

The Incongruent Culture?
Nationalist-Populism and Democratization of Post-Communist Central Europe

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1. Introduction

Since the year 1989, Central European societies have undergone fundamental changes in their political and economic systems. These changes went hand in hand with the process of creating new institutional design. Models of such designs were borrowed from the Western democracies and implemented without paying closer attention to local specifics in particular countries. As a result, significant incongruence of political structure and political culture appeared.

This paper is focusing on two problem areas. The first one concerns longitudinal durability of certain patterns of political culture. This durability is demonstrated on the persistence of nationalist values and attitudes in political culture of two particular Central European countries: Poland and Slovakia. Positive attitudes towards nationalism, predominantly in its ethnic, economic and religious notion, have survived in political culture of these societies for decades in almost unchanged forms and meanings, regardless of significantly changed social or ethnic structure of these countries. From this point of view, I consider statements on the temporary character of nationalist revivals in East and Central Europe made by some scholars to be premature.¹ On the contrary, I claim that significant presence of nationalist value orientations in political culture of countries in democratic transition is supporting a hypothesis about a long-term incongruence between political structure and political cultures of these societies.

The second problem area concerns the role of political culture in the process of democratization, and more specifically the relationship between masses and elites, respectively mass and elite political subculture². I argue that political culture plays more

¹ One of those scholars, who stressed “the transitional nature of the nationalist struggles now occurring in Eastern Europe”, was Francis Fukuyama. See Francis Fukuyama *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992)

² To explain my understanding of the term “democratization”, I borrow a definition used by Pridham and Lewis (Geoffrey Pridham, Paul. G. Lewis, “Introduction”, *Stabilizing Fragile Democracies*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). According to them, “democratization as a term describes the overall process of regime change from start to completion that means from the end of previous authoritarian regime to the stabilization and rooting of new democracies. It therefore embraces both broad processes of what are conventionally referred to in the comparative literature as “transition” to a liberal or constitutional democracy and its subsequent “consolidation”. The outcome is a system that should meet certain basic procedural requirements, such as commitment to regular elections and institutional mechanisms that provide

important role than suggested by most of so-called transitologists, who tended to overestimate the role of political elites in democratic transition. Political elites, who are crucial for performance of democratic institutions, are under pressure from two sides. Firstly, because of the will to join Western economic and security structures, they have to fulfill a set of criteria set up by supra-national institutions like NATO or European Union. They are required to follow restrictive economic policies and foster structural changes that do not go along with their voters' preferences. Consequently, political elites are losing legitimacy and support for their action in the public. Trying to bridge this legitimacy gap, they use populist rhetoric and pick up the symbols that might address large majority of voters. Among these symbols, especially those related to ethnicity, religiosity, and "national interests" are ones of great importance. In empirical part of the paper I therefore focus on two particular cases that demonstrate the abuse of various national symbols and sentiments by political elites in political discourse.

2. The Importance of Political Culture

In both phases of democratization – democratic transition and consolidation of a new democratic regime - political culture plays an important role. Its importance, however, increases in the second, consolidation phase. In comparison to the transition phase, it is usually lengthier, but – as Priddham and Lewis suggest – with wider and possibly deeper effects. Besides of the full rooting of the new democratic regime, it involves internalization of its rules and procedures and the *dissemination of democratic values*.

There are various definitions of political culture. For the purpose of this paper I employ the term political culture to embrace all attitudes, beliefs, value orientations and sentiments towards politics that give order and meaning to the political process. Some problem might appear when the measurement of political culture is concerned. There are a number of quantitative survey researches made by scholars in various parts of the globe. It is necessary to mention Almond and Verba's pioneer study on political attitudes in the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Mexico, but also, for example, very recent surveys made by Plasser, Pribersky (1996), and Plasser, Ulram, Waldrauch (1998) in the

checks on executive power, as well as the guarantee of human rights and *emergence of a political culture*

region of East Central Europe. These quantitative surveys provide the reader with interesting collection of data on political attitudes, but do not provide him with a full-scale picture of the state of political culture in particular countries. Besides certain number of attitudes and value orientations towards politics, the term “political culture” embraces also important symbolic dimension.³ Accordingly, various symbols and the employment of these symbols in political elite discourse are necessary to be made when studying political culture.

Political culture is a complex phenomenon and cannot be simply imposed to a particular society from outside. The transformation of political institutions, as well as social and economic structures alone, has appeared be insufficient condition for enforcing change in attitudes and value orientations. I consider political culture to be a slow changing entity and therefore I support the argument that it has not undergone deeper change in Central European countries during last twelve years, regardless of the establishment of a new institutional design and intensive acting of external factors (represented, for example, by NATO or European Union). Among values that show longitudinal durability and resistance to change, those related to the ethnicity, religion and nation are undoubtedly those of particular importance. Because of the resistance to deeper changes, the creation of the type of political culture that would be close to the ideal “civic” type of political culture - in the sense used by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba in their work *The Civic Culture* - is unrealistic in the region of East Central Europe.⁴

2.1 Mass and Elite Political Culture

that is clearly supportive of political life. (emphasized by T. S.)

³ Complementary character of quantitative analysis and analysis of social symbols is stressed, for example, in the article of Andreas Pribersky, “The Symbolic Dimension. Anthropology and the Analysis of ECE Political Cultures”, Plasser, Fritz, Pribersky, Andreas *Political Culture in East Central Europe* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996).

⁴ According to Almond and Verba’s typology, there are three basic types of political culture. A “Parochial” political culture is associated with groups that have no knowledge of how the political system works, no affective orientations towards it, and no desire or capability of participating in it. A “Subject” political culture is one in which individuals have an affective orientation towards the political system or some knowledge of how its policies are enforced, but little awareness of how its policies are made and no desire or capability of participating in it. Previous ideal types are contrasted with a “participant” type of political culture, in which citizens are informed, make normative judgments, and act on their beliefs. Almond and Verba’s “civic” culture is a type of political culture that is the most favorable for democracy; it is based on the congruency of political culture with political structure. (See Almond, Verba, 1963)

Lucian W. Pye in his introductory chapter to the book *Political Culture and Political development* points out that in no society there is a single political culture.⁵ He writes that

“There is a fundamental distinction between the culture of the rulers or power holders and that of the masses. Those who must deal with power and have responsibilities for the decisions of government invariably develop outlooks on politics different from those of the people who remain observers or marginal activists. Even in the most democratic societies, this distinction remains in spite of almost heroic efforts of leaders to pretend that they are of the same spirit as the common citizenry, and of citizens and commentators to feign that they are intimately knowledgeable about the inner workings of government.”⁶

Referring to Pye’s observations, I argue that in comparison to the mass population, political elites in transitory societies are more likely to accept ”new” (liberal democratic) patterns of attitudes and behavior, which are imposed from outside (for example, are set up by supra-national institutions like European Union). It is mostly because they see the integration as a necessary goal to be achieved and consider it to be “good” for their countries. However, the acceptance of these (liberal democratic) values is confronted with “attitudinal demands” of the masses, or voters respectively. One of the strongest bonds between the elite and mass political cultures is that based on ethnic ties. Therefore, political elites prefer to employ various sets of symbols that are connected with ethnicity, nationality, but also exclusivist nationalism in their rhetoric when addressing the citizenry. The willingness of political elites to fulfill “attitudinal demands” of the masses is apparent especially in time before elections, when political elites try to attract as many voters as possible. The adaptation to political culture of the masses, however, always includes a danger that some of “undemocratic” attitudes will influence further elites’ decision making.

3. Nationalism, Populism, and Nationalist-Populism

⁵ Lucian W. Pye, ”Introduction”, Pye, Lucian W., Verba, Sidney *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965)

⁶ Pye, p. 15

3.1 Nationalism

As a phenomenon, nationalism is a subject to a wide variety of meanings. In my work I conceptualize nationalism to be an ideology, which holds the nation, and the nation-state to be crucial values, and which manages to mobilize the political will of a people or at least a large section of the population.⁷ In the course of the survey of definition of nationalisms made by Paul Latawski, nationalism has been described as

“A sentiment, a state of mind, a principle, an ideology, a doctrine, a theory of modernization, an historical process and a catastrophe. Perhaps nationalism is all of these things.”⁸

Moreover, it is more useful to speak about variety of nationalisms than about nationalism as a singular, uniform phenomenon. Peter Alter, for example, develops a typology of nationalisms, which I consider to be useful for the purpose of my study. He distinguishes between two types: liberal, reformist nationalism and integral nationalism. The former is grounded in nineteenth-century liberalism (Risorgimento movement), the latter in the narrow, exclusivist, right-wing European politics of the late nineteenth century.⁹

Anthony Smith makes another division when seeing the phenomenon of nationalism ranging from “ethnic” nationalism based on a cultural group to “territorial” nationalism founded on the “skeletal framework of the territorial state”. Between these two categories he places a third nationalism, a “mixed” one that contains elements of both “ethnic” and “territorial” nationalisms.¹⁰ The “mixed” type is probably best fitting the cases in East Central Europe. Because of a delayed and centrally forced modernization, in comparison with Western European democracies, in Central Europe ethnicity (and ethnic nationalism) still plays quite important role.¹¹

⁷ Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1991)

⁸ Paul Latawski (ed.) *Contemporary Nationalism in East Central Europe*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1995)

⁹ Alter, p. 33

¹⁰ Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1971)

¹¹ Paul Latawski notes that “The mixture of political oppression, regional ethnic diversity and social and economic backwardness provided a potent cocktail for the emergence of nations that placed a premium on linguistic, cultural and religious factors in defining national identity (in East Central Europe –

When taken together, all different kinds of nationalism of East Central Europe illustrate the tendency toward “exclusiveness”. While ethnic nationalism is being centered around a common descent or common ethnicity, that undoubtedly gives it an exclusive quality, economic nationalism, for example, is favoring market protection of certain territory inhabited by certain ethnic group (nation), and usually gives economic privileges to segment of population that is ethnically bonded with ruling political elites. The supporters of the nationalist ideology (so called “bad nationalists”, an opposite to “good patriots”) usually favor a “backward-looking”, closed conception of the nation and aim to strengthen national identity and statehood through cultural, language, economic and educational policies, as well as through closer co-operation with some organizations, for example with the Catholic Church. They stress the importance of national sovereignty, even at the risk of international isolation.

Nationalism represents one of the serious challenges facing East Central Europe in the aftermath of Communism. As Wojciech Roszkowski points out, nationalism in East Central Europe could be described as “old wine in a new bottle”.¹² Nationalism seems not to be an unpleasant remnant of the past, or rhetorical phenomenon, but rather a very influential factor shaping political transition in East Central Europe. Paul Latawski notes that besides economic, political and social problems besetting the region after communism, nationalism stands alone as one of the most perplexing challenges to the construction of a new post-communist Central European order.

I am aware of the fact that the division line between “good patriots” and “bad nationalists” is often blurring, especially when Central Europe is concerned. In the empirical part of my work I focus on manifestations of so called bad, exclusivist nationalism, which is described as “integral” in Alter’s word and that has both ethnic and territorial connotation.

T. S.). Unlike the liberal West where the state created the nation-state, in East Central Europe the impulse for the creation of the nation-state came from people languishing in supranational imperial states. The desire of the peoples of the region was not so much directed to self-determination within a supranational state, but for the right to national self-determination in a territorial homeland (heimat) often shared and claimed by a rival national group. Therefore the nation-state was defined in terms of the ethnolinguistic nation. Paul Latawski, “What to do About Nationalism?”, Latawski, Paul (ed.) *Contemporary Nationalism in East Central Europe*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1995)

3.2 Populism

As such, populism could be characterized by a peculiar negativism – historically it was anti: anti-capitalist, anti-urban, as well as xenophobic and anti-Semitic.¹³ What makes populism really dangerous for democracy, however, is a consciousness that in fact it is an “empty” shell, which can be filled and made meaningful by whatever is poured into.

From my point of view, populism describes particular style of policymaking rather than ideology. According to Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, there exist the tendency for populism to be closely associated with, sometimes to be absorbed by, stronger, more cohesive ideologies or movements, one of them is nationalism.¹⁴

The main and ultimate reference of populism is “the people”. While the classic democratic theory uses “the people” as an abstract construction, the populist rhetoric may add other dimensions and also perceive “the people” as a community of blood, culture, race, and so forth. The first conception is “republican”, the second more “traditionalist, organic and nationalist.”¹⁵

What unites populist movements is that all of them tend to develop their arguments in three distinct steps. In the first place, they emphasize the role of the people and its fundamental position, not only within society, but also in the structure and functioning of the political system as a whole. Secondly, populist movements usually claim that those in charge have betrayed the people. Elites are accused of abusing their position of power instead of acting in conformity with the interests of the people as a whole. Thirdly, the primacy of the people has to be restored. It means that elites in power have to be ousted

¹² Wojciech Roszkowski, “Nationalism in East Central Europe: Old Wine in New Bottles?”, Latawski, Paul (ed.) *Contemporary Nationalism in East Central Europe*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1995)

¹³ Ernest Gellner, Ghita Ionescu (eds.), “Introduction”, *Populism. Its Meaning and National Characteristics*. (The Macmillan Company, 1969)

¹⁴ Gellner, Ionescu, p. 4

¹⁵ See Yves Meny and Yves Surel, “The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism”, Meny, Y., Surel, Y. (eds.) *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. (Palgrave, 2002). When thinking of “the people” as an

and replaced by leaders capable of acting for the good of the community.¹⁶ When blood ties and common ethnic origin define the community, the stress is given on the ethnic bonds between political elites and masses.

When relating populism to Central Europe, I consider following observance made by Cass Mudde to be one of particular importance:

“While in Western Europe, the word populism is generally used to denote postmodern or “more moderate” types of “Extreme Right” or “radical Right” parties, in Eastern (and Central) Europe it is considered to be a more general phenomenon, spread across the ideological spectrum.”¹⁷

3.3 Nationalist-Populism

I consider nationalist and populism to be complementary concepts that merely go together. While nationalism is rather an ideology, than populism describes how this ideology is used, or abused by political elites – masses relationship. Basically, I operationalize nationalist-populism as nationalist ideology that is employed by political elites in a populist way. In other words, the nationalist-populist political leaders claim to speak for the whole people and mobilize support by playing on national sentiments, ethnic hostilities, fears and prejudices, as well as on the views about the law and order that have a discriminatory character.

4. The Two Cases

From the perspective of global comparativists, Central European countries, namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia are clustered together as similar countries, belonging to the same region called “Central Europe”. On the one hand, Central European countries have a lot of common, especially when considering historical and

abstract construction, Meny and Surel refer to Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 1991)

¹⁶ Meny, Surel, p. 11-13

¹⁷ Cass Mudde, “In the name of the Peasantry, the Proletarian, and the People: Populism in Eastern Europe”, Meny, Y., Surel, Y. (eds.) *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. (Palgrave, 2002), p. 214

cultural legacies. On the other hand, they differ in some structural aspects, like social or ethnic structures. In my work I decided to pay closer attention to Poland and Slovakia and I consider these two countries to be rather different than similar ones. This approach enables me to concentrate more on the common phenomenon that is nationalist-populism. I argue that the extent of employment of nationalist symbols in political discourse is similar in both countries regardless their different social and ethnic structure.

The meaning of nationalism is different in Poland and Slovakia. The Slovak nationalism is related predominantly to the issues connected with ethnicity. Among these issues, the anti-Hungarian sentiment is extraordinarily powerful. Anti-Hungarian feeling is based on Slovak historical and ethno-national consciousness. The myth of so called Hungarian threat has the origin in the period before 1918, when Slovakia created the northern, nationally oppressed part of Hungary. It was kept alive by the post-World War I Hungarian revisionist propaganda, and was resuscitated during World War II when southern parts of the fascist Slovak State were reincorporated into Hungary.¹⁸ The myth of Hungarian threat was revitalized more intensively after 1989, when political and economic transformation started. The first Hungarian freely elected government led by Prime Minister József Antal triggered several times the tension between the two nations by making several politically incorrect statements.¹⁹

In Poland it is rather religious and economic nationalism that play a dominant role there. However, significant remains of ethnic nationalism are present in Polish society as well, regardless the fact, that Poland has been ethnically almost homogeneous for about fifty years. Bitter historical experience with foreign domination, as and historically negative experience with bigger and more powerful neighbours like Germany and Russia/ Soviet Union is embedded in national political culture. Prejudices and animosities towards former

¹⁸ See also Pieter Van Duin, Zuzana Poláčková, "Democratic Renewal and the Hungarian Minority Question in Slovakia", *European Societies* 2(3) 2000

¹⁹ In one of these statements Antal declared himself to be Prime Minister not only of ten millions of Hungarians, which is the population of Hungary today, but the representative of all fifteen millions of Hungarians, including five millions living outside the borders of Hungary. Antal's rhetoric was successfully overtaken by Viktor Orbán, a Prime Minister in 1998-2002. Nationalist-populist appeals of Viktor Orbán reached the peak in the pre-electoral rally in spring 2002, in which he called for the unification of divided Hungarian nation and claimed to be a Prime Minister of overall Hungarian national "Community".

fellow-citizen of Jewish and Ukrainean nationality are spread despite the fact that the number of Jews and Ukrainians living on the territory of Poland is only marginal.

In the forthcoming paragraphs I focus on two particular cases that have recently shaken with the stability governments in Poland and Slovakia. The first case concerns the debate on the privatization of one of the largest power distribution companies in Poland that took place in the Polish Parliament in the autumn of 2002. In the second case, I focus on the debate on Hungarian status law that has produced a kind of tension not only within the Slovak governmental coalition, but also between Slovakia and Hungary.

4.1 Privatization of Warsaw's Power Distribution Company

The privatization of the Warsaw power distribution company triggered the most turbulent protests in the post-1989 history of the Polish Parliament. The starting point was privatization of eighty-five percent of Stoen company stocks was approved by the Polish Ministry of Treasury. The deputies from the League of Polish Families (LPR) and the Self-Defense (Samoobrona)²⁰, however, asked the Minister of Treasury Wieslaw Kaczmarek to cancel the sale of shares claiming that he sells “national treasure to the *hands of foreigners*”. Gabriel Janowski, a deputy from LPR described the privatization to be a “disgraceful treason,” while another deputy Zdislaw Jankowski (Samoobrona) described it as an “act of villenaige to a *German* company”. Other deputies of LPR pointed out “the capital’s power distribution company controls the power cables that connect various strategic state institutions, its privatization endangers national security of Poland”.²¹

The request for the discussion on the privatization of Stoen took place in the Polish parliament just a few days before the local elections. The presence of the German investor in the capital’s power distribution company was a great opportunity for radical parties,

²⁰ The League of Polish Families (LPR) and Self-Defense (Samoobrona) represent the most radical part of the electorate in the Polish parliament. When taken together, they occupy almost 20% of the seats there. Both parties have become known of their nationalism and radical populism.

²¹ See *The Warsaw Voice*, October 27, 2002 No.43 and *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October...

who stress the role of national interests and always speak for the whole people, to appeal on voters' national sentiments and prejudices against Germans.²²

The request for the canceling of the privatization of a power distribution company had, however, far going consequences. The deputies from LPR, later accompanied by their colleagues from Samoobrona decided to block the speaker's podium. Development in the Parliament forced its President Marek Borowski from the Union of Democratic Left (SLD) to use force against deputies. The crisis escalated when a motion for dismissal of the President of the Parliament Marek Borowski was raised. The deputies from other, more moderate oppositional political parties like the Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS) supported the motion of the radicals, and so did Polish Peasants' Party (PSL), SLD's ally and coalition partner. The latter withdrew its support only after being threatened by the leaders of SLD who stated that Borowski's dismissal would mean the end of the coalition agreement.

Finally Mr. Borowski remained in the office; however, according to observers of local elections, both LPR and Samoobrona gained significant support of the voters. According to the interview with Prof. Andrzej Rychard, sociologist, especially Samoobrona succeeded in attraction of discontent voters both from rural and urban areas.²³

It would be foolish to think that anti-German and xenophobic sentiments that are spread within the population were predominant reasons that helped LPR and Samoobrona's to succeed in the election.²⁴ Besides other factors, negative views on privatization must be taken into account.²⁵ However, the tactical use of nationalist symbols in combination with the populist defense of "national interests" undoubtedly helped them to address significant number of voters.

²² During the World War II Poland suffered a lot under the German occupation and so did Warsaw, whose historical center was almost completely destroyed.

²³ See *Gazeta Wyborcza*, November 4, 2002

²⁴ According to *Polish Public Opinion* bulletin, published by CBOS opinion survey agency, the sympathies and antipaties of Poles to other nations have not changed for several years. The Germans, together with Russians, Ukrainians and Jews are much more disliked than liked by the Poles. (See, for example, *Polish Public Opinion* November 1998 & November 1999)

4.2 The Case of Hungarian Status Law

The Hungarian Status Law was passed by the Hungarian parliament in spring 2001. The Law guarantees ethnic Hungarians and their families in the countries surrounding Hungary a set of mainly educational and cultural benefits. For example, it promises direct payments to parents who send their children to Hungarian-speaking schools where they live. Slovakia and Romania, the countries with the highest percentage of Hungarian population, opposed the law claiming that it interferes with legal systems of their countries and gives members of Hungarian minority advantages based on ethnic principles. These objections resulted in a recommendation by European Union bodies that Hungary prepare an amended version to eliminate all problems and new Hungarian government led by Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy attempted to do so.

While Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastasse and Peter Medgyessy agreed recently that final details between the two states should be solved soon, Slovak Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda has categorically rejected the amended version saying, “If this law is applied it would mean that our country’s sovereignty is infringed and there would be discrimination on an ethnic basis.”²⁶

Dzurinda’s clear-cut rejection of the amended version surprised not only Hungarian PM, but also Hungarian politicians from the Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK) that takes part in the government.²⁷ SMK leader Bela Bugar immediately announced that his party would no longer act as an informal mediator in the bilateral dispute. He also said that Dzurinda had failed to inform the SMK of all the objections he presented during his discussion with Peter Medgyessy. In an interview given to the *Pravda* daily Bugar complained that “coalition partners have always problem with understanding when (Hungarian) minority issues are discussed.”²⁸

²⁵ The results of the surveys made by the TNS-OBOP agency say that three from four Poles consider the privatization of state property to be mostly the steling and sell-out. See *Sme*, October 31, 2002

²⁶ See *The Slovak Spectator*, Volume 8, Number 47, December 9-15, 2002

²⁷ The new Slovak center-right governmental colaition came to power after the election held on September 2002 is composed from four political paries: Slovak Democratic and Christioan Union (SDKU), Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and Alliance of a New Citizen (ANO).

²⁸ See *Pravda*, December 11, 2002

It is well known fact that SMK voter base comprises mostly of ethnic Hungarians who are in favor of issuing cards confirming their Hungarian status. Categorical rejection of amended version of the Hungarian Status Law, as well as acting “behind the back” of SMK might have served Prime Minister Dzurinda as a justification that Slovakia is ruled by the Slovaks (and not Hungarians) and that national interests of the Slovaks play a dominant role in his decision making. This assumption is supported by the fact that the case occurred just before municipal elections. By sending his “nationalist” message to the voter in a more sophisticated way, Dzurinda distinguished himself and his party from radical nationalists. This tactics proved to be successful, Dzurinda’s party candidates gained more votes than they expected.

5. Tentative Conclusions

As Pridham and Lewis note, some democracies have managed the transition but failed to consolidate. Until now, no one student of political transition labeled Poland or Slovakia as “consolidated democracies”.²⁹ The same can be applied to all other Central European countries. Theoretically, every new democracy in Central Europe can fail to consolidate.

One of the most important factors prolonging the process of consolidation of democracy might be continuing incongruence of political structure and political culture. As I have shown above, nationalist attitudes and symbols have survived in political cultures of examined countries despite changed institutional environment and social structure of their societies. If these particular attitudes display longitudinal durability and resistance to changes, we can anticipate the same for political cultures in general. Therefore, the incongruence between political structure and political culture will probably continue to last.

Certain incongruence between political structure and political culture exist in some

²⁹ See, for example, Radosław Markowski, “Polski system partyjny po wyborach 2001 roku”, *Przysłość polskiej sceny politycznej po wyborach 2001* (Warszawa: Instytut spraw publicznych 2002) for the Polish case; and Szomolányi, Soňa, “Dva rozdielne prípady demokratizácie – načo ich vôbec porovnávať?”, Szomolányi, Soňa (ed.) *Španielsko a Slovensko. Dve cesty k demokracii*. (Bratislava: Stimul, 2002) for Slovakia.

Western countries as well. However, democratic institutions there are strong enough to “absorb” these incongruences. This is not the case of new Central European democracies, whose political systems are still fragile.

Positive attitudes toward nationalism are not the only ones that complicate the “picture” of political culture in Central Europe, but are certainly very influential ones. Since nationalist attitudes, sentiments and prejudices are deeply rooted in mass political culture, political elites will likely continue to employ these symbols and attitudes when addressing their voters. There is always a temptation to adopt nationalist agenda. Some political leaders do that more openly, some in a more sophisticated way. I do not claim that nationalist-populist movements and parties will govern in Central European countries in foreseeable future. Neither do I claim that nationalism in Central European countries will never reach such violent stage as in the case of some Balkan states. However, Central Europe faces a deepening tension between what is “objectively” good for a country (pursuing reform and EU membership) and what is good for electoral accountability. According to Abby Innes, the way for populists and nationalists will be even more open when accession (to the European Union) becomes problematic.³⁰ It is possible that in very first years after the accession, economies of new member states will have to overcome another “shock therapy”. This might result in economic difficulties and temporary decrease of living standard. Some political leaders might utilize such occasion for their own political interests. They might just go to an imagined “supermarket”, buy some nationalist symbols and ideas, and wrap it in populist slogans. Their electoral success will be guaranteed, at least in Central Europe.

³⁰ See, for example, Abby Innes, “Party Competition in Post-Communist Europe”, *Comparative Politics* (October 2002)

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