

**Social and Political Instability in Poland:
A Theoretical Reconsideration**

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ABSTRACT

Before 1989, the societies and politics of Poland and other East European countries were described as unstable by some authors and as stable by others. I investigate this paradox with the help of an analytical apparatus developed by Jurgen Habermas. Using Habermas's two-tiered analysis, in which societies are analyzed simultaneously as social systems and life-worlds, I demonstrate that, at least in the Polish case, periods of stability could be found only on the level of life-world, whereas the systemic level remained inherently unstable. I trace the roots of this systemic instability to the irreconcilable contradictions between the fundamental principles of the "actually existing socialism." I identify these principles, characterize their contradictory nature, and briefly analyze the impact of such contradictions on the functioning of politics, economy, and culture (its systemic dimension). Using as an example John Paul II's visit to Poland in 1989, I also investigate the contradiction (or tension) between the systemic and life-world levels of Polish socio-political reality. Finally, I argue that periods of transition, such as the one Eastern Europe is presently undergoing, are periods of permanent crisis, not periods of instability. Such a conceptual distinction allows me to distinguish between two fundamentally different types of "instability." The first type characterizes these societies which, despite the appearance of stability (mystification on the level of life-world), are ridden by unresolvable contradictions between principles at the systemic level. The second type is to be found during periods of transition, when crises which arise from the contradiction between systemic principles culminate in the transformation of old principles or the emergence of new principles.



This essay constitutes my first attempt to reconcile two competing visions of the "actually existing socialism" in Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. It has been argued, that this social formation is basically stable, although founded on a specific type of socio-logic, in which longer periods of growth and progress, or stability, alternate with briefer periods of crisis and/or rebellion. An extreme articulation of this position can be found in Jim Seroka's 1987 article, in which he argues that East European instability is a "myth." According to him:

Many Western-based studies of East European political systems have considered these political entities to be fundamentally unstable, and in accordance with this viewpoint, they have tended to place disproportionate emphasis on events and factors suggesting destabilization and political unrest. Over time, this assumption of weakness has become accepted in many Western circles, and these studies have created a false impression that the Communist countries of Eastern Europe are perpetually at the point of political collapse... (1987:31)

It has been, however, also argued that the countries of actually existing socialism are permanently and inherently crisis-ridden and unstable. Moreover, the sources of this instability are perceived as relatively unchanged. Kolakowski, for example, wrote:

...bureaucratic despotic socialism is entangled in contradictory internal tendencies, which it is incapable of resolving into any kind of synthesis and which inevitably weaken its cohesion -- a development which is becoming more acute rather than diminishing in intensity (1971:42).¹

¹In this influential essay Kolakowski argued, that despite the structural inflexibility of these systems, due to the paradoxical accumulation of the results of subsequent crises and, first of all, social and civic activism, they are reformable.

While sharing Kolakowski's diagnosis I have been increasingly aware that it must be supplemented with an explanation of the paradox of the prolonged periods of social stability of the system diagnosed as fundamentally unstable. It is perhaps, the ultimate intellectual challenge in East European studies to account for the relative quiescence of the populace during the periods of social peace, often referred to as "normalization."

This essay is intended as a preliminary exercise in developing an abstract model, indebted to the theoretical perspective developed by Jurgen Habermas, which should facilitate a better understanding of the paradoxical nature of the social system, diagnosed by some analysts as basically stable (with temporary crises) and by some others as inherently unstable. Concrete, though brief, analyses are presented only in Parts VII and VIII, where I examine John Paul II's first visit to Poland and investigate analytical gains resulting from the application of Victor Turner's category of social drama to Polish situation.

Bielasiak, in a similar vein, observed, that the pattern of cyclical crises can be construed as a sui generis learning process: at each new stage the Party-state and society face new situation (determined by the accumulation of effects of previous crises) and employ new techniques of crisis-management (learned from previous experiences with crisis-resolution). Each new crisis is, therefore, different from previous ones, although their structural sources remain the same ("regime's claim to exclusive political power," see Bielasiak 1984:23).

I. Jurgen Habermas's social-scientific concept of crisis. System versus life-world.

One of the most influential concepts of crisis in the social sciences has been developed by Jurgen Habermas, particularly in his seminal Legitimation Crisis (1973; English translation 1976) and more recently in The Theory of Communicative Action (1981; English translation 1984 [Vol.1] and 1987 [Vol.2]). He proposes to conduct an analysis of crises on two levels: systemic and social (life-world) and develops the concepts of system integration and social integration.² In his own words:

The two expressions "social integration and "system integration" derive from different theoretical traditions. We speak of social integration in relation to the systems of institutions in which speaking and acting subjects are socially related [vergesellschaftet]. Social systems are seen here as life-worlds that are symbolically structured. We speak of system integration with a view to the specific steering performances of a self-regulated system. Social systems are considered here from the point of view of their capacity to maintain their boundaries and their continued existence by mastering the complexity of an inconstant environment.³

²The categories of system integration and social integration were also used by Davis Lockwood (1964). Frank Parkin applied those categories in his analysis of the Soviet type societies in (1972). I share his conviction that a systematic analysis of the relationship between those two types of integration should produce very interesting theoretical results.

³In (1987) Habermas defined these two concepts in the following way:

Thus I have proposed that we distinguish between social integration and system integration: the former attaches to action orientations, while the latter reaches right through them. In one case the action system is integrated through consensus, whether normatively guaranteed or communicatively achieved; in the other case it is integrated through the nonnormative steering of individual decisions not

Having defined the two level of analysis, Habermas observes that

according to [the] systems approach, crises arise when the structure of a social system allows fewer possibilities for problem solving than are necessary to the continued existence of the system. In this sense, crises are seen as persistent [stress - J.K.] disturbances of system integration. /.../ Crises in social systems are not produced through accidental changes in the environment, but through structurally inherent system-imperatives that are incompatible and cannot be hierarchically [stress - J.K.] integrated. /.../ We speak of system integration with a view to the specific steering performances of a self-regulated system (1976:3-4)

Systems theory, which allows articulation of such regularities has, however, a fundamental shortcoming: it does not allow for a clear articulation of the limits of malleability of the system, ergo it has no tools to determine when the process of crisis-resolution violates the system's principle of identity and triggers a transformation from an initial crisis-ridden system into a new system.

Habermas discusses a tremendous difficulty involved in the task of defining the identity principle of a social system. He is aware of a basic shortcoming of the classical functionalism, which did not offer a clear conceptualization of the difference between social systems and biological systems (organisms). As he observes, it is very difficult to determine whether an old principle of identity has been replaced by a new one since

the same system modification can be conceived of equally well as a learning process and change or as a dissolution process and collapse of the system. It cannot be

subjectively coordinated (1987:150).

unambiguously determined whether a new system has been formed or the old system has merely regenerated itself (1976:3).

However, after registering his misgivings about the concept, he defines "principles of organization" (or principles of identity - J.K.) as:

highly abstract regulations arising as emergent properties in improbable evolutionary steps and characterizing, at each stage, a new level of development. Organizational principles limit the capacity of a society to learn without losing its identity. According to this definition, steering problems can have crisis effects if (and only if) they cannot be resolved within the range of possibility that is circumscribed by the organizational principle of the society" (1976:7).

According to Habermas, one has a better chance to define the identity principle of a social system when systems theory is supplemented with a meaning-oriented sociological theory of action based on the concept of life-world.⁴ Only in the language of this theory can one articulate the system's identity, since it is always relative to the principles articulated within such a

⁴Sociology, anthropology and other social sciences provide countless examples of such a duality of modes of analysis. A major problem facing these disciplines is to find theoretically fruitful mechanisms of translation from one to another and work out a synthetic model of social reality. [Habermas's own project revolves around this issue. See also Eisenstadt (1986)]. Such a synthesis is also urgently needed in the field of East European studies where, for example, political scientists and anthropologists often talk past each other, despite the promising start of the political culture approach. The new possibilities are perhaps opened by Nee's and Stark's "institutionalization" of the new institutional analysis (1989). A neighboring field of Soviet studies features the work of Alexander Zinoviev, who, to my mind, offers such an original synthesis of systemic and social perspectives, however idiosyncratic and controversial it may seem to be (See, e.g., Zinoviev 1984).

life-world. As Habermas puts it:

Disturbances of system integration endanger continued existence only to the extent that social integration is at stake, that is when the consensual foundations of normative structures are so much impaired that the society becomes anomic. /.../ Identity crises are connected [stress - J.K.] with steering problems. Although the subjects are not generally conscious of them, these steering problems create secondary problems that do affect consciousness in a specific way - precisely in such a way as to endanger social integration (1976:3-4).

Significantly, in opposition to most orthodox versions of Marxism, Habermas does not prejudge the primacy of the systemic dimension over the life-word.² He correctly assumes that it is an empirical not an analytical question.

It is important to remember that not all crises of life-world originate at crises of the systemic level. There are endogenous and exogenous crises on both levels. Habermas's observation that "identity crises are connected with [thus not always determined by - J.K.] steering problems" seems to support my point. I would like also to emphasize Habermas's conclusion that crises arise from the conflict of "structurally inherent system-imperatives that are incompatible and cannot be hierarchically [stress - J.K.] integrated." The notion of hierarchy is crucial here; as I will show later, on the systemic level each socio-economic formation has its own hierarchy of the three major institutional domains, that is economy, politics, and culture, and accordingly "produces" and solves crises in a

²As Arato put it: "Habermas does not dogmatically affirm the absolute primacy of system integration..." (1982:201) In a more common Marxist language, Habermas does not assume the primacy of the base over the superstructure.

specific way.

II. Problem, crisis, and instability.

In order to define clearly the relationship between the concept of crisis and the concept of instability Habermas's definitions must be partially reworked. All societies undergo changes and are plagued by disturbances, i.e., develop problems, which can be defined as breaches of the routine state of affairs in a given domain of social reality. Crises occur when such problems cannot be resolved through the routine social mechanisms of problem-solving or, in Habermas's language, when "the structure of a social system allows fewer possibilities for problem solving than are necessary to the continued existence of the system" (1976:2).

In order to resolve a crisis, societies (their parts, governments, political parties, institutions, elites, etc.) must devise new mechanisms of crisis-solving and apply them to the crisis at hand. This process of crisis-solving has, however, its limitations: in every social system there will be a strong tendency to solve crises without changing the principle of identity of the system. When new mechanisms of crisis-solving are not devised and applied or when they fail to solve the crisis at hand, every new crisis adds to the old ones producing a cumulative effect, which can be called instability. In other words, when crises occur with a high frequency and/or are highly unpredictable one can suspect that the society is unstable. To

be more precise, one can assume that a society is unstable when (a) the frequency and/or (b) unpredictability of crises within it surpasses a norm which is relative to a life-world or an extra-systemic standard.*

Such an empirical procedure of identifying problems, crises, and instability is obviously founded on a preliminary decision as to what constitutes the criteria according to which a social phenomenon can be qualified as a problem, crisis, or instability. To define such criteria is as difficult as to define the principle of identity of a socio-political system (both definitional problems are, of course, closely interrelated).

In order to avoid this tedious inductive-empirical definitional path, I would suggest a hypothetical-deductive strategy, which can begin with a formation of a (simplified) model, which in turn will be tested against empirical evidence and amended or discarded (falsified) accordingly. Such a hypothetical-deductive strategy can be applied to the problematic of this essay in the following way. The categories of crisis and instability can be defined as belonging to the domain of structural principles of a given society, not its empirical "surface." Such a definitional strategy concurs with a common observation that the phenomena denoted by these concepts often occur beyond the consciousness of the actors. In particular the concepts of crisis and instability refer to the contradictions

*I am fully aware that the task of defining of a norm that could be used in the determination of instability is complex and one can always be accused of arbitrariness.

between structural principles on the systemic and/or life-world levels.⁷ I shall employ the concept of crisis to single occurrences of such contradictions whereas the concept of instability will be reserved for a series of crises which occur persistently, resulting from the chronically unresolved contradictions. Social unrest, disturbances of social order, conflicts between social groups, etc. are empirical manifestations of the systemic and/or life-world crisis and/or instability. Stability characterizes a society whose systemic principles (1) do not contradict each other or (2) are easily transformed into new principles or (3), at least, are flexible enough to solve emerging crises, without, however, violating the identity principle of the system.

For example, on the level of life-world "the Italian crisis-consciousness, a consciousness that spans the political spectrum, reveals a dramatic sense of always being on the verge of collapse and fragmentation" (Wagner-Pacifici 1986:22). The question arises, therefore, whether the Italian social system is ridden by contradictions between the principles of the system and/or life-world and its frequent political crisis are symptomatic of instability or, rather, an inherently stable system has developed, on the systemic level, a principle allowing for frequent collapses of government as routine phenomena. I am

⁷Habermas defines such incompatibility of systemic principles as crisis; I would suggest to define it as a source of instability.

inclined to accept the second interpretation.⁶ By contrast, one can argue that in the Polish People's Republic instability was endemic since incompatibilities (contradictions) between various principles on both levels, continued to be plentiful and enduring.

III. Mechanisms of crises and sources of instability.

There are three major ideal (in the Weberian sense) types of mechanisms of social crises and, respectively, three major sources of social instability. They include: (1) contradictions of the systemic level, (2) internal contradictions of life-world, and (3) contradictions occurring between the system and life-world.⁷ Of course, there are sources of tension and crises in social systems other than the contradiction between systemic

⁶For a similar conclusion, though phrased in a different language see Tarrow (1980). The Economist's analysts conclude that: "There is nothing more stable than Italian instability. But political stability is not the same as government stability, which is what Italy now needs" ("The Italian Economy," 1988:34). Within the model proposed here, political stability characterizes the systemic level, whereas government instability is observed within the life-world.

⁷The concept of contradiction belongs properly to logic and refers to propositional contents of statements. Here it is applied to the logic of social systems and due to the complexity and fuzziness of such systems loses some of its clarity. In my intention it refers to the incompatibilities of rules, principles, premises, etc. of both the systemic and life-world levels of society. Such contradictions manifest themselves in actions of social groups, especially classes. However, some (usually systemic) contradictions are often masked through various mechanisms of ideological mystification and do not reach the consciousness of social (individual or collective) actors.

principles, but the latter seem to be responsible for most of the severe crises and are, therefore, the fundamental source of social instability. It should be a primary task of social sciences to identify such contradictions and reconstruct the mechanisms of crisis and instability springing from them.

Since the systemic level of each social formation is composed of three basic institutional domains: (1) economy, (2) politics, and (3) culture (its institutional dimension), intrasystemic contradictions (tensions) have two basic types: (1) those occurring inside of one of the three subsystems (i.e., institutional domains listed above), and (2) those occurring between these three subsystems. I have attempted to identify the fundamental contradictions of each domain in the ideal model of the communist system described in section V. Contradictions occurring between different subsystems, for example between economy and politics, are characteristic of all complex social systems and are extensively discussed in the social sciences. Merle King observes that "chronic political instability is a function of the contradiction between the realities of a colonial economy and the political requirements of legal sovereignty among the Latin American states" (1976:138). In actually existing socialism the contradiction between the logic of (communist) politics and the logic of economy is particularly pronounced. As Rothschild put it:

... throughout the Soviet Union's East Central European empire, we witness the exquisite irony of a classic Marxian contradiction between a seething socioeconomic substructure and an ossifying political superstructure. It is difficult

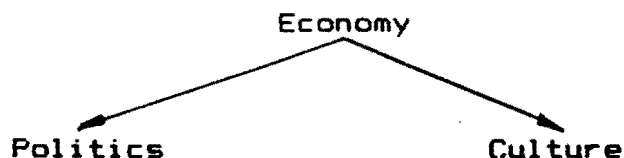
to exaggerate the potential critical nature of this contradiction... (1989:220).

IV. Hierarchy of systemic domains.

In his 1982 essay, Andrew Arato applied a "Marxist critical sociology to those societies that use a version of Marxism as their "ideology" of legitimation" (1982:196). He transposed Starnberg's, Habermas's, and Offe's analysis of the relationships between the major institutional domains -- economy, politics, and culture -- as found in advanced capitalism, to his investigation of the actually existing socialism. As he put it:

Given the possibility of the functional primacy of the three social spheres, exchange (economy), coercive relationships (bureaucracy) and political choice (normative structures), Offe defines capitalism as the primacy of exchange economy over bureaucracy and the normative sphere; presumably he would not object if one defined state socialism as the primacy of an administratively or bureaucratically conceived political domain over both the economy and the normative-cultural sphere. (201-2)

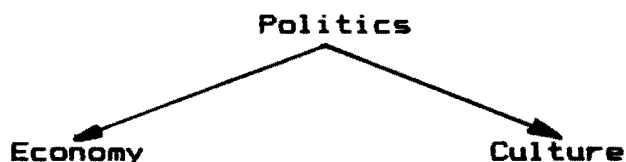
The enrichment of this picture of the two antithetical formations, capitalism and state socialism, by the introduction of the two subtypes of capitalism, liberal and advanced, reveals the homology (structural symmetry) between liberal (but not advanced) capitalism and state socialism. Let us assume that liberal capitalism can be schematically portrayed in the following way:



Advanced capitalism, in which all three domains seem to achieve an unprecedented, though not perfect, parity (a conclusion shared by such diverse thinkers as Habermas and Daniel Bell), in turn, can be presented like this:¹⁰



And finally, communism (or actually existing socialism) in its canonical version can be portrayed as:



¹⁰Daniel Bell summarizes his book in the following way: "The argument elaborated in this book is that the three realms -- the economy, the polity, and the culture -- are ruled by contrary axial principles... (1976:xxx). This notion of the disjunction of realms is a general, theoretical approach to the analysis of modern society" (1976:14). Runciman goes even further, claiming that in all societies "there are as many dimensions of social structure as there are distinctive forms of power and the sanctions on which it rests - the economic, the ideological and the coercive. The three are always mutually interdependent, but they are never wholly reducible to one another" (1985:3). Even Miliband, working within a Marxist framework, emphasizes the analytical necessity of keeping the three dimensions separate. Discussing the constitution of a dominant class in "any class society," he distinguishes "the means of production," "the means of state administration and coercion," and "the means of communication and consent" (1987:329).

There exists, however, yet another model of state socialism, proposed, for example by the Polish maverick Marxist, Leszek Nowak. In his model the three systemic domains are very closely intertwined or, rather, meshed together. Actually existing socialism, called by Nowak "the one-momentum society," is, according to him, based on

the combination of the exploitation, oppression and mental domination over the same majority of people by the same minority of them. The three forms of domination of one man over another one -- the economic, political, and spiritual, are not separated, but joined. The class tyranny reaches its apogee in such a society, whatever its ideological self-identification would be (1983:183).

Nowak's model can be, perhaps, illustrated by the following equation:

$$\text{Politics}=\text{Economy}=\text{Culture}$$

Leszek Nowak's model of the merged political-economic-cultural public domain, thus postulating the emergence of a new type of social reality, seems to approximate better the "actually existing socialism" than does the model which portrays this formation as a sort of a mirror image of capitalism, as suggested by Arato¹¹ and (within a limited field of comparison) by Stark.¹²

¹¹Habermas seems to agree with this conclusion. He observes that: "In bureaucratic socialism crisis tendencies arise from the planning administration, as they do in capitalism from the market economy, as soon as the administrative, or the economic, rationality of action orientations comes into contradiction with itself through unintended systemic effects" (1982:282).

One can plausibly argue that after the rise of Communism both systems moved along diverging paths of development: capitalism towards increased separation of and growing competition between economy, politics, and culture; Communism (or actually existing socialism) towards an almost perfect merger of the three domains -- a totalitarian order envisioned by Leszek Nowak as the ultimate fate of humanity. In the second phase, in Poland roughly between 1956 and the beginning of the 1980's, the tendency to merge institutional domains in Communism was halted or slowed down yet not reversed.

The merger of politics, economy, and culture, suggested by Nowak's model is, however, never perfect. Let me, therefore, examine in some detail the analytical possibilities offered by a model which does separate (at least initially) politics, economy, and culture.

¹²Stark summarizes the methodology employed in his work in the following way: "The purpose of the heuristic model of mirrored opposition (stress - J.K.) presented here has been to grasp, in a single framework, the distinctive features of the capitalist and socialist internal labor market" (1986:503). The most decisive rejection of a possibility of comparative analyses of democratic capitalism and actually existing socialism can be found in Jadwiga Staniszkis's Ontology of Socialism, in which she sets out to prove that the "conceptual categories developed for the civilizational and political reality of the West" are not applicable to socialism due the "ontological specificity of socialism as a formation" (1989:1).

V. Principles and contradictions of the three institutional domains of the communist system (including Poland).

In addition to various contradictions and tensions arising between the three major institutional domains, that is economy, politics, and culture (its institutional dimension), each is fraught with internal contradictions. The systemic principles and fundamental systemic contradictions within the three major institutional domains of the communist system can be reconstructed as follows.

1. Economy.

In his 1982 article, Arato promises to "single out one essential aspect" of "the system contradiction behind the economic difficulties" plaguing the socialist states, yet he ends up analyzing two contradictions. First, he observes, the fundamental contradiction of the economy is one "of the plan with itself, as the self-contradiction of planning rationality"

(1982:206) He describes this contradiction in the following way:

The more it (a totally centralized command system - J.K.) attempts to bring under its control social and economic dysfunctions due to a bizarre combination of absence yet superabundance of information, the less its ability to discover the actual needs of the population and to process the increasing, uncriticized volume of information from its extended subsidiary organs (1982:206).

Then he concludes that "the problem is not only that of information/communication" since "the plan is unavoidably affected by various priorities adopted for the resolution of conflicts," i.e., by political factors.

It should be, therefore, analytically productive to distinguish between two fundamental contradictions within the domain of socialist economy. The first is between the Principle of Centralized Bureaucratic Control and the Principle of Decentralized Market. The second is between the Principle of Political Control and the Principle of Economic Autonomy. An ideal capitalist economy is based on the second principles in each pair; an ideal communist economy is founded on the first principles. The criss-crossing of these two sets of principles yields the following table:

TABLE 1

| MODE OF COORDINATION | ECONOMY | |
|----------------------|------------|------------------------|
| | AUTONOMOUS | CONTROLLED BY POLITICS |
| DECENTRALIZED | 1 | 2 |
| CENTRALIZED | 3 | 4 |

Distinguishing between two contradictions, as opposed to the commonly noted contradiction between the planned/command economy and the market economy, opens the way for a more precise typologization of modern economic systems. Although there is no economy in today's world that would perfectly approximate one of the four ideal types identified in the table, it seems that the American economy can be placed somewhere in field 1, the Japanese and South Korean economies in field 3, and the economies of the actually existing socialism in field 4.

The table allows also for a systematization of different

types of reforms attempted in the socialist countries. There were reform programs that postulated a move from 4 (economy based on the Principle of Centralized Bureaucratic Control and the Principle of Political Control) to 3 (economy based on the principle of Centralized Bureaucratic Control and the principle of Economic Autonomy). Such a model would involve a central planning institution, coordinating all (or almost all) economic activities, but such control would be based exclusively on economic rationality. Arato describes this type of reform ideology as the one that "banks on the full scientization of the existing institutional network of planning" (1982:207).

There were reform programs emphasizing the necessity of a shift from 4 to 2 (economy based on the Principle of Political Control and the Principle of Decentralized Market). Wlodzimierz Brus, in his works from the 1970's, propagated such a solution. This reform ideology was founded on an assumption that the economy should be controlled by politics, but by democratic, pluralistic politics, not centralized; it postulated the "democratization of politics" rather than the "depoliticization of economy" (Dabrowski 1989:104).¹³

Yet most reform programs and ideologies were based on an assumption that it is possible to institute reforms that would begin to transform the economy from 4 to 1 (economy based on the Principle of Decentralized Market and the Principle of Economic

¹³Recently Brus came up with self-criticism, acknowledging that the democratization of politics cannot suffice to reform socialist economy (1989, particularly page 269).

Autonomy) without, however, arriving there. Such solutions retained some (unspecified) degree of centralization of economy and some (also unspecified) degree of political control over economy.¹⁴

Economic rationality based on the Principle of Centralized Bureaucratic Control does not allow for the articulation, let alone resolution, of inevitable conflicts between various units participating in the economic process. In order to deal with such conflicts political rationality is invoked. It calls for constant adjustments of economic rationality, not only due to the political rationality's role as a logic used to resolve social conflicts, but also due to its role as the logic maintaining and justifying the political status quo. The single central bureaucracy must therefore operate according to a mixed logic founded on two separate rationalities; a small wonder that its plans consistently fail to work.

The surrogate solution of all these contradictions (particularly the contradiction between political and economic rationality) is the existence of the second economy and black market.¹⁵ I define surrogate solutions of crises as such solutions that do not remove one of the contradicting principles of the system or/and the life-world, nor do they transform the

¹⁴In China, for example, "the elites most committed to promoting economic reform have seemingly concluded that this requires construction of a more rationalized and liberal but still undemocratic political system" (Halpern 1989:152).

¹⁵For a comprehensive definition of second economy see Stark 1989:137.

existing principles into new ones in such a way as to make the reemergence of crisis in the same structural location impossible.

Partial and ill-defined economic reforms do not remove the basic systemic contradictions of the socialist economy, thus they do not remove one of the primary sources of social and political instability of the whole systems. They merely offer surrogate solutions, which often prevent this instability from being permanently felt and articulated on the level of life-world, thus perpetuating an illusion of stability (or to be more precise: an illusion of the lack of instability).

The above analysis reveals that at least one of the fundamental contradictions of the economic domain does not result from a clash of two (or more) economic principles, but from the intrusion of a political principle (the Principle of Political Control) into this domain. The result can be interpreted as a corroboration of both Nowak's model (in which politics and economy interpenetrate each other) and these theories which emphasize the primacy of politics over economy.

Another manifestation of the politization of economy is the non-exclusive (it is not clear who is the owner), non-transferable, and non-inheritable character of property under actually existing socialism. Staniszkis, who analyzed this problem in detail, perceives it as a major source of economic failures of socialism (1987, 1989).

2. Politics.

This domain is ridden by two homogenous contradictions. One

arises between the Principle of Authoritarianism and the Principle of Democracy and the other between the Principle of Totalitarian Penetration and the Principle of Civil Liberty.

These contradictions are logically separate though sociologically intertwined. The former refers to the definition of the sovereign subject of political decisions (i.e., who rules); the latter to the scope of penetration of the political domain into the civil and private domains (i.e., where are the limits to the state).¹⁶

Actually existing socialism is based on the monopoly of political power by a single center.¹⁷ The creation of more than one center of power (political pluralism) signifies the change of the systemic principle and the end of this formation. The recent introduction of political pluralism (summer-winter of 1989) in Poland, Hungary, GDR, and Czechoslovakia must be interpreted as the end of the formation of "actually existing socialism," "state socialism," "communism," or however we call it. The monopolization of power in communism/socialism was well analyzed within the totalitarian paradigm which, despite its obvious usefulness in providing us with a clear model of the communist political domain in its Stalinist phase, was rather poorly

¹⁶This distinction of fundamental analytical significance is often neglected in the analysis of political systems. For a seminal discussion of this problem see Hayek (1960:103-17). Kraus and Vanneman, working from a similar intuition, claim that: "It is essential to distinguish the power of the state (scope in my language) from the power of the officials who staff it (who in my language)" (1985:11).

¹⁷See Strzelecki (1981a; 1981b).

equipped to grasp the dynamics of the state-society relationships. The Party-state's monopoly of power was never perfect. Moreover, it is precisely such imperfections which constitute the necessary (though not sufficient) condition of social dynamism in the communist system. Among the several new paradigms of analysis which deal with this dynamism, the most productive prove to be those which contain a conceptualization and analysis of the mechanisms of co-optation, corporatism, and patron-client relationships, i.e., the mechanisms which provide surrogate solutions to economic, political, but also cultural crises.¹⁰

3. Culture (institutional aspect).

The fundamental contradiction in this domain exists between the Principle of Total Monopoly of the media, derived from the political rationality of the system, and the Principle of the Freedom of Information, partially dictated by economic rationality but also reflected in the Polish life-world as one of the most cherished social ideals.

It is within the domain of culture that the contradictions between the principles of the system and the principles of the life-world arise. This is a result of the double character of this domain, whose institutional dimension belongs to the

¹⁰The literature is rapidly growing. See, for example, Sampson (1985-86) for an overview, Hankiss (1988), Staniszkis (1984), Chirot (1980) and recently Ost (1989). For a very useful yet brief discussion of the concept of corporatism see Cohen and Pavoncello (1987). The new institutionalism, a paradigm recently "institutionalized" by Nee and Stark (1989), explicitly and creatively concentrates on such issues.

systemic level, whereas its symbolic dimension belongs to the level of life-world. For example, in Poland, due to a high degree of monopolization of the media and preventive censorship (at least until 1976), the communist regime was able to control which contradictions and conflicts of the systemic level could be articulated within the public domain of the life-world. The imperfection of Party-state's control stemmed from the fact, that the private domain with its family traditions, foreign radio broadcasts, and occasionally Sunday mass sermons had a different dynamism, contributing to the Polish public-private schizophrenia.¹⁷ One may argue, however, that many momentous social and political issues had not been articulated at all or were articulated in ways advancing the Party-state interests precisely because they were banned from the public domain and the family dinner table was an inadequate platform to debate them. Moreover, the regime's strategy was not simply passive, i.e., based on a selection and elimination of the issues debatable within the public domain. It was also active in the sense that the regime committed considerable resources to the reshaping of the discourse of public debate, concerning, for example, such issues as national identity or the grounds of political legitimacy. The results of my analysis presented so far are

¹⁷See, for example, Stefan Nowak (1981), Wnuk-Lipinski (1982), Marody (1988). According to Marody, the situation is changing recently (before 1989 - J.K.) since no longer "the axiological separation of public and private roles is ... actually identifiable with the division into private and public domains in life. To the contrary, recent years have seen the two spheres of social life intermingle at a growing rate" (1988:109).

summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTIONS AND THEIR SURROGATE SOLUTIONS
IN THE THREE DOMAINS OF POLISH SOCIAL SYSTEM

| | | FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTION | SURROGATE SOLUTION |
|--|----------|---|--|
| S U B S Y S T E M S | ECONOMY | Principle of Centralized Bureaucratic Control versus Principle of Decentralized Market | Second economy, black market |
| | | Principle of Political Control versus Principle of Economic Autonomy | |
| | POLITICS | Principle of Authoritarian Control versus Principle of Democracy | State corporatism, social corporatism, patron-client relationships, overt yet illegal opposition, humanization |
| | | Principle of Totalitarian Penetration versus Principle of Civil Liberty | |
| | CULTURE | Principle of Monopoly of the Means of Communication versus Principle of Freedom of Social Communication ²⁰ | Independent publishers, clandestine and Church-sponsored lectures, art shows, theater productions, etc. |

²⁰For a detailed examination of the question of cultural freedom see Goldfarb (1982), who by and large subscribes to the model of "mirror images" of actually existing socialism and democratic capitalism. In the former culture is constrained by politics, in the latter by economy (market demands).

An important conclusion of the analysis summarized in the above table is that both in economy and in culture the first principles in the identified pairs of principles (respectively, centralization and monopoly of communication) originate within the realm of politics. This indicates that the boundaries between the three institutional subsystems in the actually existing socialism are ill defined. This, in turn, leads to a high degree of interpenetration of the subdomains (thus supporting Nowak's model) but, since it is the logic of politics that interferes with the logics of economy and culture, the "mirror" model of Arato, Stark, and Goldfarb is also partially confirmed.

It must be also remembered that until 1989, the regime's performance was guided predominantly by the first principles in each pair (such as the Principle of Centralized Bureaucratic Control or the Principle of Totalitarian Penetration). The second principles (such as the Principle of Economic Autonomy or the Principle of Democracy) can be construed as the ideal (and permanently unrealized) parameters of the new system into which the old system would have been transformed had it not been for the existence of the first principles in each pair. The second principles were also articulated in the life-world as aspirations, the guiding ideals of the populace (or its substantial parts). The existence of the "second" principles within the social field of the system, which was predominantly guided by the "first" principles -- constituting collectively the

system's identity principle -- and the unresolved contradictions between them led to the emergence of the vast area of social life built on surrogate solutions, such as the black market, patron-client (corporatist) political arrangements or clandestine publishing houses.

VI. Life-world: sources of crisis and instability.

The complexity of life-world in a large modern society is overwhelming; it comprises multitudes of subdomains differing from each other along several dimensions. For example, the subdomains may differ from each other according to their degree of articulation (everyday knowledge versus philosophy); or their subject-matter (household economy versus religion).²¹ There is no room here to engage in a full investigation of this complexity. A simple typology was suggested by Habermas in his 1982 discussion with his critics, in which he divides life-world into three subdomains: (1) culture, (2) society, and (3) personality (Habermas 1982:278-81; also 1987:119-52).

1. Culture (symbolic aspect).

The fundamental problematic of culture is the issue of coherence. Incoherence of the cultural dimension of life-world is

²¹Berger and Luckmann, for example, distinguish four levels in the life-world, including (1) language and vocabulary, (2) proto-science of "proverbs, moral maxims, and wise sayings," (3) explicit theories, and (4) symbolic universes which "are bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality" (1966:113).

experienced by people as something undesirable if not unbearable.²² Therefore, a society whose life-world is permeated by incoherence is in crisis; and if such a condition persists it becomes a source of instability.

2. Society.

The fundamental problematic of society is the issue of social order. The short- or long-term lack of social order is often defined in the social sciences as synonymous with crisis or instability. Within the model I develop here the lack of order can be one of the symptoms of crisis or instability. The discussion of various mechanisms maintaining social order under the "actually existing socialism" is badly neglected. In my recently completed study of political legitimacy in Poland of the late 1970's I argue that legitimacy is only one of many mechanisms sustaining social order or simply the existence of society (we must admit that some disorderly societies persist due to a complex combination of coercion, fear, apathy and perhaps many other factors).²³

3. Personality.

There is a growing realization among social psychologists,

²²See, for example, Fernandez (1987:67) on inchoateness, Wnuk-Lipinski (1982) and Marody (1988) on social schizophrenia, or Habermas (1982 and 1987) on anomie.

²³Among several noteworthy attempts to deal with this complex issue I would single out the works of Krzysztof Nowak's on no-alternativity (1988), Staniszkis's on repressive tolerance (1984), Liehm's on social contract (1983), Pakulski's on conditional tolerance (1986) and Grzegorz Ekiert's (1988), John Hoffman's (1984), and Mira Marody's (1987) essays containing synthetic analyses of the problem.

psychiatrists, and psycho- and socio-therapists that many personality disorders (or their aspects) have their roots in cultural incoherence and/or social disorder. Due to the limitations of space let me just emphasize the significance of this problem and its almost total neglect in Eastern European studies.²⁴

VII. System versus life-world: a destabilizing relationship.

The interrelationship between the systemic and life-world levels of social reality has been thoroughly studied by social scientists.²⁵ Among the impressive array of people and ideas, I would like to single out the work of Murray Edelman on the mystifications of American politics and the manufacturing of political quiescence and Steven Lukes' three dimensional view of

²⁴Habermas recognizes the issue in (1982:279). I have merely sketched several problems of this domain in my two presentations at the 44th and 46th Annual Meetings of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America. A paper presented by two psychologists at the session co-organized by me during the 1988 Meeting, confirmed my intuitions and theorizing that many mental health problems of Polish immigrants in the United States (especially paranoid disorders) result from their earlier experiences under the "actually existing socialism" in Poland (Kawecki and Salus 1988).

²⁵Classical studies and great students in this field include, for example, Marx on ideology, fetishization and false consciousness in liberal capitalism; Weber on the Protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism; Durkheim on social functions of religious ideas and the interrelationship between organic and mechanical solidarity; Mannheim on ideology and utopia; Malinowski on integrative functions of magic and religion; Pareto on residues and derivations, Gramsci on cultural hegemony, and Habermas on systematically distorted communication.

power.²⁴ Both identified and analyzed a range of strategies of manipulation used by the powerful to prevent systemic contradictions from emerging as symbols, ideas, or issues in the life-world.

Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union provide the perfect laboratory setting for the verification of their ideas. Communist regimes committed enormous resources to achieve cultural hegemony in the countries they control. Symbolic manipulation was perhaps the most important mechanism used by these regimes in their efforts to achieve social stability through cultural hegemony. Implementation of this mechanism resulted however in counteractions by at least some segments of the populations which led to State-society confrontations on many levels of life-world. The case of Poland is perhaps the most conspicuous since for many years (especially in the late 1970's) the struggle between the state and the populace was fought in the highly visible domain of ultimate national symbols. A complete analysis of this symbolic confrontation would have to include an assessment of the key dimensions of the political field, such as the power bases of the actors, i.e., their potential power. Due to the constraints of space a brief picture of the situation in this respect must suffice. In countries ruled by Communists, the

²⁴See Edelman (1971; 1988) and Lukes (1974); but also Gaventa (1980) for an excellent application of Lukes's framework in his study of the Appalachia.

means of production, the means of communication²⁷, and the means of coercion are tightly controlled by a single political elite. Due to the scope and depth of this control the rules of the political game in these countries are qualitatively different from the political rules of the Western democracies. Even in Poland, where the situation was exceptional due to the dominant private ownership of land by peasants and the institutional independence of the Catholic Church,²⁸ the power potential of the state remained vastly superior to that of the other actors in the public domain. But was such an extensive power differential translated into the acquisition and maintenance of legitimacy by the regime? Or, using Gramsci's terminology, was the Party-state's political domination turned into or complemented by cultural hegemony?²⁹

A brief examination of John Paul II's visit to Poland must

²⁷In Poland of the 1970's, the Church did not have access to TV or radio. In 1974 the official press had 3005 periodicals and a total circulation of 41 million copies, including 10 million dailies. The Catholic press (related to though not always controlled by the Church hierarchy) had three weeklies and 23 other periodicals with a total circulation of 300,000 (1 copy for every 120 Catholics). The Catholic press not related to the Church hierarchy (and often closely following the official line of the party-state), had one daily and five weeklies and total circulation of 270,000 (Spotkania, No.2, January 1978).

²⁸The situation as far as the means of production are concerned can be described as an almost total monopoly, for the majority of land in Poland is controlled by private farmers. They do however depend on the state in all aspects of the production process, including supplies of fertilizers and fodder, funds (all banks are nationalized) and sales (distribution is controlled by the state).

²⁹On the distinction between political domination and cultural hegemony see, for example, Gramsci (1971:55, f.n.5).

suffice in place of a more thorough analysis of hegemonic strategies of mystification employed by the regime and the counterhegemonic strategies of demystification used by the Catholic Church and the organized opposition in the 1970's.³⁰

In the 1970's, the public discourse of the Polish Peoples' Republic propagated the existing political order, but the shape of this order was ambiguously portrayed. The ambiguity was achieved by constantly switching (through time and space) the emphasis between the elements in such pairs of values as centralism - democracy, hierarchy - egalitarianism, patriotism/nationalism - internationalism. Such ambiguity, sustained in ceremonies and rituals, is a political asset. An autocratic ruler often needs, especially at times of crisis, to present himself as a champion of democracy. When such a need arises, an appropriate aspect of the symbolic system is temporarily stressed. However, when the ruler needs to assert his power, the principle of centralism is symbolically invoked. Such tactical symbolic operations are easier to realize when the ceremonial system is ambiguous. Thus the ambiguity permeating Polish public life in the late 1970's (and seemingly also earlier) did not result merely from a discrepancy between official and operative values and principles of the regime, i.e., from a discrepancy between theory and practice. It is also a product of the incoherent character of the official discourse,

³⁰I present a full-length analysis of these strategies in Kubik (1989a). For my analysis of the Pope's first visit to Poland see Kubik (1989b).

which was based on two syndromes of values: communist and socialist.³¹ I am not sure if this ambiguity was deliberately produced and sustained by the mass media propagandist and pageant masters. It was, though, politically expedient. The majority of the population believed in some socialist ideals, hence through this symbolically invoked ambiguity, which blurred the distinction between socialism and Communism, the authorities managed to construct some aura of socialist legitimacy for their communist practices.

Whereas the main hidden function of the official ceremonial was to produce and maintain its own ambiguity (Communism/socialism), the main function of the Church's and the opposition's ceremonies and demonstrations (such as the Pope's visit) appears to have been the uncoupling or destruction of these politically expedient hybrids. Through its ceremonies the

³¹Jan Strzelecki reconstructed the main features of communism, through a detailed analysis of the official justifications for the centralization of power in Poland. The power of the center (omnicenter - as Strzelecki called it) was presented in these texts as self-explanatory for five reasons. The center was (1) the only guardian of the communist/socialist idea, (2) the perfect and the most reliable tool of its realization, thus also (3) the most perfect and conscientious custodian of the public good. Moreover, since the center was able to identify in the most comprehensive (scientific) way all needs of the populace it automatically became (4) the embodiment of ultimate (socialist) democracy. The claims to (5) absolute power by the personnel of the center were therefore only natural (Strzelecki 1981a, 1981b).

Leszek Kolakowski listed among the features of the socialist society: sovereignty, democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, liberalism (understood as respect for basic human rights), and finally "control of society over the means of production and the distribution of the national income and over the administrative and political apparatus, working as an organ of society, and not as a master for whom society is a hand-maiden" (1971:50).

state tried to publicly demonstrate and thus reinforce such principles as democratic centralism, socialist patriotism, or patriotic internationalism. The independent demonstrations and the Church's ceremonies undermined the state's monopoly of the ceremonial use of public spaces and challenged those hybrids.

John Paul II's visit to Poland in 1979, was the single most important factor undermining the official efforts to redefine the nation's life-world. The Pope reinvigorated in massive public ceremonies the symbols of the Polish nation, Catholicism, and civil society which were accepted as genuine foci of identification for all strata and classes of the society, including the workers. Poles realized that their national community can be defined outside of the communist state. Under the impact of the Pope's visit Polish workers (or at least significant segments of this class) achieved a considerable degree of self-identification as members of a wider "imagined community" organized around such readily acceptable symbols as the Pope, the Black Madonna, the Catholic Church, and a common national heritage (as defined by the Church and the opposition). This realization constituted a significant step toward a formulation of programs of reforms developed by Solidarity in 1980-81.

Another outcome of the Pope's homecoming was the end of the Party-state's monopoly over public discourse in Poland. Many Poles realized or were reminded that non-Marxist discourses did exist and could be used effectively to articulate and analyze

political, social, and even economic problems. Since 1945, the regime appropriated Marxism and socialism, turning the latter into a hybrid of Communism/socialism. Members of the opposition opting for unambiguous forms of socialism were finding it difficult to express workers' grievances and problems without using the "new-speak" of the officialdom.³² The Pope, in his speeches and sermons, put forth conceptual and symbolic tools that facilitated the dismantling of the official hybrid of Communism/socialism. Once this happened, the Party-state's claims to legitimacy and authority lost any remaining credibility. The values and principles which thus far were usually labelled "socialist," therefore associated in the popular mind, even if vaguely, with the "socialist state," were now placed in the context of Catholic social doctrine. For example, the newly resurrected Polish Socialist Party,³³ stated in the programmatic declaration of November 1987:

Ninety-five years ago the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.) was formed, organizing Poles in the struggle for independence and social justice... Forty years ago, the Communists destroyed the democratic socialist movement. Many socialist activists died in Polish and Russian jails... Today, on the anniversary of the Paris Convention, we are

³²See, for example, the interview with Robotnik's editors in Tygodnik Solidarnosc, no. 2, April 10, 1981. By making human work one of the prime subjects of his sermons (he developed this theme in his encyclical Laborem Exercens (On Human Work) from September 14, 1981), the Pope showed that there was a non-Marxist discourse in which important social and political problems could be articulated in what was widely perceived as morally unambiguous terms.

³³P.P.S., by far the strongest party of the Polish left, was de jure incorporated into the (pro-Moscow, Communist) Polish United Workers' Party and de facto destroyed in December 1948.

restoring the P.P.S., being fully aware of the tradition we intend to carry on. We realize that the word "socialism," which has been co-opted by the communists, is currently unpopular in Polish society.

Our program will be subject to modification over time and responding to the realities of our situation. We don't want to base it on an inflexible doctrine. We don't want to tie ourselves to any specific philosophy, although we admit that we feel more affinity with the social teachings of the Church, more specifically with those of John Paul II, than with Marxism.³⁴

The Pope's visit to Poland illustrated with an unprecedented clarity the major dilemma faced by Gierek's pageant masters and media experts: no matter how hard they tried to construct the image of a secular, socialist Second Poland, the alternative image, founded on an altogether different set of values and symbols, kept re-emerging in the public domain. Was this alternative image invented anew by some people or was it a reflection of a subterranean cultural reality scarcely touched by communist socialization? Turner's concepts of social crisis, root paradigms, and social drama help to deal with such a question.

VIII. Victor Turner's concepts of social crisis, root paradigm, and social drama and its application to the Polish situation.

Key symbols and dominant values or core belief systems - as R. Lane calls them (1972:164), which constitute the most sacred domain of a given culture, can be distinguished from other symbols, signs, and values in two ways. They either permeate all

³⁴Tygodnik Mazowsze no.228, November 18, 1987.

or most domains of social life (Lane 1972:164, Lasswell 1952:14) and/or become actualized in moments of individual or social crises.³³ In cultural anthropology the idea of centrality of certain symbols in a given culture has been elaborated by Sherry Ortner (1972) and Victor Turner, who focused on - what he called - root paradigms, which:

are the cultural transliterations of genetic codes -- they represent that in the human individual as a cultural entity, which the DNA and RNA codes represent in him as a biological entity... (1974:67).

Suitable conditions (or extraordinary occasions - as Gerth and Mills have called them), under which these root paradigms can emerge into the surface of social life, are created by individual (Berger 1974:18) or social crises (V. Turner 1974:64). Analyzing various social crises, Victor Turner came up with a model of liminal phases of social life, in which everyday, normal rules of social structure are suspended. In such anti-structural periods new or alternative models of social arrangements are tested or generated.³⁴ Moreover, periods of liminality often enable people to learn and speculate about what their cultures consider to be

³³Gerth and Mills, for example claim, that: "Certain emblems and modes of language not only recur in given social contexts, but seem to be more important to the maintenance of certain institutions, to their chains of authority./.../ These symbols can be repeated every day by everyone, or they may be used only on extraordinary occasions and by specially authorized persons" (1953:276).

³⁴"The factors of culture are isolated, in so far as it is possible to do this with multivocal symbols... and then recombined in numerous, often grotesque ways, grotesque because they are arrayed in terms of possible and fantasied rather than experimental combinations" (1982:27).

the "ultimate things" (Turner 1974:259).

The concept of social drama helps to understand the creative character of symbolic action and its role in the resolution of social crisis. Social drama occurs when a latent social conflict manifests itself publicly in a dramatic form; when "the peaceful tenor of regular, norm-governed social life is interrupted" (Turner 1982:93).³⁷ The social drama has typically four main phases: Breach, Crisis, Redress, and Solution. The last phase can take two alternative forms: reconciliation or "consensual recognition of irremediable breach" (Turner 1982:92). As "a limited area of transparency in the otherwise opaque surface of regular, uneventful social life" (Turner 1957:93), the social drama enables the observer to perceive the rules of interaction code or the principles of social structure. Moreover, the social drama has social effectiveness, i.e., it transforms the rules of the socio-cultural game. This may be achieved through various redressive mechanisms, for example informal mediation and arbitration or legal action. The redressive action, however, often involves ritualization and often takes the form of public ceremonies and rituals, since in such public "spectacles" both

³⁷Victor Turner developed the concept of social drama when he realized that classic structural-functional analysis would not allow him to account for the complexity and richness of the Ndembu social life, especially for one of its "most arresting properties", that is the "propensity toward conflict" (Turner 1974:33). Moreover, his subsequent research has convinced him that "social dramas, with much the same temporal and processual structure as [he] detected in the Ndembu case, can be isolated for study in societies at all levels of scale and complexity" (1974:33). The concept of social drama is obviously modelled upon a cultural form of the stage drama (Turner 1974:32).

the rules of social game and their transformations can be clearly demonstrated to large audiences.

The history of the Polish life-world in the last two decades can be easily interpreted as a series of Turnerian social dramas or social crises with enormously elaborated liminal phases. The most impressive social dramas were John Paul II's first visit to his native land in 1979 and the whole Solidarity period. On both occasions, society rehearsed an alternative social order and recreated a symbolic universe which stripped the communist/socialist discourse of all credibility and validity.³⁸ Up until the late 1970's, the authorities succeeded in making some inroads into the domains of national identity (for example, by endowing the notion of socialist patriotism with some credibility, at least for some segments of the society) and political legitimacy (for example, through portraying themselves as champions of strong statehood). Yet after the Pope's first visit and the subsequent Solidarity period this painstakingly erected mythological illusion collapsed.

The concept of social drama makes it easier to pinpoint two

³⁸In sociological terms, the Pope's visit resulted in the renewal of what Simmel called sociability, i.e., a mode of social existence in which people "feel that the formation of a society as such is a value" (1950:42-3). Millions of people, organized not by the state agencies, but by volunteers directed by Catholic activists, came together in an orderly fashion to celebrate "their" Pope. They realized that civil organization of the society outside of the state was possible. This led to a considerable lowering of the barrier of fear vis-a-vis the state and the development of the consciousness of "we" crystallized in the towering personality of the Pope, popularly perceived as the only genuine moral, religious, and even political authority.

significant aspects of this transformation. First, it establishes a theoretical framework which confirms that the symbols and values so persistently upheld by the Church and the opposition were indeed the latent root paradigms of Polish culture or, as Stefan Nowak put it (echoing Victor Turner), they constituted "behavioral recessive values" which are:

worthy of study because, as with latent genes under suitable conditions, latent values can become powerful factors in human behavior, acting on the scale of the individual or the society. Contemporary Poland (1980-1981 - J.K.) seems to present itself as a case in point (1981:47).

Second, the concept of social drama enables us to clearly articulate the difference between the realized and the unrealized outcomes of the social transformation triggered by the Pope's visit in 1979 and the strikes in 1980. Out of two possible types of Redress: pragmatic and symbolic, the constellation of inside and outside factors facilitated the realization of the latter; an outcome with momentous consequences.

In the early 1970s, the decisive majority of the Poles followed the course of their everyday life according to the rules of externally enforced adjustment. Or, in another formulation, the stability of the life-world was guaranteed by the mechanisms of covert repressiveness, an apt phrase employed by Krzysztof Nowak (1988). At the same time, the expensive and extravagant ceremonies, through which the regime attempted to graft in the public mind an image of a powerful and successful Polish Peoples' Republic, completely dominated public spaces throughout the country. Only after 1976, particularly during the Pope's visit

and on several occasions during the Solidarity period, did society (represented by the Catholic Church, organized oppositional groups, and Solidarity) come up with equally powerful ceremonies, propagating counter-hegemonic visions of Polish polity and society. Thus, in the period 1979-1981, a significant part of the conflict between the Party-state and the society, revolved around the ultimate symbolic issues, such as national identity and the grounds of political legitimacy.

The situation in the period 1981-1989 was diametrically different. The contest over the ultimate symbolic issues ended; the Party-state lost. The more pragmatic, "down-to-earth" issues (such as the negotiation of the rules of everyday life and the regulations of social compact) returned to the fore of the conflict between the state and society. The two possible modes of coexistence left to both sides of the conflict were either mutual rejection or the gradual building of a social contract, even though the regime was widely perceived as illegitimate. The first mode of coexistence was dominant in Poland from December 13, 1981 through the fall of 1988/spring 1989); the second has been characteristic of the "round table" period, beginning in the fall of 1988 and continuing until the present. In the last part of this essay I will briefly and tentatively try to examine how the theoretical model presented in this essay can help us to deal with the rapid changes Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe are undergoing in recent months (April 1989 - January 1990).

IX. Conclusions: a summary of major findings and the tentative analysis of the crisis and instability in the period of transition.

Given the pace of change in Eastern Europe in recent months (Summer-Fall-Winter 1989), one must exercise extreme caution in trying to conceptualize, interpret, and explain this change. Yet the theoretical exercise developed in this essay would be useless if it could not furnish us with some clues as to how to analyze this transitory period.

The major points of my analysis can be recapitulated in the following way.

1. In the actually existing socialism the relationship between politics, economy, and culture (on the systemic level) can be defined in two ways: (1.1.) either as a hierarchy with politics dominant over economy and culture or (1.2.) as a whole in which the three subsystems interpenetrate each other and the boundaries between them are poorly articulated.

2. Despite the differences between the two models, both of them reveal that in actually existing socialism contradictions between the subsystemic domains of politics, economy, and culture are far more pronounced than tensions within these subsystems.

Economy and culture are so thoroughly politicized that their intrasystemic contradictions are far less significant than the inter-systemic contradictions. Yet, these inter-systemic contradictions are presented to the populace, i.e., articulated

within the life-world, as intra-systemic problems, an operation which conceals their political provenance. In the domain of economy, for example, the principle of centralization was portrayed not as an instance of intrusion of politics into the economy, but as a strategy of economic rationalization. In the domain of culture, preventive censorship (a device allowing the state to implement the principle of monopoly of the means of communication) was presented as a necessary strategy protecting the populace from bourgeois decadence and allowing to propagate proper art (socialist realism until the middle 1950's).

3. Actually existing socialism is inherently unstable, because the crises emerging within it on the systemic level are never resolved and recur constantly in the same structural locations.

4. What many observers interpret as a fluctuating pattern of periods of stability (often referred to as normalization) followed by crises followed by periods of stability, etc. is indeed a phenomenon occurring exclusively at the level of life-world. As I have already stated, the systemic level is permanently unstable.

Let me contrast this analysis with parallel features of the capitalist system.

1. In late (advanced, post-) capitalism the domains of politics, economy, and culture are much more clearly separated than in actually existing socialism. If there is a domain which tends to dictate its logic to other domains it is the domain of economy, not politics.

2. In late capitalism, tensions (contradictions) within the domains of politics (pluralism), economy (competitive market), and culture (diversity of points of view) are at least as significant as tensions between these domains.

3. If one agrees with Offe and Habermas that late capitalism is inherently unstable, after comparing it with the actually existing socialism, one has to conclude that: (3.1) the disruptive power of the contradictions between the principles of the systemic level within capitalism is much weaker than in state-socialism and/or (3.2.) those contradictions which emerge in the life-world of capitalist societies as open conflicts, threaten the stability of these societies much less than do conflicts emerging in the life-worlds of the state socialist countries.³⁷

4. The pattern of stability with periodic crises (as, for example in Italian politics) characterizes only the level of life-world. The systemic level, due to the flexibility of the principles it is founded on, remains stable, or at least, far more stable than in the actually existing socialism.

Let me finally take this analysis one step further to encompass the period of transition sweeping Eastern Europe.

1. It is a tautology to state that periods of transition are not stable. Yet from this trivial statement one should not infer that the lack of stability automatically implies instability (as

³⁷Those are tentative conclusions, hypotheses. A full-fledged comparison of the two systems within the model developed in this essay remains to be undertaken.

it has been defined in this essay). It is precisely at this point, that my conceptual distinctions between problem, crisis, and instability prove their theoretical utility to the fullest.

Periods of transition, such as the one Eastern Europe is presently undergoing, are periods of permanent crisis, or to be more precise, series of crises. They are not, however, periods of instability. In such periods of transition, crises which arise from the contradiction between systemic principles, culminate in the transformation of these principles or the emergence of new principles. New crises, therefore, arise in new structural location, i.e., within a new set of principles.

2. The consequences of this difference as reflected on the level of life-world are fundamental. Whereas the systemic instability eventually gives rise to the mood of social apathy and hopelessness (Mason and Nelson 1988), the period transition, characterized by a series of crises rapidly following one another, produces in the life-world the mood of elation, mobilization, and endless possibilities. During such periods the old rules of the social game are suspended, and the society engages in a series of Turnerian social dramas to deal with unresolved problems and contradictions.

Among the more detailed conclusion of this study, I would like to emphasize the following.

1. In the 1980's, the problem of legitimacy ceased to be the source of conflict and instability in Poland. I argue this point against a more conventional view, recently expressed by William

P. Avery who concluded that:

The explanation of this near permanent state of instability (in Poland - J.K.) is found ultimately in an analysis of the legitimacy crisis that has characterized Poland's political system throughout the postwar period" (1988:111).

Within the framework I proposed in this essay, the legitimacy crisis belongs to the level of life-world and whereas it contributed to instability it was not its "ultimate" source. Such sources, I believe, are to be found among the contradictions of the systemic level, specified in sections III, IV, and V.

2. In order to preserve analytical sanity in the midst of these sweeping changes I propose the following conceptualization. The transition period, which began in Poland in the fall of 1988 has two distinct phases. The first phase of the implementation of the political-economic reform, lasting in Poland till the formation of Mazowiecki's government, did not lead to the removal of the principal systemic contradictions. A gradual expansion of the official political field in this phase can be best characterized as the two-fold process of individual co-optation and state corporatism, not as genuine (systemic) pluralization, as has been suggested at least by the titles of recent articles by Morawska (1988) and Kolankiewicz (1988).⁴⁰ It can be argued that the corporatist inclusion of some major collective actors (such as trade unions) into the political process (according to

⁴⁰Kolankiewicz deals with what he calls "permissible pluralism" which indeed consists on "the strategy of selective inclusion or coaptation." His diagnosis is thus similar to mine; but I would argue that his use of the term "pluralism" introduces unnecessary confusion to his argument.

65:35 formula) constituted a surrogate solution since it did not remove the contradiction between centralism and democracy; it did not eliminate the most persistent source of social instability.

3. The reforms of the political system, implemented in this first phase, can be also classified as instances of liberalization; they were more radical than most of the earlier "reforms" introduced by the regime. These earlier reforms can be best classified as instances of humanization, understood as a process in which:

no new rights are won by the non-ruling groups but the style of ruling becomes more sensitive, more humane and, sometimes, more responsive to basic needs. [Also] the scope and the level of the unpredictability of repressive measures [decreases] (1988:15).⁴¹

Yet the reforms of the first phase were neither intended nor realized in such a way as to warrant the name of pluralization. The second phase began when the political, economic, and cultural reforms, addressing the principal contradictions of the systemic level (which had been merely discussed in the first phase), started to be implemented.

4. Genuine, i.e., systemic political pluralism entered the picture only after the unexpectedly high electoral victory of Solidarity in the June 1989 elections, which precipitated the collapse of the coalition of the PZPR, SD and PSL. The election of the Sejm, whose actions are no longer predictable, and the formation of the Solidarity-led government indicate the end of

⁴¹For a discussion of this issue see Ekiert (1989) who brought to my attention Lamentowicz's article.

"actually existing socialism" in Poland and the beginning of the transition period, during which not only the life-world problems, crisis, and contradictions will be dealt with, but during which the contradictions of the systemic level will be resolved.

S.I suggested already several structural features of this transitory period. Attention should now be now directed towards the identification of new sources of crisis and instability. The process of reform is going to generate, for example, a contradiction between the demand for increased productivity (as well as the supremacy of economy over politics and culture) and the demand for protection of those who are going to be the victims of the pauperization inevitably associated with drastic economic reform. As Szelenyi and Manchin has already observed in Hungary:

the expansion of the market forces and the reemergence of a market-indexed system of inequalities has created such a complex system of social conflicts that economic reform will be able to continue only if it discovers how to counteract the inefficiencies and inequalities created by the market (1987:136).

The economic reforms, driven by non-negotiable requests for the restoration of market mechanisms, can create in Eastern European societies, particularly Poland, conditions experienced in Western Europe under liberal capitalism, i.e., the primacy of the economy over other areas of the social system. Of course, such a scenario is highly unlikely -- there are many counterbalancing mechanisms in place -- but it should be considered as an extreme

possible outcome of Eastern European perestroika.⁴² What makes the Eastern European situation tragic is the fact that the existence of those counterbalancing mechanisms, can considerably slow down or derail the implementation of any comprehensive, i.e., principle-transforming, economic reform. I have in mind those mechanisms which can be set in motion by the trade unions (OPZZ, Grupa Robocza) defending the labor force against the excesses of this "primary accumulation phase of the late communism"⁴³ or by the Party-state bureaucracy defending its privileges.

⁴²The scenario of the unconditional restoration of market mechanisms is not, however, a pure product of imagination. The reform currently implemented in Poland is very close to such an extreme model.

⁴³This phrase popped up in my conversations with Bill Crowther in Greensboro, in March 1989.

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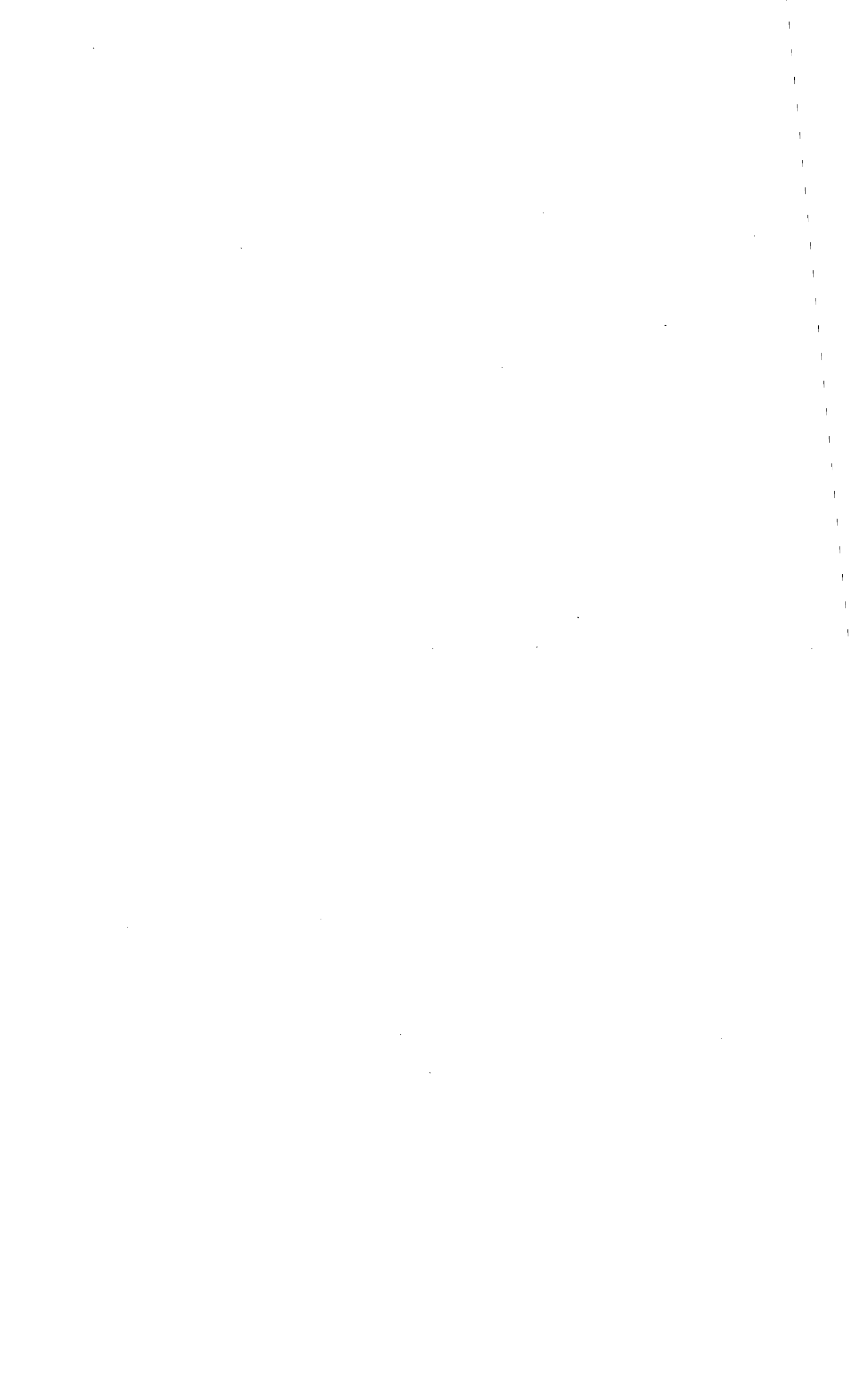
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