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The Articulation and Institutionalization of Democracy in Poland*

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Introduction

THE SUCCESSFUL HISTORY of democratic institutions in the United States and Western Europe and the dramatic collapse of communism as the major alternative to these institutions have left us somewhat unprepared for the possibility that even though democracy has been placed on the political agenda in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union, it may not succeed in becoming a political reality. Moreover, contemporary social science theories by and large have not been successful in generating a theoretical understanding of the potential gap between the articulation and institutionalization of democracy. It is precisely this gap, however, that constitutes the characteristic feature of the transition period in these countries. Briefly put, "articulation" refers to the process whereby a given group develops and articulates a set of values around which action can be oriented, and "institutionalization" refers to the process whereby these values are concretized in authoritative patterns of behavior. Since articulation and institutionalization are generally not distinguished analytically as delineating district phases within an overall process of political transformation, it is not surprising that gaps, paradoxes, and discontinuities in the process of change are difficult to address theoretically.

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Clearly, democracy was articulated and placed on the political agenda in Eastern Europe with the revolutions of 1989. In the process of rejecting "really existing socialism," democracy was proclaimed as the "promised land," a promise long delayed that Eastern Europe would finally return to a democratic capitalist Europe. A critical paradox, however, has emerged since 1989. In the West European and American experience, democracy was both proclaimed and institutionalized by the same social groups. However, in Eastern Europe—most vividly demonstrated in Poland—the social groups that articulated democracy are the very groups threatened by the institutionalization of democracy in its liberal capitalist form. It is precisely this paradox and the possibility of resolving it that will determine whether democracy becomes a political reality in Eastern Europe.

Unfortunately, the existing analytic approaches to the transition period cannot help us to grasp the causes and consequences of this critical phenomenon. Since the potential gap between the articulation and institutionalization of a political system is not addressed, there is no framework for understanding this period either on an abstract theoretical level or on a concrete empirical level. In other words, neither the transition period in general nor its particular manifestation in Eastern Europe are accorded independent analytical status. The civil society-based literature, for example, postulates that since democracy is the outcome of an increasingly complex and differentiated social structure, the institutionalization of democracy will automatically follow its articulation.[1] On the other hand, the transitions to democracy literature explicitly rejects the notion that social differentiation and increased complexity are the necessary processes that underlie democratization. The focus here is on the critical role played by political elites and their ability to manipulate even an unprepared society into accepting democracy as an effective means to mediate social conflicts. In this analysis as well, institutionalization is assumed to follow automatically from articulation.[2]

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[1] For analyses that view the presence of a civil society as an indicator of social modernization and democratization, see S. Frederick Starr, "Soviet Union: A Civil Society," *Foreign Policy* 70 (Spring 1988); Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988); Gail Lapidus, "State and Society: Toward the Emergence of Civil Society in the Soviet Union," in Seweryn Bialer, ed., *Inside Gorbachev's Russia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989).

While neither approach assumes the inevitability of democratic outcomes or rather the ultimate success of democratic institutions, their assumption of an automatic progression does render them incapable of providing a theoretical elaboration of the highly contingent processes of the transition period. Furthermore, these approaches are disabled from illuminating the specific nature of the conditions in Eastern Europe by the way in which they employ comparative points of reference. For the most part, there is a marked tendency simply to equate the conditions and processes manifested in Eastern Europe with their counterparts in West European development, thereby overemphasizing similarities at the expense of differences.[3] The social structures and conditions developed under "really existing socialism" are essentially different from the West European experience; therefore, the social groups that emerged under these conditions are not the same regardless of formal similarities. Their interests will follow a different logic of articulation and institutionalization.

None of the existing approaches to transition has paid adequate attention to the socio-economic structures that evolved under Leninism and the impact they have on the processes of political democratization. In large part, this vacuum can be explained by the fact that specialists in Soviet and East European studies were not trained to deal either theoretically or empirically with the topic of democracy or democratization—for obvious reasons. As a result, specialists from other fields with little experience in analyzing communism are expanding their interpretive frameworks to include Eastern Europe. While this cross fertilization expands the parameters of debate and inquiry, there is a danger that an analytical sense for what is specific to the region will be lost or underevaluated. Although Polish sociologists have devoted considerable attention to the specific legacies of "really existing socialism" and its impact on the transition, these more empirical studies simply coexist with the imported theoretical approaches. A constructive dialogue between these two bodies of literature has yet to emerge. As a consequence, the paradox noted above has remained unexamined theoretically while it is depicted empirically.

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[2] For an example of an elite-based transition to democracy approach, see G. DiPalma, *To Craft Democracies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

[3] Much of the literature on Solidarity follows this comparative logic. See, for example, David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Jack Bielasiak and Barbara Hicks, "Solidarity's Self-Organization: The Crisis of Rationality and Legitimacy in Poland, 1980-81," *East European Politics and Society* 4:3 (Fall 1990); Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

It would be useful to compare and contrast the articulation and institutionalization of democracy in Poland with the historical evolution of modern democracy as long as we remain sensitive to the particular nature of development in Eastern Europe. Such a focused comparison should illuminate both the extent to which the specific conditions in Eastern Europe must be understood in their own right, and the extent to which the transition period itself must be conceptualized independently (and not simply as a way station on the road to bigger and better things) if theoretical and empirical misinterpretations are to be avoided.

Comparative Framework

In order to facilitate such a comparative endeavor, a theoretical framework must be developed. The proposed framework is oriented around two critical phases in political transformation: articulation and institutionalization. Although these phases are clearly related, they are analytically as well as empirically distinct. Indeed, each phase must be analyzed according to its own logic if the assumption of an "automatic" progression and its consequences are to be avoided. There is no inevitable or inexorable process linking articulation and institutionalization. The logic of articulation may or may not facilitate the logic of institutionalization depending on the specific conditions of a given case. If one regards the relationship as one of contingency rather than certainty, the potential gap between the phases becomes inherently significant. In other words, one can treat the transition efforts from one phase to another as an independent analytical category rather than resorting to residual or ad hoc explanations of why the promise of articulation remains unfulfilled institutionally.

Articulation refers to a process whereby a given group develops a set of values and principles which subsequently provides this group with an ethically founded basis for action. On the basis of these values and principles, existing socio-economic and political conditions can be contested as inappropriate and delegitimated in favor of an alternative order, one perceived to be more in keeping with the group's value orientations. However, in order for collective action to be oriented toward the realization of such an alternative order, conditions must be present within the group that will both place sanctions on noncompliance and will provide adequate rewards for compliance. The interests of individual participants must be animated and recast in terms consistent with the particular pattern of sanctions and rewards favored by the group in order for sustained collective behavior or conduct to ensue.

An individual's interest in participating and subjecting him or herself to a particular pattern of sanctions and rewards can be animated on the basis of psychological, economic, or social incentives. The motivation generated by the desire for psychic well being, material gain, or social acceptance has the potential to recast behavior within the community formed by the group. As Weber pointed out with respect to the Protestant sects:

> . . . an ethic based on religion places certain psychological sanctions (not of an economic character) on the maintenance of the attitude prescribed by it, sanctions which, so long as the religious belief stays alive, are highly effective . . . Only in so far as these sanctions work, and above all, in the direction in which they work, which is often very different from the doctrine of the theologians, does such an ethic gain an independent influence on the conduct of life and thus on the economic order.[4]

Religious sects, revolutionary parties, and the core groups of social movements all provide examples of the effects of such sanctions and rewards on stimulating collective action in accordance with stated values.

The structural conditions under which the group forms have an impact on action only to the extent that the members themselves note these conditions and relate them to desired actions. Overall structures can, in retrospect, be deemed enabling or confining, but unless there is an explicit awareness of these structures, they will affect action less than conditions internal to the group. In other words, the rationality of action derived from principles or values is assessed in terms of the conditions members face within their group and within their immediate environment and not in terms of abstract and remote conditions and structures. Clearly, the articulation of an idea, of values and principles only becomes powerful beyond the scope of a given group if the general conditions are favorable, but these general conditions do not cause the articulation itself and are, therefore, of secondary analytical importance during this phase.

If, however, there is a "formal overlap" between the articulation of values and principles within a group and the socio-cultural and economic conditions external to it, a challenge to the old order is likely to result. In order for a group to mobilize other members of society around the values and principles it articulates, the group must possess "qualities that at least in a formal or structural sense are consistent with the defining features of the very society"[5] that is to be transformed. Ken Jowitt has developed this argument in regard to the formal overlap existing between Leninist parties and the traditional peasant-status societies in which they have operated. For example, "the formal status features of the Chinese Communist Party's Leninist organization mediated between its charismatic-revolutionary and national commitments and the status orientations of the socially mobilized mass base from which it had to recruit."[6] Such overlaps not only mediate between potentially conflicting commitments and orientations, but also serve to render a group intelligible to some sectors of society, thereby facilitating recruitment and mobilization in support of the group's agenda.

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[4] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 197.

During the course of the struggle between the old order and the newly articulated order, a new political elite will emerge. If this elite succeeds in replacing the old political leadership, it will seek to impose upon society criteria for membership and patterns of sanctions and rewards consistent with the values and principles that had animated and oriented behavior within the group. Since these same values and the conduct derived from them are considered legitimate and appropriate by the new leadership, they will form the basis of an effort to replace the delegitimated socio-economic and political structures of the old order.

The logic of institutionalization proceeds from this effort. Institutionalization itself can be defined as the creation of formally sanctioned organizations and procedures that orient social behavior according to recognizable, stable, and consistent patterns. For example, in the political realm this would entail the formation of political parties, government bureaucracies, and the establishment of a constitution governing the relationship between the political and legal orders. Yet these patterns are partisan, not neutral. Institutions will discriminate between socially or politically relevant and appropriate behavior and behavior that is considered harmful or incompatible with the preferences and values the institutions represent, and reward or punish these behaviors accordingly. There is an underlying assumption in recent literature on democratization that since democratic institutions guarantee procedural rules of the game (which already implies a degree of fairness), all participants in the game enjoy equal opportunities though not equal outcomes.[7] This conceptualization ascribes a degree of neutrality or political and social "blindness" to democratic institutions that simply is not tenable. Democratic institutions do discriminate against certain types of behavior and, therefore, will always generate opposition from the affected social and political groups who consider both the game and the rules unfair.

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[5] Kenneth Jowitt, *The Leninist Response to National Dependency* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, 1978), p. 46.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

Successful institutionalization occurs when formally established (that is, enacted) organizations and procedures elicit both formal and informal compliance from critical social groups. Whether or not such institutions evolve will depend on two factors: the capacity of the new political leadership to impose a new pattern of punishments and rewards, and the extent to which these patterns are accepted or rejected by critical social groups. The capacity to enact institutional changes will be determined by the extent to which the new leadership can adapt the values and behavior patterns established during the articulation phase to the new circumstances of holding power. On an individual level the focus will shift from the pursuit of largely ideal interests characteristic of the opposition period to the pursuit of material interests in maintaining and expanding political power. During the course of this shift, the new leadership may be coopted or immobilized by the old institutional structures since they provide the current base of power. The risk of creating new institutions may appear too great on both a personal and social level. At this point the second factor becomes critical.

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[7] This tendency is especially evident in DiPalma, *op. cit.*

The extent to which institutionalization is reinforced will depend on the existence of a reciprocal relationship between the new political elites and key groups in society. Such a relationship can be conceptualized as a "feedback loop." If there is such a mutually reinforcing feedback loop between the new political leadership and critical social groups, institutionalization of the previously articulated values and principles will be facilitated; the greater the affinity between the interests of such social groups and the proposed institutions, the more mutually reinforced is the feedback loop. The discontent of other social groups will not matter as long as the groups deemed significant or critical by the new leadership demonstrate their support. Where such a feedback loop does not exist, institutionalization is rendered immeasurably more difficult, if not impossible, except by means of massive coercion. Which social groups are considered critical will be determined by the values developed during the articulation phase. For example, in contrast to the historical evolution of modern democracy wherein the middle class (or, more generally, independent property holders) was considered critical, the articulation of democracy by Solidarity identified the working class as the critical social group.

In short, during the articulation phase, the development of values and principles and the orientation of conduct toward these values will take place in the context of a group capable of generating the rewards and sanctions necessary to effect the behavior of individual members. Such a group may have a decisive impact on the surrounding socio-cultural and political environment depending on the extent to which the values presented resonate with the existing circumstances. In other words, the values have to be presented in terms intelligible to a broader social audience. The degree to which conduct within the group might represent a novel way of life radically in conflict with the existing state of affairs will generally be hidden to outside audiences aware of only the formal similarities as opposed to the substantive overlap between the group and its social environment. In the articulation phase, therefore, three critical components must be addressed: the nature of the values proclaimed, on what basis is the rationality of action derived from these values sustained within a given group, and the extent of the formal overlap between the group and a broader social audience.

During the institutionalization phase, the formal overlap between the new political leadership and the broader social audience will begin to lose its supportive character as the substantive difference between the new leadership and various social groups becomes clear. The new leadership will seek to create institutions that will impose the way of life internal to the group upon society at large. Social groups threatened by the imposition of a new pattern of sanctions and rewards will mobilize to resist these changes. If the new leadership has sufficient internal capacity to adapt to these changing circumstances (a capacity determined by the strength and flexibility of the values and conduct established during the articulation phase), they will be able to enact new institutions. However, in order to both overcome any deficiencies in capacity and to ensure informal as well as formal compliance with these new institutions, the support of critical social groups is needed. A mutually reinforcing feedback loop between these social groups and the new political leadership will facilitate successful institutionalization. In this phase, two critical components can be identified: the capacity of the new leadership to sustain values and conduct in the new situation, and the extent to which there is a substantive overlap between the intentions of the new political elite and the interests of critical social groups.

This comparative framework will now be applied to the

American Revolution, the preeminent historical model of the articulation and institutionalization of liberal democracy, and to the Polish case. Although these two cases are separated by time and space, the logic of historical comparative analysis can shed valuable light on the complexities of the process whereby values are transformed into institutions. Most importantly, such a direct juxtapositioning should serve to highlight both the similarities and the differences of these two revolutionary settings, thereby facilitating our understanding of precisely what is at stake in Poland today.

Articulation: The American Case

The extent to which liberal democratic revolutions have been equated with the rise of the bourgeoisie is well known. Barrington Moore's famous assertion "no bourgeois, no democracy"[8] could represent the *leitmotif* of many studies devoted to the emergence of liberal democratic institutions in the United States and Western Europe. While the middle class certainly played a pivotal role in the American and French revolutions, this revolutionary class cannot be defined in twentieth-century terms as "a class of profit-making business people or even of industrial entrepreneurs employing hired wage-labor."[9] Instead, as Eric Hobsbawm points out in regard to France, democratic revolutionaries were largely drawn from "a stratum of people who owed their position in the social order not to birth or privilege but to individual worth, open to all suitable recruits . . . situated, by status and income, between the nobility above and the (manually) laboring classes below."[10]

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[8] Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York: Beacon Paperback, 1967), p. 418.

[9] Eric Hobsbawm, "The Making of a 'Bourgeois Revolution' " in Ferenc Feher, ed., *The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), p. 39.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

In the American case, the core of the revolutionary movement was clearly drawn from this stratum of people with one important distinction. Manual workers, in the form of independent artisans and mechanics, did play a significant role in the revolutionary groups. The lowest order of society excluded from the middle stratum was defined by dependence, not manual labor. Consequently, servants and other dependent wage earners were not often found at the center of a revolutionary movement dominated by independent producers and professionals.

On the upper end of the social scale, since colonial America had no hereditary nobility in the European sense, royally-appointed colonial administrators became something of a surrogate nobility, favored by birth and privilege in the eyes of the colonists. The colonial gentry who felt that their social and political advancement was being blocked by the royal appointees and by royal policies became the "founding fathers" of the revolution. As Gordon S. Wood points out, "in an important sense, the Revolution was fought over just this issue—over differing interpretations of who in America were the proper social leaders who ought naturally to accede to positions of public authority."[11] The status frustrations of the relatively well-to-do gentry were echoed by the economic frustrations of the artisans and mechanics who felt disadvantaged and restricted by British colonial policies. However, in spite of their common location on the social scale, gentry and artisans were deeply divided by the social hierarchies of the time. Commonly held values unified these two diverse social groups and generated a common understanding of grievances and remedies. This unity subsequently provided the basis upon which gentry and artisans came together to form the core group of revolutionaries that propelled America toward independence.

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[11] Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), p. 87.

Their common values were crystallized in the doctrine of natural rights. In proclaiming the natural rights of man—rights universally and eternally valid regardless of any positive law—revolutionaries such as Thomas Paine delegitimated the existing order based on birth and corporate privileges in favor of an alternate political and social order founded on the individual's constructive and productive capabilities. In their view, society was comprised of individuals who were born free and equal with an inherent capacity to determine and pursue individual roads to happiness. The substantive conditions that would maximize happiness for a majority or collectivity of individuals were not addressed in this articulation. The rigorous individualism of the American natural rights doctrine resulted in its uncompromisingly formal quality. Man may be born free and equal, but all else was up to him.

As a corollary of these rights, the idea of citizenship as a universal category of active political membership was proclaimed—a category that stood in direct contrast to the passive, deferential, and differentiated qualities expected of the subjects of a monarchical regime. In this articulation of democratic values, the citizens themselves were ideally supposed to constitute a new form of political authority based on popular sovereignty and a predictable and rational exercise of power. A major goal of the American revolutionaries was to create a political order that would leave Americans unencumbered and unrestricted by arbitrary authority while allowing them to exert their influence in defense of their rights and interests whenever necessary.

Within the revolutionary groups, action derived from the values of the natural rights doctrine was sustained on the basis of a combination of ethical conviction and rational interest—or what Weber termed value rationality and instrumental rationality. Groups such as the Sons of Liberty and the Minutemen based their conduct and action on an ethically based commitment to individual rights, combined with an instrumentally rational understanding of the type of government (representative) and the type of economy (free market) that would best serve the interests of individuals. The writings of American revolutionaries clearly provide evidence of a passionate conviction in the ethical correctness of the natural rights doctrine. As, for example, in the words of Alexander Hamilton, "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power."[12] The striking aspect of this conviction is that the governmental reforms Hamilton and others demanded to protect the rights of man were cast in instrumentally rational terms. In the eyes of the revolutionaries, just government had to correspond to the calculated needs and interests of individual citizens. According to Thomas Paine, "Every man is a proprietor in government and considers it a necessary part of his business to understand. It concerns his interest, because it effects his property. He examines the cost and compares it with the advantages; and above all, he does not adopt the slavish custom of following what in other governments are called *leaders*."[13]

It would be tempting to focus solely on the pursuit of rationally determined interests as the concrete foundation of liberal government and to relegate the natural rights doctrine to the status of an abstract set of values toward which liberal governments may or may not orient themselves. Yet this would be a misleading assessment of liberal democracy. For it is only by elevating the individual endowed with natural rights to the status of an *absolute* value that the American colonists were willing to risk their lives and their security to implement the rational form of political and economic organization that corresponded to their sense of what was ethically appropriate.

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[12] Quoted in Bernard Bailyn, ed., *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume 1* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 108.

[13] Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), p. 419.

Moreover, this ethically based commitment provided uncontestable grounds upon which group members could be sanctioned or rewarded. The historian Ernest Baker has drawn attention to the extent to which there was a belief in the "congruity of political democracy with the religious democracy of God's church" in colonial America.[14] For example, the Congregationalist minister John Wise concluded in 1717 after his study of the natural rights philosophy of Pufendorf that "a democracy in church or state is a very honorable and regular government according to the dictates of right reason."[15] Here we find support for Weber's thesis that the "inalienable personal right of the governed against any power" emerged under the influence of the Protestant sects.[16]

While the revolutionary groups were not religious sects, they did attain a high level of compliance with the newly articulated values and principles of government. Already before and during the Revolution, conduct within the revolutionary groups reflected the favored form of rational political organization. Group members, regardless of social standing, were treated as formally equal citizens, while widely accepted democratic procedures allowed for a stable delegation of authority from the membership at large to their duly elected representatives. By and large, this type of conduct and organization was highly conducive to the implementation of the rule of law in public affairs and to the development of purposeful, methodical, and rational conduct among public officials.

The affinity of the formal natural rights doctrine with the teachings of the non-Conformist Protestant ministers in colonial America served to render the revolutionary agenda intelligible to a broad social audience. Furthermore, most independent, small-scale farmers and producers felt economically threatened either by British taxation demands or by British manufacturing restrictions. There was, therefore, a considerable formal overlap between the articulation of values within the groups of revolutionary activists and the socioeconomic conditions external to them. In spite of the fact that most colonists resisted the revolutionary solutions of war and independence until well after the first shots were fired in 1776, the depth of the overlap between their interests and the values articulated by the revolutionaries ultimately resulted in a successful challenge to the old order.

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[14] Ernest Baker, *Traditions of Civility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 276.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

[16] Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), p. 1209.

Articulation: The Polish Case

By the late 1970s, there existed in Poland a middle stratum of society that was increasingly dissatisfied with the political and economic order, or rather disorder, of the Gierek regime. The skilled workers and intellectuals who would ultimately provide the core leadership group for Solidarity can be seen as roughly analogous to the artisans and gentry of the American Revolution in the sense that they too occupied the middle of the social scale.[17] On one end of this scale were, of course, Party members and the *nomeklatura*, while at the other end were the unskilled and poorly educated workers. This middle stratum was marginal in status yet relatively secure in economic position, thereby manifesting both the frustration and the resources needed to mount an opposition to the existing state of affairs.[18] Like the American case, the status frustrations felt by the relatively well-to-do intellectuals were echoed by the economic frustrations of the workers who felt that their productivity was impeded and impaired by senseless and arbitrary Party interference in economic management. Whereas these social groups can objectively be located in the middle of the social spectrum, in their daily lives they were divided and separated from one another by the status hierarchies established under "really existing socialism." Commonly held values expressed, for example, by the dissident organization KOR served to overcome these divisions and make common action possible.

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[17] On the role of specific occupational groups, such as engineers and doctors, in the Solidarity movement, see Michael Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1991).

[18] We are indebted to our colleague Stephen Hanson for this conceptualization.

Unlike the American case, however, this middle stratum was not comprised of independent producers and professionals attaining and retaining their positions solely on the basis of "individual worth." While certain intellectuals and workers may have attained their positions on the basis of individual merit independent of the ideological criteria established by the Party, the majority were still dependent on the employment provided by the state. This dependency had a twofold effect on the development of the opposition. On the one hand, the omnipresent state was rejected as an instrument of party rule and, as such, it became the focus of frustration and resentment. On the other hand, the distribution of resources and employment undertaken by the state was deemed necessary and desirable. The distribution was simply to be administered under social control in a more equitable and just fashion. As we have noted, such a substantive concern for the well being of the collectivity was unknown in the American context.

Furthermore, the historic conditions of Polish national dependence, or at least lack of independence, have also fostered a collective and substantive understanding of democracy. Polish movements for independence tended naturally to articulate their aspirations for Polish nationhood in terms of democratic ideas given that their opponents were autocratic monarchies.[19] In this context, it was believed that democracy would assure substantively beneficial outcomes for the collectivity of the Polish nation. Internal social divisions would be overcome, society would be liberated from all existing problems, and Poland would become a sovereign, modern European nation. Without ever having experienced the costs and benefits of practicing democratic institutions, Poles integrated this vision of a utopian democracy into their political culture. The dependent status of workers and intellectuals vis-à-vis the state and the historic tendency to mythologize democracy combined to produce a particular articulation of democratic values in 1980 and 1981.

Solidarity's opposition to the communist hierarchies of privilege was largely articulated on the basis of a substantive interpretation of natural rights. This is not to say that Solidarity documents ignored formal democratic principles and rights, such as the rule of law, civil rights, and the political conditions for the development of society. However, such statements did not as yet include a specific conception of a political and social order based on formal rights and principles. This stands in direct contrast to the concrete program Solidarity devised for the implementation of worker self-management.[20]

The concern for self-management is a direct consequence of the fact that in Solidarity's articulation of values, the social and economic rights of the Polish population, understood as a sacred collectivity of citizens rather than as an association of individual citizens, were primary. Even Solidarity's conception of the natural rights of the individual was substantive in nature. This is exemplified by the principle that man has a natural right to live in dignity. The articulation of such a value leads, inevitably, to the question of what substantively constitutes a life with dignity, and who or what is to ensure the conditions for dignity. Just as the collectivity is the primary bearer of rights, so too is it the primary bearer of duties and obligations. The collectivity, whether it is the immediate community or society at large, has a duty to provide the conditions for the dignified existence of all individuals.

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[19] The history of Poland is filled with political plans for the institutionalization of democracy. Serious attempts to introduce a democratic government ended as a rule in only partial successes. The greatest achievement in this regard was the creation of a relatively well-functioning democratic underground state during the Second World War. This state, as part of the Western alliance, had the potential of creating a stable democratic postwar government in Poland. The Yalta negotiations eliminated that possibility.

[20] Worker self-management is based on institutionalizing the decision-making authority of the workforce over the management of the enterprise through particular organs of democratic workers' representation such as workers' councils.

In this context, the principles of self-management and self-government are an expression of the duty of the collective to control both the process and the outcome whereby resources are produced and then distributed in the best interests of all concerned. The self-managing enterprise and the self-governing republic proclaimed by Solidarity in the 1981 Program of the First Congress were articulated according to this logic. The self-managing enterprise was to be the foundation upon which the self-governing republic would be based—without social control and autonomy at the level of the workplace, it would be impossible to have autonomy and democracy at the state level.

Solidarity unquestionably accepted all of the values and principles of democracy. The fact that substantive rights and values outweighed formal rights is due to the reality of socialist dependencies and the historical vision of democracy that fostered a focus on the collectivity and on the substantive conditions within which individual workers and citizens lived. Just as the formal natural rights doctrine suited the independent American colonists, so too was Solidarity's articulation of substantive natural rights adapted to the circumstances, needs, and interests of the social groups that opposed the communist state. While the working class character of this articulation is evident, intellectuals as well saw a fulfillment of their sense of responsibility for the Polish nation in the concept of collective social responsibility which lay at the heart of Solidarity's program.

Consequently, groups within the social movement-trade union organization based their conduct on an ethically based commitment to the pursuit of substantive rights, combined with an almost affectual attachment to the notions of a self-governing republic in the political realm and self-managing enterprises in the economic realm. The conduct consistent with these notions was clearly based on direct participation rather than on delegated representation. Self-government implied a heroic, unselfish, and all encompassing commitment to participate in political and economic life wherein the interests of the collectivity (nation, society, or workers' group) were more important that the interests of individuals. This was indeed the model of public content favored by Solidarity activists.

This heroic, unselfish opposition to communism resonated with nearly all of Polish society. The historic language and imagery that Solidarity leaders used to articulate their vision of democracy served to render their agenda intelligible as part of a historically reoccurring struggle for Polish independence. Most important, however, was the concrete support of the Catholic church which provided more than an institutional safe haven for the opposition. The clear affinity between the sermons of particular church leaders, such as the Pope and Father Józef Tischner, and the values of Solidarity served to reassure an anxious public that Solidarity's potentially dangerous opposition and radicalism were justifiable in divine terms and, therefore, worthy of support.[21] Subsequently, the concepts of social self-defense, economic self-management, and collective responsibility resonated even with the private farmers whose status had not been directly addressed by the industrial strikes that gave birth to the Solidarity. The founding of Rural Solidarity is perhaps the most powerful example of the extent to which there was a formal overlap between Solidarity's articulation of values and the interests of a broader social audience.[22]

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[21] See, for example, the sermons contained in Józef Tischner, *The Spirit of Solidarity* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1984).

Articulation: Comparative Conclusions

In the American case, the articulation of democratic values on the basis of the formal natural rights doctrine resulted in visions of citizenship founded on individual rights, of a political order based on the institutions of representative government, and of an economic order based on the free and unrestricted productive potential of independent producers. These visions were combined with a conception of public conduct that embraced proceduralism and adherence to the rule of law. Within these parameters, individuals were free to pursue their interests on a formally equal footing. The political elite that emerged after the old order had been successfully overthrown was universally committed to extending the formal equality that had prevailed within the revolutionary groups to the polity at large.

In the Polish case, democratic citizenship was based on a collective and substantive understanding of rights, while the political and economic orders were conceived of in terms of participatory self-government. Furthermore, in Solidarity's vision, public officials should aspire to the ideal of selfless heroism and sacrifice rather than to the mundane model of proceduralism and the integration of "selfish" individual interests into the public realm. Aside from the sense of heroism fostered by oppositional activity, the extent to which procedural forms had been divested of substantive content by the communist authorities and the extent to which the pursuit of self-interest had become equated with the egoism and corruption of the party *nomenklatura* were also significant factors in determining Solidarity's tendency toward a collective, substantive, and "heroic" articulation of democracy. Unlike the American case, the political elite that emerged from the phase of democratic articulation and came to power in 1989 has not been able to apply directly the values and conduct learned in that phase to the problems of institutionalizing a new order. The political and economic situation after the collapse of communism is very different from the conditions that prevailed when Solidarity articulated its vision of democracy. In coming to terms with this new situation, the political elite has predictably been fractured by widely differing views of how to proceed with reforms and systemic transformation. The initial cohesion of the Solidarity leadership that was instrumental in negotiating the Roundtable accords and in introducing the Balcerowicz plan for economic reform has given way to factionalism and fragmentation among the new political elites. In contrast to the American case, the phase of articulation has not left Poland with a determined and unified political elite capable of solving inevitable conflicts of interest within the parameters established by shared values and a shared mode of conduct.

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[22] On the relationship between Solidarity and Rural Solidarity, see Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985).

Institutionalization: The American Case

After the Revolution, the new leadership of the United States was able to adapt to the circumstances of holding power without succumbing to corruption or to the elitist exercise of political power characteristic of the monarchial regime they had just overthrown. This successful adaptation is due both to the depth of the transformation experienced by the revolutionary elite during the Revolution and to the value basis upon which democracy was proclaimed. Since both gentry and artisans had contributed equally to the revolutionary endeavor, they had come to accept one another as equals in substance as well as in principle. The old status distinctions were thereby transformed and transcended as the equality of citizenship and the forms of procedurally based conduct were experienced concretely on a daily basis. This transformation from hierarchically organized subjects to procedurally organized citizens generated a sustained commitment among the new political leadership to create the new institutions of representative government and unrestricted private economic entrepreneurship.

The stability of these institutions, however, depended on the ability of the elite to marginalize social opposition by effectively denying them civic equality.[23] This ability was facilitated by the formal natural rights doctrine. This ability was facilitated by the formal natural rights doctrine which allowed political elites to deny potentially dangerous social groups access to the polity, while holding out the promise that once they fulfilled the formal requirements for citizenship, they too would have a place in the new political order. All those dislocated, disadvantaged, or marginalized by the imposition of new institutions could be placated with the hope of future advancement, since their disadvantages were a result of formal and, therefore, potentially temporary restrictive criteria—as opposed to the substantive and, therefore, permanent restrictions of the old regime, such as birth and hereditary status.

The stability of the institutionalization process in the American case was also considerably enhanced by the powerful feedback loop that existed between the new political leadership and the social groups deemed critical by the articulated values. In the context of the formal natural rights doctrine, all independent producers, no matter how small in scale and scope, were considered worthy members of the polity. Consequently, the new leadership, while largely drawn from the gentry, was sensitive to both the status desires and the economic interests of less well-to-do citizens. Since the ability to hold public office was determined mainly on the basis of individual merit and talent, artisans as well as wealthy plantation owners could satisfy their status aspirations by rising in the public realm. Furthermore, the Federalist program of expanding the union of states toward the west clearly resonated with the economic interests of merchants and artisan manufacturers who saw a large new market opening before them.[24] Ultimately, the same social groups that provided the leadership for the Revolution benefited from the institutionalization of liberal democracy.

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[23] The marginalization of opposing groups has not been insignificant in American history. For example, R.R. Palmer points out that more people were expelled from the colonies and more property was confiscated from loyalists in the American Revolution than in the French Revolution. See R.R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution, Volume 1* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 188-189.

While this institutional leveling of opportunity for all social groups might seem self-evident in retrospect, to place artisans on the same level with gentry was a radical, if not revolutionary, departure from all social and political mores of the time. This leveling, mandated by the natural rights doctrine and put into practice during the Revolution, generated one of the strongest feedback loops in modern history. Such a direct linkage between the articulation and institutionalization phases in the American case, exemplified by the fact that the same political actors and social groups participated in both phases, has perhaps served to obscure the possibility of less successful, more tenuous democratic transitions from one phase to the next.

Institutionalization: The Polish Case

Since 1989, the new political leadership has been unable either to remain cohesive or to resist corruption and the elitist, nondemocratic practices inherited from the communist regime. In Weber's terms, political leaders in Poland today are more likely to be living off politics rather than for politics. A major reason for the weakness of the new political leadership—a weakness that has had negative consequences for their ability to institutionalize a stable new political and economic order—lies in the nature of Solidarity's articulation of democracy. Although it is now widely recognized that the original vision of participatory self-government is no longer applicable to the post-1989 situation, the collective and substantive understanding of the rights upon which citizenship is based and the heroic ideal of public conduct favored by Solidarity are still having a profound impact on the polity. The impact can be seen in three areas:

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[24] See Cathy D. Matson and Peter S. Onuf, *A Union of Interests: Political and Economic Thought in Revolutionary America* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1990).

1. As the French Revolution demonstrates, a collective understanding of citizenship invariably leads to struggles within the political leadership over who is best qualified to represent the collective. The question of how the will of the collective citizenry is to be determined and institutionalized has, therefore, taken second place to the question of which party or political grouping is best able to embody this will. This is why political figures seek to represent the national interest rather than the particular interests of a given constituency.
2. A substantive understanding of the social and economic natural rights that all citizens have a claim to makes it extremely difficult for political elites to justify the marginalization or the disadvantaged circumstances of certain social groups. Withdrawing rights previously considered permanent and inalienable leaves groups most negatively affected with a sense of disenfranchisement. New institutions created in this environment are likely to meet with implacable hostility and resistance from these groups.
3. A heroic, self-sacrificing standard for public conduct is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain in a routinized, mundane, task-oriented atmosphere. Consequently, there is a strong tendency to invalidate political leadership as soon as self-

interested or unheroic behavior does not live up to the standard originally set by Solidarity.

On the whole, it has been impossible for the new political elite to sustain the inner logic and consistency of the entire complex of values and conduct developed during Solidarity's articulation period. While certain values, such as self-government, have been consciously abandoned, others have been retained both consciously and unconsciously in a fragmentary and inconsistent manner. The extent to which these values and the conduct based upon them are incompatible with the effort of constructing liberal capitalist institutions is becoming increasingly evident.

The growing gap between political elites and critical social groups represents a further problem. Instead of an emerging feedback loop between Solidarity elites and the workers and peasants that supported them, the post-1989 reforms have led to considerable alienation and estrangement. The Polish authors of the reforms believed that the dismantling of communist economic and political institutions and the denationalization and deregulation of the economy would automatically release the natural market forces and prodemocratic tendencies latent in society. Thus, reforms were treated as a rather technical process aimed at an elimination of the developmental base which had been imposed by external power.[25] It was expected that society as a whole would benefit from these reforms, albeit after a painful period of readjustment.

In actuality, the reforms destroyed the system of central planning connected with the communist system which for almost a half-century had determined and protected the interests of all basic social groups.[26] In replacing the centralized distribution mechanism, the reformers set in motion a powerful lever for profound and rapid structural changes. The negative consequences of these changes, barely perceptible at first, have been seen as an existential threat by two of the largest social groups—peasants and workers in the large industrial enterprises, the cradle of Solidarity. These two groups make up close to one-third of the population of Poland.

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[25] For example, the economic reforms known as the Balcerowicz plan called for the dismantling of central planning, the introduction of market mechanisms, privatization, and the gradual elimination of state controls over the economy—as well as for the stabilization of the currency.

Protests by peasants against the reforms began in the spring of 1990 and gradually assumed rather intense forms. A number of the protest activities of the peasant organizations were nothing less than ostentatious violations of the law. The tactics of one of the most radical unions of professional farmers, the union *Samoobrona* (Self-Defense), might well have resulted in indictments for terrorist actions in some Western countries. These protests have prompted reflections on the question of how the reforms should proceed. Poland was one "socialist" country in which the collectivization of agriculture was officially repealed because of the dramatic resistance of the peasants. Thus, while the peasants continued to exist as a social class, the development of private agriculture was nonetheless blocked as peasants were forced to unite their farms in a system of "socialist" farming. Administrative restrictions on land turnover and on the inheritance of agricultural property were clearly disadvantageous for peasants. Furthermore, the prices set by the state on agricultural products and on the means of production, the state monopoly in the entire agricultural sector, and the associated arbitrariness and corruption of local authorities all inhibited the development of a modern private agricultural sector in Poland. As a result, Polish farming remained on a prewar level which corresponds to the state of agricultural production in Western Europe at the beginning of the twentieth-century.

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[26] See Edmund Mokrzycki, "The Legacy of 'Real Socialism', Group Interests and the Search for a New Utopia," in Walter Connor and Piotr Ploszajski, eds., *Escape from Socialism: The Polish Route* (Warsaw: Ifis Publishers, 1992).

Several months of postcommunist reform revealed a paradoxical fact: really existing socialism in which the peasants were the most exploited and ill-treated class had created something of a protected historical niche for this class, the destruction of which meant that the peasantry would not be able to continue in its present position. In order to meet the competition of Western agriculture, agriculture in Poland had to undergo a process of "shock" modernization as a result of which the majority of today's farmers—people with low professional qualifications, low levels of education, and marginal mobility—may continue to find themselves on the social margins. But this time it threatens to be an unprotected marginality without state subsidies and without a market guaranteed by state purchases. From sociological research and opinion polls, it is clear that the peasants constitute a potential social base for antidemocratic and antiliberal tendencies.

Protests by industrial workers broke out in the fall of 1990. Initially these protests were directed against specific decisions, such as the introduction of taxes on wages which were higher than the established norm. In time, however, they began to turn into manifestations of disapproval against the fundamental premises of the reforms. To a certain extent, this escalation was guided by radical and politically ambitious labor leaders like Marian Jurczyk and Maciej Jankowski and by populist oriented political parties like the Confederation for Independent Poland. However, the main cause of the change in workers' attitudes was the growing realization that Polish heavy industry would not be able to survive outside the system of central planning and distribution. This system had provided considerable benefits; for example, within the context of central planning, a miner's earnings could significantly surpass the wages of a specialist in electronics or even the salary of a surgeon.

The problem of a sharp drop in wages among the former industrial elite has been compounded by the sharp decline in industrial production. As a result of reforms and the loss of former Soviet bloc markets, industrial productivity has declined by almost 50 percent since 1990. To date, the consequences of the reform process including the removal of privileges, the reduction of wages, and the creation of unemployment have resulted in a profound threat to the continued existence of many heavy industries in Poland. Effected industries are mining, metallurgy, defense, and, ironically, ship-building.

Regardless of the original intentions of the political elite that initiated the reforms, the major result of the reform process might well be an elimination of certain social groups from the social and political scene. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly evident that the social groups which formed the core of Solidarity, workers and intellectuals, are experiencing different costs and benefits from the creation of new institutions. While workers are suffering under the new conditions, intellectuals appear to be adjusting with greater ease; they are finding employment with the state as specialists and politicians while their language skills make them attractive to foreign companies investing in Poland. A split seems to be developing in society between those with the skills to become independent producers and professionals and those that are locked into dependency by their structural position in the partially reformed economy.

The current situation revives the old status distinctions between workers, peasants, and intellectuals that Solidarity managed to transcend for a brief period of time. It would appear that first and second class citizens are being created as the new institutional arrangements undermine the social, economic, and political standing of the very workers that helped to initiate the process of systemic transformation by articulating a democratic alternative to communist rule. In response to this difficult situation, political groups have begun to present alternative, antireform programs. On the left, politicians have proposed policies that would in effect represent a return to the system of centralized distribution. The nationalist right favors a program that could be designated as autarkic Peronism. Both alternatives would logically lead to antidemocratic consequences for present day Poland. Within the Solidarity trade union as well, moderate leaders such as Bogdan Borusewicz and Jan Rulewski, who have been a part of the movement since the early days of Solidarity in 1980, are being challenged by radical leaders such as Maciej Jankowski and Zygmunt Wrzodak, who are inclined toward authoritarian solutions.

Clearly, the institutionalization of democracy in Poland has met with a number of different obstacles. Aside from the difficult legacy of the articulation period discussed above, the lack of historical experience with liberal democracy, the presence of authoritarian tendencies embedded in the political culture, the political ambitions of the Catholic Church, and the widespread political apathy prevalent in society have all played a role. Experiences to date would suggest that none of these problems taken alone represents a serious threat; together, however, they may constitute a formidable opposition to continued systemic transformation in a liberal capitalist direction.

Two developments would appear to be critical in determining whether or not such a potentially mobilized opposition can be overcome. From a sociological perspective, substantial changes in the interests of social groups and, consequently, in the social structure of the country are necessary to develop a social constituency interested in the successful institutionalization of liberalism.[27] Independent producers in the private sector and independent professionals are emerging. This process would appear to be dynamic, but the socio-economic elevation of certain social groups and the marginalization of others need to be addressed and legitimated politically.

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[27] See Edmund Mokrzycki, "The New Middle Class?" in Richard Kilminster and Ian Varcoe, eds., *Beyond Modernity (Zygmunt Bauman Festschrift)* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, forthcoming).

From a political perspective, therefore, it seems incumbent on the political elite to articulate a new relationship between rights and interests, one based on a formal rather than substantive interpretation of natural rights. As we have seen, the historical institutionalization of liberal capitalism was based on the compatibility between the interests of the independent producers of the middle stratum and the formal rights of the individual. Certain political groups and public figures in Poland have already begun to draw on Solidarity's original natural rights articulation in order to create the basis for such a new articulation. Recently, for example, the Ombudsman for the Protection of Civil Rights, an office that Solidarity originally proposed in 1981, has taken a stand on behalf of formal rights against the efforts of the Catholic Church to impose its conservative agenda upon the polity. Meanwhile, the proposed Bill of Rights sponsored by President Walesa represents a remarkable compromise between formal and substantive rights that, if implemented, might well serve as the keystone of a new feedback loop between members of the political elite oriented toward liberal rights and the growing portion of the population engaged in independent entrepreneurial activity.[28] Whether this will be enough to marginalize the opposing forces remains to be seen.

Institutionalization: Comparative Conclusions

In the American case, it is clear that the logic of a democratic articulation based on a specific amalgam of rights and interests proved highly conducive to the development of a powerful feedback loop that served to facilitate the logic of institutionalization. Absolute belief in the formal natural rights doctrine legitimated the notion that individuals had both the right and the capacity to determine and pursue their own interests. On the basis of this ethical conviction, people were willing to sacrifice even their lives in defense of their rights and interests. After the Revolution, a cohesive new political leadership was able to sustain its commitment to institutional change and to marginalize opposition by retaining the support of the same social groups that had opposed the monarchical regime.

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[28] For a discussion of the proposed Bill of Rights, see Wiktor Osiatynski, "A Bill of Rights for Poland," *The East European Constitutional Review* 1:3 (Fall 1992): 29-33.

In the Polish case, the institutionalization of liberal democracy has been rendered exceedingly difficult both by the legacies of communism and by the consequences of Solidarity's democratic articulation. An ethically based commitment to substantive natural rights—rights that were articulated to protect the interests of a citizenry dependent on the state's system of centralized planning and resource distribution—has not been conducive to the development of a feedback loop supportive of liberal democratic outcomes. In order to foster such outcomes, different social interests and a different understanding of rights must now evolve under highly unfavorable conditions. The challenge facing Poland is to legitimate the pursuit of economic interests by the newly independent producers and professionals as an expression of the rights to which individuals are naturally entitled. In this endeavor, the formal aspects of Solidarity's articulation of democratic values may eventually provide an ethical foundation for the protection of individual rights and interests that significant groups can support on the basis of conviction, as well as on the basis of instrumental utility.

Events in Poland since 1989 have demonstrated the extent to which a successful transition between the articulation and institutionalization phases is neither automatic nor assured. The fundamental challenge before us as analysts of "transition" is to focus not only on what is developing in political life but also to consider what is taking place at the social base, and to relate the political and social realms to one another.

Generally speaking, these relationships have not been of concern to political scientists analyzing transitional polities. Yet they are crucial for understanding these polities and for ascribing an independent analytical status to them. In this context, the comparative framework presented here represents a step toward the necessary integration of political and social perspectives.

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