TITLE: THE LANGUAGE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE ETHOS OF SOLIDARITY

PART III: THE LACK OF ETHOS

AUTHOR: JANINE HOLC, Loyola College

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1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
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CONTRACTOR: Loyola College

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Janine Holc

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NATIONAL COUNCIL NOTE

This Report is an analysis of the political evolution of "reform" from opposition movement to fragmentation, rivalry and even reversion. It uses political 'discourse' as its analytic instrument, and Poland as its case study. Its relevance to Russia and other countries of the former Soviet bloc will be evident to the reader, and immediate. The Report is in four Parts, as described in the following Executive Summary, Part IV of which is perhaps misleadingly titled. That part opens with a penetrating critique of assumptions about the indigenous political "citizen", derived from Western culture. The de-legalization of abortion, a major political issue in Poland, is analyzed in illustration.

The Council is distributing the Report in four separate Parts, seriatim, on consecutive days beginning on January 5, 1995.
This Report is divided into four parts, as follows:

Part I: The Ethos of Solidarity as a Discourse of Resistance

In this paper, I introduce the idea that the movement called "Solidarity" in Poland, active legally in 1980-81 and illegally in 1982-89, represented itself publicly through a discourse about its guiding ethical principles, or its "ethos." This ethos (in Polish, etos) provides a crucial way of understanding the movement, its power and its long-term significance. I criticize the mainstream scholarship on social movements as focusing too much on concrete "benefits" of protest and on measurable effects and behaviors: my research has indicated that the Solidarity movement provided not concrete benefits to members, but an alternative way of talking about politics and about political identity. In the paper I explore different approaches to studying political identity and also pose the question of what resistance means to those participating in it. I conclude that we should not evaluate acts of "resistance" according to whether they functioned to hinder the state, but rather according to how they provided alternative ways of creating meaning for a particular community.

Part II: The Content and Form of Ethos Discourse

In this section I examine the way this alternative discourse was constructed, how different people used it, and how it provided meaningful resistance to the Communist Party-ruled state. The etos of Solidarity included several discrete elements that made sense only when bound together in a specific way and only in the context of opposition to state power. A careful interpretation of Solidarity documents and language shows that these elements were: self-determination, unity, moral guidelines for individual behavior, truth-telling, religiosity and nationalism. Furthermore, all these elements were mediated by gender, that is, they made sense when viewed from the standpoint of a male. Women were major participants in Solidarity, but were accommodated by the etos discourse on different terms than were men. This point illustrates the manner in which the stated ideology or principles of a movement do not only constitute acts of resistance, but create ways of viewing subjects, or participants, in society at large. In other words, this discourse created identities through which individuals could act.
This section examines form of the ethos discourse as well as its content. Different people prioritized the discrete elements of Solidarity in different ways; for example, the Catholic Church privileged the religiosity of opposition activity. Thus, there were disagreements within Solidarity on this basis; but ethos also provided a range of different ways to invoke opposition values. One could de-emphasize religiosity and still participate fully as a resister. This fluidity gave Solidarity its power and was the reason so many people could join.

The flip side of the variable form of ethos was that there were indeed limits to the identities it could include. Indeed, if this were not so, the movement would have no meaning at all. Because of this, Solidarity was often as exclusionary as it was inclusive. The case of women participants, again, illustrates the boundaries within which resistance identities functioned.

Part III: The Lack of Ethos

This section should be of particular interest to government readers because it traces the influence of the ethos discourse on post-1989 politics. This discourse was indeed the dominant way of talking about political action and political community after the collapse of communism. However, competing elites began to argue over the proper interpretation—the proper hierarchy of the elements—of ethos to justify their differing economic and political programs. The argument over who had the authority to interpret ethos properly was transformed into an argument over the "lack of ethos." By 1991, elites were arguing that the principles of the Solidarity period had been lost: the right argued that the absence of moral values in public life was a negative phenomenon and should be corrected, while the neo-liberals argued that the absence of ethos was positive because it opened the way for "pragmatic" politics. Both sides, importantly, relied on the resonance of the ethos of Solidarity with the population at large to give their "lack of ethos" claims power.

Another important result of the shift of Solidarity discourse from the opposition in the 1980's to the government itself in the 1990's was the marginalization of the Solidarity labor union itself. While the labor union dimension of Solidarity had been the source of immense authority during resistance to the Communist Party regime, after 1989 the influence of the union diminished drastically. I explain this in part by the ability of other elites, such as those of the right and the neo-liberals mentioned above, to appropriate the authority of Solidarity's ethos for their own claims. Because ethos had been so porous and so fluid, it became available for a variety of interpretations once the opposition context had changed.
Part IV: Ethos Gendered: The Case of Abortion

In this final portion of the research report I pursue two issues. The first concerns the assumptions about the “citizen,” specifically the democratic citizen with rights and interests, in elite discourse in post-communist Poland. To this end, I also critique Western, “elite-choice” democratization theories for their neglect of the characteristics of the citizen. The second issue I take up is the manner in which citizenship discourse affected the abortion debate in Poland. I find that a liberal, rights-oriented argument about political freedom did not guarantee that arguments for women’s rights would be articulated and taken into account; rather, women themselves had to put into play a rights discourse that incorporated them into the polity as women, that is, as citizens who may become pregnant. I conclude by noting that “democratization” discourse, whether it be about resistance or about rights, is always part and parcel of the relationship between the governed and the governing.
PART III: THE LACK OF ETHOS

In this section of the paper I trace the manner in which the elements of the discourse of ethos were unraveled and re-integrated by different competitors for authority in post-1989 Poland. In the context of the anti-inflationary economic program of restrictive wages and the privatization of large state firms, supported by a series of governments beginning in 1989, Solidarity evolved into a sharp critic of policies its participants had once supported as oppositionists in the Communist Party-ruled state. Individuals who had been leaders and activists of the pre-1989 Solidarity organization began to oppose each other, as well as the now legal Solidarity trade union, after 1989. These new elites, many of whom had positions in the new democratic government, consequently also began to argue for alternative ways of talking about the tradition of the Solidarity social movement. As the former oppositionists organized themselves into political parties promoting competing policies and visions, they tried to restructure the elements of ethos and to relocate the authority it had in Polish political language.

Thus, the ethos of Solidarity was still the dominant form of talking about political action and political community in the period immediately after former opposition activists became government leaders. Participants in public speech put forth varying claims regarding the hierarchy of the elements of ethos and, in the long term, the role of ethos itself. I periodize this process of the competition over and the appropriation of ethos according to the governments that successively gained and lost power: the 1989-90 Mazowiecki government of etoscow; the 1990-91 Bielecki government of intense liberalism; the 1991 nationalist anti-communist government of Olszewski; and the 1992-93 centrist Suchocka government. By the parliamentary elections of October 1993, won by the former communists, ethos discourse had been displaced by a discourse of the "lack of ethos," and Solidarity had been marginalized as an anachronism of history.
Etos re-configured

Lech Walesa’s presidential campaign in 1990 marked the beginning of the specific period in which the notion of etos began to be treated separately from the power and fate of Solidarity as an organization. This campaign marked a jarring split between Lech Walesa and those Solidarity activists such as Tadeusz Mazowiecki who were part of the first non-Communist Party government in 1989. Walesa recruited Solidarity activists to support his organizational efforts against Mazowiecki’s campaign, forcing individual members to re-align their allegiances not with Solidarity as a whole, but with one faction of it. This move disrupted the ability of etos, with its emphasis on unity, to remain the stable reference point for the majority of Polish citizens. It also disrupted the role of Solidarity as the organizational expression of etos; rather than an institution organizing all non-state political action, it became one (partisan) group among many—a "camp" (oboz).

While Walesa had been the acknowledged leader of the social movement Solidarity before 1989, the shift in context from opposition struggle to state power after 1989 changed the meaning of that leadership substantially. At odds were not only the individuals Walesa and Mazowiecki, but the authoritative sources of the Solidarity tradition. An example is the shift in identity of the newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza. Edited by Adam Michnik, it had been the main opposition newspaper in 1988-89 and its legalization had been hailed as a major victory for Solidarity during the Round Table talks negotiating shared rule with the Communist Party government. It had been a forum for the announcement of several important Solidarity initiatives and opposition voices in general. In 1990, however, Gazeta Wyborcza, as a legal paper, published mostly views opposing Walesa’s presidential bid and supporting Mazowiecki’s. Walesa claimed the paper had shifted its identity, but in another sense the newspaper had continued to publish the same types of pieces—it was the context of its identity that had shifted.

In his campaign for president, Lech Walesa announced a “war at the top,” (wojna na gorze) from then on problematizing his claim to define etos. The spirit of unity based on a common fate, a common position regarding the state and unity for its own sake could not stand up to the explicit divisiveness of Walesa’s argument for political support.

Etos appropriated

In many ways, the first two post-communist governments—Mazowiecki’s and Bielecki’s—represented the common vision of the “liberals” in Poland. For these leaders, democratic government meant the protection of individual rights and a state commitment to an ever-
diminishing role for the state in political issues. The real stakes were economic and the urgent goal was the creation of a capitalist economy.

Liberals have traditionally talked about the ideal democratic polity in two different ways. One approach places individual liberty as the highest goal, and privileges individual self-determination as the most effective means to a free society. This liberty is discussed in terms of political rights or economic rights, which remain constant and primary, regardless of the type of social order or government that results. In contrast, the second approach considered here regards the community as the ideal setting in which rights and freedom can flourish. This community can take the form of a religion, a nation, a "virtuous" society or even a legal order. In talking about an ideal democratic polity, communitarian liberals first establish the nature and conditions of the ideal community, without which they have no way of evaluating the merits of individual rights. Both strands are liberal, but they differ in what aspect of their thought they hold to be uncontestable, and what aspects are open for negotiation.¹

The context facing Bielecki’s liberals (hereafter, "Liberals") had been established in large part by nationalist political parties and actors. There are several different political parties and movements in post-Communist Poland that can be considered "nationalist."² What these groups have in common is agreement that the Polish nation is the primary and uncontestable value in the ideal polity. For nationalists, "Poland" is conceived as a coherent entity, different from other nations, and the integrity of Poland is the primary justification for any type of governmental or social arrangement.³ These groups are not necessarily anti-democratic; indeed, the Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej [from now own, KPN] is a party that is growing by including otherwise marginalized social groups.⁴ Rather, the nationalists find that the primary status of the value of the nation should not be open to dispute. They differ on the nature of the nation, on who may participate in it, the best means for achieving it and what

¹ I have used a very expansive notion of communitarianism here because in the Polish case, the community at issue is often the nation. For further elaboration of strands of liberalism, see Michael J. Sandel, Liberalism and its Critics (New York: New York University Press, 1984).
² A shortened list includes nationalist/ethnic groups such as Narodowa Demokracja, Stronnictwo Narodowe and Ruch Narodowo-Liberalny; Christian/nationalists such as Zjednoczenie Chrześcijański-Narodowe and Chrześcijański Ruch Obywatelski; and national "independence" groups such as Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej, Solidarność Walcząca and Liberalno-Demokratyczna Partia "Niepodległość." As we can see from their names, many have liberal and democratic elements to their identities.
³ For example, one of the most popular nationalist parties, the Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej asserted in its founding programmatic statement that "the battle over independence, over the unquestionable, over the most important moral value is not a philosophical dispute, in which the only weapons are arguments..." Małgorzata Dehnel-Szyez and Jadwiga Stachura, Gry Polityczne: Orientacje na dzis (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 1991), p. 128.
threatens it. The ideal polity is a democratic national state for many and an ethnically pure state for others. What binds nationalists is a specific approach to the boundaries of the political: the primary status of nation is not open to challenge. One can "talk with" nationalists, that is, engage in political debate, only when one shares their conception of what politics is: the process of arguing about what happens after national integrity is agreed upon.

The strength of the claim of the nationalists that the value of the nation as primary should not be disputed or challenged by alternative values is derived from historical experiences shared in the collective memory of Poles as well as from the particular way that Communist Party rule collapsed in Poland. Nationalist discourse was a source of opposition to foreign rule and a way to preserve the idea of the Polish nation while Poland was partitioned (and thus had disappeared as an independent state) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It also played an important role in opposition to Communist Party rule, through the establishment of nationalist opposition movements like KPN (founded in 1979) and the integration of nationalist ideas into Solidarity. The language of nationalism was one available discourse that presented an alternative to the language of the Communist Party.

The authority of the nationalist conception of the political is more than a rhetorical appeal to patriotism or populism. It is embedded in past experience and expressed in the way those experiences are translated into present practices. But nationalist discourse does not reflexively recur, especially in the public arena of politics. Rather, the authority of nationalist conceptions of Polish problems comes into play only when actors can successfully invoke it publicly, as justification for current dilemmas. The power of this conception of politics lies not only in the number of votes a nationalist party can garner in the parliamentary elections; it lies in the effectiveness of its exclusion of those who do not accept the primary status of the

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5 The notion of memory here follows that of Paul Connerton in How Societies Remember (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). "Collective memory" denotes a community's relationship to its history and the process of incorporating the images and narratives of this history into present-day social practices. One can say it is difficult to make oneself understood with absolutely no reference to this "currency of memories." Connerton: "Thus we may say that our experiences of the present largely depend upon our knowledge of the past, and that our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order...[These images] are conveyed and sustained by (more or less ritual) performances." (pp. 3-4) I treat language and performance together as "shared practices."

6 In his careful study of worker and intellectual perceptions in the Solidarity movement, Alaine Touraine documents the separate democratic and nationalist conceptions of Solidarity's role. Touraine, Solidarity.

7 Nationalism is not an inherently anti-communist or oppositional discourse. The leaders of the Communist Party in Poland often used aspects of nationalist discourse, at times with great influence on the social and political practices of Poles. One example is the anti-Semitic campaign of Władysław Gomułka in 1968.

8 The process of invoking, or recalling, shared memories, whether they were directly experienced or recalled as historical narratives, is examined in Paul Connerton, How Societies Remember.
Polish nation as above dispute. These actors are excluded from engaging in debate about the
nation at all. In this way, the context of power is established–by those who have invested
commonly-held concepts with new meaning and delineated new boundaries of the permissible
and the forbidden.

One way to approach the nationalist visions of the ideal polity is to recall Pocock's
"reference point." If discourses are relatively stable reference points that accommodate
different people in different ways, what is particular--and particularly compelling--about
nationalism for Polish subjects?

In the wake of the breakdown of Communist Party rule, the nationalist, post-Solidarity and
church discourses concerning the ideal democratic polity established a context in which
communitarian conceptions of liberalism dominated. Any movement promoting individual or
economic rights independent of a community faced a formidable task. In many ways, the first
two post-communist governments--Mazowiecki's and Bielecki's--represented the common
vision of the "liberals" in Poland. For these leaders, democratic government meant the
protection of individual rights and a state commitment to an ever-diminishing role for the state
in political issues. The real stakes were economic and the urgent goal was the creation of a
capitalist economy.

In December 1991 the government of Jan Olszewski was appointed after much
deliberation. The parliamentary elections had resulted in a very fragmented parliament and no
consensus on either a governing coalition or a prime minister was readily available. The
president, Walesa, lent his authority to a nationalist-right former Solidarity activist, Jan
Olszewski. The rightist Olszewski government that succeeded Bielecki's in December
1991 did not dispute the economic particulars of its predecessors as much as their privileging
of the economic over the political. Olszewski represented a strain of argument that questioned
the equation of government with distributive issues rather than with issues concerning the
nature of Poland's political and national community. To shift the terms of political debate to
the latter question, Olszewski and others on the right acknowledged economic rights but at the
same time dismissed them. They achieved this by invoking the ethos discourse in a particular
way: elevating its moral elements over those of self-determination. Indeed, the familiarity of
the ethos narrative allowed Olszewski's arguments to resonate powerfully with Polish citizens.

The emphasis on community quickly became a campaign to rid the government, the
economy and even society at large of "reds," individuals who had been part of the former
regime or who had cooperated with it. The Interior Minister, who had access to the records
kept by the secret police during the communist party period, initiated a highly publicized
process of identifying "collaborators" through a "secret" evaluation of documents and
interrogation of individuals. This combination of publicity and secrecy was achieved by the all-day television filming of a room with a closed door in a government building, through which various suspects entered and left, as well as the "leaking" of lists of names. In this way, an institutionalized process of lustracja (lustration) was launched and the language of conspiracy became the dominant way of talking about public values. The campaign took the form for many of an assertion of Polish nationalism in the face of Soviet infiltration of Polish life.

The lustracja campaign forced almost every participant in public life, indeed, every Polish citizen, to reconsider his or her activities during the 1970’s and 1980’s and to think about how these activities might be judged by the lustracja leaders. In a way, it brought the state more intimately into the lives of more individuals than any Communist Party policy had previously. The urgency and intensity of the campaign was heightened when, during its initial days of closed hearings, a list of public figures who had files with their names on them in secret police records was officially released. Many citizens were shocked to see prominent individuals who had participated in resistance activities in the 1980’s on the list; included as well was Lech Walesa.

Lustracja was presented by the right as continuing the work of the Solidarity opposition movement, work that had been left uncompleted. It would restore "justice" to a post-communist Poland. The Solidarity etos was invested with an especially urgent task, to restore moral limits on political activity within the structure of the state and to identify who should be excluded from the community of "decent" Poles. It was the "decent Pole" who was the proper citizen, the "interest" represented by the democratic government, the subject whose preferences should be taken into account. Indeed, the power of etos as a resistance discourse in particular was revived as the Olszewski government constructed an amoral, communist enemy existing as a secret network of spies and informers. The right’s purging campaign illustrates how etos provided a narrative that was coherent on the one hand, yet open to re-formation in radically different ways.

The importance of the form of discourse can be seen in the stance of the liberals on lustracja. Mazowiecki and the part of Solidarity that he represented were the most fearful of the excesses of the purging campaign. In the version of etos presented by Mazowiecki, the unifying element of the Polish opposition experience was the most important to continue. Poles should rally around the new Poland and forget past crimes and betrayals. A "thick line" (gruba kreska) should be drawn in history precisely at 1989: Polish state-society relations should begin anew, on a blank slate. Mazowiecki had announced the policy of not pursuing lustracja early in his tenure, before the Olszewski government, but clearly his stance had not laid the matter to rest.
The justification of the *gruba kreska* and its link to the discourse of *etos* deserves close attention not only because it was an important public statement of one interpretation of the basis of the post-communist Polish state but because it illustrates the manner in which the elements of the *etos* discourse could be unraveled from their original configuration--and meaning--and be re-woven into a related, yet different argument about politics.

The restoration of equality and the strangling of inflation are the tasks of the greatest economic, as well political and social, weight. Inequality and inflation, intensifying social tensions, can undermine the Polish march toward freedom.... The ultimate goal is the introduction of the law of government, the acknowledgement of the rights of every citizen in agreement with international pacts, treaties and conventions. Citizens must have the feeling of freedom, security and participation. Such a feeling can be had only in a law-abiding state, in which every activity of the government is supported by law, and the means of establishment, content and interpretation answers to the social belief in justice...

We underline the past with a thick line.

I arrive as a man of Solidarity, believing in the legacy of August [1980]. I understand it first and foremost as a great collective clamour of society for agency [subjectivity], the right of deciding the fate of the country as well as a preparation for solidary and decisive acts to achieve this goal.

But the legacy of August is also the ability of transcending battles and divisions, the capability of searching for partnership, the renunciation of thinking in the categories of taking revenge for the past, the settlement of the bills of past wrongs.

The issue of fundamental weight is the revaluation of the attitudes of citizens regarding the state...the reconstruction of the trust of society in the state must, however, come first and foremost from the organs of state power, more precisely, from the government.

Mazowiecki here links a uniting of citizens of a democracy behind a government, the government that is the successor to the legacy of Solidarity. He contrasts the stances of, on the one hand, seeking revenge for the crimes of communism and, on the other, improving the economy--an emphasis on the first will sacrifice the second. He also attempts to enlist the spirit of Solidarity in the task of building a state, even though the "initiative" for constructing the new relationship between state and society comes from the state, not society. While the Solidarity of the opposition represented society against the state, here Mazowiecki is appropriating Solidarity for the state itself, against the threat of "economic breakdown." Most important, he invokes the rule of law and the imperative to build social confidence in the state to support his rejection of a *lustracje* campaign of "revenge" on former communists.
These two claims to interpret the *etos* of Solidarity—Olszewski’s and Mazowiecki’s—drew on the same experience of opposition to justify quite different visions of the "new Poland." In mid-1992 the Olszewski government was forced to resign when respected former oppositionists themselves came under attack, particularly Walesa. The implementation of the historical imperative to cleanse and renew Poland’s moral community came face to face with the very "agents" of its history. However, while the right lost the government in 1992, the discourse of *lustracja* remained as a potential alternative as long as issues of community were regarded as crucial.

The manner in which *etos* and lack of ethos collided in the *lustracja* campaign is illustrated in the following text, a letter to the editor appearing in *Wprost* magazine:

In 1980 I believed that we were beginning to build our Common Home, supported by law, order, honesty, mutual respect, international solidarity and tolerance. These principles had always been recognized in Poland as the basis of social life. I was raised this spirit. What of this remains today?

The letter writer goes on to explicitly juxtapose an interpretation of the *etos* of Solidarity with the effects of the *lustracja* campaign. The policies of the Olszewski government brought on not unity, but disunity; not truth-telling, but a type of interpretation of the past that distorted the truth; not moral guidelines to behavior, but an absence of limits to individual privacy and solidarity. This type of language captures quite well the contradictions of *lustracja* in the Polish context and goes far toward explaining its demise.

The lack of ethos

With the "success" of the free-market economic program and liberal discourse, the discrediting of the lustration campaign and the social response to the Church’s anti-abortion campaign, the argument over the real meaning of *etos* was displaced by an argument over the lack of *etos*.

The Catholic Church and the nationalist right were prominent in putting into play an explanation of social problems and economic hardship that linked them to a general "moral decline" among Poles. This moral decline was articulated as a loss of the ethos that had so authoritatively guided Poles in the 1980’s. In this way, the concerns important to these groups were interwoven with the fall of the Communist Party state and the (apparent) moral clarity of the Solidarity period.

The Catholic Church had provided a powerful counterdiscourse to state power prior to 1989 and, as seen above, contributed substantial elements to the *etos* discourse of the 1980’s. It
had developed a position of authority in a wide range of issues, although it was unable to sustain that authority in the context of the new post-communist political landscape. While the Church no longer had the authority to define *etos*, it could put into play an alternative conception of the *role* of *etos*, that is, the "lack of ethos."

**The lack of ethos II**

The liberals had never participated fully in the first *etos* debate, and now responded to the shift to the lack of ethos in a surprising way. Rather than defending the free-market capitalist economy as part and parcel of the original ethos of Solidarity, they joined the right in acknowledging the loss of *etos*. However, the implications for the liberals were not negative, but positive. In fact, it allowed the liberals to take Solidarity away from the workers.

In the 1990-1993 period, there were two main strands of liberal political argumentation. Both agreed that Poland should be democratic and that democratic institutions and procedures should be created. They disagreed on the best means to achieve rights and in the process each constituted a different, yet powerful and consequential, notion of the "democratic citizen."

If we begin by defining liberalism as a political movement inspired by a particular set of values that places individual freedom as a high priority, best established and protected by a legal order guaranteeing civil rights and private property, we can find elements of liberal thought in almost every political program in Poland, even that of nationalists and socialists. However, first locating an essence of liberal thought and then tracing its incarnations in present-day Polish politics tells us little about the influence of a particular (liberal) political party. The context of political discourse has been permeated by a way of talking about politics that seems essentially liberal because of the nature of the transformation of Communist Party rule and the influence of the West in economically aiding the establishment of new structures of governing. "Liberalization" has affected almost every participant in these processes.9

The first post-Communist government in Poland was the Mazowiecki government. It was dominated by Unia Demokratyczna, a group that was committed to the free-market but emphasized the maintenance of a large social welfare component. The government's economic program was a blend of Unia values of social welfare and economic rights, especially private property. The economic program launched by the Mazowiecki government was designed to quickly dismantle the state role in industry as well as popular expectations about guaranteed employment. The "Balcerowicz Plan," as it was called after the Economic Minister Leszek

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9 The problem of the confusion of a liberal doctrine with the trend of "liberalization" is explored in Jerzy Szacki, "A Revival of Liberalism in Poland?" *Social Research* 57 (Summer 1990), pp. 463-91.
Balcerowicz, promoted a forced and rapid recession in which prices and unemployment would simultaneously increase, in order to undercut inflation and after the state-socialist rationality of the Polish firm. The severity of the plan's effect on living standards was tempered by the Mazowiecki government's retention of social welfare guarantees. The successor to Mazowiecki, President Lech Walesa's prime minister Krzystof Bielecki, withdrew many of these limits on the harsher aspects of the Balcerowicz Plan. The plan in both its versions led to severe consequences for the standard of living for Poles and was very unpopular.10

Bielecki (by 1992 no longer prime minister) was one of the leaders of the Liberals, the party that has articulated the liberal justification for the Balcerowicz plan in the form of an individual and economic rights argument. While three prime ministers have been appointed since Bielecki's resignation and two have fallen, the government's commitment to a policy of high unemployment has remained. Indeed, Hanna Suchocka, the prime minister appointed in July 1992, broke a large strike by coal miners, retained Bielecki in her cabinet and retained the Liberal Janusz Lewandowski as the minister of "property transformation" (or privatization).11

The conception of the ideal democratic polity offered by Bielecki's liberals (from now on, "Liberals") seems to make them ideal elites to craft the Polish democracy.12 The discourse of the Liberals rejects collectivist values and bases its justification on economic and political rights and a small state. The Liberals' program, stated in a series of points printed in its official publication, begins with a statement of radical individualism: "freedom" is the primary value of any social order.13 This view of freedom as prior to, and independent of, any type of community establishes the Liberals as quite different from the "liberal" elements within nationalism, Unia Democratyczny and the church. It clearly sets the boundaries of Liberal politics by asserting individual freedom as the indisputable value of the polity, and leaving all other questions (especially those of community or collectivist values) open for debate.

The Liberal conception of the ideal democratic polity is anchored in economic liberty.

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10 Leszek Balcerowicz, 800 Dni: Szoł kontrolowany (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza 'BGW,' 1992); Winiecki, "The Polish Transition Programme."
11 Several Liberals passed muster for Suchocka's cabinet, but the portfolio for labor went to a member of Unia Demokratyczna and for industry to a Christian/nationalist.
12 The primary text that I rely on for this section is the official publication of the Kongres Liberálno-Demokratický, Przegląd Polityczny. The evidence for this section of the paper will also draw from the writings of prominent members of the KLD or those sympathetic to it, such as Donald Tusk, Jan Krzystof Bielecki, Janusz Lewandowski and Ewa Graczyk.
13 "Deklaracja programowa," Przegląd Polityczny 1 (June 1991), inside cover. The exact words are, "Uznajemy wolność za wartość nadrzedną i pierwszą zasadę ładu społecznego."
Private property is the material guarantee of human freedom and responsibility. Property finds its basis and its limits in freedom. The right to the free disposition of property by individual owners and to the transforming of it for personal use has its limit [only] when it leads to the limit of the freedom of others.\textsuperscript{14}

Here, the primary concern of the Liberals is not centered on individual political freedom; indeed, civil rights \textit{per se} are not mentioned. Political liberty is realized through economic freedom, specifically private property and economic competition. In the words of the Liberals:

\begin{quote}
The category of ownership discloses the organic bond of economic freedom and political freedom. Private property creates civil society and is a premise of its economic resources.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

In this way, the radical unemployment and other harsh results of the Balcerowicz plan is a necessary prior condition for an ultimately better way of life, one with greater liberty in general.

The commitment to rights performs another goal--access to political arguments about who is included and who is excluded in the Polish polity. Traditional liberal doctrine treats every individual as an independent bearer of rights and does not distinguish between persons. However, refusing to open for debate the category of who belongs in the ideal polity prevents the Liberals from offering an interpretation of the best community to rival that of their political rivals, the nationalists. The Liberals addressed this problem with the following principle:

\begin{quote}
The basic liberal goal is the creation of conditions for a full and worthwhile individual existence as well as for diversity and tolerance in the interactive coexistence of persons. This basic possibility requires nothing short of a free and open society, in which law and justice are not simply assumed as prepared answers, but in which initiative and individual industry augment the common good.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Here, the Liberals establish tolerance as the basis for a vision of a community that is consonant with the unquestioned status of individual (economic) liberty as the primary value of the ideal polity. A "common good" is admitted into the polity, but with little description and only as a result of the exercise of economic rights.

Once the issue of community was brought into play, the Liberals invested it with a particular meaning that could bring their polity around again to a free-market construct. Their polity was "European:” "We judge wisdom as collectively inscribed in the norms and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} "Deklaracja programowa."
\textsuperscript{15} Przegląd Polityczny.
\textsuperscript{16} Przegląd Polityczny.
\end{flushright}
institutions of European civilization, which harmonizes continuity and change.”\textsuperscript{17} By identifying the ideal community as one with values inherited from the European West, the Liberals offered an interpretation of the Polish nation that rivalled that of the nationalists, but was not a nationalist solution. In addition, a European Poland was one in which economic rights and private property were guaranteed, church and state were separate, and “Christian” values flourished without hampering tolerance and individualism, largely because these values were characterized as “honesty, honor and law, responsibility and respect for property.”

The Liberals pulled away from an exclusive radical individualism in another direction as well. In 1990 and 1991, Poles were not living in a Lockean state of nature, but in the midst of a rapid transformation of the institutions of government and the economy. The economic-rights goals of the Liberal ideal placed firmly before them a massive task: that of dismantling a thoroughly state-subsidized economic structure from above. The social movements that had determined the political arrangements of the first post-Communist government, that of “post-Solidarity” leader Tadeusz Mazowiecki, were decidedly collectivist in nature. For extensive privatization, an institution was required that Liberals (and liberals) abhor: an interventionist state.

The problem faced by the Liberals (and the liberals) in 1992 was the growing unpopularity of the austerity measures connected to the reform program. These elites had difficulty, however, reconciling this public dissatisfaction with their belief in the natural citizen, whose preferences center on ever-greater political and economic rights. The Liberals addressed this tension by shifting away from a natural citizen view to a “mentality” argument. More and more common were statements that society “could not handle” freedom, that the experience of living under communism had distorted the natural citizen, that now Liberals must fight a “mentality” of nostalgia for a strong state, that Poles were not “ready” for rights. This shift illustrated the political distance between these elites and the public; Polish subjects were, a Liberal would say, “myopic” in their apprehension of the economic changes. This shift also illustrates how elusive the “interests” of the democratic citizen were.

The Liberals were left arguing that the state must intervene in the economy on behalf of laissez-faire economics, and against a citizenry that was now characterized as the mass of the “dissatisfied.” Reform—that is, privatization—should continue, in the words of Balcerowicz, even if voters opposed it. His justification was similar to that of the elite choice theorist described above: the democratic citizen’s rationality was imperfect and even distorted.

\textsuperscript{17} Przegląd Polityczny.
People have, however, in general a natural tendency to formulate judgements about policies of a given government on the basis of a comparison of their actual situation with their situation in the past, and not with the situation that would have existed if there had not been any reform.\textsuperscript{18}

This "natural tendency" is viewed as regrettable because citizens, in this view, should be taking the accomplishments of the Liberals into account. Balcerowicz also notes that the radical widening of freedom is the main motor of our economy. But only a few people--the young, the better educated--can directly benefit from it, making for themselves economic careers.\textsuperscript{19}

These "satisfied" people, however, do not speak as loudly as the dissatisfied, thus not allowing the Liberals to reap the electoral benefits due them. In this discourse, the ideal democratic citizen, who perceives his rights as best pursued through economic liberty, is somehow silent or not articulating his interests properly.

The Solidarity trade union and the battle over etos

The trade union Solidarity was put on the defensive by the economic programs of both the Mazowiecki and the Bielecki governments. Even as Walesa, Mazowiecki and other elites tried to claim Solidarity's support and legacy, the union became more and more isolated from these former leaders. The basic issue was the unavoidable tension between the widespread unemployment that was part and parcel of the government's austerity plan, on the one hand, and the "workers' interests" supported by Solidarity. Thus, in response to the emphasis on economic and political freedom prominent in the government's discourse, Solidarity had to put into play an alternative conception of etos that would justify an alternative economic vision.

The main text in which Solidarity's post-1989 etos was represented was Tygodnik Solidarnosci, a weekly newspaper. A close examination of the paper reveals the manner in which the discourse of etos shifted in form as it was re-configured as a response to privatization and ultimately as a critique of the former Solidarity activists that made up the government, or the "post-solidarity" party leaders. Indeed, the 1989-1993 period is constituted by a remarkable change in the role of Solidarity as the source of authority in Polish political language, from undergirding the oppositionist tradition in the 1980's, to defining the form of the new government in 1989 and 1990, to offering only one interpretation of etos among many.

\textsuperscript{19} Balcerowicz, p. 23.
The newly powerful liberal discourse that made up the economic program of austerity, privatization and property rights succeeded in further positioning Solidarity as disenfranchised from its own tradition. Solidarity as a labor union and a location for individuals who viewed themselves as "workers" responded to the shift in the context of state power by attempting to reclaim the relevance of etos and to reclaim Solidarity's status as the authoritative interpreter of it. In examining the language in which Solidarity speakers put forth their arguments, I found that the element of truth-telling was the most de-emphasized and that the element of unity had been re-defined as a position from which to criticize the "quarrelling" of Poland's government leaders.

One particular text captures both the substance and the tone of Solidarity discourse in 1993, a polemic published on the front page of the union's newspaper. Tygodnik Solidarnosc, on the occasion of Solidarity's annual nation-wide meeting. The author begins by noting that Solidarity is no longer the social movement it once was, but the essence of that movement has remained in the form of Solidarity's values:

Those values are these, as I remind you: the battle for the independence of Poland, and after 1989, the constant striving for its sovereignty, the attachment to the national tradition, the guarantee of the right to freedom and to individual development, tolerance, justice, the defense of people who have been harmed or who need help. 20

Striking here is the similarity between this 1993 statement and the elements of etos during the 1980's. The language maintains its militant character, as though the struggle against an oppressive state is still Solidarity's context and as though the right to self-determination is still bound up with Polish nationalism. The author expands on these issues:

The experiences of the past four years showed clearly how correct was [Solidarity's] choice [of declining to become a political party]. how appropriate from the point of view of our ethos. The association of Solidarity with pure politics, in the sense of taking or partially exercising power, would have meant taking part in political games in which morality is an obstacle rather than a driving strength. The attitude of political parties, grown out of Solidarity stumps, as well as of former union activists who are today politicians, shows that in the fight over power the main motive is often the material interests of specific groups...The issue that this "intellectual fun" could possibly be connected with a too-high social cost seems to worry politicians only as much as its effects...can directly threaten them.

For this reason, for at least two years a considerable part of the political class has been leading a more or less open battle with Solidarity. For this reason it tries to

deride our ethos. [It pursues this battle] understanding very well that narrow social
groups organize themselves according to their own interests, but that wide social
strata--always according to values.

Here the elements of morality and moral superiority are enlisted in the claim to maintain the
priority of the general (Polish) interest in the face of pluralistic claims by specific interests,
and in the claim that Solidarity represents and embodies this general interest.