather joined the workers' protest at a later date, well after the 1981 imposition of martial law had considerably reduced the extent of their social involvement. Indeed, Wodz indicates that the intelligentsia again became immersed in social issues only in 1989 in the wake of Solidarity's electoral victory.<sup>58</sup>

This type of delay is less visible in the other Central and Eastern European countries, primarily because of rapidly changing political events. In Lithuania, for example, the rapid and passionate development of the independence movement after 1989 provoked the remark that "growing from nothing, it awakened the nation from a deep slumber in only three months."<sup>59</sup> And an examination of the role of intellectuals during that period not only illustrates a particular pattern of behavior, it also reveals their hidden motivation. A former member of the first Lithuanian parliament explains their position as follows:

There was, of course, no doubt that educated people would support the movement. But they unfortunately did not light the first lamps. Why? Perhaps because life was comfortable for the intelligentsia in Soviet times, and a significant number of them, perhaps even the majority, kept their positions. They were afraid to draw the attention of the organs of repression, worried about how to care for and educate their children, and so forth. And the first important challenges to the system came not from their circle but from those who were not afraid to take the risk. Those who did take the risk showed greater spiritual strength than the ordinary members of the Lithuanian intelligentsia, who were formed during the Soviet period, and

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<sup>56</sup> Goldfarb 1998, p. 79.

<sup>57</sup> Kennedy 1991, p. 104.

<sup>58</sup> Wodz 1995, p. 151.

<sup>59</sup> Girnius 1993, p. 3.

who were afraid to lose their apartments, jobs, and standard of living.<sup>60</sup>

Conformism was thus an endemic characteristic of Soviet intellectuals. This was due partly to their being educated under the communist regime, partly to their fear of repression, and partly to their desire to preserve the specific privileges and prestige they had acquired. In addition, many of these conformist intellectuals were involved in the Komsomol, the Communist Party, and the deeply politicized bureaucratic apparatus. While this initially might have arisen from an agreement with communist ideology, by the late 1980s membership in the Party and in related organizations tended to be either careerism or an expression of a certain type of active personality. Indeed, many former Party members after the revolution became professional politicians or successful entrepreneurs on the basis of their accumulated knowledge, experience, and organizational skills, a fact that serves as one of most appropriate examples of the conversion of cultural and social capital into political and economic capital.

Szelenyi and Konrad proposed an explanation similar to Gouldner's in their *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*, namely, that intellectuals in the Soviet bloc sought class power by virtue of their monopoly over technological knowledge. Szelenyi and Konrad maintained that these claims were partly realized when, in the post-Stalinist era, the bureaucracy indeed joined forces with the intelligentsia as a new dominant class.<sup>61</sup> However, Szelenyi later stated in his analysis of the "velvet" revolutions that although he and Konrad correctly predicted that intellectuals would come to power in Eastern Europe, that were in fact right for the wrong reason. That is to say that intellectuals did not attain power by a rationalization or redistribution of power, but rather defeated the bureaucracy in a "discursive revolution" in the way Gouldner forecast."<sup>62</sup>

The latter is associated less with the majority of conformist intellectuals than with the considerably smaller group of non-conformists or dissidents, whose numbers varied from country to country. Some of these had survived repression during the Soviet period, but since they and their families often had restricted access to universities and academies, a rather small number of them were highly educated. Indeed, many non-conformist intellectuals had been paradoxically created by the communist regime itself. As M. D. Kennedy observes, insofar as Soviet intellectuals were denied the privilege of defining their masters, "bureaucratic domination suppressed the creative capacity of individuals, especially of intellectuals." This political practice of attempting to

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<sup>60</sup> Geciene 1998, p. 150.

<sup>61</sup> Szelenyi 1994, p. 726.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 728.

control and limit intellectual activity had the unexpected effect of inspiring intellectuals to search for "truth," thereby creating the opposition. In Kennedy's words, "the vision of Soviet-type totalitarianism clearly identified the autonomous intellectual as opponent, thereby moving such an intellectual to prominence in opposition and to a natural solidarity with a broader resistance to the existing regime."<sup>63</sup>

This growing number of non-conformist intellectuals were in fact among the first to join the protest movements. They were in most cases not clearly organized, but they produced unofficial publications, participated in private discussion groups, and, most importantly, worked to advocate the basic human rights of free speech and free association. As Goldfarb nicely put it, such intellectuals contributed to the establishment of a democratic society

not by winning the favorable ear of those who were in power, nor by representing directly the dispossessed, nor by engaging in brave acts of military valor, nor through exercising political leadership. Rather, they accomplished the apparently impossible by simply pursuing a free public life as an end in itself, within their own limited social circles. They "acted as if they lived in a free society" and in the process they created one.<sup>64</sup>

The circumstances for implementing this vision of free public life, or what later came to be termed "civil society," were extremely unfavorable insofar as the ground of possibility for free organizations had been almost completely destroyed. Rose argues that this situation had been brought about through attempts on the part of communist regimes to take control of all major institutions of society in order to control organized opinion and mobilize support for the party-state.<sup>65</sup> In Sztompka's words, whatever remained of free organizations, or any new ones that were created, were "pushed underground" and became "civil society in conspiracy."<sup>66</sup> People reacted by turning to informal networks of friends and family, creating a form of society in which individuals insulated themselves from distrusted formal organizations.

Theorists disagree about the extent to which civil society existed before and during the crucial events of the "velvet" revolutions. Arato claims that Lewin, who first applied the notion of civil society to the study of social change in the Soviet Union, maintained that a slowly developing and expanding civil

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<sup>63</sup> Kennedy 1992, p. 32.

<sup>64</sup> Goldfarb 1998, p. 79.

<sup>65</sup> Rose 2001, p. 344.

<sup>66</sup> Sztompka, 1998, p. 193.

society within the midst of modernization was responsible for the Gorbachev phenomenon.<sup>67</sup> Arato himself is somewhat skeptical concerning Lewin's position because of the absence of independent movements and initiatives at the time. Tart, however, disagrees with Arato for the simple reason that throughout the Soviet period, and especially during the 1980s, cultural resistance at the very least existed as a specific form of civil society with its various values, practices, discourses, and so forth.<sup>68</sup>

From Tart's point of view, the only legitimate form of association other than the Communist Party and related organizations were purely cultural organizations, including the network that involved art societies, associations of horticulture and apiculture, as well as the widespread regional studies movements and folk music collectives.<sup>69</sup> The impact of religious organizations, such as the Catholic Church in Poland and Lithuania, may be added to this picture insofar as they worked for the maintenance of national unity and identity and also served as a catalyst for resistance. An interesting example of the latter was the petition circulated in the Soviet Union in the early 1980s to have a church building returned to the congregation, which was the largest petition to the authorities during the pre-*perestroika* period.<sup>70</sup>

Whatever type of civil society that did exist did not correspond to the classic notion since all forms of civil dissent were unthinkable. Tart argues, however, that there was indeed a semi-legal nation-centered public sphere that developed its "own solidarity and value concepts with sign systems to express them, as well as direct or indirect institutions to channel this collective mind."<sup>71</sup> This culturally-oriented type of society can justifiably be viewed as a specific form of civil society, or at least as a strong pre-condition for it, that served as the foundation upon which a rapidly growing anti-communist national movement arose.

In spite of the fact that elements of both the non-conformist as well as conformist intellectuals were personally engaged in the activity of these cultural organizations, their participation did not have a decisive influence on the collapse of communist regimes. The most important role of intellectuals before and during the "velvet revolutions" in fact involved the development and articulation of collective ideas and images for resistance and protest movements. In Goldfarb's words, intellectuals supported these movements by providing them with "political vocabularies" and thinking through the available political alternatives. It was the consequent reintroduction of ideas concerning

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<sup>67</sup> Arato 1991, p. 198.

<sup>68</sup> Tart 1995, p. 157.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Krupavicius 1996, p. 33.

<sup>71</sup> Tart 1995, p. 157.

democracy, independence, and civil society into political discourse that constituted the factor which "helped millions to come to terms with the fundamental changes in their political world."<sup>72</sup>

This type of activity may be spoken of in terms of the exercise of symbolic power by critical intellectuals, who sought to disseminate their new vision of the social and political world as they both provoked and participated in "discursive battles" with Communist Party officials in the name of implementing essential reforms, if not of changing the regime. Bozoki observes that the years leading up to and immediately following 1989 may be described as an epoch of "symbolic politics," or "a politics which is oriented towards 'breaking new ground' by means of the delegitimization of the old framework of power and the constitution of a new one in the name of new values and ideas." But this rhetoric had a highly "moral-universalist" character that produced negative side-effects in the post-communist period when there was a need for a more pragmatic vision that could facilitate the return of former communists to the political arena.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the democratizing influence of their ideas, Ivan Bernik identifies an element of self-interest on the part of non-conformist intellectuals as they adopted the position of a "vanguard" of resistance to the authoritarian regime, becoming a public voice demanding the creation of a free space so that society could express itself in form of different social movements, forums, and initiatives. Bernik states that the ideology of civil society which such intellectuals generated during the communist period was in fact strongly related to their own vital interests, which were primarily based in ensuring their professional autonomy and improving their economic status. Their attempts to "revive civil society and the corresponding envisaged radical limitation of the prerogatives of the state would clearly be instrumental in the realization of these interests."<sup>74</sup>

The self-interests of intellectuals coupled with their leadership of discourse finally placed them in a leadership role of the 1989-90 events when they established the organizing committees for a further mobilization of the population through such activities as demonstrations, meetings, and so forth. One of the best examples of their direct leading role in politics was the "Baltic Path" action of 1989 that created a human chain connecting Vilnius and Tallinn in order to express the popular desire to secede from the Soviet Union. And both non-conformist intellectuals as well as former communists participated in such political leadership. In Lithuania, for example, former communists indeed comprised the largest and the most dynamic group within Sajudis, a point that

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<sup>72</sup> Goldfarb 1998, p. 82.

<sup>73</sup> Bozoki 1999, pp. 264-270.

<sup>74</sup> Bernik 1999, p. 108.

serves to emphasize the paramount importance of self-interest among intellectuals rather than loyalty to principles. That is not to say that there were no honest intellectuals dedicated to the idea of independence, but we should not ignore the other side of a coin. As one observer stated,

We should understand that everyone wanted to express him/herself in some way. First the caareerists, who were the most active part, sought to do something. They picked up the flag, began waving it, and declared that they were Sajudis activists. They had just been declaring that sincere allegiance to Marxism-Leninism.<sup>75</sup>

Further steps were taken to strengthen and institutionalize the accumulated political power of both groups of intellectuals. These included the numerous attempts, some successful and some not, to establish political parties and carry out political functions, which in normal times are the business of professional politicians. These in fact comprised vigorous efforts to occupy the main positions of power and form parliaments and governments. Konrad and Szelenyi state that intellectuals played the most important roles in all post-communist countries during this period since it was they who eventually formed the new political elites. But they also argue that this was characteristic only for a certain stage of transformation insofar as "intellectuals only prepared the soil for a new class, for which the same intellectuals are also candidates."<sup>76</sup>

### **REASONS FOR THE DECLINE IN THE POLITICAL ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS**

The decline in the political role of intellectuals during the post-communist transformation has been particularly obvious in comparison with the extraordinary importance they had as the vanguard of the movement for democratization and independence. Many observers of the initial period of the transformation process claim that intellectuals have in fact become politically passive in post-communist societies, losing their former leading roles as well as the status and prestige they had enjoyed in Soviet society. As Joanna Kurczewska, one of the most pessimistic sociologists, has remarked, it is ironic that the achievements of the intelligentsia in bringing about the end of communism and introducing a market economy resulted not only in their "retiring from the stage," but even in their "death" as a group.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Geciene 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Szelenyj 1991, p. 338.

<sup>77</sup> Kurczewska 1995, p. 240.

The intelligentsia's insufficient competence for the role of political leadership is commonly presented as the main reason of this decline. For example, Donskis states that the "intelligentsia, with their focus on moral, cultural, and spiritual, but not material issues, were not prepared to attain the new political and economic goals."<sup>78</sup> Kennedy remarked in this respect that intellectuals "will be assured of continuity in leadership only insofar as they become... members of new entrepreneur class, or professional politicians."<sup>79</sup> More recent observers, such as Falk, nevertheless maintain that it is merely a myth that intellectuals have become marginalized in the political arena by virtue of their "political ineptitude or annoying moral superiority."<sup>80</sup> It would thus be more appropriate to examine the structural transformations and identity changes within the social group of intellectuals than simply talk about their disappearing role in the political arena.

Indeed, intellectuals as a group underwent a process of fragmentation after their dreams had been realized in the revolutions of the early 1990s. Although one segment of the intelligentsia underwent a decline in status, prestige, and income, another succeeded in adapting themselves to the new conditions by relying on their level of education and accepting the new values, some emigrating while others in fact became politicians and businessmen. Bozoki states in respect to the latter group that "as top advisers, politicians, or privatizers they are ready to change their identity from one day to the next, in a bid to accommodate themselves to the new reality as rapidly as possible."<sup>81</sup> In general, such factors indeed lead to an overall decrease in their numbers.

Such changes also served to facilitate the conversion of power resources into political or economic capital, which during the first years of transformation became the most valuable and desirable types of power resources in transforming societies. Kurczewski points out that politics may be good business in the sense of making good money since the salaries of members of parliament and local government are well above the average for the intelligentsia. On the other hand, those who complain about the declining importance of the intelligentsia in comparison with the new business class have often not realized that beginning a career in business was a natural step for certain members of the intelligentsia.<sup>82</sup>

The remaining intellectuals experienced a further fragmentation. Some of them, such as teachers, doctors, and engineers, were reduced to being specialized but low-salaried workers, while others, including scientists,

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<sup>78</sup> Donskis 1997, p. 102.

<sup>79</sup> Kennedy 1992, p. 63.

<sup>80</sup> Falk 2003, p. 356.

<sup>81</sup> Bozoki 1999, p. 274.

<sup>82</sup> Kurczewski 1997, p. 222.



university professors, government consultants, and people in the arts, succeeded in preserving their prestige and influence but not their high incomes. The latter did increasingly identify themselves, however, as intellectuals rather than as members of the previous intelligentsia.

The split between these two parts of the intelligentsia can be partially explained by the diminished prestige and status of education and science as such in the first years of the transformation that resulted from changes in government policies. Governments were simply forced by the great difficulties of this period to restrict the role of science in the socio-economical development of post-communist countries, bringing about a dissociation of the level of education from income. This in turn led to a reduction in earnings for those who worked in state-owned firms and organizations, including the intelligentsia. In addition, the cultural spheres of education, science, health care, and social welfare, where the majority of the intelligentsia worked, were the first to suffer reduced state funding and the last to become candidates for privatization.

This situation drove many intellectuals to search for better-paid work in state and local administrations and in private companies, to establish their own businesses, or to emigrate. In Lithuania, for example, 53.4 percent of economists, 52.5 percent of lawyers, 35.5 percent of engineers and technical specialists, and 35.4 percent of social scientists, representing the fields with the greatest mobility, changed their professions or places of employment.<sup>83</sup> This fact also serves to reveal another essential feature of the transformation, namely, that not all spheres of higher education are of equal importance in the new economic conditions. University educations in business, finance, bookkeeping, management, economy, and law are in fact much more valuable in a market economy than are other specializations.

However, the decline in the prestige and status of higher education was only temporary, in spite of the most pessimistic projections, and a university education has become a valuable commodity. Domanski, for instance, discusses the growing linkage between higher education and increased incomes, particularly in the private sector.<sup>84</sup> One reason for this resides in the new demands of the expanding market economy, in which highly qualified professionals have increased chances to obtain well-paid jobs.

But this process has had a critical impact on the self-identification of the former intelligentsia insofar as many people with university educations have begun to identify themselves as experts or professionals rather than members of the intelligentsia. This distinction between "specialists" and the rest of intelligentsia reflects the impact of the new principles upon which society is

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<sup>83</sup> Stankuniene 1996, p. 336.

<sup>84</sup> Domanski 1995, p. 337

structured. That is to say that changed economic circumstances, which have destroyed the basis for the communist organization of intellectual activity, demand that the structure of society be adapted to conditions which more closely resemble those of Western countries.

The impact of such macro process on the future of the intelligentsia has been frequently discussed. Kennedy, for example, observes that the intelligentsia "will become good professionals and give up their aspirations for a leading role in the making of Eastern European society,"<sup>85</sup> while Mokrzycki states that "the new 'knowledge class' may emerge in its place, but it will retain some of intelligentsia's features."<sup>86</sup> Such statements, which date from the beginning of the transformation, clearly echo the main ideas of Bell's theory of the politically neutral knowledge class.

But further developments revealed a quite different scenario. Not only did a group of pure professionals emerge in a way that at first seemed analogous to the formation of a similar group in the West, the self-conscious separation of intellectuals from other groups in society also began. This process was colored by the arrogantly stated aim of so-called post-communist intellectuals to distance themselves from the rest of intelligentsia insofar as the latter were supposedly old-fashioned, inadequate, and narrow minded. The now fashionable use of the more "prestigious" concept of "intellectual" on the part of academicians, writers, and many other socially and politically active people with a higher education, a usage that extends into the mass media, should indeed be regarded as a symbolic power game in which the concept itself serves as a specific resource of symbolic capital.

But there are indications that Western intellectuals are being idealized rather than viewed realistically. Gudkov, for example, contrasts the new intellectuals to the "morally old-fashioned" intelligentsia, and claims that the distinguishing characteristic of the former is innovation. Insofar as they are supposedly created through their skeptical evaluation of traditions, intellectuals "cultivate the reflection of internal moral and conceptual systems and clichés of values" as a type of "rational self-control." Gudkov goes on to claim that this reflection is based on an "ethics of responsibility," or the "personal responsibility for results of ideas, words and actions," while the intelligentsia was instead highly influenced by "dogmas and ideological postulates."<sup>87</sup> But this view completely ignores the actual situation of Western intellectuals as described by Jacoby and Lasch, which reveals their degradation in terms of responsibility, involvement in public debates, and the representation of people's interests.

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<sup>85</sup> Kennedy 1992, p. 64.

<sup>86</sup> Mokrzycki 1995.

<sup>87</sup> Gudkov 1995, p. 151.

In addition to this process of fragmentation, other writers attempt to distinguish between the two different groups of political and cultural intellectuals in their analyses of the relation of this social group as a whole with politics. Szacki argues that political intellectuals feel responsible for the entire world and are politically involved, while the cultural intelligentsia perceived themselves as primarily responsible for maintaining an absolute sense of self-loyalty along with a loyalty to values that determine the identity of literature, science, art, philosophy, and so forth.<sup>88</sup> But at least one significant question arises at this point, namely, how are we to distinguish between professional politicians and political intellectuals? Szacki appears to say that political intellectuals are not involved in administration, but rather sign appeals, protests, and manifestos, participate in congresses, and express their concerns for the fate of humanity. However, this distinction between political and cultural intellectuals is insufficiently clear, not least of all because individuals easily move back and forth from one group to the other.

We may thus say that the first years of post-communist change reveal not the "death" of the intelligentsia, but rather a thoroughgoing transformation as they endeavored to adapt to new circumstances. The success of this adaptation depends, on the one hand, on the resources available and the strategies chosen to cope with new challenges and, on the other, the genuine interests of the group. Those intellectuals who are more personally active, have more useful knowledge and skills, enjoy a broader social network, and wish to improve their situations have greater opportunities for adapting to the changes. As a rule, they are more cosmopolitan and have the possibility to travel or study abroad, which not only leads to the accumulation of new knowledge, but also makes it possible to critique the backwardness or unfavorable developments in transforming societies. This finally generates intense efforts "to construct their roles in new contexts," which Eyerman maintains is the unavoidable destiny of every new generation of intellectuals.<sup>89</sup>

### **NEW CHALLENGES AND NEW ROLES FOR INTELLECTUALS**

The most active intellectuals within the post-communist context who did not move into the political and business spheres began to create new strategies for coping with the new challenges facing them, which involved an attempt to re-construct their roles in a changed society. Falk states that many former intellectual activists found themselves at home in the political arena and have in fact made impressive contributions to the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions and a democratic political culture by

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<sup>88</sup> Szacki 1990, p. 235.

<sup>89</sup> Eyerman 1994, p. 16.

virtue of their ideas and sense of commitment coupled with electoral success.<sup>90</sup> The political and social activities of such intellectuals have been channeled primarily into the two areas of high politics and the creation of an independent civil sphere between state politics and society.

The first of these areas can be described as more or less permanently entering politics by becoming a member of an existing party, establishing a new one, serving in parliament, government, or a local governments body, serving as an adviser or ambassador, and so forth. But with only a few exceptions, such as Vaclav Havel, this usually leads to the loss of one's identity as an intellectual. Even Havel's case, however, can be characterized as relatively little political power coupled with considerable moral persuasion.<sup>91</sup>

The creation and enlargement of civil society thus appears to be the main public involvement of intellectuals in post-communist societies today. One of their "new" (or more properly "renewed") roles may in fact be described as being "the critical consciences of their respective societies,"<sup>92</sup> and Central and East European intellectuals are now becoming increasingly involved in critical discourse by virtue of their participation in public debate in the media and their presentation of new ideas and alternatives concerning future development.

But this engagement in critical discourse does not necessarily mean that all intellectuals hold pro-democratic views. The loss of exaggerated and at times undeserved prestige, coupled with their own lack of competence and the expectation that they would be the leaders and the conscience of the nation, have driven some of them to become disillusioned with the changed situation. This has even increased their arrogance concerning "low" culture, the "dirty business" of politics, and the new economic players, thereby opening up a deep gap between them and the rest of society. Their consequent involvement in "endless discussions about declining morality, values, and norms without any attention to the real needs of the new society" has turned the focus of certain intellectuals "away from social reality and any active participation in the creation of new ideas and new measures to resolve problems."<sup>93</sup>

This negative process has acquired a radical character in certain post-communist societies. For example, Greenfeld observes how the lost of prestige and material resources among Russian intellectuals has led them to be, at best, critics of "unfinished democratization," while a certain number of them have in fact turned away from the ideals of democracy.<sup>94</sup> Even though intellectuals as a

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<sup>90</sup> Falk 2003, p. 356.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.

<sup>93</sup> Donskis 1997, p. 105.

<sup>94</sup> Greenfeld 1996, p. 419.

group have been the main supporters of a democratic order, in unfavorable conditions a large number of them, and possible even a majority, have instead come to oppose progressive political development as a result of the concern to defend their own interests. This clearly illustrates the ambiguous position of intellectuals within society.

On the other hand, the consistent promotion of civil society by certain post-communist intellectuals has led them to become involved in the establishment of new non-governmental organizations and social movements as well as participation in those that already exist.<sup>95</sup> The ideological basis for the ever increasing activity of this type is the conviction that civil society plays a crucial role in the development of true democracy, comprising "a necessary but not sufficient condition for consolidating democracies in the region."<sup>96</sup>

Guided by this conviction, and enjoying substantial financial support from Western societies, intellectuals have found a fruitful field of activity for themselves. However, many respondents to surveys, even if they agree on the usefulness of a strong civil society, indicate intellectuals have strong self-interests in respect to the creation of new non-governmental organizations. Consider the following comments:

I would say that [within these organisations] people usually work only to publicize their own names. I do not want to generalize, but people often begin with such institutions when they want to create careers for themselves. We have also seen such people in trade unions and in other movements [A.T].

There are certainly attempts to create NGOs for the sake of personal interests, career goals, and increased popularity that could later lead to elective public office... Many people look to such organizations as a platform for furthering their careers [A.Z].<sup>97</sup>

Others emphasize financial self-interest in this regard:

These organizations are very useful, but we have already dirtied our reputations in the course of ten years. It is no secret that foreign funds are misappropriated... that finances often disappear and are not used for right purposes [L.M.].<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Kempny 1999, p. 161.

<sup>96</sup> Flak 2003, p. 315.

<sup>97</sup> Geciene 1998.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

There are indeed numerous and serious problems in respect to the creation of civil society in post-communist countries, one of the most obvious being the extremely low rate of participation in NGOs. In Lithuania, for example, it appears that between 1990 and 1999 the only voluntary organizations in which membership grew were religious groups, sports clubs, and farmers organizations.<sup>99</sup> In general, only ten to twenty percent of survey respondents in post-communist countries state that they are members of any type of voluntary associations.<sup>100</sup>

The major reason for this problem is that people simply have no confidence in the new institutions. This distrust is deeply rooted in the experience of the previous regime, where membership was at best only semi-voluntary, i.e., voluntary but ideologically necessary for personal security. The result is the mass popular distrust of institutions that "repressed rather than expressed people's real views,"<sup>101</sup> a situation that Sztompka termed a "syndrome of distrust."<sup>102</sup> This was transferred into the new democratic order, where it is evident in the distrust not only of governments, parliaments, and various political parties, but also of such institutions of civil society as the church, the mass media, and independent trade unions.

There is also a widespread interpersonal distrust (up to 70 percent) that creates even greater obstacles to the development of a healthy civil society insofar as "people need to have interpersonal trust for them to be willing to form and participate in 'secondary associations,' which make democracies work."<sup>103</sup> Moreover, people have highly skeptical attitudes towards the newly emerging structures of civil society and the people who are involved in creating them:

But when you look at the people engaged in such organizations, you see losers who did not manage to find a place for themselves somewhere else [L.M].<sup>104</sup>

In addition, Mokrzycki remarks that NGOs, of which there are almost 20,000 in Poland, are regarded by "both the political class and the 'people' as a blend of hobby and philanthropy."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Valionis 2000, p. 339.

<sup>100</sup> Rose 2001, p. 34.

<sup>101</sup> Rose, 1994, p. 19.

<sup>102</sup> Sztompka 1996.

<sup>103</sup> Reislinger 1994, p. 206.

<sup>104</sup> Gečienė 1998.

<sup>105</sup> Mokrzycki 2000, p. 66.

It is also significant these new structures are not rooted in the public tradition and appear to be artificial, created from above as it were. As many analysts emphasize, they indeed seem to be "the creation of intellectuals under the guardianship of intellectuals" insofar as the societies in question emerged as civil societies "by command of the intellectuals, not as the development of the natural course of events." As such, they appear to be "a rationalization of class power" or "a maintaining of a leading political role" guided by "an ideology for the centrality of intellectuals in public life."<sup>106</sup> The elitist character of post-communist civil society can be illustrated by the fact that the space of civil society is predominantly occupied by professionals and intellectuals. More than 35 percent of these groups in Lithuania actively participate in some form of voluntary organizations while less than 5 percent of other groups do so.<sup>107</sup>

Bernik claims that this occupation of civil society in post-communist countries by the highly educated is rooted in the "civil society ideology" they developed during the communist period. Non-conformist intellectuals living in communist regimes saw themselves as the vanguard of resistance, and their avowed aim was to create a free space in which social interests could express themselves spontaneously through various social movements, forums, and initiatives.<sup>108</sup> But their elitist stance today makes it difficult for NGOs to mobilize a larger segment of society and represent the interests of less educated people. Alexander argues that this type of situation is also a sore point within Western civil societies insofar as "scientific and professional power has empowered experts and excluded ordinary persons from full participation in vital civil discussions."<sup>109</sup>

Nevertheless, Goldfarb endeavors to defend the greater involvement of intellectuals in the affairs of civil society. He states that

It is sometimes observed by critics that absolute commitment to the civil society model is a rationalization for critical intellectuals, but it is no less true that absolute commitment to the market is the ideological commitment of the businessman, and absolute commitment to the state is the commitment of the politician or the bureaucrat. Beyond such dogmas, recognition of the interconnection among the economy, state, and civil society make the exclusive concern with one without the others incomplete.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Goldfarb 1998, pp. 93-95.

<sup>107</sup> Geciene 1998, p. 22.

<sup>108</sup> Bernik 1999, p. 108.

<sup>109</sup> Alexander 1998, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> Goldfarb 1998, p. 94.

Even if the public sphere is still immature and preoccupied with the interests of intellectuals, its role in the fostering of democratization has a number of positive aspects, such as educating people to change their non-participatory behavior, by virtue of the fact that it has "its own medicine for self-repair."<sup>111</sup> Civil society is also a main form of socialization in which people learn to respect and trust their fellow partners in the civil sphere. This is of great importance in societies where the lack of trust has been overwhelming. In addition, public debate provides a basis for democracy in that it establishes the "ground rules for the proper relations between politicians and citizens... identifies the issues of common concern, and... allows the development of feelings of collective identity and of belonging to a political community."<sup>112</sup>

From this perspective, the predominance of intellectuals in post-communist civil societies, in spite of its negative aspects, can be crucially important in facing new challenges, such as those presented by the integration of Central and East European countries into the EU. It is significant that the young and the highly educated have demonstrated greater support for EU membership on the basis of their greater knowledge of the integration process, greater trust in the EU, and experience of international organizations and a Western type of civil culture.<sup>113</sup>

Indeed, post-communist intellectuals can greatly foster democratic consolidation through their involvement in critical discourse and in the civil sphere. And in addition to being "interpreters" of developments in their societies, they can also serve as active participants in the creation of civil society.<sup>114</sup> But it is necessary that such activities be made more effective through the involvement of broader segments of society, the restriction of elitism, an emphasis on solidarity not with the leadership but with the disadvantaged, and a partnership between all social groups.

When intellectuals share their accumulated knowledge with the rest of society, society as a whole becomes better able to face not only the challenges rooted in post-communism, but also those that arise from global processes, including the "crisis of [Western] democracy."<sup>115</sup> A number of such global issues concern the shortcomings of existing liberal democracy and capitalism, including what Kennedy terms "the politics of dependency in the capitalist world system." This also involves what Žižek has termed the "fundamental blindness [of liberal democracies] about the ideological mechanisms which operate within them," whereby the liberal principle of free choice masks the

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<sup>111</sup> Perez-Diaz 1998, p. 221.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Gaidys 2000, p. 197; Stulik 1998, p. 152.

<sup>114</sup> Bauman 1987 develops this point.

<sup>115</sup> Castells 1997, p. 342.



fact that "choices made by people in democratic states are not necessarily less compulsory."<sup>116</sup>

Certain other issues are also not restricted to post-communist societies in transformation, being more characteristic of the stance of the cosmopolitan intellectual elite and their power games. For example, Pels describes intellectuals as "the first representatives of cosmopolitans who themselves felt capable and called upon, by virtue of their professional autonomy and its resultant detachment, to speak for universal values of truth and justice."<sup>117</sup> In addition, Friedman argues that the global elites' struggle for power are in fact directly related to "ideological hegemony" by virtue of their pretension to encompass the variety of world cultures.<sup>118</sup> Intellectuals in post-communist countries must thus overcome their preoccupation with domestic or regional concerns and join the broader critical discourse, as some, such as the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, have already done.

## CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it may be said that Gouldner and Bourdieu provide a theoretical viewpoint that facilitates analysis of highly complicated and rapidly changing political activity, such as the roles of intellectuals during the political and socio-economic transformation in post-communist countries. In addition, this perspective reveals the dual character of intellectuals as both emancipatory and elitist. On the one hand, intellectuals create new ideas and criticize the existing order; on the other, they seek to protect their own interests, particularly their positions of status in society. However, even by protecting their own interests they may paradoxically provide the basis for more progressive social developments, such as democratization and improvement in the lives of the disadvantaged.

In analyzing, first, the contribution of intellectuals to the collapse of communist regimes and, second, changes to their political roles in the process of coping with the new challenges that have subsequently emerged in their changing countries, it became clear that post-communist intellectuals continue to have a significant part to play in the political arena, regardless of the widespread belief that their political influence has decreased. Intellectuals in post-communist countries continue to be some of the most dynamic and influential actors in establishing the new democracies by virtue of their culture of critical discourse, involvement in political debate, active political and social participation, and the promotion of civic society. In addition, they form the

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<sup>116</sup> See Kennedy 1991, p. 109. Žižek 2003 discusses this problem in detail.

<sup>117</sup> Pels 1999, p. 68.

<sup>118</sup> Friedman 2000, p. 19.

reservoir from which the political elite draws its new members. This is clearly the case with at least those who have greater resources of power and form the cultural elite.

The first years of post-communist change displayed not the "death" of the intelligentsia, but rather their profound transformation in order to adapt to the new context insofar as changed economic and political circumstances destroyed the basis for the previous socialist organization of intellectual activity and demanded a search for a new place in society. This process was accompanied by a certain degree of disappointment by those among the intelligentsia who came to face financial difficulties, although others met with a considerable degree of success as they converted their cultural capital into political and economic capital or were able to continue an intellectual career in spite of comparatively low earnings. In general, however, this situation transformed members of the intelligentsia into politicians, entrepreneurs, specialists, and intellectuals, the latter not merely working in various academic disciplines, but rather displaying a greater involvement into political and social activity.

In addition, the relatively chaotic development of post-communist societies revealed a growing interest in higher education and useful knowledge, as well as the need to revive critical discourse. All of this has laid the foundation for a considerable increase in the symbolic power of intellectuals. As Kurczewski has observed, when the university professor is at the top of the prestige scale and the politician at the bottom, the elite status of the intelligentsia as a whole, not to mention the intellectual elite, appears to be secure for the foreseeable future.<sup>119</sup> The new role of intellectuals is thus primarily associated with a fostering of the process of democratization, as well as involvement in the expansion of civil society, through the articulation and examination of pressing social problems.

However, the elitist stance of intellectuals also complicates the consolidation of new democracies in post-communist societies insofar as it does promote biased interests and create a certain distance from other social groups. In order to develop the democratic political culture in "non-democratic societies," an attempt must be made to actively involve broader segments of these societies in democratization.<sup>120</sup> Intellectuals themselves must share the knowledge they have acquired through studies abroad and criticize backwardness or new unfavorable developments in the countries in question. From this perspective, post-communist intellectuals can serve as democratic actors of central importance in the political arenas of their respective

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<sup>119</sup> Kurczewski 1997, p. 226.

<sup>120</sup> The phrase is from Mokrzycki 2000, p. 64.

societies.<sup>121</sup> They have shown themselves capable of facing the difficulties of transformation as well as the new challenges arising from the global "crisis of democracy," the rise of "informational" or "e-democracy," and also the power games of globalized intellectual elites.

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<sup>121</sup> Goldfarb 1998, p. 1.

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## Chapter VIII

# The Europeanization of Romania: A Tentative Assessment

*Manuela Lataianu and Gabriel Lataianu*

### INTRODUCTION

Numerous analysts of EU issues have devoted much attention over the last ten years to the process of Europeanization that accompanies growing European integration. After the treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam, and Nice, and after the establishment of economic and monetary union, social scientists have seen that EU policies and institutions at the national level must increasingly take into consideration both the opportunities and the restrictions that have been created at the European level.

Europeanization as subject of scholarly analysis is indeed quite young, and scholars dealing with EU issues have endeavored since the mid-1990s to grasp the full complexity of the issue. Robert Ladrech, for example, in an article on the reform of public administration in France, views the process of Europeanization as "an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making."<sup>1</sup> One of the most comprehensive definitions of Europeanization is that provided by Claudio Radaelli, who argues that Europeanization concentrates a set of "processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies."<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, supra-national standards, objectives, rules, and methodologies are absorbed into the domestic policy of member states to such an extent that the distinction between European and internal policy becomes blurred.

The majority of studies concerning Europeanization deal with member states, the effects upon them of European-level policies, and the influence of Brussels within the borders of the Union. But it would be inaccurate to maintain that the EU exerts an influence only upon the internal affairs of its member

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<sup>1</sup> Ladrech 1994, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Radaelli 2000, p. 3.

states. Such features of the EU as the Schengen Agreement, European Monetary Union, and the economic standards of the integrated European market have led to important changes in the policies adopted by the various partners of the EU, including Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

It is obvious that preparations in Central and East European countries for meeting the Copenhagen accession conditions, such as the adoption of the EU legislative framework, the internalization of market standards, the implementation of technical changes, participation in common programs, and so forth, have exerted great pressures for adaptation upon domestic policies and institutions. Indeed, although various other internal and external factors have played important roles in regime transformation, the EU integration process clearly became the most important external factor affecting reforms in the former communist countries. The latter not only had to comply with the general rules of democracy and the market economy, but also had to internalize concrete European institutional and legislative models, practices, and norms. But in spite of the undeniable effects upon national policies and institutions brought about by efforts to meet the Copenhagen criteria, the *anticipatory Europeanization* of candidate countries has not yet been consistently taken into consideration in scholarly research.<sup>4</sup>

The present paper comprises an attempt to provide a brief assessment of anticipatory Europeanization in respect to Romania. More specifically, it is my intention to explore the main effects of European standards and criteria upon domestic Romanian politics and institutions in respect to two case studies, namely, the reform of public administration and the reform of the child protection system. It is clearly beyond the scope of this discussion to examine the full range of implications of the Copenhagen criteria. Nevertheless, a closer look at these two traditionally domestic sectors, along with a consideration of how the EU has influenced and supported their transformation, will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of anticipatory Europeanization.

## **EU SUPPORT IN GENERAL**

At the beginning of the 1990s Romania launched an economic and political transformation, as did most of the former communist states in the region. This meant, among other things, the creation of a multi-party political

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<sup>3</sup> See Sverdrup 1998 and Church 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Attila Agh (1998), Ulrich Sedelmeier (2001), Kostas Lavdas (1997), Claudio Radaelli (2000), Ole Waever (1997), and Irena Brinar (2002) provide some of the best examples of this new dimension of analysis for candidate countries, including analysis of the various aspects of anticipatory Europeanization.



system, increased attention to minorities, a more active participation in regional and world markets, the uncoupling of the state from the economy, and so forth. In spite of the various political and economic vacillations and misconceptions that apparently characterize to some extent every new movement towards democracy and a market economy, Romania has become clearly reoriented to the Western world. Accordingly, cooperation with and membership in the EU emerged as one of the strategic goals of Romanian policy.

The European Community signed an association agreement with Romania in February 1993 after determining that the country had taken the minimal necessary steps towards reform, with the agreement coming into force two years later. The European Union also approved the beginning of negotiations for Romanian membership in the same year, and the country subsequently undertook efforts to gradually transform herself into a full-fledged member of the Union. The EU has continuously monitored these initiatives, including the preparation of annual assessment reports, with Romanian policies and institutions becoming ever more shaped by the consequent pressure to adapt to European legislation and institutional structures. During the enhanced pre-accession program that began in 1998, it became possible for Bucharest to work together with Brussels in order to identify weak points in the process of integration and develop the most adequate solutions to the specified goals. Romania has also received an ever larger amount of PHARE funding in support of reforms to the prioritized sectors of the economy and the state administration. In general, the EU has become actively involved in very diverse sectors of Romanian political, economic, and social life.

In respect to the economy, the EU has assisted Romania in the creation of a competitive market in order to avert economic instability after accession. In spite of the fact that Romania was declared in 2002 to be the sole country in the region with a non-functional market economy, there have nevertheless been undeniable changes in diverse sectors of the economy.<sup>5</sup> For example, Romania has undertaken extensive regulatory alignment insofar as the internalization of EU economic legislation involves, among other issues, the adoption and implementations of thousands of technical standards, economic directives, and recommendations. In recent years such institutions as the Romanian Copyright Office, the Competition Council, the National Audiovisual Council, the Social and Economic Council, and the National Commission for Banking System Supervision have also begun to function.<sup>6</sup> In addition, substantial legislative packages were adopted in order to introduce the free flow of people, capital,

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<sup>5</sup> See the *Regular Report on Romania's Progress towards Accession for 2002*.

<sup>6</sup> See *Fise de sector -- Audiovizual -- Delegatia Comisiei Europene in Romania*; *Fise de sector -- Politica in domeniul concurentei -- Delegatia Comisiei Europene in Romania*; and others, for June 2002.

services, and goods, which provides the basis for the common European market. Finally, Brussels has sponsored and assisted reforms in customs legislation and institutions, the institutional development of the National Bank of Romania, and professional conversion in regions affected by structural unemployment.

During the same period the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has provided very substantial support for the establishment of small and medium-sized business and to the private sector in general. In addition, the ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession) and SAPARD (Special Pre-Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) supplementary financial instruments have expanded the support provided through the PHARE program. ISPA, which will provide between 208 and 270 million Euro annually between 2000-2006, is designed to assist Romania in catching up with EU environmental standards and to link up Romania's transport system with the European-wide transport networks. Romania's expanding trade with the EU also indicates that the country is gradually aligning itself with the European market as a whole. For example, exports to the EU totaled 9.3 billion Euro in 2001, amounting to 68 percent of total Romanian exports. This was an increase of 21 percent in comparison with 2000. During the same period imports from the EU rose to 10.2 billion Euro, accounting for 57 percent of total Romanian imports, an increase of 17 percent over the previous year.

In respect to politics, Romania must ensure the stability of those institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities. Romania has launched a comprehensive reform of her public administration following EU recommendations that are included in the *Regular Reports* and *Accession Partnerships*. In this regard, the Statute of Public Servants and the Agency of Public Servants may be viewed as decisive steps towards a more professional and effective public administration that is capable of interaction with European administration structures. The EU has also contributed to the reform of the Romanian judiciary, such as through the provision of the technical and financial support needed for the creation of the National Institute of Magistracy. This is intended to be the main entry point for a career as a judge or prosecutor, and trainees are selected following open competitions. Moreover, the EU's Access Programme, initiated in 2001, has contributed to the development of civil society, and it has also addressed the pressing social problems that have been mentioned in a number of *Accession Partnerships*.

In respect to minorities, the European Union has provided financial and technical support to further the integration of the Roma community, who have perhaps been most negatively affected by the hardships of regime transformation. For example, the EU sponsored a national plan for Romania in

1998 aimed specifically at improving the situation of the Roma communities supported by 2 million Euro in funding and also implemented 26 other projects for the same purpose between 1993 and 1999 with approximately 200,000 Euro in funding.<sup>7</sup> This national plan, intended to provide a comprehensive approach to problems affecting the Roma, was developed in cooperation with the Governmental Strategy for Enhancement of the Roma's Situation. The EU has also been involved in improving relations between Hungary and Romania, which foundered on the status of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. These efforts have included the Stability Pact for Central and Eastern Europe, also known as the Balladur Plan, whereby the countries in question were strongly recommended to forge friendship treaties with their neighbors. This generated a period of intense negotiations that culminated in autumn 1996 with the signing of a treaty between Romania and Hungary, two countries whose bilateral relationships had suffered greatly during the first five years of transition. The following years have demonstrated that this provided a solid foundation both for raising the level of confidence between the two countries, and also for consolidating the position of the Hungarian minority in Romania.

Bucharest undertook significant efforts to implement the *acquis communautaire*, i.e., the extensive body of EU legislation, from the very beginning of the accession preparation process. According to certain estimates, Romania succeeded in adopting more than 70 percent of the 80,000 pages of common EU legislation by the third quarter of 2001.<sup>8</sup> A special department of the government's European Institute also undertook the translation of the *acquis communautaire* from the languages of the EU into Romanian. In general, EU expertise has made significant contributions to the process of institution building in the prison system, public administration, legislation, and so forth.

Progress has also been obvious in the fields of education and research and development, with Romanian scholars and students becoming actively involved in such pan-European horizontal programs as Tempus, Socrates, Youth, and Leonardo da Vinci. Vocational training, foreign language study, and multi-country partnerships between schools have also been encouraged. And since Romanian scientists have become involved in the framework programs for European research, significant numbers of Romanian institutions have participated in European-wide research and development projects.<sup>9</sup> Similar progress has also been made in social integration and multi-cultural dialogue

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<sup>7</sup> *Fisa de sector- Sprijin pentru romi - Delegatia Comisiei Europene in Romania*, June 2002, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Revista Integrarea europeana* for September 2001.

<sup>9</sup> *EU and R&D, Innovation and Enlargement: A Focus on the Newly Associated Countries*. Special supplement of *Cordis Focus*, 1 December 2001 (no. 17).

with the help of EU grants through such programs as CULTURA 2000, which provided 167 million Euro for this purpose in the period 2000-2004, as well as RICOP and MARR, which were intended to absorb the redundant labor force in regions affected by structural unemployment.

### **THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Romanian public administration before 1989 was one of the most rigid, over-centralized, and non-transparent public systems among all the communist countries. The Communist Party strictly controlled both central and local public administrations, constituting a more or less efficient machine for transmitting decisions from higher to lower levels. There was no possibility whatsoever for decentralized management, local initiatives, or personal ideas. The primary and most important criterion in the majority of cases for advancement within this type of system was party loyalty, not competence or professionalism.

Insofar as public administration was thus in dire need of a thoroughgoing change after the collapse of communism, all of the new democratic governments placed administrative reform at the heart of their respective political programs. Nevertheless, there were no comprehensive and substantial changes in this regard for a number of years. Indeed, it was not until 1998 that the authorities took steps to make the system of public administration more effective and more suited to the new realities, but even these changes were not carried out in line with a strategy to reform the system of public services as a whole. Generally speaking, ministries reformed to varying degrees their own in-house administrations, such as their internal codes of conduct, rules for recruitment and advancement, salary systems, operational regulations, and so forth. At the same time, numerous new central public institutions emerged in response to the new realities. Unfortunately, such ad-hoc alterations fostered no real movement towards the establishment of effective, reliable, and democratic public institutions.

The Copenhagen criteria became obligatory for Romania as soon as the EU approved the country's candidacy. It was clearly stated at the 1993 Copenhagen summit that candidate countries should have "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities," as well as the full adoption of the *acquis communautaire*.<sup>10</sup> The 1995 Madrid Council emphasized the importance of the proper functioning of those institutions responsible for implementation of the *acquis*, a point that has been reiterated frequently in the various documents regulating relations between candidate states and the EU. The following is a typical example concerning Romania:

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<sup>10</sup> See *Agenda 2000*.

The European Council in Madrid in December 1995 referred to the need to create the conditions for the gradual, harmonious integration of the candidates, particularly through the adjustment of their administrative structures. Taking up this theme *Agenda 2000* underlined the importance of incorporating Community legislation into national legislation effectively, but the even greater importance of implementing it properly in the field, via the appropriate administrative and judicial structures. This is an essential pre-condition for creating the mutual trust indispensable for future membership.<sup>11</sup>

Accordingly, the 1997-2000 Programme of Governance presented measures for the creation of a modern, flexible, and decentralized public service. In the same vein, the *Avis on Romania's Application for Membership of the EU* (1997) declared its approval of the Romanian government's goal of eliminating clientelism and arbitrary decisions from the public sector, clearly separating administrative roles from the political functions of public administration, downsizing the central apparatus, and halting the "brain drain" to the private sector. It also lauded the stated aim of decentralizing public administration, which had been a principal element in the electoral platform of the then-ruling coalition.

The importance that the EU placed on administrative reform was emphasized in the first *Accession Partnership* (1998), which declared it to be an immediate priority. There was thus no doubt that Romania was expected to undertake such changes in the year to come.

The Romanian government's response to the EU soon appeared in the first version of the *National Programme for Accession to the European Union* (1998), in which an entire chapter dealt with the commitment to comprehensive change in public administration. This was the first occasion on which Romanian decision-makers presented the basic principles of administrative reform:

- Separation of political and administrative functions.
- Creation of a professional and politically neutral public service.
- Definition of clear roles, responsibilities, and relations between institutions.
- Subsidiarity.
- Autonomy of local decision-making.
- Transparency of government and administration.

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<sup>11</sup> See the *Regular Report* for 1998.

- Simplification of procedures and legislation.
- Respect for the citizen.<sup>12</sup>

Shortly after the publication of this program, the EU's *Regular Report* concerning progress in Romania stated that while the government's intentions were right, it was also time for deeds:

In the specific context of European integration the recruitment and retention of experienced officials is necessary for the preparation and implementation of the pre-accession process. The separation of the political and the administrative functions of the executive in line with Romanian reform plans remain to be translated into administrative practice.<sup>13</sup>

But 1998 was not lost in terms of the reform of administrative structures, and the first steps were in fact taken towards the creation of regional structures that were compatible with the EU's regional structural units. For example, law 151/1998 established a National Agency for Regional Development comprising eight regional development agencies empowered to apply structural adjustment and development policies for privatization, economic restructuring, and investments at subsidiary levels. The multi-county economic development regions thereby created generally took into consideration particular traditions as well as socio-economic tendencies at the regional level, but did not alter the administrative structures of the country.<sup>14</sup> These changes were based upon recommendations put forward by a consulting firm that had prepared the PHARE-funded research report entitled *The Green Chart: The Policy of Regional Development in Romania* (1997).

Later in the same year the Romanian Parliament approved a legislative package addressing public and local patrimony, concessions, and local public finances with the aim of decentralizing the administrative structure of the state, even though there was still no comprehensive law on local public administration. Elected communal, municipal, and rural government is defined in the Constitution (Articles 120 and 121) and by law 69/1991, which stipulate that it is the responsibility of county councils to organize and administer county-level public services, specify local rules and regulations, elaborate

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<sup>12</sup> *National Programme for the Accession of Romania* (1998), p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> *Regular Report* for 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Romania currently has a two-tiered system of local administration. The first level consists of the 41 counties (*judete*), which are headed by prefects who serve as the local representatives of the central authorities. The counties themselves consist of 2,948 municipal and communal councils.

development plans for local communities, and adopt local budgets. The long-awaited law on local public administration, which established the framework for a substantial increase in the autonomy of local authorities, was finally passed in early 1999. This law granted local authorities the power to levy taxes and determine how both local tax revenues as well as funds coming from the central government were to be appropriated. Schools, hospitals, local welfare institutions, and communal police have also been subordinated to local authorities since 1999.

These first steps towards decentralization had not been easy, and 1999 was a year marked by dysfunctional and confused local administration structures. The primary source of these problems was a lack of coordination between the introduction of new responsibilities and the provision of appropriate financial and human resources.<sup>15</sup>

A new law on local public administration that clarified competencies at the local level and restricted the power of central authorities to assign additional responsibilities to local bodies without allotting the necessary funding was adopted in 2001 in order to consolidate local authority. Perhaps the most important change brought about by this law was the creation of a more appropriate environment for minorities, whereby specific minority rights would come into force in localities where a given group represented more than 20 percent of the population. These rights include the use of the minority language in official documents, in local administration units where the group represents the majority, in civil marriages ceremonies at the request of those being married, and so forth.

The general reform of public administration finally began in late 1999 after publication of the European Commission's *Regular Report*. Brussels maintained that

The current regulations concerning civil servants raise questions about legality, accountability and professional independence. The civil service at senior and middle management levels remain highly politicized. A new civil service law has been discussed since 1997 but its adoption is still blocked in Parliament. Since this law is a prerequisite for any meaningful reform of the public administration the delay is of great concern.<sup>16</sup>

The Statute for Civil Servants then adopted by Parliament referred specifically to those working in the state bureaucracy whose appointments were

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<sup>15</sup> See the *Regular Report* for 1999.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

governed by the Civil Service Law, but it was also applicable to various professional categories that had specific statutes of their own. These included the judiciary, the educational system, the health services, the police, contract employees, and those employed under the conventions of civil law. Public employees were to be both selected and eventually promoted strictly on the basis of their qualifications as determined in equal and open competition. The law also established the duties and responsibilities of civil servants, disciplinary measures, salary scales, material awards, facilities, and so forth. The *National Programme for Accession* (1999) states clearly that this law accorded with EU standards, and that its aim was to introduce the concept of stability for civil servants, who are to be protected by law against political changes.<sup>17</sup> The National Agency for Civil Servants, whose role was to unify and coordinate the selection, evaluation, training, and development of the civil administrative system, was also established in order to oversee the implementation of the Civil Service Law.

In addition, Parliament passed the Law on Ministerial Reliability, thereby instituting the government's political accountability to Parliament. This included obliging members of the government to respond to parliamentary interpellations, and it further specified that those in ministerial service were liable to criminal, but not civil, prosecution. Furthermore, the executive branch of the government, by virtue of the creation of the Civil Service Ministry through the merger of the State Secretariat of Local Public Administration with the Department for the Reform of the Central Public Administration, aimed to introduce a system of better management in the reform of public administration.

In order to meet European conditions and principles, the Social Democratic government elected in 2000 introduced certain secondary legislation in support of the Statute for Civil Servants. These laws involved changes to performance evaluation, disciplinary committees, probationary periods for new employees, and so forth. A National Institute for Administration was also established to provide intensive training courses for both new and experienced public servants. In addition, law 544/2001 concerning free access to public information was intended to introduce greater transparency and accountability into government and create a citizen-friendly public administration. This law, which was prepared by the Ministry of Information, established the legal conditions under which physical and juridical persons can obtain information from public institutions. It should be noted that such legislative measures were widely supported by non-governmental organizations and the mass media, which assisted the Ministry in developing a significant campaign to raise public awareness concerning their rights to be properly informed by public institutions.

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<sup>17</sup> *NPAR* 1999.



An interesting measure for introducing both e-government as well as transparency and accountability involves the development of public procurement by electronic tenders for contracts valued between 40,000 and 200,000 Euro for such items as medicines, consumables, public services, and sub-contracting.<sup>18</sup> Official statistics indicate that from the introduction of this policy in March 2002 until the end of the same year nearly 25,000 transactions were carried out in this manner, leading to a savings of 24 percent in the funds budgeted for such purchases.<sup>19</sup>

However, while there was undeniable progress made in the first years of reform, movement was also undeniably slow. The EU itself noted in late 2002 that

the reform of the civil service is still only at the design stage and the administration remains characterized by excessive bureaucracy, a lack of transparency and a limited capacity for policy execution. The 1999 organic law on civil servants includes provisions that, once properly applied, could lead to improved practices and performance. However, the law is not fully or uniformly applied. The Civil Service Agency has the responsibility for this task but its mandate is unclear and its influence over line ministries is weak.<sup>20</sup>

Two of the main tasks of reform as presented in the *Programmes for Accession* and the *Governing Programmes* included the separation of political and administrative functions within the administrative structures and the creation of a professional public service. Although an adequate legislative framework and institutions for this purpose have in fact been created, the actual political and social practices that were inherited from the communist regime, and in some cases from even older public structures, have led to only superficial changes in most cases. A telling example is provided by the administrative reorganization that followed the 2000 parliamentary and presidential elections, when the winning party made changes in the executive in order to create the institutional apparatus that was supposedly most appropriate for their plan of government. Certain ministries were reorganized, other lower governmental units became ministries, such the Ministry of Integration, and

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<sup>18</sup> Bids for such purposes can be registered through secure transactions at [www.e-licitatie.ro](http://www.e-licitatie.ro).

<sup>19</sup> See *Adevarul*, 19 November 2002, p. 5; *Romania Libera*, 20 November 2002, p. 7; and *Romania Libera*, 23 November 2002, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Regular Report* for 2002.

some completely new ministries were created. However, these moves introduced no substantial changes into administrative structures.

One significant problem with these measures was that the consequent personnel reduction affected particularly those civil servants who had been appointed during the previous administration, which was against the principles and rules of the Statute for Civil Servants. The European Commission stated in this regard that

the removal of many civil servants either by resignations or through redundancies... seriously undermined the stability of the civil service at all levels of public administration. [F]or dismissals the National Agency for Civil Servants was not involved at any stage.... Just as with the dismissal of officials, the National Agency for Civil Servants has not been involved in either supervising or implementing the recruitment process.<sup>21</sup>

The number of legal cases brought by civil servants against the institutions that dismissed them, along with numerous trade union protests, affected the stability of public administration for a considerable period of time.

Furthermore, although the various reform measures implemented were aimed at the introduction of the best possible practices into public administration, corruption continued to flow not only from mismanagement in public institutions, but also from political clientelism, nepotism, cronyism, a lack of transparency, and restricted accountability. The *Regular Reports* have consistently indicated that corruption is an endemic problem in Romania.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the *Regular Report* for 2002 emphasized not merely that corruption is widespread, but that it is systemic in nature.

The World Bank's *2001 Diagnostic Survey of Corruption in Romania* revealed that two-thirds of ordinary citizens and enterprise managers believe that all, or at least a majority, of public officials are corrupt. In addition, 50 percent of the population, including 41 percent of managers, believe that bribery is a part of everyday life. Moreover, the *EBRD/World Bank 2002 Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey* stated that 35 percent of Romanian companies pay 2.6 percent of their annual income as bribes to public institutions in order to resolve their administrative and financial problems. Similar results appear in many other studies carried out by Romanian

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<sup>21</sup> *Regular Report* for 2001.

<sup>22</sup> See the *Regular Reports* for 1999, 2000, and 2001.

as well as international organizations.<sup>23</sup> For example, the *Open Society Foundation Public Opinion Barometer 2002* revealed that only 38 percent of Romanians trust the national government, 33 percent trust the judiciary, and 45 percent have confidence in local authorities. Public opinion polls have consistently shown that trust in public institutions has varied from 20 percent to 40 percent, regardless of the numerous strategies, laws, and state institutions that have been enlisted in the fight against corruption. Indeed, corruption has become the "cancer" of state institutions, making Romania one of the most corrupted states among the former communist countries.<sup>24</sup> Simply stated, such an overwhelming level of administrative corruption erodes public trust in governmental institutions and threatens the very stability of the democratic system in Romania.

In addition, the reforms in public administration have not succeeded in sufficiently reducing the scope of the bureaucracy. For example, opening a typical firm in 1999 demanded between 23 and 29 various approvals, authorizations, licenses, and permits from a wide range of state agencies, and the resulting paperwork required 49 to 102 days to complete.<sup>25</sup> The situation has improved somewhat since then, but a later study has indicated that business managers spent 8 percent of their time over and above regular working hours in filling out forms and in other administrative tasks.<sup>26</sup>

In conclusion, Romania's internalization of European standards, procedures, and practices has not yet ensured a smooth and effective integration into European administrative structures. More comprehensive measures on the part of the EU as well as greater political will and more effort on the part of Romanian decision-makers are still necessary.

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<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2002/cpi2002.en.html> for examples provided by the *Index of Corruption Perceptions 2002*, which ranked Romania 77 out of 102 nations in terms of corruption in 2002 (a deterioration from 69 in 2001). In comparison, Slovenia was ranked 27, Hungary 33, Bulgaria and Poland 45, Croatia 51, and the Czech Republic 52.

<sup>24</sup> Even though Romania has entered NATO and is now within sight of EU membership, corruption has significantly endangered both of these programs. Public figures who have expressed their concern with Romania's endemic corruption include US Senator Bruce Jackson, head of a senatorial delegation that studied Romania's preparation for NATO; Gunther Verheugen, EU Commissioner for Enlargement; Emma Nicholson, Baroness of Winterbourne, the European Parliament's Rapporteur for Romania; Pat Cox, head of the European Parliament; and Enrico Pasquarelli, the EC's Chief Negotiator for Romania.

<sup>25</sup> See *Red Tape Analysis - Regulation and Bureaucracy in Romania*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland (IRIS), May 2000.

<sup>26</sup> See the joint EBRD/World Bank publication *2002 Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey*.

## **REFORM OF THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM**

The issue of abandoned children has unfortunately become associated with Romania, particularly after 1989 when the Western mass media became saturated with sensational news stories on the topic. Romania has thus come to be perceived throughout the world not only as the home of Ceausescu, Dracula, and Nadia Comaneci, but also as the country of institutionalized children.

The painful problem of children in residential care has indeed become a top priority in post-communist Romania. The country inherited from its communist past an inefficient system of child care based on the institutionalization of orphaned and abandoned children, in which the state assumed certain responsibilities that appertain to the family and civil society in normal societies. The large number of such children in need of care resulted primarily from Decree 770/1966, which prohibited abortion and the use of contraceptives and instituted strict legal penalties for any offenses. The consequent high numbers of illegal abortions and rates of maternal mortality, coupled with extremely difficult living conditions during the 1980s, produced an increasing number of orphaned and abandoned children who were housed in poor and mismanaged state institutions.

In the years immediately following the collapse of communism both Romanians as well as foreigners discovered the extremely harsh, even inhuman, conditions in the state orphanages, and the Romanian authorities came under pressure to rectify the situation, particularly from the media. The Romanian authorities, with the assistance of various domestic and international organizations, responded with efforts to improve the public care of children, focusing especially on such humanitarian aid as food, medicines, clothes, funding for facilities, and so forth.

Statistical and social studies indicated that the number of institutionalized children actually increased until 1994.<sup>27</sup> The cause for this was the ongoing pauperization of the population due to the mismanagement of economic reform, which meant that many children staying with their families actually lived in worse conditions than those in institutions, tempting certain poor parents to institutionalize them. However, a number of economic and social reports, along with the experience of West European countries, demonstrated that the institutionalization of children is not only overly expensive for the state, but also detrimental for both state and children. In addition, the Romanian practice of institutionalization contradicted the spirit of the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, of which Romania was a

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<sup>27</sup> 85,786 children lived in state institutions in 1990. Two years later there were 75,334 children, and the number reached 98,397 in 1994. See Lataianu 2001, p. 53.

signatory. This state of affairs raised a range of questions concerning the future of child care institutions in Romania.

A 180 degree change in the child protection system took place in 1997, beginning with Emergency Order 25/1997 concerning adoption and Emergency Order 26/1997 concerning the protection of children at risk. The first was intended to more strictly regulate the legal process of adoption in order to protect the best interests of children, while the second introduced a completely new philosophy in child care that focused on the prevention of abandonment and the promotion of such alternative forms of child protection as reintegration into the biological family, foster care, adoption, and de-institutionalization. An emphasis was also placed on the role to be played by civil society, with partnership being encouraged. And while the Department for Child Protection was to supervise and coordinate the entire system of child care at the national level, Order 26/1997 mandated the decentralization of the system and creating 40 county Departments for Child Protection.

In respect to the Copenhagen criteria that must be met in Romania's preparations for accession, the EU views the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child to be the primary standard in the field of child protection. This document thus represents a part of the *acquis communautaire* in the section concerning Justice and Home Affairs. Although Romania signed the UN Convention for Rights of the Child in 1990, the articles of this convention came into life in the country only with the reform initiated by the Emergency Orders mentioned above.

The 1997 *Avis* encourages Romania's efforts in this direction, and states that the 70 million Euro made available to the country through the PHARE program should be used to substantially improve the situation of children at risk. It evaluated the reforms undertaken in 1997 as "a positive change in government policy on child protection and a new determination to care for this vulnerable section of society."<sup>28</sup> The expectation that the reforms underway would bring normalcy to the lives of children in need was also confirmed in the first edition of the *Accession Partnership*, which regarded the continuation of these reforms as a medium-term priority.<sup>29</sup>

But the road towards normalcy has not been smooth, and living conditions in residential institutions in fact seriously deteriorated in 1999 due to problems in financial and administrative decentralization.<sup>30</sup> For example, the budget for fiscal year 1999 permitted the use of 15 percent of local tax revenues for local expenses, including the financing of county Departments for Child Protection. But since many local budgets did not include specific budget lines

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<sup>28</sup> *Regular Report* for 1998.

<sup>29</sup> *Accession Partnership* for 1998.

<sup>30</sup> See Lambru and Rosu 2000, p. 147, along with Lataianu 2001, p. 100.

for this purpose, mayors often viewed other types of expenses to be more important. At times local authorities did not even know how to proceed with the new institutions because of serious shortcomings in communications between central and local authorities. This level of dysfunction led to a critical situation towards the end of the year, when certain cities and communes had exceeded their budgeted expenses.

The EU expressed their dissatisfaction to the Romanian government concerning the inappropriate decentralization of the child care through various official declarations, in inter-ministerial meetings, and in talks in Brussels between Gunther Verheugen and Alexandru Herlea, the Romanian Minister for European Integration. But the most important assessment of the situation came in the *Regular Report* on 13 October 1999, which stated that

it is now of crucial importance that the Government, as it has been repeatedly requested by the Commission, gives top priority to child protection and accepts that it has primary responsibility for the well-being of all children in care. It must secure sufficient financial provision to maintain acceptable standards of care (covering food medical provision, clothing, heating, normal operating expenditure and adequate staff) for all children in all different types of child-care institutions.

The same report criticized the lack of properly trained staff as well as the structural dependence of reform implementation on international assistance.

The European Union also demanded that a special authority be created to establish child protection policies, which would be responsible for the control and supervision of all types of residential institutions and also determine methodological norms regarding the appropriate standards of care. Given the existing legal framework, the Department of Child Protection in fact had the authority to supervise care for only slightly more than half of the children who were institutionalized. The rest were placed under the responsibility of other central institutions, including the Ministry of Education, which dealt with children having special educational needs, the Ministry of Health, which dealt with children suffering from chronic diseases, and the State Secretariat for Disabled Persons, which dealt with disabled children. Moreover, the European Commission came to view the recommendations presented in the *Accession Partnerships* and *Regular Reports* as inadequate and adopted the position that more forceful measures should be used with Romania. It consequently stated that

the opening of the negotiations with Romania should be conditional on the confirmation of effective action being taken

by the Romanian authorities to provide adequate budgetary resources and to implement structural reform of children institutions before the end of 1999.<sup>31</sup>

Gunther Verheugen emphasized the same point in an interview given in Bucharest in which he stated that

I am deeply convinced that Romania will seize the opportunity to join accession negotiations. This implies the mobilization of all political forces and Romanian society at large to accelerate economic reforms and secure decent living conditions in the country's child care institutions. Speeding up the process of reform is an essential requirement for Romania to ensure satisfactory preparation for EU membership. I am very confident that these objectives will be met and that negotiations with Romania will start in the spring of 2000.<sup>32</sup>

The Romanian government responded to this threat by adopting, with less than two months remaining to the Helsinki European Summit in December 1999, a new Emergency Order concerning the establishment of a National Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister, precisely as the European Commission had demanded. The function of this Agency is to control "the countrywide enforcement of the policies of reforming the system of services and institutions ensuring the promotion of children's rights, as well as the care and protection of children in distress and disabled children."<sup>33</sup> The government also allotted 40 million USD for continuing reforms in a special amendment to the annual budget, and placed a special emphasis on reform of the abandoned children protection system in the National Strategy for the Mid-term Development of Romania (2000-2004) and the National Programme for Accession to the European Union (2000). In addition, the newly established agency elaborated a National Strategy for Child Welfare (2000-2003) and the government approved a program in July 2000 to support caring for institutionalized children.

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<sup>31</sup> See the European Commission press release entitled "The Commission Sets out an Ambitious Accession Strategy and Proposes to Open Accession Negotiations with Six More Candidate Countries." DN: IP/99/751, 13 October 1999.

<sup>32</sup> See the European Commission press release entitled "The Commission Expresses Strong Confidence that Negotiations with Romania Will Start in 2000." DN: IP/99/810, 28 October 1999.

<sup>33</sup> Emergency Order 192/1999, Ch.1, Art. 2.

All of these strategies and plans for a comprehensive reform of the child care system were designed and implemented with the direct support of European institutions. Indeed, the EU came to play a more important role than any other international organization in addressing this domestic Romanian problem, contributing technical and advisory support as well as assisting in locating funding. For example, a High Level Donor Group for supporting childcare in Romania was established as a direct result of an initiative put forward made by the European Parliament's rapporteur for Romania, Emma Nicholson, Baroness of Winterbourne.<sup>34</sup> This Group met twice in Brussels and twice in Bucharest during 2000, managing to obtain 20 million Euro primarily from the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and UNICEF in support of the activities proposed in the governmental strategies.

The EU continued to provide expert and financial support (10 million Euro) for reform of the child care system through the Development of Child Protection Services program and the Children First Fund.<sup>35</sup> In 1999 it also established the Support for the Reform of the Child Protection System program, with a 25 million Euro endowment, and the Access 1999 and Access 2000 programs, funded with an additional 4 million Euro. Nevertheless, problems within the Romania child care system once again shook relations between the EU and Romania in the middle of 2001. The *Financial Times* published an interview with Baroness Winterbourne on 30 May 2001 in which she stated that the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee might well recommend that the European Commission suspend accession negotiations with Romania as a consequence of her draft report on Romania's progress in respect to European integration. The preliminary document described the functioning of a "well-oiled system" involving the "encouragement [of abandonment] by the state" because of the lucrative benefits resulting from ties with international adoption agencies.<sup>36</sup> The Baroness also declared in an interview broadcast on the following day by Romania Radio International that international adoption agencies earn significant amounts of money by "selling" Romanian children on the international adoption market, regardless of what the best interests of the child might be. This was clearly in violation of the *acquis communautaire*.

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<sup>34</sup> In 2000 The Group was formed of Mr. Mugur Isarescu, the Prime Minister of Romania, Mr. Petre Roman, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gunther Verheugen, Commissioner for Enlargement, Emma Nicholson, Baroness of Winterbourne, representatives of the WB, WHO, UNICEF.

<sup>35</sup> According to *Fisa de Sector: Protectia Copilului - Delegatia Comisiei Europene in Romania*, 20 April 2002, p. 2, assistance from the EU in this sector totaled 100 million Euro in 1990-2000. 60 million Euro were allotted for humanitarian aid with 40 million Euro earmarked for reforms in social protection.

<sup>36</sup> As quoted in RFE/RL NEWSLINE, vol. 5, no. 103, part II, 31 May 2001.



The Romanian authorities reacted firmly in the following days. Prime Minister Adrian Nastase stated that insofar as the issues of child abandonment and international adoption had become the subject of certain narrow international political interests, the report had not proceeded from an objective perspective. He and a considerable number of other high-ranking Romanian politicians declared categorically that the charges put forward by the Baroness, as well as the report itself, were "exaggerated," "erroneous," and no more than "groundless allegations."<sup>37</sup> In spite of such remarks, the Romanian Adoption Committee suspended new international adoptions on 21 June and the government issued Emergency Order 121/2001 in the beginning of October, which legally suspended all such adoptions for a period of one year.

The Romanian authorities also created the multi-disciplinary Group for the Analysis of the Inter-Country Adoption System (GIASAI), composed of Romanian specialists in the field, who were assigned the responsibility of determining how to reform the child care system in respect to both domestic and international adoption in order to avoid the violation of children's rights. The GIASAI presented its report in late April 2002 at a conference attended by the Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, and high-ranking representatives of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the World Bank, USAID, and UNICEF. The report proposed, among other matters, four legislative measures to rectify the situation existing in the Romanian adoption system, namely, regulation of the legal regime of adoptions, the prevention and reporting of abandonment, the organization, operation, and financing of the Romanian Office for Adoptions, and the establishment and operation of the Office of Children and Family Advocate within the institution of the Ombudsman.<sup>38</sup> The Prime Minister declared in late September 2002 that the moratorium on international adoptions would be prolonged until this legislative package came into force. These bills were quickly prepared in Bucharest with the assistance of British specialists and forwarded to Romano Prodi in Brussels. They were further examined by European experts before the end of the year, finally coming into force in Romania in early 2003.<sup>39</sup>

An important element in this reform process was a large public awareness campaign, with an estimated budget of 2.6 million Euro, aimed at

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<sup>37</sup> The General Secretary of the Romanian Government, Mr. Serban Mihailescu, later admitted that the number of annual international adoptions had risen from 800 to 3,500 between 1997 and 2000, and he estimated the value of the "market" at around 200 million USD. He made these statements on Romanian TVR1 during the 10 p.m. broadcast of *Calea de mijloc* on 11 November 2002.

<sup>38</sup> See the Bucharest newspaper *Nine O'Clock*, 29 April 2002.

<sup>39</sup> See Serban Mihailescu's comments on this process on TVR1, *Calea de mijloc*, 11 November 2002.

preventing the abandonment and institutionalization of children. This campaign, dubbed "Orphanage Does Not Mean Home" (*Casa de copii nu e acasa*), was merely one of the 1999 PHARE programs intended to support the development of child welfare services. The National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption, its main organizer, developed a complex campaign of awareness in cooperation with other governmental and non-governmental agencies from Romania as well as other countries that relied upon a very large number of public service announcements.<sup>40</sup>

Seven public concerts were organized within this project, which was launched by the song *Acasa* (True Home), dedicated to abandoned children and performed by one of the most popular Romanian rock bands. The project included 37 TV talk shows and 47 local and county meetings for professionals, and a toll-free phone number for counseling both families at risk as well as families intending to adopt children was also established. Perhaps the most original aspect of this campaign was the "Edelweiss" (Floarea de Colt) National Contest for children from placement centers and foster houses.<sup>41</sup> The 27 winners in the nine categories, including music, dance, theater, art, literature, sports, science, and IT, received their awards at a gala ceremony held on 1 June, with representatives from the EU, other international agencies, the government, and both non-governmental and private organizations in attendance. The children received fellowships from EU funds, and they were also invited by Baroness Winterbourne to visit the European Parliament in Strasbourg as well as the European Commission and other institutions in Brussels. These visits, which took place 11-16 September 2002, even provided some of the children with the opportunity to address the European Parliament concerning the transformation of the Romanian child care system.

One immediate and direct impact of this awareness raising campaign was the large increase in the number of Romanian families adopting children, from 1,500 in 2001 to approximately 3,000 in only the first half of 2002.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, the reform of the child protection system, in spite of certain setbacks, has also had positive results from a more long-term perspective. For example, the number of children in public placement centers decreased by almost 13,000 from the end of 1996 to the middle of 2001, with the number of

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<sup>40</sup> By 30 March 2002 there had been 7 TV spots (1729 insertions), 7 radio spots (286 insertions), 394 billboards, 1,500,000 leaflets, and extensive and repeated advertisements in magazines, newspapers, and the local press. See <http://www.suflet.ro>.

<sup>41</sup> See *The Business Review*, 10-16 June 2002; *Adevarul*, 12 September 2002; and *Romania Libera*, 12 September 2002.

<sup>42</sup> See Ioana Tiganescu, "Adoptiile internationale se reiau dupa votarea pachetului de legi privind protectia copilului 'Ziua.'" *Adevarul*, 28 September 2002.

children in family foster care more than doubling.<sup>43</sup> New types of services also emerged, such as private placement centers and professional foster care, which led to the closure of approximately 65 of the large state institutions. This also led to an obvious decline in the number of the children placed in the old institutions, from 57,181 in July 2001 to 43,170 in July 2002.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of fact that numerous problems remained at best half-resolved, if not completely neglected, such as street children begging in a large European city, objective observers could not deny that real progress had been made during the period of time in question. The European Commission themselves stated that, "During the reporting period, Romania made significant progress with the reform of *child protection*."<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Baroness Winterbourne, after many years of critical but personal involvement, warmly congratulated the Romanian authorities for their commitment in addressing these problems and placing a priority upon children in their policy agenda. She even expressed her wish that Romania play the leadership role in this respect for other applicant countries in the region, having become a model of how to implement the UN Convention for Rights of the Child.<sup>46</sup> She also declared that Romanians dramatically improved the situation once they obviously took to heart the conditions in which abandoned children had been living.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Since 1995 Romania has undergone a complex process of preparation for EU accession, embarking on a gradual integration into European structures with full EU membership as the goal. As in previous enlargements, the EU has applied a strict and legally-binding policy of conditionality, with the EU itself being greatly challenged by a growing *diversity*.<sup>47</sup> Conditionality seeks to assure a *minimal degree of compatibility* in order to install a functional, homogeneous, supra-national system of governance. For certain states, however, including the Central and East European countries, pre-accession preparations also meant an accelerated development. Indeed, countries significantly below the average level of EU socio-economic development participated in the recent wave of enlargement. In such circumstances, the Copenhagen criteria must indicate the developmental horizon necessary for reaching a *minimal level of cohesion* after accession.

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<sup>43</sup> Lataianu 2001.

<sup>44</sup> See the *Regular Report* for 2002. See also Tiganescu, note 47.

<sup>45</sup> *Regular Report* for 2002.

<sup>46</sup> UNICEF Report at the national conference "Closing Long-term Residential Institutions: Best Practices," Bucharest, 21-22 September 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Dimitrova 1996; Grabbe 1999.

In respect to East European enlargement, EU conditions impinged upon the domestic policies and institutions of the candidate countries to a greater extent than ever before insofar as these countries had to undergo an intense and painful process of democratization and marketization after almost five decades of communism. One hallmark of the recent enlargement process, which is still underway in Romania, was in fact that regime transformation went hand in hand with gradual integration into the EU. Irena Brinar was quite likely correct when she remarked that the "separation of the consequences of the transition and the consequences of the integration process is very difficult, if not impossible, because in reality these two processes are overlapping."<sup>48</sup>

Insofar as ever-closer European integration has affected an ever-growing number of national policies and institutions of the existing member states, it is clearly not possible for candidate countries to escape from this complex process. There is in fact no doubt that preparations for accession have had a powerful impact on almost all domestic aspects of post-communist transformation, and the EU influence on the internal transformation of Central and East European countries has indeed been multilateral and complex. One aspect has involved the various degrees and modes of adjustment to the EU *acquis*, norms, rules, and institutions. For example, the majority of market-regulating institutions were called upon to internalize a large body of common legislation and to adapt fully to EU institutional structures in order to withstand the pressures of competition within the common market. In this respect the European model, which had a clear design, has demanded a very high degree of internal transformation. Other policies and institutions, such as strictly domestic affairs or border surveillance, made possible a greater room for maneuver in reform processes because of the rather loose inter-governmental relations in these sectors within the EU.

The toolbox of conditional policies was diverse. Preparatory efforts were continuously monitored, and the European Commission issued annual assessment reports concerning progress in respect to integration. Those countries that complied with the accession criteria were rewarded by support at the political level and by ample financial and technical assistance. On the other hand, those countries that fell behind in their preparations, perhaps even neglecting their formal obligations, were penalized to one extent or another, from open criticism of their efforts on the part of Brussels to threats that accession negotiations might be broken off and various type of assistance withdrawn. This continues today in various ways with Romania, even after the membership has been formally signed.

The examples presented in this discussion illustrate how EU conditions have served in Romania as intervening variables in two sectors that had been

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<sup>48</sup> Brinar 2002, p. 5.

restricted to the realm of domestic politics prior to 1989. Since there is no concrete EU model for the system of public administration, public administration varies from country to country among the European member states.<sup>49</sup> However, due to the constant interaction between the administrations of member states, and because of the structural demands and practices of European institutions, a distinctive European profile of national administrative structures has emerged. For example, the EU does not require a specific type of public administration on the part of applicant countries, but rather a public system capable of smoothly implementing the *acquis*. And the EU has helped formulate a set of instructions to be followed for developing an effective administration, namely, the Sigma program. This is a joint initiative of the EU and the OECD that was designed to identify and provide the best practices in public administration, providing the governments of candidate countries with a relative liberty in choosing the model most appropriate for their specific conditions. However, EU criticism as well as direct pressure, mainly in the form of recommendations or requirements, are brought to bear when new-created administrative structures, management methods, and work practices clearly do not correspond with EU best practices.

Romanian policy-makers have tended to respond rather quickly to pressures for adaptation from the EU, designing a system of public administration in line with Brussels' requests. As Wade Jacoby has observed, the local elites in certain Central and East European countries, in their rush to prepare for accession, did everything possible in many cases to merely create appearances that were acceptable to their European partners.<sup>50</sup> This may have worked for a certain period of time, but they finally had to undertake a profound reform of public administration in line with the conditions specified by the EU. And the elimination of political clientelism, cronyism, nepotism, and the various forms of corruption in fact undermined the political and material positions of the policy makers who had been in power. A similar type of general realignment in accordance with the European principles of "good governance" has obviously been underway in Romania. The difficulties in this respect have resided not in the formal preparations, but rather in the actual implementation and smooth functioning of the Romanian public administration. Certain Greek writers have observed that decision-makers in Greece were fiercely opposed to integration pressures as much as possible, both before and after accession, in those sectors where the changes required by Brussels were

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<sup>49</sup> See Brussels' presentation of *European Principles* (1999). Also see Cardona 2000 and Brinar 2002.

<sup>50</sup> Jacoby 1998.

costly in political and economic terms.<sup>51</sup> This also seems to be case in respect to the reform of Romanian public structures.

Resistance to change was less strong concerning reforms in the system of child care. While the reform process lurched forward somewhat irregularly, this stemmed rather from the lack of experience on the part of Romanian policy-makers in dealing with the issue. As is the case in respect to public administration, there is no clearly defined European model that member states must internalize, although each is expected to effectively apply the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>52</sup> The criticisms, threats of penalties, and recommendations coming from European institutions only signaled that Romanian authorities had not observed the rights of institutionalized children and protected their best interests.

The construction of an effective child protection system has taken place by trial and error, with neither Romania nor the EU having had experience adequate for dealing with the critical situation that existed. In comparison with the reform of public administration, however, the EU played a much more active role in the case of children at risk, not only providing material support, but also directly coordinating the reforms. EU representatives, primarily Baroness Winterbourne, sought partnerships among such other major stakeholders as UNICEF, the World Bank, the Romanian government, and both international and Romanian NGOs that dealt with children. The EU also offered specialized expertise and technical assistance that greatly contributed to alleviating the situation in children's institutions.

It must be emphasized that Romanian governments did not place a high priority upon the status of the children in residential centers until the country became a candidate for EU membership in 1995. There had been some changes earlier, but the problem was overshadowed by the need to liberalize the economy, create new forms of welfare support, establish democratic institutions, and so forth. The European Union clearly set the agenda in respect to problems with child care, bringing this issue to the forefront of Romanian politics. Indeed, conditions in children's institutions may have gradually become the top priority for Romanian policy-makers by virtue of EU pressure.

In both of the examples we have investigated, EU recommendations and requirements became incorporated into the logic of reform in domestic political structures and public policies. Directly or indirectly, European institutions initiated and sustained a number of policies and institutions to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish between the *endogenous* and

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<sup>51</sup> See Ioakimidis 1996 and Paraskevopoulos 2000 for a discussion of this point.

<sup>52</sup> See Micklewright 2000 and Lataianu 2001. See also *Children at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe*.

*exogenous* drives for socio-economic change. Anticipatory Europeanization, which constituted a process that reshaped and reoriented politics, meant that Romania, as well as all other candidate countries, had *limited room for maneuver* in designing new domestic policies and institutions. It thus brought about a *decline in state sovereignty* well before membership with full rights in EU structures.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, the adoption of EU norms, laws, and standards through the various aspects of accession preparation opened Romania up to diverse opportunities for the rapid and thoroughgoing *modernization of both state and society*.<sup>54</sup> While modernization is generally taken to mean an upgrading of something in accordance with the latest methods, standards, and models, Ceausescu's Romania was one of the most isolated countries in the Communist bloc. When countries like Hungary and Poland were gradually adopting new methods of management, primarily during the 1980s, thereby acquiring certain market mechanisms and certain manifestations of civil society, Romania became even more rigid. Romanians thus discovered after 1989 that they were far behind not only Western Europe, but even certain other former communist states, and the very popular slogan "Back to Europe" expressed, among other desires, the wish to catch up with the developed countries. Within this context, becoming integrated into European institutions and structures came to be viewed as a means for overcoming backwardness.

The modernization effect associated with the process of integration has been manifest in various ways, from direct aid and technical assistance programs that make possible the introduction of the most effective machines, standards, and methods, to those that are less visible, such as the introduction of new principles. The latter involve a new approach to the socially disadvantaged, the creation of a proper environment for ethnic, religious and sexual minorities, dialogue between state and non-state actors, restriction of the power of the state, and so forth. Such principles may indeed prove more valuable in Romania's efforts at modernization than the material enrichment that is initially more obvious.

In conclusion, it is still too early to obtain a complete picture of the effects of EU integration on Romanian domestic politics since the country still has far to go in an ever-developing process of Europeanization. Nevertheless,

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<sup>53</sup> See Waever 1997, Hyde-Price 1994, and Mungiu 1998.

<sup>54</sup> It must be noted that modernization in association with the process of EU accession is not unique to Romania. A similar process can be identified in both pre- and post-accession periods in Greece, Spain, Portugal, and certain other EU member states as well. For a further discussion of this issue see Lavdas 1997, Moschonas 1997, Ioakimides 1996, Arango 1995, Perez-Diaz 1993, and Lopez da Silva 1993.

certain predictions can be put forward concerning the direction of development in light of the experience of EU member states.<sup>55</sup> For example, greater integration will create opportunities for developing new sources of material support for sub-national authorities. In addition, advancing Europeanization will re-shape relations between the state and private and semi-private actors. Moreover, the European supra-national level will modify the balance of influence between parties on the national political scene and, at the same time, reorganize relations between state and society. The increasing impact of decisions coming from Brussels will open up divisions in society, creating winners and losers in the process of integration, which will reorient the interests of national political organization. In summary, the changes associated with Europeanization can be viewed today in terms of a general trend to intensify the role played by international factors, be they international agencies, multi-national companies, or trans-national networks, in the domestic affairs of contemporary nation states.

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<sup>55</sup> See Hanf 1998, Ioakimides 1996, and Radaelli 2000.



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## Chapter IX

# The Hungarian Semi-Loyal Parties and Their Impact on Democratic Consolidation

*András Bozóki and Borbála Kriza*

### INTRODUCTION

The existence of various semi-loyal or anti-system parties on the fringes of the political party system is a relatively minor but nonetheless frequently debated issue in the literature concerning democratic consolidation. In almost all democracies one may find parties that transgress the constitutionally established boundaries of democratic consensus or at least test the tolerance of democracy. However, such political groups are the most problematic in countries where only a comparatively short time has elapsed after the transition from dictatorship. Democratic practices have not yet become entrenched in the political culture in these countries to the degree necessary for rendering society immune to the types of challenges such groups represent.

In Spain it took over a decade for the post-Franco Right to become "domesticated," i.e., to accept democracy in both theory and everyday practice and to relinquish attempts to reinstate the previous regime.<sup>1</sup> In France and Italy an even longer period was necessary for the communist parties to fundamentally rethink their former revolutionary identity and find their places in a pluralist democracy.<sup>2</sup>

The present discussion examines some important consequences of the fact that such parties exist in Hungary today.

### IN OPPOSITION TO THE SYSTEM

The fundamental dilemma concerning anti-system parties can be summarized in the following set of questions: Can democracy tolerate the fact of its enemies forming political parties and organizations? And if so, for how long? At which juncture must administrative steps be taken to counter their existence? And if such administrative steps are taken, would this not constitute a violation of the values democracy is supposed to protect? What is the political

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<sup>1</sup> See Gunther, Sani, and Shabad 1988.

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed discussion of this issue is provided by Diamandouros and Gunther 2001.

touchstone that will clearly indicate the moment when action can no longer be put off? It must also be noted that not all parties critical of the system are anti-system parties. Some utilize anti-system rhetoric to bring about reforms in the system, while others seek primarily to uproot and topple the system.

Liberal legal principles are very tolerant toward issues connected with such cornerstones of liberty as freedom of speech and freedom of association. Indeed, there are those who say it is better to have three guilty people go free than have one innocent person punished insofar as we may well end up eliminating our freedom if we are not careful about how we defend it. But recent history teaches us that the dividing lines between "reform," "radical reform," and "system change" are often rather theoretical. Moreover, they can overlap in practice, both during a transition from dictatorship to democracy as well as in a transition from democracy to dictatorship.

The term "system change" will obviously have a completely different meaning in a dictatorship than in a democracy. There is indeed good reason to become concerned when a given political force in a democracy begins to speak not merely of reforms but of system change as well since the alternative in such a case can only be an anti-democratic political system. And the rhetoric of a given party may be different from its real goals in order to conceal its real intentions. It might officially declare itself committed to the existing system, but fashion its messages to different audiences in different ways. It might declare, for example, that the suppression of certain constitutional rights ("pruning" as they might say) is necessary to "entrench" democracy. At this point a strange game of hide-and-seek commences between the defenders of democracy and the party in question. The former will attempt to prove that the party has transgressed the accepted boundaries and violated the principles of democracy, while the latter will reply that their purpose is in fact to bring about a democracy that is "more true," more "national," and "Hungarian." One of the most repeated arguments of such parties is that the time is ripe to move from a "consensual democracy" to a "majority democracy." These terms have a proper place in political science,<sup>3</sup> but in everyday political parlance the term "majority democracy" means little more than the deconstruction of constitutional rights. It indeed serves only to conceal anti-democratic intentions.<sup>4</sup>

Following the work of Morlino, the term "anti-system" party applies to those political entities that question or reject the structures and roles of the existing system and, consequently, intend to transform it.<sup>5</sup> If this aim is officially declared in political manifestos, they lose their constitutional status and can be banned without further ado. The same applies to a situation in which

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<sup>3</sup> See Enyedi and Körösiényi 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Bozóki 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Morlino 1980. p.169.

a party plans military action in order to take power or undermine the existing democratic system. However, these are simple and easily identifiable situations. Confronting such aims is not only constitutionally sanctioned, but also incumbent on the authorities in power.

### **SEMI-LOYAL PARTIES**

But what is the actual situation with such parties that nonetheless appear to participate fully in democracy? What is the case with a party that has no intention to overthrow the system, whose representatives participate in parliamentary debates, whose budget bear official scrutiny, i.e., a party that fulfills the formal requirements for a democratic party, but whose exclusionist message consistently carries an anti-democratic content that is harmful to the principles of equality? If such a message constitutes an essentially anti-democratic basis for the ideology and political propaganda of the party, the latter could justifiably be accused of challenging the system even if there was a formal contradiction between the party's parliamentary actions and its popular propaganda. Contrary to the situation described by Morlino's narrow and unequivocal definition, these types of political parties do not always have a strict correspondence between political action and propaganda, although their propaganda and their ideology tend to be harmonized. These are the parties that Sartori calls *anti-system* parties,<sup>6</sup> while another living legend of political science, Juan Linz, calls them *disloyal* parties.<sup>7</sup>

In the following case, which is central to our topic, the leader or representatives of a political party, which can be termed democratic in nature only in the formal and procedural sense, consciously and repeatedly ignores the democratic consensus as defined by the constitution of the country in question and makes statements whose propriety in a democratic country is more than questionable. This is not a party whose ideology or messages consistently challenge the system, but rather one whose leaders regularly employ elements of anti-system rhetoric. They wear different masks for different occasions. When given the opportunity to speak in the Parliament, the media, or other multi-party political forums, they deliver a message different from what they reserve for their own forums and their own audiences. What they only hint at publicly, they will spell out privately, in their own circles. Such a party leads a sort of "accordion" existence: face-to-face with the general public they contract and draw back, but they expand in front of their own audience and attempt to integrate their followers with anti-system utterances. Under Linz' influence, political science terms those political entities that "sit on the fence" of

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<sup>6</sup> Sartori 1976, pp. 133 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Linz 1978, pp. 27-31.

democracy, at times ignoring, at times observing the consensus, *semi-loyal* parties.<sup>8</sup>

By utilizing the definitions provided by Morlino, Sartori, and Linz, the typology sketched out above may be indicated as follows:

Table 1. Types of Opposition Parties Critical of the Democratic System.

<b>Relation to the democratic system</b>	<b>Manifestation of the critique of the system</b>	<b>Hungarian examples</b>
Anti-system parties	Anti-system party program; consistent ideology and propaganda	None
Disloyal parties	Consistent anti-system ideology and propaganda	None
Semi-loyal parties	Inconsistent anti-system ideology and propaganda	Hungarian Life and Justice Party; Workers Party

## THE PHASES OF DEMOCRATIC INTEGRATION

Analysis of the stabilization of democracies in Western and Southern Europe has identified three stages in the democratic integration of political parties that were originally anti-democratic in character. These may be termed 1) assimilation, 2) acceptance, and 3) gaining power.

In the first stage, an anti-democratic party accepts democracy and its rules as binding and declares so in its party statutes. Its inner identity undergoes a transformation. This alone is not sufficient to integrate it into democratic politics, however, because other parties, justifiably or not, still suspect it of anti-system tendencies. They are not prepared to invite such a party to multi-party negotiations, and continue to question its commitment to democracy.

The second stage of integration occurs when the other parties accept the party formerly regarded as anti-democratic as one of their own. It will then be included in decision-making processes and regarded as a potential factor in government coalitions. Since this stage has not been attained by, for example, the Communist Party of the Czech Republic and Moravia (KSCM) in spite of its relative popularity, the KSCM has no chance of attaining power even if they do well at the polls. One party that has attained this status after years of a pariah-like existence is the party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which is based largely in the Eastern part of Germany. The far-right Hungarian Life and Justice Party (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*, MIÉP) has also reached this point

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<sup>8</sup> This point is presented and developed in Linz 1990.

since it has been included in six-party negotiations after entering Parliament. This has indirectly reinforced its legitimacy and integration.

The third stage of integration indicates that a party is not only acknowledged to be democratic in character, but has also become capable of assuming serious roles in the political arena. This includes being a coalition partner, and perhaps even heading the government. This level has been attained in recent decades by the communist parties of France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy,<sup>9</sup> and more recently by the social democratic parties of Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary.<sup>10</sup> Only extremist parties now question the democratic legitimacy they have attained through the ballot box.

The legitimacy of the former Communist Party of Hungary, i.e., the Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt*, MSZP), cannot be questioned after their significant victory in the 1994 elections, even if figures from certain marginal groups still refer to them as the "murderers of 1956." To doubt their political legitimacy is to question the will of the Hungarian people as it has been demonstrated a number of times in elections. The orthodox communist party, now named the Workers Party, has never been a factor in the formation of the government insofar as it has never cleared the threshold necessary to enter Parliament. However, this issue remains the focus of heated debate in respect to MIÉP, which has been able to enter Parliament. The heads of the largest governing party have ruled out the possibility of MIÉP being included in the government, although they did so only after the international reaction to the New York terror attacks of 11 September 2001. This party has thus failed to attain the third phase of democratic integration not because of a lack of voter support, but because other parties consider it to be fit only for parliamentary representation, not for governing. International factors have also played a role in this matter insofar as Brussels made it known that Hungary could not join the EU with a government that included MIÉP.

### **THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS PARTY AND THE SEMI-LOYAL OPPOSITION**

In comparison with the formerly non-democratic parties that are now moving towards the political center, the parties located on the fringes are of a somewhat different type. Regardless of whether or not they can trace their lineages to the previous regime, they are less willing to adapt to a democratic system because their self-identity is bound up with a specific form of democracy, i.e., a "national," "*völkisch*," or supposedly "true" form of democracy. These groups either entirely lack or possess to only the minimally

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<sup>9</sup> See Bosco 2001 for a more detailed examination of this question.

<sup>10</sup> See Bozóki and Ishiyama 2002.

necessary degree the will to adapt to the rules shaped by the center because their identity is in fact based on a separation from the center. Such parties are typically radical formations occupying positions on the extremes of the political spectrum, and they gain political capital from presenting themselves as sufficiently "sincere" and "gutsy" to openly discuss issues that the other parties only think about. They participate in democratic public life but only as semi-loyal parties, and they often employ anti-democratic and exclusionist concepts.

On the radical right, their representatives are generally of the opinion that Hungarian democracy (or Romanian or Slovak) is reserved for Hungarians alone (or Romanians and Slovaks respectively), and they define being Hungarian along ethnic lines, not civic. These advocates of "ethno-democracy" reserve the right to determine who is and is not Hungarian, i.e., who is and is not a member of the democratic community. In multiethnic, multicultural countries (which comprise most democracies) the concept of "ethno-democracy" is misleading since the demands for a "deeper democracy" are actually a rejection of the principle of equal rights. Parties that support such principles couple the critique of democratic institutions with the critique of a "power elite," who comprise a "caste" they regard as alien or "alien-hearted."

Radical groups on the left generally attempt to obfuscate differences between the former regime and today's political democracy with the message that nothing has substantially changed for the "man in the street." They thereby display contempt for the latter and regard freedom of speech as a privilege of the intelligentsia. Since such groups understand democracy in the sense of either Marxist revolution, or a welfare leveling of social differences, they in fact reject its current political meaning. And since the new democracies fail to live up to their standards, the radical leftist parties tend to scorn its constitutionality and pluralist institutions. They regard these as no more than instruments by which the bourgeoisie cement their class position and power.

The most striking example of this type of political organization in Hungary is the Workers Party (*Munkáspárt*), which in 1989 took up the banner of the original Hungarian communist party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (*Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt*, MSZMP). Party leader Gyula Thürmer welcomed the anti-*perestroika* coup of 1991 led by Yanayev and others of his ilk, and he expressed his support for those who wanted to reverse the process of democratization in Russia. In a similar move, he visited Saddam Hussein as well as Slobodan Milosevic before NATO intervention put an end to ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Apart from these actions carried out in the face of democratic consensus, the Worker's Party has been involved in trying to rekindle the cult of the former communist leader János Kádár. This is somewhat reminiscent of the efforts of certain marginalized forces to keep alive the legacies of Franco in Spain and Mussolini in Italy.



The Worker's Party has been a rather conservative group insofar as it was more concerned with nostalgia for the Kádár regime than a critique of the new capitalist democracy. They are now considerably more focused on the issue of class repression, and from their perspective both the "mine owner" Viktor Orbán and the "banker" Péter Medgyessy are merely representatives, even if of different colors, of the ruling bourgeois class, not democrats. The Worker's Party views the difference between the parties headed by Orbán and Medgyessy (now Ferenc Gyurcsány) respectively to be the fact that Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party (*Fidesz-Magyar Polgári Párt*, Fidesz-MPP) is a "new capitalist" organization, while the Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt*, MSZP) is "converted capitalist." It views both as embodying the "brazenness" of the *nouveau riche* against the "Puritanism" of Kádárism. But insofar as the Workers Party suffers from a declining popularity, now supported primarily by pensioners, the party whose critique of the system generally stops at a nostalgic pining for the days of the Kádár regime poses no credible threat to democracy.

#### **THE HUNGARIAN JUSTICE AND LIFE PARTY AND ITS VISIONS OF THE ENEMY**

Observers usually question the commitment to democracy of the far-right MIÉP on the basis of its rhetoric, ideology, peculiar political influence, and potential for causing international embarrassment. Although their representatives sat in the Hungarian Parliament from 1998 to 2002, MIÉP is an embarrassing liability for most of the political elite. Even the center-right governing party of the period, Fidesz-MPP, did not consider them to be worthy coalition partners and only utilized their voting support.

MIÉP is in many ways a party of many voices and many faces, not least of all because the voice their representatives use when speaking in Parliament is not the one they employ in their own press and press forums. Their parliamentary faction took an active part in debates and was one of the hardest working groups of representatives, which is often the case with factions that are small in number. But their pre-agenda speeches smacked of xenophobic rhetoric, even if delivered in a tone more muted than the one used in their weekly paper, *Magyar Fórum* (Hungarian Forum). They appear to be in their natural element when addressing their own. Party President István Csurka, a writer whose talents are given full vent in his weekly column "Magyar szemmel" (Through Hungarian Eyes) and other such publications, completely dominates the party. His authority in MIÉP is beyond question, and his weekly "orientations" serve as signposts for the party faithful on political and ideological issues.

The essence of the party's ideology is ethnically-based politics and anti-Semitism, and its consistent adversarial discourse employs such tools as oversimplification, the creation of dichotomies, and a reliance on stereotypes and prejudices.<sup>11</sup> Party representatives also employ often the device of "scope-shifting," i.e., investing issues with an ambiguity and intensity that is beyond the socially accepted meaning of the issue in question. Conjuring up images of the enemy goes hand-in-hand with an ongoing state of emergency that MIÉP rhetoric claims is caused by the enemy, who must consequently be ostracized or defeated in order to overcome the problem. Csurka maintains that the enemy is quite clearly discernible, namely, the "small circle of liberal and non-Hungarian people out to destroy the nation, who deliberately loot the coffers and occupy all key positions."<sup>12</sup> The solutions they propose to the problems contain quite unequivocal statements that are, however, worded ambiguously, particularly when it comes to the Holocaust. For example, "The *Endlösung* is the final solution that unpardonably ended in the gas chambers."<sup>13</sup> This can be interpreted as meaning that it might have been pardonable if it had not ended in the gas chambers, i.e., the problem was not the intent, but the execution. Csurka also draws parallels between the past and the future of the Hungarians, stating that "the last two vassal governments taught us that everyone who does not belong to the vassal elite that is defined along ethnic or cliquish lines has become an uncompetitive, second or third-rate human being."<sup>14</sup> The future is thus supposedly bleak beyond words: "Hungarians will meet their gas chambers in their cold homes, in their misery and despair."<sup>15</sup>

Although MIÉP is a party sensitive to social issues, at least those not involving the Roma, it does not seek solutions to problems in the domain of social and welfare politics. It instead consistently looks to answers steeped in racial and ethnic overtones. Csurka is forever attacking the power cliques and castes, and he often hints that issues tied to ethnicity are responsible for bringing about the present state of affairs. This not only provides support for tens of thousands of desperate and hopeless people, it also identifies a convenient scapegoat. And insofar as 1990s capitalism in Hungary was characterized less by free competition than by free thuggery, MIÉP indeed found itself in the position of being able to articulate the concerns of certain middle class groups whose hierarchical view of society was coupled with the

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<sup>11</sup> Issues relevant to the construction of visions of the enemy have received detailed attention in studies of group dynamics. See, for example, Sherif and Sherif 1981.

<sup>12</sup> Csurka b, p. 1093.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Csurka 1998a.

<sup>15</sup> Csurka 1998b, p. 1093.

fear that they might slide down through the social ranks and become "declassé." In Csurka's lexicon of concepts, liberalism and communism are two sides of the same coin. He claims that both are essentially fronts for the aspirations to world domination, under the guise of globalization and universalism, on the part of Jews and the "Jewish spirit."

One would believe listening to Csurka that the MSZP is still a "Communist Party" whose MPs grind the "Marxist prayer wheel" and are only concerned with "carving out cushy jobs" for themselves.<sup>16</sup> Since it is more difficult to characterize the MSZP along ethnic lines, Csurka presents them as a clique or caste interested in salvaging and preserving the power and wealth they enjoyed under the former regime. In contrast, Csurka views the Liberal Alliance of Free Democrats (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége*, SZDSZ) as a "Jewish party" that apes the West, pitting their materialist-consumerist spirit against the historical churches of Hungary.<sup>17</sup> And he considers the moderate right Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*, MDF) to be no more than a political prostitute, a "pact-party" that was of "good birth" but went terribly astray. That is to say that the MDF became a traitor to the political right insofar as it ruled itself out of pursuing a true "national radical" line because of its pact with the SZDSZ, which amounts to a capitulation to the liberals. Csurka places the blame for this squarely on the shoulders of József Antall, the first Hungarian Prime Minister after 1990, who was victim of the "liberalist conspiracy" even if his original intentions might have been honest enough. (The MDF became one of Csurka's enemies when he resigned from it in order to found MIÉP.) Moreover, all governments opposed to MIÉP's line are supposedly "vassal governments" directed by a "world government" representing the interest of international Jewry, and their members are no more than "villa proletarians," "infiltrators," and members of a new "maharaja caste" who are collectively known as the "grave diggers" of the Hungarian nation. It is because of their actions that Hungary has become an "installment plan" country devastated by pseudo-democracy and "interest-rate-slavery," where society is in servitude and the political system comprises a "hamburger Gulag."

A vision of Hungary emerges from Csurka's critique of his opponents in which the traditional political division of *Left vs. Right* remains relevant to a degree. However, it is also both partly augmented as well as partly replaced by a *Top vs. Bottom* division. In using this vertical structure of social division, Csurka preserves something of the classic populism and social sensitivity of the "rural writers."<sup>18</sup> That is to say that the social diagnosis which MIÉP offers is

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<sup>16</sup> *Transcripts of the Parliament*, 21 March 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Csurka 1998b, p. 1362.

<sup>18</sup> For a more detailed treatment of this issue see Bozóki 1994.

populist in character, but the cure it proposes comes from the radical right. Csurka states his diagnosis as follows:

We have, on the one side, the wonderfully equipped players of shopping malls, global enterprises, multinationals, joint ventures, etc., who train in the Cayman Islands in how not to pay taxes; on the other, we have the teams of tinkerers, black, yellow, or red, who also pay no taxes, but who are favored for employment by people who under normal circumstances would employ honest tax-paying contractors, plumbers, bricklayers, and so forth.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover,

To ensure the evolution of the desired structure in Hungary, with the people on the bottom and the "Euro-aping," cosmopolitan, vassal elite on top, they must make sure to grab all dollar-paying, Euro-liasing, procuratorial offices and positions right from the beginning.<sup>20</sup>

In the age of globalization, the right-left and top-bottom dimensions are complemented by another ethnic/social pair of opposites, namely, *Global vs. Hungarian*. Only members of the "global" group can occupy the truly top positions, and the victims of globalization are on the bottom rung of the social order. In such a division of society, that part of the political elite which was in power between 1998 and 2000, particularly the Fidesz-MPP leaders, do not occupy the truly top positions and are not members of the true elite since they are merely the domestic puppets of foreign interests. But while Csurka regards them as caught between opposing forces, he still finds them to be but worthy of support. In his estimation they attempted to represent the interest of the Hungarian middle class while caught in the crossfire between, on the one hand, multinational capital and its domestic representatives and, on the other, national and international poverty. The main thrust of his critique of the Fidesz-MPP government was that they were too "middle class" and not sufficiently "national." Stated otherwise, they represented the interests of only one segment of the Hungarian population instead of standing up for the entire nation.

Csurka's perspective of the Hungarian social and political structures is summarized in the following table:

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<sup>19</sup> *Transcripts of the Parliament*, 9. November 1999.

<sup>20</sup> See Csurka 1998b.

Table 2. A Three-Dimensional View of the Structure of Society According to the Radical Right in Hungary.

	<b>Left</b>	<b>Right</b>
<b>Top</b>		
<b>Global</b>	Ideologically neutral, Western multinational capital, international riffraff, repressive world government	
<b>Hungarian</b>	Infiltrators in the opposition (MSZP, SZDSZ)	Hedging middle class government (Fidesz-MPP)
<b>Bottom</b>		
<b>Hungarian</b>	Cheated Kádárist workers (Workers Party)	Radical nationalist Hungarians (MIÉP)
<b>Global</b>	Ideologically unclassifiable, repressed, exploited blacks, Asians, and other colored "tinkerers," refugees, anti-Western Arabs	

### **MIÉP AND THE GOVERNING PARTIES (1998-2002)**

Of the governing parties during the 1998-2002 period, Fidesz-MPP and the Independent Smallholders Party (*Független Kisgazdapárt*, FKGP) are absent from MIÉP's vision of the enemy. We have already mentioned how Csurka refused to make peace with the MDF, but was less and less insistent on attacking them as their significance waned. But the voters of the Smallholders were of particular importance to him since they had the potential to constitute a rural base for MIÉP insofar as they were the exploited losers in the transition. Csurka attacked the FKGP leader József Torgyán, the second most influential government politician, as the embodiment of irresponsibility, corruption, and lies - a character supposedly altogether unsuitable for the politics of national radicalism. Nevertheless, he was a victim and not an enemy, and his February 2001 downfall was caused partly by his own weaknesses and partly by outside forces. Csurka maintained that these outside forces were not the Fidesz-MPP politicians, but rather the leftist-liberal press and the "anti-Hungarian" political forces ranged behind it:

Torgyán and the Smallholders are knocked out and shattered to pieces. The proto-commie press is kicking a dead body on the ground and pumping it full of lead.... The Smallholder MPs are fighting for their very existence and livelihood.... It can be assumed that there were more important strategic goals behind bringing down Torgyán, namely, to stir up trouble.<sup>21</sup>

But the popularity of the FKGP was on the wane long before they failed to register even 1 percent of the votes in the 2002 parliamentary elections. As the FKGP went into decline after 2000, Csurka began targeting their voters in the weekly *Magyar Fórum*, focusing on agricultural issues and other question important to the peasantry.

MIÉP's judgment of Fidesz-MPP politicians was rather ambiguous. Csurka had a favorable view concerning the policies of the "boys from the people," and in general supported them. Indeed, he did not consider the Fidesz-led government to be an enemy, but merely a rival. During the period of time in question MIÉP in fact supported two-thirds of all legislative proposals accepted by the Parliament, most of which were put forth by Fidesz-MPP. In addition, MIÉP supported the government in its efforts to make it impossible for opposition politicians to sit on the media boards in the struggle for control of the public service media. At the same time, MIÉP secured key positions at the public television and radio and were awarded a radio frequency that they used to broadcast the xenophobic, racist programming of *Pannon Radio*. The "we speak each other's language" type of cooperation between the two parties became apparent at the plenary sessions of Parliament. According to official transcripts, Fidesz-MPP members both applauded MIÉP speeches and often chuckled at Csurka's derogatory remarks concerning the opposition, which consisted mostly of allusions to their real or imagined Jewish ancestry.

The essence of MIÉP's criticism of Fidesz-MPP was that the latter, by coming to power, became part of the repressive caste and thus lost its authenticity. As soon as Fidesz-MPP ascended to power, it began to represent not only Hungarian but also foreign interests (US, EU, NATO). Csurka took aim at the politics of the new elite "from below," i.e., from the perspective of the man on the street:

The creation of a civic, middle class Hungary is a worthy goal. The ideal man of the middle class is well-fed, both physically and intellectually, a healthy, balanced individual, an honest taxpayer who might employ workers and pay them

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<sup>21</sup> See Csurka 2001 for the full discussion.

handsomely, one who can strike the right kind of balance between his acquisitions, work, investments, and his civic duties and public obligations. However, two factors must be granted for the middle class to thus emerge, namely, their existence cannot be surrounded by, on the one hand, the groans coming from below and, on the other, a cynical laughter coming from above while a narrow elite circle, also calling themselves middle class, drunk on power and passions, looks down on them in contempt. It is the time of Advent. This is the time when issues like these are dissolved in lovely acts of giving, but this is not the solution. The solution is rather the awakening of the middle class, its confrontation with the ruling elite, and fundamental changes brought about through the politics of national radicalism and liberation.<sup>22</sup>

For Csurka, Fidesz-MPP was a party of the middle class, but not a national radical party. While he generally shared its goals, he also regarded its successes as half-baked and openly criticized its methods. Indeed, not only did Fidesz make appeals to MIÉP voters, MIÉP was also trying to lure voters away from Fidesz. The informal cooperation of the two parties was calculated to withstand such events as criticism from Csurka and demonstrations of MIÉP's identity as an opposition party. The most significant divergences of opinion between the two parties were primarily found in the field of foreign politics, particularly concerning the 1999 NATO intervention in Yugoslavia and the 2001 terrorist strikes in the U.S. For example, while Fidesz joined ranks with the U.S. "in defense of the free world," Csurka showed an understanding of the terrorists and stated very early on that America was not an "innocent victim."

It is notable that "foreign attacks" are central to MIÉP's thinking whenever Hungary's interests appear to be affected. For example, the river Tisza was polluted with cyanide during the winter of 2000 from an upstream source in Romania. Csurka dubbed this a "Romanian attack" against what he described as "Hungarian living space" (*Lebensraum*), a term he had deliberately adopted from Nazi terminology. He stated that

The Romanian attack against the basin of the river Tisza is in fact an attack on Hungarian living space. It is a new kind of war with no shots fired, in which the long-term endangerment of living space is a deliberate, irresponsible, and certainly

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<sup>22</sup> *Transcripts of the Parliament*, 13 December 1999.

reprehensible act aimed at annihilating a nation. This is a war of aggression!<sup>23</sup>

But in spite of these various differences in opinion, most moves by Fidesz-MPP and MIÉP appeared to be coordinated, especially on domestic issues, as voter expectations from both parties generally pointed in the same direction.<sup>24</sup> In recent years Fidesz-MPP has in fact attempted to integrate MIÉP into democratic public life and make it more acceptable. Although these efforts were somewhat untracked by MIÉP's interpretation of 11 September, Fidesz-MPP regarded this difference of opinion as a political issue, not an "alien-hearted" stance by MIÉP or a betrayal of the country's loyalty to its allies. This is a significant point insofar as the government was always scornful of other opposition parties in cases of confrontation. This treatment of MIÉP was the government's way to signal that MIÉP enjoyed a special status as an "opposition" party, and that it could be put to good use in supporting government initiatives in spite of its formally oppositional status.<sup>25</sup> This resulted in the topsy-turvy political situation of early 2002, in which a party partly in support of and partly against the system was aligned more closely to the Orbán government than the democratic opposition parties.

### **THE CRITIQUE OF "CASTE DEMOCRACY"**

In respect to the problem of semi-loyal parties, it should be noted that MIÉP is critical of democracy, sometimes from the perspective of "true democracy," sometimes from the perspective of ethno-democracy. When MIÉP failed to reach the 5 percent threshold necessary to enter Parliament in the April 2002 elections and a left-liberal government came to power, which added insult to injury, Csurka did not hesitate to reject the results and declare that the new government was illegitimate. MIÉP's definitions of democracy have seesawed between the socially-charged term "true democracy" and ethno-democracy,

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<sup>23</sup> *Transcripts of the Parliament*, 20 March 2000.

<sup>24</sup> These issues included those of the media board, the former Attorney General, the ombudsman for Data and Privacy Protection, the "Lex Répássi" and the (Hungarian) Status Laws. It is also remarkable that Csurka did not oppose the December 2001 agreement between Orbán and Nastase, which made it possible for ethnic Romanians to acquire work permits in Hungary. The agreement signed was quite liberal in comparison with the original draft, which emphasized ethnic differences.

<sup>25</sup> For example, the Fidesz-MPP Speaker of the House had no wish to dissolve the MIÉP faction when their numbers dropped beneath the minimum requirement after the departure of MP Lukács Szabó.



which considers democracy to be in fact anti-democratic. There is a very conscious attempt to obscure these concepts insofar as this tactic enables MIÉP to address both the democratic consensus as well as those outside it.

Csurka often uses the term "caste," which is more than *class* but less than *race*, and his purpose in doing so is to strike a balance between Marxist class analysis and a racist approach regarded as Nazi. But regardless of the direction from which he approaches democracy, he voices deep dissatisfactions. Csurka writes that,

For ten years now we have been struggling with the nation-withering legacy of the old regime and still we could not get the better of it. The fight is between the man on the street, steeped in his own helplessness and the selfishness, treachery, meanness of a parasite caste bent on money grabbing and power madness. The helpless Hungarian populace, be it middle class, worker, peasant or professional is engaged in an unequal struggle against Big Money and Big Power. This democracy is but a quasi-democracy.<sup>26</sup>

MIÉP's aim in confronting the existing "caste democracy" is to realize its own conception of democracy based on social and national values. But it defines "nation" on an ethnic basis and seeks to create democrats out of Hungarians through the social process of "liberating the nation." Csurka's democracy is thus exclusionist and anti-liberal, admitting only the white, Hungarian, radical *petit bourgeoisie* since only they can provide the necessary raw material to create a national (and also nationalistic) middle class. It must be added that even anti-democrats must speak the language of democracy today because of the power and worldwide legitimacy of democratic discourse. Even though the similarities between MIÉP's vision and Lipset's and Hayek's middle-class-based definitions of fascism are indeed haunting, MIÉP is not a fascist but rather an "ethno-democratic" party. It does not challenge democracy, but instead reinterprets its nature and boundaries in an effort to thereby gain influence over society.

It is not easy to assess MIÉP's true social influence because the latter is not primarily evident through the ballot box. For example, even as the party succeeded in shaping public discourse in its own frightful image, it lost its parliamentary mandate in the elections at the same time. It was in fact difficult to determine the party's popular support through public opinion polls because the MIÉP faithful had been instructed not to believe in polls and not to respond to pollsters.

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<sup>26</sup> *Transcripts of the Parliament*, 29 November 1999.

MIÉP's relative isolation may turn out to be long-lasting, and since April 2002 it has been an extra-parliamentary party. However, the informal support that this formally isolated party has continued to enjoy in recent years has given rise to a situation in which those in the opposition display an increasing tendency to use MIÉP language, even though the latter is no longer in Parliament. Indeed, the mode of discourse employed by this semi-loyal opposition group threatens to take hold not only on the far right, but on the center right as well. The true danger of MIÉP lies less in its potential to gain power than in its ability to shape public discourse in an anti-democratic fashion after its own exclusionist concept of the nation.

MIÉP is a strange entity. When it was an ally of the government, albeit in an often lackluster fashion, it was in fact semi-loyal opposition to procedural democracy and steadfastly opposed the friends of liberal democracy. We will now examine how this semi-loyal, oppositionist, far-right party influenced the outcome of the 2002 Hungarian elections by contributing to the defeat of the center-right Fidesz-MPP.

### **HUNGARY'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC TURN**

On the basis of pre-election polls, no one expected that the left led by the MSZP would be victorious over the center-right group led by Fidesz-MPP in the April 2002 elections, although the MSZP and the group led by Fidesz-MPP, including the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Hungarian Christian Democratic Alliance (MKDSZ), and a Roma organization (Lungo Drom), fought a very acrimonious campaign. Nonetheless, the MSZP polled 42 percent in the first round of voting on 7 April 2002, overcoming the center-right alliance by a mere 1 percent. The composition of the new government eventually came to depend, however, upon a factor more decisive than the contest between MSZP and Fidesz-MPP, namely, the performance of the smaller parties. The liberal SZDSZ with its 5.5 percent barely crossed the 5 percent threshold for entry into the parliament, while MIÉP with 4.5 percent did not. Although the second round saw the advance of the center-right alliance led by Fidesz-MPP in many constituencies in the countryside, this served only to prevent an absolute MSZP majority, thereby leaving the door open for a left majority coalition.

Consequently, a Parliament consisting of four parties was created in 2002, with the social democratic MSZP and the liberal SZDSZ on the left and the conservative MDF and the so-called New Right Fidesz-MPP on the right. The MSZP and SZDSZ were able to form a government in May with Péter Medgyessy as Prime Minister, enjoying a parliamentary majority of 198 to 188.

## THE 2002 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

There are a number of reasons to view the 2002 parliamentary elections as comprising perhaps the most intriguing and memorable political change in the history of Hungarian democracy. Never had there been as high a turnout (71 percent in the first round and 73 percent in the second); never had there been such strong polarization; never had democratic Hungary ever seen such an emotionally charged, highly passionate race; never had the governing parties, fearing defeat, conducted such a negative campaign; and never had the governing parties been able to bring such a mass of people onto the streets between the two rounds. Certainly no leader of a defeated party ever received the welcome Viktor Orbán did from his Fidesz-MPP supporters after the election. And never had the two victorious parties, MSZP, the legal successor of the former Communist Party, and the liberal SZDSZ, one of parties that has its roots in the underground opposition of communist times, been so mentally and emotionally close in spite of their contrary origins.

All public opinion pollsters, with the sole exception of Medián, had predicted a comfortable Fidesz-MPP victory. But if people do not dare to share their opinions, who can blame the pollsters for wrong predictions? If people are afraid of the possible consequences of their thoughts, they keep them to themselves, which is why there are no public opinion surveys in a dictatorship. Indeed, possibly the strongest criticism of the Orbán government's four years in power is that most anti-Fidesz-MPP voters simply did not dare to speak their minds, which is a rather alarming situation in respect to democracy. The pundits were completely nonplussed when they understood that, on election Sunday, masses of previously silent, covert socialist voters had suddenly appeared at the polling stations.

One classical campaign strategy of center-right parties is to first secure the far-right votes and then, as the elections draw closer, to make a gradual move toward the center. Most elections today can in fact be won only from the center of the spectrum. Fidesz-MPP began moving closer to the far-right by the end of February in order to attract MIÉP voters, but it was already too late to do so. And since by the end of March there already was no time left to return to the center, the party became a prisoner of its own MIÉP-like semi-loyal rhetoric. As a result, the MSZP was able to fill the vacuum at the center, while the newly formed Center Party (*Centrum Párt*), which was supposed to have had no chance at all in the elections, was also making some headway. Simply stated, whatever Fidesz-MPP gained on the right it lost in the center of the political spectrum.

While Fidesz-MPP conducted a strong campaign and sought to deliver far-reaching symbolic messages, MSZP chose a "soft" campaign to reach out to the moderate, centrist voters. That is why Péter Medgyessy promised to move

forward with all the sensible measures of the Orbán government but also stop the "witch-hunts." On the one hand, the Fidesz-MPP campaign outspokenly addressed itself to younger voters by drawing a symbolic dividing line between the past and the future; on the other, the MSZP campaign directed its attention not only towards this same group, but also to the weak, the old, and the distressed. In doing so it deliberately emphasized its counter-arguments to the hard-line messages being put out by Fidesz-MPP.

While the Fidesz-MPP alliance came in first in the western part of the country and in several southeastern counties, the MSZP won in northern Hungary and in Budapest. It was a fatal mistake on the part of Fidesz-MPP to underestimate the significance of Budapest since the MSZP finally gained its marginal advantage by virtue of its overwhelming victory in the capital: the left gained victory in 28 of 32 Budapest constituencies. In addition, the SZDSZ gained the minimum number of votes necessary to enter parliament and thereby stabilized its position for the next four years.

It was as if the MSZP and SZDSZ campaigns had divided the task facing them, with the former emphasizing the positive message of social peace and welfare and the latter targeting government corruption. Indeed, the tone of the SZDSZ campaign was so different from that of the other parties that all undecided liberal-minded voters could easily identify with its message. Furthermore, since they had begun their campaign earlier than the major parties, their presence left its mark on sympathetic voters long before Fidesz-MPP and the MSZP gained ground. But there is at least one serious lesson that the SZDSZ must learn from its 5.5 percent result, namely, one cannot hope for a better result from a negative campaign. Hungary's political system seems to be moving towards a left-right polarity, and the SZDSZ must make an increasing effort in the future to offer positive liberal alternatives.

Their third-place showing turned out to be unexpectedly significant because the MSZP needed the SZDSZ to form a government, as if the voters had sought to compensate the SZDSZ for its crushing defeat in 1998. They in fact obtained a greater share in governance than they had had in the 1994-1998 Horn government, even though they had then been the second largest party in the country. The reverse side of the coin, however, was that the SZDSZ became both closely tied to the MSZP and also confined within its own chosen limits, thereby losing the ability to polarize politics.

The group led by Fidesz-MPP did not succeed in attracting all of the right-wing voters, but they certainly sucked the life out of the far-right MIÉP. Indeed, one of the best results of the 2002 elections was that the anti-unionist, semi-loyal, and ultra-nationalist MIÉP, which at times questions the very principles of constitutional democracy, failed to return to Parliament. Although MIÉP preserved the voter base it had enjoyed since 1998, it was unable to expand that base to the extent that the higher turnout demanded. The hundreds

of thousands of new voters who boosted the turnout to over 70 percent voted for either Fidesz-MPP or the MSZP. This new situation left MIÉP a loser.

It was not only the MIÉP leader, István Csurka, who lost his seat in Parliament, but also the head of the FKGP, the old-school populist József Torgyán, who had played a conspicuous role in politics during the twelve years since the transition. His departure marked the final step in the disappearance from the Hungarian political scene of the "historical parties" that had been present at the 1989-90 changes. Since the agrarian FKGP scored under 1 percent, not even maintaining the right to claim state support as a political organization, it is very likely that it will be banished forever into the history books. Consequently, all friends of liberal democracy may rejoice at the fact that no extremist parties succeeded in entering the Hungarian Parliament. Although this development was likely the greatest achievement of the 2002 elections, it was also equivocal. That is to say that the center-right Fidesz-MPP succeeded in convincing rightist voters, by virtue of its own semi-loyal discourse concerning democracy, that they no longer needed extremist parties.

One can only hope that the present period will secure a more peaceful public discourse, and that the center of political activity will move back into Parliament from the streets. In addition, a consensus in foreign policy should be restored insofar as Hungary has now joined the European Union, fulfilling the dream of the democratic transition that the country would "return to Europe."

#### **WHAT CAUSED THE CHANGE?**

During the democratic transition in 1989-1990 that absolute priority was placed upon demonstrating the break with the old regime. This is the reason why politics at the time were dominated by a heavy symbolism that drew a sharp dividing line between past and present, with political elites as well as their followers speaking the language of morality politics. The most important issue then became the mitigation of the various crises that arose from the sweeping economic changes, and political discourse became dominated by pragmatic debates concerning state finances, the budget, and the reform of large distribution systems. Symbolic politics was thus left behind and reform politics took over, manifesting itself in debates about how to handle the country's deep economic crisis and bring about a successful economic transition. This culminated in a package of austerity measures that were intended to usher in a speedy transition to a market economy.

In general, political discourse increasingly focuses on issues of distribution once the economic system has undergone a major change and the economy has gained new momentum. This is precisely what occurred in Hungary when a political force led by Fidesz-MPP was elected in 1998 with the open support of the middle classes, whom it regarded as the primary driving

force behind the economic and moral development of the nation. Unfortunately, this force paid little attention to such other social strata as the old, the uneducated, the marginalized, and the unemployed. What indeed proved unique in this new situation was the aspiration of Fidesz-MPP to divide society. It is quite unusual in times of economic prosperity for a government to begin its mandate with a program to carry out something "more than a governmental change, but less than a change of political systems," and then pursue it with great vigor. This can only make one doubt whether the government is genuinely devoted to consolidation politics based on a reunification of the political community.

There two types of politicians, namely, those who divide and those who unite, and whether times are ripe for one or the other depends on historical circumstances. Priority is usually given during periods of radical social change to policies that are based on the friend-or-enemy dichotomy, while in times of peace and consolidation the typical items on the agenda are unification and the maintenance of social peace. What was unusual about the activities of the 1998-2002 government was that it tried to consolidate the country while openly aiming at division. Such dichotomies as us vs. them, patriots vs. quislings, and nationalists vs. anti-nationalists, which were well-known from the symbolic political discourse of the 1990-1994 MDF-regime, made their reappearance at a time when the overall aim should have been democratic consolidation. The tensions that were thus created by the clash between the revival of symbolic politics and the need to consolidate the country undercut the sincerity of the government's actual commitment to democratic consolidation. Is it possible to consolidate by using the rhetoric of "a second revolution"? An ever increasing number of political analysts voiced their suspicion that the government was indeed conducting a deconsolidation. The government's position, on the other hand, was that a complete transition required a complete change of the elite, and its overheated rhetoric of "more than a governmental change" referred to this radical program. However, this was an aggressive agenda to create a new elite from a younger generation that also somehow promised to remedy the difficulties experienced by the frustrated losers in the transition. But although the government failed to realize any large-scale social reform, it wrapped its redistributionist policy in the guise of symbolic political discourse in an attempt to acquire social legitimacy for its political practice of something "more than a change in the elite, less than a reform."

The Orbán cabinet in many ways did succeed in replacing the elite, but it also had a further point on its agenda, namely, the cultural division of the country. The advantage to be gained from this was the reintegration of the right that had been shattered in 1994, thereby avoiding the fate of the fragmented right in Poland. By challenging certain of the principles, practices, and institutions of the 1989 constitutional consensus, the Orbán cabinet defined its

own social basis, thereby creating two "parallel Hungaries" and transforming the country into a battlefield where two strong, rival political cultures met in conflict. However, the symbolic political discourse that Fidesz-MPP made into its strategy also concealed the creation of a private, party elite that not only jeopardized consolidation, but also became embroiled in a struggle with a public who sought to defend their own constitutional rights. Voices raised in defense of constitutional procedures were not judged on the merits of their concern for the public, but rather on the basis of their political affiliations.

Bit in spite of its defeat in 2002, the Hungarian right is not going to follow its Polish counterpart down the path of disintegration insofar as Fidesz-MPP built up its voter base very meticulously. The Hungarian right's "social coalition" first of all includes those people and groups successfully bought off by the party. Another group consists of those held together by anti-communism. The Orbán cabinet in fact succeeded in dividing society to the point that certain people thought that anyone not voting for Fidesz-MPP was voting for the communist past. A third element involves those who are religiously active, whom most Hungarians believe vote for right wing forces. By addressing these three groups, Fidesz-MPP was able to forge a coalition of elements that were originally very heterogeneous. The party's more moderate leaders won over the more conservative members of the center, while the others could safely count on the votes of less-educated people in smaller communities, most of whom were losers in the transition and could be attracted to radical rhetoric.

Nevertheless, the coalition led by the Fidesz-MPP might not have come into being if there had not been a certain desire among the electorate for a strong, efficient, protective state. Because the democratic transition had resulted in a weak state, many people feared that no social institution was there to protect and defend them. Society became permeated with the fear that, along with the turmoil in the world, the state that was intended to stand for the welfare of the public had begun to disintegrate and fall prey to various interest groups. Fidesz-MPP sensed this overwhelming and yet reasonable demand and took care to address it. It was correct in thinking that there is no democracy without a state, but it was slow to realize that this state must also be constitutional in nature. Instead of turning the state into the means to create and preserve public welfare, Fidesz "made the state its home" and exhibited a tendency to monopolize it. And since the state also became a servant of one interest group during the Fidesz-MPP government, namely, the party elite itself, the rhetoric of the "strong state" reinforced nepotism. The dividing line between privatization and nationalization was thus quickly blurred.

Most of society perceived the attitude of Fidesz-MPP leaders to be "If communists were allowed to steal, so are we." But if that was the case, what was the difference between their "new civic Hungary" and people's attitudes under communist rule? The fact that Fidesz-MPP used the state as a tool for

such a curious egalitarian policy in fact eroded the liberal and constitutional characteristics of the state along with the idea of equal rights for all. The system consequently appeared to lose its democratic mandate, and the perception was reinforced that the idea of a liberal, constitutional state and parliamentary democracy was a mere facade, and that Fidesz-MPP, like the socialists before it, used its power to grow rich. Not only did this endanger the people's belief that it was possible to sustain a constitutional democratic state, it in fact created the possibility that the latter might very well collapse. Against this background, perhaps the real significance of the 2002 election results lies in the rejection of the type thinking that came to be associated with the Fidesz-MPP government.

### **SOME LESSONS FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION**

It is a basic characteristic of democratic consolidation that democracy must enjoy a deep and broad legitimacy among both elite groups and the society as a whole. Almost everything depends on the creation and continuing growth of a democratic political culture. In this type of political milieu, those in power do not seek to go beyond the democratic and constitutional boundaries in order to realize their interests, and this same rule-of-thumb applies to legal and administrative proceedings, institutions, and everyday political practice.

Democratic consolidation may be studied at the three levels of elites, organizations, and citizens. Consolidation takes place among elites when politicians, public opinion leaders, prominent figures in culture and business, and heads of other socially elite groups do not only merely submit to democracy, but are rather deeply convinced that it is the best possible form of governance, and that the constitutional system which secures it deserves their active support. Consolidation means that political leaders acknowledge each other's constitutional right to engage in a peaceful contest for power, but do not encourage their supporters to violate mutually respected constitutional norms of political behavior since they also recognize that the law and all appropriate regulations must be observed. The same also applies to the norms that govern all major parties, interest groups, and movements. One can speak of consolidation at the level of citizens if more than 70 percent of the population consistently upholds the belief that democracy is not only the best possible form of governance in general, but for their own country in particular – and they do so in theory as well as in practice. Moreover, not only should there be no anti-democratic party or movement that enjoys significant support, the country's citizenry must reject the idea of using violent, fraudulent, illegal, or anti-constitutional means to enforce political preferences in elections. In this regard, one can say with justification that Hungary has achieved democratic consolidation.



But there is more to democracy than free elections insofar as a great deal depends on how a freely elected government exercises its authority while in office. Does the governing party realize that it is in its own best interests to adhere to constitutional rules, something which can only be of benefit to it when it is in the opposition? Will long-term goals outweigh short-term tactical interests, which too often manifest themselves in a periodic curtailing of the rights of the opposition? The driving force in society, over and above one's own immediate interests, must be the normative conviction of democratic principles. However, there is a tendency in corrupt oligarchic regimes built upon or controlled by an "inner party" or a mafia-like network to institutionalize informal, illegal, and anti-constitutional practices behind the mask of constitutional democracy. These are regimes in which corruption is rife and state prosecutors and intelligence agencies are regularly used to cover up political games.

Unfortunately, if political and business elites maintain merely the appearance of democracy, people in general may become inclined to follow the pattern just mentioned. They thereby begin to identify democracy with the majority, equate a nation with an ethnic group, and regard a constitutional state as being ruled in accordance with the "rights of the strong." The shallower and more exclusive a system is, the more its representatives feel that they are not accountable to the voters. And it then becomes ever more difficult to make a supposed democracy acceptable to the lower strata of the social hierarchy since they will feel that corruption is a basic characteristic of the system, not just a passing moment. This was obviously not the case in Hungary under the Fidesz-MPP government, but many voters clearly felt that politics had begun moving in that direction.

The social democratic government that came to power in 2002 had to prove, above all, that it sought to avoid such practices. Since the extremely aggressive pre-election campaign had divided the country, the first task of the new government was once again to reunify society and put an end to the "cold civil war." But even relative success in this respect would not necessarily eliminate certain basic dividing lines within Hungarian society. The twentieth century saw the country suffer from world war, dictatorship, decades of a lack of freedom, and the shock of a democracy that found most people unprepared for the inevitable injustices of capitalism. It is no wonder that people still feel pain, frustration, and grievances. Not has the new Hungarian democracy yet become a welfare democracy. The twelve years that had passed since the transition, which are next to nothing from an historical perspective, involved not only the transformation of the political system, but the shock of privatization as well. Processes that took decades in other countries were completed in Hungary practically overnight. But while Hungarians responded to Communism with a tactic of survival and shiftiness, they did so to the new

capitalism in an egotistical and individualistic fashion. It is as if the price that must be paid for becoming wealthy and climbing your way to the top is the loss of honor and the rejection of solidarity. We may not be living among gross criminals, as the rhetoric of the radical right suggests, but we do find ourselves in a world of petty kings and shysters who have virtually rendered invisible the exploited and the poor.

One underlying goal of democratic consolidation is social peace. This involves a healing of wounds coupled with a policy that spreads a common prosperity to ever greater numbers of the population. But this in fact would encourage a diversity of identities among the various groups in society, not force people into the over-simplified dichotomy of the political left and right. Liberal democracy can secure both freedom *in* politics and freedom *from* politics at one and the same time, which is why the idea of "permanent revolution" is so alien to it.

### **ONE HUNGARY OR TWO?**

The basic problem with the 1998-2002 the coalition of Fidesz-MPP, FKGP, and MDF led by Orbán was that its attempts at consolidation comprised a post-transition "second revolution." And in order to maintain revolutionary rhetoric, they relied on the support of the semi-loyal opposition party, MIÉP. But can one consolidate by increasing the tension created by social divisions and yet reducing them to one single dimension, namely, the extremist dichotomy of "friend or foe"? Orbán might have thought in 1998 that he had no time to lose in rearranging power structures. The program of "more than government change" was an effort to modernize the right and help a new political culture, a new client base, and social support for government policy to take root. Orbán might have thought that democracy and public welfare would profit more from a contest between two oligarchies than from the domination of either one of them, but the upshot was that he tried to organize the economic and social foundation for the *Kulturkampf* between the two Hungaries that existed in his mind. Instead of pursuing social reforms, he regarded a complete change of the elite as his main task, along with securing key positions for his people, constructing a new base of support, and creating the institutional background for "Fidesz-Hungary." He brought about his own defeat, however, by mistakenly identifying the political community with the cultural community, even though the latter notion only referred to the right. It is one of the basic characteristics of liberal democracy that political and cultural communities are utterly distinct from each other insofar as any number of cultural communities can peacefully coexist within one and the same political community. Anyone who attempts to force an existing, culturally heterogeneous political community

to follow the norms of one specific cultural community loudly proclaims that he or she is not committed to the principles of liberal democracy.

Orbán's policy of social mobilization resulted in a redrawing of the political map that was characterized by the confrontation between a more autocratic or "majoritarian" democracy and liberal democracy, much like what had occurred in Perón's Argentina, Tadjman's Croatia, and Meciar's Slovakia. A similar situation can also be observed in today's Italy, where much of the former power of political parties has disappeared, leaving the contest between pro-Berlusconi supporters and anti-Berlusconi opponents to define the main issue in political life. The final two weeks of the 2002 Hungarian election campaign saw a fierce and emotionally overheated struggle between pro-Orbán and anti-Orbán political coalitions, as if the "cold civil war" had taken the form of a hot campaign.

Populist policy may be defined as representing the democratic process as a choice between life and death, truth and falsehood, past and future, or good and evil. Populism also entails a redefinition of the role of state by emphasizing its dispensational and paternalistic character. Other traits include a kind of economic nationalism; a moralistic rhetoric constantly referring to nation and justice; a steady process of searching out and stigmatizing the "enemies of the nation" ("traitors to the nation," "communists," Big Business, financial oligarchy, cosmopolitan intellectuals, and so forth.); and the polarization and reduction of political pluralism to a single dimension. Political contest during the years of the Fidesz-MPP government did not center around different programs and rationally debatable arguments, but was instead reduced to a passionate and symbolically mediated meta-political war of "us vs. them" that was supposedly justified by "cultural" reasons. Such national symbols as the flag, the circle ribbon, and the anthem, which represent the unity of the nation, were appropriated by the right-wing forces and their supporters, thus emphasizing the idea of division. "Go Hungary!" became a slogan of the right, just as "*Forza Italia!*" did in Italy. The community of nation-oriented politics became identified with the circle of Fidesz-MPP supporters, who were called upon to "defend the nation." Perhaps we should thus say that populist politics needs propagandists, not intellectuals.

One of the most important components of populist politics is the technique of personifying power that is reinforced by the media, especially the culture of commercial advertisements, video clips, and sound bytes. Modern democracy is in many ways a media democracy or a campaign democracy. In such a world, anyone who can simplify his or her ideas and communicate real or apparent truths in a watered-down but credible way gains the upper hand. Most people today prefer parties that transform politics into a visual experience as opposed to those that convey their policies using the classic devices of verbal debates and party programs. Feelings become more important than conscious

understanding and acceptance, and such feelings are apparently more accessible through those charismatic personalities who communicate the party's message. Instead of a contest between more or less articulated political programs, we witness clashes of symbols, tokens of belief, and religious convictions. Indeed, the personalities conveying the message can become the very message itself. This reveals how a political leader can become the old-fashioned boss of a charismatic community that bears a strong resemblance to a religious congregation, and why the young in search of an identity may turn to the type of politics s/he represents for deep emotional experience. In a "*Führerdemokratie*" the symbolically redolent opiate of power conveys the opiate of a self-abandoned belonging to a community of the faithful.

One of the greatest surprises of the 1998-2002 period was that a significant percentage of Hungarian society, particularly people living in small communities, needed this type of boss-mentality. They were relieved to have someone tell them what they needed to do in a chaotic, irrational, rotten, and decadent world full of enemies and bad faith – and do so in a clear, simple, unambiguous, and yet knowledgeable manner. Nevertheless, the 2002 elections proved that most voters do not believe in populist propaganda. They are interested in the present rather than past, and they are willing to believe in the future only if they can sense its foundations in their everyday lives.

Viktor Orbán himself viewed his defeat as a tragedy, not least of all because he saw no connection between the governance of his period in office and the Fidesz-MPP defeat. Even after losing the elections he attempted to divert public attention from the mistakes of his government. The leaders of Fidesz-MPP were in fact neither willing, nor able to face the fact that only governments that had greatly blundered lose elections at times of economic prosperity. One might say that the fall of the Orbán government was ultimately due to its attempts to wed fire with water, i.e., semi-revolutionary populist politics with democratic consolidation. It is in fact a sign of consolidation, however, that voters took into consideration not only personalities, but democratic institutions as well.<sup>27</sup>

Péter Medgyessy, the new Prime Minister who took office in June 2002, often voiced his wish to end the *Kulturkampf* between the "two Hungarys", and he sought to foster a return to everyday parliamentarianism and a democracy of greater consensus. He also grasped that social peace would be further secured if women were to play a greater role in politics. Indeed, for the first time ever in the history of the country there was a female speaker of the Parliament and a female home secretary, and the largest parliamentary faction was also headed by a woman. The MSZP seemed to take seriously the idea,

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<sup>27</sup> See Sükösd and Vásárhelyi 2002 for a closer examination of the 2002 Hungarian election campaign.

already current in Western Europe, that gender equality was a requisite for modern democracy. This is important not only for social harmony, but also for the example it provides society, and it must be reflected in the composition of the political elite.

Medgyessy intended to form a socialist-liberal government representative of the "national center," one reminiscent of Gerhard Schröder's "new center," insofar as it promised better relations with the churches, the development of health care and provincial infrastructure, a new policy of intellectual life, and better care for the poor. It promised renewal, a change in perspective, and a certain break with economic nationalism as well as with the purely technocratic orientation of the Horn government. As a non-partisan, Medgyessy sought to rise above the inner conflicts of the governing parties and stay free of the influence of the various MSZP power groups. This was not an easy task since the reform-communists of the 1980s and the so-called socialist managers of the 1994-98 Horn government still hold key positions in the ranks of the new governing elite. Nevertheless, such goals are worthier than those to which the country was treated until 2002. The fact that the semi-loyal parties and their political supporters suffered a serious defeat contributed to the consolidation of democracy in Hungary after the fourth free elections, a process which has continued after the latest round of European integration. The pursuit of these goals also characterized the government Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, which succeeded that of Medgyessy following his resignation.

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## Chapter X

# Lustration/Decommunization as an Instrument to Enhance Legitimacy: The Influences of the Past on the Present Rules of Politics

*Artur Wolek*

### INTRODUCTION

Although the end of decommunization, including lustration, had been announced in 1994,<sup>1</sup> the reformed communists' return to power in Lithuania, Poland, and Hungary seemed to demonstrate that attempts to eliminate the most compromised agents of the *ancien regime* from public life had been unsuccessful, and that decommunization in general would become an interest of only the most devoted students of "transitology." The years that followed, however, have demonstrated precisely the opposite. The issue of decommunization has in fact been a vibrant factor in Central European politics from the Józef Oleksy affair in Poland in 1995, to the Péter Medgyessy affair in Hungary in 2002, and to the extensions of the Czech decommunization laws.

The reason for this miscalculation was an inadequate comprehension of decommunization-lustration that took the latter solely as an instance of a backward-looking justice that is perhaps typical of a transition period.<sup>2</sup> An overwhelming majority of authors have discussed the systematic vetting of public officials, or those seeking positions, for links with the communist security services (lustration)<sup>3</sup> and "the exclusion of individuals from political life or their judicial punishment for past actions under a previous regime"<sup>4</sup> (decommunization) exclusively in terms of bringing to justice past perpetrators of injustices, a symbolic catharsis of a society that has been humiliated,<sup>5</sup> or a settling of "the wrongs that were committed during the authoritarian era."<sup>6</sup> While decommunization without question involves such issues, this perspective

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<sup>1</sup> See Holmes 1994, pp. 33-36, and Osiatynski 1994, pp. 36-41.

<sup>2</sup> This approach is taken by Kritz 1995, the major sourcebook on lustration/decommunization. See also Elster 1998 and Offe 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Szczerbiak 2002, p. 553; Letki 2002, p. 531.

<sup>4</sup> Goble 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Cepl 1997, pp. 229-235.

<sup>6</sup> Tucker 1999, p. 56.

misses the crucial political point of lustration and, as such, cannot explain the on-going recurrence of lustration.

I do not wish to suggest that lustration is simply a dangerous tool used by manipulative politicians in their power games, or imply that it merely comprises the "other" strain in the explanation of decommunization.<sup>7</sup> The latter may indeed be the case, but in a deeper sense lustration-decommunization is an instrument for changing the rules of politics in those post-communist countries that construct their democratic systems on the foundation of evolutionary regime change. Lustration, in particular, is an attempt to change the informal rules of secrecy and privilege that survived the fall of communism. As such, it constitutes an effort to overcome a crisis of legitimacy that is perhaps inevitable in such situations of change.

In the following discussion I will indicate what I mean by the informal rules of politics in order to demonstrate that their endurance makes the new Central European democracies vulnerable mixtures of old and new rules of politics. Against this theoretical background I will analyze lustration policies in Poland and the Czech Republic, such as the nationalization of party property, the prosecution of communist crimes, and lustration proper, identifying the features that make them attempts not to seek justice but rather to change rules. This will also explain why the Hungarian case is different and why lustration has been least successful there.

### **ARE THERE INFORMAL RULES OF POLITICS?**

Politics is a rule-guided activity. Those active in politics typically do not behave according to the simple expediency of the moment, merely following an impulse, but rather follow certain standards they perceive to be obligatory that may be called rules. The binding character of these standards may be of an instrumental nature (*dox if you want to obtain power*), reside in the prescriptions themselves, or consist of moral, customary, or professional guidelines. The provenance of such rules is less important than the fact that they do not reside in simple behavioral regularity or in the convergence of behavior on the part of several agents (behavioral rule). They rather provide a good reason to act (rule-following, rule-respecting) for those who are properly aware of them.<sup>8</sup>

This view emphasizes the idea that people's actions in the realm of politics should be subordinated to legal (constitutional) rules, an idea that underlies the projects of liberal democracies. The notion of *Rechtsstaat* (a state under the rule of law), which is cherished throughout continental Europe, takes

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<sup>7</sup> See Misztal 1999, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> See Hart 1979, pp. 8-12; 54-59; 86-88. See also Schauer 1992.



this idea to the extreme and demands that all political actions be bound by rules of law. The Anglo-American ideal of the rule of law provides a greater freedom for non-legal rules of politics, although it always claims the right to inspect their compliance with the legal rules.

What are these "other" rules? Behavioral political science lumps them together under the rubric of "political culture," that is, psychological attitudes towards social objects, or a political constitution internalized by the members of society as concepts, feelings, and judgments.<sup>9</sup> But since this reduces non-legal rules to psychological states, their influence on day-to-day politics is vague and always open to dispute. As a consequence, they are used as a key that opens all doors when legal rules are not respected and one cannot find rational reasons for the state of affairs.

If legal rules and political culture are the only dimensions of rule-following acceptable to political science, we are left with cases of regularity in politics that are clearly instances of rule-following even though they are not legal. For example, the party finance scandals that were uncovered in Germany during the period 1998-2002 revealed that even in a political culture permeated with legal rules politicians had followed informal (and mostly illegal) rules for years. One could say that generations of political scientists have in fact sought to identify these types of informal rules but have not acknowledged their more-than-behavioral, rule-like character.

It is important to recognize informal rules as proper rules since we may misunderstand behavioral regularity if we do not know the rule of which it is an instance. As Guillermo O'Donnell stated,

When the fit [between formal rules and actual behavior] is loose or practically non-existent, we are confronted with the double task of discussing actual behavior and discovering the (usually informal) rules that behavior and expectations do follow. Actors are as rational in these settings as in highly formalized ones, but the contours of their rationality cannot be traced without knowing the actual rules, and the common knowledge of these rules, that they follow.<sup>10</sup>

Informal rules are thus genuine rules, that is, they are standards of behavior recognized by the actors themselves as binding. Although they are not legally articulated, they are nevertheless articulations of an accepted social practice, a fact that makes them much easier to research than political culture. As articulations of a social practice created by the actors themselves, their aim

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<sup>9</sup> Almond and Verba 1965, pp. 12-13, 30-35.

<sup>10</sup> O'Donnell 1997, p. 46.

is not to describe a practice (this is what political scientists do), but rather to better understand it, or "formulate some self-understanding in order to rescue a practice, to make it possible to continue it, to put it on a securer basis, or perhaps to reform or purify it."<sup>11</sup> It is possible to elicit such informal rules from public discourse when a legal regulation is defended or contested; from court rulings, especially those of constitutional courts, that rely upon unwritten, informal rules in order to justify legal rules; and also from new legal rules that are intended to codify and entrench social practice by means of law.

### **INFORMAL COMMUNIST RULES AND THE LEGITIMACY OF NEW DEMOCRACIES**

The newly democratized countries of Central Europe are already consolidated democracies. They have survived four to six well-conducted general elections and several changes in government, they enjoy (mostly) free media, and all have a number of political parties and civic associations, that is, the "full institutional package" of polyarchies.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, not only is democracy the only game in town, a fact that is said to be the condition of democratic consolidation, but "no one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions."<sup>13</sup> As O'Donnell correctly observes, however, "this does not preclude the possibility that the games played 'inside' the democratic institutions are different from the ones dictated by their formal rules."<sup>14</sup> And while the informal rules that govern such "games" may be products of democratic transformation, they well may be a legacy of communist rules.

It was in fact a primary characteristic of the communist regime that it was based mostly on informal rules, with the formal legal-constitutional setting being no more than camouflage for the very real but informal rules that operated behind the scenes.<sup>15</sup> Certain of these rules, such as the sovereignty of

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<sup>11</sup> See Taylor 1985, p. 105. Similar intuitions can be found in Hayek 1989, p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> On this point see O'Donnell 1996, p. 5, and Dahl 1989, p. 221.

<sup>13</sup> Przeworski 1991, p. 26; Linz 1990, p. 156.

<sup>14</sup> O'Donnell 1996, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> In his description of the the essential character of communist secrecy, Antoni Kaminski writes that, "Formalization implies responsibility. Secrecy and informality in the exercise of authority mean that the government ceases to be responsible to anyone but itself... To share information is to concede that people have a right to know. Providing citizens with information enables them to make independent judgments about decisions made by the government. In a regime organized from the top down, people must feel powerless or the regime is in jeopardy." See Kaminski 1992, p. 104.

the communist party, indeed acquired a constitutional formulation, while others varied from country to country and in different periods of time, such as the recognition of the Catholic Church's position in Poland and the ritualization of ideology in Hungary and Poland in the 1980s.<sup>16</sup> In any case, the informal rules were accepted as obligatory by party-state and subjects alike. They were obviously domesticated, circumvented, and broken as all rules are, but it was only the democratic opposition of the late 1970s that began to take formal legal rules seriously and point out the discrepancies between them and the informal rules. It was thus no accident that regime change in Poland and Hungary came about under the banner of a return to the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*), which meant that from now on politics would be governed strictly and solely by legal-constitutional rules.<sup>17</sup>

Such a legalistic understanding of regime change brings to the forefront problems concerning the legacy of the previous informal rules that new regimes must deal with. For example, if there is no break in legality during transition, new regimes should respect all the old rules until they are lawfully changed, as required by the principle of legality. But this obviously raises the question of the legitimacy of the new democratic regimes. Is it enough to hold free elections in order to legitimize the continuity of rules?

János Kis answers this question in the affirmative and puts forward the following attractive model of regime change in doing so. After the tyrant Rex I died, his enlightened son assumed power. Rex II enacted a law permitting free elections, abdicated, and transferred power into the hands of a newly elected National Assembly. Insofar as Rex II introduced a new rule that designated the people, and not the monarch, as sovereign, thereby undermining the legitimacy of the old rule, this was a case of genuine regime change, not merely reform. This constituted a change in legitimacy involving the continuous legality of the

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<sup>16</sup> See Kurczewski 1987.

<sup>17</sup> The Hungarian Constitutional Court argued as follows: "With the enactment of the constitutional amendment of 23 October 1989, in fact, a new Constitution came into force, which with its declaration that 'the Republic of Hungary is an independent democratic state under the rule of law' conferred on the State, its law and the political system a new quality, fundamentally different from that of the previous regime. In the constitutional law sense, this is the substance of the political category of 'change of system' or 'transition.'" See "Decision 11/1992, 5 March 1992", in Sólyom and Brunner (2000) p. 219. A justice from the Polish Constitutional Tribune wrote in the same vein that the "political system was changed surprisingly easily by the constitutional amendment of 29 December 1989," which also introduced the *Rechtsstaat* principle into law. See Wyrzykowski 1992, p. 47.

consecutive steps that were taken towards democracy.<sup>18</sup> If we would apply this view to Central and Eastern Europe, we could say that reform-minded communists sat at round tables with opposition groups in order to develop rules for attaining democracy in the midst of a vacuum of legitimacy. Free elections then brought an end to this vacuum and granted legitimacy to the newly elected authorities.

Unfortunately, there are major problems with this argument. Not least of all is the question of how the change took place from a communist regime that lacked legitimacy to a new democratic regime that was legitimate. Kis' magic wand in this regard is the ballot box such that free elections alone are sufficient to legitimize a new regime. Was it not enough that Rex II converted to democracy, decided to eliminate of tyranny, and organized free elections? Yes, but this type of situation is so close to reform that the problem of legitimacy does not really arise. And since authorities that announce free elections cannot be said to absolutely lack legitimacy, there would in fact have been no break in legitimacy. However, a shadow is necessarily cast over the legitimacy of a new regime that is elected according to laws prepared by a tyrant in balloting that was perhaps even supervised by electoral committees appointed by the monarch. This is why Kis needs Rex II, who by the very fact of declaring free elections becomes a partly legitimized authority. The Rex II of Central Europe was the institution of round tables, a purgatory for tyrants who were condemned to prove to the opposition that they had truly converted to democracy and agreed to all sorts of security measures in order to strengthen good will.

But this problem of legitimacy remains. Is Rex II legitimate, or is he merely a remnant of tyranny, and are the rules he establishes capable of legitimizing the new democratic regime? Kis is fully aware of this issue, and he frequently stresses the temporary character of the rules agreed at the round tables that were designed to lead to free elections and then give way to new rules.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, experiences of democratic transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe indicate that the agreement between the old ruler and the opposition, although structurally conducted according to a similar plan, can lead to a variety of consequences. These vary from (1) a democratic agreement for the speedy and unconditional dissolution of the old regime, through (2) agreed upon restrictions for the new democracy, to (3) a cartel of elites.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, new democratic authorities face a major task in trying to demonstrate that they were conceived in situation (1), therefore being fully legitimate. But their hands are tied time and again by the principle of legality that demands that

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<sup>18</sup> Kis 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Kis later modified his stance in this respect. See Kis 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Linz and Stepan 1996, pp. 56-61.

they respect old legal rules until they are changed. Does this also apply to informal rules? No, since the new regime is a *Rechtsstaat*. Nevertheless, informal rules become interwoven with legal rules, and the latter often serve to reinforce the former, which then continue to be the real rules. Consequently, leaving the formal rules of the old regime intact often means permitting informal rules to endure, which make the issue of legitimacy even more complicated.

### **LUSTRATION – CHANGING RULES AND BUILDING LEGITIMACY**

Lustration-decommunization in the countries of Central Europe was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it was a means to change two important informal rules that survived the fall of communism, namely, the privileged position of the communist elite and secrecy in public life. This in turn led to the more general aim of establishing the legitimacy of the new democracy by emphasizing discontinuity with the rule of the old regime in spite of the peaceful and evolutionary mode of transition. A mix of these two aims can be seen in every move for lustration-decommunization in Poland and the Czech Republic. At certain times the symbolic break with the *ancien regime* has been dominant, such as with the Czech law that declares the communist regime to be illegal, while at other times lustration policy appears to be a purely technical instrument for changing the qualifications needed for positions in public administration, as is the case with the Polish lustration act. A detailed analysis of the nationalization of communist party property, the prosecution of communist crimes, and lustration proper always clearly reveals this double goal of lustration-decommunization in Poland and the Czech Republic.

### **THE NATIONALIZATION OF COMMUNIST PARTY PROPERTY**

It is most significant that the first case in which the continuity of the informal rules of communism was questioned and a policy of decommunization was introduced involved the nationalization of the property of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). The privileged position of the communist elite was a direct result of the basic constitutional principle in all communist regimes that declared the communist party to be sovereign. Free elections obviously overturned this rule in a formal sense, but since it had comprised the essence of communism, its consequences were well entrenched in all spheres of social life, making the *nomenklatura* a privileged estate. Abundant material resources for politics were one of the most important and enduring characteristics of this estate.

The first bill proposing the nationalization of PZPR property was presented to the Polish Parliament in January 1990, just after the official

dissolution of the PZPR. Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government vehemently opposed it, however, as threatening the process of the peaceful reconstruction of the state. It was consequently withdrawn by the right-wing deputies who supported it in exchange for the promise of a government-sponsored solution.

This reaction clearly indicates the capital of legitimacy that Mazowiecki enjoyed in late 1989-early 1990, both among "Solidarity" deputies and in public opinion, which rather quickly faded, however, from active support into passive acceptance.<sup>21</sup> This change apparently resulted from the legitimization strategy deliberately pursued by the government, which came to be widely known as "the thick line." This could be interpreted as meaning that although the revolution had taken place on the day the new government was sworn in, all hands available were now needed for the hard work of building the new democracy.<sup>22</sup> It should perhaps have been no surprise that calls from government advisers, as well as from members of the "Solidarity" political elite, to "inform public opinion that 'the past that has been marked off with a thick line,'" and that this situation "determines the circumstances in which the new government operates," fell on deaf ears.<sup>23</sup> It is clear from Mazowiecki's memoirs that his team was fully aware of the situation of actual double power in which it had to act, but this led to no change in their legitimization strategy.

Mazowiecki's government appointed the Commission for the Assessment of the Legal Status of the Property of Political Parties and Youth Organizations. The Commission, which dealt neither with movable property, nor with financial means, declared that the majority of real estate had already been returned by the communist party itself, and that the PZPR had transferred 40 buildings it once used to its political heir, the SdRP. This statement was immediately questioned by the Minister of Justice, who reclaimed half of the PZPR buildings given to the post-communists on the grounds that their former use had infringed the law, and that the Commission had not verified their legal status.

Regardless of whether or not the Commission's decisions were in accordance with informal rules, they were widely contested. As a result, the bill

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<sup>21</sup> On first stages of the Polish transition see Sanford 1992, Frentzel-Zagórska 1992, and Kurczewski 1995

<sup>22</sup> A good example of such "revolutionary" awareness is provided by Krzysztof Kozłowski, the first deputy Minister of the Interior, who at the time was responsible for the secret police (SB). He stated that, "To tell you the truth, I didn't need the verification at all. It in fact concerned only the past, whereas what was important for me was who was suitable for the future work." See Bereś and Burnetko 1991, p. 44.

<sup>23</sup> See Wnuk-Lipiński 1992, p. 8. The internal quotation comes from Mazowiecki's first speech to the Parliament as a prime minister.

nationalizing PZPR property, which declared that all property at the disposition of PZPR as of 24 August 1989 would be taken over by the state, was returned to the Parliament and passed with the support of Solidarity and its former satellite parties.<sup>24</sup> Those who had introduced the bill into debate argued that PZPR activities under the communist regime had no legal grounds, that the party could not own property since it had no legal personal identity,<sup>25</sup> and that it had used state property because of its monopolistic position and the identification of party and state. In spite of the legalistic guise, the goal of discontinuity was evident in the fact that the benchmark by which to determine PZPR property was the date Mazowiecki was elected prime minister. This was a political, not a legal, fact. Moreover, it was the fact upon which the entire "revolutionary" legitimacy of the government was established.

Opponents of the bill argued that it was a retroactive measure intended to prevent the communist party's successor from obtaining its proper rights. This line of reasoning was based on the presumption of the continuity of informal rules, and it referred to a "legal personality customarily acquired and repeatedly confirmed by practice in the courts of law" during the communist period. The continuity of the legal system would thereby guarantee that rights acquired during that period of time be protected in 1990 as well. Sławomir Wiatr, a leading young SdRP politician, described the choice deputies were to make as

whether there was, or rather has been, an evolution in Poland or a revolution. This has not yet been decided... If we accept the rationale [behind the bill], we accept the logic of a post-revolutionary construction of political order.<sup>26</sup>

He further declared that it is always dangerous to accept such logic.

The new law was referred to the Constitutional Tribunal by President Wojciech Jaruzelski shortly before the first free presidential elections.<sup>27</sup> Newly

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<sup>24</sup> "Ustawa o przejęciu majątku byłej Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej z dnia 9 listopada 1990 r.," *Dziennik Ustaw* 16, 1991, item 72.

<sup>25</sup> In this respect the Polish legal system is a European continental-type of system insofar as it assumes that a legal personality can be acquired by legal persons only on statutory grounds, i.e., if a specific statute states they are so entitled.

<sup>26</sup> See Sławomir Wiatr's speech in the Sejm, as published in *Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne z Posiedzenia Sejmu RP*, 10th term, 43rd session, 9 November 1990.

<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that President Jaruzelski vetoed only one statute and referred three to the Constitutional Tribunal, declaring that he wanted to be a

elected President Lech Wałęsa later revoked this referral, but the case eventually came before the Tribunal after they had been petitioned by SdRP deputies. However, not only did the Tribunal fully uphold the act, they even strengthened the aura of discontinuity. The Tribunal declared that it was not by accident that the PZPR had no legal personal identity under communism. Since it in fact had been a deliberate decision to emphasize that the party was above the law, one can in no way accept the claim that the party enjoys the customary legal protection accorded to individuals. Moreover, even if one would agree with such a claim, the principle of the protection of acquired rights applies only to rights acquired "according to law and in a morally acceptable way."<sup>28</sup> This could at best be applied to the property acquired by membership dues, but this amount totaled no more than 30 percent of the party budget. The Tribunal declared that, consequently, the rest of party property was obtained by various types of illegal and/or immoral measures. The Tribunal thus chose to ignore the fact that these supposedly illegal and/or immoral acts were most often legalized by court rulings or even statutory law, thereby openly questioning the principle of continuation in respect to the legal system.

This position became even more evident when the Tribunal used the values of the new regime, and not legality, as the basis for declaring that it is against social justice (the principle of *Rechtsstaat* formulated in the December 1989 constitutional amendment) if such justice means that "the property acquired against the principles of the democratic state and *often* against the law, even the one binding under the state of really-existing socialism," would be left at the disposition of the PZPR.<sup>29</sup>

The argument was further supported by the Tribunal's defense of the retroactive force of the statute, namely, the declaration in November 1990 that the property at the disposition of PZPR on 24 August 1989 was nationalized, and that legal actions resulting in a decrease of the amount and value of the property after that date were invalid. The Tribunal stated that the prohibition against *ex post facto* laws is in fact not absolute, and that "the change of political regime and the dissolution of the party which was the core of the

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promoter of and not an obstacle to democratization. As a consequence of this latter position he resigned after only 15 months in office.

<sup>28</sup> *Decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of 25th February 1992 (K. 3/91)*, as published in the data basis available in Polish at [www.trybunal.gov.pl](http://www.trybunal.gov.pl).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* (emphasis added). This statement clearly shows the two-pronged argument of the Tribunal that relies, on the one hand, on the principles of the new state and, on the other, the legalistic "law binding under the state of really-existing socialism."



former regime belong to the category of exceptional circumstances that justify a departure from the principle of non-retroactivity."<sup>30</sup>

The manner in which the PZPR property law was upheld and then executed indeed confirms that it was intended to overturn the rules that gave a privileged position to the communist party. It was not intended to be a symbolic break with the old regime or an ordinary case of justice during a transition period.

This law returned to the agenda soon after the 1993 elections, in which the post-Solidarity parties were comprehensively defeated by the successors of the communists, the SLD, and the successors of the communists' former satellites, who won an almost two-thirds majority in the new Parliament.<sup>31</sup> These post-communists sought to amend the nationalization law by deleting one word from the clause that exempted property obtained through membership dues from nationalization. The reference in the original law was to the SdRP's current account, and it was intended as good-will gesture on the part of the majority in order to acknowledge the distinction between the PZPR and its democratic successor. The proposed amendment would change the meaning such that all property purchased by membership dues would be exempt from nationalization. However, the effect of this would be to make it impossible to execute the law as a whole since no one could determine which funds had been used to purchase any particular property insofar as the PZPR had no reliable system of accounting, and at times no system of accounting at all.

In a *déjà vu* fashion, the amended law was referred to the Constitutional Tribunal by President Wałęsa shortly before his term was due to expire. The newly-elected President, Aleksander Kwaśniewski of the SLD, recalled the referral, but the parliamentary opposition once again petitioned the Tribunal. The Tribunal then not only declared the amendment to be unconstitutional, it also stated that even the property which had been purchased from membership dues could not be described as legally obtained since the party had been financed from the state budget in a manner that infringed the principle of social justice. The Tribunal interpreted the amount of money to be exempted as the dues collected after the the PZPR had lost its character as a "basic structure of the totalitarian state."<sup>32</sup>

But even though the Tribunal had upheld a law that broke the continuity of the informal rules of politics, its execution was very much influenced by the practice of continuity. The liquidator of the PZPR's property, who was responsible for executing the law, won several smaller cases and

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> See Markowski and Toka 1993. Also see Millard 1994.

<sup>32</sup> *Decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of 5th November 1996 (K 6/96)*, as published in the data basis available in Polish at [www.trybunal.gov.pl](http://www.trybunal.gov.pl).

eventual took control of property valued at approximately PLN 1 million (USD 250,000). Other cases were settled through an agreement signed by Finance Minister Marek Belka of the SdRP and the SdRP itself a few days after the left lost the 1997 parliamentary elections. Post-communists eventually accepted claims of PLN 4.5 million that were to be paid within ten years, which in fact were repaid by 2000. However, this settlement did not apply to two major cases concerning real estate and cash worth approximately PLN 50 million (USD 12.5 million) that have been in continuation for over ten years. The inefficiency of the judicial system is certainly one of the main features of the post-communist era in Poland, but cases concerning PZPR property have included events that rarely happen even in Polish courtrooms. For example, when a particular court delivered a verdict against PZPR interests, it turned out that the warrant of attorney was invalid and had not been verified by the court, even though this is always the first thing done before proceedings begin. In another case a public prosecutor refused to undertake legal action against party bosses who had emptied a foreign currency account. He defied the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal and claimed that since the PZPR had no sources of foreign currency other than dues, the money was exempted from nationalization and SdRP leaders were entitled to control it.<sup>33</sup>

### THE PROSECUTION OF COMMUNIST CRIMES

The rule that had given a privileged status to members of the communist political elite was most conspicuous in the realm of legal responsibility for criminal offenses. The sovereign position of the party had meant that party *apparatchiks* were both formally and informally immune from prosecution not only in respect to illegal actions within the context of a given political strategy, but also often in respect to criminal actions conducted for their own private benefit. At times such immunity was almost formally acknowledged, such as when the Hungarian Prosecutor General, following a Central Committee decision, issued a directive not to initiate formal investigations of members of higher party bodies without the consent of the respective party executives.<sup>34</sup> Most often, however, this involved informal rules. For example, when Jan Rokita presented a report to the Polish Parliament on over a hundred cases of unexplained deaths in which Ministry of Interior officers had allegedly been involved, he described the rule of irresponsibility as

a model that did not result from casual interventions defending particular offenders, or corruption, or the special treatment of

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<sup>33</sup> See the liquidator's report in Bečka and Molesta 2001.

<sup>34</sup> See Bárd 1992.

individuals personally connected to high officials. No, this model had a constitutional character, and it was an unwritten but generally obeyed constitutional rule. Equally certain of their impunity were the general who ordered soldiers to shoot workers and the local militiamen who killed a hated neighbor with a fence rail. The entire state apparatus could be used to defend both of them.<sup>35</sup>

Attempts to change this rule, bring justice to communist perpetrators of crimes, and thereby demonstrate a radical break in the legitimacy of the regime first appeared in the Czech Republic soon after the Velvet Revolution. Miroslav Štěpan, the Prague communist party secretary, was sentenced to 2½ years in prison for ordering the use force against demonstrators on 17 November 1989. But Štěpan's trial was the only such one to be held for a considerable period of time.

Much as was the case in Poland, the reason for this delay was the strategy concerning legitimization adopted by the caretaker government of Marian Čalfa. Even though the events of November 1989 were generally perceived to be a revolution, the legalistic character of the takeover, involving round table talks, the voluntary resignation of compromised communist leaders, the entry of opposition Civic Forum activists into Parliament, and the formation of a government of national understanding with the majority of reform communists and their former allies, lent justification to a "national compromise" legitimization strategy.<sup>36</sup> The structure of this transition process made it possible to claim, first, that the essence of the change was in fact a compromise by virtue of which no power vacuum had emerged and, second, that the formal and legalistic transfer of power gave rise to certain material rules for the new democracy.<sup>37</sup> Čalfa's government, while building the foundations of democracy, was characterized by restraints that were also typical of Mazowiecki's cabinet, and changes in administration came about slowly. For example, the new Interior Minister dissolved the old State Security Service (StB), but the new Bureau for Protection of the Constitution was not only composed in part of old cadres, it succeeded within two months in signing an agreement with the KGB for the continued operation of a special Soviet

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<sup>35</sup> See Jana Rokita's speech in the Sejm, as published in *Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne z Posiedzenia Sejmu RP*, 10th term, 76th session, 4-5 October 1991.

<sup>36</sup> On the Czechoslovak transition see Whipple 1991, Wolchik 1991, and Bradley 1992.

<sup>37</sup> This line of reasoning was put forward by Zdeněk Jičínský, a leading politician and lawyer of the anti-decommunization camp. See Jičínský 1995, pp. 268-269.

telecommunications infrastructure on Czechoslovak territory. It also took six months for former members of the opposition to obtain the agreed-upon post of Deputy Minister of the Interior, and the property of the communist party was left unregulated. A law concerning the rehabilitation of those who had been unjustly sentenced was passed, but it included a legalistic premise that the correctness of the sentence should be presumed.

But the general perception of the revolutionary character of November 1989 was strong enough to bring about change in Civic Forum (OF) policies. The OF congress held immediately after victory in the first free elections, which were held in 1990, successfully brought pressure to bear on the new federal and republican governments to "finish the revolution" and "settle accounts with old mafia structures." By mid-1991 more than a hundred judges had been dismissed and another 120 had resigned, 15 percent of the officers corps had retired from the army (including more than half the general staff), and more than 1500 employees of the Interior Ministry had voluntarily resigned. The Bureau for Protection of the Constitution was also dissolved and new secret services were established.<sup>38</sup> By the end of 1991 the Federal Parliament had nationalized communist party property and passed amendments to the rehabilitation act, restitution laws, and a law concerning the period of captivity.

The latter statute comprised the first attempt to change in a legislative manner the practice of impunity for the communist perpetrators of crimes that had endured after November 1989. In the fall of 1990 a group of OF deputies officially questioned Prosecutor General Ivan Gasparovič concerning the reasons for the sporadic and slow-moving investigations of communist *apparatchiks* (there had been fewer than twenty cases). The general perception was that existing legal measures were sufficient to prosecute those guilty of grave crimes either since the latter had constituted crimes against humanity, or because the statute of limitations had not been in effect during the communist period by virtue of a clause suspending it if prosecution had been impossible for statutory reasons. Examples of the latter could be parliamentary immunity, or even the *de iure* leading role of the communist party. The Prosecutor General played a crucial role in this regard since he could issue binding directives to local public prosecutors and therefore change their practices.<sup>39</sup> But Gasparovič ignored the deputies' calls, claiming that many accusations concerned deeds that

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<sup>38</sup> Some of these reforms had undoubtedly already begun prior to the the June 1990 elections.

<sup>39</sup> The Czechoslovak Prosecutor General was elected by the Federal Parliament and headed an hierarchically organized administration of public prosecution that was practically independent from the government. This was similar to the case in other communist countries.

were not illegal at the time they were committed, or had in fact been prescribed by law. He further stated that demands "for an abstract justice and searching for a collective guilt pale in light of the need to defend society from today's criminal elements."<sup>40</sup>

Gasparovič was soon recalled, and the bill on the period of captivity was introduced in February 1991, eventually becoming law in November. This law consisted of only three sentences, the most important of which stated that the communist regime infringed both human rights and its own laws. Communist laws would therefore become invalid if a respective statute came into effect that declared them to be so. Although this law was called "another toothless declaration," it was the first statute to question the legal continuity of the communist and democratic legal orders.<sup>41</sup> This was carefully done through the demand for a positive derogation of communist laws, but it could also well serve as the basis for new judicial practice.<sup>42</sup>

Another legislative step taken in 1993 after the Czecho-Slovak divorce concerned the illegal character of the communist regime and resistance against it.<sup>43</sup> This law was similar in construction to the law on the period of captivity, and it consisted primarily of a detailed description of communist infringements of the law, the condemnation of such actions, and an expression of homage to those who were persecuted by or had resisted the totalitarian regime. This latter part of the act, apart from its symbolic dimension, also served as the basis for a binding new judicial interpretation concerning the discontinuity between the pre- and post-revolutionary legal orders. New in this respect was the declaration that the communist regime lacked legitimacy. The authors of the bill presented this as a legal fact based on the constitution and practice of state organs that were in permanent discord with the basic moral and political principles of the community. Setting off from this premise, the law concluded that the statute of limitations was suspended during the period of communist rule in respect to any case that had not been brought before the court "due to political reasons contradictory with basic principles of the legal order of the democratic state."<sup>44</sup>

Opposition deputies immediately questioned the constitutionality of this law. They argued that the Czech Republic was based on "the sovereignty of law," including the principle of legality. They presented the "material continuity

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<sup>40</sup> As quoted in Spurný 1991.

<sup>41</sup> Rakušanová 1991.

<sup>42</sup> Moran 1994.

<sup>43</sup> Zákon 198/1993 Sb. ze dne 9. července 1993 o protiprávnosti komunistického režimu a o odporu proti němu. See Jan Obrman, "Czech Parliament Declares Former Communist Regime Illegal," *RFE/RL Research Report* 32, 1993.

<sup>44</sup> Zákon 198/1993 Sb. ze dne 9. července 1993 o protiprávnosti komunistického režimu a o odporu proti němu, § 5.

of the internal legal system and international [legal status]" of communist Czechoslovakia and the new Czech Republic as an expression of the legitimacy of the state and political order in the period 1948-1989. If this was not acknowledged, all laws from that period would cease to be valid once the bill in question became law, and the very foundation of the Czech *Rechtsstaat* in legal certainty and security would thereby be undermined. The impact of this view of continuity in respect to the statute of limitations would be that no action would be punishable if it had been prescribed, regardless of the reasons for which it had not been prosecuted.

The Constitutional Court completely dismissed this legalistic reasoning. It stated that the sovereignty of the people as the pre-state subject of authority that constitutes the state is above "the sovereignty of law." In a state so constituted, law and justice are restricted by fundamental principles that the constitution asserts to be inviolable. Although the Czech constitution respects the principle of legalism as one element of the conception of *Rechtsstaat*, it does not evaluate positive law in terms of formal legality, but rather subordinates law and legal practice to a material respect for the basic values of democratic society. This indicates a "continuity of 'the old law' and a lack of continuity with 'the old regime' in terms of values."<sup>45</sup> The Court further stated that the legitimacy of a political regime is not based on formal legality "since values and principles on which a regime is based are not of legal but first of all political character."<sup>46</sup> If the infringement of legality had been part and parcel of "the regime of lawlessness," then the Parliament has the right to declare that the statute of limitations had been suspended. It is a fact that from 1948 to 1989 the state apparatus had been deliberately prohibited from prosecuting crimes committed by party and state functionaries. Since their acts had been "*de facto* prescribed before they were committed," the Parliament did not in fact reintroduce punishment retroactively, but only declared the consequences of the illegal activity of the old regime.

The importance of the discontinuity of political rules, so obvious in the decision of the Constitutional Court, was emphasized in 1999 by the insertion of a clause concerning non-prescription into the penal code. This took the form of a generally applicable rule that acts committed by public functionaries comprising political, racial, or religious persecution of individuals are never prescribed if they were not prosecuted for political reasons.

However, the effectiveness of such legislative measures must be questioned. For example, from the establishment in 1995 of the Bureau for Documentation and Research of the Communist Crimes of the Police (ÚDV)

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<sup>45</sup> *Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic*, Pl. ÚS 19/93, quoted from the data basis available in Czech at [www.aspi.cz/aspi/jus.html](http://www.aspi.cz/aspi/jus.html).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

only 84 investigations against 171 persons were begun through the end of 2002. Only 77 of these were brought to trial, and only 17 verdicts were returned.<sup>47</sup> Even if we add the 300 investigations that were begun by the predecessor of the ÚDV, along with a few cases brought by public prosecutors, the number is still far smaller than one would expect if the break in continuity of the rule of impunity was radically enforced. The reasons for this are complex, ranging from personnel problems at the ÚDV, through the reluctance of public prosecutors to undertake cases concerning communist crimes, to the open resistance of the judiciary.<sup>48</sup> The most visible case in this regard concerned the trial of two party leaders charged with high treason for "inviting" Soviet troops into the country in 1968. The High Court in Prague acquitted them in 1997, declaring that their act was not punishable at the time of commission, and even if it would have been, it was prescribed. Although this verdict must be viewed in respect to an existing rivalry between the High Court and the Constitutional Court, such direct defiance of the discontinuity ruling clearly reveals the endurance of the informal rules of communism.<sup>49</sup>

If Samuel Huntington were correct, the pattern by which communist offenders in Poland would be brought to justice should be quite the opposite of that in the Czech Republic.<sup>50</sup> Insofar as the relatively mild and de-ideologized authoritarian regime of the 1980s voluntarily contributed to the Polish transition, certain guarantees of impunity should be expected. But one would not expect this to be the case in the Czech Republic, where an oppressive regime beyond reform was spontaneously overturned (or collapsed), albeit under the guise of a negotiated transition. A closer examination reveals, however, that in both countries bringing communist *apparatchiks* to justice is not exclusively about justice, but rather involves changing the informal constitutional rule of impunity that grants a privileged status to the *nomenklatura*.

There had been a broad consensus in Poland concerning the prosecution of crimes committed during the Stalinist period. The law providing

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<sup>47</sup> *Přehled případů vyšetřovaných Policií České republiky Úřadem dokumentace a vyšetřování zločinů komunismu, ve kterých bylo nebo je vedeno trestní stíhání a k jejichž zveřejnění dali vyšetřovatelé souhlas.* This report, accessed on 15 December 2002, is available at [www.mvcr.cz/udv.html](http://www.mvcr.cz/udv.html).

<sup>48</sup> The ÚDV employs only 17 prosecutors, and the latter are denied the competence of appearing before the court. This means that all cases must be brought by public prosecutors who have not participated in them from an early stage. Public prosecutors relatively often return cases to ÚDV with requests for new evidence.

<sup>49</sup> Mareš 2000, pp. 378-387; Spurný 1994; Spurný 1995.

<sup>50</sup> See Huntington 1991, p. 215.

new legal measures for investigating crimes committed before 1956 passed without opposition in the Parliament that was elected according to the round table agreement in April 1991. But the passage of even this bill involved mutual trickery, if not deception.

For example, the post-communists did not contest the law since they had built their legitimacy on the claim that their party was the successor to the reform wing of the old communist party. Any good democratic force would condemn Stalinist crimes. But the other part of the message was that communist Poland had been a "normal state" with, of course, both good and bad features. Even the secret police of the 1950s could not be completely deprecated since it had exhibited, for instance, "unquestionable merits" in strengthening the Polish character of the ethnically mixed eastern parts of new Poland.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, all judgments must be individualized since any generalization would be an incorrect and unfair assignment of collective responsibility. Political responsibility for Stalinism, beyond question for any true democrat, must be distinguished from legal responsibility for real crimes, which must always be individual. This strategy of the post-communists in fact consisted of a de-politicization of the past, which is supposedly an issue best left either to historians, who are often irrelevant to the public discourse, or to lawyers in indisputably individual cases. This permitted them both to obtain democratic credentials, and also to maintain the support of an electorate loyal to their memories of the good old days, who were often personally interested in sustaining the rule of impunity.

There was also trickery on the part of those willing to use the question of justice for crimes of the Stalinist period as an instrument for changing the rules. The April 1991 law was an amendment to the law concerning the prosecution of Nazi crimes. It introduced the notion of "Stalinist crimes" as crimes committed, inspired, or tolerated by state authorities before December 1956. The law stated that Stalinist crimes are never prescribed insofar as they are to be considered either war crimes or crimes against humanity under international law. The hidden message here consisted in the new definition of crimes against humanity that the act introduced. These were not only those crimes specified in international law by the 1948 Convention, as the act had indicated a few paragraphs earlier, but also "other major persecutions if committed due to the membership of the persecuted persons in a national, political, social, racial, or religious group."<sup>52</sup> Since such persecutions were not

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<sup>51</sup> See Krzysztof Grzebyk's speech in the Sejm, as reprinted in *Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne z Posiedzenia Sejmu RP*, 10th term, 44th session, 23 November 1990. See also Kraško 1996, p. 129.

<sup>52</sup> "Ustawa o zmianie ustawy o Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce," *Dziennik Ustaw* 45, 1991, item 195, art. 2b.



included in the international catalog of crimes against humanity, the new law retroactively introduced the absence of prescription concerning such persecutions and excluded the use of amnesty laws for the pre-1989 period.

The radical aspect of this statute, which post-communist politicians had overlooked, was immediately noticed by the Constitutional Tribunal. But since the law was not referred to the court, which was another sign of political consensus, the Tribunal itself could only deliver an advisory, non-binding opinion. The Tribunal did not exclude the possibility of suspending the prohibition of retroactive legislation in light of the "absolutely extraordinary historical character of the changes under way," but demanded a wording more precise than "major persecutions" in the description of the actions to which retroactive justice would apply.<sup>53</sup> Although one commentator described the Tribunal's argument "as shocking and political,"<sup>54</sup> one cannot help but agree with the assessment that "despite its dogmatic importance, the act was ignored by Polish legal science."<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, political forces widely accepted the change in the rule of impunity that had been introduced into the Polish legal system through the back door. The Parliament elected in 1993 with a nearly two-thirds post-communist majority passed a bill in 1996 that excluded the application of amnesty laws to crimes not prosecuted due to political reasons during the period 1944-1989.<sup>56</sup> The same rule was included in the new penal code of 1997 by a clause stipulating that the statute of limitations for crimes committed by public functionaries in the years 1944-1989 came into effect on 1 January 1990.<sup>57</sup> The Constitutional Tribunal confirmed the legality of this rule in 1999, providing a broad justification of the doctrine of discontinuity. The Tribunal asserted that although public functionaries who committed crimes under the influence of the communist authorities had been absolved of responsibility by those authorities themselves, such an absolution is unacceptable in a democratic state. Considerations of justice therefore demand bringing such offenders to justice. In such cases the exclusion of amnesty laws not only is permitted, it is indeed

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<sup>53</sup> *Decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of 25th September 1991* (S 6/91), as published in the data basis available in Polish at [www.trybunal.gov.pl](http://www.trybunal.gov.pl).

<sup>54</sup> Gardocki 1992.

<sup>55</sup> Arnold and Weigend 1998, p. 42.

<sup>56</sup> "Ustawa o wyłączeniu niektórych ustaw o amnestii i abolicji wobec sprawców niektórych przestępstw nie ściganych z przyczyn politycznych w latach 1944-1989," *Dziennik Ustaw* 89, 1996, item 400.

<sup>57</sup> "Ustawa przepisy wprowadzające kodeks karny," *Dziennik Ustaw* 88, 1997, item 554.

"necessary in a democratic *Rechtsstaat* in the period of transformation."<sup>58</sup> The Tribunal also observed that the aim of the 1991 and 1997 laws was not only to bring a number of functionaries who had committed crimes under the previous regime to justice, but also "to remove a systemic injustice which consisted in securing a lack of penal responsibility and therefore meant a grave infringement of the principles of equality and social justice."<sup>59</sup>

The dimension of discontinuity in justice for communist crimes was strengthened by an act that replaced the 1991 amendment. The law of 1998 establishing the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), passed by the new Parliament with a center-right majority, introduced the concept of "communist crimes" to replace that of "Stalinist crimes," and it followed the recommendation of the Tribunal that the wording should be more precise. Communist crimes were deemed as acts carried out between 1939 and 1989 that were punishable on the day of commission and consisted of repression or other violations of human rights. Furthermore, the law stipulated that the statute of limitations for such crimes came into effect in 1990 and would last 20-30 years. It also repeated the earlier broad definition of crimes against humanity and declared they were non-prescriptive in character.

As in the Czech case, the practical results of such radical legislation, which was intended to punish the perpetrators of crimes committed during the communist period as well as establish the bench mark for the discontinuity of informal rules with the communist regime, were less than impressive. The High Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (the GKBZPNP, transformed in 1999 into the IPN), which was the principal organ for the investigation of Stalinist and communist crimes, indeed initiated more than 1200 investigations. But only 250 cases were handed over to public prosecutors,<sup>60</sup> only 62 of these were brought to trial, and only 12 defendants were sentenced.<sup>61</sup> There were also a few dozen cases that had been brought to trial by public prosecutors, but only a few had been concluded by 2001. And, once again, there were a number of reasons for this state of affairs, including a general under-performance of the justice administration in Poland, the natural

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<sup>58</sup> *Decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of 6th July 1999* (P 2/99), as published in the data basis available in Polish at [www.trybunal.gov.pl](http://www.trybunal.gov.pl).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> GKBZPNP prosecutors could not appear before the courts until 1999. See note 48 above.

<sup>61</sup> The data have been drawn from Wildstein 2000, p. 67; Paczkowski 1998; and Kulesza 1999, p. 43.

unwillingness of prosecutors to deal with cases far from their daily bread, and a both open and hidden boycott of the law.<sup>62</sup>

## LUSTRATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND IN POLAND

Czech lustration is generally perceived to be the epitome of all measures of retroactive justice in Central Europe. The reason may well be that Czech *lustrace* was not lustration in the strict sense, that is, the vetting of those seeking public positions for past links with the communist security services, but rather an overt instrument of decommunization. Stated otherwise, it was used as a tool not only to eliminate both secret collaborators and *apparatchiks*, but also to stress the discontinuity of political rules. Decommunization obviously means ending the rule that reserved certain positions for the privileged estate of *nomenklatura*. Lustration resolves itself within this context into (1) disclosing the sacrosanct secrets of the communist regime and (2) changing the former basic rule that the population may not know who governs, who is responsible for what, etc. Disclosing secret police collaborators is crucial in this respect since the institution in question was essential for maintaining the secretive workings of the regime. In addition, it was the single most important channel of communication in countries like Poland for keeping the communist system working. The double-edged character of Czech lustration is clearly evident at this juncture. On the one hand, it comprises a symbolic change in rules (names revealed), but it also has the very practical objective of breaking the secretive ties of loyalty among the old *nomenklatura*, which was so very counterproductive during the period of political and economic transition.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Examples of the boycott included invoking the 1984 amnesty law in a case involving several workers shot by the police in Lublin during the martial law period; the refusal of the Interior Ministry to forward documents in the case of a student allegedly murdered in Cracow by the secret police during the 1970s, claiming that there was no new information in the apparently unclassified files that had been requested; and a year-long delay in the written formal verdict that was necessary for an appeal in a case of several workers who had been shot. See Strzembosz 1995, Łukaszewicz 1998, and Bubnicki 1998.

<sup>63</sup> Tucker draws attention to the dimension of non-retroactive justice concerning lustration in a more radical manner by observing that lustration meant the control of the *nomenklatura*'s access to hard currency. Elements of the media and certain politicians led a drive against white-collar crime under the guise of fighting against the old *nomenklatura* in a situation in which the police were completely unprepared for the challenges presented by the new economic system. See Tucker 1999, p. 67.

Scandals with secret police collaborators began in Czechoslovakia prior to the June 1990 elections.<sup>64</sup> First of all, the parliamentary commission assigned to investigate the question of responsibility for the use of violence in November 1989 not only identified no guilty parties, it in fact uncovered former StB agents among its own members. The deputy Interior Minister from the ranks of the opposition then announced that the chairman of the Interior Minister's own People's Party was a long-time StB collaborator. Another commission created by the new Parliament to investigate the November 1989 events discovered that the StB had 16 emergency plans that were to be introduced if a non-communist government would be established, some of which were indeed put into action, including infiltration of the opposition-turned-government. As a result, the commission received an expanded mandate and conducted a search for StB collaborators among the deputies and Federal cabinet ministers. Documents were collected that confirmed such collaboration on the part of 16 members of Parliament (5 percent of the total) and 14 ministers (20 percent of the government). The names of 10 suspected deputies were read out before the Parliament in March 1991, and the rest resigned in exchange for keeping their names secret.<sup>65</sup> The storm caused by this parliamentary lustration drove the deputies to prepare a statute that would control lustration, including the appearance of a list of supposed agents' names.

The lustration act of 1991 banned officers and collaborators of the StB as well as party functionaries from the county level and above from employment in managerial positions in public administration, the judiciary, the police, the army, state electronic media, and companies in which the state was the majority stockholder. All applicants for such jobs had to present a certificate issued by the Ministry of Interior stating that he/she fulfilled the statutory requirements for holding the position. If refused employment, an applicant could bring his/her case before the appeal commission and eventually to the courts of law.<sup>66</sup>

The debate concerning lustration has been widely publicized and is relatively well known in English. The just/unjust character of retribution for past evils, the necessity/impossibility of replacing old elites, the (un)reliability of secret police files, and blackmail protection/enabling were common topics in

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<sup>64</sup> For an overview of events see Pehe 1991, Bren 1993, Welsh 1996, and Krauss 1995, pp 572-574.

<sup>65</sup> See "Collaborators Revealed," 1991.

<sup>66</sup> The Constitutional Court, which had to review the law, declared that it was in general constitutional although it removed the appeal commission. It also struck down certain categories of alleged collaborators.

both the Czech Republic and Poland.<sup>67</sup> The thread that dominated the discourse of the defenders of lustration was the need to establish popular trust in the new state institutions. Old cadres accustomed to fighting democracy and human rights could surely not fight for the legitimacy of the new order. On the other hand, those opposing lustration argued that the essence of the new democratic state should be the rule of law and legality, and that old functionaries could very well be loyal to such a state. But the response to them was that a clear-cut change of the rules was needed since communism had been not only an undemocratic regime, but also an all-pervading social system of captivity. Serfs need to change into citizens, and for this a trustworthy state is the first thing necessary: "So long as we have our priorities backwards, and so long as people think of themselves as the objects not the subjects of action we cannot talk about successful revolution."<sup>68</sup> The authors of lustration were apparently prepared to admit that the process was questionable in terms of liberal democratic state norms, but they nevertheless took the risk since "unfortunately, we cannot say that we are living in normal times but in times of revolution. Yes, it was a 'velvet revolution' but a revolution all the same."<sup>69</sup>

The Czech lustration law was called "a torso without legs" insofar as the restriction of the law to the public sector in a situation of rapid privatization made lustration redundant in terms of elite change.<sup>70</sup> And there was no witch hunt even in the public sector, although 8,000 of the 260,000 applicants for certificates were found to be collaborators, half of whom were forbidden employment. At the national government level 19 people lost their jobs, 22 were downgraded, and 41 managers of state enterprises fired. There were indications, however, that the majority of those expecting a positive lustration resigned of their own accord. Indeed, a sort of consensus emerged in the media and in a great part of the political elite that prevented those revealed to be former StB collaborators or *apparatchiks* from holding important public positions.<sup>71</sup>

The story of Polish lustration is even more intricate. Partly under Czech influence, the demand that the names of secret collaborators of the former political police be revealed became a standard item in the manifestos of numerous right-of-center parties prior to the first democratic parliamentary elections of October 1991. But there were two basic differences between the Czech and Polish situations. First, the leading communist figure at the Polish

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<sup>67</sup> Tucker 1999, pp. 68-71; Elster 1992; Offe 1993. See also *Truth and Justice* 1993.

<sup>68</sup> Ruml 1991. See also Karpiński 1991.

<sup>69</sup> Benda 1992.

<sup>70</sup> Tucker 1999, p. 84.

<sup>71</sup> Spurný 1991.

round table talks in 1989 was the head of the police, and, in general, the secret police was a more important pillar of the Jaruzelski regime than of the party in the late 1980s. Second, the Czech secret police archives were largely intact even though they had been partly destroyed, while the unchanged leadership of the Ministry of Interior had comprehensively destroyed the Polish archives by spring 1990.

Yet these considerations did not deter Jan Olszewski's cabinet, nominated by the first democratic Parliament, from announcing preparations for lustration as a major policy issue. It was an important element in the program of the "government of the breakthrough" that aimed to change economic policy, redirect Polish foreign policy strongly towards NATO, and underline the break with communism. Olszewski's cabinet was, however, a weak minority government from the very beginning. Even worse, it was a government in conflict with President Wałęsa and most of the mass media. The government then decided after a series of clashes with Parliament and the President, when it was on the verge of a no-confidence vote, to disclose the findings on collaborators active in political life that had been in preparation in a special unit of the Ministry of Interior for the previous six months. The Parliament in turn adopted a lustration resolution in May 1991 demanding that the Minister of the Interior deliver information on public functionaries from the level of commune up who were officers or collaborators of the communist secret police. Within 6 days the Minister of Interior presented sealed envelopes holding the names of members of Parliament who were allegedly collaborators to the highest state officials and the leaders of parliamentary groups. Within hours it was leaked that the names of President Wałęsa, the Speaker, and a few dozen deputies were on the list. The next night Olszewski's government was recalled by a broad coalition including post-communists, the populist right, and Wałęsa supporters.<sup>72</sup>

The discussion concerning whether the June 1991 lustration list was a weapon to defend the government, the last testimony of the anti-communist program, or indeed even reliable was stormy but short. It did demonstrate, however, that the problem of former collaborators had to be somehow resolved. Six bills were eventually presented to the Parliament, some very liberal and legalistic, others with a Czech-like emphasis on decommunization. None were passed because of the dissolution of Parliament that led to early elections in September 1993, in which the right-wing parties that were the main promoters of lustration were comprehensively defeated. It was at this time that political commentators announced the end of decommunization, and it indeed seemed

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<sup>72</sup> See Doroszewska 1992; Calhoun 2002, pp. 494-520; and Szczerbiak 2002, pp. 556-558.

unlikely that a Parliament with a near two-thirds post-communist majority would be concerned with lustration.

But precisely the opposite turned out to be the case when the post-communist Prime Minister, Józef Oleksy, was accused of collaboration with Soviet and Russian intelligence by the Minister of the Interior, who had been nominated as a result of horse-trading with President Wałęsa. Although Oleksy was soon acquitted, the politician in fact cooperating with the Russians whom Polish counter-intelligence was tracking remained unknown. Friendly relations between many leading post-communists and Russian diplomats were taken to be of a sufficiently compromising character that some type of lustration, understood as a procedure for vetting politicians, came to be seen as necessary and perhaps even healthy for the SLD. However, the resistance of post-communist elites was strong enough to impede the reparation of a lustration bill until April 1997, when a coalition of the Polish Peasant Party and the post-Solidarity Freedom Union succeeded in enacting the lustration law.

This law authorized lustration proper without any elements of decommunization. Its aim was to eliminate the danger of blackmail and to ensure a safe method, in respect to state secrets and the long shadow of the past, for selecting the political/administrative elite. The procedure was simple: A person nominated for a public position (deputy minister and higher, as well as public prosecutors and advocates) or running for Parliament had to state whether or not s/he had/had not been an officer or collaborator of the secret services prior to 1989. There were no penalties for a positive statement, but the accuracy of the statements was verified by the Lustration Court. If the statement was proven to be false, the person in question could hold no public office for a period of 10 years. This procedure thereby made punishable not the fact of collaboration, but a false lustration statement.<sup>73</sup>

But there also were clauses in the law act that made it possible for its implementation to serve the discontinuity of rules as well as promote openness in public life. For example, partly due to the professional distaste of lawyers for inquisitory procedures, and partly out of practical sense at an advanced stage of the legislative track, the institution of the Spokesman of Public Interest (RIP) was introduced into the bill. This was a type of public prosecutor charged with the responsibility of supplying the Lustration Court with evidence concerning a statement on collaboration that was being examined. This meant that a subject was created with the broad investigative competence of a public prosecutor who was institutionally interested in the fact of collaboration, not in the statement itself. In addition, the use of criminal procedure coupled with the oppositional character of the trial guaranteed that the courtroom sessions would have a discursive and public nature. This had not been the case with the first bill

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<sup>73</sup> Szczerbiak 2002, pp. 562-569; Misztal 1999, pp. 42-45.

insofar as it provided only for an individual to make a statement directly the court, the latter serving as the sole representative of the public interest. An amendment adopted in 1998 by a Parliament with a new center-right majority mandated another institution that strengthened the public orientation of Polish lustration towards discontinuity. This was the "deputies' denunciation," whereby a member of Parliament could question the veracity of any collaboration statement and request the RIP to investigate the case.

This amendment became necessary because of the open boycott of the law by the judiciary. Although the lustration law had created a special Lustration Court to be nominated by the self-governing corporate bodies of judges, the majority of the latter refused to participate and the law was consequently unenforceable. The 1998 amendment instead designated the Court of Appeals in Warsaw as the Lustration Court. It also transferred the power to set the agenda concerning statements under verification from the judges to the RIP. The parliamentary majority expected that if judges retained the power to do so, they would spend the next several years verifying politically safe statements by provincial advocates.

The implementation of the lustration act in the period 1998-2001 in fact utilized this hidden potential of the statute to promote the discontinuity of rules. As the RIP undertook the verification of statements, a practice emerged within the center-right governing parties whereby politicians whose statements were questioned by the RIP should step down. The Minister of Justice also dismissed public prosecutors who were proven to have submitted false statements. In addition, pressure was brought to bear on presidents of courts of law to undertake disciplinary proceedings against judges who had been collaborators, although most frequently with no effect. The RIP as a rule appealed verdicts of acquittal in the Lustration Court, and the media closely followed even minor cases. The Constitutional Tribunal also contributed to this change of meaning in the lustration process upon the basis of law. Even though the Tribunal stressed that "the aim of the act is not to call to account for collaboration," it also admitted that the new democracy has the right to "safeguard openness of public life, eliminate the possibility of blackmail with the use of facts from the past and to submit them under the social assessment."<sup>74</sup>

### **WHY IS HUNGARY DIFFERENT?**

Hungary must always be included when speaking about Central Europe, although its experience with lustration is different from both the Polish

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<sup>74</sup> *Decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of 21st November 1997 (K. 39/97)*, as published in the data base available in Polish at [www.trybunal.gov.pl](http://www.trybunal.gov.pl).



and Czech cases. There were in fact attempts at lustration in Hungary, and it is likely the country has not easily shaken off the informal rules of the communist period. But lustration was not used in Hungary as a means to change the informal rules of politics.

I would argue that the different state of affairs in Hungary in this respect was brought about by the fully consensual mode of transition from communism to democracy that characterized the country. The use of lustration that we have described above was the response to a crisis of legitimacy that arose from the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the promise to build a new democratic state that was substantially different from the communist regime and, on the other, the manner in which that would be achieved, namely, through an agreement with the communists that differed in character in Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was perhaps only natural that the question of whether or not the promise of something new had been fulfilled arose when many of old informal rules continuing to be valid even after democracy in accordance with procedural standards had been established. If there was a new democracy, why were the old rules still binding? Within this context, lustration-decommunization was intended to both discontinue certain of the old rules and also demonstrate that they were no longer binding. In Hungary, however, there had been no such promise, but rather a building of the democratic regime through consensus, with communists and anti-communists alike working together. No single event had completely and visibly de-legitimized the old regime, and not only was there no decisive confrontation between the old and the new, there was not even the appearance of discontinuity.<sup>75</sup>

This is obvious from the fact that, unlike the round table talks in Poland and Czechoslovakia, the Hungarian National Round Table established rules not only for the transitional period leading to free elections, but also for the new democratic state. Although the talks began as they did elsewhere, namely, when the need for free elections became obvious to all participants, six crucial drafts were eventually accepted concerning the new democratic regime.<sup>76</sup> These were to be adopted by the existing communist Parliament and could later be changed only by a two-thirds majority vote. The round table also agreed that statutes regulating several dozen other spheres of public affairs would be subject to two-thirds majority acceptance. As Kis might say, it was as

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<sup>75</sup> There are those who would like to view the referendum on the direct election of the President of Republic in November 1989 as such an event. However, the ambiguous position of the largest opposition party in fact made it a prologue to the general elections rather than a clear-cut conflict between the old regime and the democratic forces. See, for example, Kis 1998, Arato 1995, and Kovács 1992.

<sup>76</sup> See Bozóki 1993, Sajó 1996, and László Bruszt 1990.

if Rex II had not only decreed the electoral law, but also sketched out the constitution.

There was a bright side to this process of cooperation. By April 1990 the final communist government, headed by Miklós Németh, had implemented reforms that it took Mazowiecki and Čalfa many months to introduce. Censorship had already been eliminated in May 1989, the communist party returned a portion of its property and made it available to new political forces, party cells were moved out of economic enterprises, the army and police were depoliticized, and a draft law on the rehabilitation of those persecuted after the 1956 uprising was prepared.<sup>77</sup>

This consensual approach was maintained after free elections, when former opposition parties became the main political actors. But a major constitutional change was introduced that curiously led to opposing parties precipitously clashing in day-to-day politics. To use András Kőrösényi's term, a sort of "shared-out republic"<sup>78</sup> emerged in which the very broad constitutional sphere of laws subject to a two-thirds majority vote was ruled according to a consensus with which all parties felt uneasy but none were strong enough to change. The sphere of "normal" politics was thereby restricted and came to be dominated by sharp emotional conflicts.

Issues of lustration-decommunization in Hungary should be viewed against this background. For example, decommunization as a changing of rules would clearly pertain to the "constitutional" sphere, and since no consensus could be expected, lustration became a highly partisan issue in the sphere of day-to-day conflict. The first lustration bill, introduced in 1990 by liberals who styled themselves at the time as radical anti-communists, was mildly opposed by the right-wing cabinet of József Antall.<sup>79</sup> When the right-wing parties launched the so-called "Justitia" legislative program in 1991/1992, which was intended to strengthen the government by means of a restricted decommunization, particularly by the reintroduction of penalties for crimes that had not been prosecuted for political reasons, the liberals were the first to warn of a "lynch mob" atmosphere.<sup>80</sup> They in fact emphasized the merits of the communists in democratization.<sup>81</sup> There is then no question but that lustration-decommunization became an issue in a pre-existing partisan conflict, and that it played no role in a strategy to change the rules of politics, which in any case had become entrenched by the unwelcome consensus. Consequently, the long

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<sup>77</sup> Kőrösényi, Bozóki, and Schöpflin 1992. See also Bruszt and Stark 1992.

<sup>78</sup> Kőrösényi 1999, p. 169.

<sup>79</sup> Lovás 1991; Oltay 1994.

<sup>80</sup> Vasarhelyi 1992. On the various right-wing proposals see Oltay 1993.

<sup>81</sup> Imre Mécs as quoted in Pataki 1992. See also Konrad 1992 and Konrad 1995, pp. 34-39.

story of actions against the perpetrators of "communist" crimes that were time and again nullified by the Constitutional Court, along with the implementation of the 1994 lustration law, have a different significance from the Polish and Czech cases, even if they may appear at first glance to be similar.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Lustration-decommunization policies in the Czech Republic and Poland were designed to solve the crisis of legitimacy connected with the endurance of the informal rules of communist politics. While they were intended to discontinue rules that granted a privileged status to the communist elite and defended the secrecy of public life, they first of all sought to demonstrate the lack of continuity between the old regime and the new democracy.

The accomplishments of such policies were restricted, however, in that radical legislation and jurisprudence were accompanied by lenient practice. There is thus only one, unequivocal evaluation of lustration-decommunization, namely, it became inescapably entangled in the legalistic dilemma it was intended to resolve. For example, since transition took place in a gradual and legalistic manner, lustration, which was intended to have a revolutionary outcome (a partial but nevertheless very real discontinuity), had to utilize legalistic means to obtain a minimal legitimacy in terms of a legal system based on the rule of law. In order to obtain at least some of the desired results, it was thus necessary to resort to trickery, such as the Polish evocation and anti-legalistic broadening of the definition of crimes against humanity in international law, the nationalization of PZPR property on the basis of an argument that radically justified this action and referred to the absence of a legal personal identity, or the use of the clause in the old communist Czechoslovak penal code concerning the suspension of the statute of limitations. But these attempts turned out to be more apparent than real solutions insofar as informal political rules often proved to be stronger than the newly introduced legislation. In this regard, Aviezer Tucker observes how Czech lustration-decommunization suffered at the hands of the judiciary. He writes that, "The decisions of judges depend much more on how they read the hierarchy of power in their environment than on the content and reasonable interpretation of the laws."<sup>82</sup> In general, lustration-decommunization was unsuccessful where the hierarchy continued to be based on the old informal rules (the material resources of the post-communist party, impunity for communist crimes), although one could claim that the policies discussed enjoyed a relative success where a new rule had already been established

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<sup>82</sup> Tucker 1999, p. 63.

(lustration proper as the realization of the rule of openness, the prosecution of Stalinist crimes in Poland).

This indicates that the crisis of legitimacy has not only not been resolved, it may even have deepened. The lustration policies, however anti-legalistic they were in content, were validly introduced laws often ignored in practice. The helplessness of the new democracy *vis à vis* the old informal rules dramatically reveals the weakness of the new state and the gap separating the promise of the 1989 changes and the reality of the 1990s. O'Donnell observes in respect to the new democracies in Latin America that "A state that is unable to enforce its legality supports a democracy of low intensity citizenship." He makes this remark in direct reference to the failure of the new legal rules of democracy in their confrontation with the informal rules of the old authoritarianism.<sup>83</sup> Any comparison with Central Europe in this respect can be misleading insofar as the privileged elites of the Latin American dictatorships cannot be identified with the *nomenklatura* estate, the subordinate classes were not the same, and the poverty was greater. But it cannot be denied that the long-lasting mix of old and new rules, the discrepancy between formally guaranteed political rights and their social context, and the low level of civic participation suggest that the Central European polyarchies may be much more peculiar than one would have ever expected or wished for. The most unusual fate of lustration-decommunization forms another argument in this debate.

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<sup>83</sup> O'Donnell 1993, p. 15.

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## **Part III**

### **Changing Values and Vanishing Trust**



## Chapter XI

# Volunteer Work: Our Way Back to a Civil Society? Specifics of Volunteering in a Post-Communist Milieu

*Aida Savicka*

Volunteer organizations are at the heart of civil society. An abundance and diversity of volunteer organizations actively operating in such various domains of social life as social services, health care, education, research, religion, culture, etc., is one of the key characteristics of a consolidated civil society. As Claus Offe points out, the concept of civil society is empirically operationalized precisely by the existence of volunteer organizations. In this respect the strength and spread of non-profit and non-governmental organizations are indicators of the effectiveness and consolidation of civil society.<sup>1</sup>

The broadest definitions of the concept indicate five main requirements for a “volunteer” organization, namely, a certain degree of institutionalization, self-government, non-distribution of profit, a reliance on volunteer (non-compulsory) work, and independence from direct governmental control. In addition, Atanas Gotchev identifies at least four essential functions that volunteer organizations carry out in building civil society. These are

to provide means for expressing and actively addressing the varied complex needs of society; to help individuals act as citizens in all aspects of society rather than rely on the state for beneficence; to promote pluralism and diversity in society by strengthening different types of identities (cultural, ethnic, religious, etc.); to establish the mechanism by which the government and the market can be held accountable by the public.<sup>2</sup>

### **CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH INTO VOLUNTEERING**

An appreciation of the importance of volunteer organizations to a truly democratic society demands a great deal of cross-cultural research aimed at

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<sup>1</sup> See Claus Offe 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Gotchev 1998, p. 11.

clarifying factors that give rise to national differences concerning the strength of volunteer initiatives. One of the best-known research centers working in this field is The John Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies, which coordinates research concerning volunteering in approximately 40 countries throughout the world, including Western and Eastern European societies, Latin American countries, the US, Australia, Israel, and Japan. The scope of this cross-cultural research makes it possible to draw significant conclusions concerning the macro-societal factors that affect the strength of volunteer activity.

Research conducted at the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (CNP) makes it clear that the development of volunteer activities is not only determined structurally and legally, but is also deeply rooted in historical tradition. This contradicts the wide-spread belief that volunteer action arises from governmental failure to provide collective goods. For example, Salomon and Sokolowski convincingly demonstrate that high levels of volunteering are in fact observed precisely in those countries where government social welfare spending is high. They also demonstrate, in contrast to the popular perceptions, that paid employment in the non-profit sector encourages volunteer activities and does not crowd it out. They summarize this point by saying that

volunteering, and more generally civic participation and self-organization of individuals to pursue common interests, are not acts of “spontaneous combustion” or “immaculate conception,” but instruments and outcomes of social policies that are highly dependent on each country’s institutional path of development.<sup>3</sup>

Such findings undermine theories based on the assumption that the existence of formal institutions is antagonistic to spontaneous action on the part of citizens, such as that put forward by Francis Fukuyama.<sup>4</sup>

Cross-cultural comparative research reveals that the volunteer sector is indeed most developed in advanced industrial societies, such as the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, and the U.S., while it is much less in evidence in Central European societies. Indeed, CNP data indicate that the size of the non-profit sector in Western European (measured as a percentage of non-profit employment) countries exceeds the size of the non-profit sector in Central European countries by a ratio of 7:1. The volunteer sector in post-communist

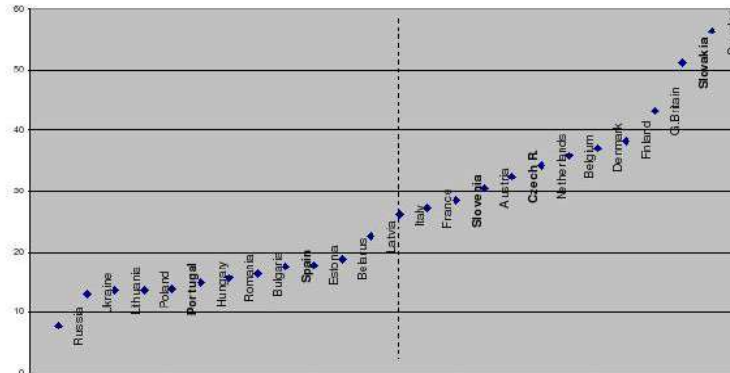
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<sup>3</sup> Salomon and Sokolowski 2001, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> This point is developed in Fukuyama 1995.

countries is surprisingly small, accounting for only 1 percent of non-agricultural labor.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1. Volunteering in European Countries, 1999 ( percent of Respondents Doing Unpaid Work for Any Volunteer Organization).



These findings are supported by the data gathered through the research conducted by the European Values Study Group, and the analysis presented below relies on the data provided by the two surveys they conducted in 1990-1991 and 1999-2000. Insofar as this research was not planned specifically for the present investigation of the issue of volunteering, only a relatively few questions included in their questionnaire are specifically relevant. Nevertheless, the information they provide reveals certain interesting tendencies. The first of these is the extremely low level of volunteering in East European countries in comparison with Western Europe (see Figure 1).

In the West, the average of people doing unpaid work for volunteer organizations is about 35 percent, with Sweden being the unquestioned leader (56 percent). Even a superficial comparison of the level of volunteering in Western Europe reveals its close correspondence to the age of democratic traditions in a given country. For example, Portugal and Spain, which have the shortest experience of democracy in Western European, also have the lowest levels of volunteering. Italy, France, and Austria are better off in terms of volunteering than Portugal and Spain, but they still lag behind such countries as the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, and Sweden, all of which are long-established democracies. Among Eastern European countries the level of volunteering is lowest in Russia, where only 8 percent of the

<sup>5</sup> See Salomon, Sokolowski and Anheier 2000.

population perform unpaid work for volunteer organizations. The numbers of volunteers are somewhat higher in other countries in the region: Ukraine (13 percent), Lithuania (14 percent), Poland (14 percent), Hungary (15 percent), Romania (16 percent), Bulgaria (17 percent), Estonia (18 percent), Belarus (19 percent), and Latvia (22 percent). There is thus a clear discrepancy between the levels of volunteering in West and East.

The most evident reason for this difference is the post-communist heritage of Eastern European countries. For example, during the communist period the only volunteer organizations permitted to exist were those that were not in contradiction with the official policies and welfare objectives of the state. That is to say that a place was allowed only for what could be termed “pseudo-volunteer” activities, not for truly volunteer organizations.<sup>6</sup> Even though the level of the regime’s intolerance for manifestations of truly civil initiatives varied from country to country, such activities were clearly restricted throughout the entire region. After the breakdown of the system around 1990, it was at first anticipated that newly emerging volunteer organizations would become important actors in political, economic, and social reforms, narrowing the wide gap between citizens and the state. Insofar as it is widely acknowledged that volunteer organizations can in principle play an important role in post-communist reforms by addressing issues that are beyond the scope of both governments and the immature free market, they could indeed become significant actors in the formation of civil society.

But the spirit of volunteering is not constant, being subject to change in connection with a changing social environment. This is especially true in respect to the rapidly changing post-communist societies. In order to identify the tendency for such variations in European societies, we may compare the level of volunteering in 1990 with that in 1999, including the manner in which it changed. Figure 2, which displays the numbers of people engaged in unpaid work in various volunteer organizations and movements in selected European countries in both 1990 and 1999, indicates that the level of volunteering in most Eastern European countries in 1990 almost equaled that in Western Europe. There was thus a tremendous growth in volunteering as the old regime collapsed. Leś, Nałęcz and Wygnański point to three main forces as being responsible for this sudden rebirth of volunteer organizations and grass-roots activities, namely, (1) deeply rooted religious, civic and cultural traditions that were once again set free by the political and economic transformations; (2) the deterioration of the socialist type of welfare state; and (3) the various efforts undertaken by foreign governmental and non-governmental agencies.<sup>7</sup>

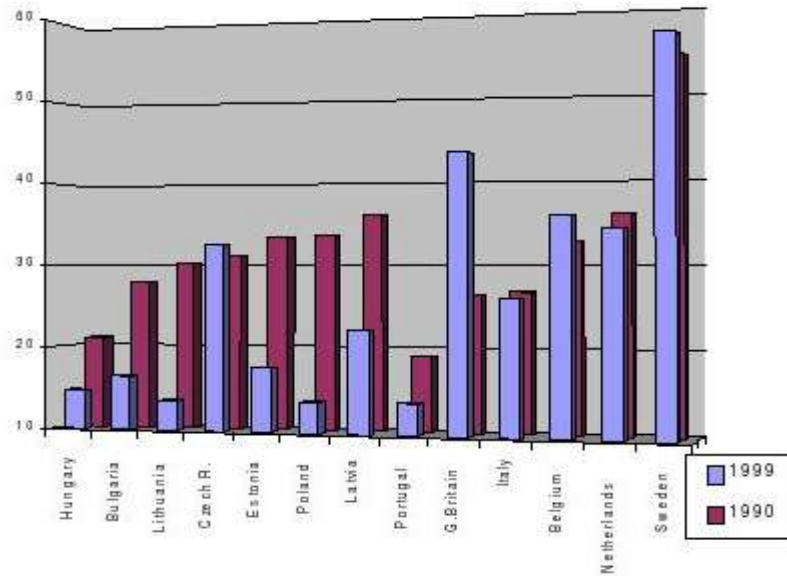
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<sup>6</sup> See Juknevičius and Savicka 2003 for further discussion of this issue.

<sup>7</sup> This argumentation is presented in Leś, Nałęcz and Wygnański 2000.



Figure 2. The Dynamics of Volunteering in European Countries, 1990-1999 (percent of Respondents Doing Unpaid Work for Any Volunteer Organization).



However, developments in volunteer activity between 1990 and 1999 in Western Europe and Eastern Europe were quite contradictory, leading to obvious differences in 1999. For example, while the level of engagement in volunteer organizations either did not change significantly or increased in Western European countries, the level of unpaid work in volunteer organizations decreased substantially in Eastern European. The sole exception in this regard was the Czech Republic, where the level remained practically unchanged. The probable explanation is that Eastern European countries were at a peak of social mobilization in 1990, which clearly declined after the “honeymoon of transition” came to an end.

It is interesting to observe at this point that no relationship can be established between the success of democratic reforms in a given post-communist country and the level of volunteering. For example, two countries that are often referred to as leaders of the democratic reform process, Poland and Hungary, have quite unexpectedly lower percentages of volunteer workers than others that have lagged behind in reforms, such as Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and even Belarus. One possible explanation is that the nature of volunteer organizations did not change significantly after the dissolution of the USSR, which resulted in the remnants of socialist-type volunteer organizations

still playing a certain role, if only apparently, in these countries. However, no clear pattern emerges in respect to volunteering in Eastern European countries, with certain of them being much more successful than others in (re)building the volunteer sector. Why is this the case? Why are the levels of volunteering so diverse in post-communist societies? As the previous discussion has indicated, there are many reasons for this state of affairs, and the explanation must be sought in historical traditions as well as in the structural, economic, and legal situations of the countries in question.

It has been noted that the institutional framework is very important for the formation and existence of a viable volunteer sector. Indeed, the development of a volunteer sector in the region has clearly been hampered by the weakness of the political and economic sectors. The legal framework is also very important in supporting or hindering certain types of volunteer activity. For instance, Gotchev (1998) reports that overly favorable tax regulations in Bulgaria gave rise to fictitious volunteer organizations that were in fact interested only in obtaining grants and exceptional privileges. As a result, the official numbers of volunteer organizations were much exaggerated and did not reflect the real situation.<sup>8</sup> A quite different case existed in Lithuania, where stringent regulations concerning labor relations in a market environment led to a situation in which official statistics artificially reduced the number of people working for volunteer organizations. Official data do not reflect such underlying differences.

The roles of tradition and of individual social actors must also be taken into consideration, and different social actors were not equally active during the transition period in reviving the volunteer sectors in particular countries. For example, the role of the Church in supporting civic initiatives differed from country to country, even though the Church is closely linked by tradition to volunteer philanthropic activities in all countries of the region. In certain of the countries in question, such as Poland and Lithuania, it actively supported various civic initiatives, primarily those oriented toward charity. Leś, Nałęcz, and Wygnański maintain that

it is not an exaggeration to claim that the Catholic Church in Poland played a crucial role in combating social apathy, enlivening the spirit of self-organization in Poland, and encouraging the struggle for democracy that gave rise to the Solidarity trade union movement.<sup>9</sup>

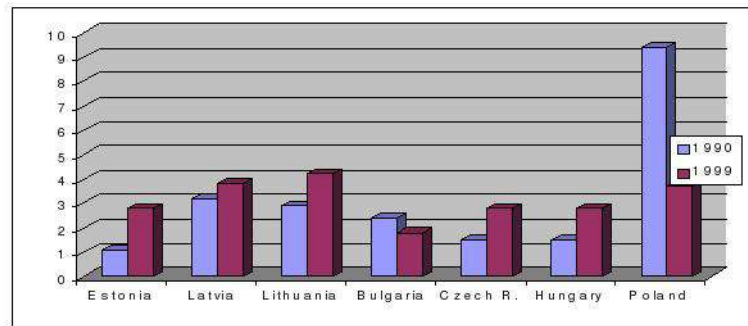
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<sup>8</sup> See Gotchev 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Leś, Nałęcz, and Wygnański 2000, p.11.

This position is supported by the EVSG data presented in Figure 3 below. It is not unique to Poland that the Church plays a key role in volunteer activities insofar as religion has traditionally been the largest agent of volunteer service and charity. But the scope of this activity in Poland has indeed been impressive, at least at the dawn of the democratic reforms. And while there was a sharp decline in volunteer activities guided by the Church during the 1990s, its level remained one of the highest in the region. It must be said, however, that the ability of Church organizations to bring about social action differs significantly from country to country.

Figure 3. Volunteer Work ( percent) in Religious Organizations, 1990-1999.



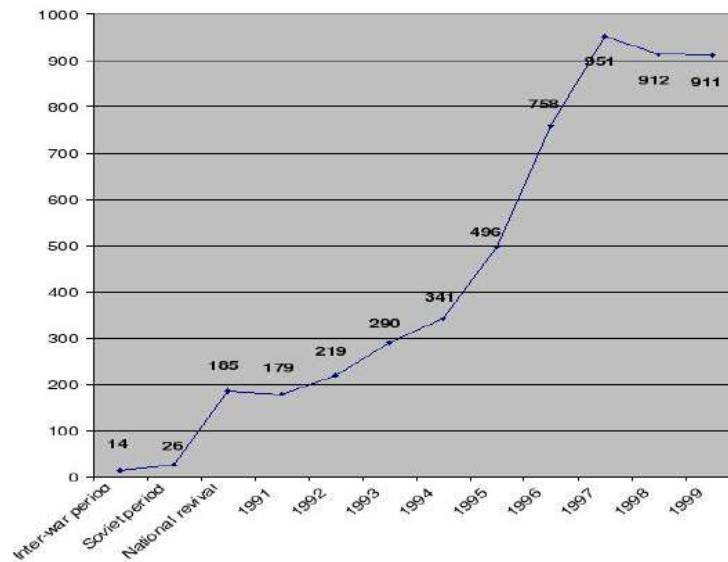
It is clear that any analysis of the differing rates of development of the volunteer sector in Central and East European societies should not focus on any single factor insofar as the phenomenon of volunteering is complex and multidimensional. In addition, the specifics of each country must be taken into account when comparing the level of volunteering across different countries.

**THE LITHUANIAN CASE**

Our discussion will now take a closer look at the development of volunteer sector in one particular post-communist country, Lithuania, which has been characterized by a rather low number of people engaged in such activities. While in 1990 the level of volunteering in Lithuania was average in comparison with other European countries at approximately 30 percent of the population, it later dramatically dropped to one of the lowest in the region (see Figure 2). It is interesting to note that in spite of this drop in the number of volunteers, the number of non-governmental organizations steadily grew, as was indicated by research conducted in 2000 on the basis of statistical data at the Lithuanian Non-Governmental Organization Information and Support Center (NISC) “Non-Governmental Sector in Lithuania” (see Figure 4). These findings

supported the popular feeling that the re-birth of the non-governmental sector in Lithuania was linked to the wave of national revival. However, a more active development of the Lithuanian volunteer sector began after 1995, and there has been a tendency towards stabilization during the last few years.

Figure 4. Number of New Volunteer Organizations in Lithuania.



Similar tendencies in the development of the volunteer sector can also be observed in neighboring countries. For example, Leś, Nałęcz and Wygnański report that

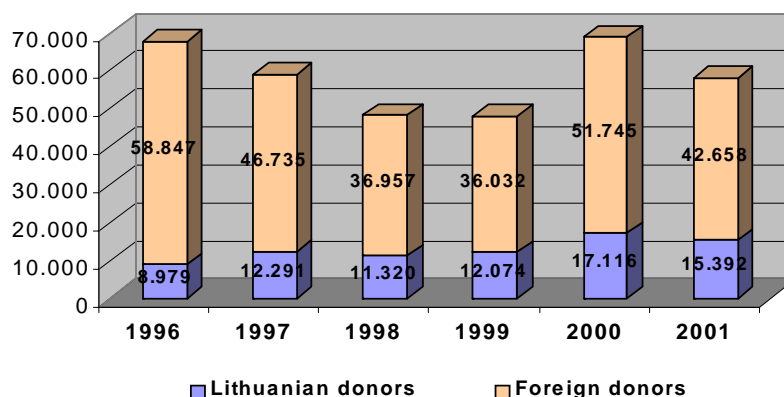
Poland has experienced a renaissance of civic volunteer initiatives since 1989. In the years between 1992 and 1997, the number of foundations nearly doubled and the number of associations quadrupled. The increase in registered nonprofits was characteristic of most of the decade, but the end of the 1990s saw a decline in the dynamism of the nonprofit sector.<sup>10</sup>

Important insights into the development of citizen activity for the sake of society can be garnered from an analysis of philanthropy and donation

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

giving. Even though the latter is a passive form of expression of civic mindedness, it nevertheless is a good indicator of attitudes on the part of society towards the volunteer organizations that are its main recipients. It must be observed, however, that the donations received by Lithuanians have come primarily from foreign sources. For instance, data published by the Lithuanian Statistical Department in 2002 indicated that no more than 27 percent of the total funds in 2001 came from local donors (see Figure 5). However, the slow but steadily growing importance of local donations apparently did reveal a strengthening of philanthropic inclinations among the Lithuanian population.

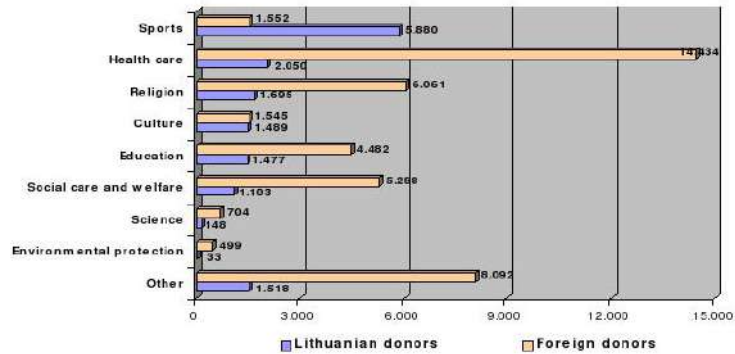
Figure 5. Donations by Lithuanian and foreign donors, 1996-2001 (in thousands USD).



Certain interesting conclusions can also be drawn by examining the donation recipients. Figure 6 illustrates that foreign donors have been concerned with health care (34 percent), religion (14 percent), social care and welfare (12 percent), and education (11 percent). Lithuanian donors, in contrast, paid the greatest attention to sports (38 percent), health care (13 percent), religion (11 percent), culture (10 percent), and education (10 percent). It thus appears that there was a significant difference in priorities between local and foreign donors, although certain experts have interpreted the great attention that was paid to sports by Lithuanian donors during the period discussed as a way of effectively concealing spending on advertising. This would mean that a significant number of local donors were prompted not by philanthropic intentions but rather by selfish aims. However, an alternative explanation would be that Lithuanian donors have in fact viewed sports in general and basketball

in particular, the so-called “second Lithuanian religion,” as a very important social activity that should be supported for the sake of national pride.

Figure 6. Types of Recipients, 2001 (in thousands USD).



When investigating the prospects of the volunteer sector, it is important to take into account not only factual information concerning the number of volunteers and volunteer organizations, the volume of their activities, etc., but also the attitudes towards such activity on the part of society at large. The most exhaustive information about attitudes prevailing among Lithuanians towards NGOs were most likely gathered during the survey conducted by SIC Market Research in 2002 at the request of NISC. The issues addressed included general knowledge of and support for NGOs as well as attitudes related to their activities, their relations with the government, and legal regulations of volunteer activity.

Respondents were first asked if they knew of any NGO, and fully 46 percent of the survey participants were unable to name a single volunteer organization. Furthermore, the knowledge of such organizations among respondents who could name an NGO was only relative insofar as some named organizations that were in fact not engaged in volunteer activities. The best known was Caritas, which was named by 12 percent of all respondents and by 23 percent of those who knew of more than one NGO. An absolute majority of respondents (50 percent) indicated the mass media as the source of their knowledge. Only 10 percent of respondents knew of NGOs because they or their acquaintances were somehow involved in their activities, such as by donations or volunteer work, and no more than 4 percent of respondents knew

of such organizations because they or their acquaintances made use of the services and support they provided.

It is evident that there was a lack of knowledge of NGOs among Lithuanians insofar as less than half of the population had any knowledge of them. In addition, the sources of the knowledge they do have are very limited. And although there is a dearth of direct contact with volunteer organizations, but those who do have some form of engagement in their activities strongly support them, as is discussed below.

In order to identify attitudes concerning volunteer activity, the following set of statements were presented to the respondents. They were asked to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with them.

c. NGOs have good prospects and are going to become an integral part of Lithuanian society.

d. NGOs can be important partners of the government in providing social services and in representing the interests of social groups.

e. NGOs are in fact a cover for individuals who seek profit by avoiding or minimizing their legitimate tax responsibilities.

f. The state should transfer such functions as care for needy children, the elderly, the handicapped, etc., to NGOs and partially finance their activities.

g. The NGOs with which I am familiar operate very professionally.

h. The NGOs with which I am familiar are improperly managed and operate unprofessionally.

i. Social services should be provided by the state, not by NGOs.

j. NGOs are unreliable and unimportant.

k. I believe that the majority of people in Lithuania have a negative attitude towards volunteer work and social activity.

l. Lithuanian law does not encourage NGO activity.

The first, second, fourth, and fifth of these statements express a positive attitude towards NGOs; the third, sixth, seventh, and eighth a negative one; while the ninth and tenth indicate an opinion concerning the environment in which NGOs operate, not the organizations themselves. Generally speaking, Lithuanians have a positive view of NGOs. They perceive them as a very promising actor in Lithuanian society (46 percent), as an important partner of the government (63 percent), as reliable (42 percent), and as professional in their operations (31 percent). And while there was in fact little support for the negative statements concerning NGOs (see Figure 7 for details), almost half of the respondents (48 percent) quite unexpectedly shared the opinion that Lithuanians have a rather negative attitude towards volunteer work and social activity. This means that notwithstanding their own positive perceptions of NGOs, people feel that such attitudes do not characterize society at large. In

addition, they are convinced that Lithuanian legal regulations are not supportive of volunteer activity.

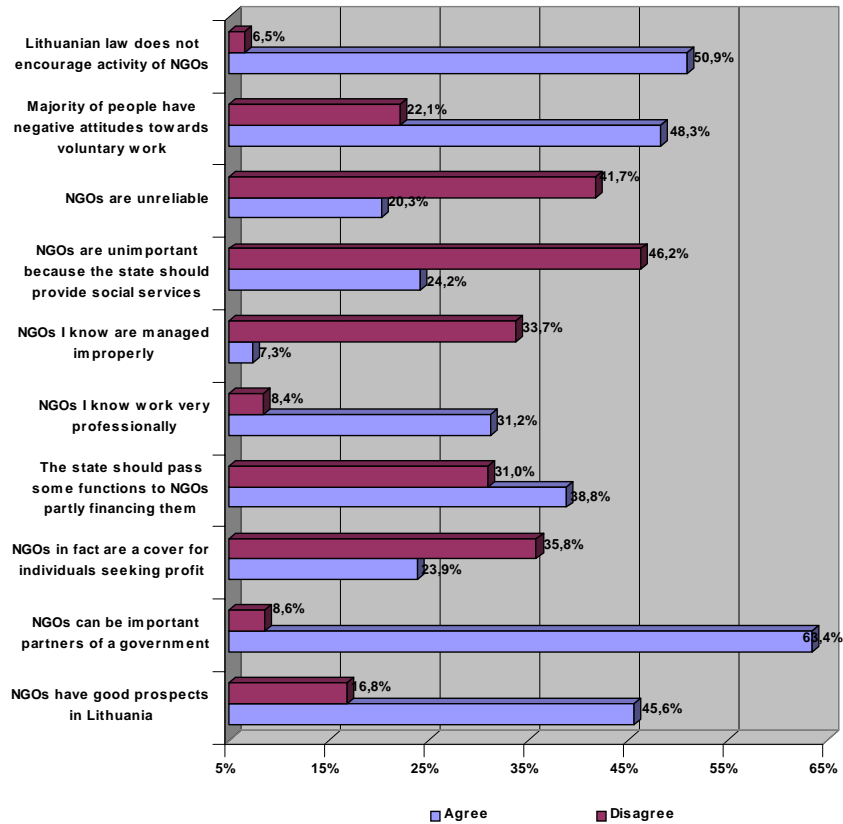


Figure 7. Attitudes towards NGOs in Lithuania, 2002.

We can follow how such attitudes changed during the period 1998-2002 by comparing these findings with the results of a similar study conducted by SIC Market Research in 1998. Briefly stated, agreement with such positive statements as “NGOs have good prospects” and “NGOs can be important



partners of the government” somewhat decreased while agreement with such negative statements as “NGOs are a cover for individuals seeking profit through avoidance of taxes” and “NGOs are unreliable” tended to strengthen (see Figure 8).

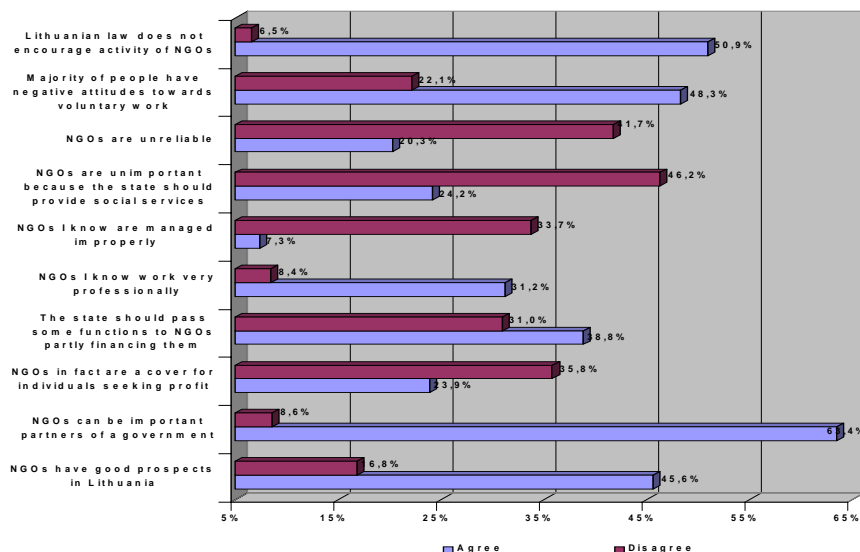


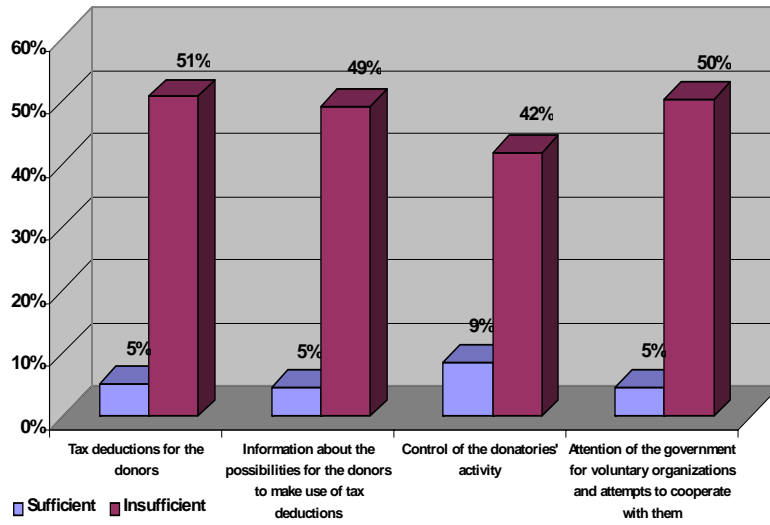
Figure 8. Attitudes towards NGOs in Lithuania, 1998-2002 (Mean on 1 to 4 scale: 1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree).

Even though the data reveal a certain deterioration in attitudes towards NGOs during the period in question, they remain quite positive. It is important to emphasize, however, that those respondents who were better informed about NGO activities, i.e., those who knew of at least one such organization, had a more positive attitude towards them than those who had no knowledge at all. This point demonstrates the importance of communication between volunteer organizations and society at large.

The respondents were also asked to evaluate, among other issues, whether the State paid sufficient attention to and provided adequate support for volunteer organizations in respect to tax deductions for donors, control of recipients’ activities, government initiatives to cooperate with volunteer organizations, etc. And while almost half of the respondents considered themselves unable to comment, an absolute majority of the remainder claimed

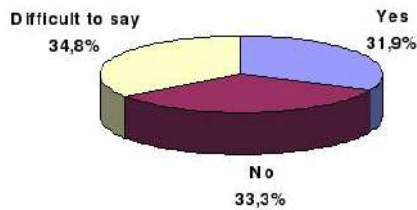
that volunteer organizations received insufficient support from the state (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Evaluations of State Support for Volunteer Organizations ( percent).



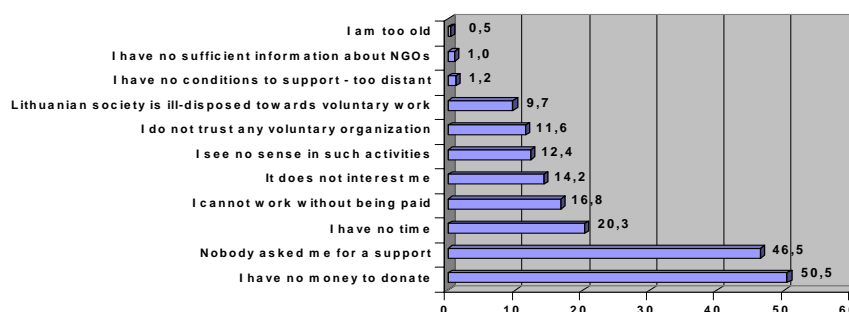
Respondents were also asked about their readiness to support volunteer organizations if so asked. The answers indicate that approximately one-third were prepared to support volunteer activities, one-third would not, and one-third were unsure (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Readiness to Support Volunteer Organizations ( percent of All respondents).



This reveals that the proportion of potential volunteers in Lithuania is roughly equal to the average level of actual volunteering throughout West European countries. Then why is actual support for volunteer organizations so marginal in Lithuania? The respondents themselves put forward two main reasons for this, namely, half claim they have no resources to offer a volunteer organization, but almost as many simply stated that no one ever asked them to participate in volunteering. Such answers as “I have no time”, “I cannot work without being paid”, “it does not interest me,” or “I see no sense in such activities” were also quite common (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Reasons for Non-Participation in Volunteer Activities ( percent of All Respondents).



Such responses indicate that there is a significant potential for an increase in volunteer work in Lithuania. Moreover, a great deal could be done by volunteer organizations themselves to encourage this not only by making themselves widely known, which would serve to foster positive attitudes towards volunteering, but also by asking the public for support.

**PROSPECTS OF THE LITHUANIAN VOLUNTEER SECTOR**

Several points should be emphasized in summarizing our analysis of empirical data. First, the situation of volunteering has undoubtedly been far from ideal and a great deal still needs to be done to improve the situation. Furthermore, there are numerous reasons for the underdevelopment of the volunteer sector and for public passivity in respect to participating in volunteer activities in today’s Lithuania. The shortage of financial and organizational resources is one of the most obvious, along with poor traditions concerning

volunteering, but the volunteer sector must also struggle against both governmental and societal reservations and misgivings.

The ties between governmental institutions and volunteer organizations have been weak because of mutual distrust. One consequence is that financial support from the government has been quite limited, and only the very largest NGOs, which are few in number, have been able to rely upon it. Moreover, the legal regulations governing donations have actually discouraged donor activity. The possibilities for volunteer organizations to make a profit have also been limited because of the strict restrictions placed upon their commercial activities. In addition, existing legal regulations have given rise to bureaucratic restrictions that undermined individual initiatives, thereby hindering the smooth functioning of volunteer organizations. One of the most absurd examples is that Lithuanian law until recently in fact prohibited unpaid work, although this prohibition was never implemented in practice. The very fact of its existence, however, served to create a situation of uncertainty and a feeling of semi-legality that undoubtedly was detrimental to the activity of volunteer organizations, particularly since the NISC estimates that only one-third of volunteer organizations have at least one paid employee.

It is also significant that the majority of people have not grasped the role of NGOs in society because of insufficient public relations programs on the part of the NGOs themselves. Nor have they fully appreciated the possibilities of volunteer organizations to effectively redress serious social problems. This has led to an unwillingness to devote time and energy to volunteer activities.

Notwithstanding the difficulties and hindrances mentioned above, certain positive tendencies in the development of the Lithuanian volunteer sector could be observed in the period discussed. The most important point to be mentioned here concerns the stabilization of the sector. The period of the chaotic rise and decline of new volunteer organizations with no clear goals and visions ended a few years ago. As a rule, those that have survived, or are newly established, have defined goals and strategies for their activities, concentrating on the resolution of concrete problems instead of idle talk. The growing experience and competence of the staff of volunteer organizations, who have become truly professional managers, is also of no little importance. Their activities are now characterized by efficient patterns of project management, an effective search for resources, the recruitment of new members, transparency and public accountability, public relation campaigns, and lobbying. The governmental response to these tendencies indicates a growing acknowledgment that volunteer organizations are an important partner in solving social problems and answering various public needs.

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## Chapter XII

# Values of Contemporary East European Culture: A Cross-Cultural and Developmental Approach

*Krassimira Baytchinska*

The value concept, more than any other, should occupy a central position [and] unify the apparently diverse interests of all sciences concerned with human behavior (Rokeach 1973).

### INTRODUCTION

The distinction between *East* and *West* in Europe has a long history. It can be traced back to the eighteenth century, when relations between the two parts of the continent were defined in binary oppositions, establishing a West-East cultural divide. Today this problem has undergone a change in content. In the socialist period East-West differences were indeed dominated by antagonistic political systems, while *cultural* differences have now again come to the fore. Moreover, the specific nature of political and economic processes in Eastern Europe is attributed to cultural differences, and cultural factors are considered to be relevant.<sup>1</sup>

In this context it is interesting to know what cross-cultural psychology can add to this debate and how its knowledge can be used for promoting the process of European integration. Of special interest in this respect are the results of the largest cross-cultural study of values in the 1990s, which allows the description of 7 value types.<sup>2</sup> These are Harmony, Egalitarian Commitment, Hierarchy, Mastery, Intellectual Autonomy, Affective Autonomy, and Conservatism, which permit cross-cultural comparison since they are common to different cultures. The definitions of these types and the single values that form each of them are presented in Table 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Roth 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Schwartz 1994, p. 199.

Table 1. Definitions of Value Types.<sup>3</sup>

Value type	Description of the value type	Individual values that comprise the type
<b><i>Conservatism</i></b>	Emphasis on the status quo, propriety, and restraint of actions or inclinations that might disrupt the solidarity group or the traditional order.	Clean, devout, family security, forgiving, honoring parents and elders, moderate, national security, obedient, politeness, protecting public image, reciprocation of favors, respect for tradition, self-discipline, social order, wisdom
<b><i>Intellectual Autonomy</i></b>	Emphasis on promoting and protecting the independent ideas and rights of the individual to pursue his/her own intellectual directions.	Creativity, curious, broad-minded
<b><i>Affective Autonomy</i></b>	Emphasis on promoting and protecting the individual's independent pursuit of affectively positive experience.	Enjoying life, exciting life, pleasure, varied life
<b><i>Hierarchy</i></b>	Emphasis on the legitimacy of hierarchical allocation of fixed roles and of resources.	Authority, humble, influential, social power, wealth
<b><i>Egalitarianism</i></b>	Emphasis on transcendence of selfish interests in favor of voluntary commitment to promote the welfare of others.	Equality, freedom, helpful, honest, loyal, responsible, social justice, world of peace
<b><i>Harmony</i></b>	Emphasis on fitting harmoniously into the environment.	Protecting the environment, unity with nature, world of beauty
<b><i>Mastery</i></b>	Emphasis on getting ahead through active self-assertion, through changing and mastering the natural and social environment.	Ambitious, capable, choosing own goals, daring, independent, successful

The results of this large cross-cultural study showed that these types are related to each other and form three bipolar dimensions: autonomy vs. conservatism; egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, and harmony vs. mastery.<sup>4</sup> They are presented below in the following model of the value system.

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<sup>3</sup> Schwartz 1994.

<sup>4</sup> There are two types of autonomy values, namely, affective and intellectual.



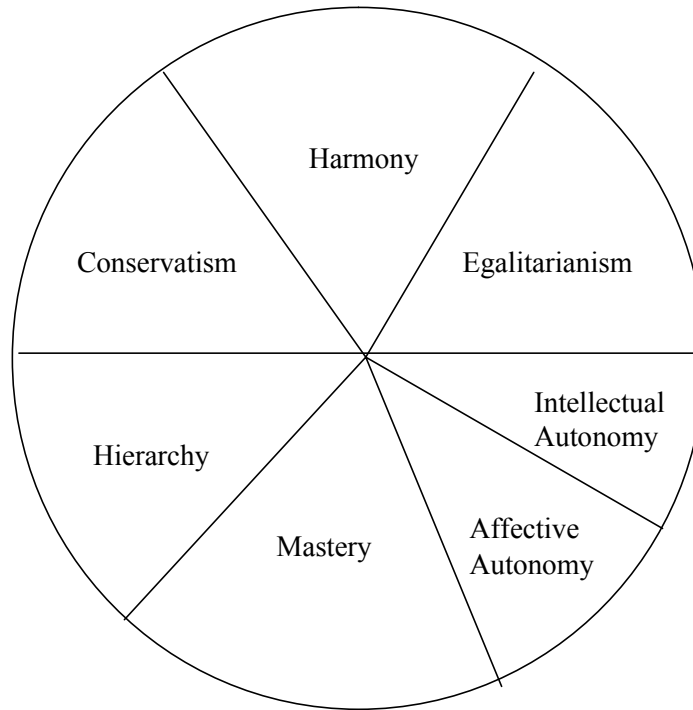


Figure 1. Model of the Value System on the Cultural Level.<sup>5</sup>

One of the important results of this cross-cultural study was the description of the differences between Eastern and Western European cultural values.<sup>6</sup> It demonstrated that samples drawn from Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s ascribed a particularly great importance to the values of conservatism and hierarchy and a low importance to those of egalitarianism and intellectual and affective autonomy when compared with West European samples. These same contrasts appeared when comparing East European countries from Central Europe, such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland, as well as more easterly located countries, such as Bulgaria, USSR, and Georgia), in which communism had penetrated more deeply. The interpretation of the East European value pattern suggested that it resulted from people's

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<sup>5</sup> Schwartz 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Schwartz and Bardi 1997.

adaptations to the day-to-day reward contingencies and opportunities present under the communist regime. Alternative explanations based on economic, historic, and religious factors do not work as well. The authors concluded that forty years of pervasive communist rule in Eastern Europe influenced people's basic values.

In a subsequent study an attempt was made to estimate the dynamic tendencies in Eastern and Western Europe following the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Values were studied at two points of time (the interval being 6 years beginning in 1989 and ending in 1998), in three countries from Central Europe, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia, and in four countries from Western Europe. The data came from two different samples, namely, teachers and students. The authors, Schwartz and Bianchi, demonstrated that there is no evidence that Eastern and Western Europe have converged toward a common set of cultural value priorities. In addition, value change within each part of Europe was considered to be limited. In comparing the ratings of each value type at two points of time (at least half a standard deviation unit), they established that there has been a decrease in the importance of harmony (for all but students from the East), a decrease in that of egalitarianism for teachers in East and West Europe, and an increase in the importance of conservatism for students from East Europe. However, these changes have been neither large, nor widespread. These changes were in the direction one would expect if life conditions had become more conducive to focusing on the interests of the in-group rather than the full range of groups in society or on nature. The increased nationalism, ethnic strife, and concern for economic development described by analysts of the European scene in the past 5-10 years are compatible with such value change.

The data did not confirm the hypothesis that student samples would exhibit larger value differences over time than the teacher samples. The authors maintain that this is understandable because, despite the collapse of communist regimes, adolescents have been exposed to value-relevant life circumstances quite similar to those adults had experienced under communism.

Two explanations for the failure to detect value change were put forward. First, the critical life circumstances in respect to which people adapt their values have not yet changed decisively in Eastern Europe. Second, the five or six year interval that separates points 1 and point 2 in the measurements of value is not long enough for a value change to appear.

These results lead the authors to somewhat pessimistic conclusions:

- 1) Major political change does not affect people's basic values in the short run. Traces of the communist experience may continue to influence values for generations.

2) At least the speed of European integration is brought into question since the identified East European value profile is ill suited to the development of democracy. The moral basis of social responsibility necessary to maintain a democratic system is normally based on the values of egalitarianism and autonomy (Diamond, Linz, & Lipset, 1990). The value basis for a free enterprise system is also not well established. The values of autonomy and mastery are not widely endorsed, which suggests a reluctance to assume responsibility, take risks, and work hard in order to apply one's talents assertively. The emphasis in Eastern Europe on the values of conservatism and hierarchy rather implies a continuing desire for the government to take responsibility and provide for basic needs. It is then not surprising that the former communist nations are experiencing serious difficulties in introducing and maintaining democratic institutions and a liberal economy.

3) Socio-economic and political developments in Eastern Europe will most probably continue to take different paths in different countries.

However, certain critical remarks on the study of East and West European cultural value differences can be made:

1) The results of the cross-cultural comparison of East and West European values were based on the comparison of the value importance score of a particular value type. The character of the differences revealed is more quantitative than qualitative. The relationships between different value types, particularly the way in which value conflicts within each dimension are resolved, have not been analyzed. However, the study is of great importance for understanding relationships between individual and group (conservative or liberal), relationships to "the other" (egalitarian or hierarchical), and relationships with the environment (active or passive).

2) The data from the cross-cultural study of values in Europe have never been considered from the point of view of value hierarchies (ordering of value from most important to less important) in Eastern and Western Europe. Such a hierarchy is of great importance for describing culture as a set of related and ordered value types.

3) The authors do not give sufficient attention to the fact that the character of the modernizing trends in Eastern and Western Europe differs substantially. The development of the value system in Western Europe is more or less evolutionary, while that in Eastern Europe can be treated as revolutionary in character. The value changes in Eastern Europe can be considered not as quantitative but as structural in respect to Western Europe. They refer first of all to relationships between individual and society, individual and the state. During socialism the state used to play the dominant role, while socio-economic changes today are based on the presumption that the individual

is relatively independent and should take initiative and responsibility into his/her hands. Socialist ideology was based on collectivism, while the free market economy is based on individualism.

These critical remarks were used as a starting point for the present study.

### **AIMS AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The present study aims to extend the cross-cultural analysis of values in Eastern and Western Europe that was begun by Schwartz and Bardi (1997) in order to make more clear the differences between two cultural regions within each dimension. Schwartz maintains that the value system consists of three basic bipolar dimensions which represent the three basic value conflicts each culture faces and must to resolve: conservatism vs. autonomy, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, and harmony vs. mastery.

The first conflict, autonomy vs. conservatism, represents relationships between the individual and society. If autonomy is of greater importance than conservatism, then the person is viewed as an autonomous, bounded entity who finds meaning in his/her own uniqueness, who seeks to express his/her own internal attributes (preferences, traits, feelings, motives) and is encouraged to do so. If, on the contrary, conservative values prevail, then the person is looked upon as an entity embedded in the group who finds meaning in life largely through relationships with others. People draw significance from participating in and identifying with the group, in carrying on its shared way of life.

The second dimension, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, refers to relationships between an individual and "the other." If hierarchy values dominate, then culture uses power differences and relies upon hierarchical systems of ascribed roles to provide responsible social behavior. People are socialized and sanctioned to fulfill their roles, roles define social obligations, and acceptance of the hierarchical order assures compliance with the rules that preserve the social fabric. If egalitarianism is more important than hierarchy, then the problem of responsible social behavior is based on the recognition of the other as equal to self in deservingness. People thus share interests that can serve as bases for voluntary agreements of cooperation.

The third dimension, harmony vs. mastery, concerns relationships between individual and environment. If harmony is emphasized over mastery, the culture focuses on the "fit" between individual and the world, on an acceptance and preservation of the world rather than on its change and exploitation. When mastery is considered to be more important than harmony, the culture is focused on an active mastering and changing of the world, on bending the world to our will and asserting control over it. The world is an object to exploit in order to serve personal or group interests.

The dimensional structure of the value system is schematically presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Dimensional Structure of the Value System on a Cultural Level.

Dimensions	Description of the dimension	Value alternatives:	Hypothesis for Eastern Europe		Hypothesis for Western Europe
			Embedded in a group	Embedded in a group	
I dimension - Autonomy vs. Conservatism	Relationships between the individual and a group	Relatively independent from a group	Embedded in a group	Embedded in a group	Relatively independent from a group
II dimension - Egalitarianism vs. Hierarchy	Relationships to "the other"	Principally the same as "the other"	Different from "the other"	Principally the same as "the other"	Different from "the other"
III dimension - Mastery vs. Harmony	Relationships with the environment	Passive, Contemplative	Active, controlling	Passive, Contemplative	Active, controlling

The resolution of each dimensional conflict is expressed as a dominant of one pole over the other. One can hypothesize, for example, that East and West European cultures can differ in the ways in which the three dimensional conflicts are resolved.

1) The conflict between autonomy and conservatism can be resolved in relatively opposing ways in Eastern and Western Europe, namely, in favor of conservatism in the East and in Favor of autonomy in the West. Of particular interest is whether the values of conservatism or autonomy will be dominant in the selection of students from Eastern Europe.

2) It will be difficult to predict the orientation of the resolution of the conflict between egalitarianism and hierarchy. As is shown by the research of Schwartz and Bardi, hierarchy is of greater importance in Eastern than in Western Europe, while egalitarianism is of less importance. However, it is not clear if these differences are reflected in the ways in which the conflict between egalitarian and hierarchical values is resolved. Two alternative hypotheses are possible.

3) In respect to mastery and harmony, it has been assumed that the values of mastery are more significant in Western Europe than those of

harmony, while the opposite is the case in Eastern Europe. The reason for this is that the principle of competition was fundamental only in the economic life of Western Europe, not in that of Eastern Europe.

Also of interest for the present study is the question of the hierarchy in value categories in Eastern and Western Europe. Europe was divided for a period of fifty years prior to 1989, and socio-political development was subject to different value ideals and priorities in Eastern and Western Europe that were justified by opposing ideologies. That is why it is natural to assume that, at the beginning of the process of European integration which was undertaken during 1989, particular differences would exist in the hierarchy of value categories in Eastern and Western Europe. The study has revealed that the values of conservatism and harmony have a higher rank in Eastern Europe than in the hierarchy of Western Europe.

A few basic points inspired the investigation of the modernizing tendency in the value system of Bulgaria as a particular East European country. First, I examined the individualism/collectivism variable in accordance with the idea that the character of the changes in Eastern Europe refers to the relationships between the individual and society.<sup>7</sup> I hypothesized that this personal trait would be an important factor that influences the structure of the cultural model of the value system.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, I expected that within Bulgarian culture two relatively opposed cultural patterns would appear, namely, that of collectivists and that of individualists. The pattern of the Bulgarian collectivists represents the conservative trend in Bulgarian culture, while that of individualists represents the trend for modernization.

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<sup>7</sup> The present article includes part of the author's results obtained in the project entitled "Value Conflicts and Value Priorities during the Transition to a Democratic Society" sponsored by the research program of the Open Society Fund (CEU/RSS/679/94).

<sup>8</sup> For eighty years individualism/collectivism was used primarily as a variable that made it possible to distinguish between two types of culture. See Hofstede 1980 on this point. Today, however, individualism and collectivism are spoken of as characteristics of the personality, which is the way they are considered in the present study. Psycho-semantic analysis of individualism/collectivism shows that Bulgarians connect individualism above all with such values as success, freedom, wealth, and self-confidence, and collectivism with cooperation, justice, tradition, and so forth. See Gerganov et al. 1996.

## **SAMPLES**

Nine teacher and nine student samples representing Eastern Europe were selected from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Samples representing West Europe were selected from Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. For each country, data from two matched samples, namely, students and teachers, were gathered. One set of samples consisted of urban schoolteachers who teach the full range of subjects in grades 3-12 of the most common type of school system in each country. Teachers were chosen since they play an explicit role in value socialization, are presumably key carriers of culture, and probably reflect the mid-range of prevailing value preferences in most societies. The second set of samples consisted of college students majoring in popular subjects in their own countries. Students are younger and probably represent the modernizing trend in culture. Of course, the value importance scores of teachers and students are not the same as those of representative national samples. But that the data are reliable is shown by the fact that the value importance scores for the student and teacher samples *order* the countries in a manner similar to the order that would be found on the basis of the differences for representative samples. This assumption of a similar order is supported by an analysis of the twelve nations for which we have values data in respect to representative national samples or for samples roughly representative of the adults in major cities.<sup>9</sup>

The data from Bulgaria come from several samples that took part in the study during 1993, 1995, and 1996. The first sample comprises 176 teachers from Sofia, and the second, 1113 persons from 30 large cities from 5 social-professional groups (teachers, university students, theology students, businessmen, and the unemployed). 103 teachers who participated in 1995 were tested again in 1996.<sup>10</sup>

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of Prof. Schwartz, which was the same for all countries taking part in the cross-cultural study, was used in all investigations. Individuals had to rank fifty-eight values in order of importance on a seven-point scale. Forty-four of these values have identical meanings in different cultures and serve as the basis for summarized indexes characterizing the significance of each category for a given culture.

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<sup>9</sup> See Schwartz and Bardi 1997.

<sup>10</sup> See Baytchinska 2000 for greater details concerning the samples.

**RESULTS**

In order to analyze the means for resolving value conflicts, averaged data for the significance of each category in nine countries of Eastern and in twelve countries of Western Europe are utilized.<sup>11</sup> In accordance with our aim, this data is grouped in Table 1 such that the two poles of each dimension are presented. The data for affective and intellectual autonomy are averaged and a general indicator for one of the poles of the first dimension is obtained, i.e., autonomy.

Table 3. Average Values for Categories and Dimensions in Respect to Western and Eastern Europe for the Teacher and Student Selections. Standard Deviations and the Significance of the Differences as Revealed by the T-test are Shown.<sup>12</sup>

Categories	I Dimension – Conservatism vs. autonomy		II Dimension – Hierarchy vs. Egalitarianism		III Dimension – Mastery vs. Harmony		
	Conservatism	Intellectual Autonomy	Affective Autonomy	Hierarchy	Egalitarianism	Mastery	Harmony
Western Europe - Teachers	3.51 .20	4.60 .39	3.76 .42	1.98 .18	5.35 .14	3.98 .23	4.30 .22
Eastern Europe - Teachers	4.15 .20	4.15 .42	3.13 .25	2.19 .27	4.74 .20	3.84 .14	4.24 .31
	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.01	0.001	0.05	
Western Europe - Students	3.32 .18	4.61 .39	4.23 .30	2.01 .21	5.21 .16	4.27 .27	4.05 .33
Eastern Europe - Students	3.83 .16	4.23 .30	3.78 .24	2.23 .27	4.63 .19	4.22 .15	4.11 .24
Level of Significance	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.01	0.001	0.05	-

It is clear from a comparative cross-cultural perspective that, independently of the selection, Western European culture ascribes a greater importance than Eastern European culture to intellectual and affective

<sup>11</sup> Schwartz and Bardi 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



autonomy, egalitarianism, and mastery and a lesser importance to conservatism and hierarchy. Harmony is the only category in respect to which no significant difference between Eastern and Western Europe is observed.

**MEANS FOR RESOLVING VALUE CONFLICTS IN EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE**

We will now consider how value conflicts are resolved in each of the dimensions. For the sake of greater clarity, the results are graphically presented below in order to focus the attention of the reader on the ways in which the conflicts between the two poles of each dimension are resolved. We will now examine the first dimension, conservatism versus autonomy (Figure 2).

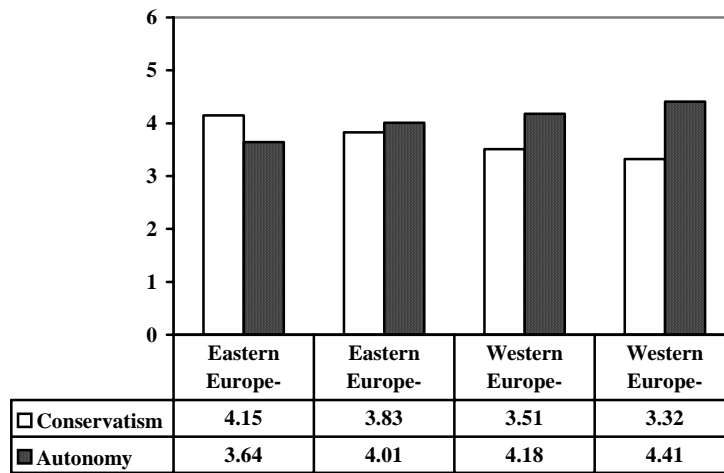


Figure 2. Average Values in the Category "Conservatism-Autonomy" for Teachers and Students in Eastern and Western Europe.

It is clear from Figure 2 that the character of the selection, whether students or teachers, has no influence in Western Europe on the character of conflict resolution between conservative values and those of autonomy. The resolution proceeds in respect to the values of autonomy. In Eastern Europe, however, this conflict is resolved in different ways in the two selections: among teachers in favor of conservative values, and among students in favor of autonomy. This indicates that in Western Europe and among students in Eastern Europe the view that the individual is relatively independent of the group

predominates, while the individual is taken as part of the group among teachers in Eastern Europe.

Also of interest is the structure of autonomy in Eastern and Western Europe, i.e., the interrelation between the significance of intellectual and affective autonomy.

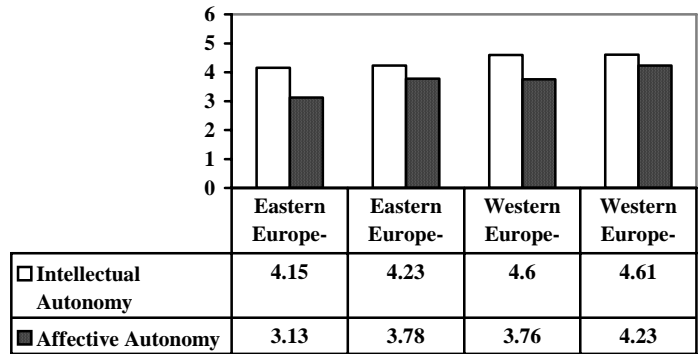


Figure 3. Average Values for "Intellectual and Affective" Autonomy among Teachers and Students in Eastern and Western Europe.

In both Eastern and Western Europe intellectual autonomy is of greater significance than affective autonomy. It should also be noted that affective autonomy has a higher value in the student selections. This is evidently connected with the goals of the development of this age group, i.e., acquisition of self-reliance and independence from parents and the establishment of personal identity.

We will now consider the way in which the conflict between the values of egalitarianism and harmony is resolved. This depends neither on the character of the selection, nor on the cultural region. It is clear from Figure 4 that in both Eastern and Western Europe, among both students and teachers, the conflict is resolved in favor of egalitarian values.

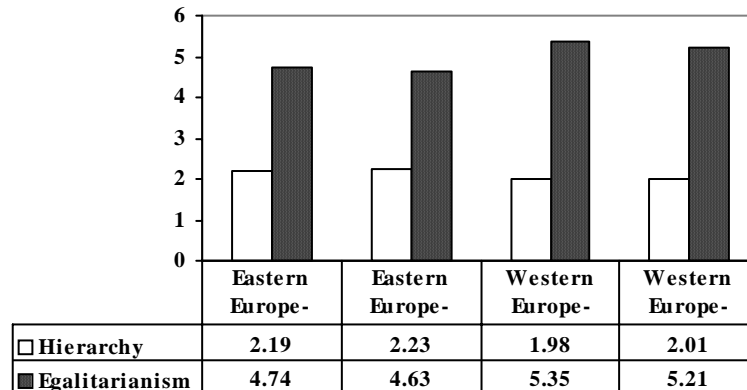


Figure 4. Average Values for the "Hierarchy-Egalitarianism" Dimension in Respect to Teachers and Students from Eastern and Western Europe.

The table indicates that in both Eastern and Western Europe the individual is taken to be in principle identical with others. European culture as a whole is based on the ideas of social justice, equality, and freedom. In Eastern Europe, however, differences between people, including the values of hierarchy (wealth, power, etc.), were sharply denied during the period of socialism. In Eastern Europe today the values of hierarchy have average values similar to those in Western Europe.

Finally, the way in which the conflict between harmony and mastery is resolved, which determines the relationship of the individual to the environment, depends solely on the selection. Independently of the cultural region, the values of mastery are dominant among students, while those of harmony are dominant among teachers (Figure 5). This indicates that the drive for actively changing the environment dominates among students, while among teachers a drive for the harmonizing of relationships, based on an acceptance of and identity with the environment, dominates. However, the value dominant is weakly reflected among both students and teachers.

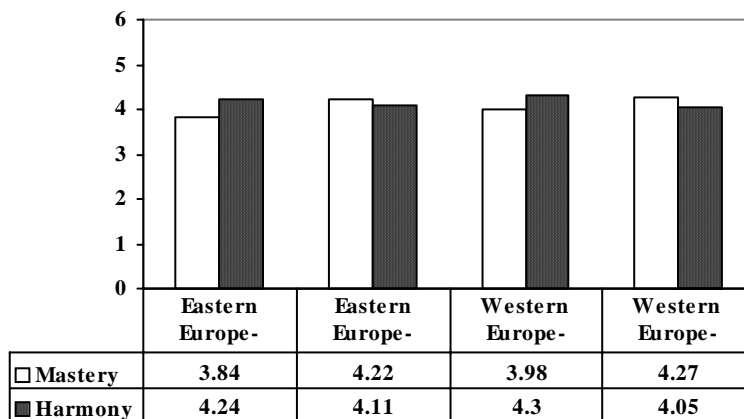


Figure 5. Average Values in the "Mastery-Harmony" Dimension for Teachers and Students in Eastern and Western Europe.

**VALUE PRIORITIES IN EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE**

The resolution of internal dimensional conflicts finds expression in the structure of the value system of a given culture or cultural region. This structure can be described as a vertical hierarchy in which every category has a particular place that depends on its significance. In order to determine the value hierarchy in Eastern and Western Europe of each category, the latter were ranked in respect to their significance. The category with the greatest significance was ranked 1, and that with the smallest was ranked 6. The results are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4. Ranks of Categories in Western and Eastern Europe in the Teacher and Student Selections.

Categories:	Dimension I – conservatism versus autonomy		Dimension II – hierarchy versus egalitarianism		Dimension III – mastery versus harmony	Harmony
	Conservatism	Autonomy	Hierarchy	Egalitarianism	Mastery	
Western Europe -teachers	5	3	6	1	4	2

Western Europe -students	5	2	6	1	3	4
Eastern Europe - teachers	3	5	6	1	4	2
Eastern Europe - students	5	4	6	1	2	3

On the basis of these results we can establish the hierarchy of values in Eastern and Western Europe for each selection taken separately (Table 5).

Table 5. Hierarchy of Value Categories in Eastern and Western Europe among Teachers and Students.

Western Europe		Eastern Europe	
Teachers	Students	Students	Teachers
1. Egalitarianism	1. Egalitarianism	1. Egalitarianism	1. Egalitarianism
2. Harmony	2. Autonomy	2. Mastery	2. Harmony
3. Autonomy	3. Mastery	3. Harmony	3. Conservatism
4. Mastery	4. Harmony	4. Autonomy	4. Mastery
5. Conservatism	5. Conservatism	5. Conservatism	5. Autonomy
6. Hierarchy	6. Hierarchy	6. Hierarchy	6. Hierarchy
Egalitarian liberalism oriented towards harmony	Egalitarian liberalism oriented towards mastery	Egalitarianism oriented towards mastery and harmony	Egalitarian conservatism oriented towards harmony

The first point that must be noted is that the same values are ranked as most important (ranked 1) and least important (ranked 6) in both Eastern and Western Europe. Egalitarian values are, somewhat unexpectedly, in first place in both regions. Egalitarianism together with the two categories next in importance form the value "nucleus" of the culture in both regions. Independently of the selection, the value nucleus in Western Europe includes autonomy, which is in third place in the value hierarchy of teachers and in second among students. In others words the value priorities in Western Europe, independently of the selection, include both egalitarian values as well as those of autonomy. This may briefly be characterized as egalitarian liberalism. The differences in priorities of teachers and students are in respect to mastery and harmony. Harmony is included in the value priorities of teachers (ranked 2), but not in those of students. Mastery (ranked 3) has a greater significance for students than harmony (ranked 4). From the point of view of value priorities,

the value system of teachers in Western Europe may be characterized as egalitarian liberalism oriented towards harmony, while that of students may be characterized as egalitarian liberalism oriented towards mastery.

We will now consider value priorities in Eastern Europe.

Independently of the selection, the value nucleus in Eastern Europe includes the values of egalitarianism as well as harmony. This means that Eastern Europeans strive for a harmony based on egalitarian values. The differences in the priorities of teachers and students are in respect to the significance of the values of conservatism. These values are in third place in the teacher selection, while they are in fifth among the students. Autonomy, which is a priority in Western Europe, is not included in the value priorities in Eastern Europe. It is in fourth place among the students and in fifth among the teachers. The value system of teachers from Eastern Europe may then briefly be described as egalitarian conservatism oriented towards harmony and that of students as egalitarianism oriented towards harmony and mastery.

The essential difference in Eastern and Western European cultural priorities, and in both selections, is thus in respect to the values of autonomy and conservatism, i.e., in respect to the relations between the individual and the group. Western European culture is based on the values of autonomy, i.e., on the view that the individual is relatively independent of the group, and that social interconnectedness is not something implicitly given but rather something that must be agreed upon. In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the view is predominate among teachers that the individual is part of the group and must preserve and share in the latter's way of life. The individual must preserve the status quo and strive for the preservation of the traditional order. Among students, however, autonomy is held to be more important than conservatism, even though it still resides among the categories that form the value nucleus.

#### **DYNAMIC TENDENCIES IN THE VALUES OF EAST EUROPEAN CULTURE (THE EXAMPLE OF BULGARIAN CULTURE)**

As was assumed above, the dynamic changes in Bulgarian culture are based on a change in the relations between the individual and the state, i.e., the individual's relative autonomy from or inclusion in the state. I examined this variable and investigated its influence on the significance of the value types and their hierarchy. The individualism-collectivism variable was chosen as appropriate for this purpose. In order to measure which values had priority for the individual, whether collectivist or individualistic, I utilized the Bulgarian scale for individualism/collectivism.<sup>13</sup> This scale was developed on the basis of a psycho-semantic approach. The individual studied was placed in the situation

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<sup>13</sup> Gerganov et al. 1995, 1996.

of having to choose one of 21 pairs of values. The collectivist or individualistic orientation of the individual was determined by his/her preference for values, the semantic of which is connected with either an individualistic orientation (self-respect, wealth, success), or a collectivist orientation (cooperation, justice, tradition). This made it possible to place each person on a bipolar scale and be characterized as either individualistic or collectivist.

It was assumed that the cultural values of individualists would differ from those of the collectivists. The more concrete assumptions were:

- 1) In comparison with collectivists, individualists will ascribe a greater significance to autonomy and a lesser significance to conservatism.
- 2) In comparison with collectivists, individualists will ascribe a lesser significance to egalitarianism and a greater significance to harmony.
- 3) In comparison with collectivists, individualists will ascribe a lesser significance to harmony and a greater significance to mastery.

Below follows a comparison of the importance of differences in significance of all value categories in the two groups, i.e., the 352 collectivists and 353 individualists who participated in an investigation of values in Bulgaria during 1995.

Table 6. Average Values and Standard Deviations in the Separate Categories for Collectivists and Individualists.

	Conser- vatism	Intellectual Autonomy	Affective Autonom y	Hierarch y	Mastery	Harmo ny	E g a l i t a r i a n i s m
Collectivist s <i>N</i> =352	4.21 .37	3.83 .88	2.90 1.04	2.50 1.03	3.99 .68	3.89 .99	4. 3 7 4
Individualis ts <i>N</i> =353	3.82 .43	3.91 .85	3.88 1.17	3.51 1.02	4.55 .68	3.55 1.10	3. 8 3 2
T-test	12.83	-1.18	-10.88	-13.09	-10.97	4.31	1

							2. 2 7
Level of Significance	.000	-	.000	.000	.000	.000	.0 0 0

The T-test indicates the presence of substantial differences in each of the value types with the exception of intellectual autonomy. The results are even more clear if we present them graphically (Figure 6).

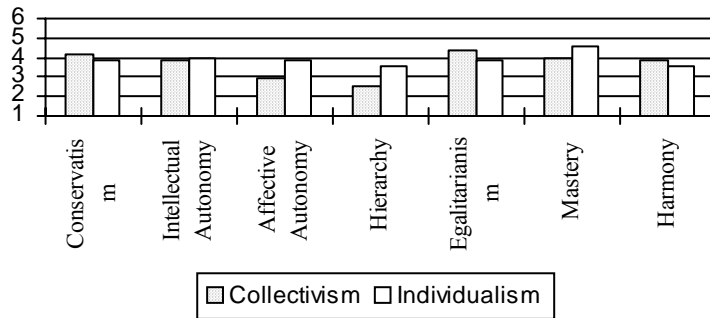


Figure 6. Average Values in the Seven Categories for Collectivists and Individualists.

The hypotheses are confirmed: in comparison with collectivists, individualists ascribe a greater significance to the values of affective autonomy, hierarchy, and mastery, and a lesser significance to conservatism, egalitarianism, and harmony.

There are also differences in the value hierarchies and priorities in the groups of collectivists and individualists (Table 7).



Table 7. Value Hierarchy of Bulgarian Collectivists and Individualists (1995) and East European Teachers and West European Students

Eastern Europe	Bulgaria - 1995		Western Europe
Teachers	Collectivists	Individualists	Students
<b>1. Egalitarianism</b>	<b>1. Egalitarianism</b>	<b>1. Mastery</b>	<b>1. Egalitarianism</b>
<b>2. Harmony</b>	<b>2. Conservatism</b>	<b>2. Autonomy</b>	<b>2. Autonomy</b>
<b>3. Conservatism</b>	<b>3. Mastery</b>	<b>3. Egalitarianism</b>	<b>3. Mastery</b>
4. Mastery	4. Harmony	4. Conservatism	4. Harmony
5. Autonomy	5. Autonomy	5. Harmony	5. Conservatism
6. Hierarchy	6. Hierarchy	6. Hierarchy	6. Hierarchy
Oriented to harmony	Oriented to Mastery	focus on Mastery	Oriented to Mastery

Analysis of the value hierarchy reveals that Bulgarian culture is not homogenic. Two relatively opposite cultural models of value hierarchy exist within it. That of individualists is based on mastery, autonomy, and egalitarian values, while that of collectivists is based on egalitarian, conservative, and mastery values. This makes it possible to characterize the cultural value model of individualists as egalitarian liberalism and that of collectivists as egalitarian conservatism. What is interesting is that in both samples the values of mastery are among those prioritized. We are here most probably dealing with different meaning of the mastery values are different since mastery is bounded by autonomy values in the group of individualists, but with conservative and egalitarian values in the group of collectivists. Individualists consider mastery of primary importance (ranked 1), while collectivists put it in third place. These values emphasize getting ahead through active self-assertion, through changing and mastering the natural and social environment (ambitious, capable, choosing one's own goals, daring, independent, successful), and are of particular interest here. Mastery is of great importance for today's social changes in Bulgaria.

The cultural value models of individualists and collectivists represent the East-West value split within one culture. When considered in European perspective the hierarchy of Bulgarian collectivists is similar to that of EE teachers and can be defined as egalitarian conservatism. The value hierarchy of

Bulgarian individualists is close to that of West European students and may be termed egalitarian liberalism. The pessimistic conclusions about the cultural distance between Western and Eastern Europe drawn by Schwartz and Bianchi are thus only partly true. They are valid only if we focus on the conservative tendency represented by East European teachers or Bulgarian collectivists. Another, more optimistic prognosis should be made if we consider the value model of individualists, who are the agents of the modernizing tendency within Bulgarian culture. It has been shown that this model closely approaches the egalitarian liberalism of West European students. The core of the hierarchy consists of autonomy, mastery and egalitarianism, and in both samples autonomy is ranked second. The differences between West European students and Bulgarian individualists concern the relative importance of egalitarian and mastery values. Bulgarian individualists attribute less importance to egalitarian values (ranked 3 vs. ranked 1) and more importance to mastery (ranked 1 vs. ranked 3).

These results lead to another question. What is the direction of the dynamic changes within Bulgarian culture? Will the modernizing tendency become stronger with the passage of time? Two hypotheses were tested in the follow-up study in which 362 persons from the sample who took part in the 1995 study were again interviewed in 1996.

1) A change of relationships between the individual and society is the essence of the value shift in Bulgaria. The concept of embedded individual is being replaced by the concept of independent individual. An increase of individualism at the expense of the collectivism will gradually take place in Bulgaria.

2) Those persons who experience a shift from collectivism to individualism will change their cultural value pattern as well. They will experience an increase of autonomy, mastery, and hierarchy, and a decrease of conservatism, egalitarianism, and harmony.

These hypotheses were confirmed in the longitudinal study in Bulgaria. 362 persons were tested twice, first in 1995 and again one year later in 1996. The scores of each individual in respect to collectivism/individualism in 1995 and 1996 were compared by the T-test. The data show a considerable increase in the degree of individualism ( $T = -14.52$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). In other words, the people we studied increasingly prefer values such as success, wealth, and self-esteem at the expense of values such as collaboration, social justice, tradition, and order. This change in the concept of relationships between individual and society is a painful and difficult process. People who have been identified as

individuals experience a higher level of value crisis and lesser degree of subjective well-being.<sup>14</sup>

The second hypothesis was examined using the T-test. We compared differences in the scores in respect to value types among the group of people (162 persons) who experienced a shift from collectivism towards individualism (Table 8).

Table 8. Means and Standard Deviations in Cultural Value Types for Persons Who Experienced a Shift from Collectivism towards Individualism.

	I dimension - Conservatism vs. Autonomy		II dimension - Hierarchy vs. Egalitarianism			III dimension- Mastery vs. Harmony	
	Conser- vatism	Affective Autonomy	Intellectu al. Autonom y	Hierarchy	Egalitariani sm	Maste ry	Harm ony
N = 162							
1995	4.13 0.37	2.91 1.18	3.92 0.88	2.5 1.0	4.29 0.50	4.15 0.68	3.85 0.94
1996	4.06 0.38	3.25 1.09	3.81 0.80	3.41 0.88	4.14 0.44	4.15 0.52	3.67 0.88
T-test	2.06*	3.61**	1.62	-9.73***	3.26**	-0.04	1.99*
	Decrease	Increase	Stable	Increase	Decrease	Stable	Decrease

The changes are consistent on the whole with those expected. The importance of autonomy (affective) shows an increase, while that of conservatism decreases. In a similar vein the importance of egalitarianism decreases, but that of hierarchy increases. Contrary to expectations, the importance of mastery remains stable, while that of harmony decreases. The major change refers to the relationships between individual and "the other." Egalitarianism will become less important, while the hierarchy values will become more important.

Finally, I wish to venture certain ideas concerning the future of Eastern European culture on the basis of the Bulgarian example of which I have spoken. This future depends on the dynamic trends that lead from conservatism to

<sup>14</sup> Baytchinska 1996 and 1998.

autonomy, from egalitarianism to hierarchy, and from harmony to mastery. If these dynamic trends are not fostered in Eastern Europe, egalitarian conservatism will continue to dominate, as is the case with Eastern European teachers and Bulgarian collectivists. If the dynamic tendency is facilitated, Eastern European culture will move towards the egalitarian autonomy that is typical for Western Europe (teachers and students alike) and for Bulgarian individualists.

Most probably the two models of egalitarian conservatism and egalitarian liberalism will co-exist. Moreover, within a given country, such as in Bulgaria, different social groups or persons with different political orientations will have relatively different cultural value profiles.<sup>15</sup>

I believe that the process of value diversification is an important characteristic of an attempt on the part of Eastern Europe to reconstruct its social and political structure. However, this characteristic is underestimated. A pessimistic prognosis was put forward in light of the differences between Eastern and Western European culture.<sup>16</sup> It is expected that traces of the communist experience may continue to influence values for generations to come. However, on the basis of my own data, I am an optimist rather than a pessimist. Certainly the cultural differences between Eastern and Western Europe will prevent a European integration that is based on economic and political resemblance. But I believe that the future of Eastern Europe does not even exclude a development based on the previous dominant of the embedded, not autonomous, individual. Cultural traditions, especially outside Central Europe and particularly in Russia, Georgia and Bulgaria, are based on the concept of the individual as a part of the group. This concept by itself is not destructive and has its merits. The problem concerns how this concept of the embedded individual is connected with egalitarian values. The communist regime in Eastern Europe was destructive in that equality was considered to be sameness. This concept was developed in Western Europe during the last century in such a way that it is now based on the recognition of individual differences and the uniqueness of the individual. I am convinced that the reconsideration of egalitarian values in a broader perspective is of greater importance for post-communist Eastern Europe than an increase in autonomy values. Eastern Europe must reconsider the concept of equality that was based not on the recognition of differences between individuals but on their sameness.

The high importance ascribed to mastery and autonomy values, which form the core of the cultural value hierarchy of Bulgarian individualists, expresses the main shift from totalitarian toward democratic society. Both are self-enhancing values and reflect the desire to become an independent person

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<sup>15</sup> Baytchinska 2000.

<sup>16</sup> Schwartz, Bardi and Bianchi 1998.

capable of taking the initiative and life into her/his own hands. It is no surprise that mastery values are ranked among the first three values not only by Bulgarian individualists, but by collectivists as well. That the importance ascribed to egalitarian values is decreasing is most probably linked, unfortunately, with their frustration on the cultural level.

Social changes are now stimulating an increase in self-enhancement values, such as mastery and hierarchy, and a decrease in self-transcendence values, such as egalitarianism and harmony. Stated otherwise, the primitive concept of equality as based on sameness must be replaced by a more developed and dialectical concept of equality that takes into account differences as well as sameness between individuals. If this is not accomplished, Eastern Europe, or at least some part of it, will follow a path of development based on either hierarchical conservatism or liberalism. In such a case, the values of hierarchy will become dominant over egalitarian values.

It is difficult to predict changes in the Eastern European cultural model today. It might be suggested that we will witness within Eastern Europe a cultural diversification based on the reconsideration of national history, culture, and identity. This is the reason why I do not think European integration can be based on the model of present West European democracy. A united Europe could be born not only out of the processes of cultural globalization, but also out of the recognition of our cultural and political uniqueness. Most probably, the degrees and forms of integration of each East European country may vary considerably and depend on the socio-political perspectives that are being created today.

In summary:

1) There are significant cultural value differences between Eastern and Western Europe. The most important difference is that the individual is taken in Eastern Europe as an autonomous agent more or less embedded in society in both samples, teachers and students. In Western Europe the individual is taken as embedded in the teachers' sample but as autonomous in the students' sample.

2) From the point of value priorities, Eastern European culture may be defined as egalitarian conservatism, while Western European culture may be termed egalitarian liberalism.

3) Eastern European culture today is far from being monolithic. This was demonstrated in the Bulgarian case, but it appears to be valid for the rest of Eastern Europe as well. There are at least two relatively opposed cultural patterns within it. One is that of individualists, who share a concept of the autonomous individual that is dominant in West European culture, and the other is that of collectivists, who follow the concept of the embedded individual that is dominant in Eastern Europe.

4) Change in the concept of the individual is the essence of the value shift in Bulgaria. The concept of the embedded individual is slowly being replaced by the concept of the independent individual. An increase in individualism at the expense of collectivism is a psychological prerequisite for social change and the building of a democratic society in Bulgaria.

5) Change in the concept of the individual can lead to changes in a still dominant cultural pattern. That is to say that egalitarian conservatism can be transformed into egalitarian liberalism, but this process will be slow.

6) The dominant concept in Eastern Europe of the embedded individual is not dangerous by itself. It used to be so destructive only because it was connected with an undeveloped concept of equality taken as the sameness of individuals.

7) Last but not least, Eastern Europe today is at a crossroads. Egalitarian liberalism is the optimistic version of its future development, but a pessimistic version is also possible. A hierarchical conservatism similar to what Webber termed "adventure capitalism" may also develop.

I believe that the studies of cultural value changes now occurring in Eastern Europe are of great importance. This presents not only a scientific challenge, but a pragmatic task as well. We can influence the process of European integration only if we are aware of our cultural differences. As the recent history of the Eastern Europe has demonstrated, politics can easily become voluntarism if it is not based on knowledge.

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## Chapter XIII

# The Need for Trust in Post-Communist Lithuania: An Institutional Perspective

*Inga Gaižauskaitė*

### INTRODUCTION

The change of political regime in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe substantially altered their societies. One of the main steps in this process has been institutional reform, i.e., the creation of new and the reorganization of already existing social, political, and economic institutions. High expectations and broad public support were characteristic of the initial period of this transformation. But the scope and pace of reforms, insufficient material and human resources, the lack of necessary experience, as well as various external pressures led to difficulties, and public support and unity were replaced with less positive sentiments. One such sentiment, namely, the lack of trust in most social and political institutions, remained a matter of concern throughout the period of preparation for EU accession, and may continue to be so today.

Trust as a particular social recourse plays a role of crucial importance in the functioning of institutions and of broader social, political and economic systems.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is the source of the legitimacy and sustainability of democracy. As Ronald Inglehart states, "(d)emocratic institutions can be imposed by elites or even by foreign conquest, but whether they survive depends on whether they take root among the public – because with democratization, the public becomes a crucial political factor."<sup>2</sup> A lack of public trust may thus not only become a serious obstacle to the functioning of any institution, but also hinder the general advancement of society. This is especially important within the post-communist context, where there is no deep tradition of self-rule and democracy.

Many attempts have been made to empirically identify the specificity of public trust in post-communist societies. These have typically involved the measurement and interpretation of public expressions of interpersonal trust, trust in institutions and the regime, as well as related public attitudes. The present discussion, however, takes a different approach by endeavoring to

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<sup>1</sup> See Kavolis 1997, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Inglehart 1999, p. 98.

illustrate how trust is perceived by the institutions that are either trusted or distrusted in post-communist societies, and in Lithuania in particular. For this purpose, qualitative interviews with informed experts were conducted in order to determine the significance of trust for the main political, social, and economic institutions, the sources responsible for the differing levels of trust in specific institutions, as well as possibilities for the creation of public trust.<sup>3</sup>

### **TRUST, SOCIETY, AND DEMOCRACY**

The wave of interest in trust in social theory some two decades ago paradoxically coincided with a decline of trust in both people and institutions in many advanced democracies, a growth in the number of democratic regimes, and a noticeable lack of trust in newly-formed democracies.

Trust has a multiple significance in a society. On the individual level, for example, trust enables individual action insofar as it is a strategy for dealing with uncertainty. Luhmann observes that "Where there is trust there are increased possibilities for experience and action,"<sup>4</sup> while Sztompka adds that trust releases us "from the necessity to monitor and control every move of others, constantly to 'look at their hands.'"<sup>5</sup>

Within the wider social context, trust is the basis of social relationships, co-operation, and exchange, and it stimulates sociability and tolerance. Misztal notes, for example, that trust can solve the free-rider problem, help to combine different interests, provide political leaders with the necessary time to implement reforms, and secure communication and dialogue.<sup>6</sup> Tyler adds that trust is also the main component comprising the willingness to defer to authorities: "voluntary acceptance of the decisions and rules of organizational authorities is important to the ability of those authorities to function effectively."<sup>7</sup> Moreover, "a system – economic, legal, or political – requires trust as an input condition. Without trust it cannot stimulate supportive activities in situations of uncertainty or risk."<sup>8</sup> This is especially relevant for the

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<sup>3</sup> A total of eleven interviews were conducted in spring 2002 in connection with an MA thesis project at Central European University. Those interviewed included informed expert representatives of the Parliament (the Seimas), the government, the Presidency, political parties, the Bank of Lithuania, commercial banks (Vilniaus Bank), the police, the armed forces, the courts, the mass media (LNK-Free and the Independent Channel), and the Catholic Church.

<sup>4</sup> Luhmann 1979, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Sztompka 1999, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> See Misztal 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Tyler 1998, p. 271.

<sup>8</sup> Luhmann 1988, p. 103.

growth of democracy in Eastern and Central Europe, where the low level of trust in public institutions threatens both the stability of the democratic order along with social development in general.

Certain fundamental practices of democracy, such as communication between citizens, tolerance, compromise, consensus, civility concerning public disputes, citizen participation, and citizen civic competence, are impossible without a minimal measure of trust.<sup>9</sup> Democracy and trust may in fact be viewed as different but complementary ways of making collective decisions and organizing collective action. Tyler remarks in this regard that "(i)t is difficult to implement the programs of a modern state effectively without the voluntary co-operation of citizens."<sup>10</sup>

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRUST IN THE POST-COMMUNIST CONTEXT**

Decades of communism have left their mark on all post-communist societies. While the old regimes were overthrown in the early 1990s, it has been much more difficult to escape the cultural legacy of Soviet system, which created "a common cultural framework, over and above distinct national cultures," or what Sztompka has referred to as a "bloc culture."<sup>11</sup> One component as well as consequence of this bloc culture common to all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe formerly in the Soviet sphere is the widespread erosion of trust.<sup>12</sup>

This decay of trust was related to the opposition between the spheres of public and private life whereby the latter was perceived to be the domain of what was good and the former the domain of what was bad. This led to the development of a double-standard of truth such that information coming from the personal environment was held to be true and information coming from the state was false. In this situation not only was there widespread distrust in everything that was linked to the state and its institutions, but the despotic and paternalistic style of politics led to passivity, anxiety, uncertainty and suspiciousness. In Sztompka's words, "(t)rust in the whole social order, its continuity and predictability was undermined."<sup>13</sup>

The events that began in 1989 can be grasped as a revolution for two main reasons, namely, they brought about a radical and fundamental transformation of all elements of society and the mass of citizens were directly

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<sup>9</sup> See Sztompka 1999, pp. 146-147.

<sup>10</sup> Tyler 1998, p. 291. On this point see also Warren 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Sztompka 1993, p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

and immediately involved.<sup>14</sup> This mass participation coupled with the views that were expressed as the process of transformation began provide a certain basis for the assumption that trust in both the private and public spheres had once again started to emerge. In the case of Lithuania, people greatly supported the actions of the new governing institutions and had faith in the decisions that were of fundamental importance for the future development of the country. It could be said that this emergent trust served to integrate members of society within the context of an absence of settled rules. Similar patterns may be found in other Central and East European countries as well. For example, Adam Przeworski states in respect to Poland that

When the first post-communist institutions were finally installed, confidence in all representative institutions soared. By November 1989 the government was enjoying net confidence... of 83 points; the lower house of the parliament... 84 points, and the upper house... 81 points.<sup>15</sup>

However, "(t)he enthusiasm and celebratory atmosphere that accompany a revolution never last long."<sup>16</sup> The reforms that affected the social, political, and economic spheres were accompanied by confusion, mistakes, and crises, and the newly-found trust virtually vanished. Marius Šaulauskas remarks that "We had trust when we sang our revolution, but it is almost absent today."<sup>17</sup>

The recovery of this emergent trust that had thus once again disappeared became a serious challenge for post-communist societies. Przeworski draws a parallel between trust and stock shares in that both can be depleted as well as accumulated, and he states that "When people learn not to trust the government, their confidence in the future declines and with it their support for reforms."<sup>18</sup> The citizens of Central and Eastern Europe countries unfortunately learned not only to distrust the political institutions, but also the social, economic, and public institutions in general in their new democracies. Although we can now identify certain signs of a revival of trust in post-communist societies, the process is very slow and the creation of trust in institutions remains a troublesome issue.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Przeworski 1993, p. 171.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>17</sup> "Abejonė, tikėjimas ir pasitikėjimas: Diskusija," p. 22. Related issues are also discussed in Saulauskas 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Przeworski 1991, p. 168.

<sup>19</sup> See Sztompka 1999 for a discussion of the signs of this revival.

## **THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE FOR TRUST IN POST-COMMUNIST LITHUANIA**

The analysis of Lithuanian institutions confirms that trust is a crucial social resource needed for the functioning of institutions in post-communist societies. The differing levels of trust in respect to the various institutions and countries in question appear to result from different public expectations concerning the performance of institutions. Symbolic capital and the mass media are also of central importance in this regard.

When examined on the theoretical level, trust seems to be a rather abstract and vague concept, especially when institutions or regimes are the "targets of trust,"<sup>20</sup> but it assumes fairly obvious forms for those institutions that strive for public trust, which anticipate it in very concrete terms. For example, each such institution may identify certain actions on the part of the members of society that it perceives to be the indicators of trust. Our mass media expert states that the size of the audience is most important. The police take trust to mean citizens' cooperation in the reporting of crimes. Commercial banks evaluate trust in terms of the number of depositors. The Bank of Lithuania recognizes the level of public trust in respect to the manner in which policies are implemented. Government representatives straightforwardly state that trust and distrust are clearly demonstrated only during elections. In general, institutions value trust as the reflection of positive activities directed towards them by the members of society. Furthermore, a lack of public trust in a given institution has a destructive effect on the manner in which it functions. This impact may range from the obstruction of its institutional performance to its overall destruction.

A sufficient level of trust is required for the effective or satisfactory functioning of an institution insofar as it ensures the needed supportive public attitudes. Distrust, on the contrary, readily transforms itself into unwillingness to co-operate with a given institution, suspicion of its activities, or reluctance to have contacts with it, all of which minimize its ability to carry out its proper activities. The results of the interviews conducted support such findings. For example, the police expert remarked that distrust renders police work more difficult since people who do not trust the police often neither report crimes, nor share information, even though only a small detail can be enough to improve public safety. The army expert noted that there can be no army without the support of the society, and that it is important for conscripts to have a positive attitude. The Bank of Lithuania expert stated that positive public opinion creates an environment more favorable for making and implementing

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<sup>20</sup> This term is used by Piotr Sztompka (1999 and elsewhere).

decisions, while the government expert declared that all collective activities fail without trust.<sup>21</sup>

Public trust can also be of fundamental importance for the very existence of an institution, particularly for such institutions as political parties that are inherently based on public involvement or support. The political party expert observed, for example, that political parties exist only as long as they have a sufficient number of convinced followers, while the Vilnius Bank expert commented that the single issue of trust can at times determine whether a bank will continue to survive.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, the distrust of particular institutions can at times extend beyond them and create a general atmosphere of distrust in a related broader system. This has been the case in the political sphere in Lithuania, where the level of trust in political parties was for years the lowest in respect to political institutions in general. Insofar as the aim of any political party today is to attain authority by democratic means (political parties expert), it may be assumed that the public distrust in political parties has to some degree been transferred to governing institutions. For example, the Seimas expert argued that increased trust in political institutions depends on the maturity of political parties and the overall strength and stability of the political system. There has been a frequent rotation of major actors on the political stage, with nine changes of government before the end of the 1990s and all independent elections in post-communist Lithuania resulting in the governing party being swept out of power. Even after NATO and EU accession there have been major scandals involving the head of state. This constant change reveals that the decision-making process in politics has had a rather improvisational nature. Qualitative change in the activities of political parties is required in order to foster a higher level of public trust in politics in general.<sup>23</sup>

### **THE ELEMENTS OF TRUSTWORTHINESS**

A review of the dynamics of trust in post-communist Lithuania during the period 1990-2002 reveals a number of general tendencies concerning institutional trust.<sup>24</sup> First, it is clear that certain institutions have enjoyed public

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<sup>21</sup> All of the expert comments referred to are taken from the interviews indicated in note 3 above, which were presented in an MA thesis presented in 2002 in the program for Society and Politics, Center for Social Studies, Central European University, Warsaw. They will be referred to as Gaižauskaite-CEU.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> The data are drawn from the *World Value Survey* (WVS) 1990 and 1995-1996 editions, as well as the Lithuanian Survey Company *Baltijos tyrimai* (Baltic

trust from the restoration of the independent state, while others have not.<sup>25</sup> For example, 67 percent of the population stated in 1990 that they trusted the mass media and 73 percent trusted the Church, and levels of public trust above 60 percent without any sharp declines have continued to be characteristic of these two institutions. The Office of the President came to enjoy consistently high levels of public trust in 1998 after the election of President Adamkus, although it is noteworthy that the latter was surprisingly ushered out of office in 2003, although he became President once again after the impeachment of his successor, Rolandas Paksas, in April 2004. However, levels of trust in other institutions, including political parties, commercial banks, the judiciary, the police, and the government, have tended to be much lower, at times even close to zero. Trust in the Supreme Council was above 60 percent by 1990, but trust in the Seimas dropped to 28 percent in 1995 and remained at similarly low levels.

Second, certain initially less trusted institutions eventually managed to win a higher level of trust, such as the Bank of Lithuania and commercial banks. For example, in 1996 only 3 percent of the population stated that they trusted commercial banks after the 1995 banking crisis. Although trust in the Bank of Lithuania was higher, it never exceeded one-third of the population until recent years, when it has become one of the most trusted institutions (61 percent in 2002). There has also been a slow but steadily growing trust in commercial banks, along with a very slow increase in trust concerning the police, the government, and the judiciary. However, there has been no noticeable improvement in the case of political parties and the Parliament.

It appears that the general level of public trust in Lithuania has been increasing, even though progress has often been both slow and intermittent. In light of the varying levels of trust among public institutions, a question arises concerning the factors that could possibly explain such differences. Why have some institutions consistently enjoyed trust while others have faced on-going problems in winning public support?

*Performance* is the basic element of trustworthiness insofar as "performance means actual deeds, present conduct, currently obtained results."<sup>26</sup> Kavolis argues that trust in institutions refers to the appropriateness of their actions in respect to the actual social and political situations. Indeed, trust in any institution is possible if members of society view it as performing in

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Surveys). See *Organizacijų reitingai. Kitimas laiko intervale* (Organizational Ratings. Temporal Change).

<sup>25</sup> I here use the term public trust to indicate that a given institution enjoys the support of more than half of the population.

<sup>26</sup> Sztompka 1999, p. 77.

accordance with the action patterns existing in the society in question.<sup>27</sup> It must act competently and in a responsible fashion, that is, it must always fulfill its commitments and not be influenced by any selfish interests. The Presidency expert responded when interviewed that trust is primarily determined by the activities of an institution, its ability to carry out the tasks assigned to it, and whether it can explain its decisions, the reasons for them, and their importance. The government expert remarked that people distrust government when words do not correspond to deeds. The Bank of Lithuania expert indicated that the main factor underlying public trust in the Bank of Lithuania was concrete activity, and that historical or psychological elements are less important. Experts representing other institutions expressed similar opinions.<sup>28</sup>

The phenomenon of performance requires a broader explanation insofar as it is the main element of trustworthiness. Indeed, not only are different types of performance expected from different institutions, distinct *expectations* to a great extent determine and explain differences in institutional trust in Lithuania. Two general types of expectations prevail in Lithuania, namely, instrumental and moral expectations. In respect to the former, regularity, reasonableness, and efficiency are expected from the conduct of others,<sup>29</sup> while moral expectations involve moral responsibility, honesty, truthfulness, and similar characteristics of action.<sup>30</sup>

The mode of expectations provides a framework for the intensity of public requirements in respect to institutional performance. According to the government expert, requirements on the part of citizens are greater when it is a question of instrumental expectations, but it is then also more difficult for the institution to be efficient, improve life, guarantee safety, etc. The Presidency expert stated that people do not trust the majority of political institutions because of the communist legacy of general distrust in authority coupled with overly high expectations insofar as people have tended to transfer responsibility for their lives to authority. In respect to moral expectations, however, the demands appear to be less intense. For example, the Church expert described the Church, the mass media, and the Presidency as the only institutions in Lithuania that are expected to possess moral rather than instrumental qualities. All other social and political institutions are expected to demonstrate instrumental qualities. In much the same vein, the government expert commented that people demand less of the Presidency than other political institutions, and that when the requirements are less, the level of trust is paradoxically higher. This also applies to the Church, which people trust and

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<sup>27</sup> See Kavolis 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Gaizauskaite-CEU.

<sup>29</sup> Barber 1983, p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> Sztompka 1999, p. 53.



from which they demand rather little. He also stated that trust will decline when people demand more since requirements would then become greater than the possibilities. The Church expert remarked that it is not necessary for the President to make instrumental decisions since the Presidency is the last worldly institution to which one can turn. "The Czar is far away and God is high above us, with everything else being very instrumental."<sup>31</sup>

But it would not be correct to conclude from such remarks that a low level of trust is inherently characteristic of instrumental institutions, even though it does appear that trust is much more easily gained in post-communist societies by institutions that are expected to be moral or fulfill symbolic functions. Moreover, the public perception of performance must be further clarified. On what grounds do people evaluate the performance of institutions? Stated otherwise, what *sources of reference* do people use when deciding upon the trustworthiness of institutions? Do they view the conduct of a particular institution in light of instrumental or moral expectations? In addition, people may well base their decisions concerning the trustworthiness of a given institution on the basis of their personal experiences. Since they have to deal with various institutions and officials in everyday life, their trust or distrust is often established in respect to their direct experiences with the institutions in question. The relationship between interpersonal trust and trust in institutions thereby becomes of central importance.

In general, "targets of trust" can be grouped into different levels, from the concrete to the abstract. We can thus speak about trust in persons on the most concrete level; trust directed towards more abstract *social categories*, including gender, age, and ethnicity; trust in *social roles*; trust in *social groups*; trust in *institutions* and organizations; trust in *technological systems*, such as transportation systems, telecommunications, etc.); and, on the most abstract level, trust in the *social system*, social order, or regime.<sup>32</sup> Sztompka and others have argued that trust in people and their actions is the primary form of trust that underlies all others.<sup>33</sup> From this perspective, all other levels of trust, such as trust in institutions, trust in social roles, or trust in the regime, may be considered as products of human action. Consequently, when we trust an institution, we actually trust those who make the institution function. Levi demonstrates that only persons can express trust, although trustworthiness applies to both individuals and institutions. He states that "When citizens and clients say they trust an institution, they are declaring a belief that, on average, its agents will prove to be trustworthy."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Gaizauskaite-CEU.

<sup>32</sup> Sztompka 1999.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. See also Levi 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Levi 1998, p. 80.

An expression of trust or distrust in an institution on the basis of personal experience is thus primarily trust or distrust of the representatives of that institution. The judiciary expert stated his belief that those before the court form their opinion of it above all from the proficiency, discretion, and respectful behavior of court officials, judges, prosecutors, and lawyers. We may say that people first encounter an institutional official as a person and then evaluate him/her as carrying out a given social role, such as policeman, judge, banker, etc. That impression is later transferred to the institution to which this social role belongs. Interpersonal trust is thus clearly an important source of trust in a given institution.

However, while personal experience is an important source of reference when deciding upon the trustworthiness of an institution, many people have never had any direct experience with the institution they claim to trust or distrust. They therefore must also rely on certain other sources of reference. Indeed, various criteria may be applied to estimate the quality of institutional performance, i.e., to evaluate the extent to which an institution fulfills public expectations in respect to its performance. For example, if we are examining the performance of the police, we may look at the number of crimes that are solved, while rates of unemployment or the level of inflation may be taken into consideration if we have an eye to governmental performance. But it is reasonable to doubt that everyone who expresses trust or distrust of a given institution is in fact willing or capable of estimating the objective character of its performance by examining, for instance, statistical indexes. The Bank of Lithuania expert observed that the activity ratings of commercial banks show that people should trust them since deposits, loans, and general financial services are expanding. Nevertheless, the level of public trust in banks has grown very slowly.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, institutional performance that has a moral or symbolic character is not subject to objective criteria. When this is coupled with the points mentioned above, it becomes clearly necessary to focus on the subjective dimensions of public attitudes towards institutions.<sup>36</sup> Two reference sources are most powerful in this respect, namely, the historical capital of a given institution and the mass media. The police expert remarked that surveys indicate that 85-90 percent of the population form their opinions about public institutions, particularly the police, on the basis of the mass media. It is only the remaining 10-15 percent who have any direct contact with police officers.

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<sup>35</sup> Gaizauskaite-CEU.

<sup>36</sup> By the term "subjective" I wish to indicate that decisions concerning the trustworthiness of institutions are based neither on personal experience, nor on formal criteria. Trust is instead formed in reference to sources more distant from actual institutional conduct.

The role of the mass media will be discussed separately in the following session. I here wish to focus on the "reputation" of an institution, or on what may be termed the "credit of the past."<sup>37</sup> Both of these concepts imply that certain institutions have existed in society for some time and they have accumulated some heritage of trust or distrust. Sztompka defines reputation as "simply the record of past deeds."<sup>38</sup> It is necessary, however, to expand this concept to include not only concrete past deeds, but also rather abstract symbolic elements insofar as reputation may involve a more general credit that devolves from the past. That is to say that institutions in different societies are surrounded by different historical and cultural sediments that may well grant them a certain credit of trust in spite of their particular actions.<sup>39</sup> The impact of the past upon the present situation is thus best defined when both actual and symbolic aspects are taken into account.

The symbolic element of the past is perhaps most vivid in Lithuanian society in those cases in which the public expects certain moral qualities from an institution. Two good examples of this are the mass media and the Church. It is possible to argue that at least some degree of the high level of public trust in the mass media is closely related to their historical role. The Church expert observed that the print media in Lithuania have acquired a flavor of the sacred, with a newspaper in fact becoming a sacred object, by virtue of the difficult cultural circumstances in which they have labored since the mid-nineteenth century. This attitude was strengthened by the Soviet experience, so much so that independence for the media was one of the main demands after independence. The mass media expert stated, moreover, that the mass media are viewed above all as the source of unquestioned truth, not as business institutions. People who were without information suddenly received all the information available from the mass media. Analogously, the public is convinced that the Church was the place where authenticity and decency were sustained during the Soviet period, and they value the Church not for its worldly activity, but primarily for its moral consistency.<sup>40</sup>

Past reputation also affects instrumental institutions. It has been argued a significant element of the distrust directed towards most political institutions in Lithuania may well be related to the negative legacy of the Soviet period, i.e., the untrustworthy image of the communist regime and its political institutions. A more recent example is the 1995 bank crisis. That painful experience has left its imprint on public consciousness, and the recovery of trust

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<sup>37</sup> The first term is taken from Sztompka 1999, the second from Kavolis 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Sztompka 1999, p. 71.

<sup>39</sup> Kavolis 1997.

<sup>40</sup> Gaizauskaite-CEU.

has been very difficult in spite of the continuously improving performance indexes.

The initial stages of the post-communist transformation also need to be discussed as a separate aspect of the credit of the past. This is an important issue insofar as people's experience of institutions during the first period of independence has had a rather strong influence on the development of trust. On the one hand, observers have primarily related this to unfulfilled public expectations. The political parties expert argued that distrust in political institutions may be related to the dramatic changes in society, particularly since life became more difficult for virtually everyone. No one was able to imagine that the euphoric drive for independence would come to be coupled with such harsh economic realities, which in turn led to a general disappointment with prospects for the future. People anticipated a very rapid improvement and forgot that nothing happens without hard work. He also remarked that the public mood began to improve and trust began to re-emerge as the economic situation improved, when people saw that certain strategic political goals were being attained. The Seimas expert also noted that the initially very high public expectations were not destined to become realities. He added that politicians themselves created false expectations by making unrealistic promises, as if there would be a paradise on earth tomorrow. Unfortunately, people thereby learned to distrust most political and social institutions, being constantly disappointed with their achievements. On the other hand, certain institutions began their "new life" in a positive light. The mass media expert in fact claimed that the on-going trust in the media in part stems from 1990, when the media played a significant role in presenting all opinions and views as the political order began to change.

#### **THE MASS MEDIA: AN EXTERNAL ACTOR<sup>41</sup>**

The mass media deserve special consideration insofar as they are a highly trusted source of information. The institutional representatives that were interviewed unanimously agreed that the mass media are the main source of reference when deciding upon the trustworthiness of institutions in Lithuania, not least of all because people often have little or no direct experience with public institutions, nor a sufficient amount of information concerning them. However, the media themselves claim that their impact is overestimated. For example, the media expert repeated the common statement that the only purpose of the mass media is to inform society, not reduce public trust in any institution. Nevertheless, there are at least three relevant issues that demonstrate

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<sup>41</sup> All expert comments in this section refer to Gaizauskaite-CEU.

that the role of the media is in fact very important in effecting public trust in institutions.

First, the mass media is in many cases the sole resource that people have which provides information concerning the activities of institutions, a fact that by itself provides an adequate reason for speaking of the mass media as exerting a strong influence on the formation of trust in institutions. The Presidency expert argued that people rely on media coverage to evaluate not only the activities of the President, but also those of other state officials. Indeed, only a very small segment of society are capable of evaluating the consequences of official decisions for either the state or their personal lives independently of the mass media. This is especially true when the effects are apparent only after a certain period of time.

Second, it is necessary to consider the aims of the mass media in their presentation of information. They claim that it is their duty to inform society when a given institution is performing badly, which would mean that it is the latter which bears the responsibility for the level of (dis)trust that society accords it. The police appear to be of a different opinion, however. For example, the police expert observed that people very often forget that newspapers are commodities in an arena of important financial interests, and that they very often cover state institutions through the prism of those interests. He also remarked that the mass media are oriented towards blood and sensationalism, the justification being that they otherwise do not sell. These views raise doubts concerning the claim that the sole aim of the mass media is to inform society. We could of course say that if society wants sensationalism in respect to news, then the mass media must naturally respond to that interest. Nevertheless, a more conscientious approach should be followed during a period in which new social and political systems are being established. The institutional experts with whom we spoke indicated that at times the search for sensationalism does not allow them to fulfill their role as effectively as they otherwise could. For example, the judiciary expert stated that while the mass media in fact play a mainly positive role, there unfortunately continue to be many cases in which they disseminate one-sided information and serve to create scandal. The principle that "bad news is good news" is not appropriate when shaping public opinion concerning the activity of the courts.

Third, the specific position of the mass media in Lithuanian society means that the information they present acquires a heightened significance in the eyes of the public. The police expert remarked that the very great degree of trust in the media which has been formed over the years leads the public to believe that what they read in the newspapers and see on television is true. In his opinion, people have still not yet learned to think critically about the media and grasp what lies between the lines. The political parties expert added that people today grab at anything they find in the media because of the hunger they

had for information in the period before independence. In the light of such consideration, a higher level of self-reflection on the part of the media would be most beneficial.

### **CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR THE CREATION OF TRUST IN LITHUANIA**

Trust in institutions is clearly necessary for the further development of Lithuanian society and the stability of its young democracy. Although it appears that the general level of trust has risen since 1990, it still remains an issue. It is thus necessary that efforts be taken to raise the level of public trust in institutions.

Lithuanian institutions understand the importance that trust has for their operation. Indeed, most of the experts we interviewed acknowledged that they closely follow the public opinion ratings or, more precisely, the trust ratings, of their institutions, and then plan activities on the basis of this information to improve institutional performance. Both the Seimas expert and the political parties expert commented that opinion polls either provide or reinforce the motivation to improve the ways in which their respective institutions function.<sup>42</sup>

What concrete measures can be taken to stimulate public trust in institutions? An important first step would be to have citizens involved whenever possible in decision-making processes. Most institutions understand that direct contact is a basic resource as individuals form their opinions concerning trustworthiness, and they must try to make such personal experience not only positive, but also influential. Levi indicates that government can "enhance its reputation of fairness by involving citizens in the policy-making process itself, so that they become aware of what is at issue and are included in the give and take that leads to compromise."<sup>43</sup> The Seimas expert admitted that although there are contacts between the Parliament and individual citizens, there is usually little consideration given to what they say or would like to be done. Society is not properly involved in decision-making mechanisms. It would be good for government to better inform society at large about decisions that have been taken, but it would be even better for there to be a greater involvement of society in decision-making itself.<sup>44</sup>

One example of the benefits of public involvement in institutional activities is provided by the Bank of Lithuania. The pegging of the litas to the Euro was one of the most important aspects of monetary reform during

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Levi 1998, p. 92.

<sup>44</sup> Gaizauskaite-CEU.

preparations for EU membership, and an important element of the decision-making process was extensive public discussion, including a campaign to raise awareness that began more than a year before this reform was implemented. Even though Lithuanian pollsters were of the opinion that any state institution that undertakes reforms is bound to experience public disapproval, regardless of the country in question, the Bank of Lithuania expert commented that the efforts they made to involve the public were an unprecedented success. The public of course had little impact on the decision itself, but the smoothness of the reform coupled with on-going social stability demonstrates that their strategy was fruitful.<sup>45</sup>

Attention must also be paid to the fact that interpersonal trust is the foundation of public trust. Both ordinary representatives of institutions as well as their leaders need to foster an atmosphere of trust. This point was strongly emphasized by the police expert, who stated that the creation of interpersonal trust was basic to the work of the police. Insofar as the leaders of a given institution are the face of that institution on the public stage, their actions must exhibit a level of personal responsibility that does not compromise the image of the institution itself. Their shortcomings have a negative impact upon public trust concerning the social roles that they represent and, consequently, on institutions themselves.

Furthermore, institutions should strive for continuity in their activities, an issue that is especially relevant for political institutions. Political parties and political actors need to realize that constant change in respect to policy does not serve to increase trust either in them or in the institutions they run. New political forces coming to power should not attempt to implement their own conceptions for the development of the country by disregarding the accomplishments of previous governments.

The final proposal concerns the role of the mass media. Independent mass media are as necessary for democracy and a healthy society as trust itself, and they should not be perceived as having only destructive intentions. It is undeniable, however, that they comprise a sphere that is in need of some improvement. For example, society needs to be informed, but the constant repetition of institutional maladies may well be dangerous for a young democracy still undergoing transition. When people acquire the feeling that they cannot control their environment, and that institutions are incapable of helping them, any sharp disturbance may provoke a chain of unsettling events. Trust is obviously a resource needed by separate institutions, but a general atmosphere of trust is beneficial for society as a whole. The various segments of the society need to work together in creating trust, and the mass media could well become an example to follow.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

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## Chapter XIV

# Trust: A Still Deficient Cultural Resource in Post-Communist Lithuania

*Algė Makulavičienė*

### INTRODUCTION

More than a decade has passed since Communist rule was overthrown throughout East-Central Europe. In spite of the enthusiasm that accompanied the first economical and political reforms, the road towards a free market economy and a stable democracy has not been smooth in most of the countries in question. Blame for this has been placed upon weak legal frameworks and supervisory mechanisms, frequently changing governments, and a lack of experience concerning how the market actually functions. But a problem within the realm of values at the basis of post-communist society has in fact hindered reforms, namely, an absence of social capital and a wide-spread "culture of distrust," reinforced by new and difficult conditions, that is a legacy of the Soviet period.<sup>1</sup> After the distrust, misinformation, strict limitations, regulations, and opportunistic adaptation characteristic of the Soviet period, people were suddenly thrown into a normative vacuum when institutional reforms were initiated, and they were forced to adapt to the new market conditions while still having to use the old strategy of trying to beat the system. In Batt's words,

for a considerable part of the society the understanding and accepting of the rules of market economy finishes at the level of expectations of quick success and reaching a Western standard of consumption.<sup>2</sup>

The search for money, power, and success became important goals associated with survival in the new conditions, but the legal means to attain them were often ignored due to a weak and changing legal system. Such a state of affairs could not facilitate the restoration of trust as an acknowledged social value. While the legal aspect of this situation has been somewhat improved, its cultural foundation, i.e., the general distrust prevailing in society, has

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<sup>1</sup> Sztompka 1996, 1999. See also Bok 1978, p. 26, as quoted in n Sztompka 1996, p. 38: "When trust is destroyed societies falter or collapse."

<sup>2</sup> Batt 1991, p. 82.

unfortunately been reinforced and still burdens the social, economic, and political spheres of life.

The present analysis will discuss the importance of trust as a basic cultural resource and necessary social value that was lacking to varying degrees in a transitional post-communist society such as Lithuania throughout the period leading up to EU membership. Indeed, the matter of public trust could be improved even today. In addition to certain theoretical considerations, I will draw upon official statistics as well as various surveys and opinion polls that were conducted in Lithuania. I will also utilize the empirical results obtained from the European Values Study that was conducted in both 1990 and 1999,<sup>3</sup> which provides a comparison of East-Central and Western European countries. By analyzing data specific to Lithuania, I will endeavor to demonstrate that a culture of distrust that reinforced itself over time prevailed in Lithuanian society throughout the transition period. I argue that no strong civil society can develop, and that political democratization and economic liberalization will encounter constant difficulties in post-Communist countries, if trust is not fully restored as an accepted social value.

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN MODERN SOCIETY<sup>4</sup>**

Trust is vital to social life when traditional certainties as well as modern probabilities cease to be viable. In general, modernity (and post-modernity) involves the destruction of traditional orders and comprises a "culture of risk." Consequently, insofar as it is primarily trustworthy relationships that hold us together, the problems of modern society can justifiably be addressed from the perspective of the quality of social relationships rather than in respect to the performance of the system.

Trust may be viewed both as a social capital, i.e., a social property that is essential for the effective functioning of institutions, and as a personal attribute. Any attempt to construct a lasting social order must be predicated on the development of stable relations of mutual trust between social actors.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, since "institution" may be defined in a broad sense as "the rules of the

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<sup>3</sup> The European Values Study Group was founded in 1978 and was originally dedicated to research concerning the values of EU residents. The research conducted in 1990 was extended to include the Central and East European countries, including Lithuania. Research conducted in 1999-2000 was further extended to cover a total of 33 countries.

<sup>4</sup> See Dunn 1984 as quoted in Misztal 1996, p.12: "Trustworthiness ... is both the constitutive virtue of, and the key causal precondition for the existence of, any society."

<sup>5</sup> Seligman 1995.

game in a society," the successful operation of any given institution depends on the quality of these rules and on the level to which the members of society adhere to them. Stated otherwise, trustworthy relationships are involved whenever there is trustworthy cooperation for the sake of mutual benefits.<sup>6</sup> In addition, networks of interpersonal exchange characterize any society, and exchange is more likely to ensue in societies where people can be sure that trust will be reciprocated. Moreover, repeated exchange naturally encourages the development of a norm of reciprocity.

Such trust must be motivated, and although it cannot be compelled, it can be earned. Such motivation may result from strong, positive, personal bonds with an object of trust, and it may also arise from the belief that there are sound rational reasons to trust and interests to do so. These issues relate trust to the general context of society. In addition, social trust, norms of reciprocity, and networks of civic engagement contribute to economic prosperity and are in turn reinforced by such prosperity.<sup>7</sup> If the former are weak in a given society, the latter will not be possible since all types of collective action will then face serious obstacles. Theorists of economic history propose that what they term "path dependence" is an important feature of any social system. By this they mean that there are always certain destinations that cannot be reached because the goals that are possible depend on one's starting point. From this it follows that history and social context condition the effectiveness of institutions, which indicates one important reason for the failures of many post-Communist societies' reform efforts.

Such an emphasis on the importance of trust for modern society can be found in classical sociology. For example, Simmel considers exchange, or "a sacrifice in return for a gain," as the dominant social relationship in modern societies, and he argues that one of its most important conditions is trust.<sup>8</sup>

Without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate, for very few relationships are based upon what is known with certainty about another person, and very few relationships would endure if trust were not as strong as, or stronger than, rational proof or personal observation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Luhman 1988 as quoted in Misztal 1996, p. 15: "Building trust on the micro-level contributes to the more abstract trust on the macro-level."

<sup>7</sup> Putnam 1993.

<sup>8</sup> See Simmel 1971, as referenced in Misztal 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Simmel 1978, as quoted in Misztal 1996, p. 50.

Trust and mistrust appear in situations of uncertainty when people are unable to make an assessment of probabilities. And insofar as the functioning of modern society depends on a variety of contracts, promises, and arrangements, modern life is largely based on faith in the honesty of others. Moreover, even though people may become subject to alienation in modern societies, they are not isolated but rather continuously depend on each other.<sup>10</sup>

Weber also emphasizes the importance of trust in his analysis of the process of individualization and rationalization in Western society, arguing that one of the preconditions for the success of modern capitalism was the transition from personal trust to impersonal trust. Weber famously describes the abstract and unconditional trust of the Puritan entrepreneurs, who were loyal to their calling without considering how they would benefit from it.<sup>11</sup>

Their mutual trustworthiness was their social capital, which benefited the group, and in the longer run established the framework underlying capitalist relationships.<sup>12</sup>

This new type of impersonal trust, founded on mutual interest and on the functional interdependence of a modern society, differs from the type of trust typical of a traditional society, which is based on beliefs held in common. Nevertheless, it plays the same important role in supporting the social order.

Parsons concentrates his attention as he discusses the social order on that which social actors who are mutually oriented to one another's actions have in common. He assumes that any social order based on self-interest cannot be stable and emphasizes the integrative role that shared values play in a society. Parsons views the social order as residing upon a system of common values, which indicates that the moral code stabilizes the mutuality of interactions within a stable system. Moreover, the roles that actors perform are founded upon trust, which ensures that appropriate values and norms will motivate actors and guide their actions as they carry out their various roles.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to this view that a stable social order cannot be maintained by self-interest, David Hume provides a simple parable concerning how to cooperate for the common good:

Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so tomorrow. 'Tis profitable for us both, that I should labor with you today, and that you should aid me tomorrow. I have no kindness for you,

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<sup>10</sup> Simmel 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Weber 1978.

<sup>12</sup> Weber as quoted in Misztal 1996, p. 55.

<sup>13</sup> A detailed presentation of this view can be found in Parsons 1940.

and know you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains upon your account; and shou'd I labor with you upon my own account, in expectation of a return, I know I shou'd be disappointed, and that I shou'd in vain depend upon your gratitude. Here then I leave you to labor alone; you treat me in the same manner. The seasons change; and both of us lose our harvests for want of mutual confidence and security.<sup>14</sup>

Self-interest in fact most often drives human actions in the modern rational world, and mutual benefit is served when the interests of different actors are coordinated. Indeed, the social ability to collaborate in order to pursue shared interests is most fundamental to the community. As Putnam observes,

Generalized reciprocity (not "I'll do this for you, because you are more powerful than I," nor even "I'll do this for you now, if you do that for me now", but "I'll do this for you now, knowing that somewhere down the road you'll do something for me") generates high social capital and underpins collaboration.<sup>15</sup>

Putnam argues that social capital is a crucial to the successful economic development of any society. Trust, as a form of social capital, helps members of society to coordinate their actions in seeking the common good, attaining common interests and goals, and solving conflicts in a rational and civilized way. In addition, various studies have shown that a high level of interpersonal trust accompanies a relatively high level of economic development, which indicates that these two processes are mutually supportive.<sup>16</sup> It can thus be said that social capital bolsters the performance of the economy, or that a strong civic society leads to a strong economy. However, such public goods as trust are not fixed characteristics insofar as they are subject to change and are also shaped by the historical experiences and the economic, political, and religious characteristics of given peoples. It is thus both difficult and yet important to attain/restore trust during/after the uncertain and confusing transition period typical of post-Communist societies.

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<sup>14</sup> Hume as quoted in Putnam 1993, p. 163.

<sup>15</sup> Putnam 1993, pp. 182-183.

<sup>16</sup> Inglehart, 1988, 1999.

**THE DEFICIENCY OF TRUST IN A POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETY**

Social capital is vital for the democratization and economic progress of a country in transition. Putnam observes, however, that

many of the formerly Communist societies had weak civic traditions before the advent of Communism, and totalitarian rule abused even that limited stock of social capital. Without norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement, ... amoral familism, clientelism, lawlessness, ineffective government, and economic stagnation seem likelier than successful democratization and economic development.<sup>17</sup>

The Soviet economic system was in fact based on distrust and disinformation. Double standards of truth and morality in both private and state spheres, which were enforced by autocracy in politics and the command economy, transformed corruption and opportunistic adaptation, or what may be termed "beating the system," into a virtue and a common way of life. This forced trust to disappear from social life as something that was neither possible, nor valued. Post-Communist societies have indeed inherited an entire "culture of distrust" that not only is very resistant to change, but also has given rise to the primary obstacles to successful reforms.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the new risks and uncertainties of the post-Communist period, such as high unemployment, inflation, normative chaos, weak agencies of enforcement and control in post-Communist society, unrealistic expectations on the part of people in general, as well as broken promises from the authorities, have contributed to the continuation of this environment of distrust.

One may certainly argue that even during Soviet times certain "islands of trust" existed in social life, and that personal trust was important and valued. But Communist rule transformed public opinion into private opinion. While individuals could hold various views about politics or government, there were no institutional means to express such ideas other than small and trusted unofficial networks.<sup>19</sup> And since the legitimacy of the system itself was under question, institutional trust did not exist. The Communist social order was instead maintained and controlled by a central authority whose strength was based on the atomization of society and the dissemination of distrust. Although such attempts to base legitimization on disbelief do foster social integration in a

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<sup>17</sup> Putnam 1993, p. 183.

<sup>18</sup> Sztompka 1996, 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Rose 1994; Sztompka 1999.



certain sense, they generate passivity and compliance by dissolving people's capacity to be critical and initiate change.<sup>20</sup>

Small communities may be able to rely upon the trust that emerges from intimate familiarity with other individuals, but impersonal cooperation is essential to complex industrial and post-industrial society. Modern societies are in fact legitimized by trust in authority and government as a generalization of primary, interpersonal trust. During Soviet times, however, interpersonal trust failed to generalize, and there was a distinctive dichotomy between "us" (the citizens) and "them" (the bureaucracy).<sup>21</sup> It has thus been especially difficult to introduce institutional trust to post-Communist society insofar as there was been little or no experience of it in the preceding period.

### **TRUST AS A STILL-MISSING CULTURAL RESOURCE: THE CASE OF LITHUANIA**

The continuing shortage of trust in Lithuanian society throughout the transition period has been revealed both by behavioral indicators and by public opinion as expressed in various surveys. The reasons for this state of affairs include unfulfilled expectations concerning a smooth transition and quick prosperity, feelings of uncertainty and insecurity brought about by economic problems and political instability, and the inefficiency of law-enforcement and other public institutions. I will endeavor to model my discussion of the indicators of distrust that have been typical for Lithuania on Sztompka's (1996) analysis of the corresponding situation in Poland.

For example, not only did the economic situation deteriorate after 1991, but satisfaction with the quality of life in Lithuania also decreased over the years.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, respondents expressed the opinion that the main reason for poverty was the injustice prevailing in society.<sup>23</sup> The latter in fact fostered a level of distrust in society such that further reforms were viewed with

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<sup>20</sup> Misztal 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Seligman 1995.

<sup>22</sup> The *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2001* indicates that the Lithuanian per capita GDP (6600 Euro) in 2000, as based on purchasing power standards, was substantially lower than the average for the candidate countries (7900 Euro). In addition, data published by the European Values Studies reveal that while 14.9 percent of respondents were more or less dissatisfied with their lives in 1990, the number grew to 31.3 percent in 1999. These are people who listed their responses between 1 and 3 on a 1 to 10 scale where 1 equals "totally dissatisfied" and 10 "totally satisfied."

<sup>23</sup> EVS research for 1999.

increasing suspicion, which led increasing numbers of people to feel that they had lived better and with greater security in the Communist past.<sup>24</sup>

In the area of economic activities, uncertainty concerning policies and legal regulations influenced particular patterns of savings and consumption. One example is that many Lithuanians preferred until recently either not to save money, or to save in US dollars.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the practice of "saving under the pillow" remained common among the elderly, especially since many lost their savings during the private banking crisis of 1995-1996. Financial institutions have also long been viewed with suspicion, which was reinforced by the near panic that beset the clients of Vilniaus Bankas (a member of the private SEB banking group) shortly before Christmas 2002.<sup>26</sup> Unofficial gossip for a period of some weeks concerning the bank's imaginary troubles had driven the public to close their accounts and withdraw their deposits, which was not stopped even by the bank's stable financial results. The situation fortunately recovered fairly quickly, but the State Security Department was compelled to undertake an official investigation of the matter.

Many Lithuanians long remained unsure about their future, particularly in respect to employment. The official unemployment rate in 2000 of 15.4 percent was one of the highest in Europe, although it did decrease to 13.6 percent in 2002.<sup>27</sup> According to survey results published in December 2002 by SIC, a public opinion and market research firm, 42 percent of Lithuanians believed that the level of unemployment in the country would rise, perhaps significantly, over the next 12 months, 57 percent stated there was a certain prospect that they might lose their jobs, and 66 percent of those employed thought it would take an extended period of time to find a new job if they became unemployed.<sup>28</sup> Such fears were reflected in various financial decisions people make. For example, housing loans grew slowly despite being aggressively marketed by banks because of a reluctance to assume debts in a time of uncertainty.

The popularity of lotteries and TV prize games in Lithuania has been another reflection of feelings of insecurity. It was particularly curious to

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<sup>24</sup> The EVS research for 1999 indicated that while the average evaluation of the current political system was 3.18 on a scale of 1 to 10, the former Communist system received an evaluation of 5.36 in Lithuania.

<sup>25</sup> The national currency, the Litas, was pegged to the USD until February 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Survey results published by Vilmorus indicated that only 32.7 percent of Lithuanians trusted banks in December 2002.

<sup>27</sup> See the labor force survey data published in *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2001*.

<sup>28</sup> See [www.sic.lt/naujienos/naujienos](http://www.sic.lt/naujienos/naujienos).

observe the way in which people participated in such TV- shows as *Who Will Win a Million?* It was apparent that they did not play for fun, which might be considered natural, but rather seemed to feel that they had to go home with a certain amount of money. Instead of playing for higher stakes, for example, they withdrew as soon as they won a modest sum. This was tied to the relatively low standard of living in the country since any extra money was vital in such circumstances.

The growing crime rate has also indicated a lack of trust in the social order. The number of crimes reported more than doubled from 37,056 in 1990 to 82,370 in 2000, of which only 40 percent were solved.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the judicial bodies themselves have not been objects of trust. One Vilnius survey demonstrates that a mere 20.5 percent of the population trusted the judicial system, and only 34.8 percent declared their confidence in the police in December 2002.<sup>30</sup>

Under conditions of a general distrust in society, when the average person had little hope that there would be much improvement in life, it was not surprising that the number of suicides increased almost 1.7 times in the 1990s, from 26 per 100,000 in 1990 to 44.1 per 100,000 in 2000, peaking in 1996 at 46.4 per 100,000.<sup>31</sup> The latter were among the highest rates in Europe. Another less radical option for "escape" has been emigration. Although the numbers have declined somewhat since the first years of independence from the Soviet Union, many still leave to work abroad, both legally and illegally.<sup>32</sup> Many have also tried their luck in US Green Card lotteries, and such newspaper personal ads as "Man seeking a woman with a Green Card for marriage and emigration" have not been unusual.

However, a critical level of confidence in various institutions has become the norm in Lithuania. This can be illustrated by examining the mechanisms of substitution that develop in a society in which trust has become a deficient cultural resource.

The general level of trust (or more correctly "distrust") in Lithuania and other East-Central European countries is well indicated by the data published in 1990 and 1999 by the European Values Study Group, which provides one basis for the present discussion. Respondents were asked to express their opinions concerning the extent to which a majority of people could be trusted. Although Western Europeans have tended to demonstrate

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<sup>29</sup> *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2001*.

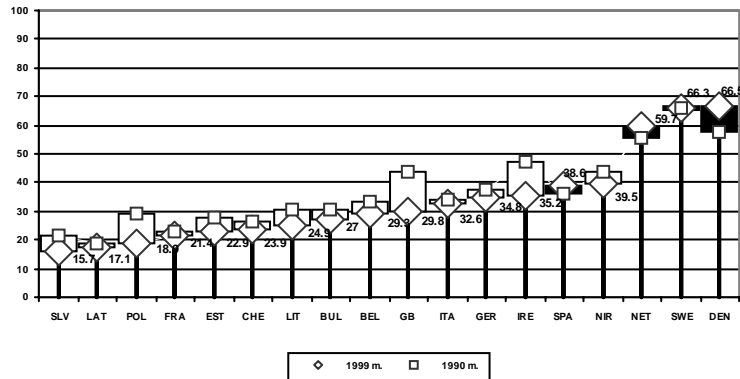
<sup>30</sup> See [www.5ci.lt/ratings2/lit/](http://www.5ci.lt/ratings2/lit/).

<sup>31</sup> *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2001*.

<sup>32</sup> The *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2001* indicates that instances of legal emigration in 1990 numbered 23,592.

more trust than Eastern Europeans, the level of general trust has declined in all almost countries since 1990 (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Agreement That a Majority of People Can Be Trusted, in percent.<sup>33</sup>



When social life is not supported by trust, various compensation mechanisms arise in order to provide feelings of security, stability, and fairness, thereby fulfilling the original functions of trust for the members of society. Sztompka identifies six substitutional reactions in this regard, namely, *providentialism*, *corruption*, *vigilance*, *ghettoization*, *paternalization*, and the *externalization of trust*.<sup>34</sup> Let us now examine the extent to which these have been evident in Lithuania, which would serve to either confirm or deny a lack of trust within Lithuanian society.

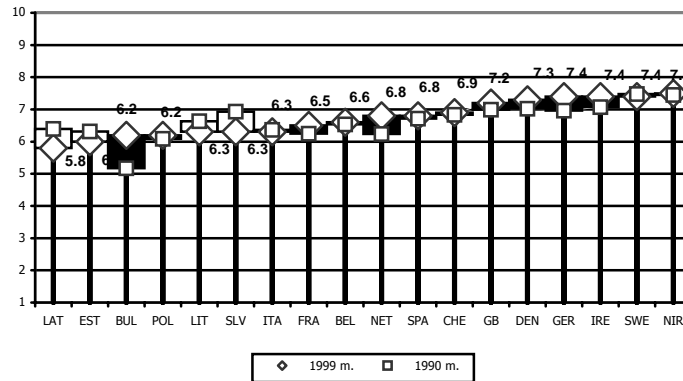
*Providentialism* involves the adoption of a passive attitude towards life, or the prevailing belief that nothing can be changed insofar as a majority of events are predetermined by such supernatural forces as fate or God. The provides a certain psychological consolation if one has not been particularly successful in life, but in the long run it induces social passivity, something which has certainly been visible in Lithuanian society. EVS respondents had the opportunity to evaluate the extent to which they feel that they have free choice and control over their lives or, on the contrary, the extent to which they feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them. Although the findings for Lithuania were in the middle of the scale, averaging 6.6 in 1990 and 6.3 in 1999, it is clear that the citizens of East-Central European countries

<sup>33</sup> EVS research for 1990 and 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Sztompka 1996, pp. 44-46.

have tended to feel somewhat less able to control their lives than their counterparts in Western Europe (see Chart 2).

Chart 2. The Feeling That One Is Able to Control One's Own Life (1 = not at all, 10 = a great deal).<sup>35</sup>



An increased passivity and stagnation in Lithuania has also been manifest in growing voter apathy insofar as people withdraw from participation in public life when they come to see no use for it over time. For example, 71.5 percent and 73.7 percent of voters respectively turned out in the first and second rounds of voting in the December 1997-January 1998 presidential elections, but the corresponding numbers dropped to 53.99 percent and 52.65 percent in the December 2002-January 2003.<sup>36</sup>

Other curious events during the latter elections may better illustrate the providentialism present in Lithuania. A new wave of witches, exorcists, and fortune tellers developed, along with a new scandal, when Lena Lolishvili, a Georgian clairvoyant, appeared on the stage side by side with the newly elected President, Rolandas Paksas (who was impeached for corruption and dismissed from office in 2004). Although she was introduced as a close family friend and non-traditional doctor who had greatly helped Paksas, the phenomenon thereby created was a leading story in the press for months, especially after it was disclosed that certain other politicians were also her "patients." This could not

<sup>35</sup> EVS research for 1990 and 1999.

<sup>36</sup> See the data published by the Supreme Lithuanian Elections Committee at [www.vrk.lt](http://www.vrk.lt), its official web site.

help but initiate a discussion on what the country could expect if its leader relied on fortune tellers. The research data published by the Spinter public opinion and market research company provided startling results.<sup>37</sup> 60 percent of respondents were convinced that certain people possessed clairvoyant qualities, with 23.5 percent saying it was nonsense and 16.1 percent stating they were not sure. 83.8 percent of respondents occasionally or always utilized "non-traditional medicine" (only 13.5 percent never did so). 24.7 percent had visited a fortune teller at least once, and 4.1 percent told fortunes themselves (52.3 percent never did so). Moreover, when people were asked whether Lolishvili in particular possessed supernatural powers, 7.2 percent of respondents had no doubt of her exceptional powers, 47.3 percent felt she had the powers typical of clairvoyants, 6.1 percent thought she was a servant of Satan, and only 17.7 percent stated she was a charlatan (21 percent had no opinion). All this can be interpreted as indicative of a high level of providentialism in Lithuania, a society that could be said to have sought security from outside forces since its inner trust in own potential had been corrupted.

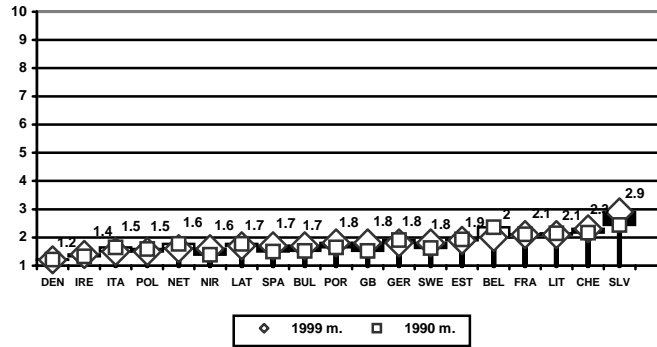
Second, Sztompka's identifies wide-spread *corruption* in society, which has also been characteristic for Lithuania, as a pathological substitute for trust. Even the current President Valdas Adamkus, who was also President 1998-2003, acknowledged that he failed during his first term of office to break the bureaucratic system and rein in corruption in the country.<sup>38</sup> When the bureaucracy becomes too complicated or the general environment too chaotic, bribery can provide a certain sense of control over decision-making, transforming a social network of mutual relations into a network of mutual favors. It is difficult to estimate the true level of corruption in a given society, but certain assumptions can be made in light of EVS data. For example, respondents were asked to express their opinions concerning whether they justified such behavior as accepting a bribe in the course of one's duties, cheating on taxes if the opportunity presented itself, and claiming a state benefit for which one was not entitled. The respondents were not asked to indicate that they in fact did so, but only whether such actions appeared "normal" to them. One can again observe a slight difference between Eastern and Central Europe and Western countries, with the lowest levels of acceptance in Denmark and Ireland and the highest in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Chart 3).

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<sup>37</sup> *Veidas*, 3 April 2003, No. 14., p. 41.

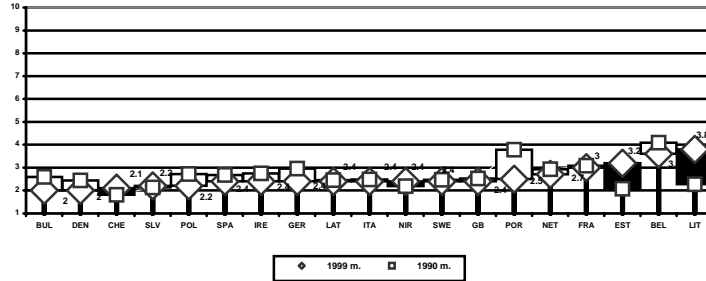
<sup>38</sup> *Lietuvos Rytas*, 6 January 2003, No. 3, pp. 1-2.

Chart 3. Justification for Accepting a Bribe (1 = never, 10 = always).<sup>39</sup>



Cheating on taxes is viewed as acceptable most often in Lithuania and Belarus and least so in Bulgaria and Denmark. It is significant that the justification of tax evasion actually rose in Lithuania from an average of 2.3 in 1990 to 3.8 in 1999 (Chart 4).

Chart 4. Justification for Cheating on Taxes (1 = never, 10 = always).<sup>40</sup>

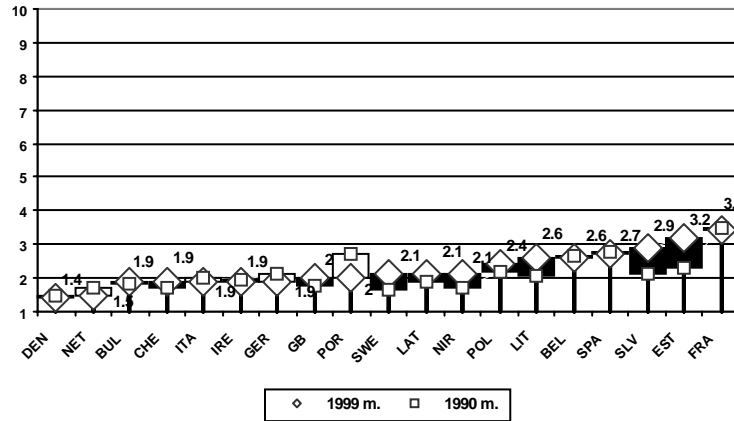


Claiming an illegal financial allowance from the state is accepted most often in France, Estonia, and Slovakia, while it is most judged to be improper in Denmark and the Netherlands. The rate of acceptance in Lithuania was in the highest one-third of the countries surveyed.

<sup>39</sup> EVS research for 1990 and 1999.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Chart 5. Justification for Claiming an Illegal State Benefit (1 = never, 10 = always).<sup>41</sup>



However, the Free Market Institute of Lithuania published on its web site in June 2001 more interesting data that was gathered from research concerning corruption conducted by Spinter Ltd.<sup>42</sup> This data reveals that 9.2 percent of respondents constantly witnessed cases of corruption in Lithuania, 44.2 percent had encountered corruption cases several times, 17.3 percent had such an experience at least once, and 26.6 percent heard of cases of corruption from friends or relatives. Furthermore, 50.1 percent of respondents agreed that bribery completely resolved a particular problem they had, and a further 43 percent admitted that problem resolution was at least facilitated by bribery. 64 percent of respondents claimed a functionary usually requested a bribe, with 36 percent stating that the bribe was initiated by the bribe giver.

Who is responsible for this state of affairs? 26 percent of respondents were prone to accuse state leaders for tolerating corruption in the country, 19.9 percent imputed responsibility to the institutions of law and order for not fighting corruption effectively, 17.8 percent ascribed blame to politicians, and 15.5 percent claimed that society as a whole tolerated and fostered corruption. This last point is crucial if members of society are to understand that the causes of corruption, not the effects, must be eliminated first.

Third, Sztompka's discusses an exaggerated *vigilance*, which has also been evident in Lithuania, as a reaction to widespread distrust in society. It is logical that enforcement agencies are employed to supervise and control an

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> See [www.lrinka.lt/Tyrimai/](http://www.lrinka.lt/Tyrimai/).



exchange partner who cannot be trusted. And when the activities of these enforcement agencies themselves are called into question, alternative private forces are used. This is evidenced by the number of private agencies for security and debt collection as well as private medical and educational institutions that have been established since independence.

The extent of exaggerated vigilance in a society may also be illustrated by the determination of its citizens to participate in various non-conventional political activities, such as strikes or demonstrations.<sup>43</sup> That is to say that if institutional trust is absent in a given society, its members may undertake radical (or other) collective action in order to "correct" the situation. For example, the *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2001* reports there were 56 strikes and warning strikes in 2000, with an average duration of 3.1 working days. In addition, according to the above mentioned SIC survey, only 10 percent of Lithuanians at the end of 2002 thought there would be fewer strikes and industrial disputes in 2003.<sup>44</sup> The EVS research for both 1990 and 1999 sought to determine the number of Europeans who would be prepared to participate in such non-conventional political actions as signing a petition, participating in boycotts, attending a lawful demonstration, joining an unofficial strike, and taking part in occupying buildings or factories. It is evident that such forms of political activity declined in popularity in Lithuania, with even the numbers of those who would never participate in such non-radical activities as signing a petition or attending a lawful demonstration increasing (Chart 5). One possible explanation for this tendency might well have been distrust in even the potential of collective action, or the attitude that one would do better to fend for oneself first. This hypothesis was apparently supported by the fact of increased withdrawal from any type of political activity in Lithuania. While 73.8 percent of Lithuanians had claimed in 1990 they were very much or somewhat interested in politics, this number dropped to 45.9 percent in 1999.<sup>45</sup>

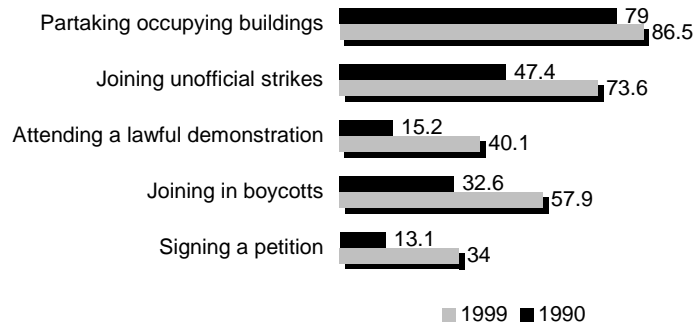
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<sup>43</sup> Valionis 2001.

<sup>44</sup> See note 29 above.

<sup>45</sup> EVS research for 1990 and 1999.

Chart 5. Number of Lithuanians Who Would Never Participate in Non-conventional Political Activities, in percent.<sup>46</sup>



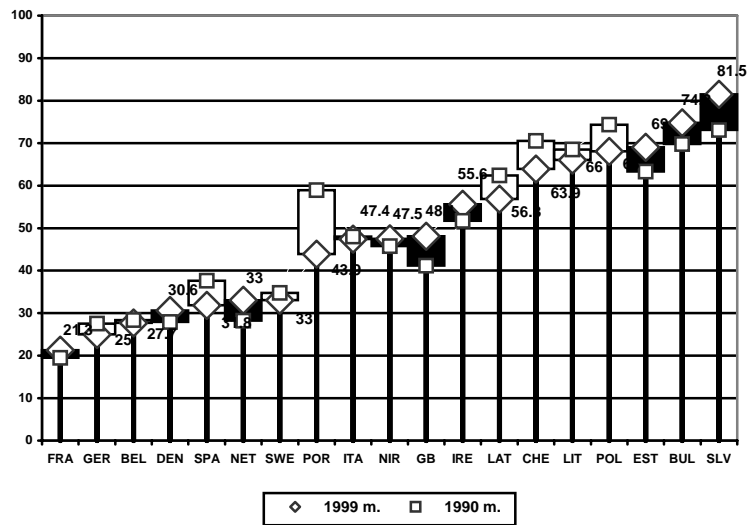
Fourth, Sztompka uses the term *ghettoization* to define the mechanism that both indicates and compensates for a lack of trust in society by closing in within immediate familial and ethnic groups. This forms islands of trust and extreme loyalty in combination with a separation from other groups or institutions and a feeling of xenophobia. Such a personalization of trust was intrinsic to Soviet society, in which one's immediate family or close circle of friends was the only source of trust. While freedom of speech has somewhat improved the situation today, it is still difficult to describe Lithuania as an open society in light of the level of tolerance and acceptance of different ethnic, religious, sexual, and other minorities.

EVS respondents were asked whether they would accept as a neighbor a person with a criminal record, a heavy drinker, a person with different religious beliefs, an immigrant or foreign worker, a person who has AIDS, a homosexual, a person of different nationality/race, etc. The data demonstrate not only that East-Central European countries exhibit a much lower level of tolerance than West European countries, but also that Lithuania is one of the most intolerant countries in Europe (Charts 6-9, 11-13).

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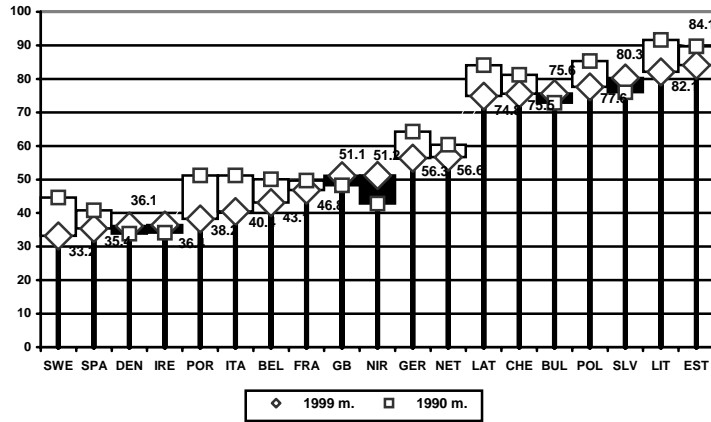
<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Chart 6. Persons Stating That Those with Criminal Records Are Objectionable Neighbors, in percent.<sup>47</sup>



<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Chart 7. Persons Stating That Heavy Drinkers Are Objectionable Neighbors, in percent.<sup>48</sup>

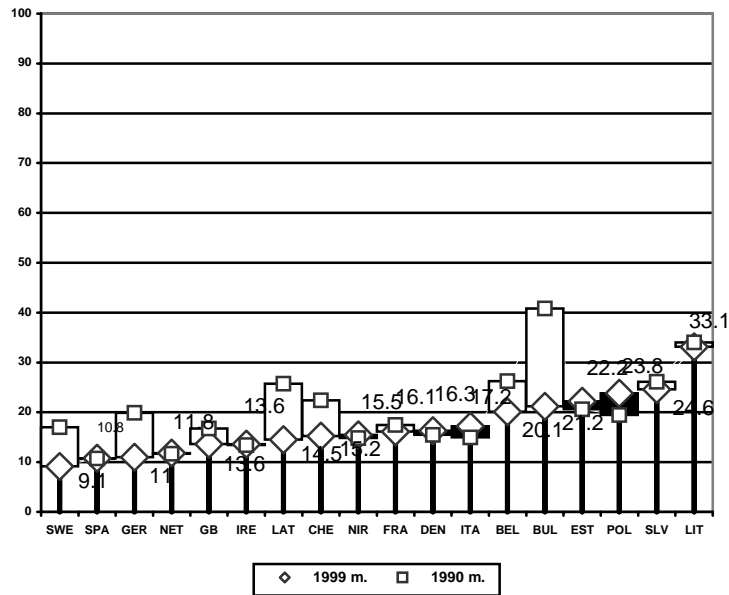


It is absurd that Lithuanians have been so reluctant to have a Muslim as a neighbor in light of the fact that there are virtually no Muslim communities apart from a small group of Crimean Tatars who have lived in the country for centuries.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, religious conflicts never take place. The level of intolerance has in fact been almost three times higher than in Germany, where the number of Muslims is considerably higher (Chart 8).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> There were only 5 Muslim religious communities in Lithuania in 2001 in comparison with 690 Roman Catholic communities.

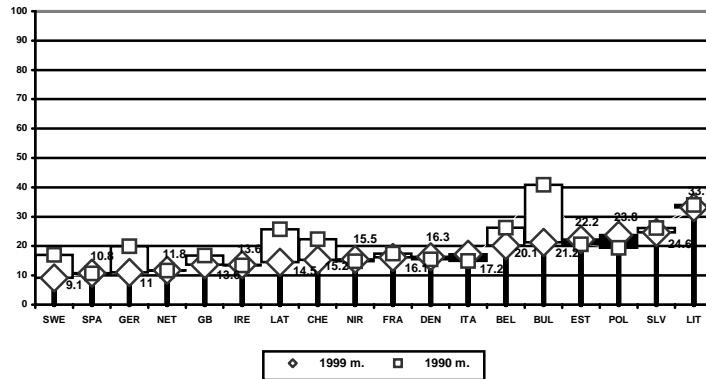
Chart 8. Persons Stating That Muslims Are Objectionable Neighbors, in percent.<sup>50</sup>



The same has held true in respect to a tolerance of immigrants or foreign workers. For example, Lithuania has been much more intolerant than Germany or Spain even though the level of immigration in these two countries is incomparably higher. Indeed, Lithuanians themselves have considered these countries to be particularly attractive destinations in their own efforts to find both legal and illegal jobs (Chart 9). Perhaps this problem was influenced by the much higher unemployment rate in Lithuania.

<sup>50</sup> EVS research for 1990 and 1999.

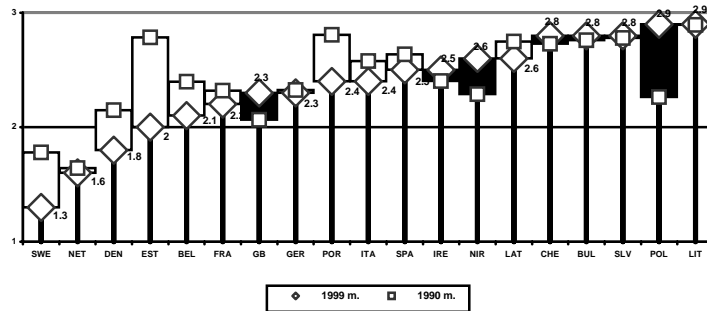
Chart 9. Persons Stating That Immigrants or Foreign Workers Are Objectionable Neighbors, in percent.<sup>51</sup>



The hypothesis concerning the relationship between the level of unemployment and intolerance towards immigrants appears to be correct. EVS respondents were asked whether they agreed with the opinion that employers should give priority to local citizens over immigrants when jobs are scarce. Here again we find a difference between Eastern and Central Europe and Western societies. And while such beliefs might be associated with a given country's level of prosperity, it nevertheless confirms the strong sense of "us" versus "them" that has prevailed in the former Communist countries (Chart 10).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

Chart 10. Conviction That Unemployed Locals Should Enjoy Priority for Jobs (1 = do not agree, 3 = totally agree).<sup>52</sup>

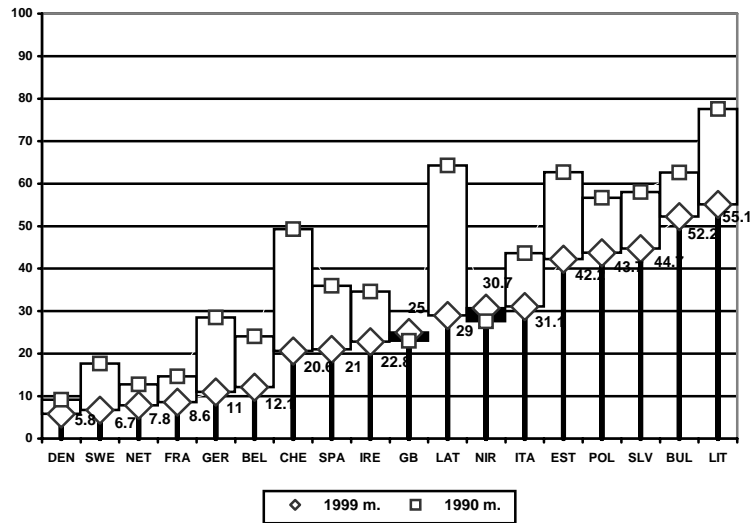


Objecting to having a neighbor with AIDS has also been the highest in Lithuania in comparison with other European countries even though the numbers affected by the disease have been relatively low (Chart 11).<sup>53</sup> This is a good example that an intolerance of those who are different is related to a lack of knowledge of the issue in question, and that we are frightened of what we do not know well. However, the situation has improved greatly since 1990.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> The *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2001* indicates that 312 persons were registered as HIV infected as of 1 July 2001, with 43 active AIDS cases and 21 fatalities.

Chart 11. Persons Stating That Those with AIDS Are Objectionable Neighbors, in percent.<sup>54</sup>



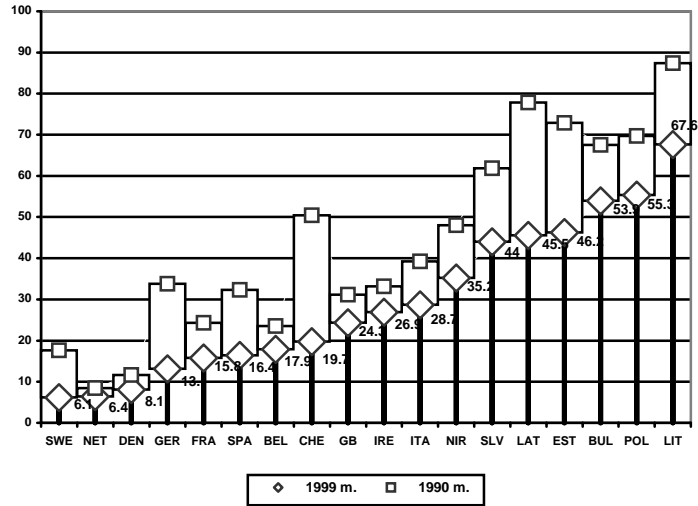
In respect to sexual preferences, Lithuania appears to be the most straitlaced European country. Most likely because of the strong influence of the Catholic Church, contempt for homosexuality has been the highest in Europe, with 67.6 percent of Lithuanians objecting to having a homosexual neighbor (Chart 12). Moreover, 78 percent of Lithuanians in 1999 held the opinion that homosexuality can never be justified. This is a remarkable figure, even though it had declined from 88.3 percent in 1990.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> EVS research for 1990 and 1999.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

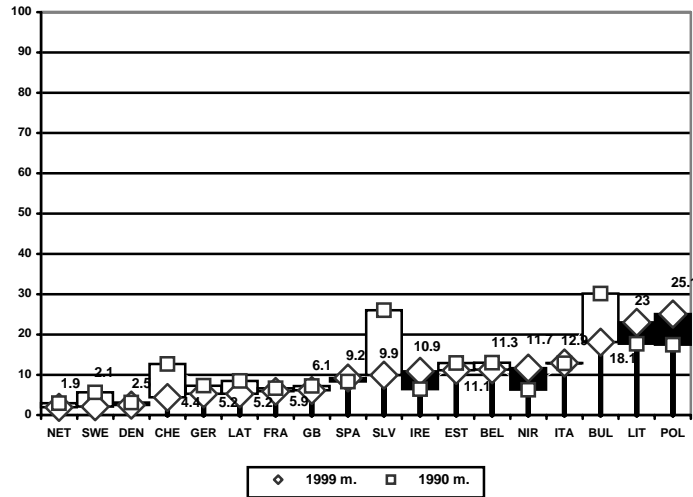


Chart 12. Persons Stating That Homosexuals Are Objectionable Neighbors, in percent.<sup>56</sup>



Another shameful tendency was a growing intolerance of Jews. The level of objection to having a Jewish neighbor was second only to that in Poland (Chart 13).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Chart 13. Persons Stating That Jews Are Objectionable Neighbors, in percent.<sup>57</sup>

An increased immediate territorial identification in Lithuania can also be understood as an additional indicator of a ghettoization tendency. According to EVS data for 1999, 51.4 percent of Lithuanians identified themselves primarily with the city/town/village in which they lived, an increase from 25.4 percent in 1990. Only 37.2 percent identified themselves primarily with Lithuania, a figure that had fallen from 66 percent in 1990. 4.9 percent identified themselves with the region in which they lived, 2.8 percent with Europe, and 3.8 percent with the world as a whole. Such narrowness was difficult to combine with the country's aspirations to EU membership, even though the latter was finally approved in a referendum with 91 percent of the vote.

Fifth, Sztompka identifies *paternalization* as a functional substitute for the social trust that is missing in a society. This tendency, which is also pronounced in Lithuania, indicates that people attempt to fight insecurity and anxiety when they become disappointed with the political system by seeking an autocratic leader, i.e., a kind of protective figure who "can restore order" in a society, on whom they can rely with calm, blind trust. EVS data illustrates that the situation in Lithuania was not very optimistic in comparison with other European countries after the first decade of democracy restoration. There was a clear tendency in 1999 to be disappointed with the democratic system coupled with a preference for a strong leader (Charts 14, 15).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Chart 14. Complete Agreement That Democracy Is the Best Form of Government, in percent.<sup>58</sup>

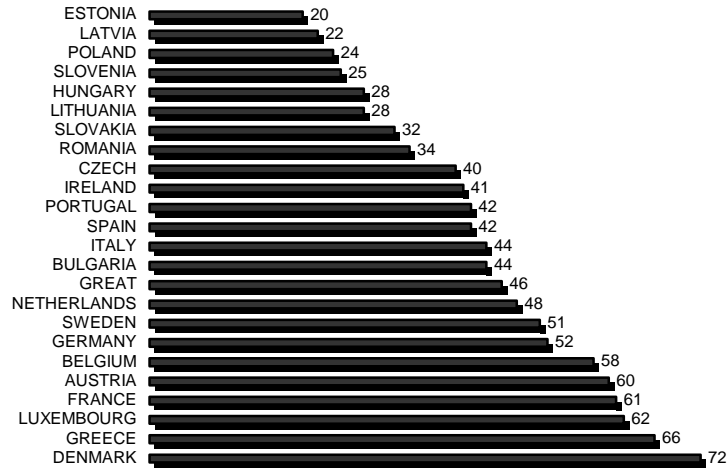
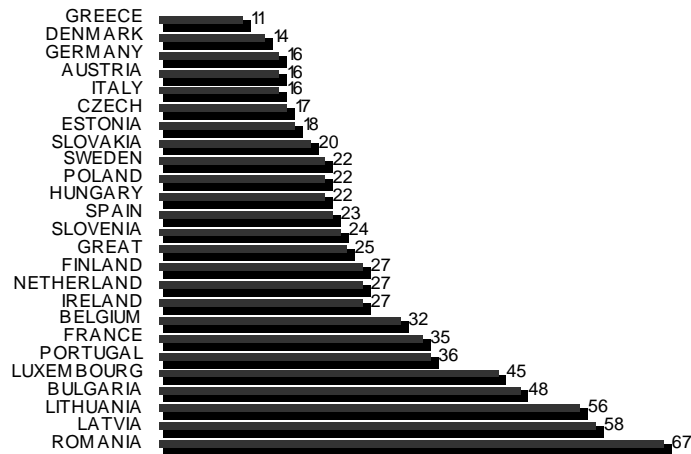


Chart 15. Complete/More or Less Agreement That a Strong Leader Who Need Not Be Concerned with either Parliament or Elections is an Acceptable Polity for One's Own Country, in percent.<sup>59</sup>



<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 1999.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

A desire for paternalistic care opens the door to politicians whose only weapons are populism and demagoguery.<sup>60</sup> This tendency became evident in Lithuania during the December 2001-January 2002 presidential elections when a certain Juozas Petraitis, an Australian businessman unknown in political circles, managed to win 3.7 percent of votes cast in the first round even though his program could be summarized by the empty promise that "life will be better."<sup>61</sup> Even the final victory of Rolandas Paksas could be interpreted as an example of paternalization. Public opinion polls indicated that the incumbent President Valdas Adamkus had consistently enjoyed the greatest popularity among politicians.<sup>62</sup> It was thus only natural to expect that he would win a second term, especially since he was the first in the first round of voting with 35.06 percent of the votes. He lost, however, and the results of an opinion poll taken in January 2003 immediately following the elections provide a possible explanation.<sup>63</sup> While this poll examined the popularity of Lithuanian politicians, the question was raised in two ways, namely, how high they stood in the people's favor, and which of them best represented the people's interests. Adamkus was once again the most popular politician with a 68.9 percent rating, Paksas coming in second, but Paksas was considered the best at representing people's interests with a 27.1 percent rating, Adamkus coming in second. This suggests that people voted for Paksas because of his populist electoral rhetoric, including the use of such catch phrases as "dictatorship of the mafia," his more controversial political background (twice major of Vilnius, twice Prime minister for very short terms), his youthful looks, and his more austere attitude as he promised hope to a disappointed country seeking guidance.

The sixth compensation mechanism discussed by Sztompka is the *externalization of trust*, also evident in Lithuania. In times of uncertainty and insecurity, when people are disappointed by unfulfilled expectations, they may turn away from local institutions, politicians, and products and place their trust in idealized foreign organizations, leaders, and commodities, believing that salvation will come from abroad ("The Americans will save us," "Joining the EU will solve all our economic problems," etc.). It suffices to remember how often foreign products or services have been preferred over local ones, taking "made in..." as proof of quality. More significant in this regard, however, is the

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<sup>60</sup> Sztompka 1999.

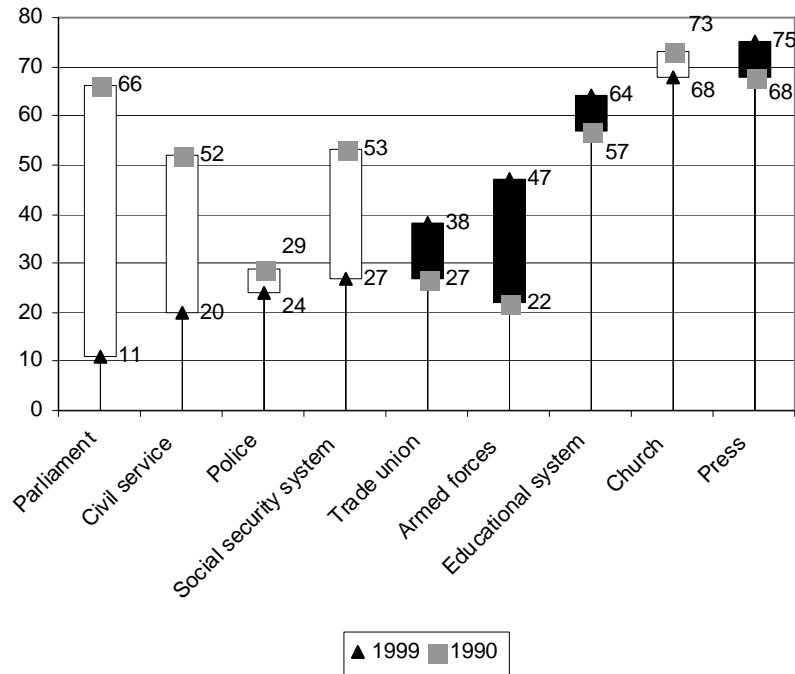
<sup>61</sup> See the data of the Supreme Committee for Elections in Lithuania published at [www.vrk.lt](http://www.vrk.lt). An even more ridiculous example was that of Vytautas Serenas, a TV comic known for his mockery of Lithuanian political life. He was fourth in the first round, winning 7.65 percent of the votes.

<sup>62</sup> See the data published by Vilmorus at [www.5ci.lt/ratings2/lit/](http://www.5ci.lt/ratings2/lit/).

<sup>63</sup> See the data published by Vilmorus in *Lietuvos Rytas*, 25 January 2003, No. 20, pp. 2, 7.

relatively low level of trust that people have delegated to their local institutions and organizations. It must be emphasized that the level of institutional trust in Lithuania is critical (Chart 16).

Chart 15. Level of Confidence in Various Institutions in Lithuania, in percent.<sup>64</sup>



EVS data for 1999 indicated that only three Lithuanian institutions were more trusted than distrusted in comparison with other European countries, namely, the press, the Church, and the educational system. The most distrusted institution in Lithuania was in fact the Parliament, which should instead have been the most important institution of representational democracy. This threatened a legitimation crisis and hindered the process of democracy insofar as society might well not obey the decisions of a Parliament it does not trust.<sup>65</sup> And while the most trusted institutions were the press and the Church, too much confidence in the press combined with the distrust of other institutions could indicate a lack of critical thinking and be dysfunctional. Nor can

<sup>64</sup> EVS research for 1990 and 1999.

<sup>65</sup> Valionis 2001.

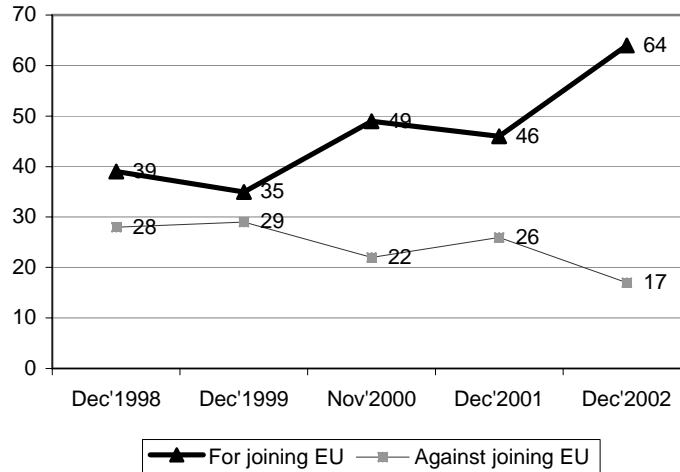
confidence in the Church compensate for a lack of trust in other institutions since it might well give rise to a merely metaphysical sense of security without any resolution of real problems in society. The fact that the most important social institutions did not inspire confidence demonstrates that the state and society were still in opposition after a decade of democracy. This was confirmed by the opinion that fully 77 percent of Lithuanians thought their civil rights were not sufficiently respected.<sup>66</sup>

If local institutions and organizations are not trusted, an eye is cast to foreign organizations. This was a significant element in respect to European Union and NATO membership for Lithuania as well as the other former Communist countries. And while the May 2003 referendum overwhelmingly approved joining the EU, it must be mentioned that the lack of confidence in local institutions for Lithuanians had not been directly replaced by trust in the EU. EVS data for 1999 shows that 38 percent more Lithuanians lacked confidence in the EU than those who did. The situation gradually changed as politicians organized pro-EU support, the mass media educated public attitudes, entrepreneurs produced a new Euro-beer, and the youth enjoyed the free concerts that accompanied the Euro-bus which criss-crossed the country. Pro-EU attitudes in fact grew substantially in the period leading up to the referendum (Chart 17).

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<sup>66</sup> EVS research for 1999.

Chart 17. Determination to Vote for/against EU Membership 1998-2002, in percent.<sup>67</sup>



The state of affairs was similar in respect to NATO, even though NATO was long more popular among Lithuanians than the EU. This support could be explained by the fact that security is a much more important and understandable issue for Lithuanians in light of having such a powerful neighbor as Russia. Data generated by Vilmorus for December 2002 indicated that 65 percent of Lithuanian citizens would then vote for joining NATO, with 20.2 percent opposed and 14.8 percent not voting at all. In general, a full 75.6 percent of Lithuanians approved of Lithuania's entry into NATO in December 2002.

**CONCLUSIONS**

This social diagnosis for Lithuania is incomplete insofar as not all aspects of social life were covered, but even this brief analysis confirms that trust long remained a deficient cultural resource in post-Communist society, and that its revival was much more difficult than was generally recognized. Social capital tends to be self-reinforcing and cumulative, but the absence of trust, cooperation, and civic engagement is also self-reinforcing. Defection,

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<sup>67</sup> Data published by Vilmorus at [www.euro.lt](http://www.euro.lt), the official web site of the European Committee of the Lithuanian Government.

distrust, disorder, and stagnation can feed off one another and lead to social catastrophe.

Accurate information and reliable enforcement are vitally important for successful cooperation, and it is only natural that the performance of institutions depends on how such difficulties are resolved. Hobbes proposed the classic solution of third-party enforcement.<sup>68</sup> That is to say that the state would make people trust each other if they could not do it themselves. But the problem is that, first, coercive enforcement is expensive and unpleasant and, second, the third party must itself be trustworthy for third-party enforcement to work. This was not the case in Lithuania. The best way in which to alter the type of situation from which Lithuania suffered is provided by a combination of rational governmental policies in order to fight the climate of economic insecurity and political inconsistency along with a general "reeducation of society for trust." The construction of trustworthy institutions is more likely to happen from the bottom up than from the top down.

Creating a civil society is like cultivating a garden. It is not a project to be achieved overnight by planting institutions in alien soil, by grafting institutions from abroad, or by drawing up a host of paper organizations that are no more real than plastic plants. It is a process that can be brought to fruition only by the patient cultivation of institutions in soil that Communism for generations sowed with distrust.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Putnam 1993, p. 165.

<sup>69</sup> Rose 1994, p. 29.



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## Chapter XV

# System Support and Trust in Elites in Bulgaria 1992 – 2002

*Vassilka Mireva*

### SYSTEM SUPPORT IN NEWLY DEMOCRATIZED COUNTRIES

Broad and stable political support among citizens is an indispensable condition for the survival of democracy and the stability of political regimes. It is especially important in the newly established democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, where the complex and challenging political, economic, and social transformation became possible only on the basis of substantial public support. In countries like Bulgaria, however, where democratic traditions are relatively weak, it has been questionable whether such support would be strong enough to overcome the inevitable problems in political and economic performance and guarantee the vitality of democratic institutions and the stability of governance. Indeed, threats to the durability of the democratic system have existed not only in the initial period of transformation. The hardships of reform and disappointment with ineffective governance endangered public support for the new system, especially when discontent at poor performance became translated into criticism toward the system itself. As most scholars emphasize, long periods of ineffective governance coupled with the inability to satisfy public expectations can endanger the legitimacy of the system and the survival of the regime.

In the 2001 parliamentary elections in Bulgaria, which had been the fifth since 1989, the majority was won by a political formation that had not existed only three months previously, which was organized around the person of Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the former king of Bulgaria.<sup>1</sup> Neither the political program, nor the persons running for office under the aegis of the National Movement for Simeon II (NDSV) were well known to the public. These events were most surprising in light of the fact that the out-going parliament, in which the United Democratic Forces (UDF) formed the majority, had been the first since 1990 to serve its full term of office. In addition, the government of Ivan Kostov had been perceived, particularly by international observers, to have more or less successfully pursued the necessary reforms that had been systematically delayed by previous administrations. There were thus

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<sup>1</sup> See Barany 2002 for a discussion of this unusual phenomenon.

justifiable grounds for arguing that the voters had punished not only the previous majority, but also the main political parties and the political class as a whole. Furthermore, the highly populist and personalistic character of the vote also raised serious questions for analysts. These included whether this withdrawal of trust in political elites constituted a more lasting trend, and whether it also signified an erosion of support for democratic institutions as well as the democratic regime. Was the support of the citizenry for the democratic regime sufficiently stable to overcome critical periods of discontent and repeated cycles of dissatisfaction and pessimism, or would stable governance itself be undermined, thereby endangering the pursuit of long-term strategic interests?

These are the questions addressed in the following discussion, which will rely in part on data provided by public opinion polls conducted between 1990 and 2002. Political support will be considered in Easton's terms, which distinguish between diffuse and specific support that unfolds on different societal levels. Special attention will be given to the mutual influence between these levels of support as it pertains to the case of Bulgaria.

The work of David Easton makes it necessary to differentiate between the *types* (specific and diffuse support) and the *objects* (the political community, the regime, and the incumbent authorities) of political support. The former distinction, which is considered basic to the political system, makes it possible for citizens to oppose the incumbents in office and yet retain respect for the institutions and the regime as a whole. For example, widespread discontent with the performance of current political authorities poses no serious threat to the basic order as long as confidence in the underlying political order is stable.<sup>2</sup> Specific support requires that the public be able to associate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the performance of specific authorities, thereby holding incumbents responsible for the results of their governance.<sup>3</sup> Diffuse support, which is more basic in that it represents a generalized attachment to political objects, is, in contrast, much more durable, tending to be "more difficult to strengthen, once it is weak, and to weaken, once it is strong."<sup>4</sup> Strong diffuse support for democracy can help the system weather a crisis when there might in fact be little specific support for the particular government or policies. As Easton emphasizes, however, frustration may gradually erode even very strong bonds of attachment if the performance of the incumbent authorities gives rise to prolonged discontent.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Easton 1975, pp. 436-437.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 444.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 445.

Interrelations between diffuse support and specific support are complex, with most scholars acknowledging that it is difficult to instrumentalize the difference between them. This issue is closely related to distinctions between the various objects of support. In this respect, Easton's classical distinction between *support for the political community*, *support for the regime*, and *support for authorities* has been further refined by Pippa Norris, who utilizes a five-fold conceptualization that distinguishes between support for the *political community*, *regime principles*, *regime performance*, *regime institutions*, and *political actors*.<sup>6</sup> This expansion of the explanatory framework was presented as necessary in light of the significant discrepancies observed between attachment to democratic principles and dissatisfaction with the way in which the political system, even in established democracies with long traditions, operates. And this more precise distinction between the objects of support proves especially useful when newer democracies are considered.<sup>7</sup>

In Norris' conceptualization, support for the *political community* (following Easton) is understood as the basic attachment to that community in terms of its boundaries, not as a set of institutional and procedural arrangements. The present discussion will not take up this matter since the borders of Bulgaria have not been challenged in the post-communist period, unlike the situation in certain other countries, especially in South-East Europe. *Regime principles* are understood as representing the basic values of the political system, thus indicating a type of ideal that is supposedly the aim of the specific arrangements and practices of the system. This type of "mid-level" support, where the more general support for democracy and the evaluation of the incumbent government meet, is the most difficult to measure. Support for *regime institutions* is intended to measure attitudes toward institutions in distinction from the evaluations of particular office-holders. Unlike regime principles, it provides important information concerning the public perception of not only various aspects of a regime's practices, but also more general attitudes concerning democracy.<sup>8</sup> Specific support for *political actors* or authorities involves the evaluation of politicians both as a class and as particular leaders. Studies of political support have demonstrated that citizens distinguish clearly between institutional structures and office holders, and that they may deeply mistrust the latter while also having a high level of confidence in the respective offices as such.<sup>9</sup>

These five levels of support reflect a continuum in respect to diffuse and specific support, with the political community attracting the most diffuse

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<sup>6</sup> See Norris 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Inglehart 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Norris 1999.

support and individual politicians gaining the most particular support.<sup>10</sup> The aim of the present discussion is to identify trends in the four levels of support indicated above among the Bulgarian public in the period 1993-2002 in order to thereby provide the basis for evaluating interrelations between general and specific support and, in addition, identify certain important consequences for the political system that stem from this interplay.

In all of the post-communist countries the public granted a high level of support both to democracy as a governing system and to the newly established institutions of liberal democracy during the first stage of transformation. It is significant that it was generalized system support that fostered confidence in the main political institutions.<sup>11</sup> It was necessary, however, to internalize this support, i.e., transform it from "assent" to "consent" in respect to the values and structures of democracy, in order to lay a stable foundation for carrying out the project of democratization.<sup>12</sup>

Positive experience with the practice of democracy is a basic condition for the attainment of such consent.<sup>13</sup> An obvious sign of maturity for a given society is the ability of citizens to distinguish between, on the one hand, the failures of particular officials and, on the other, the inability of the political system itself to resolve emerging economic and political problems. It is also necessary that citizens be able to identify the causes of any shortcomings of the system as such. Democratic development is threatened, however, when poor performance leads to a decrease of support for not only actors, but also for the rules.<sup>14</sup> It is difficult, however, to determine the period of time needed to transform discontent with democratic performance into negative attitudes toward the political institutions and the political regime. It is also difficult to determine the particular circumstances under which this might take place and whether it is likely to occur in a given country.<sup>15</sup>

After more than a decade of experience with democratic practices, various political majorities, changing governments, and individual political actors, sufficient evidence has been accumulated both for observing certain trends in public attitudes on all the levels mentioned, and also for evaluating the stability of diffuse support for regime principles and regime institutions. As was indicated above, such support constitutes a deep and broad foundation that is necessary for steady democratic development.<sup>16</sup> The *New Democracy*

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> See Mishler and Rose 1994 on this point.

<sup>12</sup> Fuchs and Roller 1998, p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Wessels and Klingemann 1998, pp. 13-14

<sup>15</sup> Thomassen and van Deth 1998, p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> Klingemann 1999.

*Barometer* provides a particularly valuable tool for following changes and trends in support over time for democracy and political regimes in respect to the post-communist countries, an issue which has also been addressed in various comparative studies.<sup>17</sup> Data drawn from the *NDB* will be utilized here for identifying trends in the first two levels of support in Bulgaria as well as for drawing comparisons with general trends in Central and Eastern Europe.

## **SYSTEM SUPPORT IN BULGARIA**

In 2000 the political party system in Bulgaria appeared to be stable and political life seemed predictable. Indeed, the reformist UDF government of Prime Minister Ivan Kostov and the leadership of the reformist president Petar Stoyanov were the most highly regarded in the region.<sup>18</sup> However, not only were the 2001 general elections won by the newly established National Movement Simeon II (NDSV), the leader of the Socialist Party (BSP), Georgi Parvanov, defeated President Stoyanov, who had been very popular during his entire term in office.<sup>19</sup> Both of these results could hardly have been foreseen even a few weeks earlier, and very serious questions arose concerning what was happening in Bulgarian society, what the message of the voters was, and how these events should be interpreted within the context of the development of the country after 1989.

Protest voting had not been limited to Bulgaria insofar as Romania and other post-communist countries had also had similar experiences to varying degrees. The paramount question was whether this was a sign of the growing strength of democracy or rather of its increasing fragility.<sup>20</sup> Certain observers commented after the elections that the will needed to sustain the current political system was weakening significantly among a large segment of the population, which was interpreted as a "slide into pre-modern attitudes."<sup>21</sup> An alternative interpretation was that Bulgarian citizens were instead becoming increasingly critical and demanding concerning the performance of democracy, not that they in some way considered the new political system to be no more than "second best."

It is also important to keep in mind that transformation in post-communist countries took place at a time when liberal democracy as a whole was being challenged by a variety of factors, one of which was the growing

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<sup>17</sup> Prominent among such studies are Mishler and Rose 1994, 1996, and Rose 2001, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Krastev 2002, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> Barany 2002; Krastev 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Krastev 2002, p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> The phrase is taken from Dainov 2002.

demands of citizens upon political elites and political institutions.<sup>22</sup> In this light it could be said that the citizens of the new democracies not only adopted democratic practices during the 1990s, but also began to learn how to be critical of their governments.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of this matter, one relevant issue when support for both democracy as well as the political regime is being examined is obviously the extent to which citizens are able to distinguish between an ideal model of democracy and the always imperfect system of governance they observe in practice. Another relevant issue, however, concerns the type of ideal pattern to which they should compare their emerging political regimes. In countries with a long history of democratic traditions, there is an established set of democratic and civic values from which a conception of an ideal type of governance emerges. And as Easton emphasizes, childhood and adult socialization, which is the primary mechanism for reproducing and developing this ideal type, comprise the source for diffuse support of the system.<sup>24</sup> But this component is absent in the case of Bulgaria. The life experiences of the bulk of the population have been bound to a totalitarian system of relationships between citizens and state upon which patterns preserved from the pre-communist past could only have had a minimal impact. Consequently, it is necessary to clarify and elaborate the rather vague set of democratic values that were initially based on a highly simplified and undifferentiated picture of the governing systems in Western liberal democracies. However, not only it is difficult to assess the extent to which a particular system of values has become a fact, by definition this is always a question of qualitative changes in an ongoing process.<sup>25</sup>

Comparisons with the old regime also remained important, but the meaning of this began to change.<sup>26</sup> Polls illustrated that the public viewed the previous regime in an ever more positive light, seeing it in contrast to the weaknesses of the current regime, as it receded further into the past. It goes without saying that this type of evaluation was made in a situation in which a return to communist rule had already become highly improbable. On the other hand, the public came to have a more detailed evaluation of the quality of democracy, along with higher expectations, after more than a decade of change.

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<sup>22</sup> Inglehart 1999.

<sup>23</sup> It is true that there can be only limited comparisons between established democracies and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but such comparisons are also necessary when searching for the basis upon which the public could be able to evaluate democratic practices.

<sup>24</sup> Easton 1975, pp. 445-446.

<sup>25</sup> Kabakchieva 2002 discusses the extent to which it can be said that a system of democratic values has been established in Bulgaria.

<sup>26</sup> See Mishler and Rose 1996 for an examination of this type of comparison.



Trust in the political system needs time to develop, and experience is the basic source for both diffuse and specific support in newer democracies.<sup>27</sup> This fact places a great significance on the performance of the regime, and high expectations on the part of the public for a rapid improvement in both the political and economic systems make it even more difficult for authorities to satisfy voters' demands.

### **COMMITMENT TO REGIME PRINCIPLES<sup>28</sup>**

Bulgarians in 2002 clearly valued the freedoms and opportunities that the transformation had provided, including individual and economic liberties (more than 60 percent and 55 percent respectively) along with political resources (approximately 43 percent). It is more difficult, however, to determine the degree of commitment to regime principles. One of the questions used in both *NDB* and the *New Europe Barometer* (NEB) for this purpose concerns the likelihood of and approval for the suspension of parliament and the political party system. Judging from the answers of Bulgarian respondents as well as the tendencies indicated, there was an obviously strong commitment to regime principles during the entire period in question. 70 percent of the respondents in 1991 and 91 percent in 1998 and 2001 considered it unlikely that parliament and political parties would be suspended, while 79 percent in 1991, 77 percent in 1998, and 75 percent in 2001 answered that they would disapprove of such actions. These figures became even more significant in comparison with the level of satisfaction with democratic practice in the country, presented below, which is one of the lowest in the region.

Less optimistic, especially as a trend, were the results of another very important measurement, namely, the rejection of non-democratic alternatives among the public. Not only were the corresponding figures some of the lowest in Central and Eastern Europe, they actually decreased somewhat over time (56 percent in 1998 and 54 percent in 2001). Moreover, two undemocratic options gained the strongest support, that for a strong leader and that for governance by experts, with the preference for the former relatively high at 29 percent in both 1998 and 2001. The choice for a strong leader appears to be one of the most sensitive indicators of a commitment to democratic values, something that became evident when comparisons were made throughout the region, although

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<sup>27</sup> Easton 1975, p. 449.

<sup>28</sup> The data in this section have been taken from R. Rose and Chr. Haerpfer 1998; Alpha Research, *Sastoianie na obshtestvoto*; and BBSS Gallup International, *Obshtestvenoto mnenie v Bâlgaria 1992-1993*.

it is also significantly influenced by the perceptions of regime performance.<sup>29</sup> Most alarming, however, was the preference for a strong leader registered for 2002 – 44 percent of the population.<sup>30</sup> It thus appears that not only did Bulgarians vote for a highly personalistic option in 2001, they had not been dissuaded by the rather dubious performance of the resulting government. There is evidently a significant level of authoritarian attitudes among the Bulgarian public.

Fig. 1. Commitment to Democracy and Non-Democratic Preferences.<sup>31</sup>

Years	1991	1998	2001	2002*
<b>Democratic commitment</b>				
Suspension of the parliament and the party system unlikely	70	91	91	-
Disapprove the suspension of the parliament and the party system	79	77	75	-
0 undemocratic alternatives chosen	-	56	54	-
<b>Preferences for undemocratic alternatives</b>				
Return to communism	-	24	26	30
Army rule	-	13	13	-
Strong leader	-	29	29	44
Monarchy	21**	18	-	9
Government of experts	-	-	55	61

\* Data from Alpha Research, *Sastoianie na obshtestvoto*

\*\* Data BBSS Gallup International for the period 1992-1993

In respect to the preference for government by experts, which was 55 percent in 2001 and 61 percent in 2002, it is significant that this option was

<sup>29</sup> The corresponding figures for the Czech Republic and Hungary are respectively 13 percent and 18 percent for both 1998 and 2001. The lowest level observed was 11 percent for Croatia in 1998.

<sup>30</sup> The results for 2002 are taken from Alfa Research, *Sastoianie na obshtestvoto* (The State of Society). The question has been phrased in the same way as in *NDB*, with the set of answers differing only slightly. It is significant that the option of military government has been omitted. The authors of the study evidently judged that this was not a relevant option even though it has a certain low level of support.

<sup>31</sup> The data are taken from Mishler and Rose 1994, Rose and Haerpfer 1998, and Rose 2001.

highly valued throughout the region.<sup>32</sup> Bulgarian politicians revealed that they were sensitive to this issue, and most of the 2001 electoral campaigns included statements concerning the supposed expert knowledge of the candidates. However, this preference has much more to do with mistrust of the political class and with the values placed on the performance of the elites than with actual expert knowledge. Giving power to experts is traditionally viewed, at least in respects to Dahl's categories, as rather threatening to democracy since experts escape public control insofar as they have no necessary connection to any of the various social interests. In the newly established democracies of Central and Eastern Europe they are evidently viewed as an alternative to politicians who lack the expertise to govern effectively.

### **SUPPORT FOR REGIME PERFORMANCE**

Perceptions of regime performance are crucial for fostering diffuse support for the political system. This is particularly valid for newly established democracies, in which the commitment to civic and democratic values is not sufficiently internalized and can be easily undermined by negative experiences with liberal democratic practice. The other important factor influencing the perception of political performance is public demand for rapid political and economic improvement, which is directed both to the authorities and to the system as a whole. Indeed, many scholars in the early 1990s were convinced that reversals in democratic transformation were possible in part because of these hard-to-satisfy demands. They also looked to cultural reasons, including the highly limited democratic traditions of most Central and East European countries, as threatening the democratic transformation.

Bulgaria has experienced no serious threat to democracy during preparations for EU membership, but its democratic system has proven to be rather inefficient.<sup>33</sup> It would be far too optimistic, however, to expect that public disappointment with the status quo would have had no effect on the level of support for the democratic system, and there is in fact evidence to that effect in the comparison of trends in Bulgarian public opinion with those of other Central and East European countries.<sup>34</sup> For example, only 27 percent of Bulgarian respondents declared that they were satisfied when asked about the fashion in which democracy operated in the country. This was one of the lowest

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<sup>32</sup> *NDB* raised this question only in 2001. The mean value is 61 percent. More than half of the population chose this option in ten out of the twelve countries surveyed.

<sup>33</sup> Barany 2002, pp. 144-145.

<sup>34</sup> See Krastev 2002, p. 40, concerning the link between public disappointment and support for democratic reforms.

rates in the entire region, where only three countries have levels of satisfaction lower than one-third.<sup>35</sup> Also worth mentioning is the fact that the number of those who are not at all satisfied with democratic practice in the country is 30 percent, which is the highest in the region. Moreover, 40 percent of the respondents stated that the worst possible scenario had taken place when asked to evaluate the country's development, with only 17 percent replying that it had been rather favorable.<sup>36</sup> The public have obviously given very low marks to the actual performance of the political regime in spite of the more or less smooth operation. As students of the democratic process in the country have pointed out, this provides clear evidence that the most serious problem over the years in respect to democracy in Bulgaria is not its presence or absence, but rather its quality.

Also worthy of consideration was the level of optimism concerning the political regime, not least of all because it plummeted from 78 percent to 58 percent between 1998 to 2001. Although optimism concerning the future of the governing system rose in most of the countries in question, in some cases substantially, the opposite in fact took place in Bulgaria and Slovakia. And this trend became more meaningful in comparison with evaluations of the current and former regimes. On average, positive evaluations of the current regime in Central and Eastern Europe rose from 47 percent to 61 percent, with over 20 point increases in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia. In Bulgaria, in contrast, not only did approval ratings remain virtually the same, they were accompanied by a slight increase in the numbers of those expressing disapproval. Evaluations of the former regime reveal a similar trend, rising from 43 percent in 1998 to 57 percent in 2001 with disapproval falling from 46 percent to 31 percent. In Bulgaria, however, approval figures for the former, current, and future political regimes are virtually identical at 57 percent, 59 percent, and 58 percent respectively. But although these ratings were positive, Bulgaria was the only country in 2001 in which expectations concerning the future of the political regime were lower, even if only marginally, than the evaluation of the actual state of affairs. In all other Central and East European countries expectations were at least 7 percent higher than evaluations of the existing regimes.

One of the most obvious reasons for this relatively pessimistic turn in public opinion was the failure of successive governments to successfully implement economic reforms and ensure a visible improvement in living standards. Economic considerations continue to be very important in respect to choices and attitudes, and Bulgarians consistently indicate both dissatisfaction

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<sup>35</sup> This question was posed only in Rose 2001. The scale of answers is very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied.

<sup>36</sup> Alpha Research, *Sastoianie na obshtestvoto*.

with the current economic situation as well as skepticism concerning developments in the foreseeable future. But purely political issues were also crucial in this regard, and pessimism concerning the possibility of influencing the political process through collective action was very high. For example, not only did less than 20 percent of the population believe that responsible authorities could be influenced in their decisions by collective action, more than two-thirds were convinced that such influence was impossible. In line with this skepticism was the reluctance of 49 percent of voters to participate in elections held only one year after highly successful parliamentary elections. This was a somewhat disturbing development when compared to public attitudes in 1992 and 1993 concerning the value of elections, when approximately 70 percent of respondents viewed them as an important form of political participation, insofar as such disillusionment reinforces cynicism in public attitudes as well as alienation from political institutions. And as events in 2001 demonstrated, elections can be partially transformed into an instrument of protest instead of being the means to shape governance and the direction of development of the country. This type of perception of the resources provided by the political system eventually weakens the basic expectations associated with democratic governance.

The statistics cited illustrate that most citizens indeed remained very supportive of democratic regime principles. Nevertheless, the 2002 evaluations clearly revealed an increased preference for the non-democratic alternatives mentioned. There also was a certain stagnation in the general support for the governing system that threatened to gradually erode support in the future.

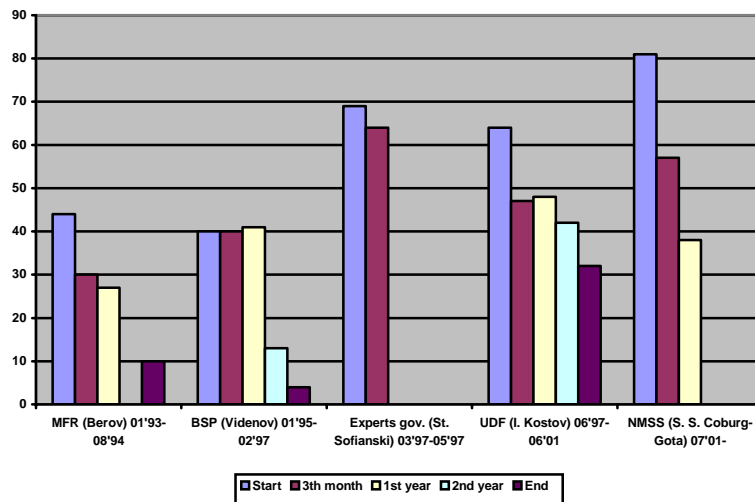
## **SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONS**

Not only is support for institutions a highly complex issue, it is very difficult to differentiate between support for institutions as a basic element of the system and approval for the performance of particular office-holders. This fact renders trends more meaningful than evaluations at particular points in time. Moreover, not only must conclusions be drawn with great care, they must always be made with specific reference to the particularities of a given country's political processes.

We will here discuss support for the six major political institutions that are most closely connected to state power, namely, parliament, government, president, army, police, and the judiciary. Trends in public approval for these institutions, which are characterized by strongly differing fluctuations, will be examined for the years 1993-2002. It must first be noted that approval for those institutions considered more important in decision-making processes, such as parliament or the government, has been much more volatile than approval for those that are less influential in this respect, such as the army, which has been

much more stable. However, it is rather difficult to make generalizations in this regard since only one parliament and one government have succeeded in serving their full terms of office during the period of time in question, namely, the UDF-majority parliament of 1997-2001 and the Kostov government.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, certain inter-election cycles can be observed that are characterized by an initial level of public confidence that is usually higher than the actual level of voter support, a falling level of support as the public become rather critical of both particular parliamentary decisions and government policies, and a substantial decline in the final period before the next elections.

Table 1. Support for Particular Governments.<sup>38</sup>



In general, approval of Parliament has been consistently lower in Bulgaria than approval for the government. This type of situation has not been typical of the Central and East European countries, in which these two levels of support have been almost identical.<sup>39</sup> This difference is not positive insofar as Parliament may be spoken of as the basic institution in a democratic system since it is intended to be the body most representative of the public. It is significant, however, there has been no general decline over time in support for

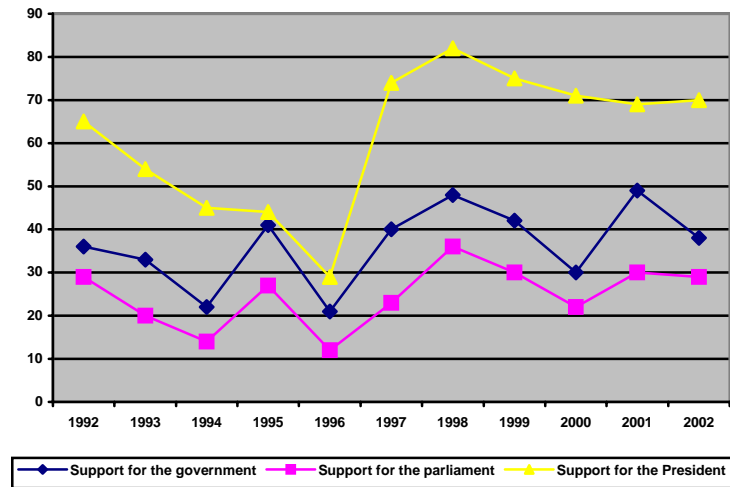
<sup>37</sup> Early general elections were avoided in 2005 only through involved political bargaining that prevented a no confidence vote and a fall of the government.

<sup>38</sup> The sources for the data are BBSS Gallup International, 1992-1997; NCIOM, 1998-2000; and Alfa Research, 2001-2002.

<sup>39</sup> This has been statistically verified by both *NDB* and *NEB*.

either the Parliament or the government, even though there have been numerous fluctuations resulting from particular events, decisions, and policies. Moreover, the substantial increases in public support after the 1997 and 2001 parliamentary elections can easily be read as expressions of overly high expectations directed towards the newly-elected office holders. This unfortunately contributes to instability in governance insofar as repeated cycles of high expectations followed by disappointment with practical achievements inevitably generate disappointment with the performance of the political system and lead voters to radical changes in their preferences.

Another specific feature of the Bulgarian public has been their extremely high level of support for the President, which has not only been significantly higher than that for the Prime Minister, but has often been double the support for the government as a whole. The simplest explanation would point to the differing competences of the particular branches of the executive, namely, the limited power of the President in contrast with the complete responsibility for unpopular measures or unsuccessful policies that must be borne by the government. But also important is the degree to which power is personalized in the public's perception, which is very visible in respect to the mutual support between the office of the President and the particular holder of the office. For example, it was Zheliu Zhelev, the first Bulgarian President and the personification of opposition to communism, who had made the institution popular among the public. The public also highly appreciated the role played by Petar Stoyanov, Zhelev's successor, during the political crisis in early 1997 soon after he took office. On the other hand, the prestige of the institution provides support for the particular holders of the office. Both Stoyanov and the current President, Georgi Parvanov, experienced a substantial increase in popularity after being elected. Stoyanov had not been well known to the public at large until the end of 1996, and Parvanov had a much lower rating in November 2001, when presidential elections were held, than he did some months later. In both cases, however, the voters' choice expressed dissatisfaction with the incumbent rather than positive expectations about the new candidate.

Table 2. Support for the Legislature and the Executive.<sup>40</sup>

Support for the institutions of the army, the police, and the judiciary has had a rather different character. One of the specific features of the process of democratization in most Central and East European countries has been the fact that the army has played no significant role. Since the Bulgaria public has greatly appreciated this apolitical behavior on the part of the army, support for the latter has been very high. More complex are public attitudes concerning the police. On the one hand, citizens have associated this institution with the performance of the government; on the other, the police and the judiciary have been responsible for implementing the law, which has been one of the weakest aspects of East European post-communist democracies. And since reducing criminality and forcing a higher respect for the law are some of the main priorities in public opinion, both reliance upon and criticism of the police would be logical.<sup>41</sup> But although criminality remains a significant problem in Bulgaria, support for the police has generally been somewhat higher than support for the government. This trend, coupled with a high level of public support for the army, suggests that respect for authoritarian institutions has remained strong among the Bulgarian public. There are even signs that it increased towards the end of the period being discussed, partly due to particular

<sup>40</sup> The sources for the data are BBSS Gallup International, 1992-1997; NCIOM, 1998-2000; and Alfa Research, 2001-2002.

<sup>41</sup> See Alpha Research, *Sastoianie na obshtestvoto*, p. 19, for data concerning public attitudes towards the police.



events and partly because of the popularity of the Chief Secretary of the police. But more basic reasons also played a role is this increased support, including a feeling of insecurity among the population and the perception of ineffective governance.<sup>42</sup> This trend is the opposite of that in established democracies, where a high level of perceived security and growing post-modern attitudes have led to a loss of confidence in authoritative and hierarchical institutions and fostered a turn to alternative values that emphasize a new quality of democracy.<sup>43</sup>

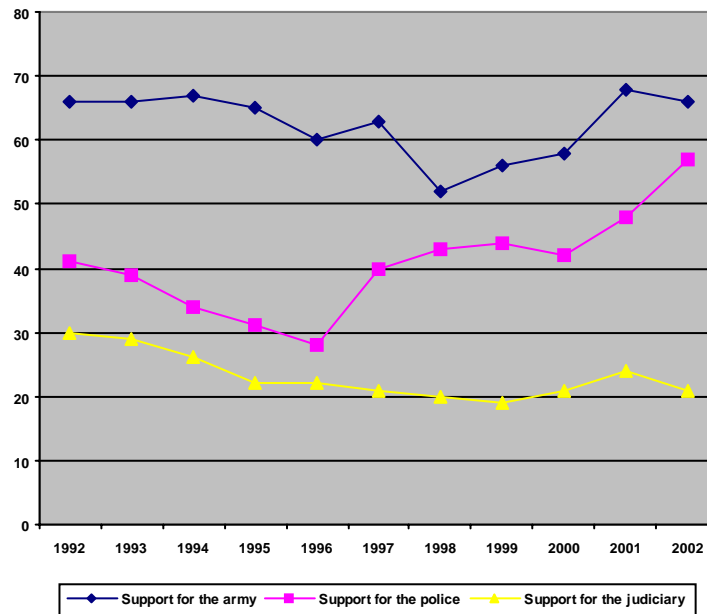
There is also a specific connection between this trend and the low level of trust in the judiciary, which not only was consistently lower than confidence in the police during the period in question, but also fell in the years leading up to 2002. Indeed, the performance of the judiciary continues to be one of the problem areas that could delay EU membership. Not only did the public clearly hold the judiciary responsible for the unsatisfactory level of the rule of law in the country, the respondents ranked criminality and corruption immediately after economic difficulties when asked to list the most important problems facing the country. More than half also viewed "the strict executing of the law and the restriction of corruption" as the most important means for improving the situation in the country.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the higher level of public reliance on authoritative institutions in comparison with the judiciary is revealing in respect to the unsatisfactory situation of Bulgarian democracy.

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<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the issue of insecurity see Krastev 2002, pp. 46-47.

<sup>43</sup> Inglehart 1999.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Table 3. Support for the Army and the Police.<sup>45</sup>

### CONFIDENCE IN POLITICAL ELITES

Bulgaria is one of the most obvious cases of a transformation that was initiated and to a large extent controlled in its initial stages by the elites. Since there in fact had been relatively little broad opposition in the country to the communist regime, many observers viewed the future of the new regime as rather uncertain in the early 1990s insofar as strong public support for the democratic regime and a solid commitment to democratic ideals were crucial in order to pursue necessary but painful reforms while ensuring a necessary degree of stability. Also needed was trust in the political elites, who had to both realize reforms and bear responsibility for possible negative developments. A significant obstacle in this regard was the lack of experience with democratic practices on the part of the elites as well as the wider public. It was also necessary to overcome the legacy of the paternalistic style of the communist state, which had socialized citizens for passivity and obedience. Another very

<sup>45</sup> See BBSS Gallup International, 1992-1997; NCIOM, 1998-2000; and Alpha Research, 2001-2002.

important problem was the high level of distrust toward the party and the governing elite that had been inherited from the communist past.<sup>46</sup>

Both segments of the new political elite, namely, former communist functionaries and newly emerged oppositionists, needed legitimacy, which had been provided only in part by the 1990 Round Table.<sup>47</sup> The anti-communist elite consisted of a few dissidents, more or less known to the public, along with a growing number of people whose only advantage was that they had not belonged to either the communist party or the *nomenklatura*.<sup>48</sup> Along with the problem of legitimacy, the mechanism for selecting potential political leaders from this group had also not yet been defined.<sup>49</sup> In this type of emerging situation, performance would be crucial for establishing public confidence in the new leadership, not least of all because of the strong public sensitivity to the difficult economic conditions.<sup>50</sup>

The anticipation of speedy economic improvement proved to be a serious challenge that successive Bulgarian governments consistently failed to meet. Nevertheless, public opinion polls indicate no significant decline in the public approval ratings of the political elite as a whole for the years in question. This was due in part to an already low level of support of between 20 percent and 30 percent that remained steady, although interesting tendencies can be observed in its dynamics.<sup>51</sup> For example, politicians in power clearly enjoyed greater support than those in the opposition, but confidence in them rapidly declined, leading to their failure to be reelected. Obvious examples in this regard include former President Zhelev and former Prime Ministers Zhan Videnov and Ivan Kostov. And while it might be expected that there would be a turn to alternative political options after periods of unsuccessful governmental performance, it is alarming that alternatives were often sought among populist politicians who rapidly gained support in times of crisis. This was even the case with such politicians as Georges Ganchev, whose qualifications and proposed political programs had already been previously discredited.

The negative answers of the respondents are quite revealing. For example, 50 percent stated in 2002 that most of the politicians for whom they had voted disappointed them, while 53 percent replied that no politician

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<sup>46</sup> Rose 1996, pp. 135-136.

<sup>47</sup> Kaleinska 1995, p. 68.

<sup>48</sup> Georgiev 1996.

<sup>49</sup> On the former issue see Dimitrova 1997, p. 38; on the latter, Tzanov 1997, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Dimitrova 1997, p. 42.

<sup>51</sup> The polls and surveys for particular years differ in respect to the number and selection of politicians included. There are also differences between the various polling agencies.

represented their views. 70 percent of the public in 1999, 2000, and 2002, and 60 percent in 2001 (the year of the previous general elections) did not associate their hopes for a better life with any of the political leaders. Such disappointment and pessimism creates a significant threat to institutional stability.<sup>52</sup>

Another very important fact revealed by public opinion surveys is the degree to which political institutions have been personified by specific politicians. Insofar as the level of confidence in such institutions as Parliament, the government, and political parties has consistently been somewhat lower than public confidence in the leaders of those institutions, political leaders have an important influence on public perceptions concerning institutional performance. One obvious example concerns the government of Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, but the same also holds true for the Chairman of the Parliament, whose role is much less exposed than those of the other institutional leaders. Whether such influence is positive or negative is highly dependent on the personal qualities of the politician in question, but it is nevertheless potentially destabilizing when support for a given institution depends on an individual. Moreover, this type of personification of institutions is conducive to the development of an autocratic style of governance, especially when there is a high level of public discontent with political and economic performance. Indeed, certain analysts argue that the Kostov government (1997-2001) could justifiably be described as elitist and authoritarian to a significant degree, albeit with limiting internal and external factors.<sup>53</sup> There apparently continues to be a significant potential for such practices that is linked to expectations for more effective governance. This once again confirms that support for a democratic regime is still not fully stabilized in Bulgaria.

## CONCLUSION

The Bulgarian democratic regime has passed through several periods of political crisis since 1989, and it has proven itself to be resistant to major anti-democratic threats. The role of the elites has commonly been emphasized in this achievement, but the support of the citizenry has also been crucial to the stabilization of the regime.<sup>54</sup> Both commitment to regime principles as well as support for basic political institutions illustrate that there is a wide-spread diffuse support for the democratic system of governance. Moreover, there has been no serious decline in this support in spite of prolonged discontent with the

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<sup>52</sup> See Alpha Research, *Sastoianie na obshtestvoto*, p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> Kabakchieva 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Barany 2002 is a typical example of those who stress the importance of the elites in democratic change and stabilization.

performance of particular office holders and of the regime as a whole. It is alarming, however, that public evaluations of the system stagnated while they were slowly improving in virtually all other Central and East European countries. Such stagnation, and even a certain degree of backsliding, resulted from the consistent failure of political elites in Bulgaria to meet expectations for efficient government and successful reforms.

There has been no long-term decline in public support for various institutions and incumbent office holders, but it has stabilized at relatively low levels. Institutions should be able to lead the way in generating support for office-holders, but the latter has been inconsistent as well as very sensitive to failure, particularly concerning economic policies. There have also been specific inter-election cycles of initially high levels of confidence followed by public disappointment that have had a destabilizing effect on the governing regime, making it difficult to pursue long-term strategies. And since the public primarily blame the elites for unsatisfactory regime performance, populist leaders can rapidly gain support in critical situations, even though an authoritative style of governance can never meet with long-term and widespread support. Finally, although a turn to non-democratic political alternatives is highly improbable in Bulgaria, the quality of democracy is much lower than it should be and there is a clear demand for improvement in this regard among the broader public.

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## INDEX

### A

- Absolute Spirit, 9
  - Totality, 10
- Adamkus, Valdas, 85, 122, 331, 354, 368
- Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD), 253, 267
- Antall, József, 223, 270
- anticipatory identity, 17, 28-31
  - desired social identity, 28, 30
  - possible social identity, 21, 23-25, 28-31
- anti-Semitism, 222
- authenticity, 14, 226, 335
- authoritarianism, 10, 25, 58, 107, 110, 119, 127-128, 131, 135, 145, 170, 243, 259, 272, 366, 372, 376
- autonomy, 2, 4, 66, 69, 70, 75, 93-94, 96, 132-133, 158, 163, 170, 181, 195, 300-305, 308-320
- autopoiesis, 11, 14
  - autopoietic system, 11-12, 14, 52-53

### B

- Balkans, 2, 23, 35, 36, 40, 42, 49, 50, 378
  - Central Balkans, 35-36, 38, 40, 42
- Baroness Winterbourne, 199, 204, 206-207, 210
- Bell, Daniel, 156-157, 164, 174, 183
- Bessarabia, 69
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 11, 32, 156, 159-163, 181-186
- Bozóki, András*, 4, 3, 215-216, 219, 223, 241, 269-270, 273-274
- Brazauskas, Algirdas, 85, 90, 92, 95, 97
- Brubaker, Rogers, 57, 62-63, 66, 68, 71-72, 80
- Bukovina, 69
- Bulgarian Socialist Party, 363

### C

- Čalfa, Marian, 255, 270

- capital, 98, 106, 156, 160-162, 189, 220, 224-225, 232, 250, 329, 347-348, 371
  - capital assets, 156, 160
  - capital conversion, 160
  - cultural capital, 157, 159-160, 162, 182
  - economic capital, 160, 162, 167, 172, 182
  - historical capital, 334
  - social capital, 160, 167, 343-348
  - symbolic capital, 160, 174
- capitalism, 59, 137, 180, 222, 237, 322, 346
- caste, 220, 223, 226, 229
- Catholic Church, 85, 96, 169, 247, 286-287, 326, 331-332, 335, 364, 369
- Center Party, 231
- Central and Eastern Europe, 1-3, 57, 62-64, 78-79, 81, 85, 102-103, 105, 121, 131, 137, 145, 156, 166, 183-184, 191, 210-214, 241, 248, 275, 297, 325, 327-328, 343, 351-352, 358-359, 363-368, 378-379
- Central Europe, 102-103, 282
  - Czech Republic, 3, 104-105, 134, 136, 138-139, 141, 143-144, 146, 148-152, 186, 199, 244, 249, 255, 257-259, 265, 271, 285, 301, 307, 354, 366, 368
  - Hungary, 2-3, 57, 65, 67, 75-82, 104, 134, 136, 138-139, 141-144, 146, 148-152, 183, 185, 191, 199, 211, 215, 219-228, 231-243, 247, 268-270, 273-276, 284-285, 301-302, 307, 366, 368
  - Poland, 3, 86-87, 92, 94, 96, 104-105, 134, 136-139, 141, 143-152, 166, 169, 178, 183, 185-186, 199, 211, 219, 234, 243-244, 247, 249, 251, 254-255, 259-265, 269, 271-277, 284-288, 297, 301-302, 307, 328, 340, 349, 365, 373, 377
  - Slovakia, 104-105, 134, 136, 140-141, 149, 151-152, 219, 239, 285, 302, 307, 354-355, 368

- Slovenia, 104, 134, 136-146, 148-152, 183, 199, 212, 307, 368
- Central European University, 80-83, 241, 273-274, 276-277, 326, 330
- Civic Forum (OF), 9, 15, 19, 36, 39, 45, 86, 101, 108, 114, 135, 142, 145, 165, 171, 192, 200, 218, 221, 228, 244, 246, 249, 254-256, 295, 304, 314, 327, 330, 338, 344, 348-349
- civil society, 4-5, 74, 133, 156, 168-170, 176-182, 190, 200-201, 211, 281, 284, 344, 372
- civil society ideology, 179
- civil sphere, 176, 180
- post-communist civil society, 179
- civilizational role, 39, 45
- collective activities, 330
- collectivism, 304, 306, 314-322
- colonization, 44
- communications boundary, 50
- communism, 3, 5, 58, 63, 147-148, 155, 171, 180, 192, 200, 208, 223, 235, 244, 249, 252, 259, 265-266, 269, 301-302, 327, 366, 371
- communist crimes, 244, 249, 259, 262, 271
- communist experience, 302, 320
- communist nations, 303
- communist regimes, 58, 67, 69, 90, 109, 112, 125, 147-149, 156, 167-169, 179, 181, 197, 246, 248-249, 251, 257, 262-263, 269, 302, 320, 335, 374
- Euro-communism, 159
- post-Soviet states, 103
- communist party, 69, 219, 220, 247, 249-256, 260, 270-271, 375
- Communist Party of Lithuania, 85-98, 109
- Communist Party of the Czech Republic and Moravia, 218
- Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 88, 92, 94, 97, 99
- Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, 282
- compromise, 89, 93, 110, 132, 255, 327, 338-339
- conformism, 163
- consensus, 4, 96, 132, 218, 233-234, 240, 259, 261, 265, 269-270, 327
- conservatism, 4, 300-306, 309, 312-322
- corruption, 133, 198-199, 209, 225, 232, 237, 254, 348, 352-356, 373
- cosmopolitan, 110, 117, 164, 175, 181, 224, 239
- cosmopolitanism, 114, 158, 164
- critical discourse, 3, 156-159, 163, 176, 180-182
- cross-cultural psychology, 299
- cross-cultural study, 299-303, 307
- cross-cultural comparison, 299, 303
- cross-cultural research, 281
- Csurka, István, 221-229, 233, 242
- cultural regions, 304
- culture, 1, 4-5, 21-25, 37, 59-61, 63, 66, 68, 72-73, 94, 156-159, 164, 176, 180-181, 236, 239, 245, 281, 289, 303-308, 312-314, 317-318, 320, 321, 327, 343-344, 348
- bloc culture, 327
- cultural differences, 299, 320, 322
- cultural elite, 163-165, 182
- cultural legacy, 327
- cultural organizations, 66, 74, 169
- cultural pattern, 37, 102, 136, 306, 321-322
- cultural reproduction, 59, 161, 163
- Kulturkampf*, 238, 240
- official culture, 61
- D**
- Dahl, Robert A., 133-134, 137, 142, 153, 246, 273, 367
- decision-making process, 75, 80, 218, 330, 338-339, 369
- decision-making mechanism, 338
- decommunization, 3, 243-244, 249, 255, 263, 266-267, 270-271
- Deleuze, Gilles, 14
- democracy
- consensual democracy, 216
- constitutional democracy, 232, 237
- democratic consensus, 215, 217, 220, 229
- democratic consolidation, 131, 133, 180, 215, 234, 236, 238, 240, 246

- democratic institutions, 132, 135-138, 145, 175, 210, 220, 240, 246, 303, 359-360
- democratic integration, 218-219
- democratic order, 177-178, 327
- democratic regimes, 3, 131-132, 139, 148, 152, 247, 326
- democratization, 74, 94, 131, 171, 176, 180-182, 208, 220, 252, 270, 325, 344, 348, 362, 372
- diffuse support for, 360-362, 364, 367, 376
- ethno-democracy, 220, 228
- liberal democracy, 47, 131-135, 138-139, 143-144, 180, 230, 233, 238-239, 362-363
- majority democracy, 216
- pluralist democracy, 215
- pluralistic democracy, 159
- self-rule, 325
- specific support for, 360-361, 365
- Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, 66, 69, 74-75, 82
- diachronic analysis, 12
- dictatorship, 89, 159, 215-216, 231, 237, 368
- donations, 288-290, 296
- donors, 289, 293, 296
- E**
- Eastern Europe, 4, 123, 151, 165, 176, 180, 185, 188, 207-209, 213, 273-277, 283, 287, 299, 301-303, 306, 317-318, 321, 328, 344, 367-368, 370, 372, 377
- Azerbaijan, 88, 134, 137-145, 148, 152
- Belarus, 103-104, 135, 137-144, 146, 148-152, 284-285, 355
- Bulgaria, 4-5, 21-23, 25-26, 31-33, 40, 44, 57, 71, 103-104, 134-136, 138-144, 146-147, 149-152, 199, 219, 284-285, 286, 301, 306-307, 314-315, 317-323, 355, 359-368, 370-378
- Croatia, 104, 134-136, 138-139, 142-147, 150, 152, 199, 239, 366
- Estonia, 96, 103-104, 134, 136, 138-141, 143-144, 146-147, 149-152, 284, 307, 355
- Georgia, 134, 137-138, 140, 143-145, 148, 152, 301, 307, 320
- Romania, 2-3, 57, 65-71, 74-79, 82-83, 103-104, 134-152, 187-194, 198-214, 219, 227, 241, 284-285, 363
- Soviet Union, 1, 69, 88-91, 94, 96, 98-99, 131, 137, 147, 168-170, 183, 213, 285, 301, 351
- Easton, David, 360-361, 364-365, 378
- egalitarianism, 4, 300-305, 309-321
- ego, 15-18
- possible self, 24, 30-31
- self, 11-21, 24-25, 28, 30-31, 41, 44-45, 47-52, 54, 63, 66, 69, 72, 75-76, 79, 89, 96, 103-105, 108, 114, 116, 118, 121, 156-158, 162, 166, 170, 173-177, 180, 219, 240, 246, 268, 281-282, 286, 300, 304, 306, 310, 315, 317-318, 320-321, 325, 338, 346, 371
- self-image, 24-25
- Transcendental Ego, 18
- elites, 5, 25, 63, 90-92, 98, 131, 132, 136, 145, 157, 163-164, 179-182, 209, 236-237, 248, 264, 267, 272, 325, 367, 374, 376-377
- counter-elite, 91, 97
- peripheral elites, 89
- political elite, 2, 3, 66, 77, 85, 171, 182, 221, 224, 233, 241, 250, 254, 265, 360, 364, 374-375, 377
- sub-elite, 86, 90-93
- empirical existence, 15
- empirical consciousness, 15
- environment, 5, 11, 13, 18, 49, 51, 69, 94, 106, 145, 195, 211, 271, 284, 286, 291, 300, 303-305, 311, 317, 327, 329, 339, 348, 354
- Erikson, Erik, 41-42, 50, 54
- ethnic cleansing, 61, 220
- EU accession, 207, 211, 325, 330
- European civilization, 1, 36, 39, 42-49, 52-53
- European culture, 4, 23, 37-38, 308, 311, 314, 319, 320-321

European culture  
 European poles, 39  
 European integration, 4, 21, 28-30, 59,  
 76, 187, 194, 204, 208, 241, 299, 303,  
 306, 320-322  
 European Union, 1, 3, 5, 37, 57, 64, 70,  
 76-79, 85, 124, 135, 139-141, 151-  
 153, 180, 187-194, 196-197, 199,  
 201-214, 219, 226, 233, 325, 330,  
 339, 344, 366, 368, 370-371, 367, 373  
 Accession Partnerships, 190, 193,  
 201-202, 214  
 acquis communautaire, 191-192, 201,  
 204  
 European Values Survey, 101, 104-105,  
 111-112, 117, 282, 344, 349-358,  
 361-362, 364, 366, 369-370  
 Europeanization, 1, 3, 187-188, 211-214  
 anticipatory Europeanization, 188  
*ex post facto* laws, 252  
 exclusionist concept, 220, 230  
 xenophobic rhetoric, 221  
 expectations, 25, 96, 112, 146, 151, 228,  
 245, 319, 325, 329, 332, 333, 336,  
 343, 348-349, 368, 364, 368-369,  
 371, 376, 377  
 public expectations, 329, 334, 336,  
 359

**F**

Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party, 221, 224-  
 233, 235, 237-240  
 Flacks, Dick, 165, 184  
 Freedom Union, 267  
 Fukuyama, Francis, 282, 297

**G**

Ganchev, Georges, 375  
 ghettoization, 352, 358, 366  
 globalization, 223, 224, 321  
 Goffman, Erving, 37, 47-48, 55  
 Gorbachev, Mikael, 89, 94, 169  
 Gouldner, Alvin W., 156-162, 164, 167,  
 181, 184  
 Greater Romania Party, 69  
 Greece, 44, 104-105, 152, 209, 211-214,  
 307

Guattari, Pierre-Félix, 14  
 Gyurcsány, Ferenc, 221, 241

**H**

harmony, 4, 241, 300, 302, 304-306, 310-  
 321  
 Havel, Vaclav, 176, 277  
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 9, 12,  
 32  
 Heidegger, Martin, 10, 16, 27, 32  
 Herodotus, 36, 45-46  
 hierarchy, 4, 25, 27, 160-161, 237, 271,  
 300-306, 309, 311-314, 316-321  
 historical memory, 22  
 Hobbes, Thomas, 372  
 Holocaust, 222  
 Hume, David, 346-347  
 Hungarian Democratic Forum, 223, 225,  
 230, 234, 238  
 Hungarian Life and Justice Party, 218-  
 233, 238  
 Hungarian Socialist Party, 219-225, 230-  
 233, 240-241  
 Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, 220  
 Husserl, Edmund, 10, 16-19, 32

**I**

idealization, 9, 19  
 identity, 1-2, 5, 9-26, 28-32, 35-45, 47-  
 48, 50, 52, 54, 59-61, 76, 78, 103,  
 108, 111-112, 116, 120-121, 156,  
 164-165, 169, 172-173, 175-176, 180,  
 187, 215, 218, 220, 227, 238, 240,  
 251, 281, 311, 321, 366  
 authentic identity, 9  
 authoritarian identity, 10  
 cultural identity, 22, 37-38, 71  
 ethnic identities, 21, 90  
 ethnic identity, 93, 110  
 European identity, 1, 21, 28-29, 35,  
 37-38, 41, 52-54  
 historical identity, 22  
 identity crisis, 13, 40, 42  
 identity formation, 14, 36, 41  
 individualism, 10, 29, 304, 306, 314,  
 318-319, 322  
 lack of identification, 41

modal personality, 10  
 negative identity, 35, 41-42  
 personal identity, 251-252, 271, 310  
 primary identity, 19-20, 44, 51  
 prolonged identity formation, 41  
 proto-identity, 15-18  
 secondary identity, 18  
 self-concept, 21, 24-25, 30  
 social identity, 21, 22, 24-25, 28-31,  
 37-38, 53  
 total identification, 42, 53  
 total identity, 42  
 transcendental identity, 15  
 ideology, 27, 58, 64, 157-161, 164, 167,  
 170, 179, 217-218, 221-222, 247,  
 304, 306  
 ideological hegemony, 181  
 ideological positions, 123, 161  
 Independent Smallholders Party, 225-  
 226, 233, 238  
 individualism, 10, 29, 304, 306, 314-322  
 embedded individual, 318, 320-322  
 Inglehart, Ronald, 102, 121-124, 133,  
 142, 153, 325, 340, 347, 361, 364,  
 372-373, 378  
 injustice, 262, 349  
 institution, 4-5, 29, 64, 66-67, 70-76, 79-  
 80, 86, 88, 91-93, 132-137, 145, 168-  
 169, 177-178, 187-220, 234-236, 246,  
 248, 263, 265-267, 282, 296, 325-  
 339, 344-345, 350-351, 356-358, 360-  
 364, 369-377  
 institutional reform, 325, 343  
 Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-  
 Accession, 190  
 instrumental qualities, 332  
 intellectuals, 3, 64, 69, 73, 85, 155-182,  
 239  
 conformist intellectuals, 167, 169,  
 179  
 critical intellectuals, 170, 179  
 dissidents, 85, 96-97, 167, 375  
 intellectual production, 162  
 intellectual work, 163  
 non-conformist intellectuals, 167-168,  
 170  
 political intellectuals, 156, 175  
 post-communist intellectuals, 174,  
 177, 180-182

Soviet intellectuals, 167  
 intelligentsia, 3, 66, 67, 86, 89, 90, 92,  
 94, 97, 116, 155, 157, 166-167, 171-  
 175, 182, 220  
 cultural intelligentsia, 175  
 revolutionary intelligentsia, 158  
 vanguard, 158-159, 170-171, 179  
 intentionality, 10, 16-18  
 interaction, 1, 13-14, 19, 37, 39, 47-52,  
 190, 209  
 interaction partner, 37  
 interaction party, 47-48  
 interaction role, 37, 47  
 interaction system, 51  
 intersubjectivity, 19

## J

Jacoby, Russel, 163, 165, 174, 184, 209  
 Jaruzelski, Wojciech, 251, 266  
 Jews, 13, 68, 223, 365-366  
 judgment machines, 14

## K

Kádár, János, 220-221  
 Kádárisz, 221  
 Kant, Immanuel, 1, 12, 15-17, 32  
 Kempny, Marian, 156, 177, 184  
 KGB, 91, 255  
 Kis, János, 247-248, 269, 274  
 Komsomol, 87-88, 97, 167  
 Konrad, George, 156, 167, 171, 186, 270,  
 274  
 Kostov, Ivan, 359, 363, 370, 375-376  
 Kwaśniewski, Aleksander, 253

## L

Landsbergis, Vytautas, 94  
 Lasch, Christopher, 164-165, 174, 185  
*Lebensraum*, 227  
 Left-Right dimension, 101-117, 122, 123  
 Left and Right identifiers, 108, 110  
 Left-Right continuum, 103, 112, 114,  
 116, 122  
 Left-Right discourse, 109  
 Left-Right identifiers, 107-108, 112,  
 114

Left-Right symbolism, 108  
 Left-Right materialism index, 119  
 Left-Right self-placement, 110-114, 117, 119  
 legitimacy, 3, 21, 23, 30, 38, 40-41, 43, 46, 70, 90, 93, 97, 135, 145, 158, 161, 165, 169, 219, 229, 234, 236, 247-251, 255, 257-260, 265, 271, 291, 300, 325, 348, 359, 375  
   continuity, 4, 25, 27, 46, 48, 58, 64, 98, 123, 172, 201, 247, 249, 251-253, 257-259, 271, 327, 339, 348  
   crisis of legitimacy, 244, 269, 271, 272  
   discontinuity, 117, 249, 251-252, 257-259, 261-263, 267-271  
   legitimization, 133, 250, 255, 348  
   legitimize, 58, 90, 157, 247, 248  
   round table, 248, 255, 260, 266, 269  
 Liberal Alliance of Free Democrats, 223, 225, 230-232  
 Liberal Democratic Party (Lithuanian), 86  
 Liberal Union Party (Lithuania), 86, 117-122  
 Liberal-Authoritarian index, 110-112, 119, 127, 128  
 liberalism, 223, 313, 317-322  
 life circumstances, 302  
 Linz, Juan, 82, 124, 133, 135, 154, 217, 218, 242, 246, 248, 275, 303  
 Lithuania, 3-5, 85-123, 134, 136, 138-153, 166, 169-170, 173, 178-179, 183-186, 243, 284, 286-297, 325-326, 328-332, 334-338, 343-344, 349-364, 366, 368-373  
 Lithuanian Freedom League, 94  
 Luhmann, Niklas, 9, 51-55, 326, 340  
 Lungo Drom, 230  
 lustration, 3, 243-244, 249, 263-272  
 lustration-decommunization, 244, 249, 269-272

**M**

Macedonians, 41  
*Magyar Fórum*, 221, 226, 242

market economy, 5, 26, 74, 106, 116, 133, 137-138, 148, 150, 171, 173, 188-189, 233, 304, 343  
 mastery, 4, 42, 300, 303-305, 309, 311-321  
 Maturana, Humberto, 11, 16, 33  
 Mazowiecki, Tadeusz, 250-251, 255, 270  
 Mead, George Herbert, 51-52  
 Medgyessy, Péter, 221, 230-231, 240-241, 243  
 media, 23-24, 29, 85, 176, 200, 217, 226, 228, 239, 246, 263-265, 268, 334-339  
   mass media, 4, 29-31, 94, 174, 178, 196, 200, 266, 290, 326, 329, 331-370  
     sensationalism, 337  
 modernization, 3, 22, 60, 63, 136, 142-143, 152, 169, 211, 306  
 modernity, 43, 54, 102, 344  
 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, 94  
 moral responsibility, 332  
 Morlino, Leonardo, 132-133, 154, 216, 217-218, 242

**N**

National Movement for Simeon II, 359, 363  
 nationalism, 2, 21, 57-64, 69-72, 90, 239, 241, 302  
   core nation, 68, 71  
   ethnic group, 21, 57, 60, 62-63, 71, 73, 89, 91, 237, 358  
   ethnic nationalism, 61  
   ethnic party, 73-76  
   external national homeland, 57, 62-66, 71, 75, 79  
   irredentism, 65  
   minority nation-building, 75  
   national conflicts, 62  
   national consciousness, 59  
   national homeland, 71  
   national minorities, 2, 57, 60, 62-65, 68, 70-80, 135  
   national politics, 58, 64-65, 69, 79, 187  
   national question, 58  
   national values, 58, 116, 229  
   nationalist politics, 60

- nationality principle, 57-59, 70, 72
- nationalizing minority, 57, 65, 71, 73
- nationalizing policy, 65, 68-70
- nationalizing process, 2, 57, 60-79, 251
- nationalizing state, 57, 61-62, 65-73, 79
- nation-building, 60, 62, 65, 70-71, 77
- nation-state, 57, 61, 68-69, 71, 73, 86
- titular nation, 2, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 68, 69, 71
- nationalization, 60, 235, 244, 249, 253, 254, 271
- nativization, 87, 88, 91-92
- NATO, 64, 70, 76, 79, 85, 135, 199, 220, 226-227, 266, 297, 330, 370-371
- New Class, 156-159, 184, 186
  - knowledge class, 156, 174
- New Democracy Barometer*, 363-367
- New Europe Barometer*, 365, 370, 379
- New Union Party (Lithuania), 86, 117-118, 122
- nomenklatura*, 86-87, 90, 93, 97-98, 249, 259, 263, 272, 375
- non-governmental organizations, 177-179, 196, 210, 281, 287, 290-293, 296-297
- Norris, Pippa, 123, 361, 378-379
- O**
- observation, 35, 43, 45-48, 50-54, 80, 345
  - observation position, 35, 46, 52
  - observer, 44-45, 47-52, 171-172, 207, 336, 359, 363, 374
  - paradox of observation, 52
- Oleksy, Józef, 243, 267
- ontology, 9-12, 15
- Orbán, Viktor, 221, 228, 231-235, 238-240
- P**
- Paksas, Rolandas, 85, 122, 331, 353, 368
- Parsons, Talcott, 346, 373
- Party of Democratic Socialism, 218
- Party of National Unity of the Romanians, 69
- passivity, 4, 295, 327, 349, 352-53, 374
- paternalization, 352, 366, 368
- path dependency theory, 136-137
- perestroika*, 89, 90, 93-94, 169, 220
- performance, 38, 145, 196-197, 230, 262, 329, 331-334, 336, 344, 347, 372, 359-377
  - institutional performance, 329, 332, 334, 338, 376
  - performance indexes, 336
- personal responsibility, 174, 339
- Plato, 46, 47
- Poland and Hungary
  - Assistance for Restructuring their Economies (original name), 189, 190, 194, 201, 206
- Polish Peasant Party, 267
- Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), 249-253, 271
- political action, 73, 158, 165-166, 217, 245, 357
- political actors, 101, 109, 122, 270, 339, 361, 362
- political change, 95, 121, 131, 137, 155, 196, 231, 302
- political community, 180, 234, 238, 360, 361
- political culture, 133, 137, 175, 182, 215, 235-236, 238, 245
  - political discourse, 66, 102, 108-109, 155, 170, 233-235
  - symbolic politics, 170, 234
  - system change, 1, 136, 216
- political party, 66, 74, 114, 135, 215, 217, 330, 363, 365
  - anti-democratic party, 218, 236
  - anti-system party, 3, 145, 215, 217
  - anti-system rhetoric, 216-217
  - disloyal party, 217
  - non-democratic party, 219
  - semi-loyal party, 218, 220, 228, 241
- political strategy, 158, 162, 254
- polyarchy, 134, 142, 246, 272
- post-communism
  - post-communist context, 175, 325
  - post-communist countries, 3, 131, 135-137, 140, 142-148, 152, 155-156, 171, 173, 178-179, 181, 244, 283, 285, 287, 362-363

post-communist development, 2, 131, 135, 152  
 post-communist heritage, 284  
 post-communist reforms, 284  
 post-communist societies, 4, 145, 171, 176, 181-182, 284, 286, 325, 327-329, 333, 343-344  
 post-communist transformation, 98, 153, 155-156, 171, 208, 336  
 post-communist civil society, 180  
 postmodern, 9, 25, 27  
 post-totalitarian society, 25-26  
 poverty, 141-142, 224, 272, 349  
 power, 2-3, 15, 21, 25, 30, 60, 64, 66-70, 75, 79, 85-86, 88, 90-98, 123, 132, 135, 156-162, 164-172, 176, 179, 181-183, 195, 209, 211, 217-231, 236-239, 241, 243-244, 247, 250, 255, 268, 271, 300, 304, 311, 330, 339, 343, 349, 367, 369, 371, 375  
 field of power, 162-163  
 power elite, 2, 85-86, 90, 93, 96-98, 158, 220  
 symbolic authority, 161  
 symbolic power, 160-161, 170, 174, 182  
 symbolic struggle, 161  
 privatization, 137, 139, 173, 194, 235, 237, 265  
 propaganda, 217-218, 240  
 proto-Bulgarians, 21-22  
 providentialism, 352-353  
 Przeworski, Adam, 246, 276, 328, 340  
 public attitudes, 4, 325, 329, 334, 370, 362, 369, 372  
 public opinion, 96, 133, 145, 147, 229, 231, 236, 250, 329, 337-338, 348-350, 354, 360, 367-368, 372, 375-376, 378  
 public discourse, 159, 229-230, 233, 246, 260  
 public institutions, 192, 196, 198, 327, 328, 331, 334, 336, 349  
 public sphere, 73, 169, 180  
 Putnam, Robert, 132, 345-348, 372, 373

**R**

*Rechtsstaat*, 244, 247, 249, 252, 258, 262

reflection, 12, 16-18, 61, 174, 329, 350  
 reflexivity, 17  
 self-reflection, 338  
 reform strategy, 158  
 regime change, 3, 73, 136, 244, 247  
 regime institutions, 361-362  
 regime performance, 361, 366-367, 377  
 regime principles, 361-362, 365, 369, 376  
 relation, 10-14, 18-20, 29, 40, 43, 52-53, 60, 71, 78-79, 98, 109, 137, 155-156, 159-162, 165, 175, 180, 191-193, 204, 208, 212, 241, 267, 286, 290, 296, 299, 314, 344, 354  
 self-relation, 16  
 revolutionary strategy, 158  
 roles, 3, 37-39, 42, 47, 64, 90, 121, 159, 171, 175-176, 181, 188, 193, 216, 219, 286, 300, 304, 333, 346  
 Roma, 57, 190, 222, 230  
 rule-following, 244-245  
 communist rules, 246  
 formal rules, 245-246, 249  
 informal rules, 3, 187, 244-254, 259, 262, 269, 271-272  
 legal rules, 245-249, 272  
 legality, 195, 247-248, 252, 257-258, 261, 265, 272, 296  
 rule of law, 190, 192, 244, 247, 265, 271, 373  
 sovereignty of law, 257-258  
 standards of behavior, 245

**S**

Sajudis, 2, 85, 90, 92-98, 170-171  
 Sartori, Giovanni, 105, 217-218, 242  
 Šaulauskas, Marius, 328  
 Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Simeon, 359, 376  
 Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph, 11-12, 33  
 Schütz, Alfred, 19  
 Schwartz and Bianchi, 302, 318  
 Bianchi, 320, 323  
 Schwartz, 299-305, 307-308, 318, 320, 323  
 scientism, 9  
 Seimas, 86, 122, 326, 330-331, 336, 338  
 self-assertion, 300, 317



- self-enhancement, 321
  - self-consciousness, 45, 47, 48
  - self-identity, 15, 44-45, 219
    - transcendental unity of apperception, 15
  - self-interest, 158, 170, 177, 346
  - self-production, 11-12
  - self-reference, 12-13, 16
  - self-reliance, 310
  - self-reproducing system, 12
  - Simmel, Georg, 345-346, 373
  - Slavs, 21, 41
    - Slavic culture, 22
  - Snieckus, Antanas, 88-90, 93
  - social categories, 29, 31, 333
  - social complexity, 49, 51, 53
  - social context, 26, 28, 272, 326, 345
  - Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (SdRP), 250-254
  - social field, 160
  - social movements, 163, 165, 170, 177, 179
  - social obligations, 304
  - social roles, 18, 37-38, 48, 333-334, 339
    - historical role, 335
    - power relations, 75, 160, 162, 165
  - social space, 26, 44, 51
  - social system, 9, 11, 37, 38, 51-53, 161, 265, 333, 345
    - class, 63, 105-106, 121, 125, 127, 133, 137, 156-162, 164, 167, 171-172, 174, 178-222, 224-229, 233, 272, 360-361, 367
    - dominant class, 158, 160, 162, 167
    - social order, 35, 102, 107, 162, 224, 300, 327, 333, 344, 346, 348, 351
    - social organization, 51-52, 58
    - social positions, 160-161
    - symbolic systems, 161
  - socialism, 58, 65, 252, 303, 311
  - socialization, 49, 180, 364
    - value socialization, 307
  - solidarity, 47, 159, 162, 168-169, 180, 238, 300
  - Solidarity, 55, 94, 166, 250-251, 253, 267, 286
  - South-Eastern Europe, 1, 23, 361
  - Soviet system, 65, 147, 327
    - Soviet experience, 335
    - Soviet period, 2, 85, 98, 166-169, 335, 343
  - Special Pre-Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development, 190
  - spirit, 13-14, 45-46, 50, 200, 223, 284, 286
    - poetic spirit, 46
  - Stalinism, 86-90, 158, 167, 259, 260, 262, 272
    - Stalinist crimes, 260, 262, 272
  - Status Law, 76-79, 228
  - Stoyanov, Petar, 363, 371
  - subsidiarity, 74
  - sustainability, 36, 325
  - synchronic analysis, 46
  - systems boundary, 52, 54
  - systems differentiation, 53
    - functionally differentiated system, 52
  - systems theory, 9, 51-52
    - systems analysis, 54
  - Sztompka, Piotr, 55, 168, 178, 186, 326, 327-335, 340, 343, 348-349, 352, 354, 356, 358, 366, 368, 373
- ## T
- temporality, 17
  - theater, 47-48, 54, 206
  - thing-for-itself, 12
  - thing-in-itself, 12
  - Thrace, 41, 44
  - tolerance, 22, 215, 326-327, 358, 361
  - Torgyán, József, 225-226, 233
  - total knowledge, 44
  - totalitarianism, 168
  - totality, 9, 16-17, 42-43, 50
  - trade unions, 96, 177
    - independent trade unions, 178
  - tragedy, 14, 21, 43-48, 54, 240
  - transcendental, 15-17, 20
    - transcendence, 16, 18, 300, 321
    - transcendental schemata, 16
    - transcendentalism, 20
    - transcendentality, 16
  - Transylvania, 65, 67, 69, 191
  - trust, 4, 5, 133, 180, 193, 199, 265, 325-339, 343-352, 354, 358, 366, 368-372, 360, 373-374

compensation mechanism, 352, 368  
 culture of distrust, 5, 343-344, 348  
 distrust, 178, 296, 327-336, 343, 346,  
 348-349, 351, 356-357, 361, 367,  
 369, 372  
 emergent trust, 328  
 erosion of trust, 327  
 externalization of trust, 352, 368  
 impersonal trust, 346  
 institutional trust, 4, 325, 328, 330-  
 333, 337, 348-349, 357, 369  
 interpersonal exchange, 345  
 interpersonal trust, 4, 133, 178, 325,  
 333, 339, 347, 349  
 public trust, 5, 199, 325, 329-339, 344  
 reputation, 35, 49, 335, 338  
 trust ratings, 338  
 trustworthiness, 331-338, 346  
 trustworthy relationships, 344-345  
 unconditional trust, 346  
 truth, 9, 14, 38, 53, 58, 168, 181, 239,  
 250, 327, 335, 348  
 double-standard, 327

**U**

UNICEF, 204-205, 207, 210-213  
 Union of Democratic Forces, 359, 363,  
 370

**V**

value concept, 169, 299  
   basic values, 258, 302, 361  
   democratic values, 364, 365, 367  
   national values, 58, 116, 229  
   value change, 302, 303, 322  
   value cleavage, 116  
   value commitments, 108-110, 116-  
   117, 121  
   value diversification, 320  
   value profile, 303, 320  
 value hierarchies, 303, 316

value preferences, 307  
 value types, 299, 303, 314, 316, 319  
   Affective Autonomy, 299, 300, 315,  
   319  
   Conservatism, 299, 300, 305, 308-  
   309, 313, 317, 319  
   Egalitarian Commitment, 299  
   Harmony, 299, 300, 305, 308-319  
   hierarchical systems, 304  
   Hierarchy, 299, 300, 305, 308, 311-  
   319  
   Intellectual Autonomy, 299, 300, 308,  
   315  
   Mastery, 299-300, 305, 308, 312-319  
   value system, 3-4, 22, 75, 133, 152,  
   300, 303-306, 312, 314  
 Varela, Francisco, 11, 16, 33  
 Velvet Revolution, 255, 273, 277  
 vetting, 243, 263, 267  
 Videnov, Zhan, 375  
 Vienna Awards, 69  
 Vienybe-Jedinstvo-Jedność (Unity), 97  
 vigilance, 352, 356-357  
 voluntarism, 322  
 volunteer organizations, 281, 283-286,  
 289-296  
 volunteering, 4, 282-290, 294-296

**W**

Wałęsa, Lech, 252-253, 266-267  
 Weber, Max, 60-61, 83, 346, 373  
 West Europe, 4, 103, 124, 200, 295, 301-  
 307, 317-318, 321, 358  
 whole, 1, 11-12, 14, 18, 27, 36, 39, 41,  
 44-47, 50-54, 68, 73-74, 92, 110-111,  
 124-125, 142, 151, 155, 157, 175,  
 180, 182, 190, 192, 236, 253, 311,  
 319, 327, 339, 356, 366, 360, 363,  
 367, 371, 375, 377  
 World Bank, 26, 154, 198-199, 204-205,  
 210, 212

# THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

## PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

## PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Colombia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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