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The Bound Prometheus. Institutional Analyses of Polish Modernization

Abstract: The author argues that it is worth applying the theoretical-methodological schemas of institutionalism to the analysis of modernization. He views institutions as bridges or in fact "engines" which are planes of inclusion of agencies (individuals, businesses, states etc.) in the structural processes of modernization, globalization, liberalization, democratization etc. He demonstrates how mechanisms differ depending on the type of institutionalism: rationalistic choice, dependence on structural heritage, sociological (functionalistic), political-legal, international. He makes references to Polish reality, past and present, in his analyses.

Keywords: structure; agency; institutions and institutionalization; rational choice; structural heritage (dependency pathway); sociological; political-legal (transactionism); international regime.

History on the Altar of Hope

Forty years ago, David Landes, professor of history and economics at Harvard University, published a book called *The Prometheus Unbound. Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*, in which he argued that the heretical or hubristic incentive to act is the main motive in western ideas and mythology. This is how he explained it:

> Adam and Eve lost Paradise for having eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, but they retained the knowledge. Prometheus was punished, and indeed all of mankind, for Zeus sent Pandora with her box of evils to compensate the advantages of fire; but Zeus never took back the fire. Daedalus lost his son, but was the founder of a school of sculptors and craftsmen and passed much of his cunning on to posterity. In sum, myths warn us that the wresting and exploitation of knowledge are perilous acts, but the man must and will know, and once of knowing, will not forget (Landes 2005: 555).

The myth of Prometheus inspired Aischylos, Ovid, Goethe, Shelley and our Słowacki. They all presented their protagonist as the embodiment of courage, noble suffering and creative intellect (Wilkinson & Philip 2007: 325).

The forces which used to motivate people continue to motivate them, say researchers of modernization (Patai 1972: 5). Landes, walking in the footsteps of Arnold Toynbee, does not hesitate to use the "industrial revolution" concept. He argues that the revolution which began in the mid-eighteenth century enabled not only Britain but also the entire West to rule the world a hundred years later. The industrial revolution can be compared with the Neolithic Revolution which introduced agriculture,

domesticated animals, settled life, towns etc. ten thousand years ago. It is noteworthy that many European countries and entire regions of the world lagged behind Great Britain but some soon managed to catch up with her, primarily the United States of America and Germany.

One of the countries which lagged behind was Poland, an economically semi-peripheral country (Kula 1983). Poland also experienced several political losses which brought her to think of herself as "the bound Prometheus." Słowacki expressed this feeling in the following words: "For you are Prometheus's only son/ The vulture is gnawing at your brains, not your heart" (Słowacki 1975: 471). The Poles often have a more positive opinion of themselves than our great romantic poet. For example, they sacralise the image of the fatherland which is often portrayed as the Christ of nations (Prokop 2000).

One could say that to call Poland a "bound Prometheus" is risky but in my defence let me quote the infernal proverb of the British romantic poet, William Blake, who cautioned us that "Prudence is a rich, ugly old maid courted by Incapacity" (Blake 1997: 116). Landes presented Great Britain as Prometheus although he knew perfectly well that calculation and practical experience were the foundations of Albion's successes and pride (Landes 2000: 246–291). These successes were the outgrowth of the same philosophy of life which David Hume and his younger friend Adam Smith, both thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, represented. As you can see, I am trying not to be prudent. It is time to ask whether Polish actions deserve to be similarly appraised. Yes—many Poles reply in chorus, especially those who see reason to be proud in military feats and the sphere of national and religious symbols. And who do not attribute failures to their own indolence and lack of institutional intelligence. They attribute them to the rapacity of neighbouring countries, Poland's geographical situation, geopolitics and unfortunate coincidence. They forget that ever since the "Swedish Deluge" (the Swedish invasion of Poland in 1655–1660) Poland had also been on the skids due to her own mistakes. It may be some consolation to know that other Central-Eastern European countries hardly fared better and sometimes did even worse (Janos 1994).

Is post-1989 Poland "bound"? My answer to this question will contain contradictory elements. Twenty years is too short a time to judge. I also remember that the great hopes of 1918 were shattered twenty years later and remained shattered for a long time. Do today's efforts deserve better marks than the interwar ones? Probably not. Or at least that is the trendy thing to say. The future surely looks brighter than it did during those two interwar decades because the context is more favourable. The outcome will depend to a greater extent on our own determination, our future-oriented imaginativeness, our ability to build creative communities etc. For the time being, however, activity in Poland is largely reactive, by which I mean that it is restricted to reacting to threats. Too rarely is it proactive. Too seldom does it anticipate the course of events.

The Poles are divided and will continue to be divided because of existing differences. Many of these differences cannot be overcome and it would be meaningless to do so. But how are we to cope with them? Some will be far more serious than the

"post-communist rift" on which many groups of politicians have decided to build their political capital. The problems with health care are increasing because of its mounting cost and sooner or later everyone will have to have guaranteed free health care according to his or her civic rights. The moral sphere will also be involved, for example in the context of biopower, and political institutions will not be able to avoid it and will seek the approval of the churches. The effects of proliferation of information and communication technologies are a great mystery. Ecological challenges are becoming increasingly urgent. Finally, equally challenging is the effectiveness of our political system and political class because so far the latter seems to be an obstacle rather than a leader. The eight-year wait for the passing of the new constitution was symptomatic (not to mention its quality). Fortunately the economic system was more effective but here again too many mistakes were made, for example when privatizing state-owned enterprises, but on the other hand, compared with our neighbours, a greater variety of institutional solutions was adopted. Ineptitude in the construction of motorways and express roads is spectacular.

The realization of new challenges can divide but probably in a different way than before: according to pragmatic and civilizational criteria rather than national-political symbols. To be more precise, I do not consider the latter to be unworthy of attention. It is a matter of change of proportion. Hence I think that the most important division is the one which divides people into those who are convinced that it is enough to know who we are (what our identity is) to overcome every obstacle and those who, although not denying the importance of identity, believe that questions such as who I want to be and what kind of world I want to live in are equally important. The latter are more willing to acknowledge the differences caused by the shrinking of the world due to scientific and technological revolution, Europeanization, globalization, global markets, environmental concerns etc. Without greater openness life becomes destiny. Meanwhile, "life is more than just destiny" (Sen 2006: 39), defined by one's ethnic group, religion or other ethnic factors.

This is the catastrophic vision presented by the author of the "clash of civilizations" concept (Huntington 1997). Is there any risk of cultural war in Poland? Some politicians are actually encouraging it. So far, however, the essence of this concept which Gertrude Himmelfarb defined as "one nation—two cultures" (Himmelfarb 1999) has not found much support in reality. Two observations can easily be made. First, society rejects extremely constructivist concepts of social change (it recently rejected one utopia—the communist one). Second, it also will not allow social orders to emerge completely spontaneously as the neoliberals would sometimes want them to do, claiming that the market will automatically put everything right. It is therefore important that the political class have some institutional imagination, partly because it could then take advantage of the Poles' hunger for success. We shall not cure our inferiority complexes by watching our national representation's football matches.

Time is on Poland's side because, more and more clearly, we have freedom of choice in our shared fate. Historical divisions, for example ethnic-linguistic or political-civic ones, are becoming elements of a "larger context" which does not mean resignation from identity, it only means location in a more successful configuration.

Looking from a bird's eye view this is a two-stage process. In early modernity, the progression was from feudal dispersion to the nation state, from tradition to modernity. In stage two, the progression was from early modernity to late modernity or even post-modernity. This transformation is often seen as the passage from the nation state to the post-state within the framework of the post-modern regional group such as the European Union. This logic is false because we can see no inclination to do away with the nation state looming on the horizon. On the contrary, the EU is a formula whose purpose is to overcome its well-known weaknesses. By "widening the context," countries such as France and Germany which were at war with each other three times within 75 years now have the prospect of peace and cooperation. In a world of increasing mutual dependency people are not content just to cultivate their identity, heritage and shared vicissitudes. They also want to know how to construct their "imagined world." The young generation is more interested in these questions than the older generation. Young people are more open-minded. Young people have less trouble balancing identities and differences. This is good news for the country's future.

The Other is marching onto the world stage with enviable vigour. Most Poles see themselves as representing Western culture but people in the West often treat the Poles as representatives of the Other's world. Although Poland acted as the bulwark of Christendom, Andrzej Walicki quotes Polish historians and reminds us that not only King Sobieski's soldiers had to be bound with special ropes under Vienna so that the Austrians did not mistake them for Turks but the king himself preferred Crimean apparel to Parisian fashion despite the fact that his wife was French. Sarmatia (the culture of the Polish nobility in the 17th and 18th centuries) was associated with a distinct, Eastern culture (Tazbir 1997, 1998; Walicki 2009). Some Poles are more West-inclined, others are more East-inclined but for some time now more and more Poles have taken these Polish and Central-European peculiarities for granted and wish to organize lives their own way because that is what life itself has taught them. Czesław Miłosz expressed this clearly and Andrzej Mencwel followed suit when he tried to define these Polish and not only Polish journeys through territory thus tailored analytically. Miłosz wrote, as if "revengefully,"

> I, Czesław Miłosz, am saying this and I'm from here, this familial, local Europe, unacknowledged in European Europe but I have to say from here, precisely, is no less important whereas unacknowledging European Europe is definitely losing it universality (Miłosz, after: Mencwel 2009: 9).

Our ideas are shaped not only by the partitions, oppressive wars, communism etc., that is the past, but also by contemporary national character. These ideas sometimes act as obstacles on the road to modernization causing many earlier attempts to fail. They did not facilitate the generation of mass innovativeness. If innovative attitudes did develop, they only did so in small enclaves.

Modernization from the Institutional Perspective

I am going to analyze modernization from the institutional perspective. I shall treat institutions as a third layer, a bridge which connects economic, political and social-

cultural structures on the one hand and agencies (subjects, actors) in the form of human individuals, companies (enterprises, banks), institutions (families, parishes), towns and provinces etc. on the other hand. Modernization processes take place within the framework of interactions between agencies and structures but these interactions are mediated by institutions. Institutions are the inalienable link of organized cooperation or organized conflict. Left to their own devices, agencies would produce a world of anarchy in which nothing would be predictable. Left to their own devices, structures would produce a completely predictable world (in theory) but one which would be closed like a container, a world operating according to the rules of internal dynamism, immune to any external influence, logical (deterministic) but not historical.

Modernization, meanwhile, understood in institutional terms, assumes the existence of three related elements: structures, agencies and institutions. Each element is relatively autonomous but they are all more or less interconnected. The whole can be more or less consistent and high consistency means that a modernization configuration has developed. This is a slow process and the outcome does not always conform to the different agencies' intentions. Importantly, however, this outcome is not the work of anonymous laws of structural determinism. Institutions are like mediators because they are practical ways of resolving social dilemmas and subsequent integration (economical, social etc.). Thanks to institutions it is possible to organize cooperation but everything comes at a price. In this case the price is the need to subordinate to formal and informal rules and suffer the sanctions, were anyone to dream of violating the rules (Ostrom 2005).

As we can see, institutions are a system of restrictions for those who use them. They have their benefits, however. They enable the cooperative game to be played and hence the elimination of such characteristics of mass behaviours as hostility, opportunism etc.—the behaviours of rational egoists in the "prisoner's dilemma" (Ostrom 2005). Well, perhaps not eliminate completely but at least limit. Here is an example of one of the reasons why we can count on it. Agencies may prefer to pay fixed taxes to the "stationary bandit" (M. Olson's expression), that is to the state (to obtain police protection, courts, prisons etc. in return), rather than to the mafia which is a less predictable bandit. Thanks to the institutional structure agencies are not left to fend for themselves in the face of modernization, globalization, democratization, urbanization etc. Institutions help, however, under the condition that trade-off is done.

Many things obstruct the development of new institutions and the repair of old ones, for example, immature citizens, but immature elites can do even more harm. Too much politicization and ideologization are also barriers. In moderate dozes they are normal or even desirable. In conditions of uncertainty such as, for example, the systemic transformation in Poland, they may be toxic. Too much politicization, as for example the Fourth Republic concept, clumsy historical politics, organized hatred of some citizens (because of their pre-1989 party affiliations) etc. may further reduce the already low social capital (Czapiński 2008). They may hinder the utilization of human capital (education) which has increased greatly after 1989.

Next, I want to present some attempts at institutional analyses of Polish modernization: to outline its sources, mechanisms and selected consequences. I use the plural

tense because institutionalism can be rational, historical, sociological (functionalistic), political-legal or international. This list can easily be enlarged (Chmielewski 1995; Hall & Taylor 1996; March & Olsen 2005; North 1990; Ostrom 2005; Peters 2005; Schmitter 2008). I shall show how various institutions operate as the "engines" of modernization. This perspective significantly departs from the dominant approaches to the study of modernization.

Modernization According to the Rationalistic Strategy

The most striking features of this approach are rationalism and realism. In its operations, the agency (subject, actor) takes into consideration that the world is as it is and there is nothing else one can do except adapt to it. It is left to the naïve to dream that a better world can be built or that it can be built quickly. So far, meanwhile, the world has had a rather rigid, pyramid-like structure. Hierarchy rules but, paradoxically, if one knows one's bearings one can achieve quite a lot, not only as a subject but also as an object. True, the structure itself is beyond our reach because it is so hard to change but change it does, albeit very slowly. This emphasis on reproduction of the *status quo* does not rule out grand events which may accelerate or retard change, for example war, but what really counts in this approach is the agency's own effort, always spurred by the thought of one's own advantage. Agencies calculate how to maximize the "pay-off" for their individual "contribution" to the system. They demonstrate their functional utility for the system.

This model is sometimes called "instrumental reason" but it would be simpler to call it a rationalistic strategy. Rationalism means looking for means to achieve one's goals whereas the goals themselves are treated as given and unquestionable. Hence in this approach, adaptation is the key word. According to Joseph Alois Schumpeter (1883–1950):

> Also, capitalist civilization is rationalistic and 'anti-heroic'. The two go together of course. Success in industry and commerce requires a lot of stamina, yet industrial and commercial activity is essentially unheroic in the knight's sense—no flourishing of swords about it, not much physical prowess, no chance to gallop the armoured horse into the enemy […]. Therefore, owning assets that are apt to attract the robber or the tax gatherer and not sharing or even disliking warrior ideology that conflicts with its 'rational' utilitarianism, the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie is fundamentally pacifist and inclined to insist on the application of the moral precepts of private life to international relations (Schumpeter 1962: 127–128).

The rationalist strategy is fruitful if it triggers processes of incessant adaptation according to universalistic values. And it does so if the means facilitate selection according to achievement criteria; if outcomes (wages, promotion etc.) depend on input (effort, competence, intelligence etc.). Therefore, it rejects particularistic achievement criteria which are typical for traditionalistic societies: inheritance of privileges, family connections, serfdom etc. (Landes 2003: 546). Individuals are viewed as predictable and reliable. Their preferences are viewed as exogenous. It "focuses on the factors shaping actors' expectations about each other behaviour. Structural change occurs when the relative expected utility of normative vs deviant behaviour changes" (Wendt 1999: 309).

Transferring this approach to the Polish transformation means that it is enough to apply structures already accepted elsewhere to wake up in a better reality. After 1989 this meant acceptance and implementation of the globalist-imitative mechanism, for example shock therapy (Morawski 2001: 258–259). The point of departure in this argumentation is the assumption that Poland is a semi-peripheral part of the capitalist system which has a long-established structure of wealth, power and prestige. And if so then she ought to know her place in the "pecking order." It is time to get down to the details. As was to be expected, the Poles were quick to accept the goals of the systemic reform: market economy, liberal democracy and civic society. They were less willing to accept the methods of achieving these goals, however. The results of a national survey I conducted with Bogdan Cichomski in 1991 and 1997 are quite unequivocal (Morawski 2001: 121). Respondents (72.8% in 1991 and 74.4% in 1997) were convinced that market economy was an essential determinant of economic growth and also believed that privatization of state-owned firms would be good for economic growth. Democracy was similarly endorsed. These are civilizational values and the Poles had been waiting for them to be implemented for a long time. On the other hand, respondents unanimously agreed that the market and the state were not functioning properly. They usually felt that the privatization process was discordant with the interests of the majority. Only a minority of respondents (22.3% in 1991 and 25.1% in 1997) were pleased with the political system. "We have a democracy but not a good one"—this is how we can summarize the Poles' opinion about the new Political system.

How do individuals perceive economic and political reality? Let me refer to work on the perception of social justice conducted within an international comparative study of 5 western and 8 post-communist countries in 1991 and 1997 in which I participated with Bogdan Cichomski. We enquired about realization of the "equal opportunities" principle and the principles of meritocracy, i.e., "pay-offs" (earnings, positions etc.) proportional to input (effort, intelligence, skills etc.). Both principles are what have made the West what it is today. As far as the USA are concerned, Robert Z. Lane wrote:

> For the market to be considered fair, two related procedural requirements must be met: there must be perceived openness, if not equality, and the market must be considered responsive to effort—to hard work (Lane 1986: 386).

In Poland the outcome was plainly negative. Only one Pole in four or five felt that people had equal start opportunities: 26.6% in 1991 and 22.6% in 1997 agreed with this opinion. This opinion is shared by three times as many respondents (65.9%) in the USA and more than twice as many (54.6%) in Germany (Western, because formed GDR was studied separately). As far as realization of the principles of meritocracy, which increase inequalities rather than creating equal opportunities is concerned, Poles' responses are located at a much lower lever than the responses of Western respondents: realization of the principle "to everyone according to their effort" 16.8% and 22.6% in 1991 and 1997 respectively compared with 71.4%—USA, 71.4%—Western Germany, 48.3%—Japan, 48.1%—United Kingdom, and 49.1%—Holland. As far as consideration of "intelligence and skills" is concerned, the contrast between

Poland and other countries is even greater: 18.5 and 27.6% in Poland compared with 75.0%—USA and Western Germany (Alwin et al., 1995: 121). No wonder that USA and Western Germany ranked first and second respectively in the ranking of legitimization of the economic system in a survey conducted in 13 countries although actual inequalities (measured with the Gini coefficient) are larger in the USA, for example, than in Poland. US citizens feel that inequalities in their country are fair whereas Poles do not.

Let me summarize these data with two comments. First, let me quote a metaphor. If the proportion of respondents rating the realization of the principles of meritocracy in the nineteen-nineties suggest a more or less 1-percent annual increment of positive ratings, then this may suggest (although this is just a suggestion, of course, not a scientific prediction) that it should take Poland at least 40 years to catch up with leading western countries. The biblical Jews needed the same amount of time to travel from Egypt to the Holy Land. The problem is that in economics expectations are much shorter and the younger generations would like them to be even shorter.

The second commentary refers to the question: how can we summarize our society taking into consideration the empirical data concerning realization of the principles of social justice? The rationalistic strategy which is working well in the West and leading to improvement of material prosperity and legitimization of liberal democracy allows us to conclude that those are "open" societies (Popper). We cannot say the same about Poland, however. Poland is now a "semi-open society" (Morawski 2001) although it is not a "closed" one. Things are changing but their dynamics do not qualify as "genuine improvement." To put this more clearly, I am not saying that we should liquidate the inequalities, social and otherwise, which always stem from property, power and prestige, only that we should reduce the scale of inequality which is large and still growing, as well as the scale of ordinary poverty, child and family neglect, poor health care etc. Failure to provide these public goods may pose a threat to freedom and democracy because if everyday problems spread on a massive scale they not only make people melancholy but also create various social traps. Various forces may easily take advantage of them to promote, for example, authoritarian liberalism, or populism.

Poles are usually pleased with themselves and their families. But they are far from pleased with Poland as state and market. This may lead to unpleasant surprises in the near and more distant future. Adjustment which the rationalistic strategy advises can be a stick with two ends. It works more or less smoothly when the whole is working more or less smoothly. The West attests to this. But it can work badly when the whole is not working properly and that is how people often feel that the entire system is working in Poland. The road from the desires (and "revolution"—systemic change!) whose waves spread through Poland in the 1980s to adjustment attitudes is completely normal because "revolutionary change is never as revolutionary as its supporters desire, and performance will be different than anticipated" (North 1994: 366). The road becomes abnormal when the scale of doubt and uncertainty is very large because then rationalistic attitudes give way to ubiquitous exasperation and uncontrolled anti-systemic revolt.

Modernization According to Historical Institutionalism

Structural dependence on the legacy of the past is called path dependence. The focus in historical institutionalism is tracking phenomena induced by specific decisions, mainly made by the nation state but not only. Decisions trigger series of positive or negative feedbacks. They are usually analyzed in the long wave in which case periods of stagnation and acceleration of change are distinguished. This encouraged researchers to adopt the "interrupted balance" metaphor (Krasner) borrowed from neo-Darwinist evolutionary theory. They wrote about "gradual adjustment" (Lindblom). In sociology these phenomena have been studied at the level of society but also lower down, at the level of organizations. For example, researchers have looked at the way regulations encourage the creation of new regulations whose purpose is to compensate for the dysfunctions of the original regulations but also sometimes not so much for the sake of rationality as simply to maintain the power (e.g. with the help of regulations) consolidated in the enrooted culture (Crozier & Friedberg 1982).

The focus, in other words, is on the tendency to inertia. It is assumed that the striving to repair institutions need not lead to radical breaking away from the past but may merely involve complementary modifications. A good illustration of this complexity is the history of the nation-creating process in Poland. This is what Andrzej Walicki says:

> In various historical periods the Polish nation was variously constructed: first on ethnic-linguistic foundations and later as a 'political nation', multiethnic, deliberately created by state elites, integrating around the idea of free republic; after the partitions […], striving to continue its existence as a stateless community of culture and historical freedom ideology, then—when these aspirations failed during the January uprising—shrinking once again to an ethnic nation, but reminiscent of its former greatness…" (Walicki 2008: 426–427).

Whether or not this past was good, it is indirectly affecting today's decisions. Douglass C. North has shown us how serious the consequences of such institutional matrices can be. The good British matrix which assumed the form of constitutional monarch during the Glorious Revolution 1688–89, guaranteeing political freedoms, private ownership, rule of law etc., was a source of success not only for Great Britain but also for the United States of America. The bad Spanish matrix with such elements as: tax exemption for the gentry and the clergy, high taxation of the inchoate bourgeoisie, a ramified state apparatus etc. led to Spain's downfall as well as to the centuries-long downfall of many Latin American countries (North 1997).

Path dependence is manifested in the dominance of so-called sticking to the local optimum (Peters 2005: 72). How does such consolidated structuring of human activity come about? It is sometimes the result of "sheer" coincidence but more often than not it is the result of ideas and people who think constructively. Such situations are not the main focus of this approach, however, the main focus being persistence of institutions whatever their value or even institutional decay. I shall now give some examples of Polish institutional legacy in three systems: socio-economical, political-comparative and socio-cultural.

In the economic sphere the most interesting consequence for Polish modernization was the centuries-long exclusion of the peasantry and the bourgeoisie from

participation in the emerging market-capitalist system. This is symbolized by the feudal estate and serfdom (Kula 1962, 1983). Labour was not viewed as a commodity. Had it been, we would be dealing with a capitalist estate. Serfdom was abolished by the tsar, not Polish Kordians who preferred to talk about love of the Polish land. Not everybody shares this opinion although differences tend to apply to earlier ages. In the 16th century, argues Andrzej Wyczański, the combination of country estate and compulsory peasant labour (serfdom) and hired labour (domestic service) was beneficial for both the economy and society (various types of promotion). As far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, he even posited that the cities defended their privileges whereas the gentry lost the battle with the bourgeoisie (Wyczański 2001: 234). If this is true then we cannot deny that, in the ages to come, exclusion of the peasants (serfs) and bourgeoisie to the formulas of capitalist economy was deleterious for economic growth.

Poland's basic industrialization was "delayed" compared with most Western European countries and its acceleration before World War II, for example through investment (the Central Industrial District, Gdynia etc.) did not have enough time to do their job whose completion was postponed until after World War II where it took place in conditions of "command economy." This has been called "imposed industrialization" (Morawski 1980; Pajestka 1975). It was an extremely expensive political-economic operation but it certainly contributed to the advancement of millions of people who migrated from the villages to the towns and cities to become workmen, office workers etc. Polish sociology has documented this process very well. Thousands of workplaces were built and the Third Republic could later privatise them profitably. This process has been going on for 20 years and is still not completed.

Two interconnected phenomena were probably most significant for political history: the republicanism of the gentry and the lack of an absolutist monarchy. In the West absolutism is regarded as an essential determinant of the development of the nation state, a phase on the road to modernity (Parker 1988: 14). Different opinions prevail in Poland. Analysts draw attention to Poland's primacy in the realization of the democratic formula in republican institutions and this is a fact if we consider the large political participation of the gentry in the state decision-making system. Western countries did not approximate our participation rate until the mid-nineteenth century.

Lack of absolutism is more controversial. How we resolve this issue depends on the criteria we use. A powerful state could facilitate economic development (Colbertism, the reforms of Peter I, Britain etc.). It is impossible, however, to separate political evaluation from the interplay of economic interests of the gentry—Polish, Lithuanian or other. Taking this aspect into consideration, we may conclude that the Republic of the Two Nations (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) was

> a pre-modern state which drew from extensive development and was immune to the intensification of modernization. In contrast to its contemporary Western European countries, the First Republic moved toward secondary ruralisation and de-urbanization […] The Union with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the object of Polish pride for many generations, entangled Poland in a gigantic web of ethnic, cultural and developmental contradictions in the new eastern territories. The Great Duchy's struggle for civilizational identity sucked Poland into the geopolitical abyss of Eurasia, confronted her with Moscow/Russia as the principle rival to west Russia's body and soul, an integral part of the Jagiellonian heritage (Bartczak 2009: 20).

In his evaluation of absolutism Jan Baszkiewicz seems to harbour a different opinion because he underscores the positive cooperation (within the framework of the Polish-Lithuanian constitutional monarchy) between the king, the aristocratic upper house and the noble lower house. True, he admits that multi-ethnicity was a source of tension and conflict but he believes that the alternative, absolute monarchy, was more complicated than we think. Absolutism—he argues—

> from the utilitarian perspective was no longer an element of the necessary world order, created by God; it could be submitted to the subjects' empirical testing—according to Aristotle's thesis that guest will judge better of a feast than the cook (Baszkiewicz 1999: 72).

From this we can see that judgements of absolutism can be contradictory due to long-term modernization effects. The partitioners, who represented absolutism themselves and hence tried to abolish Polish republicanism, were particularly outspoken in their praise of absolutism. Polish republicanism was unable to safeguard itself politically, for example with the help of federal solutions, and this is one of the reasons why our republican institutional model made it more difficult for Poland to emerge unscathed from her confrontation with her neighbours' absolutism. "A great state was suppressed, and a whole nation divided amongst its enemies," underlined Lord Acton, adding approvingly that this gave birth in Europe to the theory of nationality which eventually superseded dynastic legitimism with the legitimism of nations (Acton, after: Walicki 2009: 183).

In the socio-cultural sphere the main issue was the constituting of the modern Polish nation on the ethnic-cultural foundation rather than the historical-political one. The scales were tipped by the national aspirations of the non-Polish population of the old Republic, especially the Lithuanians, says Andrzej Walicki. After the defeat of the January Uprising, when the Poles were pushed into a defensive position and German and Jewish supremacy in the development of capitalist economy was evident, ethnic nationalism rather than political (civic) nationalism developed. Ethnic nationalism found its outlet in Roman Dmowski's National Democratic Party and the defeat gave birth to the Pole-Catholic concept: "The triumph of the 'Pole-Catholic' stereotype was the reverse of the victory of the ethnic-linguistic nation concept—a concept which inadvertently implied 'diminution of the fatherland', as Edward Abramowski expressed it" (Walicki 2009: 148). This is what Walicki is trying to say: In the late 18th century the national ideology of Kościuszko and his likes expressed Polishness in the broad sense (Polish as the equivalent of "British"), because it was not equated with Catholicism, whereas a hundred years later the Poles fenced themselves in, hence limiting their chances of becoming a modern nation. Another hundred years passes and the cover of the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* featured the enormous title, "The Pole-Catholic is becoming extinct." Inside, an empirical sociologist enlightens us as to the interpretation of this slogan:

> What distinguishes Polish religiosity from other religiosities is its attitude toward history and a certain type of thinking about one's community—the belief that Poland and the Poles have a mission" […] but also that "the Church's role is an important one but not the only or sufficient one (Szawiel 2009: 4, 5).

In this context it is good to remember that in June 2003 John Paul II argued that Poland should continue the road from the Lublin Union to the European Union. As it moves east, the EU is, to a certain extent, confronting similar problems to the ones Poland confronted several centuries ago and so Poland had already developed certain unique formulas combining independent organisms in the spirit of the principle of unity in diversity. For example, she had retained many separate central offices, separate armed forces, a separate budget etc., much like the EU today (Buras & Tewes 2008: 83–84; Pietraś 2009: 15).

In each of the three dimensions mentioned above our historical heritage is alive and can serve as a resource for the resolution of salient current problems. For example, Poland's relations with the ULB countries (Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus) in accordance with Jerzy Giedroyc's testament. Hence we may ask a more general question concerning Poland's civilizational affiliation. There is considerable evidence attesting to the belief that, although this is a gradual process, Poland and other Central-Eastern European countries should be viewed as an original, distinct, "family" space belonging to neither Western nor Eastern Europe (Mencwel 2009) yet now tied with both these Europes with multiple threads more tightly than ever before. Mutual dependencies in European and global space determine these ties. Paradoxically, they are helping Poland and the entire region to become more empowered. Instead of having to turn her back on her neighbours, as was often the case in the past, Poland is now meeting them face-to-face. This is how primary groups are defined as sociology students learn in their freshman year. Of course relations between nations-societies are much more complex. I use this expression because similar issues, background for instance, crop up from time to time—for example on the occasion of Czesław Miłosz's funeral. The best answer to those who were in doubt was given by Ewa Lipska, the poetess, in her description of the Polish hybrid:

On the mother's side our country
Belongs to the East.
The uniform's coarse cloth
In the lowlands
The drawing room on the outskirts.
"On the father's side Europe
And the cosmetic pact.
Smoothing out the wrinkles" (Lipska 2007: 27–28).

Those who are still in doubt would be well advised to take a look at their family compositions and genealogies. They will then be more able to understand not only the complex biology but also the complex economics, politics and culture of Poland and entire Central-Eastern Europe. Our genealogy is our strength, not our curse, as our traditionalists are in fact suggesting.

Modernization According to Sociological (Functionalistic) Institutionalism

This perspective is in basic opposition to the rationalistic one. It rejects such ideas as individual maximization of interest, utilitarianism, high rationality etc. and gives

precedence to values and norms and seeks the causal relationship between social forces (and their culture) on the one hand and functioning of institutions on the other hand (Peters 2005: 108–109). If theories of rational choice strive to explain the nature of organizations in terms of tasks and resources, sociological institutionalism posits that organizations and people are set to realize values and norms. Institutions are not organizations/machines, they are living organisms in which rule institutionalization and eventual rooting takes place on the one hand and rule de-institutionalization takes place on the other hand if the existing rules are not to people's liking.

In this approach transformation is explained in terms of social mechanisms. Transformation is gradual but more or less certain because agency constructivism is assumed. "The constructivist strategy treats identities and interests as endogenous to interaction and thus a dependent variable in process. Structural change occurs when actors redefine who they are and what they want" (Wendt 1999: 336–337). Change is the result of confrontation between the consequences of behaviour of people and institutions and of the causes which led to these consequences. In the functionalistic approach "the consequences of some behaviour or social arrangement are essential elements of the causes of that behaviour" (Stinchcombe, after: Schmitter 2008: 53). If the "cause-effect" mechanism is dysfunctional for the whole because it leads to negative consequences, this outcome induces people to initiate reparatory action.

The sociological mechanism develops independently of the state albeit not of the state's functioning if this no longer meets society's expectations. Let the consequences of the functioning of state socialism serve as an illustration. This was a deeply dysfunctional system, so deep that it caused cyclic outbursts of social protest. These normalized the situation for a while until the cycle repeated itself. Evidence can be found in the dates of the history of the Polish People's Republic: 1956, 1970, 1976, 1980. A vicious circle finally developed in the form of negative feedback loops between politics, the economy and society (Morawski 2001: 130–133). This was a two-phase process. Phase one was a time of decentralization reforms which equipped the economic junior and intermediate level management with the power to modify or even block decisions coming from the political system (reduction of planning objectives or increased allocation of resources for the realization of superimposed tasks). The system became decalibrated but continued to function due to the existence of ramified methods of disciplining by means of coercion, for example, staffing decisions (the *nomenklatura*), aggressive propaganda etc. Phase two began after 1980 when the social system, especially the workers working in very large enterprises, joined the economic system in opposition to the political system. This way, all the systems now had the power to block all the remaining systems. This whole was no longer manageable, or to be more precise, it was now managed by spontaneous, if not anarchic, mechanisms. Attempts to stop this "vicious circle" by introducing martial law could not really change anything. Besides, the martial law authorities failed to undertake systemic reforms and limited themselves to successive corrections of the existing system. They were willing to reform within the system but not to reform the system. Until 1988–1989.

For the system to collapse it was necessary for society itself to come on stage. The "Solidarity" movement which attracted 10 million people contested the system

in toto in the name of precious values. It looked for an alternative systemic project but its first projects were more romantic than pragmatic. Even the "Round Table" resolutions which set the structural reform in motion were romantic. However, the reform assumed a dynamic of its own which was very different from both the 1980–1981 slogans and the "Round Table" ones.

The movement's initial project was vague, unrealistic. For example, it did not take the need to privatise state ownership seriously. It came up with the idea of the self-governing enterprise as a prototype of the self-governing republic. Power was to go to the crew which wanted to treat the state enterprise in which it worked as its own group property. If so, it was not necessary to change ownership or even systemic relations radically because everything fit into the "third way" framework and the market socialism concept (Kowalik 2008). It took advantage of Solidarity's social-democratic potential. But when Solidarity won, it soon forgot about the Round Table agreements and the ensuing obligations such as pay indexation. It took quite the opposite road—neoliberal transformation. This was a time of global neoliberal pandemic.

Side effects and spontaneous processes determined the course of events. Although state socialism failed to keep its systemic promises, people took these promises literally. The workplace as a common good, for example. Incidentally, despite the alleged "institutional gulf" between the family and the nation, the workers made their workplaces their castles in which Solidarity entrenched itself so successfully that it was even able to come out and fight for issues concerning the whole nation. The activity of powerful regional structures also disconfirms the alleged gulf. It was the powerful intermediate levels, midway between family and nation, which tipped the scales toward the victory of Solidarity which was then prevented from implementing its admittedly crazy ideas.

The actual transformation greatly departed from the workmen's postulates. Nevertheless, however, we must do justice to Solidarity and admit that it was the factor which set the whole systemic transformation in motion. Great Solidarity represented so-called substantial rationality. It spoke not only in its own name but also in the name of the whole of Poland. In addition to many naïve ideas (for example to base the self-governing republic on the place of work, not the place of residence) it also became a force in the struggle for independence (quite apart from the fact that the geopolitical situation helped) and for certain liberal values such as abolishment of censorship. Industrial workers proved to be the best soldiers we ever had in our history of national uprisings.

The workmen enabled realization of the post-1989 rationalistic strategy. This strategy would not have been possible without changing the very foundations of the three-tiered system. Solidarity provided the main building material with which to construct the foundations, i.e. to give substance to the "we" concept expressed in the development of a commonwealth of feelings, "a house undivided" (Lincoln's expression). The next floor consisted of the constitutional rules as a manifestation of "reason." This was the job of the elites who did not do it too well considering, for example, the quality of our parliament's legislative production. The third floor

consisted of the interplay of socio-economic and political interests. Importantly, the logic of change assumes a sequence of dilemma resolution: one cannot solve higher-level problems without first solving fundamental ("we") problems (Offe 1999).

The Great Solidarity changes the ontology of "we." The injured "we" of the partitions had no home of its own or just a make-shift one such as the Kingdom of Poland. Then "we" lived in the "socialist barracks." Today "we" live in our own home although not all Poles are pleased with the "quarters" which the EU has allotted to us but that is what they chose in the accession referendum. Our law cannot stray too far from EU law. Hence we are sometimes surprised to hear that certain citizens in Poland are "allowed less." Was there really less Poland in Poland in the Polish People's Republic than during the partitions prior to 1918? In the Second Republic no one refused Polish citizenship (or the right to retain his military rank) to any former deputy of the Duma or other neighbouring parliament or any Polish general nominated by the neighbouring state. It looks as if a new tribe has appeared between the Oder and the Bug which easily gets such ideas into its head. He is called a radical conservative and he is a kind of two-headed calf with his own version of the Stalinist proposition that with the progression of the new political system the class struggle between the anticommunists and the postcommunists (e.g. vetting and decommunization) gains momentum.

Analysis of problems from higher floors also raises many questions. Most of these concern politics and economics but they are determined by the mechanisms of social institutionalism. In no other state socialist country were these sociological mechanisms as prominent as in Poland. They are a Polish peculiarity albeit not a particularly puzzling one. Who if not the maturing society could be an alternative candidate for the principle demiurge of change? The political class? What if it took into its head to enforce authoritarian liberalism or continue the fight for lucrative positions? Business? What if it contributed even further to the deepening of socio-economic rifts? Of course they have important tasks to perform within the social division of labour. So little, so much. But the main subject is society itself, the nation. Unfortunately it is slow to mature and the quality is poor but it still remains the main guarantee of responsibility for Poland. The incessant responsibility for changing society as the aggregate of individuals into a creative collective capable of swift identification of newer and newer challenges and the effective implementation of action strategies continues to rest on the shoulders of the stratum of society/nation which was traditionally called the intelligentsia and is now part of the larger middle class.

Modernization According to Political-Legal Institutionalism

This type of institutionalism has old roots. There are two reasons for this. First, the state can use the law as a rational instrument of expansion (for example, in France); second, the law itself can be viewed as an element of customary evolution (common law) on which the state is founded and which serves as a source of inspiration (in Anglo-Saxon countries, for example) (Peters 2005: 6–7). I do not intend to reach so

far back in history, however, and shall limit my comments to events in Poland at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s and the reason why I mentioned it is that the political forces were confronted with questions such as: how shall we deal with the severing of Polish state and legal continuity in 1944/45 and how shall we deal with the continuity which the Polish People's Republic, a state with limited albeit internationally recognized sovereignty, nevertheless represented. After 1989 the task of politics and the law was not to reproduce the *status quo* but to transform. The transformational force is, so to say, the genetically transmitted responsibility of both of these systems, the state and the law. However, this responsibility is not just political. It also applies to other spheres of national life. In post-1989 Poland we can see a natural but excessive inclination to focus only on the development of market-private economy. National health care, demography, culture, for example, were all but marginalized.

How are the state authorities to transform the country if the people are not yet ready for transformation? This argument is sometimes voiced by rightist journalists who portray society as possessed by communism (post-communism) and other evil forces (their list is well-known). Not only is this image false, it is counter-productive, as one of the journalists representing this approach was able to admit:

> This bitterness, combined with understandable emotions, is forcing some rightist intellectuals to don a nineteenth-century costume: we are in a state of national uprising, our enemies are traitors (Platform) or peasants who have been duped by the occupants and traitors (uprooted youth) —this is how we could reconstruct the message of the most radical people. There can be no national uprising without occupants because the political enemies would not really be traitors if there were not external enemy. So part of the rightist intellectuals prompt a vision of the Platform as a Russian subversive group […] Such aberrations are a sign of intellectual helplessness […] a blueprint for defeat, for how did the uprisings end? In beautiful death (Skwieciński 2009: A16).

We could be just as critical of the liberals, particularly the postmodernist ones and of course the departing postcommunist old generation and *nomenklatura* which allegedly invented the transformation and then began to run it etc. The aforementioned themes can be viewed as evidence that liberal democracy in post-1989 Poland is normal. To avoid quoting further observations similar to those quoted above, not all of which are false, suffice it to mention how political dilemmas are resolved in liberal democracy. How is political-legal institutionalism expressed? It is expressed in the essence of liberal democracy, that is, the behaviour of the elites: in what the elites want and do because in realistic theory, which is actually quite pessimistic, the people are only left to decide which elites are going to govern, not whether they are going to govern! Of course they can devour one other (more on this later) but they can also come to agreements. This mechanism is called transactionism. If there is to be transaction there must be two parties to the transaction. In the Polish People's Republic there were none because the system was authoritarian so the authorities tried their best to prevent any transaction. Yet a transaction did materialize so the authorities had to permit it. And the other party to the transaction had no alternative but to transact because society was pressing for change.

This would not be enough to cause the outcomes which attracted whole world's attention to Poland in 1989, however. There was a third party, the international

community. Always important if not the most important factor for twentieth-century Poland: the Versailles Conference in 1918, Yalta during World War II. This third party was seemingly mute but actually it was not. Naturally, the western community could have wanted to transact. But we must not forget ever for one moment that it had been encouraging such changes for several decades yet the situation had remained basically unchanged. Even in 1989 many western politicians (e.g. Zbigniew Brzeziński) failed to foresee what was to happen. In the 80s western statesmen who visited Poland were not always willing to meet our dissidents.

New and extraordinary signals were coming from the Soviet Union where Gorbachev's people were implementing the policy of "perestroika" and "glasnost" and above all signalling their rejection of the Brezhnev Doctrine. I read that it was tacitly agreed to reject the doctrine at the conference of countries belonging to the socialist block which took place in Warsaw in July 1988. Much more important than the accuracy of the date was the recognition that change was imperative if the system was to keep up the competition with the rival block because it was no longer keeping pace. For the Polish governing elite, in a country partly dependent on the USSR, in the new context of mass "Solidarity" membership, a large dissident movement, West-oriented research community and intelligentsia, economic crisis, state authorities discredited by implementation of martial law, etc., this was more than a signal that change was necessary.

So it was not a question of whether there would be a transaction but a question of the nature (profoundness) of change and its speed. In my opinion the continuing debate on who diddled whom and how in this transaction resembles the mediaeval debates on the number and quality of devils. Their sole purpose is to build the combatant legend. The transaction did not follow the logic of ruinous political struggle among the elites although such a struggle did begin 15–20 years later when the children of the Solidarity revolution began to devour each other in Poland. This is a well-known pattern. Let me review this transaction telegraphically. Three events took place: signing of the Round Table Agreements on 5 April 1989, the partly free parliamentary election on 4 June 1989 and establishment of Tadeusz Mazowiecki's cabinet on 24 August 1989. The sequence of events was not surprising but its tempo was.

The transaction took place between the moderate elites on both sides the pro-reformatory forces in the party-state apparatus on the one side (the party "concrete" was pushed aside) and the moderate forces clustered around Lech Wałęsa on the other side (Solidarity radicals were pushed aside). The Round Table Agreements were signed in the spirit of the mass expectations of the 80s but most of the reforms proposed by Mazowiecki's government contradicted these expectations. I mean the economic reforms passed on 27 December 1989 and known as the Balcerowicz Plan. In a way these reforms had to be contradictory because of the belated need to close the civilizational gap (market economy, private ownership, economic opening up to the West etc.) but they also meant that a radical neoliberal project had been chosen and this choice is debatable. A "third way," Scandinavian-type solution would have been more akin to Solidarity's social-democratic potential but at the time it was believed that the neoliberal project had no alternative. Indeed, it was the dominant

approach to economic transformation in many countries all over the world. Not only in the 27 post-communist countries because even the 6 or 7 countries which retained their old political system decided to go ahead with market reform. China did so ostentatiously because on the very day that Poland organized the partly free election on 4 June 1989 China massacred her students (and people) on Tienanmen Square and postponed political reforms interminably. Today, despite her spectacular economic successes, China is a toxic model of communist-capitalist authoritarianism which many countries all over the world find attractive (Arrighi 2007).

Even if we accept that not only Poles are prone to herd behaviour this is no excuse for the lack of serious debate on the early transformation. Different state socialism regimes had very different starting points (Stark & Bruszt 1998: 18). This debate should have taken place twenty years ago when it would have been easy to identify its competent participants. Only Hungary could boast an equally spectacular list of economists, sociologists and political scientists capable of serious discussion but had too few dissidents compared with Poland to give the debate both a scientific and political twist. In other words, Poland had a counter-elite but to almost no avail. We must therefore humbly accept Jerzy Giedroyć's reprimand to the effect that "Solidarity's only program was how to struggle with the party and communism but it had no idea how to govern. Independence fell on its head like a brick" (Giedroyć 1996). What was lacking was economical and political imagination. It is still lacking, unfortunately, and the low prestige of politics in Poland attests to the mediocrity of the political class. In the ranking of 36 occupations, ministers, parliamentary deputies and political party activists occupy ranks 34, 35 and 36 respectively (Domański 2004: 68). No wonder that the political class is held to blame for the petty partyism of the state all the way down to the territorial government level. Not only have democratic ideals been completely betrayed but also one of the most seminal legal acts our parliament passed within the last two decades (the territorial self-government act and the local electoral law of 8 March 1990) has been ruined.

Although it opened the way for politics, the outcome of the election on 4 June 1989 was not unexpected because from 1949 until then there had only been power in Poland, not politics in the strict sense. Poland proved that she knew the meaning of the practical definition of politics as the art of taking advantage of possibilities. Nomination of Tadeusz Mazowiecki's cabinet on 24 August 1989 can be similarly assessed. When General Wojciech Jaruzelski stepped down from the presidency on 9 December 1991 and Lech Wałęsa became president and when the ministers of the old system withdrew, the normal political game began. Whether this game is purposeful and reaps fruit in the form of utilization of social resources, competent regulation and distribution, swift and adequate response to events, control of symbols etc. is another matter. The Third Republic has been contested on all these counts. It has been moderately but unequivocally successful. A much higher percentage of youth now has higher education, people are living longer, satisfaction with life, and especially family life, is systematically increasing. After two or three years of transformation the national income in Poland returned to its pre-1989 level whereas in 27 post-communist countries, ten years after the beginning the transformation, the joint gross national

product was about 25% lower than in 1989. Only recently are these disproportions being evened out.

The success of the transformation outcomes within the framework of state-legal institutionalism is, in my opinion, equivocal but if we view them through the eyes of society, the view of the state apparatus and the whole political system in Poland is definitely negative. Numerous studies have confirmed this critical opinion. The problem is that there are now more external opinions which are not unequivocally positive either. At the same time, however, people are satisfied with life in the new system and this satisfaction is systematically increasing. The Third Republic needs to be reformed but the problem is—how? The rapid demise of the idea of a Fourth Republic shows how just difficult this problem is.

Modernization According to International Institutionalism

According to theories of realism and neorealism, we should hardly expect that there are any rules of the game capable of taming the egoism of the nation state. The world has an anarchic nature. Everybody strives to realise his or her own interests, oblivious of everybody else. Alliances with other countries can be entered (balance of power) if this helps to prevent aggression. Countries, like people, are aggressive by nature. Theories of institutionalism disconfirm, or rather weaken, these assumptions. These theories suggest that nation states are prepared or even willing to restrain themselves in various ways. This shows that it is possible to develop international relations on the basis of more optimistic assumptions (rejected by realists). The main assumptions of the theory of international institutionalism can be reduced to the idea that there are "formalized rules of the game and structures that do shape interactions in this arena and that also help to provide some structure and interpretative meaning to this dimension of politics" (Peters 2005: 139).

The list of institutions which fortify this type of structuralizing rules is long and includes the UN, WTO, IMF, WB, EU, NAFTA and ASEAN. The rules of the game which these institutions implement and monitor suggest that new institutional infrastructures are regimes (Ikenberry, Keohane, Krasner, Nye, etc.). In sociological terms we may call these regimes patterns of approach among international actors. Actors can take opposite stances on some matters and cooperate on other matters. Some rules are sanctioned. These sanctions are less and less military and more and more economical. It is not always easy to decipher the real functions of these institutions. For example, is the IMF a bank which imposes tough conditions or is it an international assistance organization?

Poland wants to take advantage of world interdependencies by means of the EU. Attempts to gain accession lasted for a long time yet not infrequently voices can be heard in the West that EU enlargement was too rapid because the old 15 were not yet sufficiently integrated. By creating successive versions of what we now call the EU, Western Europe decided to take the road to integration because it had been painfully hurt by two world wars, the Great Economic Depression of the 30s

and several countries' rejection of democracy (Germany, Italy etc.). Integration was necessary if peace and safety were to be guaranteed and material affluence of the people was to be increased. What is expected today is the region's more effective economic competition with world economic giants.

Europe does not always know how to integrate. The excuse often given is that EU politicians are represent low quality, that they are "petty national politicians" (Bertram 2009: 2). This is probably true but this is precisely what the adventurous promise called the EU is all about. Its shape is not defined and, if I may say so, this is what makes it so attractive. Besides, there is no other way out if the EU wants to retain its unity amidst the diversity of the nation states and their different cultures. Some would like to unify nearly everything as quickly as possible, others would not. The former want political integration, the latter would be satisfied with just economic integration. If the EU decides to accept new members, it must *eo ipso* be prepared to regulate/coordinate diversity. We may compare these European searches to political football where Europe is the ball and the different players (states) are identity projects. No player ever controls the entire playing field (Delanty 1999: 11). I would extend this metaphor and say that the EU is also under the influence of the whirlpools of globalization and therefore it is impossible to know exactly not only where the ball is heading but also with how great a force. The player who cannot even fully control the European playing field is far less able to control the global playing field (Morawski 2005: 53–54). The 2008–2009 economic crisis made this quite clear.

Poland's experiences with the EU can be inferred from the analysis of the mechanism of EU expansion; the debate over the constitutional treaty; Poland's place on the EU map; or Poland's contribution to the solution of EU problems. I shall limit myself to several comments. As far as EU inclusion of Poland is concerned, this was clearly a moving target. The EU justified this by referring to the need to meet the conditions of accession, *acquis communautaire*. And although I do not mean to complain, let me remind readers that the Americans were much quicker in coming to Western Europe's assistance after World War II (the Marshall Plan). The scale of help offered to Poland in the early post-1989 years was also many times smaller than that offered to western countries. This led the economic historian Ivan Berend to predict that Poland and other Central-Eastern European countries would "detour from periphery to periphery" (Berend 2001: 337–340). This opinion was voiced quite a while ago. After Poland's accession the situation changed immensely and public opinion recognizes this change with satisfaction. It believes that the balance is positive, especially if we measure it in monetary terms: within 5 years Poland put 12.7 milliard euro into the EU budget and took out 26.6 milliard euro.

As far as the constitutional (reform) treaty is concerned, work on its development was based on the presumption that, following economic integration, the next step would be political integration. However, it was decided that instead of a constitution (an agreement with society), only a treaty, i.e. an agreement between state elites, would be developed. Discussion of fundamental issues such as the values from which the EU originated and which the EU wished to serve, was avoided. Meanwhile, the gradually emerging European *demos* is reluctant to leave these issues completely

to the elite. Parliament voiced its apprehensions concerning social moral order in April 2003 ("Polish legislation […] shall in no way be restricted by international regulations"). These fears were rather premature, just like the fear that foreigners would buy up Polish land. The Pole's attitudes may be debatable because we are in fact evoking the perception of Poland as a country "which is functioning in the Union more like a client of a mutual assistance fund than a cultural cooperation partner," to quote a critical commentator of *Polityka* weekly (Janicki 2009: 6).

As for Poland's position in the EU five years after the accession, a ranking conducted by *Polityka* (Kowanda 2009: 10–11) using 20 criteria situated Poland at position 21 among 27 countries (Holland, Sweden and Denmark having ranks 1, 2 and 3 respectively, followed by Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania). Our per capita GNP is 55.2 percent of the EU average compared with Luxemburg's 269.2 percent and Holland's 129.0 percent. Average longevity in Poland is 75 years and has increased by 5 years since the beginning of the transformation. Poland ranks unexpectedly and positively high with respect to the difference between men and women's income which is only 7.5 percent (and is lower only in Malta and Italy). Poland is seventh from the bottom of the list as far as life satisfaction is concerned. There are other equally alarming figures as well. For example, only 57 percent of the productive age population are occupationally active (compared with over 70 percent in some countries). Research and development expenditure is also very low (only three countries have even lower rates). Poland is second last regarding motorway density per 1000 kilometres. Catholic Poland is also second last regarding fertility.

As far as Poland's participation in EU work and debates is concerned, several criticisms can be launched. Although Poland is one of the 5 largest EU countries it is not taking proper advantage of its position. She is sometimes said to be the EU's "brake." She seldom wins support although she can boast several successes lately (e.g. the Eastern Partnership or Jerzy Buzek's election to the post of President of the European Parliament).The United Kingdom is a positive example. The UK gained support for her proposal that the Lisbon Agenda encourage the idea and practice of competitiveness and innovativeness (Świeboda 2009: 19). Poland, however, came up with the controversial slogan "Nicea o muerte."

The European Union is a creation *sui generis*. Although it does not question the contributions of its member states, the EU self-constructs by building new institutions. From the very start, it did so via sector programs which were to have a spillover effect. The implicit philosophy here was functional and technocratic and it assumed a positive reaction sequence. This function was originally to have been served by the European Coal and Steel Community, then by fast railway lines connecting cities and countries, educational programs such as student exchanges (e.g. Erasmus), a common currency, euro (which was to reduce the costs of money turnover) etc. This method was successful for a while but today fundamental political issues can no longer be postponed. *Demos* is demanding it. France and Ireland rejected the reform treaty.

Another equally important concern is the scale of challenges with which the EU must learn to cope in global space. Is it enough to resort to the intergovernmental mechanism as the principal method of decision making? This method is well-tested

and realistic but it is also really a program of reproduction of the status quo. An alternative approach would be to transform the EU into a federation of states with a predominant "community method." It has been said that the EU is "a federation of sovereign states" (Pomian 2004: 232). If this means that national interest is more important than community interest this is true but this practice has little in common with the constitutional idea of federation (modelled after the USA or otherwise because several variants are possible). Another interesting suggestion was Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse's proposal to stop juxtaposing the "technocratic condominium" (reinforcing prerogatives of the Brussels administration) and the "democratic confederation" (the ultimate level of autonomy for member states) and start paying attention to the "democratic federation" formula based on democratic institutions at the EU level and clear division of power between the federal level and member states which would thrust the EU forward (Grosse 2008). Debate on the construction of the EU in the future is lacking in Poland. All Polish citizens saw on the political scene during the 2009 election to the European Parliament was the noise of the battle for places.

The time has come to find a way to overcome earlier practices. Now the multilevel (supranational-community-super system and then national-systemic and finally supranational-sub-systemic) governance system (Peterson & Bomberg 2003: 319) is operating as a compromise. What we need is a prospective formula which would help the EU to become a more effective group of states. Debate on Europe as a cosmopolitan empire should not be excluded if the Westphalian system with dominant nation states and international politics, a world state or hegemonic order is unacceptable (Beck & Grande 2009). Why? First, because it is based on acceptance of difference, i.e. Other as equal and different—this is viewed less as a problem and more as a solution. Second, due to democratic political decisions, group identities are outside nation states (they are containers, repositories of nationalism). Third, although accepting the need to integrate, it is based on imperial, post-modern asymmetry. What is asymmetrical is the governance system. Not everyone would have the same rights and responsibilities but even today there are various levels of integration (complete, deepened, limited cooperation etc.). The system is dynamic. I say this because during the 2009 Polish campaign to the European Parliament I found not even a trace of interest in such problems.

The Enigmatic Balance of Modernization Elements

I have outlined five institutional mechanisms which are essential bridges between agencies and structures. Although the intentions behind the creation of institutions are positive (to trigger positive feedback between them), in reality these institutions quite often lead to negative feedback. Every Pole participates actively or passively in both of them.

The rationalistic strategy produced good effects in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the "whole" developed splendidly. In those days it was relatively

easy to view oneself as a citizen doing ones duty with respect to the structure as a whole.

Historical legacy, for example Polish Catholicism, helped the Poles to retain their identity during the partitions of Poland. And Mickiewicz's definition of nation as a "group of spirits" helped to maintain hopes that Poland would retain her good name until better times.

Sociological functionalism was conducive to the birth of Great Solidarity (1980–1989) and although it "plays tricks" and triggers unexpected processes the balance has been positive for the country's modernization within the last decades.

Political-legal institutionalism led to the Round Table transactions, admired by the whole world, as e.g. a repetition of the successful "Spanish Way" of abandoning the authoritarian system. Prominent in these transactions was the decision to hold the partly free election on 4 June 1989. The midwives of these transactions did not overlook the moment which enabled the triggering of so-called politics (the art of the possible) because the "iron cage" was now "sufficiently" corroded to be discarded. Some adherents of totalitarian theory fail to acknowledge this to this day.

International institutionalism has now ensured that Poland has a place in European space (the EU) and global space (e.g. NATO) despite the fact that it had been detrimental to the country for so long (before 1918 and after 1989).

None of these institutional mechanisms guarantees anything in advance. Worse still, they may even increase uncertainty and lead to crises in the short run. None of these institutional mechanisms has consolidated proactive and innovative attitudes on a mass scale. They have, however, increasingly facilitated their development in various enclaves. Surveyors of territorial self-government have taken careful note of this (Ranking samorządów 2009). Reactive attitudes and behaviour continue to dominate, however. "Continuity" still goes before "change" in Poland. We still show signs of past trauma. Is this what is causing the typically Polish virtuoso improvisation, flash in the pan, levy in mass, impulsive action etc.? Often without a compass, in the form of far-sighted leaders, for example.

I now wish to draw readers' attention to normative institutionalism which I have not discussed as a separate research perspective since I think that the normative dimension is present in all the approaches outlined above. And so it is, albeit with varying intensity, and least so in the rational choice perspective. Generally speaking, normative institutionalism is about values focusing on the coherent interpretation of challenges and ways of coping in the real world. It is particularly prominent in interpretative communities (also called epistemic). I have tried to show this element in every institutionalism but have not systematically discussed any normative community except the nation which I have mentioned repeatedly. This problem area has traditionally been associated with the intelligentsia (Chałasiński 1958; Jedlicki 1988). There are now also other communities worthy of attention: professionals and experts, the world of science and technology, culture, law, education etc. These communities identify and solve specific problems raised by the challenges of modernization, for example, the political class once included in the elite but now no more, and quite rightly,

which has programmatic responsibilities with respect to society. I would rather, however, that His Highness the Citizen who cannot be relieved of his duties, leaving only his rights, carry the charge of good normativity. In Poland he first wants to be a consumer or investor and only later perhaps a citizen. The battle between these two roles goes on in each of us and all too often the citizen loses (Reich 2007: 178–180). This unbalance should not be too surprising at great moments of history, like the systemic change after 1989.

Polish interpretative (creative) communities are rather weak. I see three reasons for this.

First, weak liberalism. Individual freedom and legal procedures and other elements which constitute liberalism and which were the normative horizon in the West are poorly rooted in Poland. Even the postcommunist period did not help very much.

Second, weak conservatism. Although Polish conservatism is putting down roots (and has a tradition) it has too little respect for pragmatism, reason, rights etc. It reduces tradition's valuable resources to national symbols. Norwid called them "national tears" and "national colours." Hence Polish conservatism changes tradition into traditionalism which hardly ever facilitates reform. It can probably only be energetic and innovative in tandem with liberalism. Contemporary Poles neither own themselves (so important in liberal and rationalistic tradition) nor own Poland as a community (so important in conservative tradition). Modernization requires that we walk with two legs. Individuals who are to construct their lives and the world in tune with their values must be both rational and free. They must also be rooted in the community. Neither scattered individuals nor communities, whose only adhesive are dreams, are capable of facing the challenges of modernization vis-à-vis the opportunities and risks of European and global interdependencies.

Third, weak radicalism (socialism, leftism etc.). Capitalism and the market never cease to generate social and economic inequality and this is understandable or even acceptable if it facilitates economic effectiveness. However, there are limits whose crossing violates the principles of elementary social justice as well as systemic effectiveness. As we know, laisser-faireism led to economic crisis, economic crisis led to the welfare state and other programs supporting "positive freedom." This approach has been criticized for 30 years (neoliberalism). The problem is that "negative freedom" support is also expensive because if we neglect health, ecology, mass education at increasingly higher levels etc. we rid ourselves of potential resources in the name of effectiveness of the whole system (although business may gain something).

To conclude, let me recall our great thinker Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (1503–1572) who wrote about the challenges of his times in his work *On Mending the Republic*:

> Although nothing should be dearest to us than the Republic, in whose defence no good man shall hesitate to suffer hostility and poverty, or even death itself, it would not be right either for the Republic herself to be angry at or to hate anyone who would want to govern her according to his own plans. Because, first, it is possible that one who thinks differently than you thinks better than you. Also, even were he to be mistaken, he is saying from his honest heart what he believes to be good for the Republic and his error deserves forgiveness rather than hate. Things and times sometimes differ so much that it is no wonder that—as the saying goes—"So many heads, so many words (Modrzewski 1981: 440).

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