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# **LEGITIMACY AND THE POST-COMMUNIST HUNGARIAN POLITICAL CHANGE**

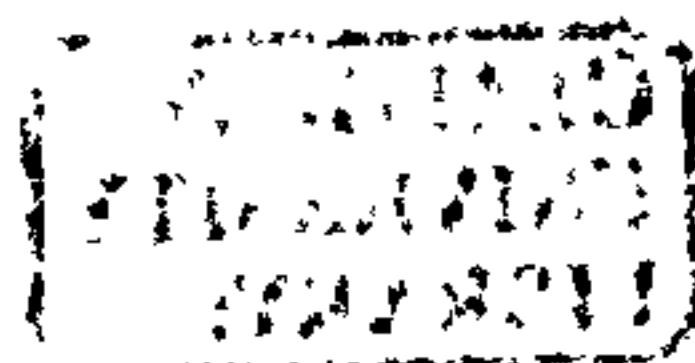
by

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A thesis submitted in the partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
Central and East European Studies

Department of Central and East European Studies  
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October 2004



# LEGITIMACY AND THE POST-COMMUNIST HUNGARIAN POLITICAL CHANGE

## ABSTRACT

Legitimacy is a key but a-changing concept in political science. It has evolved in parallel with the changing political realities throughout history. In the current political environment, legitimacy of a political order depends on its approval by people at the domestic level. However, this domestic approval has to be sustained by an international approval, an attribute underlined especially during the Cold War era. Latin American crises of legitimacy and the more recent East European crises of legitimacy provide concrete examples for this.

Hungary, as one of the East European countries which underwent the post-communist systemic transformation faces a renewed crisis of legitimacy. The grounds of legitimation have changed in comparison with the grounds of legitimation of the *ancien regime*, especially under the Kádárist rule. This thesis analyses the Kádárist attempts at legitimation, and then focuses on the post-communist system in Hungary to compare it with the *ancien regime* in search of the answer to the question what has changed during the transformation. This study focuses on legitimacy with its domestic and international dynamics, taking into consideration the systemic, institutional, and social changes in the post-communist era. It concludes that a combination of political, economic and social improvements will ensure the new system's legitimate status in both domestic and international arenas.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for their valuable contributions during the preparation of my thesis: My supervisor Richard Ross Berry for his insightful and patient guidance during the research and writing processes of the thesis; Gábor Körösi, Attila Agh, and József Bayer for their valuable time and comments during my visit to Hungary; the European Union for the grant that enabled me to study in Scotland; my parents, and Mssr. Akin Burak Bahçekapılı, Malcolm Turner, Ozan Doğu Tuna, for their financial, technical, and, emotional help in writing and revising the following thesis.



LEGITIMACY AND THE POST-COMMUNIST  
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# CHAPTER ONE

## ON LEGITIMACY AND DEMOCRACY

### I. ON THE SUBJECT MATTER, METHODOLOGY, AND TERMINOLOGY OF THE THESIS

The following thesis is to focus on the subject of *legitimacy* and *legitimation* in the political transformation of the Hungarian political system from the Hungarian Revolution to the post-communist era. The main concepts to be involved in the discussions are *legitimacy*, *legitimation* and *democratisation*.

*Legitimacy* is a concept which has a broad spectrum of meanings. Basically, it is understood in the social sciences as "the normative validity of an order,.... a matter of belief by the participants - actors,"<sup>1</sup> and therefore is an element of interaction between the actors of a political system. The concept of *legitimacy* of an order, however, is not based on sanctions, but on the acceptance of this political order by the actors, that, at the largest, includes citizens. According to Max Weber, the idea of *legitimacy* of an order depends on *virtue of tradition*, *effectual faith*, *value-rational faith*, or on a *belief in legality*. These four types that define a political order as legitimate are also to be seen as *traditional*, *charismatic*, *goal-rational*, and *legal-rational* methods of gaining *legitimacy*.

However, these four criteria underlying the *legitimacy* of a political order may not be totally applicable to the *Eastern Bloc* for the *socialist system* worked



under different principles than the *capitalist-liberal system*. As necessities arose, the Weberian system of classification has been altered and arranged in accordance with the peculiarities of other state systems. Michael G. Hudson modified it in his research on the Arab states and on the question of their *legitimacy*. Jan Pakulski argued about the hardships, if not the impossibility to apply these principles onto the Soviet-type societies<sup>2</sup>. David Beetham first mentioned the incompatibility between the two political orders and hence the difference in issues of *legitimacy* in these two<sup>3</sup>, and then proposed a new approach to *legitimacy* in order to explain the developments in the East European context since the revolutions of 1989<sup>4</sup>. Again, John Williams developed an international approach to the issue of legitimacy and legitimation in his work<sup>5</sup>. This study will focus on the line followed by the Pakulski-Beetham-Williams approach to the matter of legitimacy as its methodological pattern.

In addition to different understandings of the concept of legitimacy, there are also differences in the perception of the concept of legitimacy. A political order may be legitimate in the eyes of either the regime's supporters, or a social class, or the majority of the people who live in that given country. The same order may be thought as illegitimate by others such as the underground or legal opposition, a social class or the majority of the people of the given

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Pakulski, 'Legitimacy and Mass Compliance: Reflections on Max Weber and Soviet-Type Societies', *British Journal of Political Science*, v. 16, pp. 35-56, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Pakulski, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-45, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> David Beetham, 'Liberal democracy and the Limits of Democratization', *Political Studies*, v. 40, special issue, pp. 40-53.

<sup>4</sup> David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power*, London: Macmillan Press, 1991.

<sup>5</sup> John Williams, *Legitimacy in International Relations and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia*, London: MacMillan Press, 1998.

country. An order may be thought as legitimate by the intellectuals -e.g. Khomeyni's Iran-, or by the military elite -e.g. Greece under the junta of 1970s-, or by parts of the domestic and foreign elite with a say in the affairs in that given state -e.g. Chile under Pinochet administration which served the interests of multinational companies as well as part of the Chilean elite-, or by a social class or racial segment within the society -e.g. South Africa during Apartheid- while others may find it illegitimate. While most of the population either consider the political order to be legitimate or impossible to change, the intellectuals may consider it as illegitimate -e.g. Czechoslovakia from mid-1970s to 1989-. Therefore, there are different approaches to the issue of a political order's legitimacy. This study will focus on many different layers of society and their views on the issue. Therefore, on the one hand, the issue of legitimacy of a regime may be seen as ambiguous. On the other hand, the general principle will be a judgmental approach based on the principles of *liberal democracy*. Hence, if a political order is considered as illegitimate, it will mean it is illegitimate not in the legal sense -as all political systems which are legally accepted are legally legitimate- but in terms of the opinion of the people of this country or in terms of the liberal democratic principles.

Democracy is another key concept dealt with in this study as it focuses on the issues of legitimacy and legitimation during the democratic transformation period in the East European countries and focuses on the case study of Hungary. *Democratisation* and the transformation of a political order -or regime- into *liberal democracy* are important subjects of the post-communist studies since the post-communist societies experience a transformation from a

political order to what most people take as its main adversary or alternative, if not its direct opposite, from 1989 to date.

*Democratisation* can be described as the transformation of a given political order from an either authoritarian or totalitarian regime to a regime which allows citizens' participation in decision making. The main aim of this transformation is to create a system in which the general public have a say in the acts of the ruling political order either by indirect participation -by choosing to vote or not to vote, or, by working in, or in association with, *civil society* organisations capable of enforcing policy changes-, or by direct participation -by working within the ranks of a political party, becoming a candidate in elections and the like-. Such transformations were seen throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, following experiences of transformation first in the former colonies gaining independence, then in South European and South American authoritarian regimes and finally in the East European totalitarian political orders.

The process of *democratisation* and incorporation into the world economic and political systems of these democratising countries mentioned above led to the development of different schools of political theory. The first of these was the School of Modernisation which incorporated such names as Samuel Huntington, Daniel Bell, Dankward Rustow, and Lucien Pye. These figures claimed that industrialisation was the key concept in transformation and if a certain society was to industrialise, the process of modernisation was to force traditional, outmoded, patriarchal, rural, clan-based, corrupt social and political structures to change, giving way to a new, modern, equalitarian, urban, incorruptible democratic system.



The Modernisation School was challenged in early 1970s by the Dependency School which consisted of such writers as Immanuel Wallerstein and Henrique Cardoso, and which claimed that all the world economic and political structure was interlinked. They claimed that there were different parts such as the core, semi-periphery and periphery in the World political and economic system. Therefore, *democratisation* was possible only when the core countries were to see it as profitable to themselves. Neo-Realists such as Joseph Nye have adopted similar approaches in defining the role of actors in world politics.

The renewal of the Modernisation School took place in mid-1980s when such authors as Lucien Pye came up with the idea that the Informatics Revolution of the 1980s, the introduction of such telecommunication devices as satellite dishes, personal computers, global TV broadcasts, Internet, and the like, have challenged oppressive regimes. The claim was that through the use of these means, governments became unable to suppress the flow of ideas and information to its subjects/citizens. Therefore, the fall of the totalitarian and authoritarian regimes was inevitable. Samuel Huntington further argued that there were waves of *democratisation* and that we were living within one such wave. Following the work of Daniel Bell in 1961, Francis Fukuyama argued that the ideology as a concept had lost its importance, the world political system was going to be dominated by a uniform approach, terminating ideology as a relevant concept and hence indicating the end of history as we know it. This school of thought may be referred to as the Neo-Modernist School.

This thesis does not particularly follow any of the aforementioned political schools, but makes use of them when appropriate with the case it focuses on.

The set of ideas describing the *Weltanschauung* of this study may be seen as a distant relative of the Dependency School if any connection needs be made.

There are also other concepts which are directly or indirectly linked with regime legitimacy and *legitimation* that are used in this work. In the following work, the concept of *civil society* refers to the realm of society which is outside state ownership and/or control. Therefore, *civil society* refers to the parts of social mechanism which are constructed by civilian, non-state actors. *West* and *First World* refer to those countries which formed an alliance in the aftermath of the World War II against the USSR and its allies and subordinates, and which include the European states which had multi-party liberal democratic political orders and which were in general members of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO). Finally, the system of government that the USSR and its East European subordinates were governed by is referred to within the text interchangeably as *socialism* and *state socialism*, but a distinction between *communism* and *socialism* is made. In the text, the terms *communism* and *communist* are used to describe the ideological/theoretical bases of the socialist system while the terms *socialism/state socialism* and *socialist* are used in reference to the actual practice of the system from 1917 to present day. Although the use of the word *socialism* might create a confusion in relation with the existence of the term as part of the liberal democratic system, it is preferred here to differentiate the Marxist vision from the actual practice or malpractice of the system.

As mentioned before, there will be a quest in the idea of legitimacy and the methods of gaining legitimacy in Eastern Europe during and in the wake of the interim to democratic system. To have a clearer discussion of the subject and

for clearer application of the arguments, a case study approach is adopted. Hungary will be the focus of this thesis because of its specific position. One of the major arguments of the Neo-Modernist School is that there is a uniform pattern of *democratisation* all around the globe and that there was a uniform socialist state structure from which a uniform transition to democracy may be achieved. This thesis argues that this happens not to be the case. Hungary, with its complex political balances and with the legacy of the 1956 uprising and the causes and consequences of this event has a different structure than the proposed Soviet-type state structure.

I will examine the concept of legitimacy and its place in the *democratisation* and liberalisation processes in Hungary.

## **II. LEGITIMACY: A TRANSMUTING CONCEPT**

### **A. The Need for Legitimacy:**

The concept of *legitimacy*, as we understand it presently, may be defined as the justification of the existence of authority and of the ruling classes vis-à-vis the ruled masses. According to the Weberian definition of the concept (a comprehensive discussion is to be found below), as long as the ruling classes manage to create a popular belief in the appropriateness of their rule, they become legitimate<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, the concept defines the limits of a regime's influence over its subjects or citizens. If popular support reaches a point where the ruling political order loses its claim to legitimacy, it loses its reason of existence and its justification to rule. To ensure its domination over the political system, the ruling class therefore has to seek and find methods to justify its presence as the ruler in an existing political order. If this is no more



possible. a change in the ruling political order or in the government is inevitable. The form of change may vary depending on the administrative and/or political system of the country in question. The change may be made through elections, coups d'état, rebellions, civil wars, or revolutions, depending on the rules and flexibility of the political system.

The above definition sums up the most generally accepted definition of the term 'legitimacy'. However, it is subject to criticism and alteration since the concept itself is subject to change with the change of understanding in politics.

This matter will be discussed later in this chapter. The concept of legitimacy has been a source of interest for scholars of political science and political philosophy since ancient times as it deals with the justification and preservation of political power. During history, the concept of legitimacy changed in terms of its definition, the boundaries of its definition and its limits, and therefore at times had different meanings and different amounts of importance were cast on it due to the different domestic and international political conditions. These will be analysed in the subsequent parts of this chapter.

Nevertheless, despite changes in definition and the level of importance attributed to it, legitimacy had been and still remains a concept that links the relationship of the rulers to the ruled, creating a major motive for the existence and continuity of any ruling regime. It therefore plays an important role in the establishment of political order. Throughout history, the authority enjoyed by the rulers of a given state and the rightfulness of a regime's or a leader's rule

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<sup>6</sup> Max Weber, Economy and Society, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: 1978, p. 213.

over the citizens or subjects in a state have always been a matter of discussion, thus making legitimacy a continuously present issue of political entity. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, through its historical evolution the concept continued to maintain its important place despite changes in its meaning and perception. This chapter aims at analysing legitimacy in history, in its modern guise, and, in relation to its different appearances in national, international, liberal, and socialist environments.

### **B. Legitimacy In History:**

The concept of political legitimacy and the problem of legitimising the political authority may first be seen in the works of Aristotle. In the fourth century BC, Aristotle argued that political power obtains consent by the use of coercive force (coercion), by the distribution of rewards (utilitarianism), by education (normative techniques) or by some combination of these three<sup>7</sup>. In time, although the regimes continued to employ these means to secure their rules, the rules of the political game evolved and new schemes and new grounds to base the claims to power have appeared.

#### **1. Changes in the Concept of Authority:**

To begin with, the changes that took place relate to the concept of authority. The definition of authority gradually changed along with the shifts in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. These changes cover the matter of who decides upon the identity of the ruler, and the legitimacy of the ruler / ruling class. In the ancient world, where people were living in a communitarian system, the ability of a ruler to rule was dependent upon his ability to fight and

his military leadership values<sup>8</sup>. In such a system, those who legitimised or delegitimised the system were those capable of challenging his merits as a leader and a warrior. In the later stages of history, the ability to organise people in politics as well as in the battlefield gained importance, and therefore, the importance of the courtiers, the people with influence upon the sovereign, increased. With religion's extended importance in the pre-capitalist world, the consent of religious authorities was also sought as a legitimising factor. The clergy represented the link between the ruler and the divine will, and thus, clerical consent was to be sought<sup>9</sup>. In the modern era, however, the importance of the 'ordinary people'<sup>10</sup> and their perception of the government have become the core issue in the political legitimacy subject. Hence, one may claim that there has always been a relationship between regime legitimacy and the sources that limit, control, and hold political authority or power, although the sources of limitation vary in time.

## 2. Changes in the Scope of Decision-Makers:

Secondly, in accordance with the changes in the concept of authority mentioned above, the scope of legitimacy underwent change. The grounds for legitimacy changed from theological to legal and then to political grounds in time. The first claims to hold and to limit power were theological and quasi-historical: A divine right to rule due to descent from a ruling family ordained by the gods or the God was the foundation that arranged the exercise,

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<sup>7</sup>Joseph Rothschild, 'Political Legitimacy in Contemporary Europe' in Bogdan Denitch (ed.), *Legitimation of Regimes*, Sage Publications, London, England: 1979, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Marcel Prélôt, *Histoire des Idées Politiques*, Dalloz, Paris, France: 1961, pp. 16-20 passim.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>10</sup> The term 'ordinary people' will be used throughout this thesis. It is meant to refer to those human beings who do not hold a politically significant (or governmental) position, who are not members of the ruling class, of the intelligentsia, and nor of the entrepreneurial class. The ordinariness of these people



restriction, and legitimacy of power. In this understanding, the monarch had a divine right to rule, theoretically given to him by a deity or deities, and hence he would only be responsible for all his decisions from introducing taxes to declaring war to God or the gods that granted him the power to rule. The responsibility of the ruler was to himself and to God<sup>11</sup>.

In time, the responsibility of the ruler has become to himself and to his court, and he was to secure his legitimacy with the approval of the nobility and of the clergy of his lands. The first grounds for legitimacy and power were replaced by more rationalist, moral, and philosophical claims to limit authority and power. During the Middle Ages, the legitimacy of a ruler or one of his barons was related to their birth, in addition to the ruler's divine right to rule. Legitimacy, then, began to have legality as a ground in addition to theology. Law, as in the form of common law / law of the land, written or unwritten constitutions, and as conventions / binding rules, has become the means to limit the use of political power, and the holding of power shifted from the divine ruler to the ruling classes in the form of the aristocracy and the clergy<sup>12</sup>. For instance, the ruler and any member of nobility and clergy were expected to be conceived in a legally binding and 'respectable' marriage so that they would be *legitimate*<sup>13</sup>. They were also bound to act according to the rules

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comes from their lack of direct affiliation with political and economic decision-making positions or with the readily-broadcastable forms of opposition to these.

<sup>11</sup> See for instance Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan for the defence of the idea that the sovereign has responsibility only towards God.

<sup>12</sup> P.H. Partridge, Consent and Consensus, second edition, Pall Mall Press, London: 1975, pp. 13-14 passim.

<sup>13</sup> Possibly, the best-known example of the concept of legitimacy with regard to marital ties may be seen in William Shakespeare's play King Lear in which the story of Edgar and Edmund, the two sons of Gloucester, is told as a secondary theme. In the play, the son born as a legitimate child is represented as an ethical, good-hearted, and generous person while the illegitimate son is represented as an evil figure

implemented by the ecclesiastical authorities (or other religious authorities as the Caliphacy or the office of Sheikh-ul Islam). Institutional devices such as the mixed constitution which enables different people or different institutions to control different parts of government, a checks-and-balances system, and, division of forces, were gradually used in order to limit the over-use and abuse of power.

On the other hand, as the nature of the relationship of the ruler and the ruled began to change, philosophical and moral limitations were introduced in the major forms of natural law, human and natural rights, and contractualism. The change can be ascribed to the evolution in the scope of people who decide on the legitimacy of a ruler and to the change in their expectations from the ruler. While once the rulers had to legitimise themselves through self-legitimation or by gaining the support / justification of the clergy, that began to change. First the landed gentry, then the merchant class, then those above a poverty limit, then those below it, freed slaves, and finally women, became integrated into the voting procedure. The number of the people to decide on the legitimacy of a ruler or a government increased with the enlargement of the groups able to have a say in the issue of who governs.

### **3. The Contractual Era:**

The evolution of the society, then, created different sets of relationship between the ruler / rulers and the ruled. The expansion of the legitimising group from the sovereign to the courtiers and the clergy, and, finally, to the general public meant changes in the way a regime is perceived as legitimate.

This change altered gradually the grounds of legitimation for the regime, as

well. Developments in the domestic and international scales for a given nation and a country meant different expectations from the rulers and therefore created different expectations that would support a regime's claims of legitimacy.

A vital step in the development of limiting elements has been the introduction of contractual factor in the process of ruling. While preceding practices of contractual approaches like the *Golden Bull of Hungary* (1222) and the *Magna Carta* (1215) were between the feudal lords and the king who was all but elected by them, the contractual theories which appeared from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards were aimed at protecting the privileges and liberties of groups and individuals against the centralised governments' power. Some see the constitutions as contracts between the state and its subjects. The importance of the contractual elements lies in their support to strengthen the hypothesis that the state is a part of a two-sided relationship and that its acts need to be backed by popular consent, a previously unthinkable assumption<sup>14</sup>.

Political philosophers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, and Thomas Hobbes developed the idea of contractual relations between the rulers and the ruled and favoured the idea of *social contract* based on the natural law. The concept of natural law was based on justifying and sanctifying the *status quo*. The concept follows the assumption that natural principles are to be taken as the rational arrangement of the universe including the state. In due course natural law was used to fortify canon law, and, thus supported established rulers by claiming that there were laws that are ahistorical,

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illegitimate child's existence is unjustifiable in terms of law and religion.

<sup>14</sup>Andrew Vincent, *Theories of the State*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987, pp. 91-115 passim.



unchangeable, and rational. These laws provided clear norms for human will and for government. In his Leviathan (1651), Thomas Hobbes claimed that natural law was a set of rational rules for self-preservation. As the human beings were irrational, their choices would lead them to war and destruction. However, the laws of nature would lead human beings to the rational solution of forming settlements, of keeping an organised state in existence, and of voluntarily obeying to this state they formed<sup>15</sup>.

The concepts of natural law and social contract are linked to the political environment they came into existence. When Hobbes was writing his work, England was in a social turmoil, tired of civil war, survived the beheading of the country's Stuart king, and the dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell. The century-long period between the Reformation and the Civil War had seen a slow but steady expansion of cultivated area in his native England as well as a rise in commercial activities<sup>16</sup>. The society which grew to be more interdependent has also become more prosperous in the period of order and peaceful commercial activity. The rise of Puritan tradesmen and their new, secular approach to science, their contribution to the building of waterways across the county, coincided with and backed the increase of trade as well as the establishment of capitalism in England. However, when the peace and prosperity of the pre-Civil War period was breached, and chaos replaced it, a need to legitimise the strict Cromwellian oppression arose. The legitimisation of

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<sup>15</sup>D. D. Raphael, Hobbes: Morals and Politics, (2nd printing) George Allen and Unwin, London, England: 1978 (first printed 1977), p. 21.

<sup>16</sup>Christopher Hill, Change and Continuity in Seventeenth Century England, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1991, p. 3. Further discussion of the structure of the English society at that period, the rise and impact of the Puritans on English life, and the Cromwellian era may be found in other works of Christopher Hill as well as this book.

the Cromwellian order was based on the ideas of natural law and of the necessity of state as an orderly social structure that human beings naturally need. The ideas of Hobbes were in a way the messenger of the popular demand for order at all cost. As the regime had changed, so had the religious structure and the monetary relationships and transactions. The alterations to the *status quo ante* were in favour of the emerging merchant bourgeois-capitalist class. Therefore, new grounds of legitimacy in accordance with the new *status quo* had to be sought.

Following the same path with Hobbes, but writing in a more orderly period in which the bourgeoisie was powerful, John Locke argued against Robert Filmer's theory of absolute monarchy and the divine right of the kings in his First Treatise (1690). Locke claimed that, even assuming God had granted Adam the absolute and total political authority, it would be impossible to prove for any monarch that he is related to Adam<sup>17</sup>. In his Second Treatise, he claims that despite the fact that the subjects have a duty to God to obey their ruler, the ruler's power is neither granted directly by God itself nor absolute<sup>18</sup>. His claim in the Second Treatise was that "the actual consent of each individual generated obligation, while the hypothetical choices of rational agents generate legitimacy."<sup>19</sup>

This idea of Locke was generally adopted by all social contract philosophers who argued that individual human beings gathered together and decided to give some concessions so that a society would be established in order to avoid

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<sup>17</sup> Marcel Prélôt, Histoire des Idées Politiques, Dalloz, Paris, France: 1961, p. 375.

<sup>18</sup>Roger Woolhouse, *Locke, John* in Ted Honderich (ed.), The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England: 1995, p. 493.

chaos. The degree of the chaos in the pre-society *state of nature* depended on the degree of authoritarianism employed by the regime justified by the author. In the case of Thomas Hobbes, who wrote in defence of a highly authoritarian regime, if chaos was widespread, people would consent to tyranny or absolute rule to avoid a worse alternative. While Hobbes' ideas were used to legitimise authoritarian rule of Charles II, Locke's and his followers' ideas created claims of legitimacy for three revolutions of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: The English Glorious Revolution of 1688, the American Independence of 1776, and the French Revolution of 1789 all took their roots from Locke's pattern of natural law<sup>20</sup>.

The natural law concept gradually gave way to the larger concept of natural and human rights and duties. These were seen as intrinsic to be human which are inconceivable to deny, such as liberty, life, and property. The 1689 Bill of Rights in England was the first legal document to provide support to the existence of such rights. The American, French, and the United Nations (UN) declarations of human rights set further examples.

With advancements achieved in modes of production and with the spread of the industrial revolution from the United Kingdom to the rest of the planet, the accessibility of goods changed in favour of the poor<sup>21</sup>. In parallel with this change in the social equilibrium, the degree of expansion of rights also increased. Natural and human rights, as the holding of power was being generalised to a greater section of the society to include the trading classes and

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<sup>19</sup>Don Herzog, Happy Slaves: A Critique of Consent Theory, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, US: 1989, p. 206.

<sup>20</sup> Marcel Pr  lot, Histoire des Id  es Politiques., p. 375.



the intelligentsia, acted as definite limitations to governmental activity by codifying the rights and duties of the rulers and the ruled.

The concept of *civil society* is another idea that is linked to the concept of political legitimacy. There was a tradition of non-governmental formation in the European merchant classes. In time, especially with the impact created by the Industrial Revolution, this developed to be a distinct part of the society that decided on the prices, trade, wages, and the quality of goods. In due course, as “the nation-state developed not just as a boundary creating or maintaining device, but as a system of symbols and shared identity,”<sup>22</sup> and, as the nation-state also served to the greater participation of merchant classes and gradually of ordinary people to the state administration, civil society gained importance. It became a part of the society outside the state bureaucratic mechanism. Civil society remained as an entity with powers of influence over the administrative decisions. It became a medium through which social, economic, political rights and liberties were defended, and, pressure was imposed on government on such issues as respect to individual values and rights. Therefore, with the emergence of civil society as a pressurising group on the ruling elite, the definitions of legitimacy and of people who have a say in who rules and how are altered to suit the necessities brought with the changing times.

### **C. Legitimacy In The Modern World:**

#### **1. Max Weber's Contribution:**

At the first quarter of the twentieth century, the concept of legitimacy of a regime has found a new emphasis with Max Weber's contribution. Weber's

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<sup>21</sup> Spencer M. DiScala and Salvo Mastellone, European Political Thought, 1815-1989, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1998, p. 30.

voluminous and often-cited work Economy and Society (1922) created new theoretical grounds and brought a new manner of perceiving what legitimacy is. Weber argued that political authority is based on a public belief on its legitimacy. Weber claimed that social action “may be guided by the belief in the existence of a legitimate order.”<sup>23</sup> He accepts legitimacy as the willingness of followers to accept orders from sources of authority.

For legitimate domination, Weber establishes three patterns of authority, these being (a) rational (legal) grounds, (b) traditional grounds, and, c) charismatic grounds. The ruling regime is perceived to be legitimate by the ruled based upon either one or a combination of these grounds.

Rational grounds of legitimate domination base on the belief in the legality of the enacted rules. Those who rule are bound by the rules but they also have the right to issue commands as the rules -the laws- enable them to issue commands.

Traditional grounds are based on established belief in the sanctity of long-standing traditions. Those who exercise authority based on these traditions are perceived to use legitimate powers.

Finally, charismatic grounds cover devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism, exemplary character or charisma of an individual human being, and of the order revealed or ordained by him or her.

In the case of legal authority based on rational grounds, obedience is to the legally established impersonal order. In the traditional authority based on the traditional grounds, the person who leads the traditional order and whose acts

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<sup>22</sup>Brigid Laffan, ‘*The Politics of Identity and Political Order in Europe*’ in Journal of Common Market Studies, v. 34, p. 84.

are bound by the boundaries of the tradition receives obedience and legitimising respect. In charismatic authority based on charismatic grounds, the obedience is to the leader whose distinguishing features create the individual believer's belief in his charisma<sup>24</sup>. In Weber's work, the relationships involving the ruling class and institutions such as bureaucracy plays an important part while he analyses the outcome of legitimacy gained through one of these ways, especially through charisma<sup>25</sup>.

Max Weber categorises legitimacy as an outside force, a process that is partially linked to authority and not a direct ingredient of it. He sees legitimacy as a factor helping a particular political order to strengthen its power. On the other hand, he believes that in case a regime fails to legitimise itself, the lack of legitimacy may be balanced by other means such as the use of coercion.

However, since Weber represents legitimacy as a factor related to perception, a concept that is based on the belief of individuals in it, he underestimates the power and extent of the process. To take legitimacy as a result of cognitive processes is to deny it the vital role it plays for a regime. If the subordinates of a given regime, its subjects or citizens, cease co-operating with the ruling regime and deny any sacrifices to that regime that they might grant any other regime they would take as legitimate, that given regime would lose its ability to mobilise people into constructive channels. As a result of it, one of the key outputs of a legitimate system, the system's efficiency, would be lost and the regime would be forced to use coercion as the only means of justifying its

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<sup>23</sup> Weber, Max, Economy and Society, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 215-216.

<sup>25</sup> Dragan Milovanovic, Weberian and Marxian Analysis of Law, Avebury, Aldershot, Vermont, US: 1989, pp. 141-142.



presence in government. Such a situation would provide the rulers with the ability to control the population in the meaning of preventing them from what they want to do, but would not provide the ability to urge the people to co-operate or to make sacrifices for the good of the system even in the end the co-operation or the sacrifices would help the population to be more prosperous or more advantageous.

In that respect, David Beetham criticises Weber. Beetham argues that the Weberian definition of legitimacy misrepresents the relationship between legitimacy and people's beliefs. Beetham argues that

“[a] given power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy, but because it can be *justified in terms of* their beliefs. This may seem a fine distinction, but it is a fundamental one. When we seek to assess the legitimacy of a regime, a political system, or some other power relation, one thing we are doing is assessing how far it can be justified in terms of people's beliefs, how far it conforms to their values or standards, how far it satisfies the normative expectations they have of it. We are making an assessment of the degree of congruence, or lack of it, between a given system of power and the beliefs, values and expectations that provide its justification. We are not making a report on people's 'belief in its legitimacy'.”<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, it can be said that the Weberian definition of legitimacy is actually a definition of public belief in legitimacy and that it has its shortcomings. For instance, Weber's concept of legitimacy does not provide an explanation for such parts of the concept of legitimacy as consent or legality. David Beetham argues that acts of consent such as voting confer and contribute to making power legitimate. Such factors as legal validity, justifiability of the set of rules that govern a power relationship, and consent derived from the actions

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<sup>26</sup> David Beetham, Legitimation of Power, MacMillan, Houndmills and London, England: 1991, p.11.

expressive of consent for the rulers contribute to legitimacy of a system and create grounds for obligation to power and not for belief in legitimacy<sup>27</sup>.

Further criticism on the Weberian definition of legitimacy includes Sternberg's claim that Weber's classification of the types of legitimacy leaves no place for "civil government in its proper sense," and hence Weber would consider any sort of representative government as "non-legitimate."<sup>28</sup> Jan Pakulski argues that Max Weber neglects a further definition of legitimacy, that based on a belief that the rulers have superior knowledge of social processes than the ruled<sup>29</sup>. Any given communist party in a state-socialist society would base its legitimacy on such a claim that the party has a vanguard role to lead the society. Although it may be claimed that Weber ignores it for it is not based on autonomous authority, as Rodney Barker claims<sup>30</sup>, one may also argue that Weber ignored any sort of political formation that would not fit his legitimate rule model. Also, Rodney Barker, an avid supporter of Weber's model on legitimacy argues that what Weber does not "examine is the contribution of legitimacy to domination, nor the manner in which it is cultivated, maintained, or eroded," and that he specifically leaves the question of whether legitimacy contributes to government open<sup>31</sup>.

However, with all the shortcomings, the Weberian definition of legitimacy is a key definition. Most, if not all, of the twentieth century discussions on legitimacy and state authority are centred upon the views of Weber. The

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13 passim.

<sup>28</sup> David Sternberg, 'Typologie de la Légitimité', in P. Bastin et al., L'Idée de Légitimité, Paris, Dalloz, 1967, p. 96.

<sup>29</sup> Jan Pakulski, 'Legitimacy and Mass Compliance: Reflections on Max Weber and Soviet-type Societies,' *British Journal of Political Science*, v.16 (1), 1986, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> Rodney Barker, Political Legitimacy and the State, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1990, p.55.



discussions upon his categories of legitimation are accompanied by the indistinct shape of his definitions. If one accepts the view that “Weber doesn’t use legitimacy as an explanatory tool, but, as an organising, differentiating means and as an identifier of elements in particular systems of rule,”<sup>32</sup> and that Weber uses these schemes, for instance, to prove the superiority of the political over the economic and the bureaucratic, one’s perception of Weber’s work becomes clearer. There are also many modern political scientists who argue Weber’s legitimacy principles are either inapplicable or old-fashioned or both.

## 2. Approaches to Legitimacy after Weber:

Seymour Martin Lipset, following a quasi-Weberian course, developed the claim that the stability and hence the continuity of political organisations depended on their legitimacy and on their effectiveness. Lipset’s claim is that a system of government may survive as its effectiveness may compensate for its legitimacy deficit and vice versa. For instance, a traditionally fully legitimate system may be delegitimised in case it loses its competitive edge or becomes ineffective. Thus, no system remains legitimate without being effective in the long run. As Joseph Rotschild argues;

“...some contemporary social scientists have even proceeded from this recognition of the organic nexus between legitimacy and effectiveness to argue that the former is merely a dependent function of the latter, and that the task of government is to educate public opinion to accept this sequence. In other words, technology and science, translated into effectiveness and affluence, are to fill the void left by the waning of traditional ideologies of legitimation. Not only academic theorists but also ruling regimes sometimes subscribe to this seemingly attractive solution to their dilemmas of eroding legitimacy. Hence we have ‘goulash

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>32</sup> David Beetham, Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics, Polity Press, Cambridge, England: 1985 (first published in 1974 by G. Allen & Unwin), p. 258.

socialism' (i.e. the effort to buy public support through improved living standards and relative affluence) in East Central Europe and the sanctioned cult of rampant consumerism in the West. But for political regimes this is essentially a shallow and even desperate perspective because such a pseudo-ideology, which holds legitimacy to be a mere function of effectiveness, will leave them naked and without principled authority if their efficiency declines."<sup>33</sup>

The events that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary where a seemingly consumerist version of state socialism -goulash socialism- was experienced, have proven Rotschild's argument. When the rulers of a country decide to reduce legitimacy to effectiveness of the economic system, when the prosperity declines or disappears after a while, the rulers have no other means to legitimise their presence at government. The Kádár administration in Hungary in its last years, the Pinochet regime whose legitimacy was based on its Chicago school economic policies are examples of regimes and the Margaret Thatcher government in the United Kingdom (UK), the Ronald Reagan administration in the US, and the Turgut Özal government in Turkey are examples of governments which tried to sustain their legitimacy by pseudo-ideology mainly based on the rise of economic prosperity, and they all suffered from the decline of economic prosperity at the end, leaving their countries in an ideological legitimacy gap for differing lengths of time.

One must bear in mind that, although the inspiration for these activities may come from abroad, these were conducted on national level. However, the issue of legitimacy, especially in post-World War II East European scene, begins to depend on international as well as national political relations in vertical and

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<sup>33</sup>Joseph Rotschild, in Denitch (ed.), Legitimation of Regimes, p. 39.



horizontal scales. The changes in the international balance of power from the pre-war environment to the Cold War environment and then to the post-Cold War environment changed the rules concerning international relations, international pressure and intervention to a country's affairs, and changed the way legitimacy of an administration is perceived. The emergence of supranational organisations such as the European Union (EU) or such ideological blocs such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact affected the degree of interference to political affairs in national level. The international intervention decreased or increased depending on what bloc a country was in or what sort of an organisation it was a member of. The EU at the moment has jurisdiction over many political and economic issues which were under the close control of national governments of its members a decade ago, from the formation of agricultural policy to the rights of fishing in member-states' territorial waters. Similarly, the members of the so-called Eastern Bloc were under Soviet control on their international and national policy decisions. With what is branded the *New World Order* in place, the degree of intervention and the rules concerning outside intervention to national affairs have changed as well. The studies of legitimacy, therefore, have to include an international element which may or may not have a direct influence on the acts of an administration and hence its perception as legitimate or not. A further discussion of this subject may be found in following parts of this chapter and in Chapter Two.

There are alternative visions to the legitimacy - efficiency relationship. For instance, the members of the *positivist-systemic school* argue that legitimacy depends on longevity, clarity, economy, and enforcement capability in

administration. This enforcement capability excludes the normative side to legitimisation of a regime. The *positivistic-systemic school* claims that a government creates its legitimacy through these means cited above, and is autonomous as a political system. This approach is criticised by Marxists and radical ideologists who argue that a regime is incapable of surviving without being based on normative values, because as it delegitimises previous regimes, it will bring along its own delegitimation since they all function under similar rules<sup>34</sup>.

Therefore, one may state that legitimacy as a concept has evolved along with the changes in power relations and social responsibilities of the ruling classes. Legitimacy, which used to be a concept connected to individual relations, especially blood relations affiliated with marriage bond, developed to become a political-sociological concept which identifies the justifiability of a regime vis-à-vis its subjects. Currently the term is used to explain that a regime acquires and holds power according to justifiable rules and that it has the consent of the public, of the ruled, with it. However, there are different approaches to the concept as it is related with different branches of social sciences.

In terms of law, legitimacy means that the leader or leaders of a given land -a political party, a president, prime minister, king, or a tribal chief- acquires power to rule in accordance with legal framework that regulates the life of the land. If the acquisition and holding of power is in accordance with the laws that govern the place, then the regime is legally legitimate.

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<sup>34</sup>*ibid.*, p. 40.

In terms of philosophy, however, the laws that justify and legitimise a given regime are questionable in relation to their own justifiability. For philosophers, the existence of a law is no direct proof to its justness and rightfulness. The political system's ethical correctness, moral rightfulness, its concern over some key issues such as human rights make the system legitimate.

In terms of political science, the main cognition of legitimacy lies in Max Weber's definition: Weber defines legitimacy of a regime in its subjects' belief in its justifiable nature on the part of the relevant social agents. Consequently, Weber describes power relations to be legitimate when both those who hold positions of political power and those ruled by them believe these relations to be justifiable / legitimate.

“For a social scientist to say that a given power relation is legitimate, Weber argues, is not to make a moral judgement about it in the manner of philosopher; it is rather to make a report (which may be empirically true or false) about other people's *beliefs*. Power is legitimate where those involved in it believe it to be so; legitimacy derives from people's belief in legitimacy. So, he writes, legitimacy is equivalent to ‘Legitimitätsglaube’ (a belief in legitimacy); and legitimate power is power ‘als legitim angesehen’ (that is regarded as legitimate).”<sup>35</sup>

However, that a regime is justified in the minds of the people governed by it, is not in itself enough to make a regime, a government or a leader legitimate. There are different factors which contribute to a political system's legitimacy as well as its perception as justifiable by the people. The legal validity of the appropriation and exercise of power, the issue of justifiability of the rules governing a power relationship connected to the sets of beliefs and values in a

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<sup>35</sup>David Beetham, The Legitimation of Power, 1991, p. 8.



given society, and the evidence of public consent derived from the practices of the rulers are all parts that make up the grounds of legitimacy for a given regime or a group of power-holders. In that case, David Beetham argues that the main concept is not the belief in legitimacy, but the underlying principles of obedience to the political power, among both those who rule and those who are ruled<sup>36</sup>. Seymour Martin Lipset defines legitimacy as a concept that “involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society” while Richard M. Merelman’s definition of political legitimacy is “the quality of “oughtness” that is perceived by the public to inhere in a political regime. That government is legitimate which is viewed as morally proper for a society.”<sup>37</sup> Talcott Parsons describes legitimacy as the factor which corresponds, in political power systems, to the confidence in the mutual acceptability and stability of the monetary unit in monetary systems. This power, Parsons argues, is exchanged in compliance with an obligation that leaves the performer of that obligation with nothing but a set of expectations that he can invoke certain obligations on some other individuals in other occasions and in other contexts<sup>38</sup>.

The Weberian definition’s degree of suitability may be discussed, however it is also accepted that it is the main framework of analysis for the twentieth century social scientists on the issue of legitimacy. Those who do not make use of the Weberian approach, at least refer to it and describe their reasons of

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<sup>36</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>37</sup>Richard M. Merelman, ‘Learning and Legitimacy’ in *American Political Science Review*, vol. 60, p. 549.

discord. Hence, the Weberian approach is the mainstream approach in terms of contemporary sociology and political science.

David Beetham, in his Legitimation of Power (1991) suggests that effectiveness, order and stability are the outcomes of legitimacy and not the grounds of it. He establishes his conception of legitimacy on the principles of a regime's validity, justifiability, and the consent it gathers from its subjects. He argues that when these are established, a regime is legitimate, and, on that account, the situation generates moral grounds for consent by the ruled. Consequently, if that regime is taken as legitimate, through a particular quality of consent shown by the ruled towards the rulers, the end-products of enhanced order, stability, and effectiveness of the system may be achieved. This relationship between the ruler and the ruled affects the rulers' behaviour patterns as well. As a consequence, as the power-holders would be bound by the rules and paradigms upon which the legitimacy of their power is based, legitimate power becomes limited power and the powerful lose their legitimacy when they fail to respect their power's essential limits<sup>39</sup>.

This thesis will pursue the framework put forward by David Beetham in his Legitimation of Power, but will also make reference to Weber's schemes of legitimation techniques with an attempt to reconcile the structural differences between the Weberian era and the current post-Bipolar world structure.

#### **D. Three Layers Of Legitimacy:**

At this point, before going any further, a distinction should be made between the legitimacy of the state itself and the legitimacy of a ruling regime. In the

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<sup>38</sup>Talcott Parsons, Politics and Social Structure, The Free Press, New York, New York, US: 1969, p. 362.

current global political system, one may see that, despite all its opponents, the nation-state is the primary agency of international politics. That a group or masses of people question the merits or the legitimacy of a regime that governs them does not mean that these people question the grounds of existence of a given nation-state. There are, of course cases that show the opposite, as can be seen in the attempts of independence of such regional nationalist movements in Kurdish-populated territories, Chechnia, Scotland, Quebec, Corsica and the Basque Country against the nation-states of Turkey-Iraq-Iran, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Canada, France and Spain, respectively. In these cases, the legitimacy of a state structure which is believed to give less than it takes from the regions (bearing in mind that Scotland is an equal partner as the second kingdom of the UK unlike the other territories which may be seen in a way as 'invaded territories'), if not exploit them, is questioned. The legitimacy of a given state, therefore, is in doubt. However, the alternative these nationalist movements propose is not a challenge to the concept of nation-state or a challenge to the international political structure. What these groups seek is the creation of further nation-states to the expense of some greater ones. The case provided by the Scottish National Party, for instance, foresees an independent state of Scotland which will be a part of the European Union and which will therefore not differ from the greater United Kingdom in terms of international involvement. The concept of nation-state therefore remains unchallenged and its legitimacy is still sound.

However, while people may wish to keep the nation-state they have, they may think that the political system that their state embraces is undesirable. The

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<sup>39</sup>David Beetham, *op.cit.*, p. 34-35 *passim*.



ruled masses may think that absolute monarchy or liberal democracy is not suitable anymore for the social structure their country has at a given moment in time and may feel the urge to change it to parliamentary monarchy or Islamic fundamentalism. In such a case, as clearly seen in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Eastern Europe, the political system may be challenged while the citizens of that given country may insist on keeping the name, boundaries, symbols, capital city, flag and other concepts related to and identified with -or working as identifiers of- their nation-state. While the governmental structures were challenged and altered in that part of the world in the last decade, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania remained intact as nation-states. The boundaries of the concept of nationalism varied in all these countries. However, the nation-state which existed was not challenged by any separatist movement, nor there were any major ethnic groups in these countries that would constitute a structure with two or more nations living in one state. In other instances such as the former Yugoslav Federation or Czechoslovakia where more than one nation formed a state, the state structure was challenged, and finally, altered.

A third layer of legitimacy concerns the governments, the administrative system dominating a given political system. A government may be considered as illegitimate or may become delegitimised by different reasons. In that case the people of a given country may be content with their nation-state and political system as a whole, however, they may rather have a different government. This may be carried out through elections which would change the government, by mass demonstrations and industrial action or by other means which would force the unwanted government to resign from office, in

accordance with the conditions guiding the country's political and legal systems. In some extreme cases, the change of government, or the regime may be associated with the change of political system in a given country or the two may coincide.

A dual crisis in terms of legitimacy problems may also take place in a country at a certain point in history. Such a dual problem of legitimacy was the core of the events experienced in the USSR. As the USSR was a federation of states, the centrifugal forces had two foci, namely nationalist separatism and anti-communism. In the Yugoslav Federation which was a collection of states brought together by the charismatic leadership of Joseph B. Tito, the division among federal states became apparent after Tito's death. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia which was a combination of two nations divided into two different countries in a peaceful separation in 1998. In these states, the legitimacy of the state itself was based upon a legitimation from above principle, forced by international political circumstances, by socio-economic necessities, and other factors. When the factors which bound the smaller states together within the larger state's boundaries were eliminated, when these factors became obsolete, the break-up took place. On the other hand, these states were experiencing domestic legitimacy problems as the rulers of these states were unsuccessful in establishing a political system perceived as legitimate by the people. Hence, both a political system change -and a government change due to communist system's peculiarities- and a nation-state level break-up took place in these.

Modern studies of legitimacy, while focusing on these three layers of legitimacy, appear to have a tendency to underestimate the outside or the

international dimension of a given regime's grounds of legitimacy. The main emphasis seems to be based on the relations concerning legitimacy in one state as a structure, rather than a state as an agent. As the rulers' international connections may dictate development at the national level -such as the East European and Latin American examples during the Cold War- rather than the developments in the domestic politics, to study a given state as a closed system may lead to wrong conclusions in the study of a political order's legitimacy.

The second and the third types of legitimacy described above form the basis of this thesis. That is, this thesis concentrates on the legitimacy deficit for a given regime ruling in a given country within a pre-defined political system, and not that of a nation-state per se. Thus, the focus will be on the domestic causes of delegitimation. As a case study, the case of Hungary and the period of change that took place in the Hungarian State from mid-1980s onwards will be analysed. Nonetheless, as the Hungarian regime from the end of the World War 2 until the end of 1980s was definable as a component of a greater system of bi-polar international system, the international dimension to legitimacy and legitimation should be emphasised.

### **III. LEGITIMACY AND DEMOCRATISATION: PERCEPTIONS AND MISPERCEPTIONS**

#### **A. A New Dawn For Democracy?:**

With the Détente process which emerged from early 1970s onwards, followed by the creation of a new world order after the dissolution of the Communist bloc from late 1980s to early 1990s, many social scientists began to claim that a general inclination towards democratisation is present in the world. The process of democratisation which began in Southern Europe in mid-1970s



appeared to some to expand to include similar developments in Latin America and in Eastern Europe as well as in some parts of Africa. Some scholars claim that all these developments are related to a general wave of democracy, or, a *third wave of democracy* as Samuel Huntington describes it<sup>40</sup>, and that it was to be expected as a result of long-term cycles of democratisation and anti-democratisation in the World history.

From the early 1990s onwards, the idea that that the transformation is uniform in all transitory societies became widespread. This idea arose from the tradition which saw the Socialist Bloc a union of clone states, all socialist therefore all giving the same response to the same stimulus. As they were seen as sharing the common legacy of being part of the Socialist political order in their near history, it was assumed that they would have similar periods of transition to democracy<sup>41</sup>. The main components of a liberal democratic political system, as far as these theories are concerned, may be reduced to the basic constituents of the rule of law: state and regime legitimacy; liberal economy; and, fair and competitive elections. Of these, the rule of law and system legitimacy elements would ensure that the regime does not malfunction and prevent it from losing its public approval. Meanwhile, a well-functioning electoral system guarantees the eligibility of several candidates to fulfil positions in legislative and executive fields. Market economy sustains the political system by creating the suitable economic environment for the political system. The existence of basic freedoms such as the freedom of thought and expression including the freedom

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<sup>40</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, argues in his The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (University of Oklahoma Press, London, 1991) that after the first wave of democratisation between 1828 and 1926, a second wave was experienced during the 1943-1962 period. Huntington argues that from 1974 onwards, the world is living through a third wave of democratisation.

of expression of the printed and audio-visual media, of free and unbiased representation of all political fractions in the country, or whether the legislative bodies and the chief executive -as the president or the prime minister- are publicly elected or appointed by the parliament or another agency may be added to the above-mentioned list. However, as there would be no fair and competitive elections without an equal possibility to compete for political power positions for a variety of political fractions, they may be seen as already being parts of the process.

This list of requirements for democracy's establishment and preservation helps to create a mould for democracy and democratisation and hence to draw generalised conclusions. The fact that a series of democratising movements in Africa, Latin America and in Europe followed one another, and that most of the regime changes fitted to the above-mentioned mould of systemic requirements for liberal democracy's establishment has strengthened the generalisation. Nowadays, as the Latin American authoritarian regimes were likened to their South East Asian counterparts, the East European democratisation movements are compared with the Latin American democratisation<sup>42</sup>.

On the one hand, there are similar situations which enable an observer to compare and contrast the developments in Latin American and Eastern European political transitions. The constitutional transformation that took

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<sup>41</sup> The followers of such a view may be exemplified by the works of J.F. Brown, H.B. Feigenbaum and J.R. Henig, I. Holmes, B. Geddes, E.A. Tiryakian, A. Leftwich among others.

<sup>42</sup> Amongst the political scientists who argue in favour of a comparison and compare Latin American and Eastern European transformation, A. Bergesen, J.H. Cox, D. Bartlet, W. Hunter, R. Espindola, V. Botet, D.W. Powers may be referred to in the recent years, in addition to the members of the Neo-Modernist school. A recent and detailed comparison may be found in Sharon Werning Rivera's article



place in Brazil from 1984 till 1988 under the leadership of president Tancredo Neves follows a similar path to the Hungarian transition to democracy. There is a series of multi-party, multi-ideology talks, consensus among different opinions is sought, many different layers of the social structure are involved in the process, and the parliament as an institution plays a central role in the developments<sup>43</sup> (see Chapter 4 for the Hungarian political change and the role of the parliament in it). On the other hand, the fact that both democratisation processes follow similar patterns does not prove that there is a superstructure combining both processes. This sort of a comparison is to result in the rise of a tendency to generalise political development all over the World as the sub-categories of a ubiquitous movement of democratisation. However, such a movement of democratisation does not exist.

#### **B. The Discussion of the Uniformity of Transitions:**

In due course, those who argue that democracy is and should be uniform and universal avoid the differences and focus on the institutional necessities so that they have an argument. Such an approach is a course based on a linear perception of democracy and its components in the shape of institutions and the acts of these institutions and of their controllers. The idea may be traced back to the Modernist school of thought which was popular in 1950s and 1960s. According to such Modernists as Daniel Bell, Dankwart Rustow or Lucien Pye, modernisation was a linear process and hence all countries would follow similar processes to those which managed to industrialise and establish a democratic system in their Modernisation path of development. Therefore,

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titled 'Historical Cleavages or Transition Mode?: Influences on the Emerging Party Systems in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia,' in *Party Politics*, vol. 2(2), 1996, pp. 177-208.



the Modernist argument claims that if, say, United Kingdom or Netherlands managed to carry out industrialisation and administrative democratisation, then so could such countries like Greece or Ghana. The paradigm of Modernisation therefore assumes that transitions from pre-capitalism to post-industrialism and from absolutist monarchy to a liberal democratic system are possible and sustainable. Countries lacking the economic and political systems available in the so-called Capitalist Core might improve their economic and political capabilities by adopting patterns of development and following the paths taken by these more developed states in the past. That would mean that there should first be an industrialisation and hence modernisation of the urban areas, then, as people would migrate to the urban areas from the rural -and hence traditional- sectors of the country, they would be forced by social circumstances to part with their conservative traditionalism and adopt patterns of belief and behaviour of the more modern industrial society. The levels of literacy and hence education would rise and the society would transform itself from a predominantly rural, traditional, religious, conservative, poverty-stricken position to a predominantly urban, industrial, non-religious, progressive, prosperous stage. This would change the shape of the world as the international relations would be more pacific, more end-oriented, more rational and pragmatic than it currently were.

As the decolonisation process accelerated and altered the relationship between the states in the Core and those in the Periphery, the above-mentioned arguments proved to be inapplicable, and, became redundant. The main

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<sup>43</sup> For further analysis of the Brazilian constitutional transformation and democratisation, see Javier Martinez-Lara, Building Democracy In Brazil, Ipswich: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996.

inaccuracy of the Modernisation Theorists was to perceive the socio-economic development of Europe as a given, repeatable experience by any other country which is not as industrialised. Such authors as Rostow and Rustow did not take the imperialistic policies and hence the wealth accumulated in the continent through these imperialistic policies into consideration as a motive affecting the wealth accumulation in the European core countries that the newly industrialising post-colonial states lacked. The fact that when the first Industrial Revolution took place all the countries which experienced the industrialisation process were *undeveloped* and not *underdeveloped* makes the idea of imitation of the developed countries by the developing ones obsolete and baseless. Moreover, in a country with a developing industry and a traditional-conservative behaviour pattern, the transition to an industrial, Westerly urban culture was not a vital line of action. In most of the countries which leapt forward in terms of technology and industry, traditional values did not vanish and no straight line towards the values of West European-North American societies was hence pursued. A mixture of the indigenous and foreign cultures took place, but no uniform post-industrial society based on rationality, pragmatism and open-mindedness emerged neither in the newly industrialised nations nor in the established industries. Thus, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, modernisation theories lost their appeal and gave way to the theories of Dependency and World System Analysis. Another misjudgement of the Modernist school was to claim that the West, as a result of the welfare state notion and due/thanks to mixed economy, had come to the end of the ideological age as Daniel Bell claimed in his End Of Ideology (1960), an idea which would be carried into 1990s by Francis Fukuyama in his End Of History



(1991). This pattern of belief meant that the Western social structure is taken and presented as the end of the human society's development. Thus, it presented the West European and North American state and society structures as desirable models for the 'less developed' nations.

The first main criticism came to Modernist school from within, from Samuel Huntington. In 1962, basing his arguments on the example set by the Cuban Revolution of 1959 led by Fidel Castro against Fulgencio Batista, Huntington argued that modernisation in a society might be achieved through military action as well as civil and civic means as claimed previously. Then, gradually the idea lost its allure due to the fact that it foresaw a very long period of transition. Most newly-independent states had no will to allow a long period of time for transition and decided to substitute the lengthy transition with reform from above. Moreover, the whole school of the Modernisation seemed to be a representative of the Capitalist Core's new orientations. That the Modernists began to be influential in the wake of the Bandung Conference of 1955 strengthens the conspiracy theory that it was an attempt to extend the control of the Core over its former colonies: if the former colonies were to be convinced to follow a similar path of social, political and economic development, with similar key institutions, it would mean that there would be similar economic necessities and similar types of consumers as the small bourgeoisie would act in a similar fashion in a similar World, and there would be no wish to switch to a Communist course if in mid or long term these countries would achieve prosperity as their previous masters. The idea failed in terms of delivering prosperity but worked considerably well in terms of Containment Policy and of preservation of the links between the Core and its



former colonies. It was replaced by the Dependency School, as exemplified by the works of H. Cardoso and E. Wallerstein, which had a more global, more realistic and more Marxist tendencies, as will be demonstrated in the following parts of this thesis.

The return of the Modernisation theories came along with the 1980s and this time depended on the so-called 'satellite dish revolutions,' or the industrial revolution in information technology taking place from the late 1970s onwards, much treasured by the ex-Modernists<sup>44</sup>. This time, the argument was based on the fact that industrial development in the leading industries of the world necessitated the spread of know-how in a global scale to increase high-tech products' sales. The information technology revolution of 1980s which came with satellite telecommunications and the use of personal computers permitted the peripheral regions of the globe to receive information that was concealed from them by their oppressive authoritarian or totalitarian regimes. Thus, they claimed that the world was in a new stage in which information could not be censored and thus exposed lies and misconducts of their leaders. This enabled the expression of dissent which could be used to change authoritarian and totalitarian political orders into a competitive liberal democracies. The fall of the military junta in Argentina, the gradual fading of the Pinochet regime in Chile, the democratic elections in Nicaragua after the Sandinista rule of 21 years, and more importantly the loosening of the grip in

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<sup>44</sup>For instance, Lucien Pye's article 'Political Science and the Crisis of Authoritarianism' in the *American Political Science Review*, v. 84 (1), pp. 3-19 may constitute a very good example of the Modernisation theorists' adoption of the information technology revolution's effects. Pye argues that the introduction of satellite dishes and therefore the increase in the access to international, uncensored broadcast by the people living under oppressive regimes such as Latin American dictatorships and the Socialist Bloc weakened the grip of the political order on its subjects/citizens and hence prepared the downfall of authoritarian regimes.

the Soviet Union with Gorbachev reforms were taken as signs supporting the idea that satellite dishes, or generally speaking advances in technology, could undermine corrupt authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

### **C. The New World Order:**

With Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation on 25 December 1991 and the subsequent collapse of the USSR, the bipolar world political structure ended. People began to write about the merits of democracy and of capitalist system, some claimed the history came to its end as ideological competition was no more existent. With the East European states devoting themselves to democratisation of their political and liberalisation and capitalisation of their economic systems, the mainstream social science focused on the transformation of that part of the world. Therefore, theories concerning the fall of the authoritarian regimes expanded into the area incorporating the totalitarian regimes' transition to democracy along similar lines to the Latin American scheme which preceded the East European studies of transition by nearly three decades.

The change was so widespread and sudden that a new world order's emergence came unexpectedly. Then, theories changed shape. Now that democracy proved to be the major winner in the political systems competition, outdoing all repressive regime types, the modernist approach focused on the possibility of long-term cycles. A sort of Kondratiev cycles was proposed by Samuel Huntington<sup>45</sup> as he claimed that democratic and anti-democratic sentiments, or 'waves' using the term he employs, followed each other since

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<sup>45</sup>See Samuel Huntington's book The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century (London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991) for a thoroughgoing discussion of the subject.



the American and French Revolutions of 1776 and 1789 respectively. The claim foresees that as there are changes at given times in the important quantity of places on the globe, there are such things as waves of democratisation and de-democratisation triggered by certain key events. As there was a surge to democracy once again from mid-1970s onwards, this time including the former USSR and its former satellite states, as well as the Latin American regimes and some African dictatorships, and since even the Chinese administration was loosening its firm totalitarian grip in favour of a more liberal approach, one might argue that we were in a third wave of democratisation.

Even the supporters of hegemonic stability / world system approach seem to have accepted the main premise that democracy and democratisation are the quintessential parts of the political developments. A. Bergesen argues that:

“...while stronger core states act outward, planning for protective economic blocs to deal with the world downturn - EC '92 and the North American Free Trade Association - weaker, more compromised semi-peripheral states, are only capable of altering their domestic politics - the common move toward democracy - in an effort to deal with their worsening economic condition. Finally, the periphery, weakest and most dependent, shows the least political activity. State policy, then, is conditioned by world-system position: powerful core states band together; weaker semi-peripheral states change regimes; weakest peripheral states are stagnant and only sink into further immiseration. Existing socialist states, then, are more semi-peripheral than socialist, and act similar to their zonal compatriots in Latin America in the general move toward democracy.”<sup>46</sup>

Such approaches, despite being explanatory in their own way, may mislead the inquirer. It is true that one may draw parallels between the democratisation movements all around the globe. However, one must also bear in mind that the



differences between the types of regimes and the transformations these regimes go through, are greater than the superficial similarities of the change. It may be argued that it is pointless to try to create generalisations *per se*. If one tries to do so, the attempt would be ahistorical as the development of human society is still continuing. Therefore, there are no model societies which reached the ultimate level of development. This is so because human history and social history is in continuous motion and transition. To refer to global laws and cycles governing democratisation of the regimes at one period and their undemocratisation at another period is also ahistorical and illogical as such a type of generalisation is automatically discarding the important and omnipresent structural framework in international politics, which is the international system.

#### **D. Different Conditions, Incompatible Transitions:**

The basic inaccuracies in the generalisation of democratisation are to take the route to democracy for granted and to assume that the needs and requirements for democracy is the same for each and every nation on Earth. This attitude can be found in the Modernisation school of thought which was popular from mid-1950s to late 1960s and shares the same misjudgements with it.

Three main reasons may be mentioned to criticise the theories of the universal and uniform democratisation school of 1990s. First of all, due to socio-historical reasons, one may not compare or contrast or liken a society's structure with others. As different societies develop their value sets and rules and laws on the basis of different social, historical and geological

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<sup>46</sup> A. Bergesen, 'Communism Collapse: A World-System Explanation', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, v. 20 (1), p. 133.

requirements, the stage these would switch their political systems to liberal democracy and the perception of the concept of democracy and its requirements would be different in each particular case. For instance, the United States and France have a head of state who also happens to hold the chief executive post in the country, while in the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Turkey or Hungary, the official head of the state -the president or the queen- is ceremonial and different than the chief executive -the prime minister-, and this difference does not affect the degree of democratisation of these countries. This issue, as is the existence of unicameral or bi-cameral representative assemblies / parliaments, is linked with the historical developments which caused one way of institutionalisation and structuralisation or the other. The preference of either a proportional or majority-based electoral system as well as the definition of constituency boundaries, is also a matter linked with the socio-historical developments in a nation's history.

The socio-historical background of a nation may create very radical perceptions of institutions and their roles in society in different parts of the World, apart from administrative institutionalisation. When, for instance, the Military is considered as an apolitical institution in Western Europe, it is a political actor in such countries as Turkey, Chile and Greece. The intervention of the military into political life may be perceived differently in different countries as well. In Turkey, for instance, Military Forces fill the gap of the Left-of-the-Centre political institutions in such issues as the preservation of the secular system and are supported by the ordinary people, while elsewhere an intervention by the military part of the society would be considered as an

unwelcome, if not lamentable, event as in most countries such an event would terminate democracy rather than keeping it in good working order. Yet, one may not argue that Turkish democracy isn't working as well as Italian or Spanish democracies because it is different as it bears a different mould due to the historical evaluation of Turkish social structure.

Therefore, to follow the ideas of those like Lefwich or Geddes and to assume that there is only one ubiquitous and omnipresent concept of democracy and consequently there has to be a single pattern of democratisation to be followed is incorrect depending on the differentiation of socio-historical backgrounds of different countries. Secondly, the economic history of different nations and different states may create discordant economic and social structures at the end and these may require special mechanisms to deal with their own problems. If one subscribes to the line of thought favoured by the Dependency School which includes such names as Immanuel Wallerstein and Henrique Cardoso (see earlier discussion of the Dependency theorists) one may claim that from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the World economy saw the rise of Capitalism<sup>47</sup> and since then three main groups of countries exist, these being countries of the Core, of the Periphery and of the Semi-Periphery. While the Core has been the imperialistic centre which dominated and exploited the resources of the Periphery, the Semi-Periphery has been a middle unit between the two which neither exploits nor is exploited enough to be in either category. The development of industrial relations, of the urban-rural balance in the society, other demographic factors from the rate of literacy to the GNP per capita are

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<sup>47</sup> For elaborate discussion of the issue of the rise of Capitalism, see Immanuel Wallerstein's The Politics of World Economy (Cambridge, 1984) and The Capitalist World Economy (Cambridge, 1979).



all affected by the economic role a country plays. The variations in the economic development in different parts of the World therefore creates different economic models, differing modes of production or differing ownership over the means of production. In the end, the differences in economic structure are to affect the formation of democratic institutions as well as their authority over the society. The class structures, the stage of Capitalist development, the social orientation towards ownership affect the democratic structure as parts of the great social jigsaw that they play an important role within.

A third factor that influences the democratic development of a given country is its geopolitical position. It may be influential in both domestic and international scale. Domestically, the geographical necessities may dictate the size of the cities, the economic or political prestige of a given city or region over others and may also be influential in terms of the defining the borders of constituencies. On the other hand, the influence of other states, either neighbours or allies or competitors of a given state is of great importance. The degree of pacific relations with one's neighbours as well as strong political, trade and security ties in the international arena play their parts in the emergence of the demand for democracy in a country. Under constant threat from a neighbouring state the mechanisms peculiar to liberal democracy may not develop as freely and rapidly as in a country situated in a peaceful environment. A radical regime change as experienced by the Central-East European countries in the wake of the World War II, or, or the limitations imposed on the capability of action of Finland at the Cold War Era are

examples of the strong impact created by foreign intervention or threat of intervention to a country's political development.

As a result of the social, historical, economic and geopolitical factors affecting its historical development, a country may undergo a very different development process compared to another country which also experiences a democratic facelift. Consequently, it can be argued that a single mould of democracy and of democratisation is unsustainable and is an attempt in the wrong direction. To see the incompatibility of the two different types of social transformation, one needs to analyse the developments that took place in these regions and the infrastructure that sustained or prevented the transformation. Such an analysis seeks to clarify why the concept of legitimacy of a regime is as important as the concomitant liberalisation processes. To understand the importance and the modern context of the concept of legitimacy, one must clarify that each and every region and state on earth has its own political, economic and social balances, and that a general rule is not applicable to all states on earth regardless of their backgrounds. Further discussion of the subject with a comparative study will take place in Chapter 4 of the thesis.

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### **Figure 1.1. Different Approaches for Democratisation and Legitimacy:**

**Modernist School (Rostow, Pye, Bell, et al.):** model industrial country→ modernising country copies model→ industrialisation→ social modernisation→ democracy→ legitimate government.

**Modernist School (S. Huntington):** waves of democracy and waves of fall of democracy→ individual countries respond to wave pattern→ legitimate political orders.

**Dependency School (Cardoso, Wallerstein) (International Scale):** core countries→ core- periphery interaction→ periphery follows the core→ legitimacy.

**Dependency School (Domestic Scale):** Core countries→ core-periphery interaction→ intra-elite struggle for power in periphery→ legitimacy.

**Isolated System-1 (Weber):** leader/charisma; or tradition/legal; or systemic/institutional effect on society→ legitimacy.

**Isolated System -2 (Communist):** proletariat leads nation through Communist Party→ Party assumes vanguard role→ Party self-legitimises→ legitimacy.

**Isolated System-3 (Habermas):** individuals communicate→ civil society creates a bridge→ economy and polity realms interact→ legitimacy.

**Interactive System (Cold War):** bipolarity emerges→ countries form blocs→ individual countries abide by alliance ties→ domestic regimes receive support from bloc leaders→ temporary coercive legitimacy.

**Interactive System (post-Cold War):** US/UN establishes main principles of the system→ US/UN forces the principles on individual countries when justifiable→ forced democratisation and human rights agenda dominates individual countries→ forced legitimacy.

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## **IV. TOWARDS A NEW DEFINITION OF LEGITIMACY**

Legitimacy, in its current perception, then, is linked to the international as well as domestic elements of political change. As a political concept, throughout history, it was generally accepted as an agency of domestic politics, but, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, it relates to the



international changes as well. The shift in the scope of the concept is significant since it points out to the fact that the constantly transmuting nature of the concept in history still exists.

The events that take place in the late twentieth century, therefore, may lead us into a new definition of the concept of legitimacy which is affected by international events, domestic needs, peculiarities of any given society in which legitimacy is perceived as a matter of concern, and by the historical and contemporary political practices. Such a new definition will also lead to a new evaluation of the concept. As a result, legitimacy will then become a subject of international politics and this will lead to further exploration of the concept. This thesis aims at emphasising the international dimension embedded in the domestic discussions of legitimacy with the help of a case study. Further parts of the thesis will focus on the concept of legitimacy in 'open' and 'closed' systems (see Chapter 2), the international element in the establishment and continuation of a political order (see Chapter 3) as well as domestic elements that shape the legitimacy of a political order (see Chapters 3,4, 5 and 6).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **DEMOCRATISATION AND LEGITIMACY**

#### **I. DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRATISATION, LEGITIMACY**

##### **A. Three Important Concepts:**

Democracy, democratisation and legitimacy are three political concepts in very frequent use since the beginning of the de-colonisation process in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. These three concepts -not necessarily, but usually- accompany the concepts of liberalism, liberalisation and privatisation in the field of economics. After the end of the Cold War and the transformation of the former Eastern Bloc countries into liberal democracies, these three political concepts are of great importance in the establishment of the new political order. As the East European transformation represents a shift towards both liberal economics and liberal democratic politics, there is a strong association of the two sides, despite the fact that conditions in favour of free trade have not always been associated with political liberalisation and democratisation as in the case of People's Republic of China or in the Latin American and South European dictatorships during the Cold War.

##### **B. The Cold War Environment:**

A change in the importance attributed to the question of regime legitimacy took place simultaneously and as a result of the regime transformations since late 1980s. Legitimacy of a regime has been seen in accordance with its

collaboration with one of the sides of the Cold War. As long as an oppressive regime was to continue its ties with the leading regimes of the Cold War blocs, it would receive military and international political assistance to oppress its subjects / citizens, while it would receive economic aid to be used as social bribery to sustain public support. After the collapse of the bipolar world structure, the political oppression and economic aid have vanished giving way to a democracy-oriented structure in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During the post-war period, until mid-1970s when the *Détente* process accelerated and President Carter of the United States (US) placed particular emphasis on the human rights issue, corruption or illegitimacy of a political order was taken as a secondary part of world political agenda. There were indeed revolutions, regime changes and rebellions during the Cold War, but very few of these created dramatic impact on the general political polarisation. Such key countries as Chile were 'protected' against regime changes, and in such cases as Nicaragua or Angola, civil wars were encouraged if not initiated to keep a country within one of the two political blocs.

The fall of the Shah Pahlavi regime in Iran was the greatest exception to this generalisation. It took place when the human rights issue, rather than alliance ties, was paramount in international political agenda. In the case of Iran, the corruption and oppression of the ruling political order provoked masses to rebel against it. This very obvious example of a regime's perception as illegitimate remained as an exception to the general international actions concerning legitimacy. Most other civil unrest and coups d'état during the Cold War period remained intra-elite conflicts as the political order experienced change. These never achieved to be movements to dramatically



disorient systemic affiliations of a given country as an agent of world political system. The case of Iran, in which the country shifted from the role of co-operative ally to possible exporter of revolution, remained an individual case during the Cold War in which a country not only went through a political regime change but also changed its international political orientation.

### **C. The Concept of Democracy and the Idea of Modernisation:**

Until the rise of the anti-colonialist movements in late 1950s, democracy itself was taken as a mode of government for a limited part of the globe. While at the turn of the century the number of countries ruled by a political order based on democratic principles was a mere fraction of all countries, from 1950s onwards there has been a dramatic increase in the number of the countries ruled by democracy, based on the idea of universal suffrage. The de-colonisation process and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Nations movement as an important actor of international politics affected the situation. The emergence of the idea of *one world* based on the concepts of an *integrated world economy* and hence on the *free trade principle* took shape with the Bretton Woods convention of 1944. This meant that the Western powers began to assume a role in shaping or re-shaping the economic and political attributes of their former colonies.

### **D. School of Modernisation:**

This change of policy in the West caused parallel changes in the social sciences. A group of social scientists labelled as the *School of Modernisation* exemplified by such names as L. Pye, D. Rustow, R. Rostow and S. Huntington emerged. According to this school of thought, economic liberalisation would cause liberalisation in other sectors of the society. As a

result, the traditional and rural parts of a society would give way to modern and urban values and the society's modernisation would cause a need for liberal democracy based on representation and individual freedom as well as economic liberalism. Regime legitimacy would be obtained by reforms from the top at the beginning, but in time, as the society develops, this would give rise to a public demand for reforms and democracy and hence legitimacy would be gained by popular support as well.

However, when one looks closely to the work of those in this school of thought, such as Samuel Huntington and Lucien Pye, it may be argued that the main aim was to justify the economic and political choices of the industrially developed countries. Such a justification might create a need for the mostly newly-independent industrially developing countries to follow the same patterns of political and social development based on the developed countries' experience. As a result of this, the relationships between colonial powers and their former colonies would develop in terms of industrialisation and trade relations. The necessity felt by each side to the other would prevent any political conflict. The issue of legitimacy was treated as a secondary issue compared to the economic openness and political affiliation of the newly-independent countries. What the members of the Modernisation School were looking for was legitimation from the top and not the rule of those who are seen as legitimate by the public in these countries. This approach depends on the idea that people from a specific country or a from a particular group of countries have superior knowledge, experience and intuition than others which is, by definition, racist if not inegalitarian.

### E. Democratisation and Legitimacy:

Legitimacy is an age-old concept, existing since Antiquity. However, its meaning has changed over time. Thus, the term did not define the same type of relationships with the same type of parties involved throughout history. To illustrate the idea, an example may be given on the concept's change in time: Before the beginning of the Détente period, the idea of regime legitimacy was not considered -neither by the students of political science nor by the ruling classes all around the globe- as a major concept. With the beginning of Détente process and especially after the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics(USSR)'s abandonment of the *Brezhnev Doctrine* in late 1980s the issue of regime credibility and legitimacy in domestic terms began to regain importance. As the political focus shifted from the needs of a bipolar world structure to the needs of individual countries and their respective populations legitimacy from below has become an issue of political science once again.

The easing of international tension between the superpowers led to the reduction of economic, military and hence political aid to individual political orders. As a result, the number of countries governed by self-legitimising regimes which force their legitimacy from the top decreased. Cuba, North Korea and People's Republic of China are amongst the few such countries.

Legitimacy has to be considered at the moment as a key concept for the transitory regimes from either authoritarian or totalitarian systems to representative liberal democratic systems. As there is no direct intervention from the outside forces, these transitory regimes have to receive the approval of their citizens if the transition is to be completed successfully. If a newly emerging political order fails to gain public approval and support beyond its



being considered as legally legitimate, it will fail to be recognised as legitimate as a system, and neither social nor political nor economic stability is likely to be maintained in such a transitory regime.

In the international scale, the legitimacy of a regime as a concept and the means of legitimation of a regime have transmuted as well. While once a regime's legitimacy might be established by the means of oppression the regime might use, the main focus is now on the ruling regime's popularity in the opinion of the public it rules, and on its commitment to such issues as human rights and freedoms and on such secondary issues as corruption. As a result, the issue of legitimacy is emerging in a different manner than in comparison to the last four to five decades.

A considerable transition that the change in the concept of legitimacy may be observed is experienced in Eastern Europe as well as Latin America which go through a period of transition and transformation since the mid-1980s (this issue will be analysed in detail in further parts of the thesis). The newly established democracies of Eastern Europe are still to complete a major phase of transformation. The importance of the stability and commitment of these regimes to liberalism and to democracy, and the fact that the *ancien régime* in these countries were delegitimised and brought down on the grounds of the popular will for liberal democracy and liberal economy, brings forth the concepts of legitimacy and legitimation as key determinants in the current and future developments in that part of the world.

## II. LEGITIMACY IN ISOLATED AND INTERACTIVE SYSTEMS

To analyse the legitimacy in a nation-state in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century requires a combination of different approaches to the issue of legitimacy. Since a nation-

state is also a part of the international political system, the need of legitimation for a political order ruling in a given nation-state is of a dual structure as the issue is linked to two different yet interacting levels of stimulus and response. The first layer is the domestic environment in which the regime interacts with its subjects / citizens, and is responsible to society, while at the same time placing demands upon it. The second layer, however, is comprised of the international community and hence of the regime's responsibility towards the international community. This twofold connection makes the system's functioning more complicated and the analysis of the events related to regime legitimacy harder for any scholar of political science.

The main problem and the main difference is that most political scientists who follow the guidelines set by Max Weber -from Ferenc Feher to Leslie Holmes- either totally ignore or reduce up to a great extent the importance of the international dimension. Consequently, events are observed and conclusions are drawn within an isolated system, while politics in the World cannot be analysed within a closed, isolated system. Such an approach may lead to such misinformed perceptions as the approach of the Modernisation School discussed above, or as the novel approaches towards the systemic changes in the East European region within the last decade. Isolating the developments in politics in general and in relation to the issue of regime legitimacy in particular to an isolated system succeeds only in creating an illusion. However, the same argument would be true for identifying the international influence as the key factor in a country's regime change. The differences made by domestic and international factors are all components of a larger scheme and as will be seen

below, the approaches towards an isolated system and an interactive system are radically different.

John Williams draws attention to this fact and tries to reconcile the difference between the international and domestic levels of legitimate action by building on the works of such important Neo-Realist scholars of International Politics as Hans J. Morgenthau, Hedley Bull, and Kenneth N. Waltz. Williams bases his argument on the idea that presence of order in the international state system is the prior value. Order is legitimised as a primary value in international politics either by the anticipation of statesmen that it must be so as Morgenthau claims; or, by the need of the states to agree upon some rules so that they can co-exist within an anarchic structure as Bull argues; or, by the distribution of capabilities among the members of the system as Waltz defends<sup>48</sup>.

In either case, order is accepted as a central issue of international politics and John Williams argues that there is a connection between the domestic social contract which grants legitimacy to the rule of the rulers in a given country and the foreign relations pursued by this country, for they both are linked primarily to the safe existence of a country's citizens within given territorial borders without fear of an aggression to their security. He agrees with Martin Wight that the legitimacy of a government depends "on its ability to serve the people who are the basis of its sovereignty."<sup>49</sup> However, in such periods of World history as the Cold War era, a government's ability to serve its people may be replaced by its ability to serve its allies and the fear of actual war. Under such circumstances, the fear of war and/or invasion leads to the perceived need of

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<sup>48</sup> John Williams, Legitimacy in International Relations and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia, p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 19.



effective and excessive territorial control and therefore governments which may provide this but nothing much else, such as the Pinochet regime in Chile or the Greek Junta of early 1970s, can be seen as legitimate by their international allies and instead of basing their legitimacy on popular support, they may build it on the need for international order. According to Williams who follows the ideas of Martin Wight, it is a need that appeared after a transformation was experienced in the international politics with the replacement of the very limited elite politicians who decided on the international affairs by a far greater number of elite who were members of peripheral opposition before the decolonisation era<sup>50</sup> on the one hand and during the rise of the bipolar state structure.

#### **A. Legitimacy In An isolated System:**

Taken as a single agent of politics, the modern nation-state is an isolated system. In an isolated system, the administration of power is dependent upon hierarchical principles. However, even in such a system the role played by individuals and by their decisions is important. The reason for this is that the consent of individuals concerning leadership choice is a prerequisite of the proper functioning of the system. As a result of this requirement, every modern political system, from a dictatorship to a multiparty democracy becomes somewhat equalitarian-horizontal as well as hierarchical-vertical in nature.

A political system is therefore based on collective goals. It is also based on the organisation in order to attain these collective goals, or, in other words, on the organisational capability of the rulers in a given political system. Talcott

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-22 *passim*.

Parsons argues that, legitimacy, resource mobilisation to implement policies, and the associational subsystem which mobilises the constituent support and determination of the policies to be implemented are the three pedestals of a political system<sup>51</sup>. In such a framework, the legitimacy of the political system would depend on the elements under its control as well as its public perception. That is due to the fact that the political domain is responsible for:

- a) preparing and enacting the laws and the basic setting that defines politically, legally and therefore socially acceptable norms and rules. By this power over legislation, it legally legitimises all other social powers;
- b) legitimising itself as well as other social powers through the same methods as above; and,
- c) controlling the organised coercive forces of the State, i.e. the police, the armed forces and the secret service, which may contribute to legitimacy of the political system, but which may, in case of misuse, breach all legitimacy the system enjoys<sup>52</sup>.

With these functions being fulfilled, the mechanism that governs the state creates the grounds of legitimacy for itself and for the political system that it is a part of. With the system's and the rulers' legitimation, the opposition and all other elements of the system are also legitimised within the boundaries of the isolated system. The exception to this proposition, of course, would be the existence of an opposition of revolutionary nature, in which case one may talk about a legitimacy crisis for both the rulers and the political system itself as the

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<sup>51</sup> Talcott Parsons, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339.

<sup>52</sup> David Beetham, *Legitimation of Power*, p. 40.

opposition tries to delegitimise simultaneously both the government and the system.

### 1. The Liberal-Democratic System:

At the systemic level, the Western liberal-democracy bases itself on two major realms for self-legitimation. The first of these two is political legitimation and the second is the economic legitimation. As the means of legitimation, the liberal democratic system employs elections for the legislative organs of the country in which the head of government will also be chosen<sup>53</sup>. Using the elections as the main basis, the system secures the public consent for its elements: By letting a majority of people in each constituency decide who will represent them in the parliament, the system gives people a relative control over the laws which will be enacted. For the same reason, they would show consent and obedience to the laws as they are prepared and enacted by their representatives. That would legitimise the existence of the legislative organ as well as the existence of the government, formed either by the political party which achieved the greatest amount of votes or a coalition of parties, hence somewhat loosely representing the public will. Within that system, the previously mentioned three responsibilities of the political domain, namely legitimising the laws and the system, self-legitimising and legitimising the existence and the use of state's organised coercive forces are achievable. The political key is therefore to convince the people that they -at least their majority, through the electoral system- are the decision-makers in respect of systemic developments from legislation to foreign policy.

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<sup>53</sup>ibid., pp. 163-164.



However, the liberal-democratic system requires economic legitimation, too. By establishing the principle that private ownership and private decisions upon economic activities such as investment, consumption and employment within a formally free market are the cornerstones of the system, the economic part is legitimised. This somewhat existentialist approach to individual decisions in economic issues is breached by the state intervention in the market. State intervention is explained in relation to its protection of its citizens' rights as the state is presented as "the ultimate guardian of public interest...In effect, the contemporary state underwrites the legitimacy of capitalism by ensuring its social acceptability as well as its legal validity"<sup>54</sup>.

The liberal-democratic system, therefore, has its justification in both political and economic means based on popular and individual choice. It offers different choices in terms of ideologies and economic orientations. The choice within the system is then made by individuals either voting in favour or against a political party, preferring a political, ideological, or industrial product to another, or by choosing or declining the alternatives they are granted by the system. Although the variety of the alternatives in both economic and political fields may vary according to the capabilities of the country, the existence of a variety of choices, or the illusion that there is a variety of choices<sup>55</sup>, available for the individual decision-maker contributes to the legitimacy of the liberal democratic system. Therefore, the liberal democratic system has to provide to

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<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>55</sup> Political choice may vary in terms of ideological inclination of a nation, the international political conditions surrounding a given state and the capability of the followers of a political view or an ideology to promote their cause. Economic choice may be limited in a given country by the level of industrialisation, foreign trade balance, international relations, domestic economic indicators, and individual preferences. As for the illusion of the availability of choice, in a country where 85% of voters

self-legitimise. That is true in terms of economy, so the system at least seems to believe in competition. In terms of politics, too, the competitive character of the system is guaranteed by elite competition. To remain legitimate, the power-holders have to accept the existence of differing groups of intellectuals which would provide a spectrum of elites to create an alternative to the rulers at a given moment through objective electoral process. Such a variety of elites may be insignificant as some may never be favoured by the majority of the public while some others would be favoured, yet, one may always refer to such a variety of choice. At this point, K. Newton states that

“[a] large number of elites per se is not a necessary condition of a democratic political system except insofar as it is recognized that there is rarely a single ‘general will’ in the society but a large number of varying and conflicting wills instead. Therefore it is necessary for society to sustain a large number of elites capable of expressing and defending the full range of political demands in a society. A plurality of elites is an indication that society might be organized into a large number of different groups, each of which is capable of defending its own material and ideal interests against the threat of encroachment of other groups. Similarly, competing elites are not a necessary condition of democracy insofar as political competition is a technique by which accountability of rulers to the ruled can be maintained. The importance of a pluralist political system lies not in the number or competitive nature of elites but in the extent to which elites are responsive and responsible to the non-elites..... A society in which elites are highly responsive and responsible to non-elites is the end product of a democratic pluralist system.”<sup>56</sup>

In such a system, the political scheme itself, as well as the state concept, is safe unless a delegitimising factor jeopardises its operation mechanism. That would be possible if a direct threat to the individual freedoms (e.g. freedom of

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traditionally vote for centre-right parties, the existence of a communist party is an illusion of choice as to vote for that party will never result in changes in political system.



speech, travel, economic activity, right to vote) or to the power-holders (e.g. a coup d'état, invasion by another state) would emerge or if the people would cease to believe in the merits of the system and in the popular sovereignty idea. Unless such cases materialise, the legitimacy of the system is intact while the legitimacy of a given government may increase or decrease according to its performance in office.

## **2. The Communist System:**

The communist or state-socialist (or, simply, socialist) system, however, differs in its legitimation bases from the liberal-democratic system. The communist system is again based on political and economic justifications, however, the similarity does not continue beyond this point.

Politically, the system has two main claims to legitimacy. Primarily, instead of the economic and political individual freedoms, this system emphasises the equality principle among individuals. The claim of the communist system is that as every man and woman are equal, there should be no difference based on social classes or the relativity of ownership of property and goods among them. Therefore, the role of the elite in the liberal-democratic society as the actual or potential leaders of the society loses its importance. However, the society needs a leading force, as there is a state and the need of it to be governed. In this point, the second ground of legitimation for the communist system enters into the picture: Marxist-Leninist ideology. This ideology claims to have solved the evolution of mankind in terms of economic and political developments. Marx claims that that, passing through stages, one of which is capitalism, the human race would at the end reach the stage of communism in

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<sup>56</sup>John Scott (ed.), Power: Critical Concepts (3 volumes), vol. 3, Routledge, London, England: 1994,



which the state would be obsolete and made redundant. As this ideological doctrine foresaw the working class -the *proletariat*-, as the main force capable of overcoming the capitalist mode of production through an ultimate revolution, the working class was perceived as the leading part of the society. The Communist Party, which stood as a representative of the *proletariat*, would make sure that the transition would be securely made<sup>57</sup>. As the working class was considered to be the most progressive part of the society and its interests meant those of the whole society, the Party would be able to protect, pursue and realise policies that would benefit the *proletariat* and the society and hence reach the state-free era of communism.

As the leadership of the Party meant the representation of the *proletariat* and the society, there would be no need for any alternatives or competitors. Then, there is no need to seek popular consent through elections as there would be no better alternative in any individual or organised opposition as they would logically contradict with the interests of the Party, that is of the *proletariat*, that is of the society. The show of consent, therefore, was to be obtained through social mobilisation, through activities aimed at the ordinary people. Indoctrination, education, organisation of mass demonstrations of support, and oppression of any activity challenging the status and the importance of the state, Party, or what the working class was believed to represent are the methods of mobilisation (or, immobilisation).

At the economic level, too, the ideological difference is manifest. As the Party which is the omniscient entity in the society, it controls the economy, too. That

task is carried out by central planning through administrative control. The Party monopoly in production and ownership is legitimised through two ideological claims: The first claim is that the Party is the representative of the *proletariat*, the most progressive and hence the most self-aware part of the society, and therefore it is capable of deciding for the best interest of the society. The second claim, in parallel with the Marxist-Leninist ideology, is that there is an evolutionary process in human history. As the final aim of the progress is to reach the state of communism in which people would not have to work to satisfy their needs and will have time to develop themselves, and as this aim is to be reached by socialist system's evolution towards socialism, the process would cover a long span of time. A shortcut to reach the final aim is to allow the Party to decide what is the most productive method for the society to reach communism and to let it lead the way towards communism. This engenders central planning which results in a symbiotic relationship between the government and the bureaucracy. Therefore, while in the liberal-democratic system there is a difference between the state as bureaucracy and the government as the executive leadership which is elected to run the state affairs in collaboration and in contact with the bureaucracy, in the communist system, the state and the Communist Party have become synonymous. The bureaucratic mechanism developed a direct link with the Party as key bureaucratic positions were to be occupied by party apparatchiks at corresponding rank.

In such an ideologically-led system, both economic and political legitimation are based upon the system's ideological indoctrination of the people and on a *social contract* based on the belief in the bright future of communism and on the two choices of consent or oppression. Within such conditions, the

communist system seems to be more prone to a legitimacy crisis than the liberal-democratic system. The reason for such a crisis in the communist system is that the state is far more involved in economics than the liberal state. Failure in economy. Jürgen Habermas argues, questions the rationality of the system and hence creates a legitimacy crisis<sup>58</sup>. Habermas focuses on the failures in the construction of the system, arguing the system is not rational and therefore a legitimacy crisis is inevitable. If not aimed at the system in general, the outcome of a legitimacy crisis based on popular disillusionment would be the resignation of the government and elections which would probably bring the government in power for the following term in the liberal system. Meanwhile, neither the state, nor the liberal-democratic system of government nor the nation-state would encounter any challenges to their existence in such a crisis in terms of their legitimacy.

Such a claim would follow that there is a connection between the state intervention to economy and the rulers' legitimacy. In the communist system, as the state is totally in control of the economy, then the system appears to be more prone to legitimacy crises. Moreover, as the Party and the state are in a symbiotic relationship, the crisis would affect all the system. Consequently, the state in the communist system would lose its purpose, its *raison d'être*, due to its inability to respond to public demand in economics.

However, as it is true that there is a close link between the Party involvement in the economic life and a possible threat to the legitimacy of the Party and the state, this link may only be established by grave economic failure by the central-planning administration which would lead to be backed by a total loss

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<sup>58</sup>Leslie Holmes, End of Communist Power, Polity Press, Oxford, England: 1993, p. 33.



of political legitimacy. As the system is based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology and therefore foresees the Party playing a vanguard position and, more importantly, as there are no feasible alternatives to the rulers, such a legitimization crisis is unlikely except in a situation in which serious political crisis would be accompanied by severe economic failure. Moreover, as Leslie Holmes points out, what happened in the Second World from mid-1970s onwards was not due to Party's over-involvement in the economic life, but its withdrawal from economic sphere<sup>59</sup> and giving concessions to private entrepreneurs or the failure to supply the demanded goods to the market while refusing the private enterprises that caused the rationality and hence legitimacy problem.

In a state in which the communists have come to power as an alternative to a repressive regime or at the end of a popular revolution, despite the intensity of economic crisis, public questioning of the merits of a communist regime is unlikely unless the period of crisis lengthens for an indefinite period. Even in such a case, people may be led to believe that the failure is not originating from the shortcomings of the Party or of ideology. This would be possible because the communist party has the means of communication and propaganda under its control and the mainstream official ideology claims that the party assumes a vanguard role for the society's progress. This means, in János Kornai's words, that "[t]he party knows better than the people itself what the people's interest demands: this is precisely what 'vanguard' means."<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, people may be indoctrinated in such a way that they would

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<sup>59</sup>*ibid.*, p. 32.

believe the failures are caused by the inability of certain unworthy apparatchiks or may be threatened by the use of coercive means.

There must be a really strong counter-point to prove the failure of the political-economic system as a whole to result in such a lapse of faith in the ideology. The totalitarian nature of the communist system and its control over coercive forces hardens the situation for the opposition. Such examples of opposition and uprising against the system, however, exist in the form of the 1953 East German disturbances, the 1956 Polish change of government, the 1956 uprising in Hungary and the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia during which the people showed clearly that they saw the communist regime as illegitimate. A similar stand came from the Solidarity movement in Poland which challenged the legitimate authority of the Polish government. However, one must also bear in mind that except for the Hungarian case where the public opinion associated the tyranny of Rákosi with the communist rule itself, the idea of communist illegitimacy took decades to be popular in the countries 'liberated' by communists either due to economic improvements, totalitarian oppression and indoctrination, or public apathy.

#### **B. Legitimacy in an Interactive System:**

All the points discussed above are correct if one takes a state as a political and economic ecosystem which acts within its own limits. However, as no state operates in political or economic isolation, any given state cannot be perceived as an isolated, limited-in-itself system. Each and every state has a place in international scene and has alliances, trade relationships, debts, partners.

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<sup>60</sup> János Kornai, The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England: 1992 p. 55.

opponents, even enemies that it has to act and interact with and reciprocate to. Every state must consider its capabilities, its foreign policy objectives, the threats to its economic and political independence, and hence be a member of an interactive system, however it may try to reduce its relationship with the others to a mere minimum.

As a result of this, a totally isolated political and economic environment is unfeasible. This also needs an alteration to the points discussed above. The liberal-democratic system may be thoroughly applicable in a limited number of liberal-democratic countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, or France. However, as the degree of predictability and stability in the systems begins to become vaguer, as in such countries as Italy, Greece, or Mexico, due to systemic flaws, the system would be less clearly defined. In such a case, the grounds of legitimacy for a given state and its political system's existence may not be equally legitimising, or may even help delegitimise the administration or the system in other countries. Martin Wight claims that many regimes which were not considered legitimate managed to survive because the members of international state system accepted their legitimacy based on these domestically illegitimate regimes' respect for the territorial integrity of their neighbouring states and their willingness to abide by the values of non-intervention and order in international scale<sup>61</sup>. Furthermore, their willingness to accept the values shared by a bloc or its alternative within a bipolar world political structure would also make these regimes internationally legitimate even if domestically illegitimate and / or unwanted.

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<sup>61</sup> Martin Wight, Systems of States, Leicester University Press, Leicester, England: 1991, pp. 160-166 passim.



Foreign intervention may also be performed in a direct manner, in addition to indirect intervention as political support. The main way of such intervention is the invasion of a country by another and imposition of the value-systems of the victors to the losers. In case of the liberal-democratic system's adoption as a result of a foreign invasion, the success or failure of the system would depend on the success or failure of the occupant country's persuasion of the people of the occupied country. A mid-way legitimation of the liberal-democratic system and an alteration of it may be seen in such countries as India, Pakistan, or a refusal of the system may be observed as in the examples of Iraq and Syria, or a search for an alternative while a swing in between democracy and other possibilities may occur, as can be seen in the Algerian case.

The same proposition is -or, rather, was- true for the members of the Socialist Bloc. In countries like the USSR or China which had experienced regime changes through popular revolution and civil war, the system's legitimacy is highly dependent on the ideological beliefs and economic expectations related to the ideological beliefs, that is, on public acceptance of the ideological propositions by will. However, even in case of a socialist revolution, with the international place it holds, a country like Cuba or Angola may never reach its goal of communism and may become a dictatorial state as a result of the presence or lack of international pressures or help.

In case of conversion by force, the consequences may differ from the consequences of conversion by will. A communist system imposed by force results in a direct rejection as in the case of Afghanistan or may result in a great amount of co-operation as seen in Bulgaria during the Cold War.

Alternatively, the imposed system may be altered such as in the case of

Albania, or may be reinterpreted such as in the Yugoslav Federation under Tito's rule, to serve the needs of a given country or a certain ruling class. The indoctrination of socialism by an occupation force may also be perceived differently in different times. For instance, the occupation was first perceived as a development as it ended the Nazi occupation, but gradually became a source of discontent in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

In the cases of change of regime due to foreign invasion, the capabilities of the invaded country's people is mostly very limited. On the other hand, the grounds for legitimising the new regime are also very limited. The newly established system would, in such a case, represent not the choice of the people of the invaded country, but of those who invaded it. Therefore, a legitimation from the top scheme is present in such instances. In this case, the consent and co-operation of a small group of the country's elite is enough to self-legitimise the system with the support of coercive organs. Even though a part of the society outside the elite formation would support the new regime, these would constitute a minority in the overall population.

As an alternative, the invasion force might have liberated the country from another invasion force and a popular sympathy towards the latter invaders may appear until the time they make certain that they have no intention to leave the 'liberated' lands. In such a case, the minority collaborating with the invaders may get into authority positions in the initial period of sympathy with the votes of people who wouldn't vote for them in normal electoral conditions, as they are seen as national heroes who helped the liberators liberate their country from invasion. When it is apparent that the liberators have no intention of departing, the sympathy is likely to disappear and the new political system

imposed by the invaders and their brothers in arms at the invaded country, then, it is at this point that the new regime is likely to face with a legitimacy crisis. In such a case, the two tools of legitimation the new cadres may use would be:

- a) propaganda and indoctrination which would take time and is uncertain to be successful, and,
- b) the use of organised state coercive forces, that is the use of police forces and the armed forces, these being backed and/or constituted by the occupant state's forces.

In the case where elimination of opposition is followed by a strong programme of political brain-washing, the acceptance of the new regime as legitimate may become easier. If this process is backed by some economic success, partly due to the transfer of technology and know-how from the invader, which might prove the success of the new regime, propaganda becomes more effective. However, although the new regime may have all the means to legally legitimise itself and the components of the new political order, people may not accept it as legitimate. This is due to the fact that the new regime's ability to eliminate opposition by coercion is not equal to its popularity. The lack of opposition may stem from the belief in the futility of opposition or in the impossibility of a regime change even by a revolution. Inaction against the regime, thus, would be a show of popular consent on its power to eliminate opposition. This cannot prove the system as legitimate because the situation it enjoys is based on the lack of alternative. The main base of the government, in such a case, is the international environment that lets the invader remain in the invaded country. If the balances change, the occupation forces need to



withdraw, and if the system failed in achieving any success in either political or economic fields, it is most likely to be overthrown.

The case in many Central East European countries following World War II, the situation was similar to that described above. In the post-war period, Soviet invasion and backing ensured the triumph of communists in East European states. In the first step, new regimes were established with communists infiltrating to important political positions. As a second step, in the first post-war elections, these communists were elected to govern the country. Finally, they established a communist rule based on the leadership of a Communist Party, the representative of the *proletariat*, and by means of coercion eliminated all opposition. Policies followed included collectivisation of agricultural sector, the emphasis on the creation of a blue-collar working class in these mostly agrarian countries, heavy youth indoctrination. These aimed at creating popular support and popular will in favour of a communist revolution. Effective propaganda and the pursuit of an industrialisation programme sought to create compensation in these countries for the lack of the class and industrial structures foreseen by Karl Marx for a socialist revolution. The industrialisation process in these countries was aimed at creating a working class, a *proletariat*, which would have close links with the Communist Party and an interest in the continuity of the socialist system as it claimed to act on its behalf. The existence of Soviet troops and well-trained actual and secret police forces made the systems established in these countries invulnerable, hence reluctantly acceptable. The 1956 rebellion in Hungary ended in great human casualties and a painful period of 're-normalisation' in which the economic well-being was exchanged for the recognition of the regime as

legitimate. In most East European countries, with the exception of Czechoslovakia in 1968, such rebellions were avoided by the knowledge on the results of the Hungarian example. The economic failure of the East European communist regimes from mid-1970s onwards, when combined with the USSR's withdrawal from direct involvement through the so-called *Gorbachev Doctrine* followed by the less strict *Sinatra Doctrine*<sup>62</sup> from mid-1980s onwards, created grave legitimacy crises for the East European regimes and hence brought them down.

Therefore, the role of international intervention, either as in the case of 'Western' intervention in the conflict between North Korea and South Korea, or in cases of the lack of such direct intervention, as could be observed in the case of East European regime changes in the aftermath of the World War II, is a key issue of legitimacy and legitimation which transcends the option of coercive legitimation. The cancellation of such aid and military protection eased the fall of these regimes. Similarly, the impossibility of intervention by Russian Empire's allies due to the conditions of the World War I, such as the fact that the Dardanelles Campaign failed and Germany was not yet defeated, has made considerable contribution to the success of the Russian October Revolution. In both instances, an intervention by the Western powers might dramatically change the course of history.

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<sup>62</sup> The term Sinatra Doctrine was first used in November 1989 by Gennadi Gerasimov, the then Soviet Foreign Ministry Spokesman, while trying to find a way to express the Perestroika-based new Soviet foreign policy, as opposed to the Brezhnev and Gorbachev Doctrines. He described the new, libertarian approach as the Sinatra Doctrine on the basis that the famous singer's popular song "My Way" in which he sings he "did it my way." As the new policy suggested the East European subordinates of the USSR would be able to follow whatever policy they chose, he baptised the policy as the "Sinatra Doctrine". For this matter, see J.F. Brown, *Surge to Freedom*, Adamantine Press, Twickenham, England: 1991, p. 62.



The 1956 rebellions in Hungary and the lack of interest and/or support from Western European countries is another clear example of the working of the interactive-system. Mihaly Vajda claims that while the rebellions were a “struggle for national independence,” the West European states ignored the situation. Vajda argues that “it was the Russian intervention in Hungary in 1956 which revealed that Western politics not only accepts the post-1945 situation, but also carefully safeguards it.”<sup>63</sup> The Hungarian political philosopher claims that the safeguarding of individual freedoms by accepting the dominance of a world system dominated by two superpowers created a threat to the rejuvenation of the real European spirit which would mean the return to the continuous revision of values, the ability to go back to one’s roots, rationalism and pragmatism<sup>64</sup>.

In unison with Vajda, Hungarian sociologist and translator Ferenc Köszeg claimed that the West was indifferent to the East European discontent and dissent. Köszeg claims that Kissinger’s vision of a peaceful Europe based on the agreement of the superpowers and the preservation of the *status quo* failed because people of the Eastern Europe disliked this agreement. He mentions the fact that the US Secretary of State Schultz has praised János Kádár in his visit to Hungary in 1987 and “reduced his criticism to the simple observation that Kádár should not smoke so much as the world needs him to remain healthy,”<sup>65</sup> without getting involved into any post-Perestroika discussions in the country

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<sup>63</sup> Mihaly Vajda, ‘Central East European Perspectives,’ *East European Reporter*, vol. 1(1), Spring 1985 (pp. 5-7), p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Democracy Within the Warsaw Pact: An Interview With Ferenc Köszeg,’ *East European Reporter*, vol. 3(4), Spring-Summer 1989 (pp. 12-14), p. 12.



for the West is too much preoccupied with the governments and underestimates societies while trying to protect its interests.

Therefore, both Hungarian intellectuals seem to adopt an accusative approach towards the lack of involvement of the West in the domestic political sphere in the Eastern Bloc countries, particularly their own Hungary. However, Vajda and Köszeg miss the point that the international political environment forced the West European states to ignore the Hungarian revolution to prevent a widespread multinational war. When the international environment permitted for a political change in Eastern Europe, the West European states, especially the European Union as a supranational institution were of assistance to their East European counterparts as well as the United States. Therefore, it may be claimed that lack or existence of foreign intervention is directly related with the changes in the international political agenda.

Foreign intervention to a country's political system has effects beyond the control of government. The opposition in a country which is subject to foreign intervention is also receptive to changes. For instance, the communist influence in the East European states has given way to the formation of an alliance of dissidents which covers the most diversified groups together. In the 1956 events in Hungary, the opponents of the communist regime consisted of an alliance of such unlikely allies consisting of reform communists, supporters of the fascist Admiral Horthy regime and the Catholic Church allied together against the Stalinist, pro-Soviet regime<sup>66</sup>.

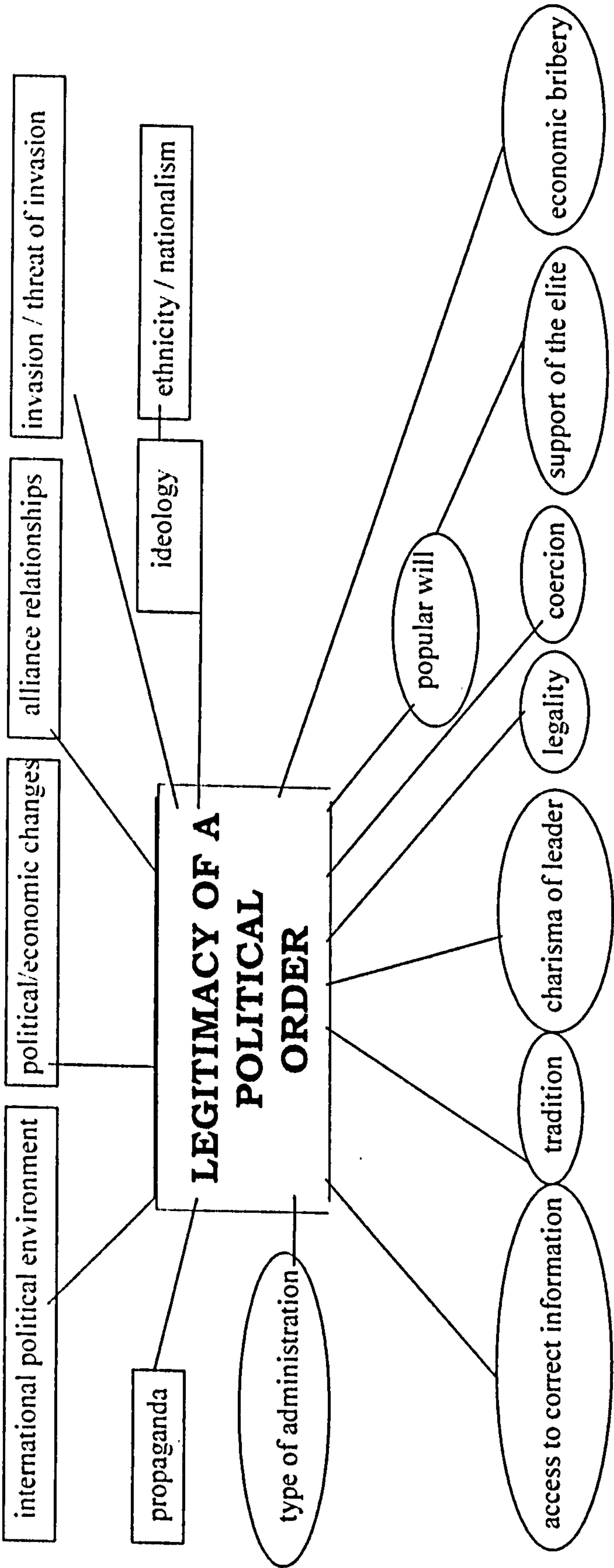
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<sup>66</sup> Mate Szabo, 'Nation-State, Nationalism, and the Prospects for Democratization in East Central Europe' in *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, v. 27(2), p. 381.

As a result, the international dimension of legitimation is to be taken into consideration when analysing a state system, as it gives way to different political developments, alliances and affiliations. The role of foreign intervention in the definition or sustainment of a particular regime in a given country therefore has the ability to alter the political balances in that given country. Hence, the political system is affected and so is the question of regime legitimacy and the main techniques that are available to legitimise the regime. The outside influence over the political system of a country is capable of altering all the dynamics of the system if the link between the foreign source of authority and the domestic rulers is capable of maintaining their control over the population by the use of coercion, of propaganda or social bribery.

Figure 2.1.: International and Domestic Factors Affecting Legitimacy:

INTERNATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING LEGITIMACY



DOMESTIC FACTORS AFFECTING LEGITIMACY



### III. LEGITIMACY AND HUNGARY

#### A. Legitimacy and Eastern Europe:

In the light of all the above discussions, it would be correct to argue that legitimacy is a dynamic concept of political life. Through its historical evolution, the concept has modified itself and adapted into the needs and conditions of the changing systems and societies. Since the appearance of the need for establishing a kind of rapport between the rulers and the ruled, the idea of *social contract* has been an intrinsic part of the concept of legitimacy. The developments in the twentieth century gave way to further developments and alterations in the definition of the concept. However, the fact remains that a regime's longevity depends on its being approved by the people it rules.

The changes that are observed in the Latin American and South and East European regions since 1974 have made it clear that legitimacy of a regime is a key concept and if a regime cannot reach a social contract with its subjects or citizens, it is likely to fail and fall the moment it loses the ability to efficiently use the means of coercion to create order. On that account, a distinction should be made between the existence of order –or the lack of insurrection- in a country and the actual public support for a regime which provides legitimacy to this regime. If the regime is perceived as illegitimate, its durability is in question whatever means of coercion it may employ. The international intervention in terms of invasion or direct or indirect military, political, and economic support may not change the fate of a regime or alter its cognition as legitimate or illegitimate, but may only delay regime change.

Nor is any one regime identical to another. The conditions surrounding a state with their demographic, economic, social, political, geostrategic and historic backgrounds enable different sets of requirements for the survival and legitimacy of ruling regimes. A society's needs and perceptions may be radically different from any other's. Consequently, the concept of democracy and the process of democratisation may necessitate different routes and procedures to be applied in any given country. The methods of legitimation and the grounds of legitimacy may differ from one country to another as well.

Eastern Europe is a part of the world where one may observe the dynamics of change and continuity in terms of legitimacy and legitimation in its own specific conditions. Due to its post-war history, the region has developed a distinct structure. Furthermore, the transmutation in that region is the most evident, recent, and strong one. As the needs and perceptions in time changed sharply in this region within the last decade, so did the expectations from and the duties associated with a ruling regime. The political concept of legitimacy has been altered to suit to the requirements of the new era as well. Legitimacy, in Eastern Europe, now has a clearer, sharper, more pertinent meaning. Therefore, its analysis would require a more focused approach. This very research aims at showing the importance of the concept of legitimacy as well as the different methods employed to guarantee its presence for a given regime within the changing rules of politics by using a specific country as its model and medium of representation.

However, as the argument of this thesis is that each and every country have their own specific needs and conditions, a general, regional approach in the study of legitimacy is thought not to be suitable. Therefore, a model country is

to be used to see the change in the perception of the concept of legitimacy and the methods of legitimation after the changes since late 1987.

As a model country, this thesis will focus on the transmutation of the political system and of the concepts of legitimacy and legitimation in Hungary, once referred to as the most liberal of the socialist states of the Eastern Bloc. This thesis, in its following parts, aims at pinpointing the conditions that surrounded the regime-society relations since World War II, the changes in terms of establishing and preserving regime legitimacy, and the impact of changes in the aftermath of the implementation of the *Sinatra Doctrine* replacing the *Brezhnev Doctrine*, in the country. The main postulates of change and continuity in the political system of the country, the change in the importance and roles of specific political and economic institutions, emergence of different political forces and influential factors affecting the perception and implementation of legitimacy and legitimation techniques are to be discussed in the following chapters.

### **B. Hungary as Case Study:**

The discussion above shows that legitimacy is a more complex issue than it is taken by social scientists who focus on the subject as a matter of an isolated system analysis. The externally imposed and/or protected sort of legitimacy of a regime, the economic and social dynamics which affect the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, the availability of options to the rulers, and the willingness of the regime in power with the people it governs are all factors influencing the establishment, preservation and absence of legitimacy.

Of all the possible recent developments, the East European transformation appears as the clearest example of all in legitimacy studies. The changes that



took place in the political and economic spheres in the region from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century onwards constitutes a very broad field of observation for the students of the concept of legitimacy. The fall of the empires, the emergence of the smaller nation-states that replace these as individual kingdoms or republics, the devastation brought by the World War II, the Soviet intervention following the Nazi invasion, the plantation of Soviet-friendly communist regimes which forced changes in the lifestyle of the people of this region, the resistance movements and the governments' methods to confront these, constitute a rich historical background to analyse the changes to the concept of legitimacy. That the individual regimes had each peculiar solutions and techniques also emphasises the region's peculiarity.

Of the regimes in Eastern Europe, though, Hungary, the chosen case-study subject of this thesis, emerges as a unique experience as it provides different solutions to similar problems than its counterparts in the region. When we look at the other states in the region, German Democratic Republic appears to be merely beyond a buffer zone with a strict regime. The Polish example is full of attempts of renewal of the system which meant a change in the Party cadres and nothing else. The Czechoslovak example, especially after 1968 events shows that it was based on terror and fear as well as indoctrination of the Communist ideology. The Rumanian regime, an outpost of the Soviet sphere of influence, was based on very strong nationalism and on the leadership of one family. The Yugoslav state was also based on the charismatic leadership of one leader, Tito, while its federated states were in constant competition with each other. Of the Soviet-controlled East European states, only Hungary stands

apart from the others in that its administration was based on a social contract after the 1956 events.

After the 1956 rebellion to mid-1988, János Kádár stayed as the leader of the ruling regime in Hungary. This makes him a different leader as there has been several leadership changes in neighbouring countries during his leadership period. However, despite his long reign, Kádár never enjoyed the charismatic legitimacy Tito made use of, and as a collaborator of the invaders, even suffered from the problems due to a delegitimised position vis-à-vis the public in his first decade at the head of the Hungarian regime. Kádár enabled other factors to strengthen the regime credibility and legitimacy. He made use of an economic contract which enabled the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party to exchange political legitimacy with economic profit. Even the use of the policy of "those who are not against us are with us" shows that populism, economic and social bribery, quid-pro-quo techniques are at the core of the Kádárist administration's search for legitimacy. Unlike other regimes and other leaders, Hungarian Communists and János Kádár have sought the accord of the people they ruled. The fact that threat to use coercive measures did not solve the problem was proven by the events in 1956 led Kádár and his cadres to look for more complicated, more feasible, and more populist ways to establish legitimacy for the system.

Therefore, the period of János Kádár's rule in Hungary was different in many aspects from other East European countries of similar ideological orientation. In addition, the difference in the perception of the ruling political order by the Hungarian people and the perception of the people by the Hungarian ruling political order created a different set of rules and of conditions in the transition

to liberal democratic system in this country. The transformation of dissident civic groups into opposition political movements, the transaction between these and the Hungarian Communists and the round-table discussions which led to the fall of the communist system in the country also make Hungary a peculiar example.

As a result of all the above-mentioned matters, I chose to analyse the Hungarian example of transition and the transition of the concept of legitimacy of the ruling political order/regime in this country. In the following chapters, the Kádár system's attempts to gain legitimacy in its different stages, the transition and its legitimacy crisis, and the post-communist regime's search for legitimacy will be analysed.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **KÁDÁRIST LEGACY OF HUNGARY: SOCIETY AND CHANGE IN THE NEW HUNGARIAN POLITICAL ORDER**

### **I. THE DISTINCTIVE PLACE OF HUNGARY**

As previously discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the issue of regime legitimacy had been perceived differently in Hungary in comparison with the understanding of the issue in the rest of Eastern Bloc countries. The main reason for this difference is the peculiar patterns of interaction between the administration and the people during the establishment, development, and decline of the communist regime in Hungary. The specific administrative methods used by administrations led by Matyas Rákosi, János Kádár, and Kádár's short-term heir, Karoly Grosz, the problems they inherited from their predecessors as leaders, and the social and economic conditions they faced caused the emergence of a Hungarian-style approach to the concept of legitimacy and the issue of legitimation.

The differences in confronting the problems of legitimacy and legitimation in Hungary qualified the country as a distinctive agent within the state socialist system. The differences in terms of ruler-ruled relationship in comparison to the rest of the Eastern Bloc and different methods applied in that context by the Hungarian administration, even under the leadership of a single leader, enabled the application of different policies at different times to preserve

order. Due to the peculiarity of the state socialist period, the democratic transition and the post-communist governments' attempts at establishing legitimacy are linked to the events that took place and relationships established during that period. The methods used and the social contract established in that era still affects the developments in Hungarian politics. Therefore, the interaction between the rulers and the ruled during the reign of state socialist leaders Rákosi, Kádár, and Grosz are to be analysed to reach a conclusion on how the current political regime needs to respond to different situations that take place in the post-communist political arena. While the policies of different governments and political developments concerning legitimacy will be discussed in following parts of the thesis, this chapter will focus on the different policies employed to legitimise the system and to secure a social and an economic contract during the communist era in Hungary, beginning with the communist seizure of power in the country and continuing with the efforts of János Kádár, the leader of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party from 1956 to 1988 to keep regime legitimacy undiminished. The chapter will then focus on the democratisation process which began with the Round-Table Discussions of 1989. The different methods employed in the transitory period in Hungary are to be emphasised as the peculiar situation of the country's political structure needed a different approach. Finally, there will be an analysis on the Hungarian people's perception of democracy.

## **II. HUNGARY BEFORE KÁDÁR**

### **A. From The Empire to the Communist Rule:**

Although the developments which took place after he left office will also be analysed in the thesis, the main focus of this chapter will be János Kádár and

his work as the longest-ruling HSWP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) leader –from 1956 to 1988- and the originator of a quasi-social contract between the Hungarian state and the Hungarian people. Kádár's success as a leader, his eagerness to adopt and employ different policies in order to render legitimacy to the communist regime in Hungary beyond a Soviet-imposed indoctrination and coercive threat, and the outcomes of these policies make the Kádár administration the main subject of this study. Since the legacy of the Kádár administration in respect of popular expectations about politics and economics can still be observed in the Hungarian life, the importance of the Kádár administration stretches beyond the term of office of this Hungarian leader.

However, Hungarian history before Kádár's rise to power may shed some light on the development of events in the recent past in that country. To analyse the Kádár era without mentioning what preceded it would be an incomplete analysis as the Kádárist policies have their roots in the Rákosi era. Without analysing what preceded the Kádárist administration, one cannot understand the changes that took place under János Kádár's rule for the pre-Kádár systems of administration have impact on the Kádárist administration as much as Kádár has an impact on the current post-communist political order. Therefore, before analysing the leader, the events, and the policies of the Kádárist era in the country, a glance at the events that prepared the background for the Kádár administration is necessary.

The way Hungary was governed before the communist take-over is important to understand the political tradition of the country. Hungary, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1867 to 1918, was administered by a self-



government system. After World War I, with the collapse of the Empire, it gained its independence as an individual nation-state. For 133 days in 1919, Hungary became a communist republic under the leadership of Béla Kun. This short-lived communist government was brought to an end by the Czechoslovak-Rumanian intervention. The Szeged Government established after that event and led by István Friedrich could not survive much without the support of Admiral Miklos Horthy, the aide-de-camp of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph and the commander of the last Habsburg fleet. With elections held on 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1920, it was decided that Hungary would remain a kingdom but would be ruled by a regent who would be Admiral Horthy. Thus, from 1920 till the end of the World War II, Hungary was ruled by Admiral Horthy, acting as regent for an unnamed king<sup>67</sup>. After Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, Horthy fell more and more under German influence and assisted Hitler with the Hungarian troops in the Nazi campaign against the USSR in 1941.

With the defeat of the Third Reich, Hungary was invaded by the Red Army during the last stages of the World War II, in 1944-45. Admiral Horthy fled, and a provisional government, including the communist agriculture minister Imre Nagy, was formed. This formation marked the beginning of the end of the non-communist era in the country for the next four decades.

## **B. The Pre-Kádár Hungarian Communist Rule:**

### **1. Establishment of Communist Rule in Hungary:**

With the formation of the provisional government in 1945, a momentum towards the establishment of communist rule in the country began. An elected

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<sup>67</sup> William M. Batkay, Authoritarian Politics in a Transitional State: Istvan Bethlen and the Unified

assembly brought a republic into existence in 1946, but it soon fell under Soviet domination, although only 70 communists had been elected within a total of 409 deputies. In the 1947 elections, which were manipulated to a great extent, the communists became the most widely represented party in the parliament with 100 seats. Then, with the slogan “we rebuild the country not for the capitalists but for the people,” first the new currency unit Forint was introduced. The introduction of the Forint is comparable to the introduction of the Deutsche-Mark in the parts of Germany occupied by the Western powers a while later as both indicate a sharp departure from the previously existing system and as both signify the beginning of a new era for both countries involved. In Western Germany, the introduction of the D-Mark signified that a unified control of Western and Soviet parts of the German lands was no more a possibility while the Hungarian communists’ introduction of the Forint signified a departure from the old system by removing one of the most easily identifiable elements of the previous order.

The second step was the implementation of a vast nationalisation process, beginning with the nationalisation of the large commercial banks and then of all the enterprises employing more than 100 workers. This process, too, was aimed at underlining the differences of the system with the previous order.

In the third stage, a ‘Unification Congress’ was held in August 1948. In the congress, the *Hungarian Workers’ Party* (HWP) was founded as a combination of all remaining left-wing fractions; a process observed, approved, and commanded by the Soviet leader Stalin himself. Matyas Rákosi, referred to as ‘Stalin’s apt pupil,’ chosen as the leader of the HWP, gradually

led the country to a Stalinist regime. The final stage of transformation came in August 1949 with the approval of a Stalinist, Soviet-type, constitution which assigned the *Hungarian Workers' Party* a leading role in the development of the society towards democracy and communism<sup>68</sup>. From then until the late 1980s, the concept of Party was to be used interchangeably with the concept of state in the country as in many other state socialist political orders.

During Rákosi's rule, especially after the adoption of the new Soviet-style constitution in 1949, industry was nationalised, land was collectivised and a wave of secret-police terror was launched to legitimise the system by suppressing any actual or potential opposition movement even before such a movement was conceived. The Stalinist political order of Hungary, from 1949 to 1953 was devoted to attain goals in productivity and in creating a model socialist environment with collective farms, heavy industry, and complete state hegemony over the political and economic realms. Coercion was the basis of achieving these goals under Rákosi's rule, as was under Stalinist Soviet Union. The activities of the secret police force, the AVO, and the sense of terror created by these activities prevented any social opposition. However, this attitude towards the relationship between the Party/state and the people created no impact on the public approval of the new political order. The legitimacy of the state in the case of Rákosi's Hungary was based only on coercive power and it is a fact Kádár sought to change by early 1960s onwards.

The general system of political organisation was imposed upon the Hungarians by the *liberation* of Hungary by the Soviet troops and despite the success of

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<sup>68</sup> Gyorgy Litvan (ed.), *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Reform, Revolt and Repression*, Longman, London: 1996, pp. 12-14 passim.



the Smallholders Party in the first post-war elections, by the end of 1948, the Communists were holding the power due to Rákosi's famous *salami tactics* which weakened the opposition and prevented a centre-left coalition and to extensive double-voting<sup>69</sup>. The grounds of legitimacy for the Rákosi-led party was their ideological belief in the righteousness of what they do, and the Soviet occupational forces to convince the nation in case of doubt. The dramatic changes in the social structure, the intensive collectivisation of farms, the emphasis on industrialisation and on the creation of a reliable working class, the ban on the offsprings of the former elite to get a university education, and the extensive, if not useless, use of force against any sort of resistance, created a temporary forced legitimacy for the Rákosi regime during the final years of the Stalinism. However, with the change of cadres in Moscow and the rise of opposition to Rákosi inside and outside the Hungarian Communist Party led to the events of 1956. Rákosi's mistakes were to assume that the threat and the use of force and an intra-party justification of the acts of the administration meant legitimacy for the system. He also underestimated the intra-CPSU conflicts and hence could not foresee the orthodox and de-Stalinist approach that would replace Stalinism.

## 2. The Hungarian Revolution:

On 14 March 1953, the leader of the Soviet Bloc, Joseph Stalin died. His demise changed the Soviet understanding of the Cold War as well as the relations among the leading cadres of the USSR. This affected the whole of the Eastern Bloc countries. The political struggle that emerged with the death of Stalin resulted in first the establishment of a committee to rule the country.

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<sup>69</sup> Nigel Swain, Hungary: The Rise And Fall Of Feasible Socialism, Verso, London, UK: 1992, p. 37.

This group included Beria, Molotov, Zhukov, Malenkov, and Khrushchev. However, by 1956, the country was ruled by a triumvirate consisting of Khrushchev, Zhukov and Malenkov<sup>70</sup>. The change in leadership gave rise to a softer, readjusted approach to the state-society relations in the USSR and this new political order was reflected in the USSR's subordinate states in Eastern Europe.

In Hungary, with the support of the Party Secretary Malenkov, Imre Nagy replaced Rákosi as the prime minister, while Rákosi remained as the leader of the Party. In 1955, Nagy's fortunes paralleled those of Malenkov in the USSR as they both were removed from office. This parallelism between the two leaders demonstrates the importance of the global structure and of the external legitimacy of a political order (as discussed in Chapter 2) in the East European states during the Cold War period.

In 1956, however, while the deteriorating domestic scene ensured that on 23 October 1956 Nagy once more became the Hungarian prime minister, Matyas Rákosi had to step down from Party leadership. This was due to a series of events which happened between 23 October and 4 November 1956 and generally referred to as the Hungarian Revolution, although there are some claims questioning the reliability of the term 'revolution' since the action failed within twelve days from its start<sup>71</sup>.

The liberalisation and restructuring process initiated by public intervention to the administration went on with Nagy's declaration that Hungary was to leave

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<sup>70</sup> S. J. Ball, The Cold War: An International History 1947-1991, Arnold, London, UK: 1998, p. 66.

<sup>71</sup> See for instance Terry Cox, 'Reconsidering the Hungarian Revolution of 1956,' in Terry Cox (ed.), Hungary 1956 - Forty Years On, Frank Cass, London England and Portland, Oregon: 1997, pp. 3-6, on an elaborate discussion on the suitability of the term 'revolution,' and claims on the events being in fact an 'insurrection' or a 'counter-revolution'.

the Warsaw Pact and become a neutral state. The revolution, as a combination of two interrelated processes of elite action which embodied “strata within or close to the centre of the Communist power apparatus itself” (such as writers, intellectuals, and revisionist communist politicians) and a ‘mass process ... spreading throughout the broad anonymous masses’” as P. Kecskemeti argues<sup>72</sup>, was unique in this combination and in its being an uprising against the Soviet authority and those who represent it, was a momentous event in European history. Hence, the change of government, which, with Nagy’s declaration of 31 October might as well lead to a change of political order, triggered a strong Soviet response, despite the less strict attitude of the new Soviet regime compared to the Stalinist era. On 4 November 1956, Warsaw Pact troops invaded Hungary crushing the revolution, ending the reform process. After many confrontations, the Soviet/Warsaw Pact troops gained control and while the revolution was crushed, some 200,000 Hungarians had to flee the country for the West<sup>73</sup>. After the Soviet troops gained control of the country, the Hungarian leader Imre Nagy was arrested. The new communist administration was to be led by János Kádár who would become the avatar of the concept of state in Hungary from late 1956 till his removal from office in May 1988.

The events of 23 October - 4 November 1956 proved two things for the Hungarian communist leadership. Firstly, the events demonstrated that coercion was not the guaranteed method of gaining legitimacy, and not even obedience. The enormity of the Soviet military support for Rákosi failed to

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 4, from P. Kecskemeti The Unexpected Revolution: Social Forces in the Hungarian Uprising, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1961, p. 2.



prevent the fall of the HWP administration. Secondly, the events demonstrated that public support was necessary for a regime to survive. The Rákosi administration's failure to accept that power alone is insufficient to sustain regime legitimacy and that legal-constitutional legitimacy of a regime is insufficient to sustain regime existence led to the multi-centric approach of János Kádár. The difference of Hungary from the rest of the Soviet-subordinate states of Eastern Europe relates to the events of 23 October - 4 November 1956 onwards. After the suppression of the 1956 disturbances, the issues related to legitimacy and legitimation in Hungary followed a different developmental pattern than the other East European members of the Soviet Bloc. The Kádár regime tried to reach a consensus with the Hungarian citizens rather than forcing the rules of the system upon them, while methods varying from martial law to nationalistic communism were used in other countries of the region.

In the wake of the 1956 rebellion, the Kádár administration's first tasks were to re-establish the communist order, establish a legitimate political order acceptable to the Hungarian people, and which would manage to achieve these two objectives by not alienating the Soviet - Warsaw Pact principles. The mistake of Rákosi administration which gave way to the public rebellion of the 1956 was to seek Soviet approval for all its actions while ignoring to seek legitimacy in domestic level. It believed that coercive threat and legal-constitutional justification/legitimation of the ruling political order was enough if the external dimension of legitimacy was established. In the Hungarian case, the close relationship between Stalin and Rákosi and the existence of Soviet-

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<sup>73</sup>Nigel Swain, *loc.cit.*, pp. 18-49 *passim*:

Warsaw Pact troops in Hungary appeared to be at the heart of this belief. The internal dimension of legitimacy, even in a closed system -based on single-party rule and which excludes the idea of competitive elections-, is as important -if not more important- an element in respect of the search for regime legitimacy. The revolution had aptly demonstrated the consequences of a regime that relied solely on Soviet support. The new regime, led by János Kádár, sought to re-establish the order -in all political, legal, and social senses of the word- in Hungary. It had to find a consensus between the two major actors which will enable the political system to function, namely the Soviet Bloc and the Hungarian people. Kádár's policies in over a time span of more than three decades, leading the country and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) were all aimed at establishing that balance.

Therefore, although the period of 1953-1956 is very interesting for many a student of Hungarian politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, one has to focus on the Kádár Era in Hungary to see what the current system is replacing both in terms of political and economic system and in terms of legitimacy and legitimation. This chapter will therefore be mainly a discussion of the Kádár Era in Hungary, focusing on the developments and changes of the period between Autumn 1956 and Spring 1988.

### III. KÁDÁRIST HUNGARY

#### A. János Kádár's Background:

János Kádár may be described as the most important figure in post-war Hungarian politics, as both a leader and a policy-maker. His models of *New Economic Mechanism* and *Second economy/Second society* have become the milestones of the Hungarian economic development and underdevelopment.

His leadership and policies created the framework for the developments in the Hungarian political life since late 1956 to date. His leadership period, from the Autumn of 1956 to the Spring of 1988, may ideologically be labelled under the heading of *Kádárism* as it signifies, in a way, a different attitude towards socialism compared to the Soviet model itself and the spin-offs from this model implemented in other East European countries. Therefore, to understand the present political agenda of Hungary, one has to consider what happened during the 32 years of Kádár-led Hungarian Socialism. Therefore, in order to have a clearer picture of the current Hungarian political landscape and to see what affects the legitimacy problem in the current political order, a thorough study of the developments, policies and legitimation techniques of the Kádár era is to be carried out.

János Kádár, a typewriter repairman by profession, joined the Hungarian socialist underground movement in his youth and remained in the party structure becoming a member of the Politburo of the Hungarian Socialist Party and from 1948 to 1951, serving under the leadership of Matyas Rákosi as the Minister of Interior. However, he spent the period 1951-1953 in prison for charges of anti-Stalinism. Then, in 1956, he regained his place in the *nomenklatura* and became a Politburo member.

Before the 1956 uprising, he was “not well-known in the country but, where he was known, recognised as a victim of the Stalinist trials and as such relied on as an opponent of Stalinism -a reasonably popular if untried new Party leader”<sup>74</sup>, although his loyalty to Rákosi regime as one of its cabinet ministers

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<sup>74</sup>William Shawcross, Crime and Compromise: János Kádár and the Politics of Hungary since the Revolution, Weidenfield and Nicholson, London: 1974, p. 14.



was also noted. Kádár, a supporter of Khrushchev's moderate political approach, was in Imre Nagy's Politburo in late 1956. He was also the only person who expressed anger towards Yuri Andropov, then the Soviet ambassador to Hungary, on 1 November 1956 meeting of Andropov with the Hungarian politburo. The same night, Kádár was reading a declaration in Radio Kossuth stating that "in their glorious uprising [the Hungarian] people have shaken off the Rákosi regime"<sup>75</sup>.

The same Kádár, though, abandoned Nagy's and his supporters' side and, on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1956, declared the formation of the Soviet-backed *Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government* at the time the Soviet invasion began. He was to return to Budapest in a Soviet armoured-vehicle and assume the leadership of the Party for the next 32 years while his government colleagues were arrested and at times executed.

With the overthrow of the Nagy administration, a new communist dictatorship was set up, with Kádár as the premier and head of the renamed and restructured *Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party* (HSWP), the replacement for the defamed and by then notorious *Hungarian Workers' Party*. The Soviet administration promptly promised \$250 million in financial aid and full support for the new Party and the new administration of Hungary. Punishment of insurgents which had begun immediately after the Warsaw Pact troops' invasion of Hungary continued throughout 1957 and 1958, and thousands were deported to the USSR. Nagy's promise of free elections was broken and the only elections were those within the Communist system, that is with single candidates from the same party, the HSWP. By 1960s, Nagy and many of his

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<sup>75</sup>*ibid.*, p. 15.

associates had been executed. In the meantime, Cardinal Mindszenty, the head of the Hungarian Catholic Church who played a role in the short-lived liberalisation period, took refuge in the US council in Budapest, where he remained until he was permitted to leave the country in 1971, four years prior to his death<sup>76</sup>. The new era in Hungarian life would from late 1956 onwards be indexed to the successes and failures of one key political figure, János Kádár.

#### **B. Kádár's Party: The HSWP's Developmental Phases:**

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), a formation that emerged on the day of the Soviet intervention, was, at least theoretically, a creation of János Kádár. The Hungarian Workers' Party that it replaced was a product of the harsh Stalinist line as was its leader, Matyas Rákosi. The new formation, or rather the old party with a new name and a facelift, was, on the other hand, an offspring of a softer generation of communism. The softer approach of the HSWP in comparison with IWP owes to two important reasons. The first, and domestic, reason is the impact the 1956 uprising had on the communist leaders of Hungary. The 1956 events were, as Terry Cox points out, the first mass challenge to a communist regime since the first years of Soviet communism, and "were exceptional in giving birth to a sustained mass movement that briefly promised a genuine share of state power to non-communist parties and the prospect of a radical restructuring of social relations and institutions throughout Hungarian society"<sup>77</sup>. The second, and international, reason is that by the time HSWP regained control of the country, the Stalinist terror had ended and a new, more tolerant approach represented by Nikita Khrushchev

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<sup>76</sup> Gyorgy Litvan (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>77</sup> Terry Cox, *loc. cit.*, p. 2.

and his colleagues had replaced it. János Kádár, learning from the mistakes of his predecessors, adopted a far more toned down approach. All through the three and a half decades of its existence, the HSWP would adopt a low-key approach and would try to use other means of legitimation than to use or to threat to use coercion.

Rudolf Tökés argues for a three-phase course in the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's evolution. According to Tökés, the HSWP began, as all other Communist parties, as a *vanguard* party, then adopted a *system-management* mode, and at the end, became a *rearguard* party. In the *vanguard* mode, the HSWP assumed the role of an institution providing guidance and leadership to the nation. The party, in this stage, strengthened its political power, re-designed property relations in the country, mobilised society, and, employed the coercive forces of the state to gain public compliance. During that first phase which was between late 1956 and 1962-1963, Tökés claims that the party administration rid itself of its opponents, both Stalinists and radical reform-seekers, and created an ideological framework for its existence.

The Kádár administration's aim was to differentiate itself from the Stalinism just like the 20th Congress of Soviet Union Communist Party<sup>78</sup> and to convince the masses that it was a legitimate institution. The vanguard phase was, then, in a way, a stage of gaining legitimacy by use of force and by proving that there were no alternatives to the system. The restoration of power was also based on seeking an agreement with the Hungarian people. Kádár's 1961 phrase, "He who is not against us, is with us" really describes the mood

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<sup>78</sup> Rudolf Tökés, Hungary's Negotiated Revolution, Cambridge Uni. Press, Cambridge, England: 1996, pp. 26-28 *passim*



of the new system and of its search of legitimacy. The urgent requirement in this stage, though, was not public legitimation, but was to be seen as an entity the Hungarian people had to learn to live with and which would not threaten lives of the Hungarians unless another rebellious movement took place. The search for compromise begins in the first phase of the Kádár administration, but it is only in the system-management phase that the famous Kádárist compromise and Kádárist social and economic contract appear. A discussion on the impact of these on legitimacy will be dealt with in the section on civil society under Kádár of this chapter.

The second phase, the *system-management* period, began in early 1960s to last until the end of 1970s. By the early 1960s, political power secure, the Party was reorganised, the 'security belt' organisations such as the *Young Communist League* or the trade unions were revitalised, the political opposition -nationalist and Stalinist alike- were eliminated and hence the system seemed to be immune to another rebellion. In the *system-management* mode, the HSWP began to emphasise the difference between the Party and the State and gradually left the roles of economic management to the state officials. However, this policy was aimed at giving the HSWP less emphasis in public relations. By diminishing the level of contact between the Party and the public by locating the state mechanism instead of the Party mechanisms in issues directly related to public life, such as the management of economics, the role of the state was redefined. The aim in this policy was to channel any sort of public discontent away from the HSWP to the organs of state. As a result, if economic policies faltered, the bureaucracy and not the HSWP would be blamed as the Party would attribute the failure to economic policy makers.

However, due to the fact that key figures in the HSWP were also key figures in the state bureaucracy, the control of the Party has not diminished over the state mechanism. A decrease in Party control over the state sought to redefine the basic tenets of communist state system in which the communist party and the state were interactive as their structures and performances overlapped as the construction of a DNA spiral.

On the other hand, according to Tökés, the decrease in the superficial Party involvement in the administration may be linked, to the failure of the reforms to create the expected development. In such a case, the Party has few alternatives such as returning to the use of Stalinist methods that it might exercise in a very limited manner not to cause a new public outburst, or try new reforms. If neither works, Tökés argues, the Party sought to disassociate itself from the failures, attributing the blame to the state. This would lead the Party into a new phase in its developmental scale, namely the *rearguard* phase. The failure in achieving the economic objectives, especially in the commitment to the expectations DIP (*dognat' i peregnat* - catch up and surpass) policy which was a product of the 21st Soviet Communist Party Congress of 1958<sup>79</sup>, brought the HSWP into the *rearguard* phase.

The *rearguard* mode “is designed to gain time for organisational self-examination, policy reassessment, and the orderly re-deployment of the party’s personnel resources to non-party entities”<sup>80</sup>. In this phase, emphasis is placed on the bold and charismatic leadership, on the party’s retreat from the political

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<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31.

scene as direct manager of public policies, and, on the new 'contract' between the party and the low-ranking members of the *nomenklatura*.

Tökés claims that at the end of this phase, the party becomes a "helpless captive of a system of its own creation", because the military shifts its loyalty from the Party to the state, expertise outweighs party membership, and economy takes over from ideology in the conduct of foreign affairs of the state. Thus, the party becomes a follower of developments in the country rather than being the creator of the agenda. The events that took place in the country from late 1970s onwards may be seen as an example of such a lose of control. However, it is also true that ideological loyalty to the Party was a key element in obtaining and preserving professional positions. Ergo, Tökés's argument that the party becomes an outcast in its own system is not sound. That the HSWP has lost its ideological integrity and commitment to create an ideal communist state and that it appeared to provide solutions to the economic and social problems is true, however, that the Party was not in command and control of the developments in the country and that its leadership lost its edge to provide new solutions to the problems, are not true. One must bear in mind that the *second economy/second society* model came into existence during what Tökés labels the rearguard phase and this model provided a major influence in the transition to democracy and on the expectations of the Hungarian people from democracy.

This said, the failure of the system-management phase is undeniable. Tökés links it to the failure in the *New Economic Mechanism* (NEM) policy, introduced in 1968, following the *New Course* approach introduced in 1961, at the outset of the Kádár regime. The NEM introduced the concept of



consumerism to a society in which 98% of the means of production were state-owned. Given the lack of economic expertise in the Politburo members, the failure, combined with the state monopoly over the production, was unavoidable. By the end of 1970s, the system was struggling to prevent Hungary from folding down under the combined burdens of the state's external debts and the Party's failure to provide what it promised in its social contract with the people. Tökés' observation is true but odd as he doesn't believe in the existence of a social contract between Kádár and his citizenry. He sees the failure of this phase as the beginning of the beginning of political reform-seeking in the society and links the *second society* idea to this failure. On the other hand, if one disregards Tökés on the issue of social contract, combining his idea of *rearguard* policies of the HSWP with the *second economy* concept, the setting is applicable to Hungary. With the acceptance of a Kádárist social contract, the rearguard phase in the HSWP history becomes an attainable idea. I believe that Kádár has offered a series of compromises from the top, before these were demanded by the public, and these compromises constitute a series of economic concessions from the Party to the people in exchange of their obedience. The Kádárist social contract, therefore, is not a single contract, but a continuum of *quid pro quo* policies based on the exchange of a rise in welfare with political obedience. That the economic reforms of 1960s failed do not and should not lead us to the conclusion that the Party has become a rearguard organisation itself. Unlike in Poland where the communist party became politically rearguard and was left as a mere reactionary to the political developments which were led by outside forces, especially the Solidarity movement, the HSWP remained in control of the

political agenda as long as the international agenda permitted for the continuity of the *status quo*. Therefore, one should not take a shift in the Party policies which allowed the introduction of various economic concessions serving the same end as the Party losing control of the events in Hungarian social and economic life.

The change in the key bureaucratic positions at managerial level from an older generation to a younger generation is seen as another important point in the change. Tökés argues that professionalism was preferred rather than party membership in bureaucracy. He reaches the conclusion that by the 1980s, Hungarian social structure was thoroughly different from the origins of the regime. The rise in social mobility and hence in social stratification according to profession, educational background, involvement in the *second economy* and the like are also seen as factors that created a blueprint for the Hungarian civil society.

Ervin Laszlo takes another approach. He sees the development of communism in Hungary in four stages. The first is the *period of transition*, covering the time between 1945 and 1948, from the Soviet 'liberation' of Hungary from Nazi invasion to the communist take-over of power after the 1948 elections. The second phase is the *Gleichschaltung period* (1949-1956) in which the communists under Rákosi's leadership tried to suppress and eliminate all political opposition by harsh Stalinist methods. The final outcome of this era was the 1956 uprising during which Nagy became the leader of the country, the Soviets invaded Hungary, and Kádár became the new leader of the new communist party, re-labelled as the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. These developments were followed by the *period of reorientation* (1957-1960) as the

regime tried to re-establish itself through ideological orthodoxy and suppression. That period would transform itself into the *period of liberalisation* from 1961 to the end, and, during that period one can see the Kádár regime struggling to redefine itself as can be seen in the introduction of the New Course in 1961 and in the implementation of the New Economic Mechanism in 1968<sup>81</sup>.

Both approaches see a similar logic behind the development of the HSWP. The driving force behind this logic was a desire to retain political power while seeking domestic legitimacy. Both the success and failure of Kádár's Party stem from the very reason of trying to reach that aim within a limited capability of acting in a limited operational space. The limitation comes from the dual nature of its responsibilities which it has to perform to satisfy both the USSR and the Hungarian nation to prevent a repetition of 1956.

### **C. The Question of System:**

The above-mentioned lines of development, and especially the general departure of Kádár from the policies followed and implemented by his predecessor Rákosi, invites questions concerning the nature of the Kádár regime. It is generally accepted that any state socialist system is actually totalitarian in nature. This belief classifies the Soviet-type state socialism, regardless of period or country, under the heading *totalitarian*. However, if we can site a social contract, or at least a quasi-social contract between the Kádárist administration and the Hungarian nation, then the system perhaps should not be referred to as totalitarian.

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<sup>81</sup>Ervin Laszlo, The Communist Ideology in Hungary, D. Reidel Publishing Co., Dordrecht, Holand: 1966, pp. 37-39.



Totalitarianism came into use in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, firstly to describe the Italian fascism, despite similar precedents in history. Critics of authoritarianism began to use the term to describe the three systems that are fundamentally against democratic pluralism, namely Nazism, communism, and Italian fascism. After World War II, the term began to imply Stalinist communist rule and remained to describe state socialist regimes of Eurasia. The greatest contribution to the issue came from Carl J. Friedrich who gave five factors that constituted or justified the label 'totalitarian' in the *Totalitarianism Conference* of 1953. Later, when he published the book titled Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy in 1956 with the co-authorship of Zbigniew Brzezinski, the number of factors rose to six for Friedrich and Brzezinski had considered communism as the real model for totalitarian rule since the Nazis were defeated. The six factors that made a regime totalitarian according to Friedrich and Brzezinski were:

1. An official ideology focused on a perfect final state of the human race, to which everyone is supposed to be devoted.
2. A single mass party usually symbolised by or subordinated to one person. The party has a hierarchical structure and is considered to be superior to or united with the state bureaucracy.
3. A technologically advanced, near-complete monopoly of the coercive weapons by that party and the bureaucracy subordinated to it.
4. A complete or almost complete monopoly of the means of mass communication.
5. A central control of and direction over the entire economy.

6. A system of physical or psychological control by use of terror.<sup>82</sup>

According to these, the Stalinist Rákosi regime proves to be totalitarian. However, if one takes into account the 1956 uprising and its consequences for the political leadership of Hungary and of the USSR, one expects changes from the line followed by the Rákosi administration under the rule of János Kádár.

When we analyse Kádárist policies, it is obvious that there is, at least in the theoretical level which does not reflect on the execution level, there is a belief on a perfect final state of human race. It is the basic communist belief that the ideology of the system burgeons from, therefore it is normal that it is present in the Kádárist system of administration as well. The existence of a single party under the control of one person is also present and is united with the state bureaucracy as much as to be seen identical to it. There also is a state / Party monopoly over the coercive weapons and mass media, so the third and fourth requirements of a totalitarian regime are fulfilled by Kádár's HSWP.

Control over the entire economy exists in the Kádárist system, as well. The entire economy was centrally planned in Kádár's administration as well as it was under Rákosi's. The later stages of the Kádárist regime, though, may be taken as a diversion from the mainstream totalitarian rule over economic activities. If one accepts the argument of Alec Nove that "there is not and cannot be a political economy of socialism,"<sup>83</sup> the Kádárist attempts to create a socialist market economy, the so-called goulash socialism (to be discussed in

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<sup>82</sup> Eugene Kamenka, 'Totalitarianism,' in Robert E. Goodin and Philip Petit (ed.s), A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy, Blackwell, Oxford, England, 1993, p. 632.

<sup>83</sup> Alec Nove, The Economics of Feasible Socialism Revisited (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Harper-Collins Academic, London, England : 1991, p. 13.

this chapter and in Chapter Four) appears to be a contradiction to one of the main principles of the totalitarian rule. The socialist system cannot have a political economy because, according to many scholars of socialism, including Bukharin, Preobrazhensky, and Stepanov, political economy analyses the unorganised national economy and is unsuitable for an economy which is adjusted by a consciously made plan<sup>84</sup>. Thus, one may argue that by the introduction of goulash socialism, creating an anarchical economy coexisting with the centrally-planned economy, János Kádár has created a diversion from the orthodox totalitarian organisation and took the administration of the economy from a totalitarian socialist form and transformed it into a quasi-socialist and quasi-totalitarian form. However, under Kádár the economy was mostly based on central-planning and hence, the economic system, even with some diversity from the original blueprint, may still be considered totalitarian in nature.

Under these circumstances, one can say that five out of the six requirements pronounced by Friedrich and Brzezinski exist in the Kádárist regime. Consequently, the Kádár administration may be generally branded totalitarian. However, there is a sixth element among the requirements of Friedrich and Brzezinski vis-à-vis a regime's totalitarianism, namely, a system of physical or psychological control by use of terror. Hannah Arendt claims that 'total terror' is the main component of totalitarianism<sup>85</sup> while Franz Neumann argues that totalitarianism is the most repressive of political systems and its main characteristics are "the destruction of the line between state and society and the

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<sup>84</sup> N. Bukharin, Ekonomika Perekhodnogo Perioda (Moscow, 1920) cited in ibid., pp. 13-14.



total politicisation of society by the device of the monolithic party”<sup>86</sup> and that the society “is totally permeated by political power.”<sup>87</sup> By this, Neumann means that individuals become ingested within the system as society loses all independence, and hence individuals become subject to control and manipulation more easily<sup>88</sup>. It is obvious from the events of the Autumn of 1956 that the processes of mass mobilisation and terrorisation of the society frequently used by the Rákosi administration had proven unproductive. Under János Kádár’s rule, especially from early 1960s onwards, there exists a regime that declares “those who are not against us is with us”<sup>89</sup> and it is a regime, as will be discussed below, which chooses social contract –or economic bribery— to terrorising the masses. As the sixth requirement is a key feature with regards to people’s lives, one may claim that Kádár’s way of leading Hungary may not be considered to be totalitarian in the entirety of the meaning the term suggests.

Using the term *authoritarian* sometimes used to refer to this sort of a quasi-permissive totalitarian administration seems unsuitable. Since the use of the term ‘authoritarian’ by Jane Kirkpatrick in defining right-wing and Western Bloc-member despotic regimes as opposed to ‘totalitarian’ which she used to describe left-wing and Eastern Bloc-member despotic regimes, the term authoritarian is used to define right-wing autocracies thus unsuitable for defining Kádárist regime.

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<sup>85</sup> See Hannah Arendt’s The Origins of Totalitarianism (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Meridian, New York: 1958) for a detailed discussion of the subject.

<sup>86</sup> Franz Neumann, The Democratic and the Authoritarian State, The Free Press: Glencoe, 1957, p. 245.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>88</sup> John J. Schwarzmantel, Structures of Power, Wheatsheaf Books, Brighton, England: 1987, p. 210.

<sup>89</sup> Andrew Felkay, Hungary and the USSR, 1956-1988: Kádár’s Political Leadership, Greenwood Press, New York, New York: 1989, p. 154.

Therefore, it may be argued that Kádár's regime was totalitarian in its core, however it did not comply with two important aspects of the definition of a totalitarian regime, hence making it a quasi-totalitarian regime as opposed to the total Stalinist totalitarianism of Rákosi era in Hungary. The difference in the implementation of the rules of the system under Kádár's rule stemmed from the socio-political outcomes of the 1956 uprising. Consequently, the Kádár regime was different in terms of its foundation from its predecessor and therefore brought along a new kind of socialist system to the Eastern Bloc, working as if a balancing act between the requirements of socialist administration and the needs and demands of a resentful nation.

#### **IV. THE ISSUE OF LEGITIMACY**

##### **A. A Balancing Act:**

The system in Hungary, therefore, suffered from a dilemma of balancing loyalties since the beginning. While under the rule of the post-war communist regime led by Rákosi loyalty was to Stalin and the Stalinist pattern of socialism rather than to the Hungarian people. Under Kádár's rule, the balance alternated in order to adjust to the changes in the domestic front and in the Kremlin. The aim in this balancing act was to secure the positions of the ruling elite. However, any such changes can result in political instability that limits the acts of the ruling regime.

Rudolf Tökés identifies the key domestic policy dilemmas of Kádár regime through its rule of four decades as follows:

- a) accumulation of political legitimacy;
- b) resource allocation;

- c) social engineering;
- d) political steering; and,
- e) keeping ideological harmony<sup>90</sup>.

Securing regime legitimacy is the most important of these as it forms the basis of the other points. The use of sheer coercion, as proven by the Rákosi experiment, is not a problem eliminator in the Hungarian case though it may appear to be a problem solver in the short-run. Thus, the regime had to legitimise itself and in so by avoiding the use of sheer coercion and avoiding to upset the USSR administration.

Kádárism is therefore a delicate balancing act. This issue will be addressed in further detail in the following parts of this chapter.

#### **B. Kádárisation:**

Charles Gati sees the process of reconciliation in Hungary as a product of, and a process initiated by, János Kádár and identifies it as *Kádárisation*. He points out that rather than performing structural changes, what Kádárist regime did was simply to develop a set of political objectives aimed at maintaining power while avoiding more vigorously ideological political programmes seen in other East European countries. In due course, the regime tolerated religion and material ambitions of its subjects as long as these sustained the regime's approval by the people. The main idea was to reach the socialist man "who is unselfishly dedicated to that which is good for society, but in the meantime the system accepts and works with a population considerably less perfect than the ideal type"<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup>Főkés, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>91</sup>Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*, Duke University Press, Durham, US: 1986, pp. 160-161.



The first step of Kádárisation was the oppression of the opposition in the wake of the 1956 uprising, but the real Kádárist era began in the early 1960s. In 1961, Kádár was able to make changes in his cabinet and remove most of the remaining Stalinists. By replacing them with Khrushchevite reformers, he was strengthening the link between his cadres and the Soviet administration. His speech at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Soviet Communist Party was aimed at emphasising the negative aspects of the cult of personality, a means of legitimation used by both Stalin and Rákosi. After freeing himself from suspicion, he initiated his campaign against Rákosi, forming a commission to inspect Rákosi's crimes during his reign. Kádár's position with regards to Rákosi and Stalinism gained public approval, which was vital in establishing a basis for legitimacy for Kádár's new regime. To quote Andrew Felkay,

“Kádár was well aware of the truism that the more people found themselves in agreement with him, the less they would oppose him. With this in mind, he formulated the Party's “alliance” policies and summed up his approach at a People's Front meeting, by restoring Rákosi's dictum “Those who are not with us are against us,” to “Those who are not against us are with us.”... He believed that there was no need for individuals to overtly proclaim their loyalty so long as they did not challenge the Party's supremacy and the country's link with the Soviet Union. He held the view that the regime must provide people with opportunities to improve their lives.”<sup>92</sup>

Otherwise, there would be no chance of survival for the Kádárist regime and of preventing social disturbances. Even though the main source of legitimacy for Kádár in the early period of his rule was the Soviet military presence, the threat to use coercive means of the state, these alone would not be enough to keep the regime in power in the long-run. People needed to have

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<sup>92</sup>Andrew Felkay, Hungary and the USSR, 1956-1988, p. 154.

hope for their future and needed to see that those who provoked the 1956 events were removed from power. Kádár gave them both with his *New Course* policy. From September 1961 onwards Kádár removed the remnants of Rákosi regime from power and the administration sought a peaceful coexistence, if not an alliance, with the public.

The next step, in Kádár's course to gain legitimacy, was to begin to convince the Hungarian public opinion that the new socialist regime was different than the previous one and that it thought of the welfare of the public. Kádárist regime aimed at reaching this end was to work on the improvement of the Hungarian economy and ensure that every sector gained more from the general improvement.

To sum up, Kádár's regime needed to *bribe* people to convince them to support the new regime and Kádár did just that. With a realistic re-arrangement of agricultural policy, which allowed private ownership of household land with farming rights, agricultural production improved slowly but steadily. By mid-1963, the 'household plots' were producing 50% of milk, 40% of pork and fat, 60% of poultry and egg, 30% of vegetable and fruit, and supported 38% of the cattle while they covered 10.6% of the arable land and 28.5% of vineyards<sup>93</sup>. At the same time, foreign trade was emphasised, and both trade and touristic relations with the West began.

The new approach of the Kádárist regime showed it in political scale, as well: In March 1963, an amnesty was announced for the refugees of 1956, prisoners convicted for their activity in 1956 uprising, war criminals who had served two-thirds of their sentences, and former Stalinists. This amnesty was to

demonstrate the regime's tolerance for opposition and different thinking. An agreement with the Vatican on 15 September 1964 regulated the position of the Catholic Church in Hungary. That would also contribute to the public perception of Kádár.

All these domestic activities, therefore, aimed at two main purposes: a) to develop an image of Kádár as a tolerant, understanding and hence tolerable leader, and, b) to prove that socialism was not unbearable as a regime and that it might even lead to some individual gains if one did not overtly oppose the system. There were two main policies to prove these. On the one hand, the Kádárist regime was struggling against the Stalinists and Nagy-supporters. The claim was that they were revisionists, and therefore ideologically inapprovable. The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party bureaux and Evening Schools were to have a 2-year special course in addition to their one-year course on ideology so that these points were made clear in people's minds. On the other hand, liberalisation in the economic and social spheres was aimed at eliminating dogmatist Stalinism and assuring public opinion that the system was tolerant enough within the framework of the socialist system.

In effect, that meant 'we do whatever we can,' a message aimed at the Hungarian public opinion, showing that the new administration was willing to make changes as long as these changes were not obstructed by the Soviet administration. The expulsion of Rákosi and Gerö from the Party and the investigations against them was an attempt of reconciliation. With public sympathy still with Nagy and his colleagues, the expulsion of the two from the

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<sup>93</sup>E. Laszlo, *op. cit.*, p. 36.



Party aimed at showing the public that the new HSWP administration cared for what happened in 1956.

Accordingly, the Kádárist attempts to gain legitimacy, except the first four years of firm oppression that followed the 1956 uprising, may be labelled as populist practices. The compromise was between a regime that sought not the direct involvement of its subjects to the fulfilment of its ideological objectives, but their silent support. The perception of support here, indeed, is in the form of not directly challenging the system bearing in mind that full and voluntary co-operation is out of the question. People supported the Kádár regime by remaining indifferent to who rules the land and by what ideological tendencies, while seeking material improvements. So, a clear *quid pro quo* strategy can summarise the Kádárist regime's relationship with the people it ruled as far as the domestic political relationships are concerned. Surely, all this depended on the developments in international politics.

At this point, one must remember that the Kádárist choice of interacting with the public is a breakthrough. Although the system appears to be a normal *quid pro quo* relationship within the Western norms of political interaction, it is not so in the socialist system. As discussed previously in this thesis (see part II.A.2 in Chapter Two), the socialist system legitimises itself not within the framework of a *the rulers and the ruled* relationship but within the framework of a *the rulers and the rulers* relationship. That means, in the rest of the Eastern Bloc and in Hungary before Kádár, the socialist administration sought to legitimise itself vis-à-vis the bureaucracy rather than vis-à-vis public opinion. As the party justified itself to the bureaucracy and vice versa, the system required no public intervention or public approval. What Kádár did was

to alter this legitimation process by introducing ordinary people's opinion into the general framework of political system. This differs Kádár from all other leaders of the Eastern Bloc, for he is the only East European leader who managed to seek public approval as well as approval from the ruling elite and the Soviet administration. Both Nagy in Hungary in 1956 and Dubcek in Czechoslovakia in 1968 disregarded the ruling elite's (and Soviet) approval and wanted to have only popular consent and legitimation. The results for this loss of perspective was the Soviet and Warsaw Pact military intervention to their countries and their loss of their position. Thus, Kádár's choice of introducing public approval into the socialist legitimation process while not disregarding the role of the Party elite and the Soviet authority is the main reason for his regime's success.

### **C. The External Influence on Legitimacy:**

As cited above, in addition to the domestic relations in terms of legitimacy in which Kádár introduced a novel interpretation to the socialist understanding of legitimacy, there is a powerful international dimension to be considered with regards to regime legitimacy. The legitimacy of the Hungarian regime, as well as any other Eastern Bloc country's regime, depended on the Soviet approval of the leadership in the country. Even in the seemingly most unusual case, when Wladyslaw Gomulka was elected as the leader of the United Polish Workers' Party in 1956, he had to be endorsed by the Soviet leadership. While the Kádár regime was to establish a feeling of trustworthiness based upon the system –and not necessarily upon the leader- at the domestic level, its relationship with the Soviet administration was leader-dependent.

On the domestic level, the post-1956 regime, populist as it might be, was not backing the image of János Kádár as a leader at the beginning. Instead it had chosen to emphasise the image of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and its main aim was to prove that the Party was not against but for the welfare of the people. On the other hand, all the HSWP performance depended on the approval or disapproval of the USSR's administration. Rákosi had based his rule on the personality cult, constructing it on the examples of Lenin and Stalin, had to flee to the USSR when his strategies collapsed. The Party had to be backed by the Soviet troops to regain control of Hungary in November 1956, however, it managed to reconstruct itself by alienating Rákosi, his image and the major principles the Party which operated under Rákosi's control. The use of the leader motive, considering the low level of approval that Kádár received during the restoration period, was unfeasible, and thus, the role of the leader was substituted by the Party as an agent of politics, at least for a decade following the 1956 rebellion.

However, as specific leaders in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) were the representatives of different fractions of the original Soviet *nomenklatura* and as the leader of the USSR was regarded as the leader of the Socialist World, the cult of leadership was indispensable in that country. The change of leadership meant a serious change of policies, and it meant that if Khrushchev was to stay in Moscow, he would require assurances. The attempt to by-pass the occupant of Kremlin by Imre Nagy proved disastrous, and Kádár was well aware of the situation and was not to repeat the same mistake. Hence, on the one hand, he had to prove that the system was not leader-dependent and seek ideological and systemic legitimacy at the domestic scale, and, on the



other hand, he was to admit that there was both an ideological and leader-dependent legitimacy in Muscovite administration and act accordingly.

This created a dichotomy for the Kádár administration: On the one hand, it had to prove to the Hungarian people that the regime itself is good and on the other hand, he had to prove himself to the Soviet leadership as a worthy leader. I name this situation that narrowed the manoeuvring space for the Kádár regime as the *dichotomy of Kádár* (see sub-heading on the subject). Khrushchev was a liberal compared to Stalin, but, as the 1962 Missile Crisis would prove once more, he had no intention of giving up his regime's ideals and principles when such an act might be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Consequently, whatever the Kádár administration was doing, it had to be in conformity with the thoughts of the Muscovite leadership as it held the real power in Hungary through direct control of coercive forces. Hungary was also heavily dependent on Soviet raw materials and technological know-how to sustain its industrial development. The lack of mineral resources in the country and the apparently limited possibility of trade with the West forced Hungarian leadership to have good relations with the USSR, beyond ideological commitment or political necessity.

Therefore, Kádár had to have good relations with the USSR. Such a limitation on the framework of action for the Hungarian administration meant that it was bound to a power outside its boundaries for the approval of its acts performed for the benefit of its subjects. For that reason, international rather than domestic factors appear to create the major consideration of policy shifts for the Kádár regime. To quote Charles Gati;

“In early 1956 it was the anti-Stalinism of the 20th CPSU Congress -and Mikoyan’s and Suslov’s visits to Budapest- that made Kádár an active opponent of Rákosi and Rákosi’s Stalinist practices. In the early 1960s he assumed a moderate, reformist stance only after Khrushchev’s decisive victory over the hard-line dogmatists at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in October 1961.”<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, in political terms, Kádár was bound to please both the USSR and the Hungarian public for the political survival of both the regime and himself as its leader. As he was neither a theoretician nor a real intellectual, keeping the balance between the two sides was based on his negotiation capabilities and social bribery. Politically, that worked in the form of liberalisation to the extent that the international climate allowed, the development of simple populism in the Western sense of the word. The acceptance, and even willingness to be a part of a COMECON agreement in 1962 which would create a division of labour among the Eastern Bloc countries is a sign of attempts to please both sides. Hungary was given the task of specialising in the production of manufacturing goods, and production of aluminium as Hungary was the owner of the third richest bauxite mines in Europe. Though, it was to extract the material, ship it to the USSR, and then receive the semi-processed aluminium from there and produce goods with it; an arrangement that contented both sides.

Legitimation of the system was dependent on this two-sidedness of Kádár’s policies. Kádár could not risk a repetition of what happened under Rákosi’s rule for nationalistic feelings, but also for it would manufacture grounds for international anti-propaganda material for the Eastern Bloc. His close

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<sup>94</sup>C. Gati, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

inspection and interpretation of the developments within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) helped him to have a more relaxed attitude towards his own nation. He managed to use the 1956 revolution as a trump card against the Soviets and hence could afford to give greater concessions to Hungarians compared to other East European regimes and leaders' capabilities. His alignment with Khrushchev, and later with Brezhnev helped Hungarian political and economic development. When, in 1968 Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) troops which included Hungarian as well as other WTO members' troops, Hungary was implementing the first stages of its New Economic Mechanism, a fairly liberal attitude towards economy thanks to Kádár's good relations with the Kremlin. For that matter, Ljubo Sirc points out to the difference of the Hungarian system as early as 1966, when the antecedent of the NEM, the Hungarian Reform Resolution was put into effect. Sirc claims that the Hungarians were "aiming at a faster rate of economic growth, while preserving the equilibrium of the economy," by one-year, short-term, economic planning and by intending to regulate the economic processes by making use of market mechanisms<sup>95</sup>. Thus, the Hungarian regime, therefore, was able to introduce market mechanisms into the system and remain supported rather than penalised and corrected by the core of the Second World. When one compares the Czechoslovak and Hungarian situations, the distinction enjoyed by Kádárist Hungary becomes more evident.

At that point, it should once more be remembered that in analysing the legitimacy of any regime in Eastern Europe during the Cold War era, to simplify the

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<sup>95</sup> Ljubo Sirc, Economic Devolution in Eastern Europe, New York, Praeger, 1966, p. 91.



situation in terms of regime legitimacy into a matter of public approval and exclude the international factor would be a mistake. The relationship of the heads of state in East European region with their Soviet counterparts decided the fate of the East European leaders as well as the fate of their countries. Nagy's nationalistic eagerness and his naïveté led to the 1956 confrontation between the Hungarians and the WTO member-states. Nagy's belief that if Hungarian administration asked, the Soviet control would end in Hungary gave way to the serious problems. On the other hand, Wladyslaw Gomulka, by establishing good ties with the Soviet leaders of the time and at least appearing to be willing for compromise and consensus, managed to lead Poland until 1970. Following the footsteps of Gomulka rather than either Matyas Rákosi who gave too much emphasis on his ties with the USSR or Imre Nagy who totally ignored this relationship and focused on populist policies, Kádár played his international card right during the rules of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, but lost his initiative against Gorbachev reforms since he was too old and too old-fashioned to reform himself and his administration.

One can also observe that Kádár's administration has always supported the USSR in all the foreign policy actions of the superpower. That helped Kádár to create the impression that his regime was in unison with the USSR and that whatever ideological alteration he might pursue in the domestic level would not alter Hungary's support for the USSR and the socialist cause.

With that clear commitment to the Soviet foreign policy objectives, he could also satisfy his country's domestic needs of –especially economic- reform. Charles Gati implies that his policies vis-à-vis the Soviet Union are reminiscent of the *'reluctant ally'* role assumed by Hungary as against the

Third Reich during World War II. During the war, Hungary was allied with the Axis powers, but it was trying to keep the door open to the Allies and that policy was called as the *hintapolitika*, literally ‘see-saw policy’<sup>96</sup>. What Kádár did for the three decades of his rule may be dubbed to be a wiser and more carefully played version of *hintapolitika*.

Therefore, to gain legitimacy before the eyes of the Hungarians without upsetting the Soviets was a hard task to accomplish and one which left very few alternative routes to follow to its pursuer. The Kádár regime may not be simply discredited for its lack of creativity in its search of internal legitimacy, which was established on a *quid pro quo* basis. Populism and social bribery seem to be the only alternatives left to an administration which has to keep the system going and the USSR content. As no major deviation from the socialist principles was possible and manifest use of force to control the masses proved to be a failure, what Kádár did is the only rational way to keep the *status quo* alive.

#### **D. The Economic Dimension:**

Under the circumstances described above, the Kádár administration had to provide a considerable improvement in the lives of the Hungarian people in order to accumulate the support it required to keep the domestic side of the balance working. Offering prosperity in exchange for superficial political support in the form of remaining indifferent to the political order’s structure and of engaging in no open opposition activity was the main proposal of the Kádár regime. Kádár aimed at exchanging economic prosperity for political

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<sup>96</sup>C. Gati, *op.cit.*, pp. 169-170.

indifference rather than for straightforward support. For that reason, Rudolf Tökés's argument can be adopted. Tökés argues that:

“Kádár's main social policy objective was the amelioration of the regime's congenital illegitimacy through the transformation of the non-elites' *contingent* compliance with the party-state's watered-down ideological expectations and key policy outputs into *consensual* support; or, failing that, at least into passive toleration of the political *status quo*. For this reason, terms such as “informal understandings,” “*ad hoc* trade-offs,” and “protracted non-institutionalised bargaining” seem to be more accurate descriptions of the operative characteristics of people-regime relationships in the Kádár era than is “social contract””<sup>97-98</sup>

The regime sought to maintain the *status quo* in intra-bloc relations while providing growth in the economy and hence prosperity. This may be taken as a realistic goal of a regime which had bad experiences with over-ambitious goal-setting followed by economic and political problems.

In ideological terms, Kádárism may be taken as an understated social contract.

The creation of the *socialist man* was not a priority of this regime as foreseen in the socialist ideology. Instead, its main priority was to keep social peace and order in the society. If one takes the main aim of a social contract as establishing the stability and continuity of the regime that is in power instead of reaching a highly philosophical aim such as to reach the stage of communism and creating the *socialist man*, then, Kádárism is a proper social contract. It managed to survive for more than two decades. It provided the most free breathing space in Eastern Europe for intellectuals, either of regime-

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<sup>97</sup>R. Tökés, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>98</sup> Rudolf Tökés is not the only person who dislikes to use the term ‘social contract’ to brand the relationship between the Hungarian people and those who rule it. C.M. Hann labels the process as ‘Kádárist social compromise,’ to give an example (see, for instance, Hann's ‘Introduction’ in C.M.



supporting or dissident kind. The Kádár regime provided an economic recipe to make Hungary the most competitive and most compatible economy with the West among the Second World members.

The two most important features of the Kádárist economy's differences from its East European counterparts were the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) programme launched on 1 January 1968, and the late 1970s' so-called *second economy* initiative. Of these, the former was aimed at developing the national economy and hence increasing national prosperity. The latter, when the first failed in late 1970s, was to convince people that they could acquire extra earnings through moonlighting. The NEM was to prove the socialist system was capable of sustaining the prosperity of its subjects while tolerating individual economic ambitions. These were meant thus to provide the regime with some relative public support that it began to lose due to economic failures.

The New Economic Mechanism, introduced on 1 January 1968, was aimed at responding the needs of a foreign-dependent economy. The NEM foresaw the replacement of the Soviet-style plan directives of the Hungarian economy with market relations among firms; the limitation of central price determination; a link between domestic prices of exported and imported goods and the world market prices; and, decentralisation of a major part of investment decisions<sup>99</sup>.

The reform programme was radical to say the least by Socialist Bloc standards.

To achieve his goal of implementing the NEM, Kádár had to convince Leonid

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Hann (ed), Market Economy and Civil Society in Hungary, Frank Cass Publishers, London, England: 1990).

<sup>99</sup>Bela Balassa, Reforming the New Economic Mechanism in Hungary, World Bank Staff Working Papers no. 534, Washington, DC: 1982, p. 1.

Brezhnev that Hungary was and would remain a socialist country and that problems peculiar to Hungary would need solutions peculiar to Hungary. In a period of intra-alliance conflicts and of the Arab-Israeli War, Brezhnev was convinced and accepted, if not approved, the NEM. Thus, Hungary became the first country to adopt semi-capitalistic measures to deal with its economic problems.

The Hungarian administration's willingness to support the Soviet intervention to Czechoslovakia provided greater Soviet approval of the NEM, and the reforms went on until mid-1970s. From 1968 to 1972, the Hungarian economy grew with an annual rate of 6.2%. The long-standing price subsidies were kept even under the NEM to prevent a high increase in prices. In the meantime, the Hungarians had begun to purchase product licences from the West so that they could sell the goods produced with the new know-how to the COMECON countries. The intra-COMECON division of labour also helped the country's industry to mass produce such material as the *Ikarus* busses which served the Soviet Bloc.

However, the other socialist countries' leaders, as well as conservatives in the HSWP were against the reforms, and, by mid-1970s, Kádár was isolated in the defence of the reforms. The managers of large enterprises feared lest things went wrong. The trade unions saw that the peasants and small private entrepreneurs were getting better-off while industrial workers' real wages decreased. Some members of intelligentsia opposed the reforms as they thought the economy was taking precedence over culture in the country. With this politically influential opposition, the NEM began to slow down, and then,

with the 1974 Oil Crisis, came to a halt<sup>100</sup>. What Hungary had, then, was a rigid command economy unable to cope with the serious world oil crisis. By the end of 1970s, the economy was in dire straits as the gap between the domestic and international market prices widened, government preferences came before market necessities, and foreign debts grew.

On the one hand, the problems of the NEM+9, as C.M. Hann recognises, were not directly domestic in nature and coincided with the developments, positive and/or negative, in the international economy. Hann observes:

“In a small country such as Hungary, very much exposed to the international economy, at every stage in the reform process a great deal has depended upon trends in the wider economy. The initial euphoria surrounding the reform was considerably influenced by a favourable external conjuncture. The faltering of growth in the later 1970s was partly due to the energy price crisis of the decade.”<sup>101</sup>

On the other hand, as Marton Tardos observes, there was a very important domestic element in the problems faced by the NEM system. According to Tardos, the problems arose both from the structure of the socialist system and the unwillingness for reform within the ruling elite. Tardos claims that:

“Those who unswervingly pursued nationalisation after 1945 resisted to any reform measure of the system for a long time. Moreover, no comprehensive reform was made until the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) was introduced in 1966-1968. Then, too, the change was focused on the management of state and co-operative enterprises which were, in practice, very similar. Substantial freedom was offered to these enterprises, but the so-called ‘market-like’ regulation remained under the bureaucratic state hierarchy dominated by party bodies. .... [T]he NEM constrained the increase of [the

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<sup>100</sup>A. Felkay, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-236 *passim*.

<sup>101</sup>C.M. Hann, Introduction in C.M. Hann (ed.), Market Economy and Society in Hungary, Frank Cass Publishers, London, England: 1990, p. 6.



private sector's] share, and limited its activity to small-scale production and the service sector."<sup>102</sup>

In 1978 and in 1982, new measures were taken to prevent a total collapse of the Hungarian economy. Foreign trade balance was in serious imbalance, as were production, productivity, and the individual income levels. The loss of the economic edge brought along a legitimacy crisis for the Kádárist government. The severity of the economic crisis meant that Kádár regime's offer in exchange of peaceful obedience to the regime, was no more available. Such a situation placed the fragile legitimacy of the regime in jeopardy as one of the two bases for the regime's legitimation of its *raison d'être* was lost. Soviet armed muscle might be a deterrent capable of suppressing any form of social unrest but would be unable to prevent the materialisation of social unrest. Thus, from 1982 onwards,

"the regime allowed a limited liberalisation under the slogan of 'mass participation'. First within the Soviet bloc, Hungary introduced compulsory multi-candidacy in parliamentary and local council elections, gave regional administrations greater political and financial independence and relaxed, to some extent, controls over the forming of voluntary associations. State-owned ministry-run companies were handed over to boards of directors and workers' assemblies. New sorts of business initiatives -such as the 'contract shop' scheme under which individuals could hire franchises from state firms, or the enterprise 'economic work collectives' (VGMKs) were permitted."<sup>103</sup>

These changes were the steps to create the so-called *second economy* which would permit individual workers and peasants, as well as small entrepreneurs

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<sup>102</sup> Márton Tardos, 'The Property Rights in Hungary,' in J. Matyas, S. Kovacs, M. Tardos (eds.), *Reform and Transformation in Eastern Europe*, London: Routledge, 1992.

<sup>103</sup> Stephen Noti, 'Hungary After Kádár,' *The World Today*, v. 44, no. 8-9, pp. 128-130, pp. 128-129.

to earn greater sums of money in exchange of moonlighting or working extra hours.

The *second economy* had two main legitimacy-related features: Firstly, it helped people to accumulate a considerable amount of income which sometimes would exceed the related person's wage by tenfold. Therefore, a sense of prosperity continued to exist despite the worsening of the overall economic situation. Moreover, the economy was profiting from the surplus value produced in the extra working hours. These would contribute to the regime's image of provider of wealth and prosperity. The second aspect, on the other hand, was an indirect contribution to the regime's legitimacy: The people working individually to provide their household with some money gradually shifted from having a class-consciousness to individualism<sup>104</sup>. The extent of individualism might be enlarged to cover the household of the working person or his or her workmates in moonlighting hours. However, the individuals working in the *second economy* lost the social bond with the members of the same social class or social environment. Although one would mainly relate this individualisation to industrial work, Nigel Swain points out that the encouragement of the so-called 'household plot' during the last years of the Kádár regime created an alternative, agrarian second-economy which enabled private, that is family as opposed to corporate, co-operative, farming, an

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<sup>104</sup> Dr. Julia Szalai, Hungarian sociologist and the head of the Max Weber Institute in Budapest, emphasised the effect of second economy in the society in the interview I conducted with her in Budapest on 16 April 1996. Dr. Szalai argues that social alienation of individuals and the loss of the 'we-feeling' within the society have their roots in the second economy. She claims the rise in material ambitions is brought along by the concept of second economy and this has affected the balance of the society by limiting, if not effacing for good, the social side of individuals. Prof. Jozsef Bayer of the ELTE University and Dr. Gabor Körösi of the KTI Institute in Budapest supported her argument in the interviews I conducted with them on 18 and 19 April 1996.



practice far less common in Czechoslovakia of the time<sup>105</sup>. The Roman principle *divide et impera*, divide and rule, is still a strong policy and therefore, while people focused on their personal or family interests, they spent far less time in order to judge the legitimacy of the political system. The fact that the working hours were considerably extended through the *second economy* initiative contributed to the fact that people had materially no time to deal with politics.

## V. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE KÁDÁR REGIME

### A. The Beginning of the End:

Despite the fact that people had less time to spend on politics –partly due to the quasi-social contract labelled as the ‘Kádárist social compromise’ by C.M. Hann-, developments outside the country forced changes in the domestic front. Changes in the international background, especially policy changes of bloc leaders forced changes in the position and relationship models of the subordinate states. Important events in the Soviet Union, namely the Afghanistan campaign of the USSR, the replacement of Leonid Brezhnev after his death by Yuri Andropov in 1983, and Andropov being succeeded first by Konstantin Chernenko in 1984 and then by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, created first a wave of uncertainty in the Soviet political scene. These developments affected East European, then European and World politics in a great extent. Later on, these changes led to a new and fairly radical economic and political reform programme in the USSR from late 1986 onwards. Under such conditions, once the foreign intervention disappeared or seemed to

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<sup>105</sup> Nigel Swain, ‘Agricultural Restitution and Co-operative Transformation in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia,’ *Europe-Asia Studies*, v. 51(7), 1999, p. 1216.



disappear, there were not many alternatives to be taken by the HSWP to retain its weak position of legitimacy before the eyes of the Hungarian public.

The struggle of the succession now was apparent in the Hungarian political scene and it was now between three main groups; the conservative wing of the HSWP, the reform-seeking wing of the HSWP, and, the dissidents. The final outcome was the loss of Kádár's leadership position and then the dismemberment of the HSWP.

As a result of all these, change in the HSWP cadres became imminent. János Kádár was removed from office and was appointed to the honorary role of Party presidency at the special conference of the HSWP in May 1988. In the same congress and the following Central Committee session, 37 new members joined the 108-member Central Committee. These changes meant the removal of not only Kádár but also most of the influential figures of the Kádár administration from office and the beginning of a new administration in line with the requirements of the new Soviet administrative policies.

By January 1989, there was a clear division between the reformist and conservative wings of the HSWP as well as a dramatic increase in the opposition to the single-party system. Political organisation capable of running candidates in a possible forthcoming election -such as the Alliance of Free Democrats, the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Smallholders Party- emerged. On 14 January 1989, the New March Front attempted to establish communication between the HSWP and the newly formed parties for the first time. This attempt was followed by the acceptance of a multi-party future political environment by the HSWP on 11 February 1989 and the formation of the Opposition Roundtable on 22 March 1989 as suggested by the Forum of

Independent Lawyers. The Opposition Roundtable comprised of eight political organisations, namely the Alliance of Free Democrats, Alliance of Young Democrats, the Smallholders Party, the League of Democratic Trade Unions, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, Hungarian People's Party, and the Social Democrats. The summer of 1989 saw the establishment of the National Roundtable talks and the acceptance of decisions concerning the regime change. The end of the HSWP rule came in the wake of the National Roundtable talks and by the spring of 1990, Hungarians were voting in multi-party, multi-candidate elections for the seats in a multi-party parliament. János Kádár would not see the new era of multi-party liberal democracy as he died on 6 July 1989<sup>106</sup>.

#### **B. The Dissidents, The Roundtable and the Transformation:**

To claim that the opposition in the country appeared as a result of the changes in the USSR would be just oversimplifying the scene. The changes that took place in the USSR and hence in the Soviet attitude towards the East European states and their administrations have galvanised the opposition movements in Hungary as elsewhere in the Eastern Bloc. The opposition, though suppressed, was an ever present 'force' in the Hungarian system. Based on the chronological path of three-tier party scheme he makes use of, Rudolf Tökés analyses the role of the opposition, the dissidents and their impact in Hungary's 'negotiated revolution'<sup>107</sup>. He invests an important role in the political, academic and literary elite of the country in respect of the transition

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<sup>106</sup> Nigel Swain, . *Hungary: The Rise And Fall Of Feasible Socialism*., pp. 18-23 passim.

<sup>107</sup> János Kis sees the process somewhere in the middle of revolution and reform, and, based on an idea of Timothy Garton-Ash, labels the transformation as 'refolution,' as it is a hybrid of reform and revolution. It is basically the same as Tökés' 'negotiated revolution.' See János Kis' 'Between Reform and Revolution,' in *East European Politics and Societies*, v. 12 (no.2, pp. 300-389), on the subject.

to multi-party democracy, because these were the members of the non-governmental party in the roundtable.

Tökés groups the dissidents into three categories: a) those supported by the regime; b) those whom the regime was indifferent to; and, c) those taken as illegitimate and had to be suppressed by the regime.

Those who were supported by the regime were generally high-level members of the *nomenklatura*, economists, scientists and non-party intellectuals who championed the regime but criticised it for being not patriotic enough or not too much in favour of the Party, and their function was in a way to sustain the legitimacy of the regime. Their contact point was the high-rank party authorities.

The tolerated dissidents were after human rights, religious autonomy, greater artistic freedoms, and supported a lift on censorship. They were retired party officials, high and medium status intellectuals, and those non-party elite who had good connections in the Party. Their contact was either with the proper authorities or with unauthorised recipients like the foreign media.

The suppressed dissidents, on the other hand, consisted of low status intellectuals with no Party connections, youth, religious activists and former political prisoners. These were asking for a regime change, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary, in effect following Imre Nagy's legacy in their way. These organised strikes, printed *samizdats*, directly connecting with the people and were organised under multi-purpose groups, unlike the previous

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two which were acting either on individual basis or in small, object-oriented groups<sup>108</sup>.

Dissent, according to Tökés, changed its shape in time and began to irritate the administration in an increasing manner. The shift of majority of dissident movements from the first group to the third as time went by created an atmosphere of intolerance in the government and hence greater suppression began to appear. Tökés tries in his book to create an image of oppressive regime against the dissidents, however fails to firmly back his argument. He mentions the 15 March 1988 demonstration and the police intervention to it as an example of the suppression. He claims that while for years the demonstrations were seen as a sort of peaceful marches of high-spirited high-school and university students, in 1988, the police intervened and hence oppression is observable. On the other hand, he seems not to mention that the Kádár regime, from 1972, the first year of 15 March nationalistic demonstrations, till 1988 had not intervened by using force. Therefore, one may think that the tolerable nationalistic youth might as well transform itself with the help of some agitators to a suppressible group of dissidents. His other examples of the suppression of dissent are not very convincing either. The point seems to be an attempt to exaggerate the sufferings of the dissidents who were at the end sharing the same negotiation table with the HSWP apparatchiks, rather than providing an objective overview of what happened. Tökés claims that especially from 1986 onwards, dissent has begun to be perceived as a 'hostile' party rather than a tolerable 'opposition'. He states that the dissident groups were from then on taken as a force threatening the

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<sup>108</sup> Rudolf Tökés, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

regime, fully collaborating with Western powers, namely the US, and with each other<sup>109</sup>. He mentions such *samizdats* as the special issue of *Beszélő* of mid-June 1987 which began with the message “Kádár Must Go!” as an example of organised democratic opposition which was powerful enough to see János Kádár leave his post of Party leadership in a year’s time. The pamphlet had come after the change of premiership in the country, and there would most certainly be greater changes within the HSWP cadres, including most possibly János Kádár. Therefore, to claim that the ideas mentioned in the samizdat were influential is not exactly the best way of commenting on the situation, especially when one considers the new policies adopted by the USSR concerning the East European involvement of the country.

Tökés, perhaps deliberately, focuses mainly and solely on the internal political debates and developments of Hungary and never mentions the international environment which let the dissidents to become a strong opposition and a major factor in Hungarian political life in the second part of the 1980s. The lack of introduction of the developments in the international environment that surrounded the change is a major flaw in his theory, because all of a sudden, the dissidents seem to get more and more powerful and take control without any considerable change in the domestic political scene. However, had Brezhnev or his two immediate successors been still alive and had Mikhail Gorbachev been a member of and not the leader of the Soviet Politburo, none of the changes in the Eastern European region were likely to happen, at least not at the same pace. Gorbachev’s dual policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* and his ambition to replace the leaders of the subordinate states to the USSR

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173-200 *passim*.

created the impact that led to the change of Hungary's as well as any other socialist state's systems. The absence of intervention by the Soviet troops and the USSR's willingness to renovate the East European regimes and its adoption of the *Sinatra Doctrine* gave way to the National Roundtable Talks of 1989.

At this point, one must note that Gorbachevite reforms were different from the previous attempts at reforming the communist system. According to Peter Marcuse,

"The beginnings of the transition from real existing socialism in most of the countries of Eastern Europe were led by those who saw themselves as reformers of socialism. Even in the heyday of the strongly centralised state-run systems of production and distribution, in some cases out of pragmatism, as with 'goulash communism' under Kádár in Hungary, in others out of a concern about failures in the centralised economy, as under Khrushchev in the Soviet Union.... With perestroika, it was different. Gorbachev, ..., for instance saw his efforts as 'encroaching on socialism, but only the socialism that was built bureaucratically, under which the country veered off the path on which it had embarked in 1917.'" <sup>110</sup>

Thus, Gorbachev's attempts at changing the Soviet society as well as the way Eastern Europe was administered, both in terms of politics and in terms of economy, failed to overlap with the general understanding of reform in the Second World and led to a period of surprise in which the East European leaders belonging to the old guard did not know what to do. The success of the 1989 – 1991 reforms and revolutions lies partly in the new approach adopted by Gorbachev. This can be seen, for instance, in Hocnecker's insistence on

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<sup>110</sup> Peter Marcuse, 'Privatisation and its Discontents: Property Rights in Land and Housing in the Transition in Eastern Europe,' in Gregory Andrusz et al. (eds.), Cities After Socialism: Urban Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies, Blackwell, Oxford, England: 1996, p. 149.



staying in power, and in Kádár's inability to react to developments. The role of Gorbachev in the process is therefore paramount.

Tökés observes a transformation in Kádár's perceived image following the route of *reluctant hostage* in late 1950s, *risk-taking reformer* in 1960s, and *the good king* in the 1970s which would be transformed into *enfeebled autarch* by the 1980s. By the mid-1980s, Kádár was a tired and nearly senile leader incapable of fast decision-making and his only ability was to change people in the Politburo and to try to keep the economy afloat with great amounts of foreign debt. Thus, the end of the Kádár administration gradually took place from mid-1980s onwards. This gradual decline is reflected in the five-stage evolutionary scheme by Tökés:

- a) the collapse of the Kádárist centre from April 1984 to November 1986;
- b) the advance of bureaucrats and technocrats to high posts, from December 1986 to June 1987;
- c) the Karoly Grosz campaign, from July 1987 to March 1988;
- d) the conservative counter-mobilisation to prevent Grosz's replacement of Kádár, from November 1987 to March 1988;
- e) the negotiated succession, from April to May 1988<sup>111</sup>.

This gradual process of Kádár's loss of control in the country created a vacuum through which reformist ideas were able to penetrate into the HSWP management. Karoly Grosz needed progress in the economic reforms he had begun to implement in his premiership. On the other hand, he had to struggle to keep his leadership position against the Reform Socialists in the HSWP. Throughout the 1980s then, with power shifting from the centre to the

periphery in the *rearguard* fashion, the rise of dissident formations as strong political actors became unavoidable.

The beneficiaries of the Party's adoption of a *rearguard* position can be sited as the state bureaucracy, the interest groups and policy lobbies, and, indirectly the citizens of Hungary. In the *rearguard* mode, the state bureaucracy was more independent, while civil associations kept growing. Therefore, a greater degree of political freedom was available for the citizens.

The change in the Party cadres, the replacement of the old guard by the new names such as Laszlo Marothy, Matyas Szürös, Gyorgy Adzel, Rezső Nyers, and János Berecz in the partly free elections of 1985 resulted in the strengthening of the reformist wing in the HSWP. The new forces gathered by the bureaucracy, regional-scale party organs, organised interest groups, politicised intelligentsia are all domestic factors influencing the changes in the domestic political climate. However, these changes were strengthened, if not ignited, by international developments. For instance, the rise of the independent social groups from mid-1980s onwards may be linked to the relaxation in the Soviet attitude towards such social activities.

In the domestic level though, to claim that the dissident groups and the independent civil associations may be seen as descendent of the late 1960s and 1970s may not be too wrong. As Terry Cox and Laszlo Vass argue, there is a loose link between the tradition of reform and the emergence of such groups. The development of fully sentient and functional political

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<sup>111</sup> R. Tökés, *op.cit.*, p. 272.

organisations was possible only by the end of 1980s<sup>112</sup>. This connection may be extended to include the relationship created between the dominant and subordinate parts of the society in Hungary. The legitimacy of the regime in Hungary was special to that country within the general context of the Eastern Bloc.

By the end of 1988, there were twenty-one new or recently founded political associations which identified themselves as societies, leagues, associations or fronts, with the exception of the Independent Smallholders Party (SHP) which promptly chose the word 'party' which was usually associated with the HSWP and hence which was quite unpopular<sup>113</sup>. These formations would lead to the creation of 6 political parties until the Opposition Roundtable that would begin on 22 March 1989. The participants of the National Roundtable that would begin on 13 June 1989 were the HSWP, these aforementioned 6 political parties, four policy lobbies, four social groups, and an observing organisation.

The transformation was strengthened by the beginning of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary on 25 April 1989. It continued when the HSWP surrendered its *nomenklatura* rights to the Németh government on 8-9 May 1989, the death of János Kádár on 6 July and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) candidates' election victory in the by-elections of July and August 1989.

The National Roundtable of 14 June-18 September 1989 was a crucial breakthrough for regime transformation, and therefore, a unique and successful

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<sup>112</sup> Terry Cox and Laszlo Vass, 'Civil Society and Interest Representation In Hungarian Political Development', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 10, no. 3, p. 161.

<sup>113</sup> Independent Smallholder Party claimed to be the offspring of the pre-communist SHP and therefore adopted the name to show the political continuity.



process towards democratisation of the system as a whole. The Hungarian National Roundtable had concerns beyond regime change as it sought to make the transition to multi-party competitive politics as easy and as painless as possible. This situation seems to be peculiar to Hungary as the domestic political conditions differed from other East European countries due to different approaches in the regime - subject relations and in legitimation of the regime. For instance, the Polish Roundtable was merely an attempt to prolong the stay of the Communist Party and of Jaruzelski in power, and not a gathering aimed at easing the tensions of transition to a new political system.

On 7 October 1989 at 22:24, in the second day of the 14th Congress of the HSWP it was announced that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party ceased to exist. The declaration also announced the establishment of the new Hungarian Socialist Party which was to host the Reformist wing of the party in the new multi-party system<sup>114</sup>. This announcement came nearly a month after the National Roundtable agreement's signature. This act shows that, unlike in Poland and many other East European countries, the ruling party was not to try to fight to the end and accept to be conquered, but would re-shape itself and fight for the domination of the system under different conditions. So, the importance of the negotiations may be linked to this -very well calculated- decision of the communists.

## **VI. THE KÁDÁRIST LEGACY OF HUNGARY**

To sum up, Hungarian political structure presented a different environment compared to other East European states in its transition to democracy. The basic reason for the difference is the political peculiarities of the Hungarian

state due to the 1956 uprisings and its consequences. The events that took place in 1956 have created a need to have a diversion from the orthodox Stalinist method of legitimation through coercion. That forced the Hungarian leadership to pursue different methods of legitimation. Due to the fact that there was no possibility of creating a more liberal political environment because of the conditions the international environment dictated, reforms in the economy which would make up for the loss in political freedoms were used to legitimise the regime. The introduction of economic liberties sustained the formation of independent civil associations -such as the student or professional representative groups- and permitted the formation of a kind of civil society background. On the other hand, the *second economy* initiative caused a familiarity in public towards the liberal economy and hence eased the economic transition to an extent, at least in comparison with the other Eastern Bloc conversions into Capitalism.

The National Roundtable of 1989 may also be taken as a major and unique event in the East European transformation. During the National Roundtable, both the HSWP and the opposition were willing to reach the aim of a least troublesome transition to a multi-party liberal democratic system.

After 1956, the HSWP sought a sort of economic legitimation. It attempted to be perceived as a provider of economic benefits to its subjects unlike any other Eastern Bloc communist party. However, when the economic policies of the Party failed, it had to gradually retreat to a rearguard role, letting the dissidents gain greater political control. The Party then tried to shift the image of failure into other parts of the state mechanism and tried to disengage itself from the

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<sup>111</sup> R. Tökés, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

state mechanism. Thus, the HSWP under Kádár's rule tried to be a defender of its subjects' economic benefit, and when things began to go wrong, it tried to save its popularity by shifting the blame on some other part of the state mechanism. The same policy may be seen in the political scene as the message given by the HSWP was that it could not engage itself in political reforms as it would jeopardise the economic freedoms gained due to very hard persuasion of the Soviet authorities. The HSWP therefore was giving messages of being restricted in both its relations: In the domestic level, the message was that the Hungarians were to be satisfied with what they are granted in terms of economic benefits as in political sphere the HSWP's actions were seriously limited by the USSR. On the other hand, the message given to the USSR was that the liberal economic attitude was a must due to political reasons as the Hungarians have shown that they were not much pleased with the Communist rule in 1956.

The changes in the USSR during the second part of 1980s created the grounds for both sides to putting more pressure on Kádár and his administration as the USSR was willing for more political concessions and the Hungarians were unhappy with the state of the economy which began to collapse at the end of 1970s. The rise of the political opposition was due to economic failure as well, and as the HSWP had lost its main tool of legitimacy as well as its international *raison d'être* in the form of a barn-dog for the USSR whose actions would be permitted as long as it played its part proficiently, to stop the change was not possible anymore.

The new leadership of the HSWP therefore, from mid-1988 onwards had to find a way to reform the credibility of the Party, reform the economy, and find



new grounds of legitimacy for itself. It failed in all these aspects. The National Roundtable discussions and the dissolution of the Party were therefore the only sensible way to go as it might give a chance to the HSWP or its derivatives to seize power once again -as it happened in 1994-. A new regime with new grounds of legitimacy was needed after the failure of Kádár's legitimation processes after four decades of work due to social bribery to a great extent. New institutions, new policies, new political rules and a new period of orientation were the elements the new political order needed to find an alternative to the Kádárist social contract<sup>115</sup>. Therefore, the future of the new political order depended and depends on how it deals with the Kádárist legacy of Hungarian political system. As will be discussed in further parts of the thesis, a decade after the fall of the communist regime in Hungary, Kádár's political legacy still affects political developments in the country.

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<sup>115</sup> The attempts to institutionalise and ideologically reshape the new system will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIETY, INSTITUTIONS, AND CHANGE IN THE NEW HUNGARIAN POLITICAL ORDER

#### I. CIVIL SOCIETY, CHANGE, AND LEGITIMACY

##### A. Discussions On Civil Society Under Kádár:

The concept of the *second society* and that of political dissent in the Kádár era, especially from mid-1970s onwards, was taken as a sign of the existence of civil society in Hungary. Observation of the events that took place in the wake of the letter of intellectuals supporting the Czechoslovak Charta-77 movement and of the socio-economic conditions forcing the implementation of the *second economy / second society* concept into the Hungarian system, led to discussions on the existence of civil society in Hungary. That the dissident movement in the country grew and formed what were to become the legally illegitimate parts of the National Roundtable Discussions, and that the systemic transformation took place in a politically more advanced manner in Hungary than its East European confederates, are two points supported by such authors as R. Tökés, J. Frentzel-Zagorska, Oleg G. Rumiantsev and David Beetham, who, based on these two points, argue that civil society existed in Hungary before the transformation to democracy.

To analyse the existence or non-existence of civil society in pre-transitional Hungary, especially during the late 1970s onwards, one has to focus primarily

on the definition of the term civil society. Only when one clearly defines the concept and understands its implications, a discussion on the existence or non-existence of the concept in the Kádárist era can be shaped.

#### **B. A Definition Of Civil Society:**

Civil society, as a concept, has a variety of definitions. These diverse definitions of civil society may however be reduced to three groups. Civil society means:

- a) in the Weberian sense, a world of interests (such authors as Locke and Hegel who preceded Weber are to be incorporated into this group as well);
- b) in a Gramscian sense, a rendition of the society as the sum of all social groups and connections which are independent of the state at institutional level; and,
- c) as a narrowed-down political concept, the purposeful self-organisation of socially active forces<sup>116</sup>.

If one combines the second and the third propositions, and takes the concept of civil society in a neo-Gramscian understanding, that is, if one takes civil society as a “structure of the self-organisation of society, located outside, though not disconnected from, the institutional framework of the state,”<sup>117</sup> the definition of civil society becomes clearer. Civil society results in the creation of the normative structures which define group identities and interests. Moreover, it has to present a link between the members constituting the society and its past, its traditions, and its normative and hierarchical values of social behaviour. It fulfils, based on these two points, the tasks of inspecting,

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<sup>116</sup> Oleg G. Rumiantsev, ‘From Confrontation to Social Contract,’ *East European Politics and Societies*, v. 5(1), Winter 1991, (pp. 113-126) p. 114.



controlling, and criticising state policies on all subjects, and, if necessary, defending the interests of the society against the state<sup>118</sup>.

On the one hand, therefore, civil society means a restriction on the power of the state as an entity. It constitutes an obstacle to the state so that the state will be forced to limit its control over the whole body of social activity. On the other hand, civil society may also stand for a composite of self-organised social foci within the society through which people can work collectively to solve problems or to channel them to the organs -usually within the state- which may solve them.

In all descriptions of the term 'civil society', there is a common set of required elements so that civil society would function. These are:

- a) a market economy,
- b) independent media of communication and information,
- c) sources of expertise which are independent of the state but which provide expertise on all governmental policy issues, and,
- d) a network of voluntary associations in all areas of social life<sup>119</sup>.

(Of these, the existence of a market economy provides the freedom of enterprise and of choice. The existence of expert organisations inspecting the government provides an objective look at the deeds of the state and of the ruling political order or government. The existence of voluntary organisations in all fields sustain the availability of political choice and of the right to choose among different organisations. The existence of independent media,

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<sup>117</sup> Janina Frentzel-Zagorska, 'Civil Society in Poland and Hungary,' *Soviet Studies*, v. 42 (4), 1990 (pp. 759-777), p. 759.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 759-760.

and freedom over communications and the flow information enable the expression of the freedoms of thought and of speech and the uncensored communication of ideas. The state's role in the creation of civil society is to enable the two basic freedoms, that is, the freedom of association and the freedom of speech so that civil society may truly function.

### **C. Civil Society and 'Second Society' In Kádárist Hungary:**

As one may induce from the explanations above, civil society appears to be capable of existing only under a liberal democratic system which comes with freedoms of speech, information, association, and, free elections. Without the presence of the basic constituents of a liberal democratic system, i.e. open and accountable government, free and fair elections carried out on the basis of universal suffrage, civil and political rights, and a democratic society resulting of and based on these, the existence of civil society may not be claimed. Ergo, in the light of the parameters of the definition of civil society described above, a communist civil society may be labelled as an oxymoron and the Kádárist Hungary may not be considered to have a civil society.

On the other hand, one has also to bear in mind that the concept of civil society discussed from the beginning of the section is based on the West European - North American model of society and political order. Therefore, the concept defined above is not at all times applicable to the conditions of the East European states within the Cold War context.

Hungarian sociologist Elemér Hankiss addresses this issue in his study conducted in 1987 and published in 1988. Hankiss proposes a model of *second*

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<sup>119</sup> David Beetham and Kevin Boyle. Introducing Democracy, UNESCO-Polity Press, Padstow: 1995, pp. 107-108.

*society* to bridge the gap. Instead of a separate and fully functional civil society system as understood in the Western sense, he proposes a two-tier social organisation. In this, the first society represents all that has been realised by the ideology-sanctioned model, that is, in the East European case, the socialist system. The *second society* therefore becomes in Hankiss' view all that is outside the structure of the first society. The *second society* therefore, would be made up of:

- a) a *second economy* which is private economy which is either legal or in the form of black market,
- b) an alternative public opinion as a result of illegal/underground media operations,
- c) a second culture including sub-cultural groups as hippies as well as religious groups,
- d) a second social consciousness which preserves and develops value systems differing from those of the state, and,
- e) a second set of socio-political interactions including opposition activities, citizen initiatives, and a network of informal relations in professional, religious and other groups.

Hankiss claims that these would give rise to the formation of interest groups which will have influence on the policy-making in the country. Hankiss concludes that a *second society* which may be an East European alternative to the Western concept of civil society does not exist although activities exist in all the five areas he proposes. His reason is that these activities never sum up to constitute a grouping capable of proposing a different set of paradigms to those provided by the first society. He concludes that the emergence of civil



society in Hungary in particular and in Eastern Europe in general is obstructed, but may emerge in time<sup>120</sup>. Therefore, it can be claimed that Hankiss takes Hungarian second society as a quasi-civil society which may either be categorised as a subgroup of civil society or something that has the power to evolve into the form of civil society in time, fulfilling all the five requirements. Following Hankiss' list of requirements for the *second society* but avoiding his conclusions which were premature as expressed in 1985 in the pre-Perestroika period, one may claim that the concept of *second society*, vaguely described as all activities beyond the economic and social control of the totalitarian regime, constitutes the equivalent of civil society in the Western sense. As in a totalitarian political order there is no political discussion nor possibility for the public to have any control nor inspection power over the deeds of the state administration, the concept of *second society*, as a network of economic and socio-political activities and of religious, traditional and of national values which normally are unauthorised by the communist system, serves as a substitute as close as possible to the concept of civil society. Andrew Arato, writing on the Polish civil society activity in 1981, argues that civil society in a communist system may be summed up as what is uncontrollable by the state apparatus. He also points out that the two ways that civil society might change the social structure in Eastern European states during the Cold War era were blocked. The first, he claims, was the revolution from below which was unlikely to take place after the 1956 experience in Hungary (see part II.B above on this matter), with the only possible exception of one such revolution in the imperial centre itself, in this case, the USSR. The second means, Arato

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<sup>120</sup> Janina Frentzel-Zagorska, *op. cit.*, pp. 766-778.

proposes, is the reform movements implemented from above by the rulers of a country and sees, with the exception of Hungary, that this option was blocked, after the events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia. Arato then claims that a third way is possible as shown in the works of Kolakowski in 1971 and of Michnik in 1976: Partial yet structural reforms from below. Instead of an 'all or nothing' approach, the ordinary people were to ask for improvements in their social life, living standards, working hours and such, and to form organised structures to obtain these, if possible. The Solidarity movement in Poland which insisted that its main aim was to improve the rights and working conditions of the Polish workers and that it had no political ends (in January 1981) can be seen as an example of such an attempt<sup>121</sup>.

Following Arato's argument of the third possibility, one may claim that Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary are the three Soviet Bloc countries where a sort of *second society* emerged and developed into an East European version of civil society. In Poland, the Solidarity movement and its followers confronted the ruling political order in an openly political, confrontational manner with collective action and organisation. The aim was to change the state structure by means of reform from below which would give way to a structural change at the end. The Polish example of second society / civil society therefore is a political and visible scheme, especially after the tough stand the Polish government took against the Solidarity Movement. When the organisation gained structural legitimacy in the public despite its illegal nature, it became an alternative way of expressing political needs of the Polish people.

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<sup>121</sup> Andrew Arato, 'Civil Society Against The State: Poland 1980-81,' *Telos*, no. 47, Spring 1981 (pp. 23-47), pp. 24-28 passim.

The Solidarity movement has also benefited from charismatic legitimation by the influence of its leader Lech Wałęsa who became a symbol for the Polish struggle against the communist totalitarianism.

In Czechoslovakia, political activities were concentrated in the actions of the intelligentsia especially after the Spring of 1968 events and the reign of terror that followed it. Unlike Poland, no popular movement with street demonstrations or industrial action took place to disturb the ruling political order. The main concern of the dissident intelligentsia was the issue of human rights and to ease the tight control the administration applied in the wake of Spring 1968.

On the other hand, in Hungary, based on the need of the administration to negotiate to gain legitimacy, and based on the recollections of the popular memory on the 1956 uprising, a compromise was sought and reached. From early 1960s onwards, as Janina Frentzel-Zagorska observed, critical but not opposing intellectuals asked for economic reform from above, and only in the late 1980s voiced their wish for political reform from above as well as further liberalising economic reforms<sup>122</sup>. Civil society in Hungary in the intellectual-political sense therefore consisted of the intellectuals who sought the continuity of the regime through reformation. The idea of legitimacy of the regime for the Hungarian intellectuals therefore lied upon the success of the reform programmes in the field of economy as the external support made the overthrow of the regime impossible. As a result, I believe that, although dismissed by Arato and others as a revisionist, this compromise-based system, the transaction between the Hungarian ruling political order and the Hungarian



public, despite being based on economic reform and the improvement of economic liberties most of the time, constitutes an example of the third possibility to change the system.

Likewise, as exemplified by the introduction of the *second economy* idea in late 1970s and by many other reforms from the top which preceded it, the belief of the ordinary people and not only of intellectuals that the political order is legitimate was a primary objective sought by the Kádár administration. What János Kádár wanted to have was a sort of social contract which would bind the public not to rebel against the ruling political order, but which would not on the other hand bring any unbearable burdens for the administration. Thinking in terms of Western interpretations of the concepts of social contract and of civil society, the idea that a unilateral social agreement appears not to be a proof for the existence of civil society. On the other hand, in a system where the state has a self-declared legal legitimacy and is the omnipotent political power-holder, and where the institution of communist party is interchangeable with the state apparatus, an authoritarian agreement may be dubbed as a social contract and the public (consisting of ordinary people and intellectuals alike), taken as a side to this agreement, may be understood as assuming a part of civil society.

In such an agreement, "the citizens will renounce certain liberties, if the state will guarantee them a stable rise in the standard of living"<sup>123</sup>. In Hungary, what happened since the end of the 1950s was that Kádár always sought to reach compromises if not agreements. The system was restrictive towards a social

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<sup>122</sup> Janina Frentzel-Zagorska, *op. cit.*, pp. 772-773.

<sup>123</sup> Oleg G. Rumiantsev, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

contract based on mutual political compromise as proven by the events of 1956 and with the presence of the external element of regime legitimacy. Ergo, instead of a social contract based on pure political terms, Kádár proposed a series of economic contracts with some political concessions implemented in between economic liberties. The public would have a better living standard and the HSWP would have undisputed political authority (for post-communist implications of this Kádárist social contract, see below)<sup>124</sup>.

The existence of such a system, despite the fact that the government was immune from public inspection by either the means of some extra-governmental organisations or by the means of free elections, created the ground for civil society in Kádár's Hungary. However, the limits on the functions and on the sphere of influence of this society is a matter which requires further analysis as it gave rise to both the dissident movement which became the opposition in the interim to democracy, as well as to the main problem of the Kádár administration that I brand as *the Dichotomy of Kádár*.

#### **D. The Dichotomy Of Kádár:**

The post-war Hungarian political order was based on a Stalinist constitution and despite all the reforms which were carried out after the 1956 uprising, the system continued to be a Stalinist system in essence. The Kádár administration on the one hand had to give or appear to give concessions to the public, on the other hand it had no external credibility to afford to reform the system from top to bottom. The regime, as observed by Josef Gorlice, invited people to

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<sup>124</sup> However, this never means that the state never gave political concessions. The very basic example that a Department of Symbolic Logic was set up and then replaced the Department of Dialectical Logic in the University of Budapest in 1980s (see Janos Laki and Katalin Neumer, 'Past Continuous: Philosophy in Hungary Before and After the Political Turn,' *Studies In East European Thought*, v.51, 1999, p. 247) shows such a trend in politics as well as in economics.

compare the Hungarians' situation with the populations of other East European countries and this would lead to a conviction that Hungarian society was a richer, more dynamic, reasonably freer society in comparison to other societies in the same situation. The Hungarian state permitted "a significant range of individual freedoms, especially in the field of economics, but it was not allowing the essential questions of power and structure to be brought into question - a strategy of granting concessions without rights as János Kis calls it"<sup>125</sup>.

In each and every possibility that the international duties of the Hungarian ruling regime would permit, reforms, especially in the field of economics, were granted. The aim of the Kádár administration was above all to avoid social complexities and a confrontation with the public<sup>126</sup>, therefore it granted what would be the bases of socio-economic development for the exchange of social obedience.

However, as there were internal balances to be considered, namely the issue of obtaining an intra-party legitimacy which would enable the ruling cadres to remain in power, some compromises were suspended. For instance, the 1968 economic reforms were withdrawn in 1972 to silence the hard-line communist opposition within the HSWP. The return to repression over the dissident intellectual took place in 1972-73 period as several dissidents were expelled from the HSWP and some distinguished members of Budapest intelligentsia like Ferenc Feher, Ivan Szelenyi, and Mihály Vajda were forced to emigrate<sup>127</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> Josef Gorlice, 'Introduction to the Hungarian Democratic Opposition,' *Berkeley Journal Of Sociology*, v. 31, 1986, (pp. 117-167), p. 117.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 119.



The cancellation of some reforms and the hardening of the administration's approach towards dissident voices were reflections of the personal fears of Kádár and his close colleagues for the fate of their prospective positions against the Muscovite administration. If Kádár was to compromise too much in the eyes of the Soviet administration at a given time, he would be replaced by a hard-liner, or another 1956-style military intervention could take place. On the other hand, if the Kádár administration was to totally ignore the public wish, then another uprising might occur.

Ergo, on the one hand, Kádár had to satisfy the wishes and orders of the Soviet regime, and on the other hand, the needs and demands of the Hungarian public. The Kádárist compromise was granted from the top with no apparent demand from the below, because the demand from the below would only be too vocal to be limited to domestic scale only. On the other hand, Kádárist administration was unable to disregard the terms and conditions of the compromise with the public, as it was a *quid pro quo* sort of politico-economic contract with the Hungarian public. I brand the situation that Kádár suffered during the balancing act of various internal elements by competing groups while maintaining a fidelity to the USSR and preserving the *status quo*, as the *Dichotomy of Kádár*.

The *dichotomy of Kádár* is the essential building stone of the *status quoist* policies adopted and implemented by Kádár during his 32 years reign as the HSWP's supreme figure. These policies acted as preventive devices for the establishment of a Solidarity-like movement in the country with the claims that Hungarians were in a far better situation compared to other East European people. The Kádárist dichotomy prevented on the one hand the Kádár

administration to implement truly and thoroughly comprehensive economic and social reforms, yet on the other hand prevented the formation of a strong opposition to go beyond the symbolic acts of the underground artists calling themselves the *Incommu* and who organised unofficial art exhibitions in private apartments<sup>128</sup> or beyond the attempts to change the political order by the *embourgeoisement* of the Hungarian society.

Due to the successful implementation of Kádárist legitimation techniques based on the *quid pro quo* strategy, the communist system survived in Hungary until the great change in the world political structure in late 1980s permitted greater structural change in individual countries of the Soviet Bloc. The change was to remove some restrictions in respect of the freedom of speech and of communication, notably after the general amnesty of 1985. The change caused political activity in the country to expand. The *status quo* Kádár tried to preserve hence became the *status quo ante*, this resulting in Kádár administration's loss of legitimacy. Kádár was unable to offer further changes. The political environment that created the *Dichotomy of Kádár* kept János Kádár in power for 32 years, but because of the existence of this dichotomy, the same Kádár had to leave office.

## II. THE EFFECTS OF 'CIVIL SOCIETY'

### A. Two Perceptions Of Civil Society:

*Civil society* was described above from Elemér Hankiss' point of view. Throughout this thesis, in order to be more identifiable, the term '*civil society*' refers to the sectors of society which are not, by definition, inseparable parts of the state realm, that is, which are non-political parts of the society outside the

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<sup>128</sup> Roger Scruton. 'The New Right In Central Europe, 2: Poland and Hungary,' *Political Studies*, v. 36,

policy -making process. Although there are a variety of definitions concerning *civil society*, the above definition seems to be accurate in terms of describing the functions of *civil society*.

Whatever description is extended to the concept, *civil society* is perceived in two precise manners by two different schools of thought vis-à-vis its relationship with the state. The two schools consist of the Hegelian and Neo-Hegelian school on the one hand, and the Scottish Enlightenment school on the other. The Hegelian and Neo-Hegelian approach to the subject of *civil society* is based on the claim that state and *civil society* are two different and adverse entities and cannot co-exist. Hegelians, and among them those such as Gramsci, think that when one of the two sides has a loss, the other grows stronger as one is the complete opposite of the other. On the other hand, Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith were arguing that state and *civil society* may and do coexist and are actually parts of a whole rather than two opposite sides of a confrontation<sup>129</sup>. Therefore, while either the state or civil society has a loss, both sides lose, or when one has a gain, both gain.

While the political change in Southern Europe and Latin America might be used to support the Hegelian vision of *civil society*, the East European and post-Soviet transformation from mid-1980s onwards is more on the side of the Scottish Enlightenment approach. The changes in the existence or credibility of one part of the equation, for instance a change in the living standards towards better or worse, may have direct indications on the public perception

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1988, (pp. 638-658), p. 647.

<sup>129</sup> Krishan Kumar, 'The Evolution of Society: A Darwinian Approach,' in C.M. Hann (ed.), When History Accelerates: Essays on Rapid Social Change, Complexity and Creativity, London, UK: The Athlone Press, 1994, pp. 25-26.



of the new political order. The development of *civil society* agencies may contribute to the public acceptance and approval of the new political order or diminish the strength of a negative response up to a certain extent.

With the historical background of the *second society* which dominated the Hungarian social life from 1970s onwards, it is possible to claim that the Hungarian people were already practising some sort of non-governmental social organisation. Although there is an element of familiarity with the *second economy* and the *second society*, whether these two concepts were supporting or hindering the formation of a post-communist *civil society* needs to be discussed.

#### **B. Is The Second Society a Civil Society or a Proto-Civil Society?:**

The Kádárist social contract was based on the provision of a better standard of living in comparison with other East European nations in exchange of political obedience, or rather depoliticisation. The diminishing economic benefits of Kádár's New Economic Mechanism in the mid-1970s led to the widespread organisation of what would later be dubbed as the *second economy*, a concept which was present since the early 1960s. With the simultaneous existence of a *second public sphere* which covers the illegal and semi-legal publications like the *samizdat*, it was characterised by Elemér Hankiss who branded the whole of this set of social networks as the *second society*. Hankiss' idea of *second society* comprises of a combination of a *second economy*, second culture, second social consciousness, a second level of social networks which made up a monolithic whole<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>130</sup> Susanne Klausen, 'First Society, *Second society*: Mutual Discontents. Interview with Elemér Hankiss.' *East European Reporter*, vol. 3(1), November 1987 (pp.63-65), p.64. See Chapter 2 for a further discussion and explanation of Hankiss' idea of *second society*.

However, as the *second society* is a derivative concept, that is as it is a concept which was created to find a solution to the shortcomings of the *first society* which was the legally legitimate, socialist society existing only at the official level and within the HSWP and the bureaucracy, its merits as a quasi-*civil society* are disputable. In the last two decades of the Kádár administration in Hungary, the majority of the people who were eligible to work were participating in the *second economy* and a considerable part of the intelligentsia formed the segment in the society Hankiss refers to as the *second sphere of culture*. However, for the former was not directly interested in the latter's activities, one may not possibly claim that there was a *civil society*, at least in the making, in the late-Kádárist Hungary. As Elemér Hankiss observed in an interview in November 1987:

"[T]he majority of the population lives a more or less negative existence. By that I mean that they in fact do not really participate in the "first society's" political, social or spiritual life. They do not live from the values of the first society and these values have no influence in their lives. People are neutral or indifferent towards these institutions but they have been unable to develop new ideas, values or institutions. Nor does the second way of life offer attractive conditions for the vast majority. The *second society* as a whole is placed in a diffuse social position. It is twisted and distorted, but with a core structure which resembles proto-institutions or proto-mechanisms, but which in this quasi-legal posture cannot be used as a model for a new social system. In this ghetto-like condition it cannot evolve into anything truly healthy and dynamic and attain a larger significance. Hence, I do not believe that in the future we can expect a realisation of the *second society*. On the contrary, ...it would completely disappear were the first society to democratise."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Hankiss' remarks point to the fact that the *second society* as a concept is an attempt to an alternative culture within the parameters of the state socialist rule and not a form of *civil society* in the making even before the opening of the system to the effects of democratisation. Albeit the existence of dissident groups and illegal or semi-legal publications such as in *samizdat*, the public involvement in the political level of the *second society* is negligible. That is due to the nature of the Kádárist social contract and the social bribery which was a part of this social contract.

When one looks at the formation of the non-governmental organisations and other *civil society* components in the post-communist era, one can see that these organisations reflect to a great extent the non-political nature of the pre-democratic society in Hungary. However, there are elements in this generally depoliticised environment which may be linked to a more politically oriented segment of the *second society*.

### **C. The Roots of Politicised *Civil Society* in Kádárist Hungary:**

Within the Gorbachevite international political framework of détente and against the background of *glasnost*, politically oriented groups emerged in Hungary within the *second society*. These groups may even be considered as the possible ancestors of a post-communist Hungarian *civil society*. These may also be dubbed as alternative cultures in the Western understanding of the word and these have four main foundations: a) the minority groups who fought to keep their national identity such as the Gypsies and the Jews, b) environmentalists and urban conservation groups who were politicised as their conservationist demands clashed inevitably –and deliberately– with the government's policies on industrial development, c) members of the political



dissident groups who published material in the *samizdat* format, or published and circulated other illegal or semi-legal newspapers, journals, and magazines, and finally, d) the general public who in fact were not involved in politics, but who are a party in the Kádárist social contract and who therefore expect economic benefits in exchange for political indifference.

The first two of these four categories are legal as there was a right to organise. However, while the national minority groups were truly interested in preserving their social/national identity within the Hungarian state which was in essence, at least in the ideological level, universalist, the environmentalists and urban conservationists had a further political agenda: As to criticise the administration on ideological-political grounds consisted a crime even in the loose *glasnost* atmosphere, to voice environmental concerns and to claim that the administration had no interest in the environmental health of its population was a means of discrediting the administration without apparent political involvement. Besides, since the 1956 events have created a cautious public response to political-ideological agitation, the voicing of seemingly apolitical concerns were likely to receive more public backing. The environmental campaign to prevent the construction of the Bos (Gabcikovo)-Nagymaros Dam on the Hungarian-Slovakian border has been a lively issue of discussion among the Hungarian public. The debate which began in 1983 continued with the emergence of the Danube Circle, an organisation which did not ask for permission to organise and which replaced the legally-established Association for the Protection of the Danube Region<sup>132</sup>, and continued into the post-

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<sup>132</sup> Gyula Denes, 'The Politics of Environmental Protection,' *East European Reporter*, vol. 2(2), Spring 1986 (pp.4-5), p. 4.

communist era<sup>133</sup>. This was perceived as a political campaign to discredit the HSWP government without a real political involvement and created interest in the generally apolitical Hungarian public over the issue and over the misconduct of the Hungarian communist regime. The Danube Circle became a successful public relations cause of the Hungarian dissident movement as it managed to gather five thousand people to demonstrate against the Bos-Nagymaros Dam in May 1988 while in September 1988 it arranged for a massive forty thousand people-strong demonstration urging the suspension of the construction work. Although the attempt failed at the moment, the Miklos Nemeth government suspended work on the dam and tried to cancel the project<sup>134</sup>.

Formations which supported a social, as well as a political cause filled the gap between the second and the third groups. For instance, the Social Committee for the Homeless (SCH) which emerged in early 1989 and which supported the cause of the homeless but which refused any homeless person to enter the committee as a member because it was an organisation "for" the homeless and not "of" the homeless. It was run by intellectuals, "it was a social movement which used demonstrations and petitions; it was a movement *for* rather than *of* its target group; it was ready to discuss with the [Budapest municipal] council...; and finally it achieved results."<sup>135</sup> The SCH, therefore has become an organisation attempting at politicising the Hungarian people, however it lacked the political nature of the third group. The Tenants Association formed

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<sup>133</sup> Tamas Fleischer, 'The Blue Danube,' *East European Reporter*, vol. 4(2), Spring 1990 (pp.78-80), p. 78.

<sup>134</sup> Bill Lomax, 'The Strange Death of 'Civil society' in Post-Communist Hungary,' *Journal of Communism Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 13(1), March 1997(pp. 41-63), p. 45.

in 1988 was a similar movement. These groups, helped in some central issues like environmental protection and housing problems, but in the long run, were limited in scale and scope and could not reach the majority of the population and were helped by the post-Gorbachev atmosphere of greater understanding as well as abusing it to harass the ruling regime. As they were short-lived, issue-oriented, and, had a secondary aim as wearing out the administration's already sinking popularity, they cannot be mentioned as a group on their own but as a niche between the politicised activists and the overtly political dissidents.

The third group in the communist era alternative culture formations consists of the politically active dissidents. These published material as the *samizdats* or other illegal or semi-legal newspapers, journals, magazines, held opposition meetings, formed political groups and attempted to politicise the nation. Such samizdats like the *Beszélő* and *Valóság* helped the members of this group to spread their ideas and create an intra-elite discussion forum outside the reach of the official control and censorship. The members of this group, however, are themselves members of the intelligentsia who are outside the decision-making clique but within the boundaries of intellectually influential part of the society. This group is made up of students, philosophers, teachers, members of academia, economists and other politically-inclined professionals, and, by definition, they are not members of the common public in general. Their higher political awareness and their comparatively higher living standards - despite the gradual decrease in the living standards of the academicians which

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<sup>135</sup> C.G. Pickvance, 'Environmental and Housing Movements in Cities After Socialism: The Cases of Budapest and Moscow,' in G. Andrusz et al. (eds.), *Cities After Socialism*, p. 252.



continues well into the post-communist era- put these into a different position of relationship with the power-holders as the members of this groups are potential power-holders themselves.

One major difference between the intelligentsia in this third group and the ordinary people in the fourth group is the former's ability to negotiate with the ruling class on a philosophical - ideological basis. While the Kádárist social contract was an exchange of economic benefit or relative economic freedom with political obedience, the intelligentsia asked for intellectual freedom. Therefore, they were not part of the Kádárist social contract. The censorship and a lack of free expression of thought, and not the economic hardship, were the main problems for the intelligentsia,. In the meantime, the general public, the parts of the society which are outside the definition of intelligentsia identified their major problems as those issues concerning everyday life such as the rising prices, the lack of needed consumer goods in the supermarket shelves or the lack of financial ability to afford these. If we keep this in mind, it is arguable that while the dissident part of the intelligentsia carried out activities to defend the intellectual rights and freedoms in Kádárist Hungary, the main support to them came from the public when the economic inconsistencies of the communist administration began to undo the 'depoliticisation in exchange for economic benefits' equation.

The best example for the differences of the intellectual dissident approach and the ordinary citizens' understanding of the Kádárist regime is the youth movement *Dialógus*. It emerged in the 1980s as an organisation of young secondary school pupils. It sought nuclear disarmament. The leaders of *Dialógus* attempted at keeping their distance from both the government and

the intellectual dissident class for they thought *Dialógus* was in fact a legal organisation, working under the guidelines set by the Kádár administration. In the end, the HSWP disagreed and *Dialógus* was disbanded in the wake of threats over the educational futures of the members and of pressures both on the members and their parents<sup>136</sup>. The organisation, unlike the environmentalist organisations such as the *Danube Circle*, did not receive any assistance from the dissident circles who thought it was just an offspring of the Kádárist establishment's brainwashing campaign. The Western equivalents of such an organisations showed no interest either for it remained unnoticed due to the lack of a famous figure in its leadership cadres.

The indifference of the Hungarian intelligentsia towards such an 'innocent' organisation as the *Dialógus* shows that there was a gap of understanding, if not of trust, between the intelligentsia and the general public. The intelligentsia's refusal of the existing social contract under the Kádárist system and their negative attitude of those who abide by its rules, and the general public's general indifference to the perils the dissident intellectuals face, created this gap and kept it alive. It was only when the dissident intellectuals began to make use of the economic decline as their means of communication with the general public that interaction between the two sides really began. From then on, that is from mid-to-late 1980s onwards, a popular mobilisation against the ruling political order emerged. Hence, only from that point onwards one may refer to the existence of a nation-wide *pseudo-civil society* with mass participation.

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44-45.

#### D. The Reform Proposals:

In order to enable *civil society* to function properly in its liberal democratic sense, the reforms sought after by the Hungarian intelligentsia had to be carried out. With the transfer of some segments of political power to the public, with economic liberalisation and with public participation into policy-making process up to an extent, *civil society* might burgeon in the Kádárist Hungary. However, as the members of the dissident intelligentsia were and are by definition a marginalised minority of the society, the efforts towards creating the environment suitable for the establishment of *civil society* components came into existence only when the economic requirements forced political change in the domestic scale and when the international political environment permitted such changes.

As Csaba Gombar and Laszlo Lengyel observed in their 1986 article, the changes came not from the activities of the intelligentsia to create a haven of intellectual freedoms, but from the negative response from the general public towards the lack of commitment to the economic causes of the Kádárist social contract:

"The common denominator [...] is that until now there has been no political reform.

The reason for our uncertainty are as follows. From the outset, we have witnessed not just reforms with an economic content, but we have also seen how since the late 1960s the activity of higher political organs involved in direct economic management have been transformed institutionally. ....But we have noticed that quasi-political alternatives have been constructed.... And what is important, a start has been made in institutional metamorphosis. ....Quasi-interest representation organs have emerged, which are in part no longer transmission belts for the central organs of state and party. Half-autonomous, half-independent economic areas have come into being, notably the private plot, ancillary



industries, small enterprises etc. and these have not been integrated into any kind of hierarchical political order. The mass media pursues the propaganda of success, but even if it does so with great unevenness, it is developing gradually towards an all but open, almost critical, here and there independent European-type of autonomy.”<sup>137</sup>

The main catalyst which enabled the formation of a pseudo-structure of *civil society* in Hungary, therefore, is not the political efforts of the first three groups which, after all, were minorities in terms of demography and social class structure, but the economic discontent of the masses with the ongoing economic decline process. The members of intelligentsia who published the samizdats were also aware of the situation and in the late 1980s, the economic element has become their main point of argument, rather than the political freedoms issue.

In June 1987, a group of intellectuals who were gathered around the samizdat *Beszélő* published a programme titled ‘Conditions for a Political Renewal’.

This manifesto pointed out to the fact that the reluctant public consent era was over due to the consequences of economic decline. Its authors attacked the Kádárist social contract as a negative consensus reached between the Kádár administration and the Hungarian people which resulted in the granting of small sacrifices by the state instead of large-scale social, political and economic reform. The programme foresaw that there are three ways out of the crisis situation for Hungary: a) a series of campaigns to strengthen the nationalistic, ideological or racial feelings through mass mobilisation and relocation of populations like in Rumania; b) a widespread economic

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<sup>137</sup> Csaba Gombár and Laszlo Lengyel, ‘It May Be...,’ *East European Reporter*, vol. 2(2), Spring 1986, p. 10; extract from the authors’ article titled ‘On the Question of Social Reform’ published in

liberalisation programme which would change the economic environment dramatically while the single-party dictatorship would remain intact like in South Korea; or. c) a social contract which would replace the existing 'consensus' with the participation of all layers of the society. The first condition for the realisation of the last possibility was János Kádár's leaving his post as the head of the state and of the administration<sup>138</sup>. It is interesting to see that the first alternative was, up to an extent, adopted and used by the Hungarian Democratic Forum government during the first post-communist parliamentary term, the second alternative failed during the later stages of the communist rule in the country, and the third way was actually adopted as the basis of the National Roundtable negotiations of 1989.

A second group of intellectuals which might be described as nationalist-radical populists and who were within the ruling clique of the communists, met in Lakitelek in late September 1987. During the meeting, Imre Pozsgay, the leader of the People's Patriotic Front (PPF), made a speech stressing on the problems of the state apparatus. With the participation of twenty-two intellectuals, the PPF had already issued a reform proposal titled 'Turning Point and Reform' which was published unauthorised in the March-June 1987 issue of the samizdat *Hirmondó*. This manifesto accused the state of establishing a monopoly over the sources of information and therefore creating misinformation on the condition of the Hungarian economy. This claim was based on the assumption that most people considered the country's economy

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*Társadalomkutatás*, 1986, issue 1.

<sup>138</sup> 'A Social Contract: Conditions for a Political Renewal,' *East European Reporter*, vol. 3(1), November 1987 (pp.54-58), pp. 54-55 passim; taken from *Beszélő*, special issue, June 1987.

to be better than their own economic situation<sup>139</sup>. The remedy the PPF was proposing was the strengthening of the mass media and its public credibility as well as strengthening the position of the Party. The perception of public by the twenty-two intellectuals who wrote the proposal are interesting:

“A significant sector of the population is ruled by apathy. They receive no information as to how they should understand the loss of previously professed values of socialism (i.e. material certainties, stable prices and job security) and cannot distinguish between the enforced retreat and the unavoidable reevaluation of the system.

In the most recent period, because of the divergence between the use of reform phrasology in the media and the actual social and political practice, the word “reform” has become voided of meaning and devalued, even for those who largely know what it means. It is though-provoking that nearly 40 percent of those asked in a survey could not answer the question as to what this concept meant . [...] No economic consolidation or renewal of any kind is imaginable without regaining credibility in the public sphere.”<sup>140</sup>

The eleven years that followed the publication of this document has seen a total political and economic transformation and a reform process. As a result of this reform process, the mass media became a freer institution with foreign investment and know-how transfer. The flow of information became an uninterrupted, uncensored process. However, despite all these changes the public view of the role of the administration did not alter dramatically to prioritise intellectual freedoms over economic concerns. Economic problems are still the most important issue in the agenda of the ordinary people in Hungary. The respectability of such institutions as political parties,

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<sup>139</sup> ‘Proposal for the Reform of the Public Sphere,’ East European Reporter, vol. 3(1), November 1987 (pp. 58-61), p.58.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.



government and the parliament are still very low (see further parts of this chapter for a detailed discussion).

On the other hand, one must admit that the samizdat system, based on the illegal publication and distribution of dissident ideas, has worked in creating a national interest and familiarity with the political sphere. As the distribution numbers of these journals and newsletters increased, the ideas of the dissidents who write for these publications spread around slowly but unmistakably. That the 1989 National Roundtable discussions were so successful in persuading the ruling class to leave office without popular uprisings or a civil war as in other neighbouring countries within the same pact, can be linked to the fact that the dissidents were by then well-known and respected, and that was due to the impact of the samizdats in addition to the failures of the Hungarian communists in the fields of economics and of public relations.

To sum up, it is rational to claim that the activities of the dissident groups have been, up to an extent, successful in undermining the Hungarian communist regime. However, the inability of the Hungarian administration of the time to tackle the pressure stemming from a) the loss of its international backing due to the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, b) the domestic economic failure due to the inability to catch up with the requirements of the new informatics industrial revolution which took place from early 1980s onwards and due to the inability to make the semi-liberal *second economy* mechanism in a manner to benefit the state and the people, and as a result of these, c) the failure of the state apparatus to play its part in the Kádárist social contract, were the main reasons for the fall of the communist system in Hungary. It is hard to claim that the second society idea, under these circumstances, may be considered as

either *civil society* or a pseudo-*civil society* which emerged from the conditions of Hungarian state system. That some parts of the second society were indeed foundations for a post-communist Hungarian *civil society* is a correct assumption, but to observe a *civil society* in the Kádárist Hungary which had no widespread popular support nor wide-scale activities of protest, no access to widespread mass media, and no role of inspection or pressure over the government policies would be irrational. The process of strengthening which took place in the last three years of 1980s, especially after János Kádár's replacement in the May 1988 Congress, may be seen as a *civil society* formation, however, even so, it is too short-lived to influence the totally different mechanisms of the post-communist Hungarian society.

### III. CIVIL SOCIETY, CHANGE, AND POLITICAL AGENDA

#### A. The Mechanism of Change and the Social Factor:

The changes in the agencies of the political order in Hungary altered the superstructure of the political order in the country through a new institutionalisation process (see a detailed discussion in Chapter 3 concerning civil society and Chapter 4 for institutional changes). However, the institutional change in the superstructure, for instance the establishment of political parties, their nation-wide organisation, the change in the importance and/or perception of such agencies as the parliament, political parties, or the trade unions, the restructuring of the economic and political mechanisms and agencies, the separation of power within the legislature, executive and the judiciary, were either results or causes of infrastructural changes in the society. The formation from scratch in some areas, and, strengthening in some others, of *civil society*, led to and interacted with a major social transformation in

which people have experienced different levels of change, novelty and disappointment.

As a process, although supported by popular will, the transformation from totalitarianism to liberal democracy was experienced as a series of reforms from above. The process of change, therefore, has been an issue handled by the elite of the Hungarian society. The introduction of such alien concepts as civil rights and freedoms, new electoral procedures, political parties and election campaigns in the realm of politics, and such concepts as inflation, unemployment, flexible exchange-rate mechanisms, devaluation in the realm of economics, have created their relevant social consequences, affecting all layers of the society. Although there has been an increase in the activities of *civil society* and civic organisations, the population had to go through a process of learning to use and misuse the new institutions, to choose from among new concepts and sets of values<sup>141</sup>. The learned difference in the perception of and reactions to the process of change have influenced both the structure and stratification of the society and the perception and role of the concept of legitimacy.

Therefore, the winners of losers in the new system, the expectations and disappointments of the public within the new socio-political order, and the activity of *civil society* are key elements affecting the perception of the concept of legitimacy. The concept of *civil society* and whether it is a reliable source to examine the evolution of democratisation is an issue this chapter will be dealing with. However, changes in the social structure of the country, as well

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<sup>141</sup> Ferenc Miszlivetz, 'Participation and Transition: Can *civil society* Project Survive in Hungary?,' *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 13(1), 1 March 1997 (pp. 27-40), p. 27.



as the mood swings in social classes due to the change in specific parts of the economic and political mechanisms, have a great impact on people's thinking and perception of political developments. Therefore, national voting behaviour and the perception of political parties and their political platforms, as well as support for particular political parties are also affected.

#### **B. The Problem of Adaptation:**

While analysing the change in the society and therefore in the perception and significance of the concept of legitimacy in the Hungarian society, the issue of adaptation needs to be closely considered. In the transition to any novel form of behaviour, adaptability and the costs and effects of adaptation play a pivotal role. When one considers the differences between the authoritarian regime of the pre-communist era which only experienced one free election process and the communist era, it may be claimed that although there was a transition from authoritarianism to totalitarianism, the transition was without revolutionary changes in the state-society relations as both authoritarian and totalitarian regimes are state-centric.

On the other hand, the new political order is individual-centric and is based on the interactive relationship between state and the citizen. The change from interacting with a totalitarian state mechanism which owns all the means of production and which was largely self-legitimising to a system which requires public participation and public approval of its acts, and which is legitimised by the public approval, is a first for Hungarians. The sheer existence of the new political order demands the existence and functioning of *civil society*. In effect, this legitimises the new political order as well as easing the interaction between the state and the citizens and providing a checks and balances

mechanism for the newly-emerging political superstructure. The issue of *civil society* and its function is therefore vital to the Hungarian political transition.

#### IV. POST COMMUNIST CIVIL SOCIETY: GROUNDS FOR LEGITIMACY?

##### A. Is There a Post-Communist Civil Society?:

In spite of the lack of political participation by the general public into the membership of non-governmental organisations during the Kádár administration<sup>142</sup>, from 1970 onwards there has been an increase in non-political civil representation organisations. The figures of membership have grown from 2,171,000 in 1970 to 2,979,000 in 1989 despite a decrease in the number of civic associations from 8,886 to 8,514 during the same period<sup>143</sup>.

The increase in the number of youth organisations, pensioners' associations, the emergence of civic legal aid groups, political organisations and of professional chambers and associations is a positive sign pointing to the emergence of a *civil society* structure similar to that in the Western political system. Especially notable is the increase in representative organisations for such economically vulnerable groups as the youth (troubled by unemployment) and the pensioners (troubled by ever-diminishing living standards). Such organisations prove that there is a development in public consciousness towards the checks and balances mechanisms and policy-manipulation and awareness of the uses of interest representation.

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<sup>142</sup> To this, trade unions may constitute an exception as they were organisations of interest representation under the old regime with extensive membership numbers. However, it must be remembered that these were extensions of the ruling order and were generally controlled by the Party-appointed managers rather than genuine workers' representatives in most cases.

<sup>143</sup> Terry Cox and Laszlo Vass, 'Civil society and Interest Representation in Hungarian Political Development,' *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 10(3), 1994 (pp. 153-179), p. 154.

On the other hand, it is also interesting to see that an actual 49% of the total number of *civil society* formations in 1992 belonged to sports and sports fan clubs, that some of the environmental, women's, educational, human rights associations are actually political party-affiliated. Besides, when one considers that of the one and a half million members of the non-governmental organisations, 1,147,157 are actually members of trade unions with no active participation, Ferenc Mészlivetz's assumption that "organisational density does not necessarily an expression of the civil ethos, or, as Agnes Heller puts it, of the 'republican spirit'," <sup>144</sup> needs to be considered. The lack of an established middle-class, along with the lack of interest due to the general suspicion towards the nature of politically-inclined non-governmental organisations which is a remainder of the communist era, diminish the active participation ratio in these organisations hence narrowing down their chances of influencing the government in policy-making and policy-implementing stages.

**Table 4.1. Civil Associations in Hungary, 1989 and 1992<sup>145</sup>:**

Association Type	Number in 1989	Number in 1992
Mass communication	-	72
Artists' Associations	616	439
Trad. Folk-Art Circles	-	634
Sports and sports fan clubs	3,066	6,315±
Leisure/ hobby groups	93	399
Fraternal societies	-	237
Educational societies	105	220
Scientific societies	123	193
Children's/Family organisations	-	139
Youth organisations	55	496
Disabled's assoc.	-	141
Pensioners' assoc.	38	140
Other health-care assoc.	62	95
Benefit groups	-	141
Environmental assoc.	75	246
Architectural groups	-	246
Economic Interest	-	660

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>145</sup> Data from *ibid.*, pages 155 (1989) and 174 (1992) respectively.



representation groups		
Professional chambers and federations	-	299
Civic legal aid groups	-	419
International relations	-	194
Political organisations	-	61
TOTAL (including not listed) <sup>146</sup>	8,396	30,507

†: this figure is taken from F. Mislivetz article, 'Participation and Transition: Can *Civil society* Project Survive in Hungary?,' 1997.

The increased foreign ownership of production facilities in the country either by means of foreign direct investment or by means of joint ventures also limit the influence of the non-governmental citizens' organisations. That the economy is run in co-ordination with rules introduced by the stand-by agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) means that Hungarian governments do not have much of a say in the way the economy is managed creates further problems for the civil institutions. The lack of influence of civic organisations over economic policies of the government diminishes public interest towards these organisations as the public interest is mainly in the improvement of the standard of living.

## **B. Two Protests Within Civil Society and Social Fragmentation:**

### **1. The Taxi Drivers' Blockade and Following Public Protests:**

The low priority assigned to politics and political participation in *civil society* activities may also be linked to the lack of communication between the intelligentsia and the rest of the society. While a considerable section of the Hungarian intelligentsia chose dissent and fought against the communist regime, all Hungarians now middle-aged or older have spent the major part of their lives under the same regime and normally would not like to think of

<sup>146</sup> Numbers for the totals from Ferenc Miszlivetz, 'Participation and Transition: Can the Civil Society Project Survive in Hungary?,' *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 13(1), March 1997 (pp. 27-40), p. 28. The figures include associations and foundations.

virtually their entire adult life as a dark age of shame and defeat as the intelligentsia members propose that era to be. The Hungarians would like to see a certain continuity in their lives, and this is the point where the distinction occurs: While the ordinary people would like to perceive a continuity element with the improvement of their economic environment, a trend which began under János Kádár's leadership, the intelligentsia is more concerned with the building of a continuous line of political development which might be traced back to Kádárist era as well.

Therefore, the public perception of the new post-communist political era and the public expectations from this new system differ from the perception and expectations of the intelligentsia from the same system. The two important post-communist means of action taken by the ordinary people and by the intelligentsia, the taxi drivers' blockade of 1990 and the *Democratic Charter* of 1991 respectively, show the difference in the attitude and understanding of the new regime.

The taxi drivers' blockade took place in the wake of the first anniversary of the proclamation of the Hungarian Republic<sup>147</sup>, from 24 to 26 October 1990. The rise in the petrol prices resulted in a spontaneous demonstration by the taxi drivers. The protest emerged from the discussions between the taxi drivers and the petrol station owners and the drivers gathered before the parliament on the night of the Friday, 24 October and when their demands of negotiation were rejected, they blocked the roads first in Budapest and then in most towns and inter-city roads. By 26 October, all the traffic in the country ground to a halt for all the major arteries were blocked by the taxi drivers. The government first

responded to the blockade by the threat of using coercive means, however, with wide public support from the lower-income segments of the society and the reluctance of the police and the armed forces to enter into conflict with the protesters, as well as large parliamentary pressure from the main opposition party of the time, the AFD, it agreed to negotiate. The negotiations were conducted through the already existing Council of Interest Representation, an institution originally aimed at solving problems between the employers, employees and the government. At the end of the three days of blockade, the government limited the petrol price increase to only 35% of the original increase and accepted not to prosecute the protesters. On the other hand, the protesters accepted that the petrol prices were to be set by the world market fluctuations in the future and to remove all the barricades by the following Monday morning<sup>148</sup>.

The taxi drivers' blockade has become the first post-communist social movement in which the ordinary people confronted the governing elite. Its cause, as most other problems felt by the general public in the post-communist era, was purely economic. The low level of adaptation at the highest point of the transitory period and the public frustration stemming from the incapability to change government policies gave rise to such an impromptu act. Public support for the taxi drivers, the lack of violent confrontation despite the counter-protests of the ruling HDF partisans, the reluctance of the army and of

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<sup>147</sup> The new post-communist Hungarian Republic was proclaimed on 23 October 1989.

<sup>148</sup> Andras Bozoki, 'Democrats Against Democracy?: Civil Protest in Hungary Since 1990,' in Gyorgy Szoboszlai (ed.), Flying Blind: Emerging Democracies in East-Central Europe, Budapest: Hungarian Political Science Association, 1992, pp. 383-390 passim.



the police to intervene point to the shared feeling of frustration with the novelties of the new system by the public.

The taxi drivers' blockade was followed by many small and large-scale public protests, ranging from the protest against the president Árpád Göncz in 1993 by the skinheads to the right- and left-wing protest movements. Smaller scale blockades, similar in essence to the drivers' blockade, just like in the case of the Városliget blockade on the Earth Day in Budapest in 1993 and the Boeskaai Street school demonstration<sup>149</sup> failed to gain the same impact on the society and were controlled and limited by police presence. The farmers' protest in the Spring of 1997 has blocked half of the motorways in Hungary. The reason for this blockade, and then, the farmers' rally in front of the Parliament in the autumn of the same year, was the rise in agrarian taxes<sup>150</sup>. The general character of the public protests is that ordinary people in Hungary failed to express their displeasure from the regime in another way. If one considers these protests were conducted in a period where unemployment rates soared from ten thousand to six hundred thousand people, and that most of the unemployed were seen as long-term unemployed, it is clear that the public would feel estrangement from the new system and hence express itself with such protests.

## 2. The Democratic Charter and the Point of View of the Intelligentsia:

On the other hand, the *Democratic Charter* is an act originating from within the intelligentsia. In September 1991, János Kis who was the chairman of the

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<sup>149</sup> Máté Szabo, 'From a Police State to a Demonstration Democracy: Policing Mass Demonstrations in Hungary Before, During and After the Regime Change,' unpublished paper, p. 19.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

AFD, and Tamas Bauer, a member of the AFD National Council published an article arguing the HDE-led centre-right coalition government was gradually shifting to the right and authoritarianism. They proposed a charter in which citizens would declare their principles and argue that the democratic transformation was not yet complete. It was an attempt to improve the participation of the intelligentsia into the political affairs in Hungary. The main problem perceived by the initiators of the *Democratic Charter* project was the danger of them becoming perceived as opposing to the system once again, rather than the opposition to the government. The charter which was published in September 1991 and penned by such well-known figures within the Hungarian intelligentsia such as György Konrad and Mihaly Kornis, was signed by around five thousand people within two months' time.

The charter became an issue of political debate as the opposition parties supported it especially after the PM József Antall removed the head of the Hungarian National Bank after he had signed the charter. With the support of the opposition parties and in accordance with the results of a meeting of nearly half of the signatories of the charter in December 1991, it became the core of a social movement and on the national holiday of 15 March 1992, the Charter movement asked its followers to protest in streets. The result was a ten thousand-strong mass demonstration in Budapest on that date<sup>151</sup>.

At the end, the Charter did not evolve into a political party. However, its impact is considerable when one takes into account that it began as an elite movement and largely remained so despite its popularity. The success the Democratic Charter movement is due largely to unpopular government

policies and their outcomes, including price rises, increasing inflation and unemployment rates, and social instability. The discontent with the HDF-led coalition's policies gave rise to political fears which included a fear to transcend from a totalitarian communist regime to an authoritarian capitalist regime. The public fear of Hungary becoming a capitalist authoritarian regime after four decades of communist totalitarianism was the reason for widespread public support to the movement.

The major difference between the essence and growth of the two movements of protest is that they are based on different priorities in people's minds. The taxi drivers' protest has become a public affair overnight due to its direct contact with the most popular public problem, namely the rising prices which constantly pull down the standard of living to lower limits. The Democratic Charter was different in essence, and although being a popular movement, due to its mainly intellectual basis, it remained limited to a group of the population. In a rapidly changing environment, when the economic necessities are the main concern for the general public, a change in the political agenda is always taken as of secondary importance.

The difference between the priorities of the ordinary people and of the intelligentsia also sets the basis for a two-tier legitimisation process: While an intelligentsia incorporated into the ruling elite may perceive a political order as legitimate, the general public, those who are outside the highly-educated professionals, may perceive it as illegitimate. The necessary step to guarantee the continuity of the post-communist system in Hungary is to ensure that both segments of the society approve of the new regime.

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 391-395 *passim*.



The main factors which influence the difference of perception between the ordinary people and the intelligentsia is the levels of education and of income, as well as the two sides' ability to find jobs under the new economic and social circumstances created in the post-communist era. These factors create a social fragmentation and are to possibly create a polarisation between the well-educated, politicised professionals and poorly-educated, apolitical masses. The former is likely to be the driving force in the Hungarian capitalisation process and create the new Hungarian middle-class, while the latter may encounter worse living conditions than under Kádár.

#### 1. Educational Differences:

In terms of education, there is a real difference between the urban areas on the one hand and the rural regions of Northeast Hungary and Lower Transdanube region in the Southeast. While in the urban areas the education levels indicate that from 15% in general urban areas to up to 30% of the population in Budapest to have higher education, in Northeast and Transdanube regions the figures are usually up to 5% of the population having higher education. In contrast, in the Northeast and Transdanube regions, where the main unit of dwelling are small villages, the ratio of people with a maximum of eight years of elementary education goes up to 50% in some parts. In Budapest and other urban areas, this figure is down to a maximum of 20%<sup>152</sup>. Table 4.2 gives a clearer indication of the educational differences between social classes and hence clarifies the answer to the question why the intelligentsia's world-view differs from that of the ordinary people so definitely.

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<sup>152</sup>Data from Jozsef Meszaros and Istvan Szakadat, Magyarország Politikai Atlasza, Budapest: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 1995, maps 4 and 5.

The table below shows that after a year, those having a higher education or more qualified jobs or jobs requiring some learned skills have seen an improvement in their income levels and there has been drops in the percentage of their groups' involvement in the lowest-earning one-fifth of the society which includes people of 16 years of age or older. In contrast, people who have an elementary education, no job-specific skills, those involved in agrarian sector and those with disabilities or liabilities have seen a reduction in their incomes and began to live in greater poverty<sup>153</sup>.

**Table 4.2. Poverty by social class and education. Percentage of people above 16 years of age and living in the lowest-earning 20% of the society in terms of per capita income<sup>154</sup>:**

<b>Educational and social class↓ /Percentage of the population living in the lowest-earning 20%→</b>	<b>1992 (%)</b>	<b>1993 (%)</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
0-7 years of primary schooling	30.6	31.6
8 years of primary schooling	26.5	29.2
Professional skill-teaching schools	21.8	23.2
Secondary School	12.1	11.1
University or other higher education institutions	8.3	4.0
<b>SOCIAL CLASS OF THE ACTIVE PEOPLE</b>		
High Position Holders	6.0	2.7
Intellectuals	7.1	6.6
Middle-Rank Employees and Foremen	7.3	7.4
Employees (Ordinary Jobs)	11.2	10.7
Private Entrepreneurs	18.2	13.6
Qualified Workforce	17.4	16.7
Unqualified Workforce	22.4	25.6
Peasants and Agrarian Workers	21.3	37.7
<b>SOCIAL CLASS OF THE INACTIVE PEOPLE</b>	<b>1992 (%)</b>	<b>1993 (%)</b>
Unemployed	44.7	43.9
Pensioners	15.8	11.9
Disabled Pensioners	26.7	34.3
Single Mothers	35.8	38.5

<sup>153</sup> Also see OECD, *Social and Labour Market Policies in Hungary*, OECD, Paris, 1995, for more detailed data on the decline of income in the lower-earning parts of the Hungarian society.

<sup>154</sup> From Rudolf Andorka, 'Anciennes et Nouvelles Inégalités Sociales en Hongrie,' *Revue D'Etudes Comparatives Est-Ouest*, 1994(4), December 1994 (pp. 111-129), table 8 in p. 125.

When education and job qualification affect so much in terms of income differences within the space of one year, the degree of appreciation and involvement by individuals in the new political process, are unsurprisingly low. With so much fluctuation in the levels of income, in an environment where only having higher education, capital to start one's own company, or a skilled-labour-oriented profession helping to improve one's standard of living, the lack of interest towards politics and political life which includes participating in the activities of *civil society* formations is understandable, if not justifiable.

## **2. Economic Differences:**

Social class distinction with regards to employment type and educational background is affecting income levels and hence living standards of the Hungarians. The difference between those who have higher than average income and those who are below the poverty line also indicates to the different standpoints in perceiving the new regime. As the expectations and the positive or negative outcome of these expectations in relation with one's educational and professional background and hence one's ability to fit in and adapt to the working conditions of the new, capitalist, liberal-democratic era, are factors which influence the perception of the regime. Consequently, the legitimacy of the post-communist Hungarian political depends on the feeling of adaptation that the Hungarian people exhibit.



**Table 4.3. Differentiation of household income by profession from 1962 to 1992 in Hungary, in relation to the national income level (100%)<sup>155</sup>:**

Household head's social class	1962	1972	1982	1987	1992
High Position Holder	154	150	127	125	162
Intellectual	154	150	127	125	140
Middle-Rank Employee	128	115	107	117	114
Employees (Ordinary Jobs)	119	108	99	93	120
Private Entrepreneurs	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	122
Skilled Workforce	109	100	99	102	100
Unskilled Workforce	82	86	84	81	90
Peasants and Agrarian Workers	87	105	95	90	99
Pensioner	84	83	98	94	91
Unemployed	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	78
Student	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	110

The data from the table above suggest that some groups experienced an improvement in their income levels over the last three decades. Changes in income levels in many professions indicate the purchasing power of all but a small fraction of the employed people increased. However, the data above refers to only official income. From early 1970s onwards, first illegally and then in a quasi-legal structure, the *second economy* activities were another and more important part of national income generation. The use of the Hungarian version of moonlighting worked on an untaxed, uncontrolled basis; and are excluded from the table above. In general, with the exception of the agricultural production, the means of production used in the process of creating the extra material were owned by the state and workers were able to use the state-owned workshops and machinery for free in exchange for their political obedience. However, when the political system shifted from state

socialist to liberal democratic, the accompanying shift took place in the field of economics from communist to capitalist. Most factories were privatised with their control going to either foreign owners or to joint ventures. The sociological as well as economic result of this was the loss of access for most of the blue-collar workers to the means to produce the extra material to provide them with a second, unofficial and quasi-illegal income which in general was more significant than their legal income presented at the table above.

Consequently, although there appears to be an increase in the levels of income through the past three decades in Hungary, the generation of household income depended more on the *second economy* activities than the actually recorded income levels. The loss of part, most, or all of that secondary income is far more important in terms of standard of living improvement than any increase in the official income as these were not considered as adequate even by the Kádárist state structure which at the end permitted the formation of a tax-free and illegal *second economy* for it could not provide the necessary levels of income to support the desired living standards.

The following table which indicates the levels of satisfaction of private life based on a poll taken in 1992 may constitute a more accurate basis for the commenting on the social fragmentation in Hungarian society and the effects of this fragmentation towards regime perception.

As can be seen from the results of the survey, the lower-income groups in the society are pessimistic towards the future while the intellectuals and those who earn higher amounts than average have higher expectations towards the future.

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<sup>155</sup> Data gathered from *ibid.*, tables 1 and 3, pp. 122-123.

The students, categorically a preliminary group of intelligentsia-members have the highest expectations from the future as their education will guarantee them a place in the higher earning segments of the society if the economic trends continue in the same manner of development. This general decline in household income has to do with the change from the Kádárist policies and hence has been a problem for Hungarian regime transition throughout the 1990s.

**Table 4.4. Satisfaction towards four dimensions on private life in Hungary, 1992:** (The table is made on a level of 0-10 scale, 0 signifying the lowest and 10 the highest.)

Social class of the person↓ / Average satisfaction as to→:	standard of life	income	life up to now in general	future perspectives
High Position Holder	5.7	5.9	7.3	5.6
Intellectual	5.2	4.8	6.8	5.7
Middle-Rank Employee	4.5	4.7	6.4	4.4
Employees (Ordinary Jobs)	4.9	4.5	6.3	4.6
Private Entrepreneurs	4.8	4.4	5.9	4.6
Skilled Workforce	4.4	3.7	5.8	4.1
Unskilled Workforce	4.5	3.8	5.4	4.2
Peasants and Agrarian Workers	4.2	3.2	6.1	3.8
Pensioners	4.4	3.5	5.5	3.8
Unemployed	3.3	1.5	4.4	3.1
Student	6.6	3.1	7.1	5.9
General population pool above 18yr of age	4.5	3.6	5.7	4.2

In contrast with the well-educated and well-employed, the lowly expectations from the future amongst the peasantry and agrarian labour force, the unemployed, and the pensioners is alarming. That the private enterprise



owners are not as optimistic as the high-position holders and the intelligentsia about the future of their standard of living while these are supposed to become part of, if not the driving force in, the newly-forming Hungarian middle class, suggests that the new regime is unsuccessful in creating confidence. The main reasons for the lack of confidence from the middle-class entrepreneurs towards the post-communist system are the lack of stability and the need to live by a series of economic emergency measures. As the state is unable to print money, raise wages, disable inflation and its outcomes, and as the economy is run in connection with, if not in command of, the IMF and the international market fluctuations, the competitive free-market mechanism is likely to create some more disadvantage for the lower-income earners in the short-to-medium run and hence create an aura of dissatisfaction in the Hungarian public.

Moreover, as can be seen from Table 4.5 below, during the mid-1990s, the trend set in the table 4.4 continued. Most of the people surveyed in Hungary in 1994 through 1996 believed their household finances went worse than before. It is remarkable to see that the level of pessimism in Hungary was similar to the other countries surveyed in 1994, but it changed dramatically in time and while the people questioned in other countries became more optimistic and/or saw a positive change in their income levels in 1995 and 1996, Hungarians' position remained unchanged.

**Table 4.5: Change In Household Finances: Better, Worse, or Unchanged?<sup>156</sup>**

Year / country	Hungary	Poland	Belarus	Czech Rep.	Slovakia	Bulgaria
1996	B: 5 U: 18 W: 76	B: 20 U: 43 W: 35	B: 15 U: 30 W: 54	B: 28 U: 43 W: 28	B: 21 U: 37 W: 41	B: 18 U: 36 W: 42
1995	B: 8 U: 24 W: 66	B: 11 U: 32 W: 54	B: 9 U: 18 W: 72	B: 22 U: 37 W: 40	B: 16 U: 31 W: 52	B: 9 U: 23 W: 66
1994	B: 8 U: 23 W: 68	B: 10 U: 32 W: 54	B: 9 U: 18 W: 71	B: 22 U: 33 W: 45	B: 14 U: 26 W: 60	B: 10 U: 24 W: 65

B: Better; U: Unchanged; W: Worse

Besides creating a vacuum of systemic legitimacy before the eyes of the general public, the regime itself is damaged from the economic gap being created after the transformation. Moreover, inequality in income distribution may lead to serious social problems. However, the immediate problem which faces the issue of legitimacy in contemporary Hungary is the memories of the Kádárist social contract and the nostalgia towards the positive effects of that social contract not found in the level of the intelligentsia or high-position holders, but amongst the majority of the people, the ordinary people.

## **V. THE ELEMENTS OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE NEW SYSTEM**

### **A. The Change and the Legitimation Criteria:**

#### **1. Change in Political Structure:**

The fall of the socialist rule and the dismemberment of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party marked the beginning of a new era in the Hungarian political system. The new system which differed from the previous one in many aspects required a new framework for legitimacy of the ruling political order. The state

structure as a whole required to be based on new principles, because the political system undergoing change within the capitalist system -e.g. from fascism to liberalism- or within the socialist system -e.g. from Stalinism to reform socialism- but from one end of the political spectrum to its antithesis, from single-party state socialism to multi-party liberal democracy. Although in Chapter One it is argued that I support Immanuel Wallerstein's idea that both the socialist and capitalist camps of the Cold War era (which may respectively be referred to as First World and Second World or West and East) were actually part of a single capitalist world structure in view of the fact that the communist camp has originated as a response to the capitalist camp (see Chapter 1), one must also recognise the structural and operational differences between the communist and capitalist institutional and social structures. Therefore, the systemic change from one end of the political and economic spectrum to the other requires the development of new patterns of action and interaction within the post-transformatory regime.

As a result of this, in legal, social and political terms, the new political order that emerged after the fall of the socialist regime in Hungary had theoretical and practical bases that differed widely from the general practice within the socialist system. This chapter will focus on the change in the new system which led to the development of new laws, new requirements, new criteria to judge for the performance of the system and of its main elements.

The institutionalisation of the new system may be seen most clearly in the first parliamentary term from mid-1990 to mid-1994. Firstly, this period witnessed

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<sup>156</sup> Data collected from the 1994, 1995, 1996 surveys of the European Union, published in Candidate Countries Eurobarometer.



the development of a new political system based on free elections and universal suffrage. Secondly, the first post-socialist government created the norm for the following governments to be evaluated. Thirdly, the voting public became able to judge the changes in the political system by examining the changes in the parliamentary structure, the competition among political parties, and the general level of satisfaction concerning policies followed by the government.

As to the observation of the change in terms of legitimacy, one may claim that it is observable through the domain of legality and the domain of politics which also incorporates ideology. The legality of a regime is linked to its claim to legitimacy. It is so, because, when the legal environment changes with the socio-political transformation, the legality of the new regime becomes distinct from the legality of the regime that preceded it. This difference is caused by the change in the legislative mechanisms and by the legal framework the state and its executive branches, the government and the bureaucracy, embeds themselves in. In terms of politics and ideology, there is an observable change in respect of the issue of regime legitimacy. While the former change may not be as clearly observable as the latter, they both play crucial roles in the transformation of the system.

## 2. The Legal Aspect:

In legal terms, the claim to legitimacy may be brought forward by examining the legal bases of the ruling political order. In due course, just as the *ancien regime*, the new political order accepts the *rule of law* principle and builds its legal claim for legitimacy upon this principle. Basically, both the *ancien regime* and the new regime share the same understanding of law and order

which means that the working political order must be based on the existing laws and regulations and act within the guidelines set by those laws and regulations. Consequently, although the laws and regulations have changed in the transformation from the *ancien regime*, the new Hungarian political order has a claim to legitimacy which is based on identical ground as its predecessor.

As a result, in legal terms, the legitimacy of the new regime is based on the constitution, the laws, rules and regulations that arrange the election and performance of the political authorities. However, although the patterns of legal legitimacy used by both regimes are identical, there is an important difference in the essence of these two claims: Even though the new system bases its claim of legal legitimacy on the grounds that it is lawful, and is acting within the limits of the existing constitutional rules as its predecessor did, the element of consensus gives an advantage to the new regime the socialist Hungarian regime had failed to experience. The new regime's advantage is that it gained widespread national support through the amendment process of the 1949 Constitution by the means of the National Roundtable Discussions of 1989. This is a very important difference between the communist and post-communist regimes of Hungarian State. Unlike the Soviet-backed communist regime, the new constitution as well as other elements -as the electoral law and procedures- were a result of the consensus reached at the National Roundtable discussions. This consensus was reached by the representatives of all political factions and fractions in the country, represented by the members of the opposition and of the government of the time during the talks. Therefore, it may be argued that the new guidelines that the Hungarian political order

operates under have the approval of the majority of the Hungarian people, unlike those of the socialist regime which operated within the parameters dictated from outside Hungary.

The legitimacy of the state as a political actor is another fortifying element for the idea of the *rule of law*. If the existence of the Hungarian State as a superstructure is questioned, the legitimacy of the regime that rules it cannot be defended as the state as an entity would not be considered as a legitimate framework for the operation of such sub-systems as political order or economic structure. Therefore, so far as the legitimacy of the regime in conjunction with the state as a superstructure is concerned, the lack of any opposition to the existence of the Hungarian state as a superstructure points to the existence of a national agreement on the entity called the Hungarian Republic. While other parts of Eastern Europe, such as in the cases of the Yugoslavian Confederation or Czechoslovakia, suffered from national and ethnic strains between the forming nations of the state which resulted in fragmentation, the existence of Hungary as an independent and unified state remains unchallenged. For that reason, as there is support for the existence of the state structure, it is seen as a legal and legitimate entity, and, therefore, legal structures that defines Hungary are legitimate.

However, legality, even if sustained by public approval of the state's and the system's legal legitimacy, is insufficient by itself to sustain legitimacy of a given political order. Legitimacy of a ruling political order has to depend on its political-ideological basis and its interaction with people, that is, its public perception and its exchange of policies or economic measures to deserve a positive perception.



### 3. The Political - Ideological Aspect:

Consequently, to obtain legitimacy through the political-ideological level is more wearisome than to be legally recognised as legitimate. Due to the nature of transition, it has been difficult to convince people of the merits of the new system. This is partly due to Kádárist economic policies.

While the Antall and Baross governments which served between 1990 and 1994 focused on ideology and nationalism to provide a new set of values to undo the communist set of values, the Horn government from 1994 to 1998 focused on promises for improvements in the field of economy and in living standards, following a neo-Kádárist policy. The following Orbán government from 1998 to date has followed more liberal but as much populist policies, yet differs from its predecessors in its more system-oriented approach to politics and public relations. In comparison to Czechoslovakia and Poland, it has been difficult to secure public support for the new political order and individual governments which serve within this new political system, due to the lack of charismatic leaders. However, in some sense the absence of such leaders has also eased the transition as a systemic process rather than a leader-based charismatic process -to employ Weberian terminology. The only problem in Hungary was not the lack of popular, mediatic leaders, as there are problems originating from the political legacy of János Kádár. Irving Luis Hodebateitz explains the change in the East European political system in general as follows:

“In its simplest historical terms, the breakdown of the Brezhnev Doctrine and the rise of Gorbachev’s *Perestroika* provided Eastern Europe with a window of opportunity to break the shackles of an unwanted, oppressive regime. Only a short decade ago, the Soviet Union and its satellites were

captive to the claim, one that united every regime since the time of Lenin, that.... to embrace the communist system was to cross over from the mythical bilateral world of capitalism to communism once and for all. With the 'revolutionary seize of power,' any real politics ceased to be practiced, replaced, as it were, by circusses and caucuses dedicated to celebrating the new order.

The explosiveness of the events is partially explained by the absence of routine politics in the communist world. After the concentration of power in the hands of party officials and government bureaucrats, organised opposition collapsed, or was crushed, in each East European nation. What emerged was an essentially apolitical opposition, drawn from a variety of fields and professions but outside the framework of the communist party as such. What rapidly unfolded was a struggle between party officials without legitimacy... and the emerging non-political figures -from welders in Polish shipyards to poets in Czech bistros- who established solid support from broad sectors."<sup>157</sup>

The above account, with the exception of its final part, applies to Hungary as well. It is true that the Hungarian opposition emerged under Gorbachev's new liberal policies, and that the opposition leaders were of different backgrounds. However, the similarity ends there. None of the opposition leaders were charismatic or famous enough to influence development and to be seen as symbols of a new era. It was only after Kádár's removal from office and then his death that the Hungarian transition to liberal democracy gathered pace. The effect of Kádár on Hungarian people was an important element in the change, although changes in the international environment were crucial. The implementation of the *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* policies and the abandonment of interventionist policies in the East European region by the USSR, assisted the process of change in Hungary. The lack of great popular movements from

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<sup>157</sup> Irving Luis Hodebateitz, 'Revolution, Longevity and Legitimacy in Communist States,' *Studies In Comparative International Development*, vol. 27(1), Spring 1992, (pp. 61-75), p. 62.



below, unlike in Poland -with the Solidarity movement-, meant that the Hungarian demand for change was a contest among intellectuals, and hence, the change came as a compromise between the wishes of the intelligentsia, either members of the communist or of the anticommunist camps. Therefore, the political change has been limited to the negotiations among different fractions of the elite. Those outside of the intelligentsia were more interested in a positive change in their economic conditions than the change in terms of ideology. The use of the concept of ideological change per se was insufficient in convincing people that the new regime with its different economic framework was better than the *ancien regime*.

#### **B. The Issue Of Representation:**

Along with the change in the political-ideological axis comes change in the understanding and implementation of the idea of representation. In a communist system, the communist party, the representative of the proletariat by definition, is assumed to fulfil the task of representation by standing as the progressive segment of society. Consequently, in a communist system, representation is executed through *ideological representation* idea and the communist party is the main agency of representation. Meanwhile, the industrial and agricultural trade unions act as pressure groups in a very limited sense of the term. In liberal democracy, however, representation is required to be carried out through a series of institutions including the parliament, political parties, and pressure groups. The transition from being a subject under communist rule to be a citizen in a democracy is a major attribute of the systemic transformation for any individual, and the change in the mode of



representation is a part of this continuum of transformation. Accordingly, the structure of the political mechanism has to endure several changes in the transition to democracy from the communist system. The transition which took place in Hungary, as in other East European states, has brought major changes in the substance and the perception of the political system as a whole, and as a part of it, has strong implications concerning the change of representative mechanism.

In such a fundamental transition, the change in the mainframe calls for changes in the subdivisions. The electoral system needs to be altered to enable individual candidates and the candidates of independent political parties to contest parliamentary seats; the government type needs to be altered to specify either a presidential or a parliamentary-governmental system; the electoral system needs to be rearranged so that a system of electoral representation based on either a proportional representation (PR) or majoritarian system in general and local/municipal elections may be adopted. In the Hungarian case, the change in the political system required the adaptation and alteration of the electoral system and choices over the forms of government and representation.

All these issues were solved in Hungary by a series of roundtable discussions among the members of the communist regime's ruling elite and the democracy-seeking opposition of the time in 1989. The negotiations outlined the boundaries of the future political system through a set of compromises from both sides. The conclusions that the negotiating parties reached mostly proved to be a mid-way between the demands of the opposition and the leadership of the time, ensuring the guaranteed participation of the opposition

to the political life in a formal manner while also ensuring socialist representation even in a limited way in the new system.

## VI. POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

The political transformation which took place in Hungary from late 1980s onwards caused changes in nearly all aspects of the Hungarian social life. The changes included the re-emergence of political parties; the direct and indirect participation in the political realm by the citizens of the country; the rise of civil society organisations; changes in the electoral and legislative processes; and the adoption of different economic and social policies by the administration. The major change in the interim to democracy was the politicisation of the masses which, by means of elections and representation, shaped the new regime's working framework.

### A. Political Representation in Democratising Societies: the Rokkan Hypothesis:

Stein Rokkan, in his 1970 book Citizens, Elections, Parties, proposed a hypothesis on the emergence of the proportional representation (PR) in the electoral realm. To begin with, Rokkan observes that in the history of West European politics, there is a tendency of extending the right to vote to wider and wider circles of citizens since the French Revolution of 1789 so that at the end a universal suffrage might be reached. Then, he proposes a four - step formula for political transformation. The first step is the *incorporation* of the classes and/or sections of residents kept out of the system under the original political criteria. The second step is the *mobilisation* of these citizens into electoral contests. The third step is their *activation* into direct participation in public life, and, finally, the fourth step is the *formation of the nation-wide*

*political party organisations* which would eventually alter the old political system as it would change local and national political power structures<sup>158</sup>.

In accordance with this four-step model of change, Rokkan claims that the *proportional representation* system in elections is an outcome of this political change process. He claims that the rise of the working class as a political actor at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries gave way to the *proportional representation (PR)* system. Rokkan argues that as the working class became quickly politicised, it demanded a lower representative threshold so that its members, as well as the members of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie might be represented in legislative organs. At the same time, as the power of the working class political force threatened the monopoly of power of the mature, well-established political parties, these too asked for the PR system for they knew the rise of the proletariat was inevitable and that they might preserve at least some seats they held in the parliament if proportional representation replaced the majoritarian system. The preservation of the majoritarian system of election might deny the bourgeois parties the ability to preserve the parliamentary seats and hence the legislative power they held. Therefore, Rokkan's hypothesis proposes that in a democratising, transitory society in which the power to vote is transferred into wider segments of society, PR is the logical electoral system.

Arend Lijphart claims that the same logic is applicable to the post-communist transition in Eastern Europe. If one replaces the rising working class with the newly burgeoning democratic forces and the established ruling class with the

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<sup>158</sup> Stein Rokkan, Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970, pp. 226-227 passim.



communist party cadres, the structure of the East European transition of 1990s can be explained. Poland with its extreme PR system and presidential political formation is the main example of what Lijphart names as the *Rokkan Hypothesis*<sup>159</sup>.

#### **B. The Making of the New Hungarian Electoral System:**

Despite the similarity of the events in Hungary to the presupposed changes in the Rokkan Hypothesis, the Hungarian political system differs from the system proposed by Rokkan and Lijphart. From 1989 onwards, the political system in Hungary experienced changes which allowed the masses to participate in policy-making. The changes since 1989 enabled the realisation of multi-candidate free elections based on universal suffrage as well as political mobilisation of previously depoliticised masses which was achieved largely through the resurrection of civil society. Their incorporation into the negotiation process shaped the new regime through political organisations which in turn became political parties, and led to the establishment of nation-wide political parties.

Therefore, political changes in Hungary between Spring 1988 and Spring 1990 –from the retirement of János Kádár to the first free elections–, followed the path pursued by the West European democracies. However, although the pattern followed by the Hungarian political structure was similar to the transformation scheme proposed by Stein Rokkan, the outcomes of the transformation were not in unison with Rokkan's predictions. The Hungarian system which makes use of a mixture of the majoritarian and PR types of

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<sup>159</sup> Arend Lijphart, *Democratisation and Constitutional Choices in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, 1989-1991*, in Gyorgy Szoboszlai (ed.), *Flying Blind*, Hungarian Political Science Association,

electoral representation and its parliamentary-based government with a symbolic president is outside the stereotype proposed by Rokkan and voiced by Lijphart. The representation system used in Hungary is more majoritarian than PR. This resulted despite the fact that the system broadened its boundaries by including the majority of the Hungarians in the indirect decision-making process in means of first the National Roundtable discussions, and then by means of free elections based on universal suffrage and representation by political organisations.

The main reason for the existence of the current post-communist Hungarian system may be attributed to the negotiation process before the systemic change. As both the opposition and the government of the time were aware that democratisation was inevitable and wished for a pacific change, the multiparty talks led to a hybrid system. On the one hand, the communist rulers of the country knew they could not hold to power for long as the popular will and the international political environment were against such a course. On the other hand, the opposition knew that the HSWP had the power to block the change for a long time. Therefore, the electoral system, the presidential office and the powers and responsibilities of the realms of the estate were defined by a series of compromises. The lack of a unifying figure as the head of the Hungarian political opposition powerful enough to lead masses into a revolution, and the wish to give the administrative power to a government directly elected by people forced the participating parties to adopt a system of government based on a powerful executive led by a prime minister and hence to the adoption of a limited, representative presidential role. The desire to

prevent a very large number of political parties being represented in the parliament gave way to the imposition of an electoral threshold, while the fear of one party having a substantial majority in the parliament and hence possibly leading to a continuation of the *ancien regime* led to the complicated electoral procedures. As a result of the Roundtable negotiations, the Hungarian Parliament in the beginning had six parliamentary parties and the number of political parties represented in the parliament remained the same in all three post-communist parliamentary terms. In the meantime, coalition governments have become the norm either due to necessity -as in the first and third parliaments- or due to a preference to share responsibility and the blame in national matters -as in the second parliament-.

As to the type of representation, it was decided as a result of a debate over whether to adopt a proportional or a majoritarian representative model. The HSWP was interested in a majority representation basis for they were convinced that their better-known candidates secure their return to government, while the opposition backed a proportional representation scheme as their candidates were by and large total strangers to the public. To overcome this stalemate, the electoral system was formed in a half-majority - half-PR basis.

The parliament modified the text of the agreed law to change the representational schemes. According to this, of the 386 available seats, 176 were to be elected in single-member constituencies, 152 in a proportional way and 58 seats were to be allocated to the National List to correct the



representational disproportion which are to take place in county and single-member constituencies<sup>160</sup>.

A two-stage minimum threshold to prevent an over-divided parliament was also foreseen. The first step requested a pre-candidate to collect at least 750 signatures in his/her district to ensure his/her candidacy, and the second step foresaw a necessary 4% of national votes to be won by each political party in order to be represented in the parliament. A political party was also asked to have candidates in at least 7 constituencies to be able to present a national list.

A political party which satisfies the norms of both electoral thresholds may then compete within a two-round election process. In this election round, the voter is to decide for a candidate for his/her constituency and then vote for a national list by a political party. If there is a turnout above 25% and if one of the regional candidates manages to get more than 50% of the vote cast at that district, there is no need for a second round, but if it turns out to be the other way around the same process has to be followed once more yet with the two mostly-voted candidates of the first round.

This system, while protecting the greater organisations against the smaller ones, secures a representation of political parties in the parliament in a fashion which would either let one single party or two parties form a government, without the need to form multiparty coalition governments which may create instability in a not-yet-stable system. Of about 60 political parties that were registered by the end of 1989, only 12 managed to present a National List and only 19 could do so with county lists. 13 parties held a majority of 97% of all

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<sup>160</sup>Carmen Gonzales Enriquez, 'Electoral Systems and Political Stability in Central and Eastern Europe', Budapest: Hungarian Centre for Democracy Foundation, 1995, pp. 18-19 *passim*.

candidates in the 1990 elections while 28 parties either nominated their members as candidates or supported some others' members as candidates<sup>161</sup>, and 6 political parties became represented in the parliament.

### **C. Deviations From the Rokkan Hypothesis:**

#### **1. Electoral System Formation and Activation:**

Even if in terms of political change they follow the Rokkan Hypothesis, in terms of representation the East Central European countries, including Hungary, do not fit into the Rokkan Hypothesis. Arend Lijphart points out to the fact that the condition of legitimacy and the role played by the old established parties determined the outcome. In Poland the traditional communists held power in a system imposed by the prevailing international environment. However, the international environment had changed while giving rise to open opposition which challenged the legitimacy of the existing order. With the withdrawal of the Soviet support and the rise of the reform wing within the HSWP, the opposition had nothing to fear during the Round-Table discussions of 1989. The reform-seeking communists within the HSWP did not see the issue of continuity in the power positions as an immediate issue, and the opposition knew that the quasi-legitimacy of the communist regime was fractured at the time of discussions. Therefore, the opposition was stronger than the ruling regime during the talks.

In addition to the unstable position in terms of legitimacy, the attitude of the parties to the changes in political system and the attitude of the general public to the political process affected the formation of the new Hungarian electoral system. The over-enthusiastic and extremely optimistic approach of the

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<sup>161</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

Reform Communists within the HSWP led them to insist on a mainly single candidate by district majoritarian electoral system with a semi-presidential government type with a higher electoral threshold of 5% as opposed to 3% demanded by the opposition. The legislature of the time was also made up by communists as a whole, so the final electoral system was more majoritarian than PR, which in effect cost the ex-HSWP a number of members in the post-communist parliament. Public mistrust of communist party led to a mistrust of the concept of 'political party' as a whole, as well. Therefore, as PR nearly almost meant party-list PR system, the case for the PR appeared weak during the negotiation process<sup>162</sup>.

## 2. The Problem of the Intelligentsia and Konrad and Szelenyi's Approach:

One major problem with the Rokkan – Lijphart point of view is that it is based on a path that was followed by the Western industrialised states, and therefore it is based on the development of social classes, social strata, and understandings of cultural and economic capital in that part of the World. However, in Eastern Europe, as pointed out by George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, as well as others such as Claus Offe, Bela Greskovitz, and Gil Eyal, a different developmental path was followed<sup>163</sup>.

According to Konrad and Szelenyi, the Eastern European socialism has created its own system of oppression and exploitation of the working class. This meant that "under the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' it is actually the workers who

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<sup>162</sup> Arend Lijphart, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>163</sup> See for instance, Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, and Eleanor Townsley, Making Capitalism Without Capitalists (Verso, London, 1998), Claus Offe, Varieties of Transition (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1996), and Bela Greskovits, Political Economy: Protest and Patience (CEU Press, Budapest, 1998), in addition to Konrad and Szelenyi's The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power.



make up the most underprivileged class.”<sup>164</sup> Thus, the extension of the privilege (which would become the right in time) to participate in the decision-making process for the working class that formed the backbone of Rokkan’s hypothesis, had failed to materialise in East European socialist system. Intellectuals, with their understanding of socialist theory and their influence in decision-making circles even when they are not directly incorporated in these circles, have become influential in decision-making while the workers were left in more or less the same position as their Western counterparts, despite the fact that the main basis of the communist system is the dictatorship of the proletariat<sup>165</sup>. This situation, combined with the intellectuals’ domination over the bureaucracy, has prevented the development of even a quasi-civil-society as required by Rokkan and Lijphart for the development of a liberal democratic system.

The dominant position of the intelligentsia, despite part of it was marginalised for they refused to be incorporated within the ruling socialist party, enabled them to secure a leading position in the post-communist society alongside the members of politocracy and managerial class. The intellectuals, therefore, have retained their controlling position in the decision-making process of their country and hence prevented the political decision-making to be affected by the general public, including workers, peasants, small entrepreneurs, and students, by forming alliances with the post-communist power elite<sup>166</sup>. The transition was reached by the Roundtable Discussions, an intra-elite

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<sup>164</sup> George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Inc., New York, NY, 1979, p. xiii.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 146-184 *passim*.

negotiation process, and the new order was established not by the masses but by the power elite of the communist and post-communist eras.

As a result, it may be claimed that the Rokkan Hypothesis and the Rokkan – Lijphart point of view fails to explain the post-communist East European situation as it is referring to a gradual generalisation of influence on the decision-making process while in the East European cases, the influence was narrowed down to a group of intellectuals rather than to be generalised into greater segments of the society.

### 3. Electoral System and Its Applications:

In conjunction with the formulation of the electoral system and its application, one may claim that the Rokkan Hypothesis, although in itself a valuable guide to the stages of formation of a new political order, is inapplicable to the Hungarian situation in terms of providing a framework of prediction in respect of the chronology of events. Although it is possible to claim that the necessary prerequisites Rokkan indicated took place in the Hungarian context, one may not claim these functioned within the parameters set by Rokkan and Lijphart. In a plain approach, it may be claimed that, in Hungary, the *incorporation* step took place with the National Roundtable discussions and the free elections that followed; the *mobilisation* step took place with the political campaigns and with such events like the 1990 taxi drivers' strike (see the following part on civil society for a discussion of the subject); the *activation* and *political-party formation* steps took place within the pre-democratic threshold from mid-1980s onwards. However, that these steps were taken in Hungary does not necessarily mean that Rokkan Hypothesis is justified. The lack of popular

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<sup>166</sup> Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, Eleanor Townsley, Making Capitalism without Capitalists, pp. 33-35

interest in the formation and use of civil society mechanisms in terms of political influence, the low ratio of voters attending the ballots, the similarity of nearly all political parties in their economic choices, and the low figures of membership for political parties point out to the fact that despite socio-political change and three multi-party elections, the Hungarian political system is not as mature as Rokkan and Lijphart thought it to be.

The main deficiency in the application of the Rokkan Hypothesis into the East European situation stems from the fact that one may foresee a logical path for the development of democracy in a totalitarian system, but one cannot impose rational choice to the system from outside. To believe that the public is rational as an entity and hence is to act in a given pattern within given parameters, especially in the wake of such social turmoil as experienced in Eastern Europe, is unfeasible. Consequently, while the Rokkan Hypothesis is sound for creating a transitory model and for following the developments in the post-communist transition, it is unhelpful in trying to predict what took place in a given stage of development.

## **VII. TRANSMUTING SYSTEMS: SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES**

### **A. Systems in Transition:**

The Rokkan Hypothesis discussed above deals with the internal political elements of change. On the other hand, more comprehensive theories concerning the political change were produced in the last two decades. These focus on the idea that the individual or regional political transitions which took place in 1980s and 1990s in different parts of the World prove that the existence of a political transformation in global scale. These theories argue



that the basic needs of individual societies changed simultaneously to seek the implementation liberal democracy. Consequently, the political changes resulted in generalisations and these took the form of comparative studies between the democratising regions of the world. The comparative studies focused especially on democratisation processes in Eastern Europe and in Latin America and Southern Europe. The former was seen as a continuation of the transformation of the South European - Latin American democratisation process which had started nearly a decade before the East European transformations.

The institutional transformation in Hungarian political system is discussed in the previous parts of this thesis. The following part aims at analysing the comparisons between the Latin American -South European political transformation and the East European transformation which includes the Hungarian case analysed in this thesis. The main reason for such an analysis is to find whether or not a mould of transformation from totalitarian and authoritarian regimes to democracy exists. For this aim, the agencies that form and sustain the political order before, during, and after the political transition, the social backgrounds of the two parts of the globe, the driving forces in the transition, ideological and economic causes and outcomes of the transition will be analysed.

### **1. System Building:**

The main comparison brought forward to indicate to similar trends in democratisation in recent years was the one between Latin America and Eastern Europe. The comparison emerged as there were some common elements of democratic system-building and some similarities in the way the

society was organised in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes in terms of the relationship of the rulers with those they rule upon. The main driving force for the comparison is the way these two groups of countries are perceived: The Latin American countries were founded by the European, mainly Spanish and Portuguese, conquistadors destroying the state mechanisms that existed on these countries prior to the conquest. Latin American state structures and societies have emerged as a mixture of the outside influence dictated upon the natives and native elements which somehow managed to resist to the change. The result was a colonial system which endured from the early sixteenth century till the end of the nineteenth century. The first independence movements date from 1810s and continued since then. Therefore, the countries in the Latin American region had to survive for four centuries with a political system which wasn't their own, under a colonial administration which alienated natives from the power positions and bureaucracy, and which dictated the needs and wishes of the overseas coloniser over the country's economy and society. When the countries in the region gained their independence and the colonisers became assimilated in the new system as parts of the elite, there was no one in these newly independent countries experienced in bureaucracy, technological details of production, administration, except military issues. Hence, these countries were driven to a chaotic environment in which the key to solutions were seen either as to seek outside help, this time from the United States, or as resolving the matters by military coups d'état.

A parallel may be drawn with Eastern Europe from this point. Although the East European countries had periods of independence during their existence and were not created by an enforcement of a foreign culture, they were

occupied by great powers of Europe for very long periods during the last five centuries. Then, the Soviet invasion -or liberation- during the 1945-1989 period ensured that these countries experienced similar positions to the Latin American countries in the colonial era. Although the main difference between the two systems was that while the Latin American system was based on race and hence those would be allowed to positions in state bureaucracy or in engineering positions were those who were of European origin and of Catholic faith (except Surinam where the Dutch ruled), in Eastern Europe those to be allowed to these positions might be natives yet had to be of Marxist faith, the system worked in a very similar pattern. That is the underlying reason for the fact that after the end of the communist rule, most of the key position holders had to be left in their positions with a mere declaration of conversion to liberal democracy as there was no replacement for them at the immediate post-communist era. Such similarities gave rise to the claims that one may draw parallels between the two democratisation processes as the social backgrounds and the post-‘independence’ situations are somewhat similar.

## **2. Changes in Political Structure:**

In the realm of political structural changes, there are more manifest similarities. There is a democratisation of the regimes in both parts of the world, following the same key patterns of institutionalisation and restitution. Therefore, it may be claimed that the Latin American democratisation may be seen as an exemplary, if not a forerunner, to the East European changes as the transformation towards liberal democracy from authoritarianism began first in Latin America and then was followed by the East European states. The need to grant more individual freedoms in both cases ignited the fall of the



authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Moreover, both series of changes took place as a result of the end of the Cold War and of the emergence of a New World Order. There certainly are some similar processes in both regimes to make the comparison look worth the effort.

To begin with, the changes towards a truly democratic system seek primarily the establishment of a system responsive and responsible to the public. The establishment of such a system would require guarantees on basic rights and freedoms; the introduction of political and economic choice; and the lifting of censorship of all kinds and the calibration of election results. Therefore, it may be argued that the establishment of certain components of a liberal democratic system is required in both authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in the transition to democracy. Of the necessary changes, the emphasise is placed on the need to have a competitive political system with a competitive and free electoral process based on universal suffrage. Consequently, as this major component of democratisation is lacking in all democratising regimes, parallels may be drawn between the problems and solutions to these problems that may be faced in each and every democratising regime.

As to the similarities of the regimes to be replaced, one may emphasise the importance the unelected bureaucrats and technocrats enjoy in both totalitarian and authoritarian systems. As these have no power assigned on them by the popular choice, i.e. as they are not elected but appointed to their positions, their responsibilities are normally towards those who appoint them and therefore not to the public's demands. Also, the limits over the regime legitimisation is restricted to the opinion of those in power positions, namely the high bureaucracy, local notables, and the political leaders. Whether the

members of a Latin American junta or the members of the Politburo of a socialist state, the power-holders had a very limited responsibility towards the public as they derived their staying power from the coercive means they control and ideological orientations which enable them to influence the public opinion and the international environment during the Cold War era.

### **3. Change and the Question of Regime Legitimacy:**

At this point, one must remember the Gramscian argument that “even in the most despotic societies, there is a measure of active support by a minority, and there is passive acceptance by larger sectors who believe there are compensating advantages to themselves and no realistic alternative”<sup>167</sup>. In the authoritarian Latin American regimes, the minority on whose support the regime depended was the traditional elite consisted of either drug barons or great farmers or industrialist owning generally assembly plants. This group of influential people who had either a limited degree of public support or none at all, had influence as the owners of the means of production. Hence, as they gained prosperity under the authoritarian regime, they supported it in the domestic scale. In the meantime, they supported the anti-communist Western Bloc of countries in the international arena. The view was taken that the deeds of any regime might be acceptable as long as it was not lost to the communist camp. The main support for the totalitarian regimes of the Eastern Bloc came from high-rank officials in the armed forces and bureaucracy, as well as from recruits to the Party and through ideological propaganda. On the international side, support came from the USSR, the political and ideological leader of the Eastern Bloc. Therefore, in both types of regimes, one may talk of a limited

legitimacy and a low need for legitimisation while there is a need to legitimise the rule of the rulers before the eyes of those who might end it.

Consequently, the legitimisation process is based on intra-clique legitimisation in both types of regimes. Yet, the system might require some alterations as the general public might come to a point of total dissatisfaction and force the ruling class to leave their positions either by rebellion, civil war, or a series of industrial action and by other non-violent means. To prevent this, the reforms in such systems come from the top as well: Once there is a general dissatisfaction in the public, especially in the realm of economics, reform programmes are initiated and applied without asking to the public. In the realm of politics, some concessions are possible, yet these need be limited in scope.

A good example of such political initiatives in the Eastern Bloc were the policies of Glasnost and Perestroika. They both have become the bases for the democratisation in the Eastern Bloc although the main intention of the policy-makers was to reform the state socialist system and not to democratise it. With the dramatic increase in the public expectations and in the freedom of expression, these policies also became the major motor forces to create the momentum of dismemberment of the USSR as they created the suitable milieu for the dissident ideas to spread beyond what was thought possible a decade ago. These policies could not be labelled as real steps towards democracy or liberalisation, but to bypass the malfunctions in the communist system. Similar processes were observed in the Latin American political life as Russel Bova demonstrates:

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<sup>167</sup>Frank Cunningham, Democratic Theory and Socialism, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 34.



"In its original and most narrow sense, "glasnost" referred to a policy aimed at increasing access to information, thereby reducing the veil of censorship and secrecy that had long smothered Soviet society....[G]lasnost shared little in common with the Western idea of "freedom of information" and even less with Western notions of democratic, constitutional government.

....This liberalisation often referred to in discussions of the Latin American world as decompressao (decompression) or apertura (opening). typically involves the institution, restoration and liberties of individuals and groups...(And,) in a regime of liberalised authoritarianism,..., the liberalisation enjoyed... is granted and controlled from above, and is potentially subject to revocation at any time."<sup>168</sup>

There indeed is a similarity in the reform processes and in the objectives the reform processes are meant to aim at. Consequently, one may argue that the change from authoritarianism to liberal democracy in Latin America and the change from totalitarianism to liberal democracy in the former Eastern Bloc are similar procedures, hence the two transformation processes may be comparable and contrastable. If one adds that similar problems and similar solutions are around in both transitions in terms of institutionalisation, as countries in both parts of the world needed new constitutions, new sets of laws and regulations, new electoral processes, new institutions as parliaments and political parties which function properly, one may see the ease in getting involved in comparisons. Not surprisingly, in the last couple of years, to equate the change processes in the two differing parts of the world, united only by their desire to adopt liberal democracy and their technological inequality with the countries of Core Capitalism, became a widespread practice. Such comparisons intensified during the institutionalisation process in the formerly communist and fascist-dictatorial regimes. As the Latin American countries

were first to democratise, they were seen as an example for their East European counterparts.

## **B. Dissimilarities in Transformation:**

### **1. Driving Forces:**

In spite of the fact that there is a great similarity between the relationship patterns of the ruling classes vis-à-vis the other important power-holders and the public opinion in both authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, one may not compare the two sets of regime transformation. The main reason for this is that the two regime types and the countries they dominated differ in terms of historical background, social structure, economic system and political orientations both in domestic and international scale.

The main obstacle for comparison of the two regime types stems from the fact that the proposed cycles of democratisation and un-democratisation are merely illusions. It is true that the world has experienced some 'waves of democracy,' yet it is not possible to verify whether these waves occurred as waves of democracy *per se*. In all instances, there has been a driving force, an ignition point and an international framework which eased the other regimes pursue in the same direction. In the last decade of democratisation, one may identify two major factors in the shape of economic necessities and changes in the world order.

Of these driving forces, economic necessities have been the main concern of the Latin American states and of the USSR, the main benefactor in the East European scheme. In Latin America, as the economy had reached to a point at which major social disturbances might take place, changes were introduced.

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<sup>168</sup>Russell Bova, 'Political Dynamics of the Post-Communist Transition, A Comparative Perspective'

The economic environment which necessitated the changes consisted of high levels of internal and foreign debt, high inflation rates, decrease in real income of the majority of the population, and incapability to adopt to new technologies. The changes came as the liberalisation of the system, rather than the adjustment of the economic injustice. These may also be seen as the adjustment of the private sector to the new economic requirements so that it would not lose its competitive edge.

The foreign pressure on human rights issue on the Latin Americans authoritarian regimes from the US and the EU meant a decrease in foreign economic and political support. The change of the world political structure with the development of the Détente policies was of no assistance to the authoritarian regimes either. As the strategic importance and the need to keep the Latin American states on the side of the Western Alliance decreased, the pressure on the regimes to adopt political and civil rights and freedoms acceptable in European and North American standards increased. Furthermore, the collapse of the bipolar world order from 1989 to late 1991, meant that these regimes had no more support from outside and hence were forced to give way to more democratic schemes.

As to the Eastern Bloc, from 1987 onwards, a process of reform was necessary as the planned economies of the bloc members were seriously failing. The same problem haunted the USSR, the main benefactor of the whole socialist world, as well. To regenerate its economy, it had to rid itself of the burden of supporting a series of countries in Europe which functioned merely as a buffer zone that modern war technology did not really necessitate.



The main idea behind the '*Sinatra Doctrine*' was to free the USSR from the burden created by its satellite regimes in Europe.

It is also true that the industrial revolution of information technology in the 1980s which made nearly all previous services sector technologies obsolete had its fair share in the way to the transition as the Modernists claim. As the economic burden of coping with the new technologies in computer science and telecommunications was enormous for closed economies, an economic liberalisation was necessary and once the access to information eased in the Eastern Bloc, the end of the regimes came quickly.

When one looks at the matter in the light of these facts, it can be argued that the democratisation processes are linked with the international order. The world order from late 1940s to late 1980s was permissive of authoritarian regimes as the notion of loyalty to an ideological cause -and hence to a superpower- was the main identifier of a country's regime rather than its human rights records or economic achievement or income distribution in that country. A change in the world order, specifically the end of the bipolar era and a shift towards a multi-polar system that we now experience, has some resonance in history. For instance, the collapse of the European based balance-of-power system with the United Kingdom performing the role of the *keeper of balance* and the rise of a multi-centric system in the interwar period, and the rise of the bipolar system after World War II, caused changes in the perception and in the priorities in the perception of regimes. Therefore, as the rules of international politics change, a once vital ally may lose its status to be perceived as a harsh, oppressive and unworthy dictatorship that has to be isolated in order to enforce global democratisation. Thus, one may talk of

cycles, but only provided that the cycles are related with the global political system changes and not related to an invisible hand which conducts the beginning and end of waves of democratisation because the World feels the need for democracy. That is to say that a cyclical change environment concerning all the world political structure may be proposed, however this would only be formulated as “whenever a change in the world order occurs, states and other political actors react to this change by adapting to the necessities of the new order”. A very long and vague cyclical occurrence this may be, it also is the equivalent of the physics law “every action has an equal and opposite reaction”. Moreover, the cyclical democratisation approach is insufficient to explain why anti-democratic forces develop if democracy is considered the most desirable system.

## **2. Alliances and Cultural Camps:**

From this, a brief second point may be made claiming that while East European people depended on the termination of their alliance ties with the superpower that controlled them to democratise, the Latin American democratisation was dictated in a way by the superpower which manipulated them. Although the initial steps of democratisation came from the Soviet administration and with the opposition of most leaders of East European countries, the main drive was from below and the end of the Soviet control marked a way of independence for the East Europeans. Hence while the end of the Soviet control meant a rebirth for the East European countries, the end of the Soviet threat meant the fall of their regimes for the Latin American dictatorships.

A third difference is that the Latin Americans always associated themselves with the Western-Capitalist culture. Therefore, even the most oppressive regime in Latin America sought ties with the Western world and emphasised its place in the Western civilisation while the West, in general, embraced such regimes as one of its variations. On the other hand, the East Europeans were caught in an experiment of alternative to that mode at least in terms of economics and politics. The ideological differences meant a total alienation from the values and norms of the Western culture and indoctrination of the Marxist-Leninist alternatives to the Western system. Hence, the Eastern Bloc played the role of an alternative to the Western world and was perceived as a different entity by the West. Moreover, as Laurence Whitehead points out, the East European case of late 1980s may be likened rather to the decolonisation process of Africa and Asia in 1960s than Latin America, as East Europeans are, in a way, struggling to find their national identities and their long-suppressed sovereignties<sup>169</sup>.

It is for this reason that the forces competing for power differs in these countries. Political life in most authoritarian Latin American countries is based on the competing local notables these be great land-owners, coffee or drug barons, or high-rank military officials. The main aim of a party is to prevent the others to seize power. Therefore, if one of these traditional elite came to power, the main aim would be to maintain power as long as feasible. That means the use of such methods as cheating in elections, dictatorship without elections, suppression of other powerful people and the like. The opposition

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<sup>169</sup>Laurence Whitehead, 'East-Central Europe in Comparative Perspective', in Geoffrey Pridham, Eric Herring, George Sanford (Editors), Building Democracy?: The International Dimension of



consisted of other bidders for power. However, in the Eastern Europe, the regime was ideologically solid and well-defined and the only grouping was between the Communist Party and its members and the others. Thus, there is a very definite difference between the origins of the two transitions and nature and meaning of the change.

### 3. Ideology:

Ideology plays a crucial role in both political and economic parts of the system. To begin with, the definition of the needs of the system is made according to the ideological choices. The Socialist system was based on the dominance of the ideology. That meant that the East European countries were to have a centralised bureaucracy and a centrally-planned economy.

The bureaucracy in the Eastern Bloc were part of an intrinsic relationship with the Communist Party. Under the communist theory, the Communist Party held the vanguard role to lead the nation to the final stage of *Communism*. The Party controls the whole state mechanism as it has a supposed leadership role. Therefore, the key positions of the bureaucratic mechanism, if not all the bureaucracy, were in the hands of the Party apparatchiks. At the end, this relationship equated the concept of the 'state' with the concept of the 'Party', eliminating the possibility that any ideologically unsound practice might be carried out. Hence, ideological needs came before the pragmatic necessities. In the post-Communist era, therefore, privatisation policies and the liberalisation in the economy in general "in Eastern Europe means the creation of a new class, a bourgeoisie...[creation of which] is made more problematic in the contemporary context, wherein an internationalised economy may pre-empt the

development of an indigenous alliance of analogous function”<sup>170</sup>. Therefore, there is the problem of a structural change in the economy in Eastern Europe which is peculiar to the relationship created during the Communist rule between the State and the other segments of the society in relation to economics.

On the other hand, as Henrique Cardoso has noted, “dissimilarities in Latin American political regimes and other variables should not obscure the fact that all these countries, with the exception of Cuba, are capitalist and occupy a subordinate position in the international economic order”<sup>171</sup>. This means that they were part of the (quasi-) liberal economic system of the West with the occasional protective regulation or two, while their political system was incompatible with liberal democracy’s requirements. In economic terms, cost-effectiveness was considered to be more important than ideological motivation. Consequently, the economic and bureaucratic mechanisms of the Latin American regimes were administered by technocrats. The similarity of the technocrats to the apparatchiks is that they both put emphasis on planning and they both are appointed. Apart from these two points, however, technocrats are entirely different in performance from their socialist counterparts as they elevate economic over political criteria, are less nationalistic (read ideological-oriented instead of nationalistic if you wish) than politicians<sup>172</sup>, and are much more pragmatic in terms of aiming at

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<sup>170</sup> Harvey B. Feigenbaum and Jeffrey R. Henig, ‘Privatization and Democracy’, *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, vol. 6, no. 3 (pp. 438 - 453), 1993, p. 439.

<sup>171</sup> Alejandro Portes, ‘Latin American Class Structures’, *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 20, no. 3 (pp. 7 - 39), 1995, p. 7.

<sup>172</sup> Juan D. Landau, ‘Technocrats and Mexico’s Political Elite’, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 111 (2), Summer 1996 (pp. 295-322), p. 296.

providing solutions to a problem. Therefore, while Mexico, Argentina or Chile had seen no improvement in political issues including human rights their economies developed to cope with the changes in industry. The best example of the economic success of the technocrats may be shown in Pinochet's Chile where the dictator employed the so-called 'Chicago Boys,' a group of economists from the University of Chicago who favoured limited state intervention to economy and liberalisation of the political system by privatisation and limitation of state control over free trade, to cure the economy while not attempting to liberalise the political scene at all.

#### 4. The Economic Factor:

The former members of the Eastern Bloc are not only experiencing a transition to liberal, competitive political system, but they are also undergoing a process of economic liberalisation which has never been a problem in authoritarian regimes as they were part of the capitalist world. Despite the fact that through a superficial analysis, both transitory regime types may seem to suffer from the same disruptions in the form of problems of debt, inflation and structural adjustment to domestic and international liberalisation, the problems of Eastern Europe are much more profound. As Judy Batt observes;

"The East European economies were not merely over-regulated with an overblown state sector, but fully state-dominated economies, lacking a developed private sector and even the most basic institutions of a market economy. Moreover, they were geared overwhelmingly to an international trading bloc -the CMEA- which operated form the world economy..... and which has now collapsed. The scale of the task of economic transformation and structural reorientation is unprecedented, and likely to take much longer than initially expected. The social costs will be high, and



popular confidence in the goal of a market economy cannot be taken for granted.”<sup>173</sup>

Therefore, Eastern Europe undergoes a different dimension of change not experienced by Latin America<sup>174</sup>. The peculiarity of the challenge created by the economic transformation makes the East European case unlike any other transition, as Latin American, South East Asian, Southern European economies were always incorporated within the Capitalist mode of production, perhaps with the exception of the transition from the pre-Capitalist economic relationships to Capitalism in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the states such as Turkey, Albania and Bulgaria after the first World War and the transition of the pre-Capitalist relationships in the East European countries to the Socialist mode of production after the Second World War. However, the transition from the Socialist system to the Capitalist system has no precedents in history, thus, it is unique and constitutes a unique challenge to the East European leadership cadres.

#### 5. Political Reform:

The question of political reforms is another source of difference between the transitory movements in the two regions. Similar to the case of economic reforms, political reforms are dictated from the top in authoritarian regimes of

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<sup>173</sup>Judy Batt, 'The International Dimensions of Democratisation in Czechoslovakia and Hungary' in Geoffrey Pridham et al. (Ed.s), *op.cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>174</sup> Attila Agh claims that there are four different scenarios of development in the European integration process of the East European countries which are Germanisation (EU integration with great German influence over the countries of the region), Turkisation (partial integration limited to security issues), Yugoslavisation (no integration at all), and Europeanisation (full-scale integration). What Agh not too correctly refers to as Turkisation is reform-dictatorship and is actually a mirror-image of the Latin American model discussed here. Chile would be a far better example for that model, but Agh, staying in the European context, chose Turkey. If Turkisation is read as Latin Americanisation, the argument makes more sense and the discussion in this study becomes clearer. To see Agh's comments, see his article titled 'The Paradoxes of Transition: The External and Internal Overload of the Transition Process,' esp. pp. 21-30, in Terry Cox and Andy Furlong (ed.s), *Hungary: The Politics of Transition*, London, England: Frank Cass, 1995.

Latin America, where, Terry Lynn Karl argues, transition from above is the predominant case. She points to the fact that whenever there has been a transition from below, it did not lead to stable democracy as the members of the traditional elite responded with subversive opposition<sup>175</sup>. The pattern of transition from above may be generalised in Southern Europe as well including Portugal, Spain, Turkey in addition to the Latin American countries such as Chile, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina and Peru<sup>176</sup>. The general pattern in such countries is that the ruling authoritarian regime, either due to external pressures or the domestic pressure stemming from opposing traditional elite, decides to move away from the office and arranges multi-party elections which would result in a period of democracy. How strong popular discontent may be, regime change is nearly always orchestrated from the top and necessitates pressure from abroad or from the strong members of the opposing elite.

However, in Eastern Europe, despite the fact that the Gorbachev reforms came from the top and ignited the whole process of dismemberment, in most cases, except for Bulgaria<sup>177</sup>, the change came from below. The change that was foreseen by Moscow was surpassed by the East Europeans not because their rulers were willing to introduce drastic changes, but because there was an enormous pressure from below for change as the Soviet military presence was lifted and the *Sinatra Doctrine* which allowed individual countries to chose

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<sup>175</sup>Georg Sorensen, *Democracy and Democratization*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993, pp. 44-45, quoting from T. Lynn Karl, 'Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 23 (1), 1990,( pp. 1-21), p. 8.

<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45.



their own political and economic programmes replaced the *Brezhnev Doctrine* which foresaw a Warsaw Pact intervention should one bloc country attempt to change its political orientation. The mass defections from the German Democratic Republic, the Solidarity movement in Poland, the activities of the opposition groups such as FIDESz in Hungary, the Rumanian revolution combined with a coup, constitute evidence that the change was from below and irreversibly so. The rise of nationalism and bigotry in the region after the end of the Communist rule shows the popular involvement in the process of change.

The change from below, that is change as a result of the popular will is the key difference between the two regime transitions. As there would be no likely local notables to prevent a full democratisation, the possibility of success in the East European transition looks far better than the Latin American transitions in such countries like Colombia or El Salvador. However, the East European transition was not as smoothly realised as in Costa Rica or in Venezuela either. Unlike these countries, the East European states has to suffer from the perils of economic transition resulting in unemployment, lower purchasing power, higher inflation and higher prices, concepts East Europeans who were not used to until the end of 1980s.

Despite the fact that since mid-1970s there is a global inclination towards liberal democracy, it may be argued that this inclination shows itself in different conditions under different circumstances. That there are common points between the East European and Latin American, not to mention South

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<sup>177</sup>And with the exception of the USSR; yet the USSR cannot be included into the list. The Soviet Union doesn't count as it is the foreign power involved, not one of the East European states converted



European transitions to democracy, the similarities may be seen as similar responses to the same changes created by the same driving forces.

However, to overemphasise the similarities overlooking the differences of the two regions undergoing processes of democratisation would result in the thought that the two regions underwent the same type of change. From that point, one may argue that these two are similar in social structure, economic and political background and that authoritarian and totalitarian regimes are alike, which they are not. One may not link the Latin American and East European practices of democratisation on a one-to-one basis.

Nevertheless, as they both are the product of the same major change in international political structure, namely the end of the Bipolar World Order, there are and will indeed be similarities between the two processes of transition. However, to create imaginary ties, theorising upon waves of democracy and hence creating intangible rival forces of pro and anti-democracy helps only to blur one's mind. One has to bear in mind that liberal democracy, considered by many as the best way of government in the Capitalist mode of production, may prove to be unfitting for some societies at any stage of their political and social development. Consequently, democracy may be inserted to and be rejected by a social structure which is unwilling to accept its conditions or which believes as a whole that another type of government is preferable. There is, however, no ground to talk about democratisation waves, although the concept facilitates the perception. As this facilitating effect in perception oversimplifies the situation. One has to bear in mind that "there are no generalizations that are not historically time bound,

because there are no systems and no structures that are unchanging"<sup>178</sup>, hence there are no real models nor similar or dissimilar routes to follow to reach an end as there is no definitive, absolute end. Therefore, it can be said that the transition from the Bipolar World System to a Diffuse World System is the key reason in the fall of dictatorships and socialist regimes and in the rise of democracy.

Yet, whatever the reason for the change in the attitudes towards democracy, there is a change in favour of democratisation and of justification of a regime in the domestic scale rather than international scale. This very inclination that is in ascent from the late 1980s onwards created a parallel rise in importance for the concept of legitimacy of a regime and of a political system, issues suppressed during the Cold War era despite their vital importance.

One may conclude that the transformations had common characteristics as well as peculiarities. Moreover, even in the regional scale there are differences from a country to another in terms of methods of transition, the duration of the transition period, the speed of the institutionalisation process and the adaptation of society to the new political and economic order. Therefore, the East European transformation is different from the Latin American transformation. Furthermore, the Hungarian transformation by itself is to be treated as a unique case within the general context of the East European political transformation. The structure of the parliament, the formation, representation, and membership characteristics of political parties, organisation of civil society agencies differ from the rest of East European

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<sup>178</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, The Capitalist World Economy, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1979, p. 134.

countries which went through similar political changes. These characteristics of the Hungarian system will be discussed below. The conclusion concerning the pattern of democratisation processes is that each system operates as part of an 'open system' so that transformation may begin but then reacts to the conditions and needs of its 'closed system' created by the country's internal political, social, and economic background.

## VIII. THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES

### A. The Legislature and the Political Parties:

The first major change brought along by the new system was the requisite of holding free, multi-party and multi-candidate elections on a hybrid of the PR and the majoritarian electoral systems. However, the change in the electoral system, following the pattern proposed by Rokkan, is merely the introduction of the third step towards democratisation, that is, the *mobilisation* of masses into indirect participation in the political decision-making process. The electoral process, therefore, is only a means and not the end, in politicising society. The main institutions in politicising society into a democratic structure are the parliament and the political parties. With the activities of these two which form the legislative and executive branches of the state structure, and with the formation and functioning of nation-wide political party organisations, the old political system would be altered to suit the necessities of the new political order. Therefore, the first elections and the parliament which was to be formed upon their results, have a vital role in the shaping of the liberal democratic system in a transitory society.

The 1990 elections, in this context, have two important functions: First, they have set the formula for the later elections and proved that the electoral system



which was introduced in the National Roundtable discussions was working efficiently. Secondly, the 1990 elections have pinpointed to the six major political parties which have become members of parliament from within the pool of thirteen political parties which represented 97% of all candidates. This process of reduction in the number of the major political parties enabled the Hungarian political system to run in a far less fractured manner in comparison to other post-communist societies, such as the Russian Federation or Poland, which are plagued by a very large pool of political parties.

Political parties represented in the parliament were also the recipients of the majority of all votes. The representation of these parties in the parliament led to a systemic stability which fortified the role of the parliament and eased the operation of the new political order. As both the parliament and the political parties are the key icons of the transitory period, the clarity in the formation and identification of these two major political institutional frameworks enabled the transition to take place more smoothly and hence enabled the strengthening of the legal legitimacy of the state and of the new political order vis-à-vis the public opinion.

## **B. Parliamentarisation:**

### **1. The New Parliaments of Eastern Europe:**

At the beginning of the post-communist era the parliament emerged as the only easily formed and the most easily accessible icon of the new political order. Therefore, the role of parliament has become far more important and vital than it usually is in the established liberal democracies. As the parliament as an institution was associated, within the transitory period, with the major tasks of restructuring the new political order, amending or replacing the communist

constitution and other laws, creating an area of discussion for different political views voiced by the newly formed political parties' representatives, and with forming and inspecting the functions of the executive branch, it has become the focus of attention for the general public in all post-communist societies during late 1980s and early 1990s. Parliament was now seen to function in a democratic manner. It managed to refashion itself as an important part of the new political system -as distinct from its role under communism-. This gave it extremely high ratings in the mind of the Hungarian public.<sup>179</sup> Attila Agh refers to the rise of importance in the role of and the public expectation from the parliament as *overparliamentarisation*.

The main reason for the intensity of the expectations and the burden of the tasks held by the newly-formed parliaments in Eastern Europe in general and in Hungary in particular was the fact that the newly-formed parliaments of the region have to perform the multiple task of *constituent parliament* and the tasks of a *normal legislative organ* at the same time. Since few, if any, of the members having served in democratically elected bodies, and with few, if any, practices and internal structures of the pre-revolutionary era suitable for use in the new system, the newly-formed parliaments are expected to form a government, inspect its functions, create and adopt the necessary laws, by-laws and regulations, and create a new working environment in which these could take place.

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<sup>179</sup> János Simon observes that the parliament was ranked second highest in public opinion in 1989 in terms of respect, while it went down to the fifth position out of six in 1992 while the army which was ranked third in 1989 went up to the first spot. See Simon's Fieldmarshal's Baton and Peace, Budapest: Academy of Science, 1993.

## 2. The Clash of the Parliament's Roles:

Each country in the East European region adopted a different approach to the issue of this multi-task procedure of being both the active legislature and a constituent parliament. In Bulgaria, the first post-communist elections were for a Grand National Assembly, the task of which would be to compose a new constitution. In Poland, the parliament held the duty of amending the constitution and the changes were made first through the negotiations between the Communist Party and the Solidarity movement first in 1989, then in 1992, when Solidarity's so-called *Little Constitution* formed the basis of a democratic constitution. The Czech and Slovak republics had their own amended constitutions after the dissolution of the Czechoslovakia while Rumania adopted a brand-new constitution in 1993<sup>180</sup>. In Hungary, the 1949 Stalinist constitution was amended but not replaced.

The main reason for the use of the 1949 constitution with amendments was that in the first post-communist Hungarian parliament, changes in the constitution required a two-thirds majority. Due to the discord among the political parties on the constitutional issues, the two-third majority could not be reached. As a result, the constitutional changes ground to a halt. Intra-parliamentary conflict has harmed Hungarian political process more strongly than it harmed other East European political orders due to the fact that it was Hungary that made the transition based on political consensus and mutual compromise<sup>181</sup>. The failure of the system of compromise and consensus

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<sup>180</sup> David M. Olson, Democratic Legislative Institutions: A Comparative View, Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 127.

<sup>181</sup> Attila Agh, *Bumpy Road to Europeanisation: Policy Effectiveness and Agenda Concentration in the Hungarian Legislation (1990-1993)* in A. Agh (ed.), The Emergence of East Central European Parliaments: The First Steps, Budapest: Hungarian Centre of Democracy Studies, 1994, pp. 72-73.



resulted in the Hungarian parliament's disability to perform its duties as a constituent assembly and caused the decline in popular trust in the parliament. On the other hand, it would be correct to assume that the main function of a parliament is not to prepare a constitution but to legislate necessary laws and to amend laws previously enacted. In addition, the image of the parliament as a legislative organ has a precedence over its role as a constituent assembly with regards to public needs and expectations. Therefore, public loss of trust towards the parliament may not be associated only with the failure of reaching a constitutional consensus among the political parties. The failure to solve socio-economic problems through new legislation or by change of government through electoral process have more to do with the decline in the public interest and trust for the parliament than its failure to act in unison to introduce a new constitution. When the two functions of the parliament as a constitution-making body and as a representative assembly which enacts laws and regulations, the latter role, is the one more associated with the concept of parliament in public mind, as the former has a temporary life expectancy, thus a clash amongst the roles carried out by the parliament would either be artificial or short-lived.

### **3. The Hungarian Parliamentary Structure:**

The Parliament is therefore, in essence, a representative body and it is perceived as such in the Hungarian society since the first post-communist parliament's formation through two-round elections in 1990. The constituency structure of the country defining the terms of eligibility to membership of the Parliament is regulated by Act 34 (1989) which dictates a mixed constituency system. Of the total 386 seats, 176 are decided in individual constituency

elections, 152 on the basis of 20 district lists (county and municipal), and 58 seats on the basis of national lists. This dual electoral system allows the voter to use one vote to support the desired candidate in the individual constituency, and secondly, to support a party list.

This constituency representation system was designed during the 1989 Roundtable as a compromise between the wishes of the sides, and hence, is complicated. Parties which claimed to be the descendants of the pre-1949 period, such as the Smallholders Party argued in the Government-Opposition Roundtable negotiation process of August 1989 that a list system should be used in the elections as the one used prior to the Communist take-over of the country. Other parties disagreed claiming that regional liabilities should be favoured as well as stable majorities should be sought. As a result of these discussions, Hungarian electoral system has three different methods to fill the 386 seats of the Parliament. The number of the parliamentary seats decided by each of the three methods and the way these three methods work are described by John Fitzmorris as follows:

“a) 176 single member district (SMD) seats (32 in Budapest), based on subdivision of the counties and the capital. In these, a candidate is elected if he obtains 50 per cent plus one of the votes cast on the first ballot. This is rare. In 1994 only two MPs (both MSzP) were elected on the first ballot, against five in 1990. In the second ballot, held two weeks later, a plurality (first past the post) applies. The top three candidates and any others with at least 15 per cent of the first ballot vote can remain in the field.

b) 152 seats are allocated to regional lists in each county and the capital. Each area has a seat allocation corresponding to its population. Voters have ... a second list vote. There is a five percent threshold for obtaining seats in this category, though of course even smaller parties can elect MPs in the smd category...

c) 58 (plus any unallocated regional seats) form a national pool. These are allocated on the basis of residual votes from the *smd*'s and regional lists. The threshold applies here too.

<sup>182</sup>

In the individual constituencies, a prospective candidate requires the support of at least 750 voters to appear on the ballot. The acquisition of the required 750 nomination slips is at the same time a precondition for the subsequent listing of the parties. District lists can be established by any party which has candidates in at least one-quarter/at least two of the individual constituencies in that district. National lists call for at least seven district lists. Entry into Parliament previously required at least four percent of the votes cast nationally, on party lists, while by the time of the 1994 general election, the ceiling was raised to five percent.

According to the law, every Hungarian citizen of 18 years of age is eligible both as a voter and as a candidate for elective office.

#### 4. The Members of Parliament:

As a result of the change that the political order went through, the structure of the parliament has also changed in terms of the qualities and identity of the new members of parliament (MPs) in Hungary. The new MPs, mostly inexperienced in parliamentary political life under the *ancien regime*, were mostly dissidents under the old regime or professionals who had no direct political connections until the transformation. Árpád Göncz, a renowned playwright, echoing the political ascent of the neighbouring Czechoslovakia's Vaclav Havel, was elected the president of the country by the parliament. Many other people indirectly interested in political life but whose professional

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<sup>182</sup> John Fitzmorris, 'The Hungarian Election of May 1994', *Electoral Studies*, vol. 14 (1) (pp. 77-81),



interests were elsewhere became members of the cabinet. In the wake of the May 1990 elections, the first non-communist premier of Hungary, József Antall, was a medical historian, the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament was a historian of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungary, the foreign secretary was a historian of diplomacy while a medical doctor was appointed as the minister responsible for health and welfare<sup>183</sup>. None of these key positions went to professional politicians, because, apart from the communist apparatchiks of the *ancien regime*, there were no professional politicians in the Hungarian society at that time.

When the professional distribution of the new members of the Hungarian Parliament is analysed, it appears that the new parliamentary elite of Hungary gathered from two main sources: a) Professionals whose political preferences were subsumed within the boundaries of their professions but who constituted the centre of any newly-established political organisation by using their networking skills and political knowledge; and, b) local notables, people who lack in political skill and knowledge compared to the first group, but who are respected and prestigious in their local community. Akos Rona-Tas claims that the "kind of local prestige that elevated the elected into power came from their position of being 'above politics,'"<sup>184</sup> during the communist era and this proved short-lived due to their role in the new political order.

The 1990 election in which 386 MPs were elected, shows that having a profession not directly related with politics has been an important element in

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March 1995, pp. 78-79.

<sup>183</sup> Akos Rona-Tas, 'The Selected and the Elected: The Making of the New Parliamentary Elite in Hungary,' *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 5(3), Fall 1991 (pp. 357-393), p. 357.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

one's election to the parliament. The following table shows the professional distribution of the first post-communist legislature in Hungary.

As can be seen from the table below, the structural division of the Hungarian Parliament in the aftermath of the first non-communist elections shows a two-tier division between the two groups cited above. Also, it is not surprising to see that the members of the newly rising bourgeoisie as medical doctors or lawyers are represented in the first post-communist parliament even though they lack the necessary political experience.

The composition of the parliamentary groups by mostly inexperienced people has contributed to the election results in 1994 as the general public voted overwhelmingly for the HSP which incorporated experienced pre-transition cadres within its ranks. The 1998 elections, on the other hand, were fought in a new environment where all the participants have become professional politicians within the eight-year period of experience with democracy.

**Table 4.6. Professional Distribution of the 1990-1994 Parliament's MPs<sup>185</sup>:**

Profession	MPs Elected (n/386)	General Grouping
Agronomists, Vets, Co-op Heads	29	Local Notables
Clergymen	11	L. N.
Physicians, Dentists, Chemists	40	L.N.
Teachers	32	L.N.
Social Scientists	79	Politicised Professionals (P.P.)
Lawyers	51	P.P.
Journalists	16	P.P.
Writers, Linguists, Critics	21	P.P.
Artists, Actors, Sportsmen	14	P.P.
Sales/Hotel/Middle Managers	5	Technocrats
Engineers, Architects, IT people	42	Technocrats

<sup>185</sup> The information on the numbers is from *ibid.*, pp. 379-380, even though the division of groups is mine and different from Rona-Tas' classification.

Miners, Farmers, Industrial Workers	17	Non – Professionals
Small Entrepreneurs	14	Non- Professionals
Clerics, Accountants, Soldier	13	Low-rank, white-collar workers

### C. The Political Parties:

#### 1. Political Parties as Institutions:

Apart from the parliament, the other key figure, if not the protagonist of the whole new system, are the political parties. As an institution, the parliament is, at the end of the day, a medium, a mean to achieve liberal democracy. However, the major agencies which are involved in this aim, and the main agencies which are to manipulate the system, are the political parties. In due course, if the transition is to succeed, the main contributors to this end will be the political parties as individual actors, and not a general concept of parliamentary democracy or the parliament acting as an umbrella institution.

The break-up of the old regime has seen the emergence or re-emergence of political parties in the Hungarian political scene, although some were either the spin-offs or claimants to be descendants of previous political parties. The Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP), for instance, was formed by the reform communists of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, while the conservative communists joined in the formation of the Agrarian Alliance (AA). Many parties in the country, in fact claim to be either direct descendants or devoted followers of the pre-war political actors. Of these the Independent Smallholders' Party (ISHP) claims to be the same party which was founded in the inter-war period and which was the main opposition party. It was the party of the land-owning peasantry and had won the 1945 elections in which it stood as the only non-communist party in the elections receiving 57% of the votes. It



was reformed in 1988 by its previous MP's. The Hungarian Social Democratic Party (HSDP), being one of the pre-war political parties which merged with the Communists in late 1940s, was also reborn in the form of a more Left-Liberal party<sup>186</sup>.

All of this first group of political parties, then, are linked with a past institution or claim to have such links through the use of party names or politicians and political ideas associated with the previously existing political parties. The main reason for the claims of linkage to the past political entities rises from the wish to make use of politics of nostalgia, that is, to make use of the popular memories of previous political parties. By creating such a link, it marginalised party organisation from the communist system. The new parties hoped to receive a larger margin of votes and hoped to use their past to present themselves as national 'Hungarian' parties. Therefore, the claim to have a legitimate link with a previously existing political organisation, in the political chaos of Hungary in late 1980s and early 1990s would eventually give an advantage to the newly formed organisations for these would be perceived as descendants of parties that are placed in the common public memory. In this case, the act of abandoning some major policies has no great effect on the votes, because although the names of the old political parties are still part of the common memory, after four decades of Communist rule, the chances that the major policy perspectives of political parties of 1940s being remembered accurately were low. The choice to follow the policies of their namesake parties as the Smallholders Party did, or to abandon or dramatically alter these

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<sup>186</sup>Andras Körösenyi, 'The Hungarian Parliamentary Elections, 1990', pp.72-73, in Andras Bozoki, Andras Körösenyi, George Schöpflin (ed.s), Post Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in

policies as the Hungarian Social Democratic Party did depends on the possible popularity of these policies in the late 20th century.

There were also those politicians who followed a different way. The newly formed political parties had a claim to power based on their opposition to the Communist rule in the late-Kádár period, and their legitimisation was based on their reform-oriented, change-seeking approach to Hungarian political life. The winner of the 1990 elections, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF), for instance, was the result of a crisis, in 1987, in the late Kádár era, and was a nationalistic and populist movement. It served as a centrist institution between the ruling Communists and the radical opposition groups. It changed its structural framework under the leadership of József Antall, who took over as the party's new leader in 1989 and who took the party to the line of German CDU/CSU Christian-Democratic with a nationalistic side. That is, the party has become a conservative, nationalistic party which promoted fundamental values of religious and national origins.

The Alliance of Free Democrats (AFD), on the other hand, began as an umbrella organisation. The roots of the party were found among the Hungarian opposition intellectuals, who, in 1980s, transformed their concerns of opposition from the pursuit of human rights issues to more direct political activities. This general umbrella organisation first turned into the so-called Network, a loose alliance of regime opponents in the Spring of 1988. The Network led to the formation of the Alliance of Free Democrats in Autumn 1988. The AFD is, then, an alliance of the bourgeois radicals, Christian Democrats, Liberal Conservatives, various fractions of Social Democrats, and

of Greens<sup>187</sup>; which combines all these groups under an institutional framework similar to that of British Tories.

The Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESz) is a party that developed on the basis of a youth opposition movement of 1980s. Its first predecessor was an 'Independent Youth Union' opposed to the Communist KISz (Communist Youth Union) and dates from 1981. Then, with the opening of new, specialised colleges in Budapest and elsewhere in Hungary, the student elite of these colleges -such as the Budapest University of Economics- followed the idea of forming their own youth organisation and in March 1988, FIDESz was founded. It became a radical youth movement which did not hesitate to adopt aggressive and fundamentally anti-communist methods. Its participation in the round-table talks in 1989, and its members' highly active participation in these talks enabled it to debate beyond its character of a youth organisation and reform itself as a political party close to the line pursued by the AFD<sup>188</sup>. Yet, the FIDESz was a radical political party which would not accept any members above 35 years of age, at that time. The rule of having no members above 35 years of age was lifted when Viktor Orban, the charismatic leader of the party, turned 35 in 1995.

To generalise the specifications of this second group, one may claim that the newly emerging political parties claim their right of existence and legitimacy on the grounds of a political movement and can be affiliated with various opposition figures in the 1980s. All of these political parties can be linked to

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<sup>187</sup>Laszlo Lengyel, "The Character of Political Parties in Hungary (Autumn 1989)", in *ibid.*, pp. 37-39.

<sup>188</sup>Istvan Stumpf, "Political Socialisation of the New Generation: Alliance of Young Democrats", in György Csepeli, Laszlo Keri, Istvan Stumpf (ed.s), State and Citizen: Studies on Political Socialisation in Post Communist Eastern Europe, Budapest: Institute of Political Science, 1993; pp. 67-79 *passim*.



cliques in society who ideologically associate themselves with the parties. Their commitment legitimises these parties as their representatives. The associated clique may be formed by liberals or the Greens or the independent youth who do not wish to be associated with any political ideology but want to have a say in the future of their country<sup>189</sup>.

Yet, to rule a country, to compete in a national scale and win the right to rule, political parties have to go beyond the level of being representatives of a given portion of the nation and persuade the others that they are worthy of support. The first group of political parties, those which identified themselves with the past political parties, by relating themselves to/with the past experience of the public with their so-called predecessors, managed to create such an image in the minds of general public. The performance of a previously active political party (such as the ISHP) or of an important fraction within a political party (just like the HSP) may be used to convince masses that the re-formed party may work for the benefit of the country, or that the new cadres will pursue a more advantageous policy vis-à-vis the public (as HSDP chose to claim) and sought to redefine their policies without totally denying their origins.

On the other hand, the newly emerged political agencies, those organisations which were formed within and by the 1980s lack this luxury of associating themselves with the previously lived experiences. They hoped to associate themselves as political professionals who could manage change, a factor especially important during the uncertainties of transition. The frequent policy

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<sup>189</sup> FIDESZ's self-representation as the 'party of the youth' may be seen as a policy to convince the ideologically neutral -or indifferent- part of the Hungarian youth to vote. Therefore, it is possible not to have any direct ideological affiliation with a political party but to legitimise it by voting for it.

alterations of the newly born parties may be linked with this wish to obtain public legitimacy and secure political power.

Moreover, the social existence of political parties is another key issue in their success. The lack or existence of nation-wide organisation is a key in nation-wide legitimisation of the party as well as its political orientation or background. The lack of a well-organised nation-wide structure may result in the parties based on local representatives which do not show interest in the nation as a whole but which prefer to defend the interests of a regional, geographical and hence sociological group, such as urban intellectuals or the Great Southern Plain population. The lack of nation-wide organisation of FIDESz cost them a great deal of votes and the denial of a nation-wide recognition and legitimacy in the 1990 elections in which they got only 8.94% of votes.

The legitimisation of political parties as individual organisations, then, depends on their ability to convince the public opinion on their being rightful and followers of previously existent political parties or on their being the right choice to govern the country based on their performance as opposition movements in late Kadarist period, and on their nation-wide organisation. Yet, the problem with political parties' legitimacy is not peculiar to individual organisational level only. Their performance as a group, as a set of agents within the political structure has its very important role in legitimisation too.

## **2. The Parliamentary Political Parties:**

The parties represented in the Hungarian Parliament have experienced ideological fluctuations as well as actual fragmentations in their membership. However, the six political parties represented in the first parliamentary period

of 1990-1994 remained in the parliament in the aftermath of both the 1994 and the 1998 elections, though the representatives and their values have changed in time.

During the 41 year period of interregnum, there were no active alternative parties to the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, although the multi-party system and individual parties were never abolished outright by any legal ruling or court decision in Hungary in the aftermath of the communist take-over. The only exception to the undisputed rule of the HSWP in those 41 years was the brief re-emergence of the pre-communist political parties during the 1956 uprising.

The first steps to the establishment of the multi-party system in Hungary, took place in 1987 and 1988. During these years, popular movements and political organisations appeared and in a short period of time transformed themselves into political parties. The Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) was formed on September 27, 1987, in Lakitelek, and transformed in September 1988 into a "movement with a political program". In the spring of 1989 it finally became a political party. Within the same process, the AFD came into being out of the Network of Free Initiatives -formed in 1988-. In January 1990, the political organisation became a political party. The Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESz) which now has become the Hungarian Civic Party, was also formed in 1988. Yet, the real breakthrough came when The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party declared its own dissolution on 7 October 1989. In its place, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP) was formed, now defining itself as a social democratic party. In November 1988 the Independent Smallholders' Party (ISHP) was formed. In January 1989, the Hungarian Social Democratic



Party (HSDP) appeared on the Hungarian political scene. Both the ISHP and the HSDP claimed to be direct descendants of the parties of the same name. By the time the elections were held in 1990 (25 March and 8 April were the dates of the two rounds of election), some 65 political parties were formed and registered. However, only 12 of these 65 political parties could fulfil the conditions so that they could compete in the general elections. Of these, eleven parties could achieve more than 1% of the total votes cast though only 6 of them were eligible for parliamentary representation, that is only six parties have passed the 4% election threshold -which would rise to 5% in 1994 elections-.

The first session of the multi-party Hungarian Parliament convened on 2 May 1990, and the new coalition government was formed on 22 May, by the representatives of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Independent Smallholders' Party, and the Christian-Democratic People's Party. The first post-communist government, then, was a Christian-Conservative alliance, leaving the liberal (FIDESz and Alliance of Free Democrats) and the socio-democrats (Hungarian Socialist Party) on the opposition benches.

Although during the two elections held in 1990 and 1994 there has been fragmentation within political parties, raising the number of the political parties represented in the Parliament from six to fifteen, the 1994 elections resulted in representation of the same six original parties. During the first parliamentary period, such parties as the Hungarian Justice and Life Party and the Market Party were formed from the Hungarian Democratic Forum (see also the establishment of the Hungarian Democratic People's Party during the second parliamentary term, in early 1996), and a division of the Smallholders'

Party took place due to arguments over the party's representation in the government. However, the representation in the Parliament was not altered as the fractions which turned into political parties were left outside of the parliament after the following elections. In addition to the intra-parliamentary divisions, the number of parties outside the Parliament has increased geometrically. At present, there are 130 registered parties, although 100 to 110 are actually 'phantom' parties with a few dozen or a few hundred members and hence lack any opportunity to achieve to pass the electoral threshold<sup>190</sup>.

## **IX. THE PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION IN HUNGARY**

### **A. The Parliamentary Representation of Political Parties:**

The Hungarian parliamentary system resembles that of a chancellery democracy. The main executive organ is the cabinet. Its members are elected from within the parliament. The highest executive position is premiership, while the presidency has a value only in terms of symbolic representation. Its main representative body, the Parliament, has a unicameral structure consisting of 386 members of parliament (thence, MPs) who are elected for four-year terms. The Hungarian Parliament holds two regular sessions, one in spring and one in autumn, the first from February 1 to June 15, and the second from September 1 to December 15 during the year. Since May 2, 1990, it has been in constant session by alternating regular and extraordinary sessions.

The parliament holds its plenary sessions on Mondays and Tuesdays, while Wednesdays and Thursdays are reserved for committee meetings. During the 1990-94 parliamentary period, the Parliament enacted 219 new laws, amended 213 laws, and brought 354 decisions. Most of these amendments and

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<sup>190</sup>Downloaded from the Internet database of the Hungarian Embassy in Washington D.C..

enactment are necessary steps to deal with the newly established democratic system and a market economy.

The first elections in 1990 did not result in any single political party gaining power. The votes, due to the electoral system made a coalition government a necessity. A coalition between the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Independent Smallholders Party and the Christian Democratic People's Party shared the responsibility of governing the country with the Hungarian Democratic Forum being the majority partner in the right-wing coalition. The results of this first election in the post-communist era may be seen as a reflection of the public desire to get rid of the ancient regime and to support a liberal political and economic system.

**Table 4.7. Parliamentary seats gained by political parties after the 1990 elections<sup>191</sup>:**

Party Name	MSzP	SzDSz	FKgP	FIDESz	KNDP	MDF	A A	Joint Deput- ies	Inde pen dent
Seats Won	33	92	44	21	21	164	1	4	6

Guide to Parties: Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP); Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz); Independent Smallholders Party (FKgP); Christian Democratic People's Party (KNDP); Federation of Young Democrats (I HDESZ); Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF); Agrarian Alliance (AA).

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MPs of coalition government formed on 22 May 1990 consisted of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF/HDF), the Smallholders Party (FKgP/ISHP) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KNDP/CDPP) constituting nearly 60% of all parliamentary seats. However, in time, the parliamentary arithmetic changed as some dissidents appeared in each party and formed new political parties or remained as independent MPs. Towards

<sup>191</sup> Carmen Gonzalez Enriquez, *Electoral Systems and Political Stability in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest: 1995, Hungarian Centre for Democracy Studies Foundation, p. 21.



the end of the four-year parliamentary cycle, the balance had considerably altered and nearly 20% of the MPs sat with groupings other than their original affiliates, reducing the government majority to around 50 percent.

More than 20 parties ran candidates in the second general elections held in two rounds during May 1994. 15 parties managed to compile national lists, and in the end the same six parties made it to Parliament as in 1990, though in fundamentally different proportions. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP/HSP), a party formed by the *reform wing* of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, received the most votes.

**Table 4.8. Parliamentary seats gained by political parties after the 1994 elections:**

Party Name	MSzP	SzDSz	FKgP	FIDESz	KNDP	MDF	MDPP	Independents
Seats Won	209	69	22	19	20	19	15	6

Guide to Parties: Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP); Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz); Independent Smallholders Party (FKgP); Christian Democratic People's Party (KNDP); Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ); Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF); Hungarian Democratic People's Party (MDPP)

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The 1994 elections, as can be seen in Table 4.3., gave way to a different combination of political party representation than the 1990 elections had yielded to. Another coalition government was founded after these elections, this time between the Hungarian Socialist Party who had enough votes to form a government by itself yet which preferred not to, and the Alliance of Free Democrats which were the second biggest party in the 1994-1998 parliamentary period.

The 1998 elections which were held in two rounds on 10 and 24 May 1998, once again, resulted in the same number of political parties being represented in the parliament. The Christian Democratic People's Party has lost all its

seats, while the Hungarian Democratic People's Party has lost its seats to its descendant, Hungarian Justice and Life Party:

**Table 4.9 Parliamentary seats gained by political parties after the 1998 elections<sup>192</sup>:**

Party Name	MSzP	SzDSz	FKgP	FIDESz	KNDP	MDF	MP	MIEP
Seats Won	134	22	48	148	0	17	0	14

Guide to Parties: Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP); Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz); Independent Smallholders Party (FKgP); Christian Democratic People's Party (KNDP); Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ); Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF); Hungarian Democratic People's Party (MDPP); Workers' (Communist) Party (MP); Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP).

Although there has been a change in the representation of the political parties with the exception of the exclusion of the Christian Democrats from the 1998-2002 parliament, the ideological representation in the parliament was not altered by the 1998 election results. The inability of the communists to have an MP elected through their Workers' Party and the continuity of the nationalist-to-liberal tendencies of the Hungarian Democratic People's Party by the Hungarian Justice and Life Party, prove that there is a continuity in the parliamentary representation and voting procedures.

**Table 4.10 Parliamentary seats gained by political parties after the 2002 elections<sup>193</sup>:**

Party Name	MSzP	SzDSz	FKgP	FIDESz	MDF	MP	MIEP
Seats Won	178	19	0	188	0	0	0

The 2002 elections were different in their structure and outcome from the previous elections due to the association of the country's future with the European Union (EU) membership and hence people voted in the second round of the elections in accordance with their vision of EU membership.

<sup>192</sup> Data on the 1998 election results gathered from the web-site of the Italian organisation Agora, [www.agora.it/elections/hungary.htm](http://www.agora.it/elections/hungary.htm) in September 1998.

<sup>193</sup> Data on the 2002 election results gathered from the web-site of the International Foundation for Election Systems, IFES, <http://www.ifes.org/eguide/resultsum/hungary-par-02.htm>.

Three political parties, Fidesz, Hungarian Socialist Party, and the Alliance of Free Democrats have become the parties favoured by the voters in the second round of the elections and the combination of all other parties could find only 47,006 votes for themselves in the second round of the 2002 elections. The Hungarian parliamentary structure, therefore, was dramatically altered in the 2002 elections for the general wish of the Hungarian public to have a strong government and/or a strong opposition in the parliament in this transitory period. EU membership, therefore, has become a more pivotal issue than party preferences and loyalties.

The Hungarian Parliament has a diversion of political views represented within itself by the mainstream political parties. Of these, six have been represented in parliament from 1990 to 2002, thus, one may assume that there is a discernible trend of development in parliamentary traditions. Moreover, some of these parties claim to be the direct descendants of the political parties of the pre-communist period, such as the Smallholders' Party, while the Hungarian Socialist Party is the heir to the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, now was divided into two political parties, the other party being the Hungarian Workers' Party. As to the results of the 2002 elections, it can be claimed that even the relatively strong system of representation in Hungary had to be revised for the voters wanted to see their country's government as a solid mechanism and not a coalition or a weak lead of one party over nearly equal others.



## B. Major Parliamentary Political Parties in Hungary:

Political parties represented in the Hungarian Parliament are either newly established political parties or those who are successors to the communist regime's leading party. Of the first group, some claim –such as the Independent Smallholders Party- to be the followers or the reincarnation of a political party that once functioned in the pre-socialist period, or claim to be representatives of a social group or class.

John T. Ishiyama distinguishes between the newly formed political parties and the successor parties, claiming that, of all the post-communist political parties in Eastern Europe, the communist-successor parties are, “unlike ‘new parties,’ ... not merely clubs of notables or ‘couch parties’ (where all members could fit on a single couch)” but are “distinct organisations, and by any definition represent ‘real’ political parties.”<sup>194</sup> The other political parties which rely on the claim of historicity try to obtain the same degree of distinctiveness and hence create a feeling of reliance on the public by association with a historically continuous process. Paul G. Lewis' observation that the success of communist-successor political parties such as the SdRP in Poland and the ISP in Hungary result from the main strengths of what he terms as the traditional mass party, which has “a high membership in terms of the post-communist context, good finances and material resources and a high degree of organisational development,”<sup>195</sup> sustains Ishiyama's argument<sup>196</sup>.

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<sup>194</sup> John T. Ishiyama, ‘The Communist Successor Parties and Party Organisational Developments in Post-Communist Politics,’ *Political Research Quarterly*, v. 52 (1), March 1999, p. 88.

<sup>195</sup> Paul G. Lewis, ‘Introduction and Theoretical Overview,’ in Paul G. Lewis (ed.), Party Structure and Organization in East Central Europe, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1996, p. 16.

<sup>196</sup> For a discussion on generalisations on political party organisation types, works of Petr Kopecky, Herbert Kitschelt, Paul G. Lewis, Angelo Panebianco, John T. Ishiyama, Richard S. Katz and Richard

On the political parties formed in the post-communist era, Aleks Szczerbiak observes that "evidence confirms many of the hypothesised characteristics ascribed to the new political parties in postcommunist Eastern Europe: a weak grounding in the civil society, dependence on the state for material and financial resources, and a centralised decision-making structure combined with sectoral local autonomy."<sup>197</sup>

The Hungarian Parliament, for the three consecutive post-communist elections had the same six political parties under its roof and hence shows a coherent and consistent attitude unlike other post-communist regimes' legislatures. The Hungarian voters' consistency in terms of electing the candidates of the same six political parties in all three general elections, as well as the two-term service of the former President Árpád Göncz and the unproblematic election of his successor Prof. Ferenc Mádl to the post of presidency in the year 2000 can be taken as proof of the positive effects of the Roundtable Discussions and the distinction created by the Kádárist regime's quasi-social contract<sup>198</sup>.

However, the Hungarian political party system is not a fully-functional mechanism which is based on the institutions. Although there is ample evidence on the institutionalisation of political parties and some sort of party-affiliation among the Hungarian voters, it is also possible to accept the argument of Gabriela Ilonski and Malcolm Punnett that the Hungarian party system is based on leadership and leading figures as these represent a symbol

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Mair in the theoretical arena, and the works of Attila Agh, Gabriela Ilonski, and Aleks Szczerbiak in the regional/practical arena can be cited.

<sup>197</sup> Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Testing Party Models in East-Central Europe,' *Party Politics*, v. 5 (4), p. 518.

<sup>198</sup> See Paul G. Lewis, 'East-Central Europe: The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland,' in Stephen White, Judy Butt, and Paul G. Lewis (eds.), Developments in Central and East European Politics -2, London: MacMillan Press, 1998, p. 33, on parliamentary fragmentation in the first Polish



to the general public to follow. Ilonski and Punnett claim that the dissident Hungarian intellectuals of the communist era now emerge as power-holders and policy makers which give them an extra power on the party administration and organisation, and provides public figures to follow for the public while easing intra-party leadership-selection procedures to remain not entrenched yet<sup>199</sup>. Although their arguments may be sustained by the decision of FIDESZ to prefer the leadership of Viktor Orban to their founding principles, or by the MDF's intra-party succession race after the demise of party leader and Prime Minister József Antall, one also must consider the institutionalisation of the political parties within the new political order.

Hence, one may argue that the Hungarian political party organisation is still to be solidly rooted in the liberal democratic system in terms of its representational preferences in terms of the formation of the intra-party hierarchy and in terms of the public representation, that is whether a political party is to become a catch-all, cartel, or class-specific organisation. However, when the parliamentary representation of the Hungarian political parties is considered, it can be argued that the political party organisation in terms of institutionalisation of political parties in Hungary is established in a more stable manner than all the surrounding East-Central European countries' political parties and the Hungarian political parties have a better relationship with their voters in comparison with the regional post-communist regimes.

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and Czech parliaments. Hungary remains distinct from these two examples as there were fragmentations in mid-parliamentary term but these were not sustained by the voters in the following elections.

<sup>199</sup> Malcolm Punnett and Gabriela Ilonski, 'Leading Democracy: The Emergence of Party Leaders and Their Roles in the Hungarian Parties,' in Terry Cox and Andy Furlong (eds.), Hungary: The Politics of Transition, London: Frank Cass, 1995, pp. 101-102.



The political parties that are represented in the Hungarian Parliament are as follows.

**1. Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP / MSzP):**

The Hungarian Socialist Party is a direct descendant of the HSWP. It was established after the dissolution of the HSWP by the Reform Socialist wing of the Party. Therefore, the HSP has a socio-democratic attitude and has a positive approach towards privatisation and direct foreign investment.

The leader of the party and the Prime Minister in the 1994-1998 period is Gyula Horn who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the last Communist government. During that period, Gyula Horn played a prominent role in the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea and Israel, in the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, and supported the re-unification of Germany by allowing East Germans to flee via Hungary to the West. Additionally, he completed preparations for and later signed the agreement on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. Thus, as a reform-wing member of the HSWP, Horn was the leading figure to lead the post-communist HSP.

While in the 1990 elections the party didn't do well, receiving only 9% of the votes and 33 parliamentary seats, in the 1994 elections it emerged as the main party from the ballots, magnifying its percentage in the total votes cast to 54% and its seats in the parliament to 209. The party was the majority coalition partner in the 1994-98 legislative era in co-operation with the Alliance of Free Democrats, the second biggest party.

However, the HSP has lost its supremacy in votes in the 1998 elections to Fidesz gathering 32.2% of the votes and 134 parliamentary seats, making the

HSZ the second biggest party in the parliament. The party is not a member of the government in the 1998-2002 parliamentary term.

## 2. Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz):

The presence of Alliance of Free Democrats originated in the late 1970s as a social opposition movement to the Communist regime. Chiefly concerned with human rights, it initially gathered intellectuals who adopted a critical attitude towards the existing system. The group called itself 'the democratic opposition'. Later on, this democratic opposition gradually embraced political, professional, cultural, religious, minority and other oppositions to the single-party rule in its composition. The *Network of Free Initiatives* emerged from this co-operation and transformed itself to the Alliance of Free Democrats on 13 November 1988. According to the Manifesto of Principles, approved by the Founding Convention, the Alliance of Free Democrats is the 'party of freedom and solidarity'. The Alliance supports liberal policy and wants an independent, democratic welfare state.

In the wake of the National Roundtable Negotiations of 1989, the Alliance of Free Democrats and the Federation of Young Democrats, supported by the Smallholders Party and the Social Democratic Party, initiated a referendum on whether the people should directly elect the President of the Republic. As a result of the referendum, the majority of citizens decided not to elect the President directly, before the general free elections, and left this function to the new Parliament.

The AFD became the second largest parliamentary party with 92 seats after the 1990 elections and became the leader of the opposition. Árpád Göncz, a former member of the Executive Board of the Alliance of The Free Democrats,

was elected President of the Republic. In the 1990 municipal elections, it achieved notable success with its candidate Gábor Demszky becoming the Mayor of Budapest. Yet, due to intra-party conflicts, the Party leader János Kis did not run for re-election. His successor, Peter Tölgyessy, was elected in November 1991. In November 1992, the party held a congress resulting in leadership changes. Iván Pető, who used to be leader of the parliamentary group, was elected president of the party. In July 1993 the *Liberal Internationale* voted unanimously to include the Alliance in its organisation. During the 1994 parliamentary elections, the AFD remained the second largest party in the Parliament with 67 seats. At the 1994 local elections, the party preserved its results and remained the second largest party of the country. Gábor Demszky, the Mayor of Budapest, was re-elected and the Alliance of Free Democrats achieved leading positions in most of the cities of county status, as well.

The AFD has entered into a coalition with the Hungarian Socialist Party, the victor of the 1994 general elections. The Coalition Agreement includes a very detailed 'bylaw of the coalition' providing equal positions in decision-making. The Government Program is based on the programs of the two parties, despite the unequal parliamentary positions held by the two parties<sup>200</sup>. A series of scandals including the Tocsik privatisation scandal affected the AFD and appeared to harm the public image of the Alliance.

As a result of the corruption accusations and the poor performance of the party in the 1994-98 coalition government with the HSP, the Alliance of Free Democrats have lost more than half of their parliamentary seats in the 1998



elections. The AFD's parliamentary seats were reduced from 60 in 1994 to 24 in 1998 and its share in the votes was reduced to 7.9% compared to the 17.8% in 1994.

### 3. Hungarian Civic Party [ex-Federation of Young Democrats] (FIDESz):

FIDESz has a similar background to the AFD. It was founded on 30 March 1988 by a group of 37 university students and young intellectuals. Miklos Andrasi, Viktor Orban as well as, Ivan Csaba, Laszlo Kover, and Andras Racz, were the leading figures in the movement. The name FIDESz was chosen as the motto of the group. The word literally means "self-confidence, trustworthiness, belief". They held a two-day congress at the Jurta Theater in November 1988 in which the members of the Federation discussed and adopted the draft of the program of the organisation. In 1989, it had become a considerable political actor in opposition with 80 local groups and 3,500 members. It was an organiser and a leading member of the 1989 Roundtable. The main decision-making body of FIDESz was its Congress. The representatives of local groups created the Council, the highest body between the sessions of the congresses. Local groups of FIDESz were autonomous, and elected their leaders, and determined their own structure.

A major characteristic of the Federation was that none of its members should exceed 35 years of age and had to leave the organisation when turning 35. This rule, however, was altered when Viktor Orban, the leader of FIDESz turned 35 himself. Orban led the party for a while longer but is not the leader anymore.

Despite receiving only 5% of the votes cast in the May 1990 elections, FIDESz has continued to be an influential actor in Hungarian political life and was

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<sup>200</sup> From the web-site of the SzDSz at the address [www.szdsz.hu](http://www.szdsz.hu).

tipped as one of the victors of the 1994 elections in which it could only defend 19 of its 21 seats in the actual elections.

The 1998 elections saw a dramatic change in the voting behaviour of the Hungarian electorate in favour of the FIDESz. The Federation has become the favourite of the electorate for its liberal economic programme and its urban, intellectual, youthful image. In the 1998 election campaign, FIDESz was victorious becoming the largest party in the Hungarian Parliament. Despite the fact that it gained only 28.2% of the popular vote, with its victory in the single-seat constituencies it managed to hold 148 parliamentary seats. Viktor Orban became the fourth prime minister of post-communist Hungary, leading a coalition government formed under FIDESz's leadership with the participation of Independent Smallholders' Party and the Hungarian Democratic Forum as the smaller members. In the 2002 elections, FIDESz led the votes.

FIDESz has adopted the name Hungarian Civic Party in addition to Federation of Young Democrats and although still using the abbreviation FIDESz, the party has officially become FIDESz-MPP.

#### **4. Independent Smallholders Party (ISHP/FKgP):**

The Independent Smallholders Party (ISHP) claims to be the direct descendant of a political party of the same name in the pre-1949 era in Hungary. It re-appeared, or was resurrected, during the late 1980s and played its part in the National Roundtable discussions. Its determination to introduce an electoral system similar to the one used prior to the communist take-over helped define the boundaries of the current electoral system.

The party has a sectional appeal though claims to have support from a variety of social segments. The main support of the party comes from the agrarian

parts of the country, from the voters who are in principle in support of the liberal market economy but who, in practice, are for the preservation of the agricultural protectionism. Yet, beyond that group the party claims the faiths of anti-Communists, nationalists, devoted Christians, and quasi-liberals<sup>201</sup>.

In the wake of the 1990 elections, The ISHP has become one of the three coalition partners with its 44 MPs. However, the Party seemed to work against rather than work within the coalition government, and in March 1992 the party officially left the coalition. However, the government stayed in power as 30 out of the 44 MPs of the party remained in the government benches and claimed that their caucus is the ISHP despite their dismissal from the party.

In the 1994 elections, the party's share of votes fell 4% to 7% and it lost 18 of its 44 parliamentary seats<sup>202</sup>. In the 1998 elections, the party managed to increase its seats to a record level of 48 and has become a small partner in the FIDESz-led coalition government.

#### 5. Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF/MDF):

The Hungarian Democratic Forum first appeared at Lakitelek in September 1987 as a populist-nationalist umbrella organisation for the liberal and centre-right political views outside the urban intelligentsia. It sought to be a forum for all opposition forces<sup>203</sup>. With its anticommunist and nationalist political and liberal economic agenda, it won the first parliamentary elections gaining 164 of the 386 parliamentary seats. This enabled the Hungarian Democratic Forum

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<sup>201</sup> Gabor Toka, 'Parties and Electoral Choice in East Central Europe', p. 7 of paper to have been published in P. Lewis and G. Pridham's *Stabilising Fragile Democracies*, London: Routledge, 1996.

<sup>202</sup> Carmen Gonzalez Enriquez, *op.cit.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>203</sup> Attila Agh, *The Parliamentary Way To Democracy: The Case Of Hungary*, in Gyorgy Szoboszlai (ed.), *Flying Blind*, Budapest: Hungarian Political Science Association, 1992, pp. 289-290.



to establish the first post-communist government in Hungary leading a centre-right coalition with its leader József Antall as Prime Minister.

The inability of the government to fulfil public expectations and the death of József Antall in 1993 -followed by his replacement by the then Foreign Secretary Peter Baross-, left the party's popularity damaged. In the 1994 elections the Hungarian Democratic Forum received only 19 parliamentary seats and in 1998 elections they lost two more seats to their competitors reducing their parliamentary seats to 17, becoming the smallest part of the FIDESz-led coalition government.

In March 1996, an inter-party crisis led to the fragmentation of the party and out of the dissident group a new political party came into existence under the leadership of Ivan Szabo. The party is named Hungarian Democratic People's Party (HDPP/MDNP) and has seventeen MPs in the 1998-2002 parliament. Therefore, the total of parliamentary seats occupied by the HDF and its spin-off is actually 34 as these share the same ideological grounds. Therefore, the fall of the HDF cannot be seen as dramatic as the Christian Democratic People's Party who ceased to function within the parliament in the wake of the 1998 elections.

#### **6. Christian Democratic People's Party (KDPP):**

The Christian Democratic People's Party is the immediate legal successor of Democratic People's Party which was founded in 1944. It ceased to function during the war and was subject to political suppression in 1949. It was re-established in 1989. The party sees the individual as the centre of its political philosophy and emphasises that it is not a church party but an organisation

which adopted the rules of the 2 millennia old Christianity. The party has a right-of-the-centre position and defends basic freedoms, rights to property, the liberal market economy and preservation of Christian values. Dr. Márton Járósi is the head of the party.

The CDPP served as one of the three coalition partners in the 1990-1994 government and had a 1% rise in its support in 1994 elections compared to 1990, with a rise from 6% to 7% resulting in one additional MP. In the 1998 elections, however, receiving a mere 2.6% of votes in the first round and hence did not achieve the electoral threshold, and thus failed to be represented in the 1998-2002 parliamentary period.

#### **7. Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP/HJLP):**

During the 1998 elections, the marginal Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP / HJLP) managed to overcome the parliamentary threshold and became the parliamentary replacement of the CDPP in the 1998-2002 parliament. It is a far-right nationalist party led by Istvan Csurka and with fourteen MPs in the parliament creates a notable contrast with other political parties. The HJLP is against foreign ownership of farmlands and foreign direct investment in key sectors of industry<sup>204</sup>. The rise of an extreme right-wing party above the national threshold is a sign which displays the populist discontentment with the transition process.

#### **C. Non-Parliamentary Political Parties:**

Parties outside the parliament, the Agrarian Alliance, the Republic Party, the Entrepreneurs' Party, and the Workers' Party (the ideological successor to the former communist party, the MSZMP) have gdebaten stronger. In May 1994

elections, only the Agrarian Alliance and the Entrepreneurs' Party managed to obtain parliamentary representation with one MP each. The Hungarian Social Democratic Party and the National Democratic Forum founded by Imre Pozsgay have distinct clusters of support, but all the same, neither achieved the five percent threshold in May 1994.

The Hungarian party system can be considered relatively stable because three large parties linked to the main ideological currents (MSzP, SzDSz, and MDF) have become professional competitive 'catch-all parties'. Furthermore, due to the five percent minimum parliamentary threshold, the Hungarian parliamentary system will not tolerate a fragmented party system, as is confirmed by the results of the 1994 elections. Due to the so-called constructive motion of no confidence, the government coalitions within Parliament are stable. The government parties have the majority of the parliamentary seats, therefore a vote of no confidence is not likely to overthrow the coalition government unless one of the coalition partners join forces with the opposition. Therefore, the FIDESz-led coalition has a realistic opportunity to remain in government with a fundamentally unchanged composition until the next election.

Hungarian Workers' Party, the most influential of the non-parliamentary parties, was founded in December 1989 by those outside the reform wing of the HSWP. It is a left-wing Marxist party of 'new type'. It is led by Dr. Gyula Thürmer, with Attila Vajnai, József Eros, and Eva Fitos serving as his vice presidents. The HWP has about 20,000 members, with about one thousand



basic organisations all over Hungary. It claims to represent the interests and democratic rights of working people. The party is against further privatisation of the Hungarian economy and a more active involvement of foreign capital as well as the country's membership to NATO and to the European Union.

Although being the major non-parliamentary party with a strong organisational network, the HWP has no electoral backing and therefore is not expected to become a member of parliament in foreseeable future.

## **X. THE DIFFERENCE OF PERCEPTION IN THE NEW SYSTEM**

### **A. Institutions and Institutionalisation:**

The Hungarian political system, due to the changes that took place in the period beginning with the National Roundtable discussions has adopted a new course and a new framework of operation. The new political order emerged in relation with a new economic order. The change in the electoral procedures enabled the previously disconnected parts of society to at least indirectly contribute to the decision-making process. The involvement of previously non-political persona in the legislative process by becoming candidates in the municipal and parliamentary elections due to their social status has contributed to the image of public participation.

In general, public interaction with the parliament and the political parties has contributed to the establishment of legitimacy of the new political order by creating a differentiation from the *ancien regime*. As the new regime was based on the constitution and the laws which are either agreed upon during the National Roundtable negotiations or during the first parliamentary term's legislative work, the legal legitimacy of the regime, strengthened by the popular support, was established.

As to legitimacy by public approval, the re-emergence of the parliament as the centre of immediate public attention and the emergence of the political parties as the means of political and ideological representation helped ease this process as well. The introduction of new ranks, e.g. of the local notables, into the parliament strengthened the ties between the public and the political representatives within the parliament. The parliamentary structure remains solid despite the emergence of parliamentary factionalism. This helps the systemic legitimisation all the more so as this legitimisation is not based on charismatic leadership or on tradition.

However, the transition in Hungary from a totalitarian-socialist system to a democratic-capitalist system has far greater implications for the Hungarian people and their perception of the new political and economic order and its institutions. The transition is a major one in that there are spectacular differences between the old regime and the new one. However, one needs to remember that there are differences between the old Hungarian regime and the general communist state structure. To begin with, Richard Rose observes,

"In power, Communist parties were mobilisation regimes. They sought to indoctrinate the mass of the population in Marxist-Leninist beliefs and to recruit millions of members to the party. The intent was to make each nation's Communist Party a broad church of believers. In consequence, there are now tens of millions of former members of the Communist Party in Central and Eastern Europe today."<sup>205</sup>

In Hungary, the HSWP lost its mobilisation motive in mid-1950s, near the end of Rákosi's rule. The effects of the communist regime's principle of mass mobilisation has in a way backfired on post-1956 Hungary. The social contract

between Kádárist administration and the Hungarian public was based on an exchange of economic profit with political obedience.

The effects of the Kádár era are still detectable in that area. Richard Rose's claim over the existence of many ex-communists in a post-communist environment is true as there is a great number of card-carrying ex-members of Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party integrated into the new system. However, the ideological affiliation of these people with the communist ideology is questionable beyond the argument that in the new political order, some reformist parties were based on the communist parties of the old regime, such as the HSP which was an offspring of the HSWP as was the Hungarian Workers' Party which fashions itself upon the old HSWP's ideological principles.

However, the tendency of mass mobilisation on the grounds of ideology may be found in the 1990 elections in Hungary. However, the mass mobilisation was not in support of the communists but against them. The popular will to disconnect the ex-communists from the positions of power led the Hungarian public to vote anti-communist. This resulted in the appearance of the Hungarian Democratic Forum as the largest party and the head of the governing coalition in the country. As the Hungarians wished to remove the communists from power positions, they have voted for an anti-communist, middle-class, non-intelligentsia political group which was represented by the Hungarian Democratic Forum.

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<sup>205</sup> Richard Rose, 'Ex-Communists in Post-communist Societies,' *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 67(1), January-March 1996 (pp. 14-25), p. 15.



The effects of popular mobilisation, albeit not in conjunction with the remnants of the old ideological affiliations, may be seen in the 1994 and 1998 elections. Once it was apparent that the communists would not return to power and that the democratic system was permanent, the importance of the concept of experience gained increasing support leading to the HSP victory in the 1998 elections. The 1998 elections witnessed the rise of the urban, educated, young groups not easily associated with the communist past and factor behind the victory of the FIDESz in the elections.

Public response during the ballots in 1990, 1994, and 1998 elections are solid proof that the initial anticommunist hysteria has faded and the political system as a whole is accepted by the people. With the nation-wide organisation and networking of political parties and with the construction of experience within political party cadres, professional party politics are becoming a part of the Hungarian system and an important part of everyday life. That the system as a whole is supported by the Hungarian public means that the legitimacy of the regime is, in legal and institutional terms has been achieved in the first eight years of the post-communist period.

However, general public approval of the system is not enough by itself to create a solid ground of legitimacy. The existence of a lively civil society, as well as the preservation and reduction of economic discrepancies between different social classes, the improvements in the field of economy are also required if the new political order is to be legitimised. When the entire system -social and economic as well as political- is well-established, one may then talk about a sound legitimate order.

## XI. PERCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY IN POST-COMMUNIST HUNGARY

### A. The Remains of Yesterday:

Although the Kádárist administration was incapable to keep with the requirements of the social contract from late 1970s onwards, the Kádárist social contract remains an important factor in the political transformation of Hungarian life in the post-communist era. The Kádárist social contract itself is not the issue that constitutes a threat to the existence of the actual Hungarian political order, but it inspires a feeling of nostalgia that appears in the common social consciousness.

Even in a situation where there is a fundamental change in the nature of a political system, in this case from a single-party to a multi-party system, there remains the possibility that some segments of society will associate themselves with certain values of the previous regime. This is all the more likely in the case where economic hardship accompanies political change. The main reason for that sort of nostalgia is not that the *ancien regime* was better, but it is the fact that people are disillusioned in relation to their expectations under the new order.

Prior to the transition from communism, there was a feeling of longing towards the freer, much more democratic Hungary. The fact that Hungary was virtually an authoritarian dictatorship and had only one free multi-party election before the communist take-over did not change the feeling of longing.

It was a desire towards a regime which was not Stalinist in its essence. People wanted a regime in which they were able to own property rather than a regime in which all was owned by the state. Such feelings were reinforced by the Rákosi regime. The forced relocation plans under the leadership of Rákosi and

the way the 1956 uprising was suppressed created a feeling of nostalgia towards a Hungary which did in fact not exist. Furthermore, the state socialist system was imposed from above by the Soviet Union and its troops which liberated the country.

A similar expectation gap can be found among those who promoted the development of a capitalist – liberal democratic system. The expectations on the systemic change were based on the observations on the living standards of the West Europeans and North Americans who either came as tourists or were watched or listened through some satellite dishes and radio waves, or by the limited existence of Western-produced manufactured goods for common consumption, by the Hungarian public. That those visiting the country had better cars, better living standards and that the non-communist countries were abler in the production of manufactured goods, were enough to create an illusion about a more prosperous, happier, more developed standard of living under a democratic system. This illusion about the other pole of the bipolar world political structure created high expectations and therefore illusions about the future of the Hungarian State after the establishment of a liberal democratic system. The illusion towards capitalist system and towards the functioning of democracy never included, and would not, by definition of the word illusion, include the facts that there would be income gaps, not enough work, housing, nor schooling for everyone, and that there would be high rates of inflation, unemployment and market fluctuations and the introduction of market prices. For there was an illusion towards the effects of systemic change and for there were high and immediate expectations towards a better quality of life for everyone, the disillusionment caused by the socio-economic changes that took



place during and in the wake of the transition had strong effects in the perception of both the new and previous political orders. When all the negative effects of the new politico-economic system emerged and these began to create a negative impact on the income levels, expenditure levels, and on the *second economy*, the disillusionment process began. As the rents went up, many products ceased to be subsidised by the state, real wages diminished in parallel with the purchasing power, and as unemployment and other economic problems caused instability within households, a longing for the *status quo ante* emerged. What the people were looking for were not the political conditions of the Kádár era, but the basically economic social contract that Kádár offered in one way or another.

When thought in conjunction with the data presented at table 4.5 above, the issue of illusion becomes more intriguing. Table 4.5 shows clearly that there has been a considerable downturn in relation with the household income levels in Hungary at the same period. While one may observe a considerable development in terms of household income levels in all other countries surveyed, it can be seen that about 2/3 of the Hungarians who participated in the survey claimed their household finances became worse and only five to eight percent declared an improvement in household income. This outcome, repeated three years in a row, shows that Kádárist Hungary was capable of offering more to the people in terms of income and hence transition hurt a great percentage of the population. There is certainly a strong correlation between the government intervention and welfare and that relation makes Eastern Europe, but Hungary in particular, different from the Western style of

government and income relations<sup>206</sup>. Considering this relationship, that people would long for the previous regime should be understandable.

The existence of such a longing for the *status quo ante* or the illusion of it is the main problem facing the legitimisation of the new political order. János Simon observes that by the end of 1993, there was a clear distinction between the concepts of political left and right and the general public understood “‘what is not Left,’ and on the other hand, ‘the Right is worse than the Left’.”<sup>207</sup> which Simon links to the poor performance of the HDF-led coalition. The effect of disillusionment over the public perception of political right and political left is important as it is this disillusionment that created a lack of interest towards politics in the public at the end. The shift in the meaning of the word of ‘democracy’ for the people during the 1989-1993 period gives clues towards what sort of a reality shock was experienced during the transitory phase.

**Table 4.11. Classifications of the meaning of the word “democracy” in percentages of those who answered<sup>208</sup>:**

Survey Year→ / Democracy Means↓:	1989-1 HISWP elite (%)	1989-2 national sample (%)	1990 nat. sample (%)	1993 nat. sample (%)
Social well-being	3	32	32	26
Freedom	6	31	28	35
Participation	53	23	15	10
Elections	4	1	4	6
Rights	7	2	6	8
Values	5	4	4	7
emotions/temper	1	3	6	7
Other	1	3	4	2
No. of respondents:	110	976	1299	1505

<sup>206</sup> For a detailed analysis of the subject, see Richard Rose and T. Makkai, ‘Consensus or Dissensus About Welfare in Post-Communist Societies?’, *European Journal of Political Research*, v. 28, pp. 203-224, and Christine S. Lipsmeyer, ‘Welfare and the Discriminating Public: Evaluating Entitlement Attitudes in Post-Communist Europe,’ *Policy Studies Journal*, v. 3 (4), pp. 545-561, November 2003.

<sup>207</sup> János Simon, ‘What does democracy mean for Hungarians?’, *Coexistence*, vol. 32 (pp. 325-340), p. 327.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

When the results of this survey are analysed, the first point is to note the difference between the ordinary people's and the HSWP elite's approaches to the perception of democracy in the reform year of 1989. While only 3% of the HSWP elite saw democracy in terms of social well-being, 32% of the national sample identified the concepts of democracy and social well-being. The emphasis on representation that the elite had made was never shared by the general public which valued the importance of freedom in democracy far more than the HSWP elite surveyed. Therefore, the distinction I try to make between the intelligentsia's and the general public's perceptions of politics, state-citizen relations and the difference between their comparative perceptions of the new political order is once more apparent in this survey. While the elite had a different level of expectation than the ordinary people, both segments of the society craved for reform. The difference is that the latter's view of reform was not focused on personal liberties but economic improvement.

The decline in the answers linking democracy to well-being and with participation between the first survey in 1989 and the last one in 1993 is remarkable. These two results indicate that democracy as a medium of participation in the policy-making has created a negative effect in public mind. The expectations from participation to policy-making were as intangible as were those expectations of becoming financially better-off under a democratic regime. However, that there is a decline in the linkage between participation and democracy is a sign of problem in the public perception of democratic process. The considerably low turnouts in the general and municipal elections (in all three elections, there has been a consistent ratio of between 54% to 60%



of eligible voters attending the ballots, and an even lesser number showed up in local elections, while in the 2002 elections the figure is round 70% of all voters) and the low numbers of membership of political parties indicate a decline in interest in the political process. The lack of interest in *civil society* institutions on the one hand and the lack of interest in direct political action on the other hand indicate a disillusionment with the political process.

In addition to the above conclusions, one should take public satisfaction with the development of democracy into consideration. As can be seen from table 4.12 below, throughout the mid-1990s about 80% of Hungarians were unsatisfied with the development of democracy in their country. This level falls to 62% in the year 2003, when the country was close to European Union (EU) membership. The levels of satisfaction with democracy in Hungary, therefore, improved with a possibility of a better life within the European Union and as the correlation between well-being and democracy was not as often established as before. These two factors contribute greatly to the perceptions of democracy and of democracy's development in Hungarian public. The EU membership issue, which also affected the 2002 election results, has also contributed to the Hungarians' confidence in their country, their country's democracy, and the fact that they now see themselves considered as parts of a larger, freer, and richer Europe. When one analyses the changes in the country in relation with the EU membership, the revisions made to the Hungarian legal system so that it would become compatible with the EU Community Law, it may be understood that the public perception has also positively changed towards the working of the system. When the public generally believes that the institutions which once only existed in name and

failed to function are now truly working due to the EU connection, democracy, as a regime of institutions and rights would be seen stronger<sup>209</sup>.

**Table 4.12.: Satisfaction with the development of democracy<sup>210</sup>:**

Year / country	Hungary	Poland	Belarus	Czech Republic	Bulgaria	Romania
1994	S: 20 U: 74	S: 35 U: 49	S: 13 U: 68	S: 48 U: 48	S: 20 U: 69	S: 30 U: 56
1995	S: 23 U: 66	S: 23 U: 63	S: 11 U: 73	S: 44 U: 53	S: 4 U: 91	S: 31 U: 67
1996	S: 20 U: 77	S: 50 U: 38	S: 14 U: 67	S: 46 U: 50	S: 13 U: 80	S: 37 U: 58
2003	S: 33 U: 62	S: 23 U: 72	S: - U: -	S: 41 U: 55	S: 22 U: 75	S: 21 U: 77

The main cause of the problem is the decline in income levels and living standards for the majority of the population. The Kádárist social contract and expectations linked to this social contract, the remains of the political yesterday of Hungary, are the main causes of the current problems in Hungary.

## **B. The Problems of Today:**

### **1. Economic Problems:**

Currently, the post-communist political order is troubled as there are few options to offer to the society to reduce the level of post-communist disillusionment. The misperception about the working of the capitalist system and its consequences are as important as the misperceived nostalgia about the 'good old days' of the Kádárist past. The aura of expectations of rapid improvement in living standards combined with the loss or damage of a secondary income from the *second economy* for many industrial workers causes a general feeling of mistrust and isolation in the general public.

<sup>209</sup> For the impact of the legal issues, see Jimmy O. Milanese, 'The Road to EU Membership: Enforcing Competition Policy in Hungary,' *Liverpool Law Review*, v. 25, 2004, pp. 79-106.

The following table which shows the difference between 1993 and 1995 in terms of the perception of free market conditions is of great import in identifying the current problem which may create a greater crisis of legitimacy for the current political order than it is expected:

**Table 4.13.: Changes in the judgement of free market economy, 1993-1995: Do you agree with the following? (% of respondents saying they agree)<sup>211</sup>:**

<b>"I believe that the following should happen":↓ / Survey Year→:</b>	<b>1993 (%-yes)</b>	<b>1995 (%-yes)</b>
Wages to be determined by market conditions	68	61
Those who aren't fully competent should be made redundant	49	40
Big companies need to be privatised	50	39
Big real estates need be privatised	41	35
Successful businessmen should become very rich	36	27
Companies need to be purchased by foreign investors	30	23
Large private lands/property's appearance needs to be permitted	23	20
foreigners should be allowed to purchase real estates	20	15
foreigners should be allowed to purchase agricultural land	6	5

As the response figures show, there is a shift from a positive attitude towards capitalism as an economic system as a whole towards a more cautious approach to the application of capitalism per se in the country. The poll suggests that foreign involvement which meant optimisation of resources in the organisations acquired and managed through foreign direct investment has not been met with popular sympathy. The fact that about 60% of those surveyed preferred incompetent workers to remain at their jobs is not a sign for the Hungarian indifference to low efficiency and productivity levels, but is

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<sup>210</sup> Data gathered from East European Eurobarometer and Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 1994 to 2003.



more of a sign of a fear of capitalist system. The fear stems from understanding that the system that they hoped would improve the standard of living is also capable of creating redundancies. The fairly low to very low support in regard to foreign ownership of businesses and of land has two main roots: Firstly, it relates to the growth of redundancies under foreign ownership and the lack of access to the production facilities which were available under the Kádárist *second economy*. Secondly, the nationalist tendencies were ascendant near the end of the communist rule with the fear that the country will fall into foreign hands. This came at a time of Soviet withdrawal and the regaining of political independence. The growing concern about privatisation may be linked with these two major fears as well.

As to the issue of the implementation of the free market economy, Hungarian public remained suspicious of the new economic order. In a survey conducted in 1993, 76% of the respondents thought that free market conditions should be in Hungary, while 15% did not approve with the proposition. In 1995, the same question was resulted in a decline in public confidence towards the elite's idea of free market environment: The ratio of those in favour of the free market showed a decline of 21% to 55% while those who did not think a free market economy was aimed to be established, after all the privatisation, economic and legal reforms, has increased to 31% from 15%<sup>212</sup>. That more people (14% in 1995 as opposed to 9% in 1993) responded that they did not know demonstrates that the public trust towards capitalist market system is in decline.

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<sup>211</sup> Laszlo Beck. A Magyarország Politikai Evkonyve-1996 egy fejezetének kezirata, Median Media Research Ltd., Budapest: 1996, p. 2.

Public suspicion towards the new economic order and hence the new political order shaping the economy, has its bases in the particular manifestation the economic system takes in Hungary. In 1980, 90% of the official gross domestic product (GDP) of the country was produced by the state. In the same year, 10% of Hungarian GDP was produced by domestic private sector and there was no foreign ownership. After the transition, in 1990 the state share in the GDP declined to 76%, the domestic private sector's share rose to 23%, and 1% of the GDP was produced by foreign direct investment projects. In 1993, the ratios were 37% for state's share, 50% for private sector and 13% for foreign owned companies. However, with the inclusion of the *second economy* activities, the figures for state, domestic private ownership and foreign investment owned parts of the economy become 83%, 17%, and 0% respectively in 1980, and, 37%, 50% and 13% respectively in 1993<sup>213</sup>.

The shift in the balance between state-owned and private sectors in the conduct of the economy indicated a shift in the balance between job security and the threat of sudden unemployment. The ratio of economically inactive young and old household depending on wage earners has arisen from 117/100 in 1987 to 167/100 in 1993<sup>214</sup>, creating a further economic burden on the lower-earning groups. Despite government attempts to cushion the impact of economic changes by spending 26% to 28% of the budget on social security, the number of the people living under the poverty line have grown dramatically. While there were one million people living at or below the

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>213</sup> Rudolf Fökés, 'Political Transition and Social Transformation in Hungary,' *Sumarios Afers Internacionals*, no. 34-35 (17 pages), downloaded from the website address [www.cidob.es/Castellano/Publicaciones/Afers/tokes.html](http://www.cidob.es/Castellano/Publicaciones/Afers/tokes.html). Page 7.

minimum living standards in 1987, the number rose to one million and a half in 1990 and to three to three and a half million people in 1994<sup>215</sup>. In a country of a population of 10.8 million and in which gross domestic production (GDP) has decreased 18.5% between 1988 and 1993<sup>216</sup>, the decrease in living standards and the rise in unemployment are remarkable.

While a Keynesian approach to political economy might help improve the economic and social situation, national governments lack the power to provide the necessary solutions to the economic problems and their social consequences. This is primarily due to the high rates of foreign debts and the guidelines set by IMF stand-by agreements which in theory exist to ease the transition to capitalism and to provide the country with monetary support as well as technical and economic know-how. As the state sector continues to decrease in size and to provide secure but low-wage employment, the private sector which increases in size offers higher wages with no guarantee of continuous employment. With no direct government control over the economy, due to the declining size of the state sector within the economy, and the stand-by agreements with the IMF, the implementation of Keynesian measures are impossible. The immediate consequences of these appear to be growing unemployment and poverty which have resulted in the growth of nostalgia towards the Kádárist social contract on the one hand, and has created a

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, from R. Andorka and Z. Speder, 'A magyar társadalom szerkezete, 1994' (The structure of Hungarian society, 1994), in S. Kurtan et al. (ed.s), Magyarország Politikai Érkönyve, 1996 (Hungarian Political Yearbook, 1996) Budapest: DKMPA: 1996, p. 325.

<sup>216</sup> Geoffrey Evans and Stephen Whitefield, 'The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment: Support for Democracy in Transition Societies,' *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 25 (pp. 485-514), p. 492.



legitimacy crisis for the new political order in the political sphere on the other hand.

Another important element in economic relations is the role of the trade unions. Labour representation has experienced a great transformation in Hungary. The emergence of competition within trade unions, their struggle for survival and then problems they face due to the state the Hungarian economy was in. The Antall government which introduced new measures to deal with the economic problems of the country, has turned Hungary into a "antidevelopmental state [which] siphons resources out of the economy."<sup>217</sup> A new economic system, based on the East Asian principles, which led to the establishment of the tripartite negotiations in terms of labour relations. The resulting system turned out to be a system of bargaining among the representatives of the state, of the entrepreneurs, and of the labour. From one perspective, as the transition period requires a certain type of arrangement in industrial relations and permits an interventionist state. Within the institutional anarchy of the transition period, the emergence of the tripartite negotiations has even been a positive intervention for the Hungarian economy. Yet, if one thinks of the situation within the boundaries of civil society and legitimacy of the system, then the tripartite system and continuous state intervention into the economy cannot be seen as positive aspects<sup>218</sup>. Also, such interventions from the government towards creating more income for the state but which also reduced capabilities of the public, especially of the youth, such as the

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<sup>217</sup> Bruszt and Stark quoted in Laszlo Andor, *Hungary on the Road to the European Union, Transition*, In Blue, Praeger, Westport, 2000, p. 103.

<sup>218</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the tripartite negotiations and their impact on civil society, see, Miszlivetz, Ferenc, 'Participation and Transition: Can the Civil Society Project Survive in Hungary,' *Journal of Communism Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 13(1), March 1997, pp. 27-40.

introduction of tuition fees within the framework of the Bokros economic improvement package, have not contributed to the development of a mutual understanding between the society and the post-communist regime in Hungary<sup>219</sup>.

Such economic problems led to political problems and a loss of trust in the key institutions of the country.

## 2. Political Problems:

The immediate political consequences -or, reflections- of the above-cited economic problems appear as a loss of interest in political participation and an erosion of trust towards the agencies of the post-communist regime. The following table, based on the results of a 1995 survey, shows that the popular support for the key institutions of the transition era has diminished while those which are either neutral or which seem to protect the public good are held in a favourable position in public conception.

Of the institutions cited in the survey, the office of presidency has no active participatory role in the policy-making process apart from representing the nation as its symbolic leader. However, with the 'image of president' created by János Kádár as the nation's father figure, the presidency has a high regard. The role of presidency is strengthened by the odd remark made by the president about the conduct of affairs in the country, although the president has no impact on policy-making process. The political comments help preserve the father-president image created and exploited by Kádár. The Constitutional Court, regarded as highly as the presidency is, on the other hand, a safeguard

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of the rule of law principle in the country and hence has a politically active role. That the Constitutional Court had invalidated the Gyula Horn government's austerity measures declaring these unconstitutional in the earlier parts of the year of the survey has helped improve the public perception of the Court's role. The high rating it receives may therefore be linked to the popularity of that earlier decision which increased its image as 'the defender of the people against savage capitalism'.

**Table 4.15.: Support for the key institutions of the post-communist political system<sup>220</sup>:**

Institution Name ↓	Approval Rate (%)
Presidency	65
Constitutional Court	64 <sup>1</sup>
Political Parties	11
The Parliament	22
The [G. Horn] Government	21
Courts	46
The Army	44
The Mass Media	32

<sup>1</sup> Datum on Constitutional Court from Rudolf Tökés, 'Political Transition and Social Transformation in Hungary'.

According to data shown in the table above based on 1994 findings, the lowest-ranked in terms of public approval are the political parties. Their approval rate is nearly one fifth of the two institutions which have the highest ranking.

Interestingly, as can be seen in the table below, within 9 years of change, not much improvement can be seen in terms of the trust towards the key institutions. In a survey made in 2003, the following results were obtained:

<sup>219</sup> Andor, *loc. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>220</sup> Data from Matthew Wyman, Stephen White, et al., 'The Place of 'Party' in Post-communist Europe,' *Party Politics*, vol.1 (4), 1995 (pp.535-548), p. 538.



**Table 4.16.: Trust towards key political organisations in different countries<sup>221</sup>:**

Country / institution	Political parties	Civil service	National government	National parliament
Hungary	15	40	38	36
Slovenia	19	27	33	31
Czech R.	13	30	30	20
Turkey	17	18	63	66
Poland	8	24	14	13

The table 4.16 shows that the political parties rate far behind the civil service and the government and the parliament. The main reason for the continuous national alienation from the political parties is the continuous stalemate in the political system which stems from the negotiations and mutual agreement which aim at creating a pacific political environment. The same political consensus however, restricts direct public influence over the political system. As all the parliamentary political parties are supportive of privatisation, of free market mechanism, multi-party liberal democracy, Hungarian membership to NATO and to the EU -i.e. to the Hungarian participation into the capitalist world structure once referred to as the West-, and as the economy is mainly run in concord with the IMF, the political parties are in no position to deliver what the public wants, namely better living standards, better education, better housing, less working hours for better wages. As the illusions of the public demand clashes with the realities of what can and what cannot be done in Hungary, the popular frustration reflects itself as a loss of trust in political parties, a lack of interest in political life, and therefore a public suspicion towards the political parties. The parliament, which has been the focus of all institutional change in Hungary during the transition, has also lost its status as the focal point of all the improvements. It was rated in 1994 above the Gyula

<sup>221</sup> *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2003.4, Full Report, p. 26.*

Horn-led HSP-AFD coalition government (22% to 21% respectively) which had lost its popularity due to the economic austerity measures it tried to implement. That the army and the churches are rated far above the political institutions like the parliament, the government, the political parties and even the mass media has to do with public affinity with its apolitical role.

The solution to the confidence problem the major institutions which constitute and represent the current political order is in the creation of a stable middle class which could affiliate themselves with the benefits of the new system and therefore associate themselves with the new political order and its institutions.

The Kádárist middle class of party members and bureaucrats is partly fading away and as the state sector is unable to sustain better wages, it will continue to fade away. To balance the situation, the state needs to invest heavily in undoing the income gap created between the new rich and the new poor, increasing the social security network and subsidise prices of mainstream goods in the market. However, the main problem stemmed from the state's and the governments' inability to realise that aim. The sudden capitalisation of the economy created its bourgeois class, yet, on the other hand, resulted in hardship for the majority of the people in Hungary. Old age pensioners, students, women, university teachers, unskilled workers do suffer and are likely to continue to suffer under the new savage capitalism which has no infrastructural concerns at the moment and is struggling to survive in the Hungarian setting.

On the other hand, when the Hungarian public is questioned about the top three most trusted organisations in 2003, the results were as follows:

**Table 4.17.: The three most trusted organisations<sup>222</sup>:**

Country / institution	Hungary	Poland	Czech Republic
Most trusted	United Nations 56%	Voluntary organisations 59%	United Nations 47%
2 <sup>nd</sup> most trusted	European Union 56%	The Army 59%	Voluntary organisations 46%
3 <sup>rd</sup> most trusted	The Police 48%	United Nations 54%	European Union 43%

As can be seen from the table above, the Hungarian public sees the United Nations and the EU as the most trustworthy of all organisations and then mentions the police force, whereas in Poland voluntary and charity-oriented organisations top the list with equal trust, followed by the UN. In the Czech Republic, the UN leads over the voluntary and charity-oriented organisations while the EU comes third. This shows the degree of mistrust towards the institutions of the new order even after 13 years and a similar result may be claimed to exist for the Czech nation. The lack of the voluntary organisations from the list in Hungary may indicate a problem with the development of the civil society and its general conditions by the general public. That the police is mentioned right after two non-national organisations, one symbolising the idea of international legitimacy and the second symbolising the greater idea of Europeanness Hungary has now become a part of, both strong international organisations with clear-cut rules and solid traditions, shows that in the national level there may be problems concerning the institutionalisation, if not establishment within the public mind, of the key institutions.

### 3. The Gender Problem:

The issue of gender differentiation, although not an issue during the Kádárist era, has become a problem for post-communist Hungarian society as well as

<sup>222</sup> *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2003.4, Full Report*, p. 32.



other East European countries. After the systemic change, and especially when unemployment is discussed, one must not underestimate the rise of discrimination against women in terms of employment in the region. In the post-communist Second World, being a woman appears to be a cause for dismissal from work.

Sue Bridger and Rebecca Kay conclude that it is "generally recognised that in a chaotic period of change which has followed the demise of the USSR, women have been the major losers." They argue that women had formed the absolute majority of those left unemployed. They observe that at some regions within Russia, the ratio of women within the officially registered unemployed goes as high as 85 to 90 percent although they usually make up around 70 to 75 percent. They blame the 'protective' policies of the USSR as the main reason for the high rate of unemployment among Russian women as well as the post-communist media campaigns emphasising the place of women is at home and beside their children<sup>223</sup>. Tatyana Kotzeva has similar observations on the place and perception of women in the post-communist East European, and particularly Bulgarian, society. Kotzeva claims that there are "commonalities between the 'Second' and the 'Third World' which makes it possible of East European cases to be subsumed under studies of 'post-coloniality'."<sup>224</sup> Kotzeva claims that while women are represented as a symbol of technological progress and the incarnation of revolutionary energy, this resulted in the creation of a 'transgressive femininity,' while the post-

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<sup>223</sup> Sue Bridger and Rebecca Kay, 'Gender and Generation in the New Russian Labour Market,' in Hilary Pilkington (ed.), Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 21-22 *passim*.

communist, nationalistic rhetoric has become to be perceived as an allegory of interiority, innerness, home, and purity<sup>225</sup>. Thus, discrimination towards female employees, both in redundancies and new employment have become the mainstream in both Russia and Bulgaria. In post-communist Poland, women's rights were restricted with the revoking of the right to abortion, with the decline in the number of kindergartens and nursery schools, and motherhood, with the influence of the Catholic Church has been emphasised as nowhere else in the former Second World<sup>226</sup>.

In the case of Hungary, the situation is similar to these two countries and the rest of Eastern Europe. Evá Fodor points out that in 1980, almost 50 percent of financial executives and chief accountants were women and female CEOs made 16 percent of the whole, yet after 1989, their number in executive positions fell sharply. Fodor relates this to the rise of the male-dominant capitalist ideologies, lack of party membership and self-employment amongst women, and concludes that "with the discrimination women suffer as mothers, they were summarily relegated to the position of 'reserve' and expected to be the first to lose their jobs when an economic recession occurred."<sup>227</sup> However, while the situation is similar to the other countries of the region, one may also see that redundancies faced by female workers are far lower in Hungary than those faced by their fellow East European post-communist counterparts. The following table which shows the redundancy ratios in Hungary, Poland, and

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<sup>224</sup> Iatyana Kotzeva, 'Re-Imagining Bulgarian Women: The Marxist Legacy and Women's Self-Identity,' in Chris Corrin (ed.), Gender and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe, London: Frank Cass, 1999, p. 84.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., pp. 85-86 passim.

<sup>226</sup> Evá Fodor, 'Gender in Transition: Unemployment in Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia,' *East European Politics and Societies*, v. 11(5), Fall 1997, p. 479.

Slovakia shows that even in the most nationalistic era of post-communist life, that is, during the rule of the Hungarian Democratic Forum between 1990 and 1994, the female unemployment has not become as marginal in Hungary as in these two other countries.

**Table 4.18. Unemployment Rates in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia<sup>228</sup>:**

Country - Gender / Year	Hungary Male	Hungary Female	Hungary Total	Poland Male	Poland Female	Poland Total	Slovakia Male	Slovakia Female	Slovakia Total
1990	1.8	1.4	1.7	3.2	3.8	3.5	-	-	-
1991	9.2	7.6	8.5	7.9	11.8	9.7	6.3	6.9	6.6
1992	11.0	10.5	12.3	11.8	14.9	13.3	11.1	11.7	11.4
1993	11.2	10.1	12.1	14.3	17.3	15.7	12.5	12.9	12.7

As the Table 4.18 shows, the number of female redundancies overweighs the number of male redundancies in both Poland and Slovakia, but the number of redundancies in Hungary favour female workers. It is partly because of the Kádárist second economy and its impact in terms of employment as well as individualism on the Hungarian society, and partly because of the industries hit by redundancies. In Hungary, in the period examined above, the service sector boomed while agriculture, construction, and industrial labour markets shrank, hence not affecting women as much as their counterparts in Poland and Slovakia<sup>229</sup>. However, there is a tendency of job losses for women in Hungary in managerial positions.

Yet, job losses are not the only gender-related issue in Hungarian social life. The place of women in the Hungarian society and the way women are perceived was tried to be changed as well. During the Hungarian Democratic Forum government, the role of women as mothers was emphasised while no

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., pp. 470 and 479 passim. Fodor bases her argument on 'reserve' status to Chris Corrin's *Magyar Women: Hungarian Women's Lives 1960s – 1990s* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

<sup>228</sup> From Ibid., p. 474, taken from the *Yearbook of Labor Statistics*, International Labor Office, 1993.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 485.



new areas of employment were opened for women, except for the pornographic industry. Chris Corrin observed that during the IIDF government:

“The governing coalition proposes outlooks for Hungarian women which revolve pivotally around family relations. The two views of women –good and bad, Madonna and Whore– are starkly apparent within Hungarian society at present. Some women will remain classified as ‘bad’ and as such not worthy of detailed attention, while those ‘good’ Hungarian women who wish to be married, have children, and abide by Christian (and nationalist?) values will be ‘cared for’ by the government.

As has been noted, that the present government cannot live up to its promises for these ‘good’ Hungarian women, is currently being faced within Hungarian society. Even ‘good’ women are, and will become, poor in Hungary. .... Given the lack of choice about whether or not to be in paid work, many women in Hungary do want choice to care for their families full-time. Equally, though, many women still wish to work in paid work, either full- or part-time. Current economic changes and consequent policy decisions ... will mean that women lose out on all fronts. Many women may ‘be returned’ to their homes to suffer poverty.”<sup>230</sup>

After three changes of government, the problem with gender-related unemployment is still a problem in need of being solved by the Hungarian authorities. There is less pressure on women to stay home since the fall of the IIDF-led coalition government, but there is not much change in the perception of women’s place within the society. That before 1989, there were no women’s movements in Hungary with the exception of the Party-led Hungarian Women’s Council, and that in the post-communist era, there are not many feminist organisations echoing the Western feminist organisations, constitute a

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<sup>230</sup> Chris Corrin, *Magyar Women: Hungarian Women’s Lives, 1960s – 1990s*, McMillan / St. Martin’s Press: Houndsmill and London, 1994, p. 250.

problem of mobilisation for Hungarian women as well as other East European women<sup>231</sup>.

Before the problem is faced and any attempts are made to tackle and solve it, the issue of gender-related problems, the most important among them being unemployment or biased employment, will be a major cause of disruption within the newly-forming Hungarian civil society. As is true with any other East European society, without a solution to the gender issue, formation of the Hungarian civil society and the Hungarian transformation to liberal democracy cannot be considered as complete. With the strengthening of the emphasis of women as wage-earners and workers in addition to or instead of their role as 'mothers,' the social balances in Hungary will remain weak and this will result on the lack of active participation of women to the political, economic, and intellectual processes within the society, making the issue of regime legitimacy a harder problem to be dealt with.

### **C. The Problem with Legitimacy:**

Such concerns led to an increase in the popular longing for the Kádárist era. As soon after the transition as 1993, the general perception of life under János Kádár's rule was clearly different from what people thought under the Kádár administration itself. The following table shows the opinions of the Hungarian people towards the Kádárist Hungary and as can be seen, the results of the poll are not overlapping with the actual public discontent felt especially from mid-1970s onwards in Hungary.

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<sup>231</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 259-263 for a detailed discussion.

**Table 4.19.: Public opinion on the Kádár regime according to respondents' party preferences (percentage of those who agree with the propositions), 1993<sup>232</sup>:**

Party supported→ Characteristics of Kádár Era↓ /	HDF•	AFD	ISP	HSP	FIDESz	CDPP	National Sample *
There was economic development	53.6	72.3	78.4	90.1	74.3	77.2	76.1
People lived better	76.8	83.0	89.0	92.5	86.1	89.7	85.9
There was significant social development	51.5	69.6	68.9	82.6	70.1	63.2	68.3
There was law and order	58.8	72.3	76.7	83.5	73.4	68.4	73.6
There was great oppression	63.8	46.4	48.6	24.2	34.3	38.6	37.4
They failed to solve social problems	37.7	32.1	32.4	15.7	25.3	24.6	25.5
Freedom was missing	66.7	61.6	66.2	30.0	48.8	59.6	49.1

• HDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum; AFD = Alliance of Free Democrats; ISP = Independent Smallholders' Party; HSP = Hungarian Socialist Party; Fidesz = Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party; CDPP = Christian Democratic People's Party; \* : those who did express party preference.

The Table 4.19 shows that people agreed that they lived in better conditions, there was law and order, and surprisingly there was a successful social policy. The bulk of the legitimacy problem faced at contemporary Hungary is that the misperception of the past is accompanied and sustained by a feeling of nostalgia. The main reason for the Hungarian public demanding change was the lack of solutions to the mounting social problems encountered during the Kádár era. If, four years after the fall of the communist regime by popular will, 74.5% of the people agrees that Kádárist regime was able to solve social problems, this result indicates to great amount of dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the new political order.

To obtain a legitimate status within such circumstances is the main challenge for the new political order. That the regime is legally legitimate and is

<sup>232</sup> Rudolf Tökés, *loc.cit.* p. 13.



perceived as legitimate by the intelligentsia and other parts of the elite does not necessarily make the regime a legitimate order for the general public.

On the one hand, one has to be cautious while dealing with data such as that noted above. One important factor working within the system and which makes people show possibly greater affection to the Kádár era than they should show, is the common knowledge that the post-communist regime is now an established system, that neither the Russian Federation nor other parts of the former Eastern Bloc are in any position to implement a return to the communist rule and hence there is no way back for a communist Hungary unless there is a popular revolution or a referendum, both unlikely cases.

The responses to the survey questions, therefore, may not reveal the truthful feelings of the Hungarian people. Yet, these are also to be perceived as signs of public disillusionment and mistrust vis-à-vis the new political order and its economic consequences. The main problem facing the new political order is that no public-approved legitimacy is possible as long as the economic decline continues. The loss of economic benefits undermines *civil society* as well as the wish to participate in the policy-making process either by party or lobby group membership or by attending the process at the most basic level, i.e. by casting votes in the ballots. The low participation ratios in the parliamentary and municipal elections, which sees one third to the half of the population not turning up to vote, decreases the popular support for the acting national and local governments and for the parliamentary political parties. The low ratio of voting results in an even lower support for the ruling party and hence extinguishes the popular trust in the system.

The table below shows that the Hungarian public opinion is confused about the idea of participation. While the respondents to the survey think the government controls life too much, in a far greater amount than their fellow East Europeans, they also believe in the effect they have on their parliamentary deputies. The latter issue is supported by a firm belief in the multiparty system as long as it contains no marginal parties, as well. The Hungarians are also confused about the role of the state as they want less state intervention to life, but look towards the state for socio-economic assistance. In addition, perhaps the most important finding of all the questions is that although there is a lack of approval towards the government policies, there is a strong belief in the system. The support for the prime minister's administration is shadowed by the trust in the multiparty political system and the belief in the bona fide work of the MPs for the people.

**Table 4.20. Opinions about the political system in different countries (approval / agreement rates)<sup>233</sup>:**

Countries→/ Issues ↓	USA	UK	France	Hungary	Poland	Bulgaria	Russia	Ukraine	Lithuania
State should provide food and housing to everyone	34	9	10	20	11	12	15	17	14
State controls life too much	62	44	69	57	24	46	49	49	45
Most deputies care about what people like myself think	44	35	27	32	23	21	18	22	30
Elections affect governmental policy	73	55	76	49	41	76	47	47	74
We should fight for our country whether right or wrong	55	56	37	30	47	53	42	36	39
Parts of		20	12	68	60	52	22	24	46

<sup>233</sup> Klaus von Beyme, *Transition to Democracy in Eastern Europe*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, England: 1996, pp. 154-155, data taken from the *Times – Mirror Surveys*.

neighbouring countries should be ours									
We should stop immigration	--	79	86	68	58	38	45	31	54
I strongly accept multiparty system	--	--	---	73	66	75	60	72	74
In a democracy all parties should be allowed	57	47	67	33	54	48	32	40	51
I agree with President's/ PM's administration	--	56	51	34	42	69	22	19	12

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Therefore, it may be concluded from the survey presented in the above table that the system has been better established in Hungary than other East European countries. In that respect, one may claim that the main problem of legitimacy in Hungary lies in the problem of participation. The agencies of the post-communist political order need to incorporate greater segments of the public in the indirect decision-making process. This can be achieved either by increasing political party membership or by increasing participation in the electoral process. A solution to this problem lies in increasing economic justice in the country. One way to achieve economic justice is to introduce new legislation which would artificially create upper and lower limits for all the wages. Another way is to introduce reforms on the legal and practical mechanisms with regards to taxation and tax collection, increasing the state revenues which can be directed to the destitute and deprived areas of the economy so that a regeneration may take place.



By these means or by the use of other political procedures, popular support for the institutions of the new political order and for the general political order itself needs be maintained in Hungary. The establishment of liberal democracy based on multi-party competition in the field of politics and the establishment of a capitalist free market system in the field of economics do not suffice to provide continuity for the regime. The economic crisis that the Russian Federation is currently experiencing and the rise of popular support for the communists in that country and the popular disenchantment with the leading political order are clear signs of danger for the post-communist Russian system. Although public discontent in Russia and in Hungary is incomparable at the moment, the Russian example remains a good reminder of the insufficiency of the legal and structural legitimacy in guaranteeing the continuity of a political order which had also received the approval of the intelligentsia. The public affection for and approval of the government is as important as, if not more important than, these two means of legitimisation. The full-scale establishment of the Hungarian post-communist liberal system is only possible with widespread popular support and not by legal or structural means of legitimisation, nor with the elite's approval of the system. The solution to the economic problems and inequalities in the country will also contribute to resolving the question of legitimisation. When the population feels greater financial and economic security, then it will be more willing to participate in *civil society* and in the political decision-making process. When this participation is secured, then, it will be possible for the Hungarians to dominate the political life of their country more directly.

Moreover, the impact the EU membership will have on the Hungarian political system cannot be ignored<sup>234</sup>. That the EU is the second most-trusted institution in Hungary also suggests that the regime and the public would have a more securer relationship and hence the stability of the regime, once again strengthened by the EU membership from May 2004 onwards, would bring a more stronger approval rate for the parliament, the government, and the political parties. This would create stronger bases for the claims of legitimacy of the governments to come and for the regime in general. If the Hungarian political changes and public perception of the new regime can be strengthened with the EU membership, then legitimacy of the regime may become undisputable for it would depend on both domestic and international value sets and domestic and international grounds for the country's administration.

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<sup>234</sup> For discussions on the issue, see, for instance: Laszlo Prager, 'Hungary on the Road to the European Union,' in Laszlo Andor, Transition In Blue (London, 2000), Zoltan Bara, Small Economies' Adjustment to Global Challenges (Budapest, 2000), Gabor Lakatos, 'The Last Round of Bargaining Before EU Accession,' *Hungary Quarterly* (2000, pp. 79-86).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SYSTEM LEGITIMACY IN CONTEMPORARY HUNGARY

#### I. THE POLITICAL CHANGE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

##### A. Three Dimensions of Legitimacy:

From the 1990 elections onwards, the question of legitimacy continued to be central to the democratisation process. The different meaning attributed to legitimacy in different fields of social sciences, as in politics and law, first of all, gave rise to some confusion over the meaning of the term. Secondly, the understanding and implications of the concept of legitimacy within different layers of the Hungarian social structure<sup>235</sup>, and even within the different layers of the state structure, created alternative perceptions of legitimacy.

Such discrepancies in understanding can be reduced if one considers there are different but co-existent definitions of legitimacy. There are three main substructures to legitimise a given political system for all different layers of social sciences and of the society: Legal support of the claim to legitimacy; support of the intelligentsia; and the support of ordinary people<sup>236</sup>. The

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<sup>235</sup> The divisions of the social structure mentioned here refers to two different social segmentations, either in terms of income or in terms of political awareness/education. Society may be divided according to their income level, and this led to the development of the lower-earning or working class, the middle class, and the upper class. It may as well be divided in terms of education into two, namely the intelligentsia and the common people, the ordinary people. In this second division, one may subdivide the intelligentsia into the three important parts of political power elite, with economic power elite and the bureaucracy. The former two would be active in the decision-making process either by direct or by indirect influence in the political parties and the parliament, while the bureaucratic elite will, despite their influence on the decision-making process, be peripheral compared to the power-elite in economics and politics.

<sup>236</sup> See Chapter 1 for a lengthy discussion of the subject.



support of the intelligentsia and the ordinary people may be gained through different means. These means include legitimisation through the leader or leaders of the new regime, legitimisation through tradition and legitimisation through the recognition of the system as legitimate with its institutions and infrastructure and superstructure.

Legitimation by legality, on the other hand, depends on the new political order's acceptance of the *rule of law* principle and hence its attempts to prove its legitimacy by laws, regulations and by-laws, of an international and domestic nature.

#### 1. Legal Aspect of Legitimacy:

As previously stated, when the post-communist Hungarian system is analysed, its claim to legitimacy through the support of law is not radically different from its communist predecessor. It accepts the *rule of law* principle, then, this limits its space of action in the boundaries of the constitution of the country and ensures that its actions will be scrutinised. The acceptance of the United Nations charter and the promise to honour bilateral and multilateral agreements with other states, and the wish to become part of the European Union and hence the acceptance of the authority of a supranational organisation are also signs of the new regime's attempts to gain legitimacy in terms of international law and international politics.

The main characteristic of the Hungarian post-communist liberal democratic system in terms of legal legitimacy is that it depends on a constitution which was amended during the National Roundtable discussions of 1989 attended by representatives of almost all political views in the country. This speciality gives the post-communist constitution of Hungary greater credibility and

public support as it is prepared by the representatives of the people. Therefore, in legal terms, for it abides by international law, and for it is based on the constitution which was amended by the representatives of a great majority of Hungarian people. Therefore, in the domestic scale, the new Hungarian political order is legally legitimate.

On the other hand, obtaining legitimacy by public approval is harder to preserve than obtaining legitimacy by legal terms. Any change in the ruling - ruled relationship in a given country may result in serious consequences for the regime's legitimacy.

## **2. Legitimacy by Elite Support:**

The Hungarian elite, formed by the intelligentsia, students and teachers, professionals, businessmen, politicians, and the members of the bureaucracy, has changing perceptions of the new regime. However, on the whole, as the new regime provides the intelligentsia with greater freedom of speech and action, this ensuring their support. The role of the intelligentsia in terms of supporting or opposing the system is a crucial one as the members of the intelligentsia are part of the elite and hence while they may not be the ruling elite, they may one day become a part of it, and hence influence policy-making.

In the making of the new system, as during the reform stages of the communist rule, reform from above has been the main criterion of change in Hungary. The role that the ruling and non-ruling intellectual elite played during the reform process which went on for over a decade affects the support of the elite towards the new order. The role of the intelligentsia which was outside the administrative circle increased in time, and became paramount during the

Roundtable negotiations. The intelligentsia which was perceived as a threat to the communist system finally found a platform to express their views and was hailed as the defenders of the public will within the negotiations. As most members of the first post-communist parliament were either local notables or the members of the intelligentsia with a history of dissent, they also had access to political power by means of their influence over the legislative process.

The intelligentsia's approval of the new regime was based on their perception of the new political system as a political whole. Under communist rule, their main concern was the implementation of fundamental human rights and political freedoms. The ability to act within the new political system with a far greater freedom and with far less constraints than before has improved the popularity of the new regime within the elite. The positive change in the living standards of the ruling elite of the *ancien regime* affected the perception of the new regime by the intelligentsia as they realised the financial opportunities awaiting them in the new system.

The political system, the number of political parties that served within the three governments in the 1990-1998 period, and the disillusion within the elite towards the *ancien regime* and its representatives disabled the emergence of a popular, nation-leading leader. This obstructed the legitimisation of the system on the grounds of charisma/leadership. The lack of a tradition of democracy in the country -despite the anti-communist and pro-democratic work of the dissident intelligentsia during the communist rule and the revolutionary nature of the change-, has obstructed the legitimisation of the new system on the basis of tradition.



On the other hand, the intelligentsia's role in the transition process and their own desire for political power ensured the new regime's acceptance by the intelligentsia. The intelligentsia created the parameters that the new regime functioned within, thus legitimising the system.

The Democratic Charter movement (see Chapter 5 for a discussion) is the major example for the intelligentsia's acceptance of the new regime as legitimate. As the new regime was considered as legitimate at the systemic level, the signatories of the charter acted to preserve the core of the new regime against the danger of an authoritarian administration. The movement and later political involvement by the members of the Hungarian intelligentsia show that the liberal democratic system is considered as legitimate and trustworthy by the Hungarian intelligentsia.

### **3. Legitimacy By the Ordinary People's Support:**

Although the support of the elite for the continuity of a political order is an indispensable need, the lack of support from the people who are not members of intelligentsia may end its reign with or without the support of the elite. The legitimacy of a regime, therefore, depends more on its approval as legitimate by ordinary people than by the intelligentsia or by law.

The Hungarian general public (hereinafter ordinary people) which constitutes the majority of the population was the significant part of the Kádárist social contract. The social contract was a hypothetical agreement between the Kádár administration and the people. It was perceived by the dissident intelligentsia perceive it as a social contract but as a mere act of social bribery. The contract was based on the equation of economic profit in exchange for political indifference. Such concepts as the New Economic Mechanism, second society

and second economy were the outcomes of such a social contract. The transaction permitted Kádár to stay in office with relative peace and for longer in comparison with other East European leaders. It also enabled people to benefit from the economic and political outcomes especially due to the absence of taxes on the second economy activities. Moreover, the regime refrained from ideological pressure on the issue of mass mobilisation campaigns which were in use in other East European states, and from major social confrontation. After the austerity of the 1948 -1961 period, Hungarians were able to benefit from Kádárist policies which gave them greater economic benefits and a better living standard than other communist states. Therefore, although it created a system operating on the basis of oppression and censorship and has thus an anathema to the Hungarian intellectuals, the Kádár administration has been an era of economic and social recovery for the people in general.

In late 1980s and early 1990s, the situation changed for both the intelligentsia and the people. While the former gained from the change as it meant greater freedom of expression, greater ability to earn recognition and money, and achieve office, for the latter, the changes meant the loss of many economic rights and benefits, a new political and economic environment, and a loss of the ability to negotiate with the administration.

While the intelligentsia was ignored and suppressed by the communist administration, the Hungarian public was politically wooed to prevent a recurrence of 1956. Therefore, the population had some power under Kádár's rule. However, as the new system is a multi-party liberal democracy, every individual has theoretically equal rights and equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. However, as the main drive of the elite is

political and that of the ordinary people is economic in the first place, the elite has a greater say in the policy-making process than any layman under the normal working of liberal democracy. This results in the creation of a disparity between the elite and the ordinary people in favour of the elite for the latter has easier and more ample access to the places of influence and high-rank bureaucratic posts or membership of civil society organisations such as lobby groups.

Consequently, where a member of the elite perceives an improvement due to his/her position, the ordinary person may perceive a decline due to his or her lowered income and loss of state protection either by social security services or by social bribery.

The legitimisation of the new order, in terms of the people, therefore depends on the economic performance in the transformation period. On the one hand, the Hungarian people perceive the new political order as better than the previous one for it enables them greater freedom and greater rights, but on the other hand, they also see it as a liability because it gave rise to great social injustices and a general decrease in the living standard of the Hungarian people.

All these create an inner dilemma within the society. First of all, the system is approved as legitimate on a systemic basis. Secondly, the system is also perceived as indifferent to people's needs and therefore there is a feeling of apathy in people towards the new political order which manifests itself by non-participation. Political party membership figures are extremely low, the people are apolitical, there is a constantly very low turnout in the elections and there is



an aura of indifference about anything political. It is this indifference that the great problem in Hungary lies for both legitimacy and democratisation.

#### **B. The Current Hungarian Situation:**

The situation in the post-communist Hungary operates within the boundaries of this dilemma of lost influence of the general public and the newly gained influence of the intelligentsia. As a majority of dissidents proceeded to become members of the ruling elite in the post-communist system increasing their influence and forming the bulk of the newly-forming middle class, the general public's political bargaining power has diminished.

The main problem for the political power holders in the country is to provide means to ensure mass participation in the democratic process. Unless the people are integrated into the political process, either through an administration-led civil society revival, or by finding new means of improving the living standard of the majority of people, there will be problems facing the post-communist political order in terms of legitimacy and hence continuity.

The civil indifference to the regime may end up in a series of mass protest movements like the taxi drivers' blockade and force an elite versus ordinary people confrontation which would endanger both the social peace and the position of the regime. To prevent the development of such a scenario, there are two major steps to be taken: Firstly, the intelligentsia needs to recognise that the new system is a composite of both political and economic spheres. Secondly, the rulers of the country need to convince the people that their economic situation is likely to improve.

The first step is crucially important as many members of the Hungarian intelligentsia claim the process of transition is a purely political process. For

instance. Belá Greskovits claims in his essay of 1996 that most Western observers of the East European transition predicted a failure for the post-communist liberal democratic system in that part of the World and blames many political scientists for spending too much time and emphasis on the field of economics<sup>237</sup>. This approach perceives economics and politics as two different fields. The main point in this separation is to oppose the Marxist principles. It argues that proposing economic solutions to political problems equates with being a Marxist, and therefore, is unacceptable in the post-communist Hungarian setting. The proposition of political solutions to political problems is also an ideological rejection of the Kádárist social contract by ignoring the 'economic benefit in exchange for political obedience' axis of the Kádárist social contract. However, the situation in Hungary and other East European countries is beyond mere political - ideological orientation: The greater part of society does not receive what it needs. In the case of Hungary, what is needed is an end to the impoverishment of the majority of the people; improved means of social security, housing, and schooling for everyone.

The acceptance of the economic dimension of the situation by the intelligentsia will improve the handling of the situation by the governments as the political parties depend on the intelligentsia's guidance. Unless a prudent approach is adopted by the elite, social indifference may transform into social unrest which may be shown either by total isolation from the sphere of politics or by protests which may range from a dramatic increase in the votes cast for such marginal

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<sup>237</sup> Bela Greskovits, *'Good Bye Breakdown Prophecies, Hello Poor Democracies: On Failed Prediction, and Eastern Transformation Realities,'* paper presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference

parties as Csurka's nationalist extremist Hungarian Justice and Life Party to public acts of mass protest, even rebellion. The economic situation in the Russian Federation where the rich-poor divide is extreme endangers the continuity and legitimacy of the Russian system. Although Hungary is not as divided, unorganised, centrifugal and poor as the Russian Federation, in time, a similar fate may take place in Hungary as well.

### **C. The Causes of Social Differences on Legitimacy:**

The difference in approaching the issue of legitimacy between the intelligentsia and the ordinary people may be attributed to the lack of communication between the two layers of the Hungarian society. The lack of communication between the intelligentsia and the ordinary people is the reason for the creation of a two-tier process of cognition and evaluation in respect of legitimacy as well as other socially important issues. The two segments of society developed different sets of value and different priorities under Kádárist rule. While the intelligentsia adopted a purely political stand vis-à-vis the ruling political order, the ordinary people focused on economic conditions. This resulted in the intelligentsia's suffering under Kádár while ordinary people ignored the political situation. The new regime has different modes of relationship between the rulers of the country. This new relationship focuses on political interaction rather than economic interaction and most of the Hungarian people cannot understand the change. This leads Hungarian society into a two-tier formation: the intelligentsia which can relate to this new political environment and ordinary people who cannot.



On the other hand, the Hungarian political and economic systems are still in a transitory phase. Therefore, while post-communist Hungarian society is different from Hungarian society under communism, it is also different from post-industrial society of the First World in terms of institutional stability and continuity.

#### 1. Different Sets of Interaction:

In the post-industrial society, there are two sets of interaction, one in the macro level and the other in the micro level. The macro-level interaction comprise the interaction in the institutional, organisational level while the micro-level interaction comprise the interaction among the individual human beings.

The Hungarian intelligentsia focused in the last decade, mainly on the issues concerning civil society, political institution-building and similar subjects on the macro level. On the other hand, as the institutional changes affected the everyday lives of ordinary people, the focus of interaction in the lesser-earning and less-educated strata of the Hungarian society increasingly became the micro-level transactions. "Both sets of demands, micro individual and macro organisational, are satisfied on the meso level of role relationships and network interconnections, where people work collaboratively, pool human capital, and redesign relationships to maximise creativity and improve problem-solving potential."<sup>238</sup> The lack of a meso-level interconnection network in the post-communist, transitory Hungarian society caused a rupture of contact in between the two layers of the society. For the communist era's meso-level organisations were inadequate in the post-communist state and social structure,

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<sup>238</sup> Jerald Hage and Charles H. Powers, *Post-Industrial Lives: Roles and Relationships in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California: 1992, p. 211.

no new institutions replaced the defunct communist institutions, causing the rupture between the different parts of the society, and creating the dichotomy of cognition and interpretation now present in the Hungarian society.

## 2. The Failed Civil Society Conception:

However, to solely blame the transition for the lack of communication and meso-level transactions between the intelligentsia and the non-intelligentsia would be erroneous. The problem's roots can be seen in the dissident movements in 1960s, but especially in the 1980s. During the last decade of the communist rule in the Eastern Bloc, the dissident intellectuals focused on promoting the idea of civil society, hence creating a framework for democratisation while trying to avoid an upsurge in the ethnocentric feelings in the society. With the events of 1989 and especially after the 1990 elections, it became clear that there were no more two political camps consisting of the communists and all others. This was the first problem the post-communist era paused for the dissident intelligentsia of the *ancien regime*. While the pro-democracy front fractured into a wide spectrum of political institutions ranging in terms of ideology from the ultra-national right to the reform-socialist left, the intra-elite conflict on power took precedence over the rebuilding of the society. In order that the meso-level transactions that the new elite and the ordinary people needed to interact could be implanted. The intra-elite power struggle and the task of creating or rearranging political and economic institutions that the post-communist liberal democratic order required in order to function forced the intelligentsia as it became the new power-elite to a loss of interaction with the other segments of the society. At the end, the intelligentsia began to lose contact with ordinary people. This led to its making

assumptions about the behaviour and thoughts of the majority of the society without any considerable transaction with it. As a result of these assumptions, the concept of civil society formed the bulk of the intelligentsia's interest in social contribution to the new system. However, as Alexander Smolar observes, while the concept of civil society was never something beyond a concept in reality:

"The greatest shock for civil society activists, however, was their discovery of society's real condition. The "revolutions" of 1989 happened not because civil society was tremendously strong, but because Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* had created a deepening international crisis for the Soviet Union's satellite regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. It soon became clear that the former oppositionists could command only limited social support, even where there was profound social discontent with the old order."<sup>239</sup>

Members of the intelligentsia who were thoroughly enthusiastic about the rise of civil society and who were writing in the early 1990s about popular aspirations of independence, the strength of popular values, the signs of active and passive resistance became advocates of the idea that the post-communist society were at the brink of self-destruction for the communist regime had created a sort of cynical, atomised, stunted subject generally referred to as the *homo sovieticus*<sup>240</sup>. Although the observation about the *homo sovieticus* has a degree of truth in it, the lack of communication between the intelligentsia and the ordinary people, even under the communist rule, and the suppositions rather than one-to-one observations of the intelligentsia about the thoughts and

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<sup>239</sup> Alexander Smolar, 'From Opposition to Atomization,' *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 7(1), January 1996 (pp. 24-38), p. 30.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.



priorities of the ordinary people created the gap between the two strata of the society.

The lack of interaction between the intelligentsia and the ordinary people was and is the primary cause in the absence of a national approach on the issue of legitimacy as well as other concepts of political and economic life. However, there are other factors which contribute to this dichotomy of *Weltanschauung* between the highly-educated and less-educated sectors of the society. The absence of the concept of collective activity in the mind of *homo sovieticus* is also to blame for the intelligentsia's ill-defined vision of what the priorities in the new regime should be, and for the absence of civil society. Social interaction sets that were developed under four decades of communist rule are hard to change within the space of a mere decade and therefore one should not expect great achievements vis-à-vis the formation of political consciousness and more active participation in the decision-making process. The state of economic hardships which engulfed the region, including Hungary, from early 1990s to date contributes to the public adoption of the 'economics-before-politics' approach as well as those factors cited above.

### 3. The Influence of Economy:

The most important economic outcome of the political and economic transformation in the Hungarian society may be cited as the rise of the gap between the rich and the poor, the elite and the ordinary people. The widening of poverty among greater segments of the society, incorporating the old-age pensioners, the unqualified labour force and those made redundant under the new managerial systems, has created a segment within the society which is

theoretically and practically inaccessible and therefore ignored by the intelligentsia.

According to Hegel, the basic structure of civil society gives rise to a class which is excluded from the benefits civil society creates, such as work and personal dignity. This would actually be a segment of the society which performs no duty towards the whole of the society, but is an element within civil society which negates its universal principle, a kind of what is branded in the contemporary world as the underclass<sup>241</sup>. Such an underclass is in formation within the former Eastern Bloc and its representatives become a sharper indicator of the difference between the dissident intelligentsia and the ordinary people after the change of regime. While the members of the intelligentsia transformed themselves into members of the power-elite, the members of the least educated, labour-intensive part of the society were transformed into the equivalent of the Western underclass.

The formation of an underclass in Hungary is the main reason behind the theories concerning system legitimacy. Therefore, economics contribute to the political milieu's definition in the country both with the introduction of the liberal economic system and with the consequences this transition to the liberal capitalist economies create in the socio-political sphere.

## **II. DEMOCRACY AND LEGITIMACY:**

### **A. Democracy, Social Differentiation and Legitimacy:**

The interaction of the fields of economics and politics as well as the interaction or the lack of interaction amongst different segments of the Hungarian society, as discussed above, had a dramatic effect on the events that

shape the Hungarian political scene in the post-communist era. Within this transaction between different sets of institutions, fields of interest and various segments of society, a crucially significant element in the post-communist legitimisation process in Hungary is *democratisation*. The success of the new regime and its public cognition as legitimate depend on the growth of the concept of democracy in public cognisance. This process requires more than institution-building as the understanding of democracy and of the liberal democratic system, including its value sets, is the key issue to legitimise the system in the long run.

Although the institution-building process is over in Hungary, the legitimacy problem is still present not because the transition was wrongly conducted but because the *homo sovieticus* of the *ancien regime* did not transform himself into a *homo democraticus*. Basically, the main reason for this is that most of the people who live in Hungary at the moment were born under the communist rule and therefore were raised in accordance with the systemic boundaries of the communist system. The *ancien regime* was operating under the set of values of Kádárist communism, and the Kádárist social contract. The current public insistence on economic improvement owes its popularity to the fact that it was basically the only type of bargaining the Hungarian non-élite had encountered under Kádárist rule, from 1961 till 1989. For the length of these 38 years, the Kádárist social contract based on the exchange of political obedience with economic prosperity has been the main political element affecting the Hungarians' lives. If and when a new generation's lifetime is

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<sup>211</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, Verso, London: 1997, p. 127.



completed without the common knowledge of such a political arrangement, the political aspects of the new order may best be perceived.

In order to perceive the importance of the role played by economic change, one should focus on the society's formation. I believe the Parsonsian - Habermasian approach to social classification is the right one to adopt in the case of the Hungarian situation: Jürgen Habermas, developing Talcott Parsons' ideas on modernisation -that modernisation is basically a process of differentiation-, claims that differentiation actualised by modernisation creates four social subsystems: the economy, the state/the polity, a public societal community, and a private sphere of domesticity<sup>242</sup>. The public societal community is akin to civil society and the private sphere of domesticity is basically the interaction within households and among individuals. In the way I adopt Habermas' classification, the main agency of differentiation is not modernisation but systemic transformation, which may be perceived as a certain type of modernisation if one considers the transition as a movement from the periphery to the semi-periphery in terms of the Dependency Theory.

Within this division, the state and the economy, or rather the bureaucratic-institutional settings of the state and the market mechanism, respectively, are the key realms of interaction which permit the adoption and implementation of key political and economic decisions. Civil society is a checks and balances mechanism which is outside the centre of the system and thus has a secondary role in terms of the working of the system. Instead, the interaction among individual human beings at home or at work create the subsystem that feeds

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<sup>242</sup> Stephen Crook, Malcolm Waters and Jan Pakulski, *Postmodernization: Change in Advanced Societies*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Sage Publications, London: 1993 (first published 1992), p. 27.

this mechanism. In Hungary, the major problem of the system stems from the fact that the bureaucracy and the economy are under the control of international conditions such as international agreements or the condition of World markets. The control of the political sphere falls on the once-dissident intelligentsia, and for this group, the achievement of such goals as free elections, representation of a diversified political spectrum in the legislature, and the establishment of basic rights and freedoms of a liberal democratic order constitutes a source of satisfaction if not pride. The sphere of economics is dominated by the fortune of the international capitalist market, and the bulk of post-communist Hungarian economic policies follow the framework set by the stand-by agreements concluded with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Therefore, for the intelligentsia, there are no great tasks to accomplish in the political realm and no possible intervention to be made in the economic realm. As discussed above, civil society is not a part of the Hungarian political and economic life compared to what it should be. The lack of arrangement of interest representation in the country in the form of widespread civil society institutions may be one reason why the dissident intelligentsia of the *ancien regime* which became the new power elite after the transformation may possess feelings of accomplishment and self-confidence.

In addition to the lack of organised, institutionalised protest from the general public, the lack of communication between the intelligentsia and the ordinary people create the differentiation of opinions in respect of legitimacy. The household-level opinion-exchange mechanism, the micro-level interaction among individuals in the Habermasian stratification of the society, operates differently in the elite and the ordinary people groupings. While the micro-

level transactions of the intelligentsia focus on the issues of political essence, the ordinary people's micro-level interaction focuses mainly on economic issues as economic survival which takes precedence over political freedom. As a result, on the one hand, due to the absence of a proper civil society, the power elite of the post-communist era and the ordinary people do not communicate at the macro-level. On the other hand, the micro-level transactions suffer from the difference of perceived problems and priorities assigned to these problems in the two different segments of the society.

Such a social structure, as a result, gives rise to a dichotomy of opinion concerning the issue of legitimacy: While the intelligentsia opine that political developments since 1989 provides a strong basis for systemic legitimacy, the 'economy-first' approach of the Kádárist era still preserves its importance for the greater segments of the society. Therefore, for the intelligentsia, the question of regime legitimacy is barely a political issue which was solved in the democratisation process and which will require some more familiarisation. However, for the ordinary people, it still centres around the issue of economic improvement.

#### **B. The Rise of Political Consciousness:**

Although it is seen by the Hungarian intelligentsia as a fully completed process, democratisation of the system is still unfinished. Although the institutional mainframe of Hungarian democracy is completely constructed with the establishment and maturation of major political agencies, there is still the task of creating social awareness and consciousness with regard to liberal democratic system.



The wave of global liberalisation which affects the World in general after the fall of the far-right authoritarian and far-left totalitarian state models from early 1980s onwards dictates that within the international political environment, the new Hungarian political order is seen as legitimate. Besides, the international political environment also dictates that there is no return to the old system of government for the Hungarian state at least for the coming decade as there is no USSR-type second superpower claiming to be an alternative to the liberal democratic-capitalist system. Therefore, the Hungarian political structure ideologically has to continue to exist as a liberal democracy. This is due to the lack of any other alternatives in the international political environment.

In the realm of domestic politics, though, even in consideration of international political pressures and the intelligentsia's adoption of the liberal-democratic system, the acceptance of the new regime as legitimate by the general public is still required. The acceptance of the political order as legitimate because there is no possible alternative due to international and domestic balances of power will not make the Hungarian liberal democracy last long. The situation will be a repetition of the communist era with a different ideological setting. The agencies of the system will differ, but the final outcome will not: If people do not want the political order, it will fail.

There are two alternatives to enforce the system by force<sup>243</sup> to people: First,

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<sup>243</sup> Use of force does not always mean coercion. As used in here, the term 'force' refers to something forced upon people without their consent. It needs not be forced upon people by the threat of using physical force or by physical or mental punishment. The lack of a viable alternative to the ruling political order means the people of the country are forced to adopt a system of government they cannot assume as their own. The fear of anarchy or the fear of the unknown can prevent any direct and widespread opposition. Whether the system is imposed on them by a communist dictatorship or by the

by the development of a political consciousness in the Hungarian people's minds, and second, by development of better economic policies which would undo the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor in the country.

In the realm of politics, there are signs pointing at the creation of such a post-communist political consciousness in Hungary. The Hungarians, as well as other East Europeans, have "relatively stable and well-formed implicit cognitive representations about political parties even in an amorphous and ill-defined political context"<sup>244</sup> that was the transition period to liberal democratic system. Although participation in the activities of civil society and in elections is considerably low, the Hungarian public has clearly defined political party preferences. This enables the continuous representation of five out of six political parties in the parliament for the length of three elections and eight years<sup>245</sup>. The stability in the voting patterns and hence the limitation on the number of political parties represented in the parliament enables the system to work more efficiently. This is due to the ability of these parties to organise on a nation-wide basis and receive better recognition and greater loans from the state as well as the increasing a voter's identification with a specific political party. There may be hostilities and mistrust against political parties, however there also is no search for alternative to replace them as political representatives. Civil society is still considerably weak and is

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liberal democratic-minded intelligentsia does not change the situation to a great extent because in either case, people are stranded with a system they dislike.

<sup>244</sup> Joseph P. Forgas, J. Laszlo, I. Siklaki, S.J. Moylan, 'Images of Politics: a Multidimensional Analysis of Implicit Representations of Political Parties in a Newly Emerging Democracy,' *European Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 25 (pp. 481-496), p. 493.

<sup>245</sup> Eight years is the duration between the first elections and the actual writing time of this study. However, when one considers the third elections were conducted to enable a parliament till the year 2002, the possible span that covers the length of representation for these five parties is actually 12 years, unless early elections are held.



perceived as a 'hobby,' something taken in one's spare time. Consequently, political parties are the means of representation in the new Hungarian political system.

The limited amount of participation to elections may also be interpreted as a sign of increased sensitivity about political matters in the society. It may be seen as a majority of the people using their right not to vote as a protest, or as a sign that shows that they do not believe the victory of a political party over the others will change the conduct of affairs in their daily, routine lives. Even though this attitude may also be interpreted as political apathy, by being apathetic the Hungarian people are making a political statement concerning the legitimacy of the ruling political order in the country.

As to the issue of the development of a real tradition of democracy in the country, it is actually very early to expect such a development in the current level of experience with democracy. However, in time, with a couple more parliamentary terms, the Hungarians will become more familiar with the requirements of the liberal democratic system. Then, with the development of a common democratic consciousness, the level of those approving of the Hungarian political order as legitimate on the grounds of its political and not economic deeds will greatly increase. This will therefore provide a stronger *raison d'être* for the post-communist liberal democratic system in Hungary.

### **C. Legitimacy, Democracy and Economy:**

To sum up, the Hungarian problem concerning legitimacy has two major elements: On the one hand, the development of a continuous systemic legitimacy which would be approved by all segments of the society requires the development of a democratically-minded public. This would require at



least one generation's lifetime so that today's post-communist youth can raise their own children within a liberal democratic environment. In such an environment, the socially improving effects of the democratic system may be adopted by a whole new generation. The members of this new generation will be unaware of the type of social contract that existed between their grandparents and the Kádárist administration and act in accordance with a new set of values.

The development of such a generation will logically give way to an increase in the people's perception of their civic rights and therefore increase participation in the organs of civil society while decreasing emphasis on the economic interaction between the state and the citizens. As the people will recognise the difference between being a subject of a totalitarian party-state and being a citizen of a democracy, the current problems surrounding the issue of legitimacy will either diminish or dissolve.

On the other hand, the development of a continuous legitimacy, and this is for a shorter-term guarantee for the system, depends on economic reform. The lack of reforms may in the short -to- medium run affect the voting preferences of the general public and may lead to increase in power of such parties like the Hungarian Justice and Life Party which made no contribution towards the establishment of democracy. In the long run, however, a great divide between the rich and the poor may cause graver social consequences such as mass protest meetings, a series of industrial action that would worsen the economy's conduct, and even civil unrest.

Therefore, the future of the Hungarian post-communist liberal democratic system depends on its relationship with the people of Hungary. Although it has

a sound systemic legitimacy, it lacks the strong leader figure. Such a leader might save the system in case of strong public opposition and shift the focus of the system from systemic legitimacy to charismatic legitimacy. However, in the absence of such a leader, the system is to be judged as a whole and on the systemic level. The failures and the contributions of the post-communist governments will either endanger the future of the ruling political order as a legitimate system or result in public adoption of the system as legitimate. To secure the backing of the society as a whole, the ruling elite of the country must avoid the Soviet-type self-legitimation. That is, the leaders of the country should not see the intelligentsia or the West for sole legitimisation. The state socialist system's major mistake was to do just that: To receive the approval of the bureaucracy and the apparatchiks in the domestic sphere and to receive the approval of the USSR administration in the international sphere while alienating the masses brought the Kádár and other administrations. The problem facing the new Hungarian political order is to manage to look beyond the needs and wishes of the former dissident intelligentsia who are now the power elite of the country. By interacting with the greater segments of the society and by addressing to the priority needs of the ordinary people, the new political order will differentiate between the political satisfaction of the intelligentsia and the economic satisfaction of the common people reaching an equilibrium between the two sides of the society. The intelligentsia still needs to preserve its avant-garde position in leading the nation, however it also needs to see the connections between the superstructures of polity and economy. It has to accept that the intelligentsia and the ordinary people act within different realms in their micro-level inter-individual interaction. If this

distinction can be clearly made and the social injustices can be reduced, the Hungarian political system will survive as a legitimate political order which has the approval of every segment of the society.



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