Elite Circulation and Consolidation of Democracy in Poland

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Abstract

The paper examines two aspects of democratic consolidation—institution-building and value consensus—through analysis of the old and new elites in Poland. It argues that although Polish democracy is established and working, it has not been fully consolidated. Poland represents the case of a "shallow consolidation," i.e., all elements constituting a consolidated democratic regime are in place, but relations among them do not form a coherent structure typical of mature democracies.

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"as the process of transforming the accidental arrangements, prudential norms, and contingent solutions that emerged during the transition into relations of cooperation and competition that are reliably known, regularly practiced, and voluntarily accepted by those persons or collectivities that participate in democratic governance. If consolidation sets in, the democratic regime will have institutionalized uncertainty in certain roles and policy areas, but it will also reassure its citizens that the competition to occupy office and/or to exercise influence will be fair and circumscribed to a predictable range of outcomes." (Schmitter 1992: 424).

When is this process over? How does one determine whether a particular democratic regime is already consolidated?

"Democracy is consolidated when under given political and economic conditions a particular system of institutions becomes the only game in town, when no one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions, when all the losers want to do is to try again within the same institutions under which they have just lost. Democracy is consolidated when it becomes self-enforcing, that is, when all the relevant political forces find it best to continue to submit their interests and values to the uncertain interplay of the institutions." (Przeworski 1991: 26).

The notion of consolidation, envisioned either as a process or as an outcome of the process, comprises two components. First, the value-orientation component which underscores consensus about rudimentary rules of democratic procedures among all major political players; and, second, the institution-building component which underscores a demand of translating value consensus into a democratic institutional framework which accommodates competing interests of all leading political actors. These two aspects of consolidation are mutually interdependent, and both have to occur to make consolidation complete. For analysis, however, they may be examined separately.

There is a lot of controversy about the advancement of East European countries on their way to democracy and capitalism. Some observers, mostly from the West, are quite optimistic. According to their view, democratic regimes and market economies in Eastern

There is little doubt that East European transitions were elite-led changes. This does not deny the critical role played by the mobilized masses, as evidenced by the strength of Solidarity movement in Poland, the East Germans' 'exit via Hungary' strategy, or the November 1989 Prague demonstrations which toppled Husak's regime. Nevertheless, the elites were the chief architects of communism dismantling. Serving a role of primary agents of change, at the very time of transition East European elites enjoyed an unprecedented autonomy. It allowed them to adopt a "pacted transition" pattern of radical change (Karl, Schmitter 1991; Higley, Pakulski 1995), and promptly to install the institutional underpinnings of a democratic polity. Soon after the remarkably successful breakthrough the elites were to play the role of stabilizers of a new regime. To consolidate a new regime is a different task than to abolish the old one. It requires accommodation within a new institutional structure (which is still under construction) of a variety of competing interests, most of which have been envisioned only very recently and remain in constant flux. Institution building and interest structuring are simultaneous processes in Eastern Europe, and more often than not newly (and frequently hastily) built institutions have not yet provided a pertinent framework for competing interest articulation. Besides, elites themselves need time to grasp the implications of the new institutional arrangement for their behavior.[1]

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Consolidation of democracy, as distinguished from transition to democracy, is defined:

Europe are established and working. Whatever turbulence in the region occurs, it is a standard predicament of democracy and capitalism, which, after all, are conflict-based systems. John Mueller who represents a global approach stresses the institutional aspect of regime change and the completion of the process in Eastern Europe:

"[T]he time of fundamental change is substantially over: further developments will take place in environments which are essentially democratic and capitalistic. The societies may become more or less efficient, humane, responsive, productive, corrupt, civil, or effective, but these changes will probably have to come about within (or despite) the present political and economic framework, not through further institutional transformation. In consequence, it might be sensible now to decrease the talk of 'transition' and to put a quiet, dignified end to the new field of transitology." (Mueller 1996: 103).

John Higley who represents an elite-centered approach stresses the importance of consensus of democratic values dominating within new elites as a necessary--and to large extend sufficient--condition of democratic stability. In his view, elite settlements, which paved the way for the peaceful abandonment of communism and launched the transition to democracy in East-Central Europe, resulted in the emergence of consensually united elites[2] and, subsequently led to the strengthening of East European neo-democracies:

"Open but restrained electoral competition, which are overlaid by much policy consensus, now prevail in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, and the contours of their politics closely resemble those of stable West European democracies." (Higley 1995: 14).

East Europeans are more skeptical. In their eyes the picture is not very encouraging. Kaminski and Kurczewska basically question the completion of transformation in Poland. They call post-communist elites *institutional nomads*, who

"... take over or create institutions for the sake of expediency, use them, and abandon. They do not invest in them nor do they consider them strategic assets. [...] The communist regime collapsed because of the degeneration of the particular organization of the political system of which the state was the key element. Instead of conceiving a global program for restructuring the whole government structure, the new elites replaced just a few elements leaving the rest intact. Instead of putting on a number of think-tanks that would try to formulate a strategy for the political and economic development, the new people in power behaved as if they had no use for new ideas and information. In their arrogance, they have copied the communist elites they replaced." (Kaminski, Kurczewska 1994: 149-50).

Sztompka emphasizes the inhibiting role of cultural legacy of communism:

"Imposing similar institutional and organizational forms, similar life-ways, similar ideologies on a number of nation-states of Eastern and Central Europe, and enforcing them for several generations, the communist system succeeded in creating a common cultural framework, over and above distinct national cultures, and relatively isolated from wider global culture; the unique syndrome of values, rules, norms, codes, standards typical for the bloc as a whole, the bloc culture. [...] Unexpectedly and unintentionally this cultural legacy has turned out to play a double-edged historical role. First, it had a 'boomerang effect' on the project of 'real socialism' blocking its operation, undermining its efficiency from within and eventually leading to its collapse. And second, outlasting the conditions that have bred it, and even enhanced to some extent by the immediate effects of prolonged oppositional struggle and revolutionary experience, it persists after the demise of communism and stands in the way of democratic transition. Strangely enough it has proved to be a subversive force both against totalitarianism and democracy." (Sztompka 1993: 87; underlines in original).

The two perspectives drafted above lead to opposite conclusions. According to the first, there is nothing wrong with the East European developments: the countries of the region are on the right track, and they have already achieved a phase which makes them essentially indistinguishable from mature democracies of the West. According to the second perspective, the countries of the region are still struggling for democracy, and there is a lot of uncertainty about the eventual outcome of this struggle.

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The paper discusses the advancement of consolidation of a new system in Poland through an examination Polish political elites. The major emphasis will be on value consensus and value configuration of elites; the post-communist development of political institutions will be summarized in a brief section.

The value orientations of elites have a two-fold importance for the stabilization of a new system. On the one hand, they constitute an independent and necessary component of consolidation. On the other, they interrelate with the other component of consolidation: institution-building. Elites are shaped by the institutions in which they have climbed-up and which they serve. Yet, the opposite dependency is also true: elites are institution-builders and they shape institutions they themselves design. (Kitschelt 1992; Kaminski, Kurczewska 1995). This is particularly true during rapid and profound changes of the political structures. Therefore, there is a good reason to believe that the new institutions emerging in East European neo-democracies will reflect attributes of their architects, or, to put it in other words, that elites' dispositions and beliefs will help determine their institution-building strategies.

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The demise of communism and the democratic transformation of the former Soviet bloc countries resulted in a circulation of political elites. Two determinants played a key role in the process: the establishment of a democratic institutional environment, and a change in the criteria of elite recruitment (merit and open competition substituted for the nomenklatura mechanism). The scope of the top office-holders turnover varies

significantly, however. According to the 1993 data[3], among Russia's new political elite the former nomenklatura still prevails, whereas in Poland and Hungary old elite members make up less than one-third of the new political elite. Whatever the ratio between old and new elites, none of the East European countries (with a possible exception of the Czech Republic) experienced a total replacement of the communist elite by new personnel.[4] In all of them current political elites constitute a mixture of the old and the new cadres. The 1993-94 electoral victories of the political Left in Poland and Hungary modified the elite configuration and sparked further personnel circulation within command positions. Specifically in Poland, communist-endorsed incumbents of middle- and lower-rank managerial/ professional positions under the *ancient regime* have been increasingly promoted to top offices.[5] One can not say, however, that the 1993 "left turn" in Poland resulted in restoration of the old communist elite.

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Given the mixed political background of current elites and the importance of elite values for consolidation of the new system, several questions arise: what are the value orientations of the political elite (do elite members coming from different camps share basic values of liberal democracy?); do these values form clusters typical for distinct politico-economic persuasions; and, do elite members originating from the communist camp differ in their value orientations from those with a non-communist background.

To answer these questions I will refer to the 1990-91 data

on deputies to the 'contract' Diet (Bialecki, Mach 1992; Wasilewski, Wesolowski 1992) and to the 1993 data on old and new elites in Poland.[6] Communist-backed deputies to the 'contract' Diet and the incumbents of the 1988 command positions will be considered representatives of the communist-originated elite, and the Solidarity-backed deputies to the 'contract' Diet and the incumbents of the 1993 command positions will be considered representatives of the non-communist-originated elite.

Brief recapitulation of the institutional development of the Polish post-1989 political system.

The process of institutionalization of the post-1989 political system in Poland has not yet been completed. The major obstacle is the absence of a new constitution. The legal framework of the system is still rooted in the Round Table agreement. Political compromise reached there was designed as a transitory arrangement. It was based on the assumption that the predominance of the Party will continue as will the minority representation of Solidarity-led opposition. The fragile construction built at the Round Table, with a communist-designated President to be elected by the National Assembly and the counter-balancing power of the freely elected Senate, mirrored the then-existing configuration of political forces. Key elements of the settlement agreed upon at the Round Table had already been turned into law by the communist Parliament in April 1989. During the next several months, however, the balance of

powers as well as the international context changed dramatically. The domino-effect swept away Communism from Eastern Europe. Under new circumstances, the Round Table arrangements appeared to be obsolete and inadequate. The semi-democratic legislature of 1989-91 undertook several steps to adjust the legal foundation of the polity to the changed situation, but failed to break the link between this chamber with the Round Table deal. A draft of a new constitution was proposed, but the project never came to a vote. A series of amendments based on stipulations rooted in the Round Table accord initiated by the 'contract' Diet and continued by the next legislature resulted in a constitutional provision (called "Little Constitution") of October 17, 1992. Since then, however, several further important amendments were passed (e.g. electoral law of 1993, bill on 'constructive vote of no-confidence'), altering the "Little Constitution" just months after its enacting. The sluggish process of constitution-drafting in recent years leaves little hopes for a breakthrough during present (1993-97) Parliament.

Current stipulations defining the status of policy making institutions are not particularly unsuitable within the Polish context. This is not the point. The point is, they are incompatible (which is a typical case when one tries to implant new elements into old structures) and unsteady. Taken separately, they might be of an unquestioned merit, but they fail short of forming a smoothly operating system. Furthermore, they are in constant flux.

Since April 6, 1989, the day the Round Table deal was settled there have been three parliamentary elections in Poland

(June 1989, October 1991, and September 1993). The Parliament elected in June 1989 (the 'contract Diet') lasted 28 months; the next, labelled the 'fragmented Diet', lasted 18 months; the present, called the 'Left Diet', will be probably the first to serve the full four year term. Each of the parliamentary elections were based on a different electoral law. Unique rules of compartmentalized elections (Olson 1993) led to the contract-based Diet. The 'fragmented' Diet was elected according to a proportional representation, and the 'Left Diet' according to a proportional representation with a five per cent threshold for parties, and an eight per cent threshold for electoral coalitions.

Changes in electoral rules were accompanied by an unsteadiness of party composition in the Diet and a permanent fluctuation in deputies' affiliation. At the beginning of the contract-based Diet seven parliamentary caucuses were formed; at the end of the term there were fifteen of them and still twenty deputies declared themselves non-affiliated. At the beginning of the term of the 'fragmented' Diet there were seventeen parliamentary clubs, of which only nine survived until the end of the term, and seven new ones emerged during the eighteen months tenure of the chamber. During the first year of the 'Left' Diet, three new factions appeared, and none of the seven original parliamentary clubs managed to maintain all its members (Jackiewicz 1994; Jackiewicz and Jackiewicz 1995).

An unsteadiness on the parliamentary arena is accompanied by an ambiguity in mutual relations and responsibilities between the legislature, the President, and the Cabinet. An abundance of

legal provisions and re-adjustments introduced throughout the past six years have not resulted in a coherent pattern of power sharing. Consequently, competence struggles, particularly between Parliament and the President, have been a common experience, often resulting in protracting political gridlock. An internal observer of the 1989-93 Polish political scene concluded that the changing configuration of forces between the President, Parliament, and the Cabinet suggests five distinct stages in Polish politics. Each of these stages were characterized by such different relations between leading political actors that they could be considered separate political systems.[7]

Despite the electoral lessons leaders of post-Solidarity parties were taught in 1993 and recently during the November 1995 presidential campaign, the Polish party system is still excessively fragmented, and there is little hope that this picture will change before the next year parliamentary election. All together, it seems that Kaminski/Kurczewska's political nomadism diagnosis might accurately depict the development of Polish political institutions. Since August 1989, when the first non-communist government in Eastern Europe was established, Poland has had seven cabinets. Recently, in December 1995, the third President was sworn into office. Three legislatures, seven cabinets, and three Presidents during six years: it hardly may be considered a portrayal of stable polity.

At the same time, all democratic institutions do exist in Poland, and neither individual nor collective political actors challenge them. Parliament is elected in openly-contested and universal elections. Minorities' rights are protected. Judiciary

is independent from politics, freedom of press, speech, assembly, petition is guaranteed, etc., etc. Clearly, democracy is working in Poland. The existence of democratic institutions is enough for democracy to work. But it is not enough to make democracy stable and smoothly operating. What is lacking is, as Schmitter put it, an institutionalization of relations of cooperation and competition that are reliably known, regularly practiced, and voluntarily accepted. In other words, for a mature democracy, durable patterns of relations have to be linked to democratic institutions. The mere existence of these institutions is a necessary, but insufficient, condition for consolidated democracy.

Value consensus.

Students of democratization agree that consensus about fundamental rules of political competition is a precondition for a stable democratic system. This means that on an individual level none of the major political leaders question the concept that "democracy is the only game in town." All adhere to democratic procedures and *a priori* accept uncertain outcomes of competition. On the level of political organizations this consensus means that none of the major political parties challenge the system of the government, i.e. there is no anti-systemic party in Sartori's (1987) sense.

The groundwork for consensus on the Polish political scene was laid during the Round Table negotiations. The very fact that

hitherto hostile parties agreed to meet and talk signaled a breakthrough. The settlement reached there established a promising starting point for elites' consensual unity. The consensus itself was worked out in the contract-based Diet. Despite the "we - they" dichotomy which overwhelmingly dominated the chamber, deputies of all political persuasions developed a strong feeling that they had a mission to fulfill. They all understood that they were expected to lay a foundation for a new polity and that they were the only body capable of doing it. Most of the deputies had only a vague idea of what a new system would look like. A lot of them, particularly those coming from the communist camp, were reluctant to accept democratic values, and the only reason they complied, was that at the moment they had no other viable alternative.[8] Whatever motives and circumstances determined legislators' actions, they eventually shared a view that a new system should be build on democratic and free market principles.[9] Task-oriented attitudes of deputies allowed the development of a cooperative mood among competing parliamentary parties. Despite an abundance of fundamental differences in policy issues, a missionary-like zeal created a common procedural platform which gradually expanded outside Parliament.

Simultaneously, equivalent processes have been taking place among political organizations. Mushrooming political parties and groupings, many of them composed of radicals, have been moderating their programs on a step-by-step basis, increasingly accommodating democratic rules and repudiating policies based on non-democratic principles. It has been a long-lasting and arduous process, one which entirely altered the initial political map of

the country and affected every single political actor. Today, there are virtually no anti-systemic parties on the Polish political scene.[10]

A 1991 study by Bialecki and Mach (1992) focused on the economic and social attitudes of deputies to the 'contract' Diet. Attitudes and dispositions concerning the distribution of power and democratic values were not at the center of their attention. Nevertheless, their study gives a good approximation of politico-economic values of transitional parliamentary elite.

On specific policy issues, differences between Solidarity-backed deputies' (members of the Citizens' Parliamentary Club) and those backed by *ancient regime* parties (and commonly identified then as the "communist camp") were in most cases significant, but rarely drastic.[11] As anyone familiar with the Polish situation could guess, Solidarity deputies were stronger proponents of market reforms (privatization, foreign capital) and moral renewal, whereas "communists" more frequently emphasized social aspects of transformation (unemployment, poverty, social services). In this sense, the former adhere more closely to elements of an 'economic liberalism' model, while the latter to elements of a 'socialism' model. Interestingly however, some issues typically linked with 'liberalism' or 'socialism' were rated by both groups in a similar way. For instance, there were no differences between opinions on "increase subsidies for agriculture" and "closer relations with the European Community".

An essentially similar picture emerges when deputies' were asked to assess nineteen statements on the nature of social and economic relations expressed in general terms (e.g. "Management

will always try to exploit workers", "There is one law for the rich and one for the poor", "Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth", "Schools should teach children to obey authority", etc.). Supposedly, these items, which did not refer directly to dilemmas of Polish transformation, better exhibit "deeper" attitudes of respondents than specific policy-issue questions. Differences between Solidarity and non-Solidarity deputies were slightly less pronounced than in the first case, but the direction was the same: Solidarity deputies more often declared opinions considered typical of a pro-market orientation, and the "communist camp" deputies gave opinions more characteristic of the 'socialist' orientation. No clear pattern of distribution was found however, among authoritarianism-tolerance-punitiveness items. Solidarity deputies revealed a weaker tendency toward punitiveness and legal rigor, but a stronger one toward enforcement of moral standards through education and censorship.

Table 1 presents the 1993 data on politico-economic preferences/transformation strategies of the new and the old (nomenklatura 1988) elite. Though differences between the new and the old elites are generally statistically significant,[12] in many cases they are surprisingly small (see, for instance, the distribution of the FOREIGN CAPITAL, CLOSING DOWN, FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, UNEMPLOYMENT NECESSARY variables), and in some cases (POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY, CIVIC POWER, EQUAL RIGHTS) they are non-existent.[13] New elites seem to be more intensely bound to liberal political and economic values than the old elites, but by no means can the latter be portrayed as hostile to democracy and to

a market economy. Both group reveal skepticism about an idealized perception of democratic values: on the one hand they accept a general code of popular rule and equal rights, on the other they admit that in special situations democratic rights might be constrained (variables CIVIL RIGHTS, FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY) and are reluctant to accept an unrestrictedly popular sovereignty principle. Besides, both elites share a distrustful view of the labor force: a large proportion think people have to be coerced to work effectively (UNEMPLOYMENT NECESSARY), and would misuse welfare (WELFARE SPOILS) if left alone.[14] The 1993 picture is quite similar to that of 1990-91: Communist-originated elites tend to perceive social relations as conflict-based and asymmetrical, attach more importance to welfare and social justice issues, and are inclined to impose reforms 'from above'.[15] New elites less often perceive social relations as asymmetrical and are less willing to support extensive welfare measures and political redistribution of resources.

Attachment to democratic values declared in sociological interviews and revealed in standard opinion-polls' multiple-choice questions indicates a readiness of political leaders to adhere to (realistic, as opposed to utopian) democratic principles and a reluctance to turn to non-democratic measures. Still, it says little about the depth of these opinions and virtually nothing about their structure. One can not determine the patterns of value orientations and discern whether an array of opinions form consistent systems of politico-economic beliefs.

Structure of value orientations.

A convenient starting point for the analysis of the structure of elite values is again the Bialecki-Mach study. Confronting Solidarity and "communist" deputies and adopting factor analysis, they tried to find out whether respondents' attitudes form consistent patterns, running along well-defined dimensions (like 'economic liberalism vs. socialism', 'authoritarianism vs. tolerance', etc.). Their procedures and findings describe as follows:

"The correlations between responses to individual items were rather weak; in different variants of analyses we got a relatively large number (from five to seven) of factors. Our expectation, encouraged by the results from other countries, that the factors would reveal a small number of clearly interpretable factors was not fulfilled. In particular: (1) the principal component did not emerge as a superfactor with poles that could be interpreted unequivocally as 'socialism' and 'liberalism' respectively; (2) conformity to authority and tradition, punitiveness, and legal and moral rigor turned out to be relatively independent, and did not constitute a common factor opposing conservative authoritarianism to approval of the autonomy of the individual, nonconformity, and individual freedoms and rights." (1992: 177-178).

The best what they could derive were two independent factors. The first relates to the general vision of social relations:

"On one of the poles of this vision these relations are defined as asymmetrical, putting employers and workers at odds in the division of labor, in which exploitation and inequality are the rule. This is true both for relations at work [...] and broader relations of social inequality on the macrolevel. [...] The opposing vision of social relations identified by this factor is made up of convictions that the social order contains various forms of symmetrical cooperation, is not based on injustice and exploitation resulting from the division of labor, and does not require the proegalitarian intervention of the state. This pole expresses the antisocialist attitude, but it is closer to a special kind of collectivistic conservatism than to liberal orientation, which is much more fully expressed in the second factor." (178-179).

The second factor expresses attitudes toward the welfare state, putting those who support extensive safety net programs on

the one extreme and those who oppose them on the other. Weak correlations between the original items and the independence of two identified dimensions mean that someone could support the 'socialist' policy of state involvement in the economy and at the same time preach 'capitalistic' features of economic individualism and declare authoritarian views on moral issues. This finding suggests considerable incongruence of deputies' attitudes. They hardly integrate their ideas/attitudes into well-structured systems of beliefs. Rather, their opinions form a mixture, sometimes peculiar indeed, composed of elements coming from distinct dimensions. One could expect that this kind of incongruity would characterize the general population--and studies support this view indeed[16]--but not elites who were chief designers of democratic/free market project. Bialecki and Mach's data show otherwise. Both, elites and the general public reveal a sort of muddle consciousness.

If Bialecki and Mach's conclusions are correct it may have significant consequences for a process of consolidation of a new system, both on individual, and on institutional level. After all, elites are major institution-builders, and their attitudinal bewilderment may be translated into the structure of the institutions they construct.

To find out whether the pattern (or, rather, a lack of thereof) described by Bialecki/Mach holds when broader elite is taken into consideration, I applied the same procedure to the 1993 data. My objective was to double-check their findings, to discern a possible distinctiveness of the nomenklatura elite, and to test a hypothesis that the early stage of systemic

transformation/consolidation is responsible for the hazy structure of elites' orientations. It seemed plausible to expect that the more advanced the process of the new regime installment, the more consistent the structure of elites' orientations. Analysis was run separately for the old and the new elites. Results are presented in Tables 2 (new elite) and 3 (nomenklatura 1988).

From among seventeen original variables listed in Table 1 three describing universal democratic principles (EQUAL RIGHTS, CIVIC POWER, and POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY) were excluded from factor analysis since they did not correlate with other variables in the model.[17] This is additional evidence of the declared support for general democratic values among Polish political elites whatever the configuration of their other attributes.

The remaining fourteen interrelated variables do not run along one dimension. Instead, in both the new and the old elite samples four independent factors were identified. This very fact shows that elite values do not constitute well-structured composites, and that as far as congruence of attitudes is concerned the new elites are not distinctively different from the former nomenklatura.

It would be unrealistic to expect that all variables cluster along one dimension. It could be expected however, that they would form two dimensions: one pertaining to procedural aspects of democratic politics and one pertaining to distribution of resources (Kitschelt 1992).

Dimensions along which elites' attitudes are arranged are not the same for the new and the old elite. There are apparent

similarities between them, however.

The new elite. The first factor is composed of five variables expressing opinions that the changes Poland is experiencing are advancing in a proper direction (variable 1), that foreign capital is an essential element of economic development (2), that shock therapy brought positive results (3), that unprofitable firms ought to be shut down (4), and that it is not true that private business always exploits workers (5). These variables clearly relate to economic reforms, specifically to measures associated with liberal model of economy. The positive end of economic liberalism dimension reflects the "laissez-faire" conception of economy, the negative end reflects skepticism toward this conception. The economic liberalism factor explains 20.7 per cent of the total variance of all variables.

The second factor is composed of three variables depicting a restricted (hierarchical/narrow) model of democratic decision-making (variables 6 and 7 concern restriction of civil and assembly rights, variable 8 expresses belief that economic gains can justify limitation of democracy). A high score on the democratic politics dimension reflects a quasi-authoritarian perception of procedural democracy, a negative score reflects a quasi-participatory stance. The democratic politics factor explains 14.2 per cent of the total variance.

The third factor is composed of three variables dealing with unemployment and state policy toward it. Variables 9 and 10 express a critical position toward both, reasons of unemployment (Variable UNEMPLOYED TO BE BLAMED basically implies that people have no job because they are lazy and/or irresponsible), and

welfare policy (extensive welfare measures spoil people). Variable 11 (UNEMPLOYMENT NECESSARY) emphasizes economic coercion as a requisite of an effective work. It is not easy to interpret this dimension. One could say, that all three variables "ought to" belong to the first factor, since they address issues typically considered a component of "laissez-faire" model of economy. Elite members, however, do not perceive them in this way: only the UNEMPLOYED TO BE BLAMED variable correlates (weakly) with the "economic liberalism" factor. The other possible interpretation--and let's adopt it here--is that these variables utter opinions about the nature of the labor force (human nature) and recommend adequate social policies of the state. The positive end of the labor force nature dimension reflects perception of people as immature, distrustful, and inactive, who thus have to be forced to work and should not be provided with benefits since they are to misuse them anyway. The negative end of this dimension reflects the opposite perception of human nature. The labor force nature factor explains nine per cent of variance.

The fourth factor is also composed of three variables. They depict social inequalities as a result of social injustice (variable 12) and obligate centralized power (variable 14) to redistribute resources (variable 13) in order to right the social wrongs. Thus, this factor closely resembles the socialist ideal of state and politics. A high score on socialist strategy dimension reflects approval of redistributive role of centralized state, a low score reflects disapproval of such a model.

All together, four factors explain 52 per cent of the total

variance in the distribution of fourteen variables in the new elite sample.

The old (nomenklatura) elite. The first factor, which explains 18 per cent of the total variance, is composed of four variables. Three of them (variables 9, 10, 11) concern the nature of labor force (see above), the fourth centralization of power for the sake of successful reforms (variable 14). Therefore, the old elite add to the distrustful perception of human nature an element of paternalism.

The second factor, economic liberalism, explains 14.5 per cent of variance. In comparison with the new elite, nomenklatura members do not include into this dimension EXPLOITATION variable, which is a component of the next factor.

The third factor, socialist strategy, is composed of three variables (12, 13, and 5), and strongly emphasizes the exploitative and unjust character of social relations that serve as a rationale for redistributive policy of the government. Nomenklatura thus have an idealized picture of socialist politics since the element of centralization of power is missing in their vision. Socialist strategy factor explains nine per cent of variance.

The fourth dimension, democratic politics, is the only one which in both samples is composed of the same variables. In the old elite case however, it is the least important factor: it explains merely eight per cent of variance. All together, four factors explain 50 per cent of the total variance in the distribution of fourteen variables in the old elite sample.

The results of factor analysis of politico-economic values

of the 1993 elite leave little doubt that Bialecki-Mach were right. My findings are nearly the same as their. Elites' opinions are not clustered along one or two well-defined dimensions.[18] The very fact that the four dimensions described above are independent means that elites' way of thinking about, and their perception of, politics and the economy is segmented into narrowly defined portions. They do not combine into comprehensive, multi-component constellations. In consequence, a sometimes surprising indeed conjunction of beliefs occurs, when, for instance, typically liberal economic measures concur with typically socialist ones.

It would be wrong to equate the fact that elites' politico-economic values are dispersed along several dimensions with a disorderly distribution of them. They are structured, though it is not this pattern of structuring which characterize mature liberal democracies. One may hypothesize that Polish elites illustrate the case of a liberal democratic belief system in the making. Though four factors are independent, some individual variables correlate with particular factors (coefficients are listed in Tables 2 and 3), and in most cases these are "proper" correlations, i.e. expected under the theoretical model.[19] One may anticipate that since the time data were collected the process of crystallization of elites' value orientations have been further advanced.

Conclusions.

A consensus about rules and codes of democratic political conduct is widely shared among Polish political elites. All major actors share fundamental rules of procedural democracy and in this sense they make up a consensually unified elite in Higley's perspective. Sometimes however, it is merely a 'negative' consensus, i.e. based on a rejection of non-democratic values and procedures because they are considered infeasible or otherwise unacceptable at the moment. Polish elites do not necessarily consider democratic ideas as "values in themselves"; the process of internalization of them has not been completed yet. Moreover, these values are loosely tied. As such, they are not anchored in deeply structured belief systems, and they are not yet inseparable parts of comprehensive and well-integrated wholes. Instead, specific values and dispositions cluster along narrowly defined issues and often happen to be mutually incompatible.

Values and orientations of the communist elite differ from those of the new elite in terms of both their content and their structure. Nevertheless, the two pictures are not contradictory. Whatever remnants of communist ideology and state-socialism political strategies persist among communist-originated elites (and certainly the new elites are not immune from the communist legacy either), they do not seem to pose a serious threat to democratic and capitalistic development. The old elite's attitudes accommodate within a broad spectrum of democratic politics and market economy. From this standpoint, the "left turn" in Polish politics denotes an alteration, possibly profound indeed, within democratic/free market framework, but not a sort of "come back" to the pre-1989 model.

All democratic institutions in Poland are established and are in working order. They do not form a smoothly operating system, however. Relations between them are rather poorly structured, chiefly because they are institutionalized on a provisional basis (lack of Constitution).

There is an astounding analogy between inadequately structured relations among political institutions operating on a national arena and underdeveloped structures of elites' orientations. My hypothesis is that these two imperfect structures mutually reinforce each other. Attitudinal predicaments and incoherences of elites are transferred to state institutions, because indeed elites constitute institution-builders. At the same time, institutional inconsistencies at the state level support the endurance of incongruent belief systems on the personal level because institutions do matter.

Despite all aforementioned drawbacks, the process of consolidation of democracy is well advanced in Poland. All elements critical for a consolidated democratic regime are in place. In this sense "democracy is the only game in [Polish] town." However, the process has not been completed yet. Its present state I call a "shallow consolidation", to emphasize that elements imperative for a stable democratic regime are not yet deeply grounded within the institutional substance of the state nor within personal belief systems of major political actors.

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Endnotes

"Institutional rules will develop an independent momentum and turn into constraints on political competition. Yet it will take some time before political actors fully understand the institutional constraints imposed on their actions and before they effectively gear their strategies to these rules of political game [...] In other words, while institutions have consequences for political actors, such consequences are not yet strategically understood." (Kitschelt 1992: 9).

In my view the weak point of "consensually unified elites" approach is that it focuses on initial elite settlement which activates the process of changes. It may accurately grasp the conditions and circumstances of launching transition (and, I believe, this is exactly the case), but not necessarily provide adequate theoretical and methodological tools for analysis of the ensuing processes of transformation to, and consolidation of, a new system. Consensually unified elites paradigm is based on two assumptions which are of empirical nature and may or may not be fulfilled in particular case. The first is that compromises and accommodations which were groundwork of elite settlement were sincere and reflected genuine will of major players to alter profoundly the structural framework of polity. The second is that elites which inaugurated regime change are the same which actually run transformation. If these two conditions are not met, if a settlement was merely a tactical move to win time, and/or the original signatories of the pact (both, or one of them) were excluded from the further developments, the paradigm is not going to explain the course of transformation and will say little about chances of successful consolidation.

See preliminary results of the comparative study of elite recruitment in postcommunist Eastern Europe published in special issue of Theory and Society 1995: 24. Cf. also Higley, Kullberg, Pakulski 1996.

From the perspective of elite theory there is an acute difference between the imposition of communism in Eastern Europe and its collapse: the communist take over in the mid- and late 1940s was marked by a total (and frequently violent) elimination of the preceding elites.

Data on Pawlak's and Oleksy's government to be included here.

The 1993 data come from the international comparative project mentioned earlier. See Szelenyi, Szelenyi 1995 for theoretical and methodological foundations of the study, and Wasilewski, Wnuk-Lipinski 1995 for summary of Polish findings. The project covered both the old communist elite, defined as the 1988 incumbents of the central-nomenklatura posts, and new elite, defined as the 1993

incumbents of the post equivalent to central nomenklatura listing. In Poland interviews were conducted in August-September 1993, just before parliamentary elections.

See Kurczewski 1995: 109. Mr. Kurczewski, a lawyer and sociologist, served as Deputy Speaker in the 1991-93 Diet.

See Wasilewski 1992: 51. Interestingly, a recently published analysis of responses to a questionnaire distributed among members of Lech Walesa's Presidential Council shows a persistence of similar opinions among Polish elites. Assessing risks and chances of Polish transformation, members of the Council frequently argued for a continuity of reforms using the phrase "there is no other option for Poland but to build a democratic and free-market social system." (Krzeminski 1995: 130).

Processes of group formation and consensus-building in the 'contract' Diet are described in Wasilewski, Wesolowski 1992. Analyses reported there are based on in-depth interviews with deputies conducted in the Fall of 1990.

Two minor groupings which may be considered anti-systemic play no role in national politics. One is the "Samoobrona" (Self-defense) movement of peasant populists, another is "Polska Wspólnota Narodowa" (Polish National Community), of extreme nationalists and anti-Semites.

The wording of the question was "What is the most important task the government should tackle in first order?" followed by a list of sixteen specific issues. Solidarity and "Communist" deputies differed significantly about "accelerate privatization", "attract foreign capital", "moral renewal of the society" (much more frequently considered the most important tasks by the former), and "improve public services", "limit unemployment", "increase industrial output", preferred by the latter.

Large samples undoubtedly contributed to that.

One has to keep in mind, however, that nomenklatura members were interviewed in 1993. There is no way to know whether their responses would have been the same if they had been interviewed before the collapse of the old regime.

The question arises whether this means that elites have a realistic perception of society, or that they simply voice a sort of elite-superiority toward masses.

One may wonder whether it is a reminiscence of Jaruzelski's justification of Marshal Law. He insisted that a major aim of Marshal Law imposition was to force population to accept Party-designed reforms.

See Wnuk-Lipinski (1987), Marody (1988, 1991), Ziolkowski (1988).

Two of them (EQUAL RIGHTS and CIVIC POWER) could not interrelate with other since their distribution is very skewed and they hardly differentiate samples.

A similar conclusion is drawn by Wesolowski who analyzed how "leading deputies" to the 'fragmented' Diet understand politics. (Wesolowski 1995). He interviewed merely 29 people, but all of them were the most prominent politicians on the national arena.

For example, economic liberalism "ought to" encompass negative attitudes toward political redistribution. Variable FLATTEN INCOMES is not (regretfully) a component of economic liberalism dimension identified by factor analysis, but it negatively correlates (r= - .199; see Table 2) with this dimension. This is what I call "proper" correlation.

Table 1. Politico-economic preferences/transformation strategies of the new and the old elite. Both elites studied in Fall 1993; N = 373 (new) and 850 (old). Five-point scale: 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree (please note: the lower the score, the stronger support for an opinion). Percentage of those who approve an opinion (strongly agree+agree) and mean score.
Missing values were not included into calculation of percentages and means.
Differences significant on .01 level unless marked * (.05 level) or # (no statistical significance).

Variable number, name, and question wording:	NEW ELITE			OLD ELITE		
	% approve	mean	StD	% approve	mean	StD
1. PROPER DIRECTION: Political changes in Poland are progressing in a proper direction.	72.4	2.18	1.15	47.5	2.87	1.28
2. FOREIGN CAPITAL: Changes in economy are not possible without broad opening to foreign capital.	90.1	1.58	.90	81.4	1.84	1.10
3. SHOCK THERAPY: Balcerowicz Plan brought positive results.	72.8	2.26	.98	50.2	2.71	1.18
4. CLOSING DOWN: Unprofitable firms ought to be closed down.	69.5	2.27	1.09	58.2	2.58	1.27
5. EXPLOITATION: Private business always benefits owners at the expense of the workers.	15.7	3.83	1.16	34.0	3.27	1.39
6. CIVIL RIGHTS: There are situations when civil rights and freedoms may be restricted.	54.5	2.83	1.44	66.2	2.48	1.39
7. FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY: There are situations when political parties, trade unions, and associations may be suspended.	56.0*	2.77	1.44	65.0*	2.49	1.36
8. ECONOMY vs. DEMOCRACY: Interest of economy can justify certain restrictions on democratic rights.	21.6	3.79	1.22	39.0	3.28	1.38
9. WELFARE SPOILS: The welfare state makes people nowadays less willing to take care of themselves.	42.7	2.97	1.28	31.0	3.40	1.32
10. UNEMPLOYED TO BE BLAMED: When someone is unemployed it is usually his or her fault.	12.2	3.70	1.00	15.2	3.82	1.33
11. UNEMPLOYMENT NECESSARY: Unemployment is necessary to make people in Poland work hard.	43.2	2.80	1.27	47.7	3.09	1.39
12. POVERTY: People are poor because of social injustice.	13.1	3.64	1.09	32.7	3.14	1.25
13. FLATTEN INCOMES: Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off.	33.2	3.36	1.42	48.8	2.89	1.51
14. CENTRALIZATION: For the sake of successful changes, power should be concentrated in one center.	25.8	3.62	1.33	35.0	3.39	1.51
15. POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY: Government not always has to act according to the will of the electorate.	66.2*	2.47#	1.29	62.7*	2.60#	1.41
16. CIVIC POWER: Citizens should be endowed with the strongest possible influence over the exercising of power.	85.4#	1.68#	.95	83.0#	1.76#	1.00
17. EQUAL RIGHTS: All citizens ought to be endowed with an absolute equality before the law.	96.2#	1.20#	.65	93.9#	1.28#	.79

Table 2. Politico-economic preferences/transformation strategies of the new elite: factor loadings (varimax rotation).

Variable number and name:	Factor 1: Economic liberalism	Factor 2: Democratic politics	Factor 3: Labor force nature	Factor 4: Socialist strategy
1. PROPER DIRECTION	**.750**			
2. FOREIGN CAPITAL	**.724**			
3. SHOCK THERAPY	**.717**			- .186
4. CLOSING DOWN	**.516**		.376	
5. EXPLOITATION	**- .426**			.319
6. CIVIL RIGHTS		**.828**		
7. ASSEMBLY RIGHTS		**.814**		
8. ECONOMY vs. DEMOCRACY		**.592**	.273	
9. WELFARE SPOILS			**.715**	
10. UNEMPLOYED TO BE BLAMED	.181		**.660**	.199
11. UNEMPLOYMENT NECESSARY			**.586**	- .253
12. POVERTY	- .187			**.750**
13. FLATTEN INCOMES	- .199		- .302	**.668**
14. CENTRALIZATION		.215	.322	**.458**
Eigen value	2.90	1.99	1.25	1.15
Percentage of variance explained	20.7	14.2	9.0	8.3
Total percentage of variance explained	52.2			

Table 3. Politico-economic preferences/transformation strategies of the old (nomenklatura) elite: factor loadings (varimax rotation).

Variable number and name:	Factor 1: Paternalism	Factor 2: Economic liberalism	Factor 3: Socialist strategy	Factor 4: Democratic politics
9. WELFARE SPOILS	**.643**			
10. UNEMPLOYED TO BE BLAMED	**.633**			
11. UNEMPLOYMENT NECESSARY	**.607**	.251		
14. CENTRALIZATION	**.606**			
3. FOREIGN CAPITAL		**.705**		
2. SHOCK THERAPY		**.627**	- .368	
4. CLOSING DOWN	.235	**.605**	.215	
1. PROPER DIRECTION		**.589**	- .277	
12. POVERTY	- .193		**.716**	
13. FLATTEN INCOMES			**.690**	.201
5. EXPLOITATION			**.667**	
6. CIVIL RIGHTS				**.796**
7. ASSEMBLY RIGHTS				**.787**
8. ECONOMY vs. DEMOCRACY	.384			**.592**
Eigen value	2.56	2.03	1.32	1.13
Percentage of variance explained	18.3	14.5	9.4	8.1
Total percentage of variance explained	50.4			

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