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'Path Dependence': How Geopolitics and Culture Shape Divisions in Poland after the Fall of Communism

Abstract: I examine two long-wave processes, geopolitics and culture, which I consider to be the main causes for the fall of communism and the beginning of the transformation. As a result of the geopolitical situation—in the shape of communism's multidimensional defeat by capitalism—the national culture was able to help society use the new geopolitical context successfully. I distinguish two sequences of cause and effect: The geopolitical one, in which the sequence begins with geopolitics treated as an independent variable and an element shaping all systems, which are treated as dependent variables, i.e., communism loses to capitalism → downfall of the state, for instance, the 'Round Table' → downfall of the central, planned economy (economic reform) → 'S' as organized rebellion → the Western model; and the cultural sequence, which begins from culture treated as an independent variable and a factor shaping all systems, which are treated as dependent variables, i.e., community based on national, religious, traditional, and solidarity values → 'us' against 'them' → industrial workers and the Church hierarchy supporting gradual change → the ruined work environment and civil society → Christian Europe and Poland's mission in East Central Europe.

I do not absolutize either geopolitical or cultural explanations (these are tools). I am closest to a configuration approach, in which attention is concentrated on all the factors that could contribute with 'equal strength' to forming a 'virtuous circle'. It is a relational approach, neither determinist nor constructivist (voluntarist). Structures and agencies possess autonomous powers of causal influence. There is a dual constituting of the agency/actor and the structure/system.

Keywords: Historical institutionalism, structure and agency, two chains of cause and effect: geopolitical and cultural, configuration approach

> 'Now, however, you must play an entirely different game. Now you no longer have a textbook external enemy or an embodied evil—equally textbook—in the shape of the state. Now you must stand face to face with the evil in yourselves. But triumph over the forces of evil does not automatically make anyone a good person.'—Joseph Brodsky, Nobel Prize winner, speech on the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate in Katowice, 1993 (2006: 234)

Main Ideas

Historical institutionalism

'The basic, and deceptively simple, idea is that the policy choices made when an institution is being formed, or when a policy is initiated, will have a continuing and largely determinate influence over the policy far into the future…The standard term

for describing this argument is "path dependency", meaning that when a government programme or organization embarks upon a path there is an inertial tendency for those initial policy choices to persist,' wrote Guy Peters in regard to political phenomena (Peters 2005: 71), but the same idea applies to economic and social phenomena, as well as to geopolitics and culture. I will thus present, first, arguments for the idea of the decisive significance of long-wave processes in the origin of the post-communist transformation, and second, I will prove that these processes co-define the divisions that have existed in Poland since 1989. Of course, many of today's tensions and conflicts originate in events of the short or medium wave. Thus the divisions I try to analyze are both old and new in character.

I will analyze here two long-wave processes—geopolitics and culture—considering them as the base from which events of the medium and short wave were set in motion. The overwhelming majority of analyses of the transformation have concentrated on these latter: on internal affairs such as workers' protests, the leadership of Lech Wałęsa, the agreement of the ruling-party elite and the union opposition within the framework of the Round Table, the forming of Mazowiecki's government, the Balcerowicz plan, etc.; or on foreign affairs, such as, for instance, Gorbachev's assumption of power (and the reforms), or the West's aid for the anti-communist opposition in Poland. Although I concentrate on long-wave processes of geopolitics and culture, the very course of the transformation after 1989 indicates that the economy, politics, and society—that is, processes in the micro and mezzo sphere—have an increasingly large influence on the shape of these axes.

Certain traits of long-wave processes should be mentioned at the beginning of such analyses. Namely, that large structures, or systems, change much slower than might appear from the events of a day, month, or year. Therefore, concentrating on processes of the long wave could have pessimistic, or even fatalistic, overtones. We should remember how slowly the political regimes ruling Europe after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 changed (they lasted with minor alterations until 1914). This explains why the mechanisms of geopolitics are most often analyzed in determinist categories. The cause and effect sequences are reminiscent of the action of natural forces, as if external to us. On the other hand, cultural processes are usually located in the sphere of indeterminism, where the change of cultural order is treated as dependent on the normative sphere—the values, norms, and choices that agents (actors) carry in their hearts and minds. Then it is more appropriate to use the concept of agency. Culture ordained that national uprisings would occur systematically, and geopolitics—that they would end in defeat.

Another situation emerged in the 1980s. Both structures favoured the fall of communism and the beginning of systemic transformation. New driving forces (economic, political, and social) have also had an influence on the course of the transformation. The impact of these new factors sometimes appears to researchers to be so powerful that they describe the world as 'liquid', 'flat', or 'spinning', suggesting that actors (agencies) can construct a world voluntarily, according to their imaginations and interests. It is an illusion—just as the 'stiffness' of communism and the 'eternal' functioning of the two blocs in the Cold War period turned out to be an illusion.

In short, there is neither 'liquidity' nor the 'stiffness of the structure'—such extreme approaches are false. It should be added that there are periods of accelerated change, or of interrupted continuity (for instance, Poland in 1945), as well as of 'disturbed equilibrium', decay, and stagnation.

Cause-and-effect sequences and the chances for a successful configuration

I distinguish two cause-and-effect sequences: one in which the sequence begins from geopolitics treated as a determining factor of what is happening in economics, politics, society, and culture; and another in which the sequence begins from culture as a causative agent of processes that occur in society, politics, economics, and geopolitics as well.

In the geopolitical sequence, a central place is occupied by the external determination of the systems of political-economic domination. The world is a 'given' in it and we must adapt. The situation is the contrary with the cultural sequence, where the world is solely 'extant', because people can change it if they only attach sufficient value to their own actions (Aleksander 2010: 21–46). If the desired effect is achieved, then a positive configuration will occur between actors (agents) proceeding deliberately and contexts (structures), which also change. In order for the desired outcome to be produced, the structures must make it possible. However, the actors should not cease their efforts if they do not bring the expected results, as achievements depend not only on external determinations, but above all on the strength of the motivation; this is the potency of values as moral obligations. Currently, this set of values is most often defined by identity. While geopolitical approaches usually originate in the school of realism (macro or micro), the cultural approach comes from phenomenology (macro or micro), the science of possible (rather than certain) phenomena, in which changes depend on the developmental phase of consciousness, and in the end, on the results of one or another institutionalization. The geopolitical sequence of the genesis of systemic transformation primarily explains the multidimensional global defeat of communism with capitalism, while Solidarity's rebellion is seen solely as a factor accelerating the implosion of the old regime. In this sequence, culture is an addition to, not the cause of, transformation. It is exactly the opposite with the cultural sequence, in which the central question is the influence of (national) culture on all systems, including geopolitics. Culture was responsible for setting in motion mechanisms that led to the downfall of communism as a system foreign to itself.

I do not absolutize either the geopolitical or the cultural explanation. I treat them as useful heuristic tools. The configuration approach, in which attention is concentrated not only on the mutual relations of geopolitics and culture, but on all the systems that could theoretically, 'with equal strength', contribute to shaping the 'virtuous circle' between systems, is closest to my way of thinking. This means that all systems act, to a large degree, autonomously, according to their own 'logic', as is said. They are interdependent. It is a relational approach, neither determinist nor agency-based (reductionist, constructivist, or voluntarist). It is characterized by the fact that agency and structure possess autonomous powers of causal impact (Archer 2013: LV–

LXX; Reed 2003: 299–304). In regard to the above, a 'double constituting' occurs of the actor/agency and the structure/system. Emergence processes occur. Combinations and concentrations appear, then constellations or configurations, which consist in the fitting together of all the factors (Morawski 2010). Sometimes it is necessary to wait a long time, sometimes even hundreds of years, for a positive configuration (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). In modern Polish history, we have had successful configurations twice: in 1918 and in 1989. In both situations the determining role fell to external factors, but these were supplemented by internal ones. The latter are necessary, but insufficient. On the other hand, an example of a negative configuration is the situation at the end of the Second World War.

Past experiences are not enough

In Poland, geopolitics and culture have always been fields of fierce scholarly, ideological, and moral confrontations. The post-communist transformation brought new questions to these confrontations and has often produced sharp differences of opinion: beginning, first, with the question of who 'we' and 'they' are in the confrontation of the 1945–1989 period; second, what are the constituting frameworks of the practice of liberal democracy; third, what political, economic, and other interests best serve economic interdependence with the outside world; and fourth, how to define the equilibrium between the forces of identity and forces of diversity. This raises the need for questions about the usefulness of past experiences.

What has history taught us? Well, probably mainly that there isn't any good answer to that question if we consider that in our history waves of disappointment have followed waves of hope. The period when the Constitution of May 3rd was passed, the Napoleonic wars, the achievement of independence in 1918 and its defence in 1920, the beginning of the post-Stalinist era of 'communism with a human face' (1956–1968), and the transformation after 1989 were high tides of hope. Ebb tides of hope—these were the periods of the partitions, of failed uprisings, the imposition of the communist regime by the Yalta Agreement and the Soviet Army marching on Berlin. In trying to change the situation for the better, our ancestors had to choose, and sometimes to err. For instance, should one ally oneself with Napoleon, or not, like Kościuszko? Should one ally oneself with Russia or with Germany—as was debated during the First World War?

Do the experiences of the past teach us how to deal with them? One thing is certain. We don't need to think up questions of this type. They come to us on their own, because we live in an open world of regional and global interdependence. Let's pause on this thought for a moment. Here are two statements. Kazimierz Wyka, in a book written during the Second World War entitled *The Make-Believe World*, explained that 'The European nations are acquiring ever more history and nevertheless these nations do not fall into the state of formalist-historical dementia characteristic of organisms eaten away by an outdated and decaying historicity, but still look to their past, simultaneously seeing in it their goal. They are fragmented, but have one thing in common: each desires to be itself and each has some mission, some calling, each

dreams that only it knows how to accomplish certain tasks. Whether they will be able to come to an agreement and understand that their pasts can be reconciled in one sentence—is unknown' (Wyka 2011: 28–29).

The unknown, about which Wyka wrote, did not concern freedom, but only the paths to it. It was similar with the entire region of East Central Europe after the Second World War. Wyka pointed to the danger connected with an 'outdated and decaying historicity', but at the same time the vitality of the question of the nation. Czesław Miłosz viewed the matter similarly years later, claiming that 'in its extreme form, the nation appears as the top priority, replacing in a certain sense parties, Marxist ideas of the organization of history' (Miłosz, 2006: 345). This view does not fit the metaphor used by Clifford Geertz, who says culture is like an octopus—one doesn't know which arm it's going to use when. Would a contrary metaphor be apt, namely, that our culture is reminiscent of a knife, which is associated with clearly defined aims and means? These are radical views; thus, following Weber, I see our choices as dual-phase. In the first, the normative phase, 'the switchman' (according to Weber) chooses the train's direction at the railway station, and in the second, practical phase, the train ride takes place in accordance with individual interests and possibilities, which are various. This means that the direction is a given for us, because it is freedom (sovereignty)—what Wyka described as 'one thing in common'—but the roads leading to it could be various, which is determined chiefly by questions of equality and solidarity (fraternity). Poles express themselves on these issues with varying force, variously.

Reference to the past could have very limited sense. The American researcher into the ambiguity of experience, James G. March, warns us that 'Experience is likely to generate confidence more reliably than it generates competence and to stop experimentation too soon… Experience may possibly be the best teacher, but it is not a particularly good teacher' (March 2010: 114–115). Examples are provided by history.

Experience can be a trap. It needs to be continually redefined on account of variable external and internal conditions. This is the obligation of the elite, which has performed its task well if it is able to make use of the potential of new social forces. At present, I have in mind people with peasant or proletarian backgrounds. Somehow our culture is chiefly gentry founded, which does not always favour the entry of new social forces, because from time to time our 'Sarmatian phantoms' increase in strength. Fortunately, supporting the middle classes does not evoke any particular controversy. Presently, what remains is to refer to the tradition of the intelligentsia, whose strength is regrettably weakening.

If practical experience is insufficient, then reference to scholarly theory is a path that is always present for exploration. But this path too has its limitations: first of all, because our political and economic elites after 1989 did not see the sense in spending money on research and technology. The proponents of the 'neoliberal transition' were not ashamed to say that it would be a waste of money (everything can be bought, after all!). Information about the interests hiding behind socio-political ideologies produces even less hope. Quite a number of our politicians are universally regarded as unproductive, and the prestige of Polish politicians is close to zero. In this situation

it would be good to return to experience, but in a form that has little to do with practice. I am thinking of the idea of the 'social imaginary'.

This concept has been developed by Charles Taylor, a Catholic philosopher from Canada, who writes that a new vision of the social order is necessary—one that would at the same time be a moral order: 'The social imaginary is not a set of ideas; it is rather what makes social practices possible by giving them sense' (Taylor 2010: 9–10). Individuals and communities see themselves in the world in a way that reflects their values. People want to build themselves homes to their liking and there it is always a matter of 'persons, nature, goods', and religion, Taylor stresses. This idea could be useful in researching imprecisely defined situations such as we often have to deal with. It is different with ideologies, where 'truth' and 'falsehood' are guarded within the framework of the regimes of conservatism, liberalism, radicalism, and national Catholicism, which compete with one another, 'prioritizing some things above others' (Jessop 2012: 75). Comments on the construction of pipelines at the bottom of the Baltic as proof of the currency of the 'Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact', or others, for instance, on the division of Poles into 'true' Poles and 'domestic Muscovites'—such opinions belong to the social imaginary. They are often symptoms of reactivity or of mental traumas. They legitimize what was or is—or the opposite—not because they are true opinions or not, but because people identify with them for, among other things, emotional reasons.

The Geopolitical Sequence of External Determination

> 'In connection with our geographical situation we must make, in this regard, much greater efforts than other powers to achieve the same goal. We lie in the center of Europe, we could be attacked from three sides. France has only one eastern border, Russia, only a western one, on which they could be attacked […] The pike in the European carp pond are preventing us from being carp and we can feel their teeth on both sides'—Otto von Bismarck (in the Reichstag, 6 April 1888: 139)

Geopolitical considerations preoccupy not only states that have fallen under external blows, but also those that have, as we read above, given effective blows to their neighbours. Such considerations are the more important for Poland—a medium-size country with an average output, located between two powerful neighbours. If 'contemporary geopolitics identifies sources, practices, and interpretations, which allow for the control of a territory and acquisition of resources' (Flint 2008: 32), geopolitics will be understood as all those dependences on the external world that ensure the security of the (nation) state not only in the military sphere, but also in the economic, political, social, and cultural spheres.

The connection between geopolitics and culture: positive versus negative

Geopolitics in the wide sense is linked not only with wars, but also with other forms of struggle against oppressors: in Poland, for instance, with literature, with 'organic

work', with the activity of 'rebellious peoples' (Cywiński and others). In other words, geopolitics and culture are systems that are generally positively associated for us. Literature in the form of the three bards, or the books of Henryk Sienkiewicz, functioned as a substitute in the lack of our own state. But geopolitics and culture can often be negatively linked, and quite a number of examples of a strengthening of a 'culture of dependence' (on the partitioner, the colonizer) can be found. One proof could be the formation of *homo sovieticus*. Analysis of a negative dependence are provided by literature on the subject of Orientalism (see Edward Said, for example) and Occidentalism (see Ian Buruma, for example).

When we come to analyze the connections of geopolitics and culture in Poland in the era of communism it should be noticed that lack of acceptance (legitimation) for communism in society was not alone sufficient for its downfall, just as in the past (1795–1918), society's lack of acceptance for the partitioning powers was in itself insufficient for the attainment of independence. Obviously the communist system did not have normative identification in Poland, but it increased the sphere of instrumental acceptance. The Polish United Workers Party had a few million members. The authorities ensured the mass advance of the peasant population, attempted the 'renewal' of communism after 1956, and undertook to modernize the country in the times of Edward Gierek. Society in Poland remained divided the whole time, but it would have been hard to speak of simple divisions. They were not as glaring as in the USSR, of which Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote: 'half the nation was sitting in prisons, but the other half was walking about the streets cheering the authorities' (cited after Kapuściński 2009: 16).

In the logic of the geopolitical model there is no need to negate that Solidarity contributed to overcoming the system, but the main claim is that communism, in losing the confrontation with capitalism, enabled Solidarity to carry the day. In other words, the downfall of the system in 1989 occurred as a result of the forming of a successful configuration of external and internal factors. In modern history such a configuration happened twice: in 1918 and in 1989. Since the Swedish Deluge, Poland had been on a downward slope. Internal efforts, expressed in unsuccessful uprisings, did not help: the Kościuszko Uprising, the November Uprising, the January Uprising, the 1905 Revolution, and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. They were organized more or less every 30–40 years. It was only the advantageous international situation at the end of the First World War (the defeat of the partitioning powers) that led to the decision at the Conference of Versailles and finally a positive utilization of internal initiatives (Piłsudski's army divisions, the Silesian Uprising and Wielkopolska Uprising, etc.). In turn, the configuration that emerged at the end of the Second World War was tragic (the Yalta Agreement). Unfortunately, everything indicates that neither the massive underground state, such as existed in no other society defeated by Hitler, nor the tragic Warsaw Uprising of 1944, had any chance of producing a more advantageous end to the Second World War for Poland.

The second time a favourable configuration appeared was at the end of the 1980s. The West's dominance over the communist world was overwhelming: 3.5 to 1 in terms of population, 4.6 to 1 in terms of economies, 1.7 to 1 in terms of military

troops (Collins 1999: 50–51). The Soviet system was ossifying, and the withdrawal of the USSR from Afghanistan proved that its protection of the empire's external borders was in question. The breakup of the state and its crisis of legitimacy were manifestations of the decline of the empire.

Poles aren't forgetting about geopolitics

Poles know rather too well that the geographical situation matters, but awareness of this fact seems to be 'fractured'. Let's look at public opinion research on the subject of the downfall of communism (Center for Public Opinion Research—CBOS). 20 years after 1989, here is how Poles responded to the following question (Roguska 2009: 27): 'What, in your opinion, contributed the most to the downfall of the communist system in the USSR and in the former countries of the Eastern bloc?' Answers: 'The Solidarity movement and the activities of the democratic opposition in the People's Republic of Poland'—44%; 'the pontificate of John Paul II—38%; 'the economic inefficiency of the communist system'—27%; 'the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev/*perestroika* in the USSR'—25%; 'the policies of Ronald Reagan, the United States' military dominance over the USSR'—10%; 'the activities of the opposition in other countries of the Eastern bloc'—9%; 'something else'—1%; 'hard to say'—13%. Similar answers (to the same questions) were given a year later (2010). Does that mean that Poles saw internal forces as more important than external ones? Well, not necessarily, because Poles also appreciate the external (geopolitical) factors. 20 years after the introduction of martial law, 'the majority of Poles consider the introduction of martial law to have been the right thing to do'. In an announcement by CBOS I can read that surveys after the year 2000 show that 'the preponderance of opinion considering its introduction to have been reasonable is decreasing but still persists.' (Wenzel 2010: 33).

The events of 1989 constitute a reversal of the course of national history, if one takes into consideration that Poland left the Warsaw Pact and COMECON, and then joined the Western political-military and economic groupings (NATO and, among other entities, the EU). It is as if the West had always been our natural place. Does this mean that Poland was a part of it, and returned to its place? That the West became its natural place after the fall of communism is a fact, but our relations with the West were and are more complicated. The West has not always been friendly toward us; it hasn't always considered us a part of itself. The doubts remain (Kieżun 2012; Markiewicz 2012).

The impact of geopolitics is continual, but at present is more advantageous

Table 1 presents the influence geopolitics has on other systems: on politics, the economy, society, and culture. The first part of the table displays geopolitical influence in three phases: (1) before 1989, (2) at the beginning of the transformation, and (3) currently. An increasingly stronger European and global interdependence is visible. The influence of geopolitics has not disappeared but is only different than in the Cold War period. The geopolitical symbolism is old, because although Poland's Solidarity was

the hero of the global scene in 1980–1989—as was recognized then in giving Wałęsa the Nobel Prize—now the symbol of the end of the Cold War is the Berlin Wall, and not the Gdańsk shipyards. The second part of Table 1 presents important theoretical categories used in analyzing the transformation.

Theoretical concepts

Description of the sequences includes the following concepts and theoretical perspectives.

1. Geopolitics: in place of the category of system/systems the key category appears of 'interdependence', which points to the objective phenomena described as the third wave of globalization. It requires the world, which was recently strongly divided, to be seen as one. Interdependences existed earlier, of course, but at present they are much more 'complex' (see Nye, Jr.). What counts in them is not only 'hard power' (the USA is number 1), but increasingly 'soft power' (for instance, the EU); not only the East and West, but also the South, not only military might, but also economic strength. That the two dominating systems from the times of the Cold War (the communist and capitalist) have disappeared does not mean political rivalry has disappeared. A number of major actors have arrived: among other reasons, because the Third World has finally come onto the world stage with great impetus as the so-called Great Remainder. China, in particular, is admired for its economic successes since 1978. The states called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), which often practice state capitalism, have become significant. This would seem to indicate that geoeconomics has replaced geopolitics (Haliżak 2012), but that would be a simplification, because geopolitics returns. Poland, which has found itself within the structures of the West, is becoming aware of the costs it may incur as a result of its decisions in regards to its external, economic, and political-military connections.

2. Economics: the key category was neoliberalism and structural adaptation to the so-called logic of global markets, or, in actuality, to the implementation practices of the Washington Consensus, backed by the United States and the strategic financial institutions on which the US has the greatest influence (the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, and others). These institutional practices were the embodiment of successive versions of known theories of modernization, westernization, or Americanization. Presently, this is being done under the baldaquin of 'rational expectations' (confirmed by Nobel Prizes), which, however, have not passed their examination. This was shown by the crisis of 2008–2009, a kind of so-called 'black swan' for neoliberal economists.

3. Politics: changes in the functions of the state are the key issue. Along with the neoliberal economic offensive of the last 30–40 years, the state was supposed to acquire a minimal form, that is, reduction of the nation state's prerogatives on account, chiefly, of processes of regionalism, federalism, and in general—globalization. The matter is complicated meanwhile not only because of external economic ties (which are closer to neoliberalism or neorealism) but also internal identity aspirations. Rather than the reduction or elimination of the nation state it is better thus to point to the necessity of redefining it. People need that state like they need slippers for walking

about the home. For several years after 1989 such questions in Poland were almost not considered. However, since it was decided that the achievements of the elite of the 'transaction' (the Round Table) were a bit too modest, corresponding to the minimal state, it has increasingly been recognized that to meet the new challenges it is necessary to have 'transformation' elites of the kind that satisfy not only narrow socio-economic circles but also pay attention to social aspects, i.e., the rather too large socio-economic inequalities. This could mean promotion of the nation state and indubitably a 'good state'. Without good elites and a good state, Poland will lose the civilizational race.

4. Society: the transformation began with the revolt of a group of industrial workers in the period 1980–1981. Then the trade union Solidarity emerged, and was joined by 10 million people. They had the support of Reagan and Thatcher, who were furiously fighting against trade unions in their own countries. Solidarity for them was mainly an instrument in the struggle with communism. The workers, Solidarity's chief strength, wanted all kinds of freedoms, including the possibility of participating in decisions not only in the industry but also in the state. To be citizens. Meanwhile, neoliberal economic reforms imposed the roles of consumer and investor as more important than the role of citizen.

5. Culture: in the beginning, Western imitation-liberal patterns predominated, which augured cultural convergence, although theoretically they presupposed acceptance of the diversity of the global world. Awakening identity is a reaction to ubiquitous diversity. How to preserve the equilibrium between identity and diversity—this is a topic of violent controversy, as is evidenced by debates on the subject of multiculturalism, migration, terrorism, the strengthening of the nationalist right, etc. The liberal-imitative patterns of this sequence—diversity, pluralism, tolerance, and rapid change (the famous 'liquidity')—have found themselves in collision with those proposed in the cultural sequence.

The Cultural Sequence of Internal Agency

> 'A nation is summed up in its literature and lives through it, when it can not live elsewhere. It might err politically, but nationally it never errs. It is like a torch lighting the darkness of bondage—and like a great bell, which won't let sleep the conscience not only of Poles but other peoples as well.' Henryk Sienkiewicz (cited after Szczublewski 2006: 450)

Culture as an independent variable

Jeffrey C. Alexander, in opposition to those who treat culture as a dependent variable (as in the geopolitical sequence), treats it as an independent variable: 'Agency is immanently connected with culture, and is not a process located outside of it. Agency is 'free', activity is never simply imitation, and internalized symbolic environments are never simply reproduced' (Alexander 2010: 56). Let's make the connection with the role played by Sienkiewicz's work. When the author ends the *Trilogy* with the sentence,

Table 1

The Geopolitical Cause and Effect Sequence of External Determination

Systems: Changes in time:	Geopolitics⇒	Politics⇒	Economics⇒	Society⇒	Culture
1. Before	1. Communism loses against capitalism	1. Breakup of the state: fiscal problems, divisions among the elite, the Round Table, transaction elites	1. Downfall of the centrally planned economy	1. Solidarity as organized rebellion against communism	1. The West as model
2. Beginning	2. Poland leaves the Warsaw Pact and COMECON	2. Transformation elites	2. Geoeconomics: the economy as a political tool	2. The decline of trade unions	2. Globalism and imitation
3. Presently	3. Poland enters NATO and EU structures	3. Democracy: elites vs. society	3. The EU as Poland's main trade partner. How to leave the crisis?	3. Civil society: myths and realities, migration and immigration	3. Poland in Europe and the world, or Europe and the world in Poland? The invasion of 'difference'
Theoretical categories:	Two systems: complex interdependence; the Great Remainder awakens; China	The minimal state: neoliberal; redefinition of the nation state; the EU and its crisis	Adjustment: the Washington Consensus; the crisis; 'black' or 'white' swans; the state economy (BRICS)	'Limited Revolution;' globalization; Europeanization; free choice; weak faith in collective action	Identity as reaction to difference; Poland's place on the map of collective culture?

'This ends a series of books written over several years and with no little difficulty—for the purpose of raising spirits,' (Szczublewski 2006: 183), it means that that 'raising spirits' is a prerequisite for forming the strivings of the people reading the writer's novels into activity on behalf of the nation. It indubitably did contribute.

The strategic assumption of this sequence is the following: there is a community, formed in the past, based on such values as the nation, religion, tradition, language, and solidarity. This community is supposed to have a large driving force, because, among other things, it is inclusive. This is a condition of its being able to fulfil its task in regard to the whole called the Republic. Were those republican expectations realized in practice? It might be doubted, although not yet in regards to the 16th century. Later, however—yes. As is known, the gentry nation, with its own interests in mind, would not agree to extend the power of the king. There was no absolute monarchy in Poland, as in other countries round us, and this might have been considered then as favouring the construction of a modern state. The democracy of the gentry short-changed the

rights of the townspeople, and outright oppressed the peasants, increasing serfdom (the so-called second serfdom). This did not foster the development of capitalism on Polish grounds.

During the Partitions, the matter of inclusivity was no better. Andrzej Walicki proves that the 'modern Polish nation—like other 'new nations' of East Central Europe—was constituted on an ethnic-cultural, and not historical-political, basis' (Walicki 2000). In other words, on the basis of exclusivity, and not inclusivity, as in the United States or France.

'We'—this is the foundation

Since the Second World War, Poland has been ethnically homogenous; therefore passions in the context of defining 'us' against 'them' have acquired an entirely different character. In the 1980s it was expressed by opposing working people with people in power ('us' against 'them') (Torańska 1994). The moral arguments merged with the political ones, but after the transformation this clarity has diminished. Yet the readiness to define a so-called 'real' Pole has grown, even though the criteria of that 'realness' may give rise to doubts. This was visible, for example, on the occasion of the debate over how to implement de-communization and lustration. Sometimes the idea of inculcating the conviction that the best kind of Pole is the 'Catholic Pole' also seems dubious. The situation is similar with the criteria for definitions of pluralism and tolerance.

I begin with these questions, because it is necessary to speak of the primacy of the definition 'we', as this appears to be a prerequisite for orderly thinking about Poland. The next level, involving changes in the political (constitutional) systems, and also at the tertiary level, where it is a matter of normal policies connected with economic and political interests, depends on decisions in this sphere—as Claus Offe has shown (Offe 1999: 39–42). This is the direction of causal connections, which would confirm that culture—it concerns that question of 'we'—is a system that effectively defines political, economic, and other solutions. Thus we should not be at all surprised by Czesław Miłosz's warnings: 'We can expect a terrible disorientation, an acceptance of the West's washings, the imitation of American models, of mass culture. In order to maintain consciousness and balance in this new post-communist world, it is necessary to have very good foundations. People don't have them. What remains? On the one hand, Catholicism, and on the other, nationalism. They give a certain point of reference. If belonging to the nation is the main element ordering the world, people will seize on it' (Miłosz 2006a: 260). The beginnings of the transformation in many post-communist countries are confirmation of this line of approach. New nation states appeared in the USSR. Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia divided. The GDR was absorbed by the FRG. In general the process was peaceful, although it occurred bloodily in Yugoslavia.

In Poland, independently of the divisions, which became more distinct after the middle of the 17th century and sometimes took on scandalous forms (such as serving foreign powers), the national community managed deeds that sometimes evoked Europe's admiration: among other events, the national uprisings, if only the tragically defeated Warsaw Uprising of 1944. It wasn't 'victorious', as is well known, although it is

sometimes described that way in Poland. Perhaps what is meant is its influence on the succeeding generation, as after 1944 we did without the two next uprisings (and earlier they had occurred regularly every 30–40 years). In truth, the period 1980–1981 could be recognized as a substitute national uprising, although not of a military character. And yet it was victorious, which was possible thanks to two factors. The first was the excellent organization of the industrial workers, who turned out to be better 'soldiers' than the gentry insurgents, who did not have the full support of the peasants (serfdom was abolished by the Tsar of Russia and not by the Kordians). The second factor was the support of the Church hierarchy, which declared itself to be for gradual change. The hierarchy's wise position effectively cooled 'radical heads'. The image of the Virgin on the lapel of Lech Wałęsa, leader of the shipyard workers, was no accident.

The dignity of life and of work as a new understanding of honour

In the 1980s, it wasn't so much a matter of independence but rather of equality, dignity, and solidarity. Ryszard Kapuściński grasped it best in his report on the events at the Gdańsk Shipyards: 'Whoever tries to reduce the labour movement on the Coast to matters of salaries and benefits hasn't understood anything. The main motive of these demonstrations was human dignity, it was a striving for new relations between people, everywhere and at all levels, it was the principle of mutual respect being obligatory for everyone without exception, the principle by which the subordinate is simultaneously a partner' (Kapuściński 1980). In the industrial conflict organized by the post-peasant protagonists it was a matter of realizing the promises that state socialism had not fulfilled: social justice, social solidarity, human dignity, the work ethic, equal opportunity, etc. These postulates were reflected in John Paul II's encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (1981).

The development of a similar idea is to be found in the study *The Struggle for Recognition: the Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Honneth 2012). How is 'a wounded sense of social recognition' or a 'moral offense' to be eliminated? These notions are helpful in interpreting Polish conflicts. The sense of injury can be explained as the transformation of a traditional sense of honour, one of the myths of gentry Poland, into a modern understanding of the dignity of life and work: adequate wages, human dignity, belonging to a supportive community. Morally motivated social conflicts became the driving force of the changes, whose aim was to tear Poland from the trenches of the 'dirty communities' (Adam Podgórecki's term) and lead the country to the path of 'normality'. That 'normality' was often defined at the beginning of the transformation in a simplified manner, that is, as the opposite of what prevailed under communism. The emphasis went in the direction of the liberal 'I' in place of 'they', and 'us' began to be understood 'communally' in place of 'collectively', as imposed from above. Warnings appeared that it would not be possible in a short time to transform the ruined work environment and other environments into mature ones capable of taking advantage of freedom (liberalism) and democracy (Szacki 1994; Tischner 1993). In the 1980s, the social-democratic programme approximated the workers' goal, although they also put forward ideas of freedom and equality (social justice). While the

workers' postulates were in general specific, wider visions were hazy and above all voluntarist. Whatever they were, they quickly became a secondary element of liberal democracy—which was also abstractly defined. The idea of workers' self-government and independent trade unions drowned in the pseudo-visions of a so-called social dialogue, which no one could associate with the ideals of a workers' democracy.

It can be seen with increasing clarity that many matters had to acquire a Polish substance, regardless of whether they came from abroad or from Poland. As I wrote above, 'Europeanness' is acceptable, but on the condition that it is the kind Poles want. It is the same with Polishness. The conviction is growing that there isn't one sole West. The liberal West often diverges from Polish imaginations about the West that would suit us. The conclusion is the following: the sense in continuing to imitate the West is limited. The problem is that according to some people what is involved is the sphere of worldview (abortion, in vitro fertilization, civil partnerships, etc.) while according to others it should comprise the economic sphere (the adoption of the euro) and the political sphere (federalism). As a result, copying Western models has ceased to be a large mobilizing force. The EU crisis has weakened it further. The option of a creative imitation is also rejected—which might be regarded as unreasonable. The conviction is growing that the West should evaluate itself more critically, because as an oasis of liberalism, it is sometimes the refuge of dubious philosophies of life: for instance, not always supporting traditional families, promoting multiculturalism, or failing to remember one's own past, e.g., about the Nazis in Germany, or collaboration with the Nazis in France (the Vichy government).

Identity and difference

In the conditions of globalization, the largest challenge in the sphere of culture becomes maintaining a balance between identity and difference. Both these values are important, but globalization fosters increasing tension between them, and this is because 'difference' somehow arrives on its own, which evokes pressure to emphasize 'identity'. How these elements are to be integrated becomes a task for each of us. It is not easy to preserve identity (particularism) when facing the storm of diversity, whose name is universalism (above all, on account of the benefits it could bring). And at the same time, access to computer-communications technology, for example, could pose a threat to both traditional values and those considered modern. What are the proper proportions? We don't know ourselves. An American economist claims that the consumer, or investor, is winning at the cost of the citizen through our own decisions (Reich 2007). This could produce divisions between people. We can read lately that 'one nation and two cultures' is supposed to exist in the United States (Himmelfarb 2007).

That we recognize the signs of a cultural war in Poland—this is an indisputable fact. I doubt, however, whether it should be called a war when the matter is limited to a confrontation of flags and banners, marches (even with torches!) and above all with floods of empty words. It's rather a stupid playing with history than a mature look at national needs. As of now, no great debates have appeared—philosophical, political, economic, or cultural—that would engross the whole society. We have dif-

ficulties defining one situation or event or another, but it hasn't yet translated into serious proposals to change the country's rules of life: at the constitutional level, for instance. Thus we are dealing with an increase in anticipated tensions in the context of defining and negotiating pluralism, democracy, cultural singularities, and differences in worldview. The West had and still has similar tensions. Their removal or regulation is a test of the competence and ability of the elites and the engagement of society itself. They are challenges that are enriching. If, along the way, the idea of a single Poland appears—which in times of danger is even desirable—it is a pipe dream for everyday purposes, sometimes even a dangerous one (Szacki 2007). The idea of the nation's moral-political unity never worked, although attempts in that direction have often been made (most recently in the 1970s).

How much, in resolving these questions, can we be helped by our tradition, in which the leading place was occupied by a freedom that did not include the peasants or townspeople, because fraternity and equality were secondary? In introducing this critical tone, I am simultaneously rejecting the idea that we possess many of the attributes of a post-colonial country—particularly on account of that fondness for freedom, although it is often misunderstood. Poles never, on a broad scale, adopted the values imposed by their colonizers: neither when Poland was entirely conquered nor when it had incomplete sovereignty. There was participation, but only of a very narrow pseudo-elite (Pawelczyńska 2013: 14). It should be added that there was a time when Poland itself incarnated the colonizer toward non-Polish populations in countries on its Eastern side. In its defence, the First Republic entered on the role together with Lithuania (to which these territories first belonged), and it was also an attractive partner for the local elites, which often became Polonized. Being at the meeting place of cultures, the Borderlands produced in time great cultural richness and were a place where patriotism was inculcated. Students learned it from school readings and often from family teachings as well. Those people who want to preserve memory of this achievement are right (Thompson 2013), but that does not change the fact that for the majority of the Ukrainian population and others, the Poles were, or became, a foreign nation: ethnically, linguistically, religiously, economically, and politically. In large part, it was the Poles' fault, because they were unable to create a federation of three nations. The Union of Hadziacz in 1658, which was intended to repair the problem, was an idea that came much too late.

Theoretical concepts

The cognitive categories dominating views of the cultural sequence of internal agency are the following:

1. Culture: the central category is the moral community based on values: the nation, religion, tradition, and possibly solidarity. A particular role is played by the Catholic Church as the spiritual adhesive, although the Constitution of 1995 presupposes—beautifully!—a plurality of the values that Polish citizens may devote themselves to realizing. Nevertheless, the fact that there is space in school teaching for religion indicates that the tendency to identify Polishness with the Catholic Pole is

strong. We should remember that in the middle of the 16th century most of the members of Poland's chamber of deputies and senate were Protestant (Zamoyski 2011: 87).

2. Society: the essence of the social conflict in the 1980s was a 'struggle for recognition' of the dignity of work and human dignity. Perhaps it could be seen as a new definition of honour (as I wrote above). However, as realization of the liberal 'I' meets with criticism, the present trend is toward social conservatism, which would appear to provide an opportunity to combine the 'I' and the 'we'. It is different in practice, however. Economic and social differences, which have not yet produced social protest, are growing.

3. Politics: The successful comprise of the Round Table (those who came to sit around it were moderates from Solidarity and reformers from the side of the government, that is, it was a 'transaction' between the old and new elites) has been questioned since a certain time. First, 'liberal Poland' was successfully attacked by 'solidary Poland' (2005–2007), which attempted to realize its vision of the so-called IV Republic. Suggestions that something inspiring from the past might be found in this sphere were clearly called into question, although in fact until the 16th century the Poland of the gentry did give proof of effective collective action (Wyczański 1999). Later, matters increasingly worsened. The present political discourse circles around the conflict between the neoliberal minimal state and some new variant of the nation state, which seeks its place in the increasingly federalizing EU. There is significant resistance to engaging in closer integration with the EU.

4. Economics: implementation of the globalizing-imitative neoliberal model is seen as dangerous for the country, because it increases economic and social inequality and produces crises. The remedy is supposed to be a practical realization of economic patriotism (an active state, an industrial policy). This is expressed, among other things, in lack of confidence in the EU (the euro, federalization, etc.). There is a lack of any constructive position, while at the same time economic competition requires the acceleration of structural changes in the economy.

5. Geopolitics: belonging to NATO and friendship with the USA have the support of society. Acceptance of the EU is conditional, although Poland has been (and will be) strengthened by large financial support from the EU in the period 2004–2020. The idea behind the occasional hesitations is the following: Poland is supposed to be made to its own design, and not to that of external forces. How this is to be done, few people know. For example, Poland's obvious efforts to develop friendly relations with its neighbours on its eastern border have only been a halfway success.

Polish Configurations: From a Community of Fate to Rational Choices

'In my beginning is my end'—T.S. Eliot (2007: 1)

Table 3 presents a map of the divisions in geopolitics and culture, as well as in economics, politics, and society, in Poland after the fall of communism. These divisions originate in long-wave processes, but mainly in geopolitics and culture. During the

Table 2

The Cultural Cause and Effect Sequence of Internal Agency

Systems: / Changes in time:	Culture⇒	Society⇒	Politics⇒	Economy⇒	Geopolitics
1. Before 1989	1. Community based on values: of the nation, of religion, of tradition, of solidarity	1. 'Us' against 'them;' 'dirty communities;'	1. Industrial workers and the Church hierarchy for gradual change	1. The ruined work environment; *homo sovieticus*	1. Christian Europe—yes
2. The beginning	2. Poland part of Europe (John Paul II)	2. The liberal 'I'	2. The Round Table as a 'transaction' of the elites	2. The search for alternatives to free market neoliberalism	2. Poland's mission in East Central Europe
3. Presently	3. Culture war— the closing of the community	3. 'I' and 'we'— social conservatism; growing socio-economic inequalities	3. 'Solidary Poland' contra 'liberal Poland'	3. The state in the economy; industrial policy	3. The EU—selective acceptance; NATO— yes; Russia—an enemy? Germany—a threat? Lithuania— animosity?
Theoretical Categories:	The moral community. National identity. The church as the spiritual adhesive. Inclusion versus exclusion.	Social conflict as the struggle for recognition: the dignity of work and human dignity. Individual and collective identity.	The nation state versus the minimal state. The EU as a threat (federalism). Republicanism.	Economic patriotism. Uncertainty, the market, and the crisis = moral-economic challenges.	Poland as its own design. Poland as a post-colonial country. Poland's mission.

transformation the divisions have, so far, been weakened by economic, political, and social mechanisms, although these factors themselves independently produce new axes of conflict. For selected examples I show that the confrontational elements are often so strongly mixed with integrating ones that it is difficult to tell which were formed by history (so-called path dependence—historical institutionalism) and which come from transformation processes occurring before our eyes.

Geopolitics versus geopolitics, culture versus culture

'Undoubtedly there exist two Europes and it happens that we, inhabitants of the second one, were destined to descend into the 'heart of darkness' of the 20th century […] but poetry, mine and my contemporaries […] was not prepared to cope with those catastrophes. Like blind men we groped our way and were exposed to all the temptations the mind deluded itself with in our time.'— Czesław Miłosz, Nobel Prize acceptance speech (2006: 197)

Table 3

Configurational Challenges: From a Community of Fate to Rational Choices

GEOPOLITICS ⇄ GEOPOLITICS

The West in place of the East	Selective acceptance of the EU (the West)
Global interdependence	In regards to neighbours: a sense of mission (toward the former Borderlands)
The multiplicity of worlds	Pride and prejudice

The ECONOMY ⇄ The ECONOMY

Neoliberalism—a power instrument	Seeking alternatives to neoliberalism
The EU—Poland's main trade partner	Economic patriotism
	Divisions in the context of 'what next?' with the EU
	Structural (industrial) policy

POLITICS ⇄ POLITICS

The minimal state as an 'exit' from communism	'Solidary' Poland versus 'liberal' Poland
The EU as the main network of external ties	The nation state is better than the minimal state
Liberal democracy: governments of the elite	Republicanism (but what kind?)
	Governments of the elite are insufficient

SOCIETY ⇄ SOCIETY

Entity—the consumer and the investor	Social conflict as a 'struggle for recognition:' the dignity of work, love in the family, solidarity with the nation
The interests of the 'I' are more important than the collective 'we'	Divisions on the basis of worldviews, for instance, in the context of biopower
Therefore, for instance, trade unions are a problem	

CULTURE ⇄ CULTURE

Imitation of the West	The moral community based on many values (social conservatism)
Diversity,	Conflicts over 'honour'
Pluralism,	From virtue to values and choices
Tolerance,	Continuity
Change	

To admit that culture's significance is large—that is to say something else than that culture decides, particularly if we take into account Miłosz's opinion that Poland has experienced a 'descent into the heart of darkness'. In its situation, the realistic approach is to show when and how culture and geopolitics can help each other, and when not. We should remember that in the conditions of the First World War and right

afterwards, 'mutual aid' was expressed, among other ways, by the active cooperation of the leader of the national movement, Roman Dmowski, with Józef Piłsudski at the conference in Versailles; by the spontaneous participation of peasant volunteers in the war of 1920; and by the organization of uprisings in Silesia and Wielkopolska. Similar events could perhaps be noted in 1989, with the Round Table being mentioned first, and the beginning of the reform programme on behalf of the private market economy. The convergence of national efforts and the favourable geopolitical context brought positive results in 1918 and 1989. Culture and geopolitics at last fitted together in a long-awaited, successful configuration. Culture itself was not sufficient to fulfil dreams, but without it, as should be clearly emphasized, there would not have been a chance for the successful course of our national history.

Twenty-five years after the beginning of the transformation, I am recalling these events in order to say that although there are many quite good reasons to criticize the III Republic, there aren't any strong arguments for overturning what made Poland a model for others (the so-called green island of Europe), first in the period 1989–1990 and then during the 2008–2013 crisis. Where should we look for the measure of 'normality'? The first answer appeared in 1989—from the West, but since then the Great Remainder (the countries outside the West) has begun its active entry upon the scene; the idea of 'many worlds' has gained strength, and at the same time, many possible scenarios for the construction of our future. Of course, it depends on whether competent elites, who are in good relations with society and will work effectively to bring those scenarios to life, can be found. The West need not be our sole model. We will in any case remain close to it as members of NATO and the EU. The idea of 'many worlds' and the 'multiplicity of modernization' practices resulting from that idea require us to develop what could be called, in the cultural sequence, a selective acceptance. So that in regards to the West it is a matter of taking from it what suits us. In 1989 the West's occupation of the East's place (capitalism in place of communism) was the only way to exit the framework '*de longue durée*' in which we were solely a 'community of fate'. Presently we are on a trajectory of more autonomous choices.

We still remain conditioned by the outside, because we live in the age of Europeanization and globalization. However, it should be easier for us to be make decisions at present as to how to arrange relations with our neighbours. The problem has two sides. On the one, it is necessary to think about the benefits that could be brought from trade and other contacts, on the other, to seek a compromise between the sense of national pride and the prejudices that have accumulated along the lines of Poles-Germans, Poland-Lithuania, Poland-Ukraine, etc. Our relations with Russia will remain difficult, but Ukraine—and not only Poland—is beginning to have a large impact on changing them. Relations with Germany would seem to augur well.

The economy versus the economy

A dispute is underway over the degree to which the application of the neoliberal 'shock therapy' was the original creation of the Polish elite (Klein 2007). The opinion

predominates that the behaviour of our elites on the threshold of the transformation (Leszek Balcerowicz's shock therapy) could appropriately be described as that of neophytes. They considered everything that came from the outside to be desirable (suitable for imitation), because it had been tested in the West and seemed to promise a rapid transition to 'the new'. When the goal receded, the idea of a transformation began to be used. Many negative phenomena appeared, as, for instance, the initial decline of living standards, unemployment, the enfranchisement of the previous authorities (although not to such a large degree as in other countries), the plundering of national assets, corruption, and the destruction of the state farms (without considering the consequences). This produced a wave of dissatisfaction so serious that it allowed the post-communist forces to return to power in 1993 and to remain, in one form or another, until 2005.

This state of affairs continues, even though Poland has had many significant successes since the beginning of the transformation, and even greater ones since the moment of its accession to the EU in 2004. The funds that have flowed in from there have resulted in more than just investments in infrastructure. For instance, fortified by these funds, the farmers have gone from being very dissatisfied to being proponents of the EU. Previously, as a result of the liquidation of the state farms (and for other reasons) a rural protest movement in the form of the Self-Defence League (*Samoobrona*) had been growing. It ceased to have any real foundation. None of the post-communist countries in Europe can claim Poland's nearly doubled economic growth since 1990. Our economy is nevertheless characterized as a 'dependent market economy'. 'This creates a fundamental dilemma: in order to attract foreign business and maintain competition, Poland cannot raise salaries, which are presently at one third the level of those in the most developed countries of the European Union' (Orenstein 2014: 26).

The list of weaknesses is impressive. Above all, we lack ideas and activities on behalf of structural changes. Although Prime Minister Tusk has considerable achievements to his credit, his governments have not been up to the challenges. For years the question of supporting innovation has been neglected and state expenditures for science and technology are at an embarrassingly low level. It is a fact that people in high government positions defended such decisions—including ministers of finance who were professors.

Appraisals of the economy in the logic of the geopolitical sequence and in the logic of the cultural sequence vary in quality. In regards to geopolitics this partly results from the experiences of the crisis of 2007–2009, which seriously shook faith in neoliberalism. In regards to the cultural side, the search for alternatives to neoliberalism has gained strength. The alternatives are still hazy; it is not certain how the postulates of economic patriotism are to be realized in practice in conditions of strong external ties. Without an industrial policy, or more broadly, a structural policy, our economy will falter. At the beginning of the transformation, entire manufacturing industries were eliminated, as were mid-level technical studies. The idea of the day was deindustrialization (services as the core), but today the demand for the building of production factories is returning, and not only in Poland.

Politics versus politics

According to some, Poland is a liberal-democratic, capitalist country, and according to others this means that it finds itself in some new, supposedly not very different, mutation of communism (Legutko 2012). These types of remarks have a certain sense when the discussion takes place at the level of a critique of civilization, but a similar presentation of affairs in regards to daily life abstracts from the experience of Poles, who, as research shows, are increasingly more satisfied with their own lives and the lives of their families (Zagórski 2010). On the other hand, Poles increasingly complain about public life. An expression of this was, among other things, the victory of 'solidary Poland' over 'liberal Poland' in the parliamentary elections of 2005.

The West has an increasingly good perception of Poland, but it is far yet from really treating us equally. For example, look at Poland's disadvantageous share of positions in the EU bureaucracy. We should also remember that the possibility for a quick transition to democracy in Poland was not seen: for instance, President Bush persuaded General Jaruzelski to stand for the presidency of Poland. Poles had a better opinion of themselves because they believed in the possibility of a rapid, quality change in the sphere of political participation. It did not occur, but rather the opposite happened: for instance, institutions of workers' self-management, which were so popular in the 1980s, fell into decay in large measure through the fault of the trade union leadership (it did not want to introduce the system of firm councils on the German model, a system that had been successful for decades). Therefore, people have a low opinion of our political democracy. Opinions of the type 'we have democracy, but poor democracy' predominate. Careers in politics (minister, member of parliament, etc.) are consistently located at the bottom of the prestige rankings. The changes occur more slowly than expected. The responsibility rests mainly with the post-Solidarity political elites, which have been unable to produce effective 'transformation elites'. This is most often explained by 'dependence on the path', i.e., on communism, but this is a weak explanation. If we were to speak of 'path dependence' than it would be a matter of a much longer one, reaching back at least to the second half of the 17th century.

Society versus society

> 'The worst is that we live in a contaminated moral environment. We fell morally ill because we have become used to saying something different from what we thought. We learned not to believe in anything, to ignore one another, to care only about ourselves […] We cannot blame the previous rulers for everything, not only because it would be untrue, but because it could blunt the duty that faces each of us today.'—Václav Havel (2006: 287)

This speech touches on something that in Poland is a rarity—the need to look critically at ourselves if we want to repair the moral desolation of which we are not only witnesses but also agents. In Poland, the emphasis is being placed entirely elsewhere, and yet social opposition to the imposition of communism was expressed after the

war, as in Czechoslovakia, in rather 'limited' forms. Yes, we now honour the 'accursed soldiers', and most often correctly, but after all it did not come to civil war in Poland. Opponents of the system slowly joined in the life of the country. This is evidenced by the statements of prominent figures connected with the Home Army and the underground state. It did not happen that way because some larger segment of society wanted communism—that is clearly not true.

Perhaps Poles considered the People's Republic of Poland to be a creation such as we had known in the past (for instance, the Congress Kingdom)? In fact, people in Poland half accepted what was imposed by force. Why? Partially because, as numerous studies into people's memories in Poland have documented, millions of people in the countryside experienced the social advancement organized by the new authorities (Józef Chałasiński and others). In coming to the cities and undertaking work in industry, new people participated in the changes, which they often considered to be more advantageous than what they remembered from before the Second World War (the overpopulation of the countryside, the lack of land, the lack of agricultural reform, the small chances for employment and opportunities to work in a town, etc.). The instrumental acceptance of the system, as I wrote earlier, lasted only one generation. From 1956–1970 a rebellion began against the authorities. 1980–1981 was a breakthrough period, with the emergence of Solidarity, which was organized on the basis of large manufacturing facilities and regions (violating the centrist organizational principles of the party-state). Employees wanted to socialize what had been nationalized (to treat state property as group property). From the perspective of time we can thus speak of the voluntarist nature of the movement. This movement was a reaction to communism. It could not be a movement to repair capitalism, because the capitalism that had been known was remembered as being rickety and the new generations had not known it at all.

The basic industrialization of the country was implemented by the People's Republic of Poland at somewhat too large a cost, because it was done without economic calculations and without respecting private property—in short, on false premises. During the transformation, it was on the basis of this industrialization that workers after 1989 first observed real capitalism, which they had previously not experienced. The new system did not excite enthusiasm. The platform of the main opposition party (presently the Law and Justice party—PiS) departed from standard capitalist practices, which were continually changing, as capitalism was then producing its next mutation (after industrial capitalism it was time for financial capitalism). No alternatives to a neoliberal 'adaptation' were developed—either in the West or in Poland. Perhaps it could be said that the West too had 'shock without therapy' (Grzegorz Kołodko's term for Poland) in the period 2008–2013?

Poland is a 'half-open society'. Survey studies of social justice on nationwide samples in 1991, 1997, and 2013 indicate that the formal principle of equal opportunity is realized at the level of 22–24% (in the United States it is three times greater) and the principles of merit, according to which output is proportional to input, e.g., effort, talent, and ability—at the level of 22–28% (in the United States it is also three times greater). Although in the United States and certain other countries of the West the

real inequalities are much higher than in Poland, people there assess the system as being just or more just than they do in Poland. It is precisely because the two above-mentioned principles are treated seriously (Morawski 2009).

In Poland, there is a great tradition of loving traditions, including the tradition of freedom and honour. This tradition is reflected in the motto 'God, Honour, and the Fatherland', which is presently understood variously. While once it was about the sphere of virtues and values, at present people, and particularly youth, are rather tending toward 'choices', whose popular version is the saying 'Do what you feel like doing'. Negative intentions are sometimes ascribed to it, but perhaps it can be interpreted in the spirit of St. Augustine's statement: 'Love and do what thou wilt'?

In Conclusion: Life Events Versus Life Values

The richness of national life and the life of every separate citizen can not be grasped by pure formulas, either universal or particular (individual). Mixed solutions must dominate. Recently in Poland extremism has been gaining strength. Society seems to have become 'dilapidated'. Social and economic inequalities are growing (Jarosz 2013). These involve the value systems in people's lives as well. What is considered good and what bad is ceasing to be defined similarly. However, this is nothing special in the history of nations, provided it does not acquire a mass scale.

Life in Poland is increasingly seldom running on the same track with people's declared values. In one newspaper we can read that priests ride around in luxurious cars. In another paper, I read that euro-deputies live like kings and that's why they will do anything to find themselves in Brussels. Even those persons who, in Poland, continually criticize Brussels, try to go there. The practical conclusion that occurs to people—not only to populists or demagogues—is simple: something should be done about it! The leader of a large political party (in opposition) suggests the imposition of a punitive tax on small businessmen. Similarly, the leader of the ruling party every once in a while puts forward ideas—which are forgotten about a few days later.

There aren't any serious discussions, even on serious subjects. Ideas are proposed not in order to give them real substance, but only in order to harm a political opponent. This happens in the public arena, because at the private level serious discussions do, nevertheless, often occur. Such discussions take place within the framework of one or another moral-ideological family and, to speak in the language of the national bard, one or another parochiality. Mickiewicz described a quarrelsome backwater in *Pan Tadeusz*, and Norwid supplied the work with a scathing commentary, because he saw even more clearly the weakness of our discussions and our lives. I have the impression that not much has changed since those times.

We hear from all sides that there is no good life without values, but in Poland great values often appear to be airborne. They aren't planted in the firm ground of collective life, which requires organization and negotiation between the elites and society. Without this grounding, the collective schizophrenia will increase. Everyone seems to have his own truth and own falsehood. It is the same with appraisals of

geopolitics and culture in Poland. They are planted in the national-moral soil and undoubtedly they testify to the vitality of emotions, feelings, and intuitions. They give content to the social imaginaries, which form a certain sequence of ideas and sequence of actions. It can not be otherwise, because people need it to be so. Large and small communities—all are anchored in specific material and moral interests. Frankly, our minds work later to rationalize what, in our not always pure parochialism, we consider to be true, good, and beautiful.

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