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THE LABILITIES OF LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM AFTER COMMUNISM:
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Michael D. Kennedy

Liberalism and nationalism have been juxtaposed as fundamental alternatives in defining postcommunism's course. Liberals are individualist, not collectivist. They should favor pluralism, tolerance and the market economy. Nationalists are collectivist. They should favor statist if not dictatorial solutions to social conflict and economic issues. I think this admittedly simplified but too frequent opposition is a problematic point of departure for analysis. Instead of assuming ideological difference, I propose we reconsider the labilities of liberalism and nationalism.² I suggest we focus on the unstable relationship both between liberalism and nationalism, as well as the instability within these broad ideological formations. In this essay, I elaborate such a theory of ideological lability and develop that approach for studying East European liberals and Polish businessmen in the articulation of the nation.

I begin the essay by considering how lability is worked out of liberalism and nationalism. Analysts tend to stabilize these visions by focusing on the articulations of liberal collectivities and more collective nations by their principal spokespersons. This method implicitly reinforces the categorical distinctions between positions. Instead, I propose that we undertake an alternative method in which these labilities are more fully evident.

One of the most important starting points for this alternative method is to treat the articulation of liberalism as critically as postcommunist studies treat nationalism. Drawing on Jerzy Szacki's volume, I describe some of liberalism's instabilities in Polish practice. I turn next to the national formation of the postcommunist liberal subject. I consider the conditions under which the liberal spokesperson articulates the nation, and what formulations of the nation dominate that liberal elaboration.

Labilities are more apparent, however, when one switches from ideological enunciations to everyday life, to the presence of these ideological formations in practice.³ This approach has certainly been common enough for social histories, but I believe that we should extend it to intellectuals themselves.⁴ The everyday life of intellectuals should be as much an object of our analysis as their more public identities. Once we shift our gaze to everyday life, the distinction of intellectuals from non-intellectuals becomes more difficult to render, however. We are more likely, then, to identify other types of actors as intellectuals in function if not in nomenclature.

Businessmen⁵ are not traditionally defined as 'intellectuals' in Eastern Europe or in the West. I am not suggesting that Polish businessmen are intellectuals in any familiar sense of the term. Rather, intellectuals and the businessmen I analyze in this essay are a subset of a larger category of social actors called "prominenci."⁶ Prominenci are those who appear to play a disproportionate role in shaping public opinion, and as a consequence, the articulation of the nation. Polish intellectuals have played that role traditionally,⁷ but in postcommunist times, they are "retiring from the stage."⁸ With that exit, Polish businessmen become important new voices in the public sphere and in everyday life. Their "rational" and "sophisticated" business practices not only facilitate profit

making and European multinational integration, but those practices are also innovative cultural products with public consequence. I suggest that they are transforming the meaning of the Polish nation by extending the principles associated with their business practice to the rearticulation of the nation.

The explicit innovativeness of articulation varies, however, and becomes more pronounced when liberalism's contradictions are more apparent and when the nation's ideological formations intersect with business practice or other putatively liberal spaces. Polish businessmen and women employed in multinational corporations are especially likely to find working conditions conducive to the articulation of a new kind of national liberalism. In this essay, I explore how a few Polish businessmen and women negotiate the contradictions between a necessary nationalism and an ideologically powerful liberalism and in the process generate a new ideological formation for Polish postcommunist capitalism.

In this essay, I do not demonstrate that businessmen have replaced intellectuals in Poland's public sphere. I also do not prove that Polish businessmen are at the center of a new national ideology with business at its core. My primary data -- forty four in-depth interviews with businessmen and women who are themselves involved in multinational business ventures -- do not allow that kind of analysis. Instead, I draw upon those interviews to suggest *how* Polish businessmen are rearticulating the meaning of the nation. Before I turn to that more specific reformulation, I begin with an account of liabilities.

THE LIABILITIES OF NATIONALISM AND LIBERALISM

Both liberalism and nationalism are typically studied in their more 'fixed' ideological formations. Focusing on postcommunist Eastern Europe magnifies this tendency.

Analysts typically distinguish nationalisms with reference to its 'type,' pronounced by its adjective. They stabilize the elusive phenomenon by distinguishing among political and ethnic nationalisms, official and revolutionary nationalisms, or with other categorical differences.⁹ This categorical reference begins beyond contexts and typically descends upon a particular set of rhetorics and practices. Official proclamations or symbolic texts, or their carriers -- states or social movements -- illustrate that nationalism's qualities. As nationalism becomes the new 'threat,' Western states and international organizations work with indigenous liberals to emphasize the opposition between liberalism and nationalism. Through this collaboration, nationalism is produced as a "dark, elemental, unpredictable force of primordial nature threatening the orderly calm of civilized life."¹⁰ Thus, liberalism and nationalism become the main ideological contestants in the postcommunist world. Nationalisms also contest one another.

One people's nationalism evokes another, which in turn inspires others. Rogers Brubaker has proposed that we move away from comparisons based on dichotomous contests among nations or between a majority nation and its minorities. He suggests that we consider the intersection of nationalizing states, national minorities and external national homelands as the triadic configuration generating struggles. Brubaker recommends we study each position in terms of a 'field' of activity, of "differentiated and competitive positions or stances." This rethinking encourages us to review contest within fields as much as between them.¹¹ I find this elaboration quite

useful. It certainly invites a conception of nationalism's lability. However, Brubaker's execution pays little heed to the ways in which liberalism is implicated in nationalism or how that implication elevates its lability. This is especially evident in Brubaker's application to the Yugoslav War of Succession, in which he fails to consider how Slovenia's 'liberalism' helps to explain the beginning of war.¹² Whatever the application, however, Brubaker's approach is certainly open to considering the mutual implication of liberalism and nationalism.

Liberalism tends to be treated differently than nationalism. Nationalism's ideologists purport to know the core of the nation. Liberalism's spokespersons typically contend that their core is procedural, not substantive. The activities of a plurality of people who accept common liberal rules for action usually define liberalism's core. In this sense, and only if all other things are equal, liberal ideology is closer to everyday life than is nationalism. Its substance is multiple, contradictory and variable. This may be one reason why so many East European intellectuals wound up counterposing 'life against ideology' during late communism. It is also one reason why they are less likely to see liberalism's own ideological power.¹³

In postcommunism, however, liberalism cannot be so fluid. Locked in ideological struggle with communist rule and later with varieties of nationalism and socialism, liberals must make liberalism more fixed than its ideological project declares ideal. This is especially apparent when its promoters become rulers, and attempt to make a liberal economy, if not polity and society. Not only must liberals define the rules of contest, but they also must obviously enter the terrain of other ideological formations. Beyond setting trade policies and forms of property, they must define the nation. They must declare who are citizens and who are not. They must declare the relationship between foreign interests and the national interest. They must establish who may own the land, and who may not. Liberalism, thus, becomes more fixed and stabilized as it enters a cultural fray, and moves beyond its commonsensical foundations in developed capitalist societies. Nationalism and liberalism, especially when thus locked in cultural struggle, ought therefore to become more fixed. If we think of ideology as an increasingly coherent and consistent culture, produced through contest, liberalism and nationalism become more ideological under postcommunist conditions.¹⁴ Nationalism and liberalism also become more fixed ideological formations as intellectuals become more central to the definition of their project.

Intellectuals are central to nationalism in two fundamental ways. Firstly, nationalism frequently requires the intellectual to articulate what the nation is because its empirical existence is not what it ought to be. It may be "repressed" by foreign domination or "immature" due to economic or social underdevelopment. Nevertheless, that empirical existence is essential. Intellectuals depend on that ontology to claim the right to articulate a position based on their own personal identity embedded in a broader affinity with a larger collective identity.¹⁵ Thus, intellectuals struggle to fix the nation in their own ideology, reconciling the expectation of the nation with its current condition.

Secondly, intellectuals are frequently treated as symbols of the nation's existence. Intellectual historians and others who research and write about intellectuals themselves can reproduce those very nationalist aspirations that motivate their subjects. They elaborate their subject's particular articulation of the nation, and use that very intellectual to represent the nation's meaning in social space. By telling individual life stories of prominence in

familiar narrative forms, the liabilities of the nation are thus fixed. For example, we can know nationalism by taking any particular nation's nationalist exemplar, in Poland perhaps Roman Dmowski, and study his life and what he has written. One thus can "know" nationalism by representing a nationalist's coherent life and ideas. One can make that life even more coherent by emphasizing a particular period of a person's life that fits with the ideological vision to be reinforced. Ivan Franko's early years are ideal for those socialist visionaries of Ukraine, while national democrats tend to focus on his later years. Few focus on the times and conditions of his mortal illness, for that contributes little to fixing the nation.

Liberalism, however, depends less on intellectuals. Liberalism thrives as an invisible ideology, without spokespersons. It does not put intellectuals in such a central position as nationalism does. Liberalism may provide a smaller role for intellectuals because liberalism is less collectivist than nationalism. Perhaps it is because one needs fewer liberal ideologues than nationalist ones because liberalism should be a less particularist vision that needs only interpreters rather than legislators.¹⁶ In postcommunist Eastern Europe, however, liberalism is said to oppose both nationalism and socialism. Liberal ideologues and spokespersons are thus necessary to elevate that ideological opposition. To focus on the texts of liberal intellectuals is thus as important as to focus on those of nationalists. At the same time, by focusing on these intellectuals, liberalism's liabilities are also likely to be minimized.

DISSECTING LIBERALISM

Nationalism has always been a significant object of inquiry in East European studies, but it has become newly important. In the wake of communism's collapse and in lieu of terrorism, nationalism is the next threat. Many fewer analysts study liberalism as an ideological formation. Most intellectuals oriented toward the West see it as a virtue rather than a liability and an ally whose dissection could prove troubling. Is it not better to look at the threat that makes one's position superior than to consider whether the ideology grounding hope stands on clay feet?¹⁷ Does one want to offer a critique of liberalism that might create a self-fulfilling prophecy, as some of my Polish sociological colleagues have cautioned me? Fortunately for us, Jerzy Szacki does not recoil from such serious inquiry, and I draw upon his work to offer the following portrait of liberalism's power and tensions.¹⁸

Many would see liberalism as communism's legitimate successor. Liberalism most decisively departs from the principles of communist rule, and at the same time, European liberalism has enjoyed a genuine renaissance. Communism's putative antithesis comes at the same time as it enjoys a global heyday. Liberalism's variety is more apparent than any particular essence, however, and the partiality of its success and influence is more apparent than its final victory. Nevertheless, certain tenets of liberalism are hegemonic in postcommunist Poland and the other East Central European countries, even among those former communists who now call themselves Social Democrats. While liberal ideologues are likely to identify themselves as the true liberals, and others as 'false'¹⁹, much of liberalism has become part of the more general ideological landscape of postcommunist Central Europe.

Szacki cautions that liberalism is not so secure as it appears, however. Post-communist liberalism shares with other democratic market economies that tension between political and economic liberalism.²⁰ It also has special problems. For instance, liberals should favor a society in which the rights and responsibilities of individuals are paramount.²¹ Such a doctrinaire liberalism seems rather inadequate to the task of rapid economic transformation in which quasi-Bolshevik methods of implementing economic change are widely appreciated among liberals. Finally, liberalism is not an integral element of national cultures in Eastern Europe. Although Polish historiography can place a strong emphasis on the liberal foundations of noblemen's democracy, Szacki is rather skeptical about liberalism's fit with the Polish nation. While it *does* look liberal in comparison to Russian traditions, it is quite different from contemporary emphases on the centrality of the individual and the importance of economic dimensions.²² As an alternative, Szacki suggests we consider three types of Polish liberalism.

One should understand East European communism's democratic opposition as *protoliberal*. It elevates civil society over individualism, and subordinates the latter to various collectivist impulses from 'society' writ large. Any community or social movement, indeed Solidarnosc itself, could be the empirical expression of this collectivity. This collective society was the agent of social transformation. Solidarnosc, empowered by workers and its allied intelligentsia, was the best example. Szacki argues that a more *integral* liberalism, one that goes beyond the justification of capitalism, is underdeveloped in Poland. Indeed, the articulation of views on culture and society has remained, among liberals, quite underdeveloped in comparison to their views on economy.²³

Economic liberalism followed protoliberalism's development in Poland, emerging after the 1980-81 Solidarity movement. It rejected both communism and the revolutionary means to fight it. This perspective wanted to de-emphasize politics and make economic change central. Before communism's collapse, Miroslaw Dzielski and others looked at the second economy as evidence for communism's liberal alternative. Departing from Solidarity's vaunting of the working class, this view celebrated the entrepreneur and the middle class. Dzielski wrote, "The person who trades is the pillar of civilization, and in conditions of socialism also its heroic champion."²⁴ With its simultaneously realist and decentering approach to politics, Szacki identifies three key aspects to economic liberalism: "absolute primacy to the economic system.... accepting liberal or neoliberal views on the economy in their orthodox form...(and) recognizing these views not only as necessary but also as a sufficient condition of being a liberal...."²⁵

Although they focus on the economic, liberals also recognize that society itself must change. It is not sufficient to change property laws. Indeed, society must rid itself of economic traditionalism and socialist residues. Like the organic intellectuals in the end of the 19th century, today's liberals believe that society must learn that making money is good for the nation. It must learn that socialism is the enemy to the nation that must modernize.²⁶ Liberals developed this point of view before 1989, but when they took power its cultural value soared. This societal critique legitimated their attempt to initiate radical systemic change regardless of popular wishes and regardless of liberalism's orthodox interpretation.

Systemic transformation required the rejection of liberal political action. One cannot change a system piecemeal. One could not introduce liberalism as a system with many ways of life. It had to acquire that holistic

approach to change that was more characteristic of communism and nationalism: that there is but one way to construct a system. This introduced, then, the basic contradiction of the postcommunist liberal project, within its own economic formation, as well in relation to its traditional bedfellow, democracy. It had to become, in the words of a former Minister of Privatization, a 'pragmatic liberalism,' one that uses the state to shorten the way to the market.

At the same time, that state had to compromise with a society with a 'communist mentality' and preserve some of the welfare provisions that would make continued liberal politics possible.²⁷ Furthermore, because its social base is so small, pragmatic and democratic liberals (as opposed to pure and authoritarian ones) had to find ways of combining economic liberalism with other Polish values. Szacki has thus posed the right question: "Do the non-economic postulates of today's Polish liberals refer only to the necessity of rooting out the remnants of real socialism from all areas of life, or do they also call for transcending the traditional forms of Polish thinking and Polish life?"²⁸ This is where the labile relationship between liberalism and the nation emerges.

In most circumstances, liberalism and nationalism are posed as opposing principles. In all its varieties, nationalism's emphasis on the priority of the nation's collective rights overwhelms the individual rights emphasized in liberalism. Szacki argues that their common appearance at any moment is more a matter of historical conjuncture and common enemies rather than ideological affinities.²⁹ When communism ceased to be the primary enemy, the allies made in anti-communism -- liberals and nationalists -- were opponents again. Those who would emphasize Christian values as the primary concern of Polish politics can find in liberalism an enemy, one that undermines the truth of God's law with its claims to pluralism.³⁰ Economic liberals do not necessarily respond in kind, and rather seek to reconcile Polish and Christian value systems with the new economic liberalism.³¹

Szacki's book, magisterial in its sweep and dedicated in its purpose, nonetheless articulates an implicit hope in the generation of a broader liberalism. He sees many barriers to this in Poland. Liberalism does not have a clear political ancestry in Poland. Polish identity has, with its stateless existence for 123 years, emphasized communitarian values and the centrality of Catholicism. Poland's relative homogeneity means that political tolerance does not appear so necessary as in a more explicitly diverse society. The majority understands its tolerance as benevolence.³²

Both in his prescriptive conclusion and his historical argument, Szacki identifies both the contradictions of liberalism and its exclusions. It is about economic arguments, and it is difficult to extend its implications to politics and culture. Liberalism is not, after all, a good theory for radical political and cultural change. Too, the religious and the nationalists are hegemonic in the articulation of politics and culture in Poland. In short, the liberal *theory* of politics and culture might be difficult to make effective in postcommunist, and especially Polish, conditions. On the other hand, it is quite possible to see the effect of liberalism in culture as everyday life and in the articulation of national politics. In particular, one can focus on the formation of the liberal subject, and his implication in the nation.

THE NATIONAL FORMATION OF THE POSTCOMMUNIST LIBERAL SUBJECT

Szacki elaborates Polish liberalism's dilemmas by focusing on its macrocultural and macrosocial contradictions and their expressions in elite pronouncements and political and social conflicts. In this portrait, the clash of cultures and the compromises of elites produce the labilities of liberalism and nationalism. Szacki thus provides the necessary contextual foundation for those who would develop a sociology that focuses on the choices a subject makes among existing alternatives. Szacki does not, however, provide the foundation for considering the conditions which allow agents to alter the choices before them. In order for that approach to be developed, one must focus as much on the formation of the subject as on that subject's possible choices.³³

A theory of subject formation is especially important for understanding the lability of ideological formations. Ideological lability is most apparent when actors reconfigure ideological formations in order to address particular goals. As Bill Sewell describes it, agency is apparent in "an actor's capacity to reinterpret and mobilize an array of resources in terms of cultural schemas other than those that initially constituted the array".³⁴ Sewell identifies five factors that might elevate the conditions of this agency:

- 1) *the multiplicity of structures*: any social unit is going to be composed of a variety of structures which are unlikely to be entirely homologous or in synchrony with one another; this variety of structures can lead to conflicting claims and social conflicts;
- 2) *the transposibility of schemas*: actors are capable of taking schemas or rules learned in one context and applying them to another;
- 3) *the intersection of structures*: structures with different schemas and different resources overlap and interact in any given setting, making their smooth reproduction always potentially problematic given the contradictions that could emerge from their contact;
- 4) *unpredictability of resource accumulation*: enactments of schemas can produce quite unforeseen outcomes, and those outcomes, if sufficiently altering the power relations in a given social unit, lead to a transformation of structure; and
- 5) *the polysemy of resources*: the multiplicity of meaning potentially attached to any set of resources means that these resources can be interpreted in different ways, with various consequences for social transformation.

I find the first three factors especially useful for developing a theory of the national formation of the postcommunist liberal subject. One place to begin is with the empirical elaboration of that theory is with Business and the Middle Classes, edited by Jacek Kurczewski and Iwona Jakubowska-Branicka.³⁵

This collection exemplifies sociological approaches to such a liberal subject. They focus, above all, on its articulation as a class actor, a middle class. In this particular collection, they find that the new capitalist middle classes ally with socialism's middle classes to construct values that support the development of market society. These middle classes apparently value individualism, private property and the prestige of financial success more than others in the social structure. The nation, however, appears irrelevant.

There are some places, of course, where the nation does enter the discourse of liberalism. Iwona Krzesak finds that the Business Center Club,³⁶ arguably the leading business organization in Poland, demands that a BCC

member be an exemplary citizen. The Club supports the vision of the democratic and competent state based on the rule of law. It expects the businessman to be well informed on political, social and economic matters in the country. Businessmen, the BCC recommends, should help solve problems and help those weaker than themselves, using their superior organizational skills for the benefit of all.³⁷ Even in this direct engagement, however, the meaning of the nation remains underelaborated. The liberal's nation is a nation where the rule of law enables pragmatic well informed citizens to make intelligent choices. The nation, other than as a site of activity, virtually disappears. The individual subject reigns supreme. Businessmen, as liberalism's carrier, thus tend not to discuss the nation. Their social conditions normally discourage their explicit articulation of the nation. Nevertheless, their political spokespersons do find themselves in that space where the nation must be articulated.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with parliamentary elites, Elzbieta Skotnicka-Illasiewicz and Włodzimierz Wesolowski³⁸ found Polish liberals from both the postcommunist party and post-Solidarity parties understanding Europe as a "configuration of civil societies."³⁹ They suggest that liberals view nations as pluralistic sites of interest formation among individuals and groups. Liberals thus tend not to elaborate the nation in ideological terms because *their own nation should not be peculiar*. By contrast, other Polish politicians see Europe as threatening on moral grounds. These deputies, typically from the Christian and Peasant parties, see Europe as a threat to Polish national identity. Europe is debauched, they claim, and Poland retains, or should retain, its traditional moral and spiritual values. These nationalists thus tend to construct nations as particular moral communities with common interests. In such a framework, the elaboration of national distinction becomes quite important. Indeed, it is much more important for the right wing than for the liberals.

Nevertheless, liberals take the schemas associated with liberalism and use them to reconceive the meaning of nations. As political elites negotiating Poland's relationship to Europe, they are obliged to engage the question more seriously than those domestic middle classes with relatively little obligation to define the nation. One might surmise that liberals will typically retreat from articulating the nation, given that the liberal point is to de-emphasize it. National political institutions are composed of a variety of structures in which national claims and liberal claims must intersect, however.

Under these conditions, liberal political leaders, distinguished precisely by their claim to *national* leadership, must articulate their vision of the nation. The most liberal and cosmopolitan of actors must somehow define the nation, even as they promote larger regional and global association. For instance, Czech President Vaclav Havel recently recognized that very point:⁴⁰

For the first time in the history of mankind, our civilization has become truly global, encompassing the entire world. Yet at the same time, perhaps because of its global character, it is marked by increasingly determined attempts made by various cultures and regions at preserving their distinctiveness.

This need not mean, however, that this national distinction is a threat or barrier. Liberals are at work trying to redefine their own national mission in the context of various liberal integrative projects. According to Slovenia's Milan Kucan⁴¹, for instance,

It is very important for us within the framework of European integration in the economic area to also prove capable of evaluating and intensifying our individuality in the area of culture, in the area of spiritual values, and in the area of spiritual forms. The views of the future can be verified only through continuously constructed dialogue. ...

In this move, Kucan transposes several familiar liberal schemas: 1) He separates the economic from the social and cultural, allowing the nation to develop in the cultural realm while liberalism proceeds apace in the economic; 2) He introduces a spirit of dialogue and compromise, one that presumes, like the contract, the ability for individually rational agents to come to mutually appealing agreements depending on a willingness to compromise and relatively egalitarian conditions of communication.

These articulations of the nation do not imply lability, however. They reflect the liberal and nationalist ideological conflict, and the attempt by liberals to articulate a vision of the nation that is compatible with their economic priorities. To consider labilities, we should consider the transformations of visions and their associated practices.

THE LABILE ENGAGEMENT OF LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM

Liberals not only articulate the meaning of liberalism or their own vision of the nation. They also articulate the meaning of nationalism itself.

Nationalists and liberals have uneven access to the global media. Outside their relevant diasporas, nationalists are more poorly known than liberals and are typically mediated by others. For instance, we know that Istvan Csurka is a chauvinist right wing Hungarian, but he is mostly described for us by others who analyze his threat.⁴² By contrast, liberals are more likely to present themselves. Gyorgy Konrad is a liberal, European Hungarian, and his works are regularly translated and used to illustrate the progressive hope in Eastern Europe.⁴³ To publish the nationalist in the global media risks endorsing that vision, something most global medias will not risk. Hence, the very form in which liberalism and nationalism are presented in global media reinforces the general imagery of liberal definitions looking global, and nationalist ones remaining parochial. The liberal is familiar and unmediated. The nationalist must be explained. Vladimir Tismaneanu's work exemplifies this normative/analytical stance.

Tismaneanu writes a political history of East European transformations around the identification of hope. Hope lies in the virtues of civic culture and pluralism. During the transformations of 1989, he writes, "concepts like popular sovereignty, European consciousness, civil rights and many others reacquired full semantic justification."⁴⁴ In this sense, the East European transformations represent not only national liberation, but also the promise of a wider emancipatory hope. Nationalism, however, represents the danger. The new threat is ethnocracy.

Elsewhere, Tismaneanu⁴⁵ identifies the basic crisis of postcommunist society to rest in the uncertainty, insecurity, fear and helplessness characteristic of the change. Radical nationalism, he argues, provides the 'myth' which provides "consolation, the bliss of community, a simple way to overcome feelings of humiliation and

inferiority and a response to real or imaginary threats".⁴⁶ What is more, this is building on the political culture of intolerance and self righteousness characteristic of communism itself. It is used by old communists to preserve their position, but builds upon the unresolved psychological and historical problems of each nation.

In these analytical/normative approaches to the nation, the analysis secures a place from which the nation is simultaneously understood and critiqued. The universal and/or global position afforded by the discourse of human rights or civil society allows the critique of any particular nationalist. Indeed, the general opposition between liberalism and nationalism can be secured by identifying the proper historical and social structural explanations for the particularly labeled nationalism now revived in communism's wake. Implicit in this account, of course, is that there is an alternative.

Lability can rest not only in altering nationalism's meaning or transforming the meaning of the nation through liberal ideology. Lability also can rest in the transformation of the field in which nationalism is understood. By focusing our intellectual energies on explaining the deviant formation of nationalism, we imply that there ought, if not could, be an alternative. To the extent that alternative remains unspoken, or embedded in more universalistic hopes of liberalism's virtue, nationalism, through globalization, becomes ever more deviant. And as we multiply adjectives to define the latest nationalist deviation, we embed that innovation in a tradition of nationalism rather than implicate it in liberalism itself. In short, I suggest that explanations of nationalism are problematic to the extent they focus primarily on nationalists themselves. Lability ought to make us more aware of how liberalism structures the explanation of nationalism, even when liberals are hardly evident in that nation.

Of course nationalists are not likely to allow the liberal vision to pass unmarked, but this varies by society. As Katherine Verdery emphasizes in this collection, liberalism in the Romanian context has a much more difficult time than liberalism in the Hungarian or Polish. To be 'liberal' in the Romanian context risks not just association with being European, but also with being Hungarian. And to be overly sympathetic to Hungarian discourse might suggest that one sympathizes with that nation, in the Romanian nationalist discourse, that threatens Romanian territorial integrity most. Polish liberals, however, can claim that their Westward gaze is simply recognizing a geopolitical choice that Poles must make.⁴⁷ Alliance with the West may be the best way to preserve their national independence before a potential Russian threat.

Regardless of nationalist dynamics, the liberal articulation of the nationalist threat and liberal alternative is more effective when it comes from within the nation. National liberals not only indicate the possibility of an indigeneous liberalism, but they also provide an example of what it means to be liberal in that context. The liberal thus becomes embodied and signified as a living alternative to the nationalist threat, and the 'opposition' between liberal and nationalist is preserved. By recognizing the particular rhetorical move underlying this opposition, however, lability becomes apparent. Without the national liberal in residence, liberalism could never transcend the claim that its opposition to nationalism is based on its own hidden nationalism.

National liberals are also developing their own form of nationalism, however. They are moving beyond the normal civil society model of the nation that I described earlier. For political reasons, however, this meaning of the nation is better left underelaborated.

Liberals give primacy to the economic system. To the extent they also accept liberal or neoliberal views on the economy in their orthodox form⁴⁸ they are also, of necessity, oriented toward a global economy. There is no alternative, in this framework, to reconstructing national economies in order to 'fit' with the West. This is a position of liberals in either global or indigenous space.⁴⁹ In this very moment of articulation, however, liberals argue that the nation is inadequate, and that economic salvation rests without.⁵⁰ Thus, even those liberals who would prefer to avoid the multinational question are somehow implicated in a debate about the relative merits of the nation. And when it comes to economic questions, the nation typically does not fare well before liberals. One of the best illustrations of that can be found in the observations of Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, Poland's most liberal Prime Minister.⁵¹

Drawing on his own experience as a director of the consulting firm, Doradca, Bielecki emphasizes his pragmatic orientation. While Bielecki considers his party strongly rooted in a faith around certain ideals⁵² with a very Western grounding,⁵³ it is based more on reason and common sense rather than ideology. He could develop a clear program, "with our own definition of privatization,"⁵⁴ based on these ideals and common sense. In order to have this program, however, these ideals depend on a very clear ideology of what is healthy and normal in the world system, and what is aberrant. This liberal ideology allows liberals to look at their own society, their own national identity, with an extremely critical eye, enabling a kind of distance from Polishness itself. For instance, Bielecki says this of Polish culture...

It is for sure difficult to be a boss in Poland. ... Poles don't like bosses. In general, Poles don't do well in the position of being a boss, and in my opinion, it is even impossible. We are not a society that has a genetic in built formal discipline.⁵⁵ ... in Poland, it is not believed that success is a result of work, knowledge and exceptional know-how, but a result of a dirty deal.⁵⁶

Bielecki also criticizes society in general for the corruption that he had to deal with as Prime Minister. For instance, he asks why so many bank cashiers did not concern themselves with these obviously suspicious checks in the famous Art-B scandal. He uses this as evidence of Poles' lack of responsibility, especially in comparison to what would happen in England.⁵⁷

Such a liberal critique of the Polish nation would be perfect fodder for nationalist counter-mobilization if it were mounted from London or New York alone. In this case, however, liberalism comes from within the Polish nation. In that moment, liberalism offers its rebuttal to nationalism. Liberal ideology enables Bielecki to step outside of his "Polishness" to administer the treatment that might cure his nation of its socialist malady.⁵⁸ At the same time, because he administered it, he could claim implicitly that he has transcended the problem. And because he is a Pole, the Polish nation, embodied in Bielecki, can become what it is not yet. This implicit liberal rebuttal to the nationalist charge therefore relies on the same nationalist lability identified earlier. The liberal intellectual must be of the nation to make the critique. Proof of that liberal's critique rests in the power of the national ideology, however. If one Pole can do it, all Poles might potentially make it. Liberalism thus enters the nation as an alternative nationalism that claims to be apart from nationalism. Liberalism gains its transformative power by becoming national. Its power also rests on its ability to transcend the national. This is lability.

These two engagements of liberalism and nationalism -- the liberal critique of the actually existing nation and the liberal critique of the actually existing nationalist -- are both national expressions. Without grounding *within* the nation, the liberal critique cannot escape the nationalist counters. Thus, liberalism must become national in order to become effective, and must accept the national claim that national identity matters. Liberalism and nationalism might be distinguished by their relative emphasis on individualism and collectivism in *ideological* terms, but liberalism requires its own nationalism in order to be effective. The liabilities of liberalism and nationalism remain, however, underdeveloped precisely because we remain grounded in the liberal *intellectual's* articulation of the nation.

INTELLECTUALS AND THE NATION IN POLISH BUSINESS

Ideology, by its very contestable nature, is designed to be more packaged, more coherent on a manifest level. Ideological critique might find the liabilities, as suggested above, but this is likely to be the work of intellectuals rather than ideologues. Liabilities do not only live in deconstructionist lairs, however. Liability is more apparent in everyday life than in the study of elites or ideological expressions. It is more apparent because everyday life typically doesn't encourage the formulation of coherent packages of world views. Elites and masses have very different levels of coherence in their belief systems.⁵⁹ One might even question whether categories of actors ought to be transformed in the study of the everyday. Businessmen are not after all, familiar intellectuals in the articulation of the nation.

They are not familiar first of all because they typically don't enunciate the nation. Indeed, as we have explored above, liberalism itself shies away from elaborating that nation because it has relatively little to say, in comparison to nationalists, and what it does have to say is not an elevation of that nation as it already exists. Given the importance, however, of the international qualities of economic reform, however, Polish business is deeply implicated in the nation's redefinition. Businessmen are also not familiar in this role of articulating nations because they are not typically regarded as intellectuals. Under postcommunist conditions, however, I believe they should be, for two basic reasons.

Firstly, on one empirical level, leading businessmen like to cultivate an image of intellectual accomplishment, a certain *Bildung*. For instance, *Gazeta Wyborcza* published a Dictionary of Polish Businessmen on May 12, 1993⁶⁰. In this collection of 130 men and 20 women, 68% had higher education, and 17 out of 20 women had this education (in comparison to 7% of the general population). Of those with higher education, 40% had degrees from the Technical University system and another 43% from the university or economic academy. In fact, Malgorzata Fuszara decides that this group might be labeled the "old-new" middle class because it is composed mostly of the intelligentsia who decide to become businessmen.⁶¹ Of course many of the less prominent businessmen do not have such aspirations or credentials. I nevertheless find the businessmen's strategy quite important. They seek to elevate their prestige by *linking it* with the intelligentsia. In these terms of educational background and especially forms of representation, businessmen and women are not distant from traditional

images of the intelligentsia.⁶² At least businessmen and women are struggling to counteract the negative imagery their newfound profession might imply.

Secondly, businessmen as playing a role akin to what Gramsci described for organic intellectuals.⁶³ The Business Center Club,⁶⁴ for instance, expects its members to influence political and social matters in the country through their example and their argument. Indeed, we might also consider that in the construction of a market economy, the very site of critical intellectual activity in the articulation of the nation changes: away from the publication of texts and the postures of politicians,⁶⁵ toward the elaboration of economic activities that are more central to the nation's definition in a market economy.

Regardless of whether Polish businessmen in general, or the ones I consider below in particular, are intellectual, another point deserves to be made here. Liability is more likely to be apparent in the everyday implementation of ideological formations. We are more likely to find intersecting structures and contradictory expectations, and an agency to transpose rules learned in one context to others, in the space of action rather than enunciation. Because everyday life is less intent on preserving ideological integrity than it is in realizing ambitions through the use of ideologies, we are more likely to discover the conditions and ideas generating new ideological formations.

In 1993, 1994 and 1995 research assistants⁶⁶ and I conducted interviews with Polish managers, business consultants and private entrepreneurs. In initial research on this cultural encounter between Western business experts and Polish entrepreneurs, we argued that so called 'technical assistance' is far more than a transmission of expertise, and rather an attempt at profound cultural transformation in business practices. And while our experts might admire the courage of their entrepreneurial employers, or their 'instinct' for their market, they found little in the business culture of Poland from which they could learn. They might learn about the evils of communism or about Polish history but they wouldn't learn any technique or insight that might even be remotely associated with what American business scholars and students seek when they go to Japan to learn a new approach to business. The only business they learned was a measure of organizational responsibility that the limited sophistication of their enterprise allowed them to assume.⁶⁷

We asked Polish managers and entrepreneurs with whom these experts worked whether the Westerners were in fact mistaken. Wasn't there something Western consultants needed to learn about Polish business culture and/or style in order to advise more effectively. In every interview with top managers of Polish owned firms, Poles emphasized negative things to me about indigenous capacities, and praised certain dimensions of 'global' culture. Liberalism clearly provided the cultural schema with which to assess the inadequacies of the Polish nation.

For example, most would agree that there were certain necessary concepts that Polish business simply did not have -- cash flow and business plans were among the most commonly identified. Each of these concepts, of course, emphasized a different time frame -- business plans indicating the long term, and cash flow the shorter term day to day survival of the firm. But both were equally necessary to the survival of the firm. Businessmen also emphasized that it was absolutely important to change the culture of the Polish firm, to change attitudes toward work and above all, to the client. One manager called this a 'new philosophy', and specifically emphasized

dopieszczanie klienta, to do more than the client expects, one of the key ingredients to success, and far more difficult to do than 'changing the color of one's socks' (#131).⁶⁸ Indigenous business practices, even if quite ingenious, simply did not build the foundations for good legal business activity. As one person recalled,

In the beginning, there was no tradition of normal, regular Polish private business. All the business in Poland was, how to say it, corrupt, not in the criminal way, but corrupt in the way that it was not run by profit but by central planning. And ... the private business, they had to play by the rules as imposed by the companies' partners who were more interested in making good connections than making good products. (127)

One of the most common strategies for a private firm was to work with these state companies, as one successful entrepreneur recalled his start.

There was a big need for computers, but a state company couldn't buy these computers abroad. But the private person could buy them, and then sell it for zlotys to the state company, and then exchange the zlotys for dollars on the private market. It was not criminal, but it was not legal. It was great. (134)

In this sense, private business was conducted in opposition to the state and its law. This legacy, recalls another businessman, is a problem. Socialist Poland therefore leaves Poles with no good national tradition of doing business.

Up to '89, everything was controlled by the state ... which was by definition against business. So one thing which is very new for us and is a problem is how quickly even as a society we can understand that some public activities, even business activities, ... really can be assessed and can be judged in a social way, by public judgment (139).

Today, however, this manager finds corruption rampant. He is disappointed with the degree to which the state has taken responsibility for the prosecution of that corruption. Society, thus, is being miseducated by corrupt capitalism. It fails to learn how to act legally, and is instead encouraged to maintain the bad practices of the past. It is being encouraged to hide profits, to disrespect authority and to disobey the law more generally. The liberal transformation, because the state is not strong enough, is making the nation sick.

The liberals resolve the problem, however, by indicting the patient, the society. Poles are not developing a healthy society because they fail to elaborate the proper liberal vision. For instance, one manager recalled with regret how his employees thought of him: as a fellow Pole, rather than as their manager of a multinational firm in a capitalist economy. He recalled the surprise of his employees when he announced that he was closing down one department of the firm. I asked him, with intentional naiveté, why they expected him to defend that department. He said,

They felt that they, they knew me from the past time (when he was a director thirty years earlier). That I was, let's say, a patriot of this company. (but) they badly understand what is pat—local patriotism. For me local patriotism is to earn money. For those who want to work, and not to defend those groups and machines which are worthless from the technological point of view.

They are good for a museum. They (the employees) are too sentimental. I am not sentimental anymore. (952)

I suspect that if these interviews were conducted by Poles, we would have found more positive traits of Polish firms identified and emphasized. But these traits would have been identified in comparison to other Polish firms, minimizing the American comparison. My presence and emphasis on their contact with Western consultants accentuated the American comparison, which in turn undervalued the Polish experience. My presence is not unusual, however. Western know-how is part and parcel of post-communist liberalism, especially in terms of business. If one examines the interviews and tracts of post-communist liberalism's leading spokespersons⁶⁹ the West almost always figures as a positive reference point, with the post-communist country diagnosed as inadequate in some way. In this sense, liberalism in postcommunist capitalism at most incorporates the entrepreneurial spirit of a select group of leading indigenous capitalists fused with the technical sophistication of a larger world business culture.⁷⁰ Indigenous business culture, the cultural soul of the post-communist capitalist turn, is bankrupt.

We thus find in these interviews the same kind of nationalist liberalism that we found in the more elite statements discussed above. The challenge of liberalism is not just to value individual rights or private property, but to transform the collective identity of a nation, to make it into something that it is not. At the same time, however, these managers display a critique of liberalism that is less commonly found in more political forums. For these managers, liberalism's limitations can often be found in Western presumption. But these limitations are also more typically found where liberalism and nationalism clash: within the multinational firm among managers who have regular contact with West Europeans and Americans.

These managers consider themselves, properly, as relatively sophisticated, given their more or less extensive contact with Western business practices. They are not the "white socked corrupt Polish businessmen" who are the object of so much derision. All of them also expressed some distance from the West, however. There were several strategies for that distancing, but nearly all of them had one underlying comment -- that the West is at best naive, often insensitive, and frequently arrogant if not downright colonial in their attitude.

The most Westernized indigenous manager I have interviewed was a marketing manager in an joint venture. There was nothing intrinsically wrong, she said, with the firm's culture of doing business in Eastern Europe. The company has its own culture which cuts across national boundaries, and the only thing wrong was that sometimes Westerners were too arrogant, talking behind people's backs, snickering at East Europeans as if they were dumb. This, she thought, was a great failing; Westerners should always demonstrate their faith that people can learn (957). Another manager recalled a similar event:

We employed a Dutch company to develop a management information system for us ... after a couple of weeks, they took seven top people from the company for a day, which was really a sacrifice on our part. And we went to a meeting.. and they were explaining to us why it is important to have a good management information system installed in the company. They were rewording what we told them already, showing us diagrams like input/output or people/other

resources/output... like they were showing, oh, I don't know, undergraduates or something... the consultants were predisposed... that we were dumb, stupid and incompetent people (127)

While this kind of consultant arrogance might exist also in the West, in Eastern Europe it is seen to be more than an occupational hazard. It is inevitably implicated in a question of the nation and its membership in a larger global culture of business accomplishment.

Sometimes this arrogance goes beyond insensitivity, and produces a lot more hostility among managers than only resentment. Another manager recalled a story where the parent company demanded that this manager use his connections to fix standards for the import of some factors of production.

Deliveries to Poland are completely signed that the product has to be delivered according to the Polish rules, Polish standard. And they expect that because I am a previous president (of the regulatory agency), I can have everything (done) like that (as he rubs his hands against each other, like "chip, chop"] So I told them, Why didn't you sign the contract according to the official standard? I am not responsible for your relation with that agency! (They tell me) Oh well, you have to arrange it somehow. How can I arrange it? How? There are rules, standards. (They say) Arrange the meeting with them. Well I arrange for the dinner with the, with the president of the commission. You know him! Go ahead, arrange it with him! You know American officials? You know how to fight for visa in the States? Well it's the same way with the Polish authorities. Apply, for example, valid documentation. Write a letter, attach the documentation, and wait for the approval. How can I arrange it? It's not Bangladesh or any other country in which you can go [slaps the table, as if slapping down a bribe)], give the envelope and arrange it. Maybe some envelope maybe would be helpful, but it is impossible to arrange these things without following proper procedures. I told them, I can maybe, maybe I can accelerate something. But it is impossible to avoid the necessary actions. They (the multinational managers) don't understand it. It's a colonial attitude. They suppose that they are in the wild countries, in which the, the—all the administration is corrupted totally. And, in which I have everywhere friends and I can arrange it in a way they don't want to, to think about. It makes me crazy sometimes (952)

This arrogance not only is unseemly, but many East Europeans find that the parent company's arrogance and condescension actually leads them to poor business decisions. Sometimes their point is right out of a business textbook, in a passage familiar to anyone enjoined to 'know your customer':

There are many potential marketing possibilities using Polish traditions, using the Polish mentality, using Polish culture, so if you know Polish conditions you can profit, you can really adapt to the needs of the people ... the needs cannot be the same because you (speaking to Kennedy) have a quite different experience, quite different history of your own country, so the needs may be the same but absolutely maybe not... (139)

Sometimes, however, it goes beyond knowing the desires of your customer today, beyond knowing what a focus group or marketing survey might yield. Sometimes it reflects directly on the past, as one manager discussed 'employee of the month' awards:

They come up with ideas. They're happy to receive, uh, money, this reward. But when you want to put their name and their picture on the board and say, This guy really did something, no, because, it continues to be perceived as something negative really. Because you are cooperating with authority. Cooperation with authority is not good by definition. Because it's been—and it's not only the communist system, it's also the, the history of Poland—you know, when it was partitioned for 200 years. To defy authority, to fight authority was a good patriotic deed. So now if you, all of a sudden, are recognized by authority, it means—well, who are you? Which side are you on? Even though, you know, we try to communicate and explain, you know, it's, it's pretty good for all of us. They are very skeptical towards it. In fact if you—I, I was just amazed myself -- when you try to—when you take like corporate creeds— Or mission statements. In English. And they make perfect sense, they're sincere and all this. You translate into Polish— It sounds terrible. It sounds almost 100 per cent like communist propaganda (955)

The pragmatic profit making spirit, at the heart of economic liberalism, thus can critique the global cultural dispositions on which it arrives. At the same time, managers can ingeniously elevate the indigenous culture and link it to liberalism to produce a new Polish nation. They are manufacturing a new Polish nation in which *some* popular sympathies can be sutured to the new nation, while others must be discarded. The fundamental principle of this new liberal nation is that *knowing the nation* is fundamental to good business practice as much as knowing liberalism. And part of knowing the nation involves respecting it as a place filled with people who are capable of learning.

This cultural emphasis is not incompatible with the earlier liberal articulation of the nation as a pluralistic site of law-abiding interest formation. It does, however, incorporate a measure of cultural pride and value of cultural knowledge that the other did not make explicit. This valuation comes, in fact, within liberalism's multinational conditions. It also can be the foundation for more aggressive turns in the nation's articulation. The Polish businessman might even define himself as part of the national mission: defending the nation's economic interests within liberalism while transforming the society so that the nation can survive. In fact, Poles might even aspire to become the site out of which a more global postcommunist liberalism might be defined.

Managers sometimes identified divergent interests between the parent firm and the indigenous company. One manager spoke of how a company purchased a firm in order to milk it dry (955), and another spoke of how the multinational sought to undermine their capacity to be manufacturers and exporters of finished goods and turn them into suppliers of unfinished manufacturing goods (952).

These critiques of Western practices were not critical of the liberal project itself. Instead, they were critical of the inadequacies of Westerners in a strange land, and in praise of local knowledge. In this fashion, these indigenous managers could embrace the liberalism of economic transformation, urge the adaptation of Western

models in Polish reality, and distance the Westerner him or herself as inadequate to the task of transformation. In this sense, the presence of the Westerner in Polish postcommunist capitalism indicates the inadequacy of the nation, but a temporary inadequacy, one that could be transcended by the creation of a new class of national heroes. The Polish manager is the one, by embodying both the capitalist expertise and knowledge of East European everyday life, that can transform these economies and societies. And at the same time, they can defend Polish business when need be from being ravaged by multinationals, but NOT at the expense of protecting outdated equipment, procedures, or practices. In this sense, they are better than nationalists or socialists, for they have the expertise to protect the nation's economy. But while they protect the nation's economy, they also are obliged to transform the nation.:

Poles still believe that the world owes them something. That Poland is still an important European country, because it was one of the main causalities of the second World War for example. Nobody gives a damn now in the West what happened during the second World War, and whether Poland was important or not. Poles still think a lot about national boundaries, national states. It's very important for them. It's such a shock to learn that people really travel freely, and that the West is really becoming international... Poland is kind of a nineteenth century nationalist dream, probably the only one in Europe which has for no practical purpose minorities.... Also, I think in this whole business thing, that economies are motivated to run by profit-motives. It's a shock. In a way, lots of Polish attitudes, especially in the countryside, is kind of pre-industrialized world attitudes. Some of them are nice and are not detrimental to progress... but some are just... most Poles believe that the most important part is becoming agriculture. They can't understand that Poles might be better off just buying subsidized food from Western Europe... (127)

Even as they transform their nation, Polish businessmen recognize that they have a special identity that they can present in the international field. Poles have long cast themselves as somehow between East and West,⁷¹ now they can claim the same crossroads identity as transmitters of capitalist know-how, understanding better than Westerners the pathological past, but at the same time, understanding better than those to their East how to make Western know-how applicable.

One manager recalled how they began working with lawyers from the West in Belarus. One of the experts advised that it was unnecessary to privatize agriculture because it was already private, believing, after all, that *kolkhozy* were private because they were coops. Americans, he said, often come in with theoretical knowledge about how supply and demand will solve problems, but East Europeans will rarely believe them. For instance, when shops are privatized, East Europeans believe that only vodka and cigarettes will be sold. But the Polish consultant can convince his Eastern neighbors by appealing to the Polish experience and how it really worked (131).

Thus, in a global comparison, East Central European identities can acquire this positive reference in post-communist capitalism, but only within the post-communist imagined community. When engaging the Westerner

on "European" territory, post-communist liberalism cannot elevate the Pole or Czech or Hungarian over the European. But when engaging that European on postcommunist space, by understanding the pathology of the nation that endured communism, the postcommunist liberal can be more effective in its transformation.

In sum, one can find in elite liberal enunciations a clear articulation of the nation. They emphasize that the nation should be normal, not peculiar; it should be like the West.⁷² At the same time, underelaborated but pronounced, the nation must be transformed, ridden of its socialist maladies and inappropriate traditionalisms. Polish businessmen share these ideas, but they also go beyond them. They are prepared to assume the new role of national hero. Their rational and sophisticated business practices might enable the nation's salvation, by being able to develop indigenous business competence. They can develop the real patriotism, one that knows how to make money for Poles. They will be in the position to distinguish between good investments and bad investments from abroad. And even more, they might occupy a position that elevates Poland once again to that crossroads identity between East and West, except this time as the interpreter for postcommunist conditions of global liberal visions.

POSTCOMMUNIST BUSINESSMEN ARTICULATING THE NATION

The businessmen whose interviews I have recalled here were not intellectuals, in the classical sense. Some of them were once in that position, as teachers in the university, artists or professionals in other trades. They all certainly had the higher education and a breadth of cultivation, *Bildung*, that made them a wonderful partner in conversations about intellectual matters far beyond the province of business. But now, their 'job' is something quite different.

Now they are challenged by the new intellectual opportunity -- taking a global business culture whose stock of knowledge is consequential for developing a firm, and 'translating' it into a suitably indigenous practice appropriate to Polish business. While that certainly does not seem to be about articulating the nation, through their practice and example they are also instructing the nation about how they should see themselves. Sometimes it is quite explicit: as one editor put it to me, the mission of his publication was to teach how to look at the world through the lens of money, by highlighting things useful in a market economy, from how a high flying senator cheated the treasury out of taxes to what elements in a building lease contract need to be there in order to be safe in Polish law (125). But it is certainly the case that the nation is not the primary ideological commitment of businessmen.

Unlike intellectual historians of the nation or public intellectuals articulating liberal or illiberal versions of the nation, or even most liberal nationalists, businessmen do not, explicitly, seek to redefine the nation. They certainly have their opinions, as they are Polish citizens, but their job is not to articulate them on the pages of their publications or in advertising for their products. They are not useful, then, for illustrating the alternative types of nationalisms that exist out there. Through the effect of their practices and their own articulations in everyday life of what the nation is and what it must be, however, they are certainly as influential if not more influential than

those who focus on the nation per se. Their effects carry the discursive power of necessity -- if economics is the primary basis for identity -- and of invisibility -- if they speak only practically and not ideologically.

In their view, the Polish nation before the requisites of business is inadequate. It must be transformed by Western business practices. At the same time, Western business practitioners are inadequate before the Polish nation, but not because their general vision is hostile or their general methods inappropriate. They are inadequate only because they don't understand the pathology of what it was to be Polish for the last forty years. Positioning themselves in this fashion, postcommunist businessmen can redefine the nation -- dissect it to define its pathology, but at the same time, preserve it by demonstrating that they, as Poles, can do what their critique suggests they must. But this is a different kind of nationalism.

This nationalism does not elevate the nation as superior. Indeed, its superiority only rests in its claim to be able to transcend its past, and to become something it claims as its national right: to be European. Its claim to superiority rests only in recognizing its pathology. But for those in East Central Europe, access to the pathology that was communism allows them to embrace a kind of superiority that those further to the East do not: they can return to the national identity as bridge between West and East, between the future and the past. And with that, the nation can become superior, only because of the tragedy it had to endure and now moves beyond. Nationalists don't like it, and liberals hardly talk about it, but liberalism, in the hands of Polish businessmen, becomes nationalism. It manages this best, of course, by avoiding the label. Liability.

NOTES

¹ Forthcoming in Ronald Grigor Suny and Michael D. Kennedy, Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation (University of Michigan Press). I wish to thank Ron Suny and the volume's anonymous reviewers for their comments on this essay. I also wish to thank the William Davidson Institute and the Center for International Business Education at the University of Michigan for their financial support of the data collection that has enabled this essay.

² I am building on Nicolae Harsanyi and Michael D. Kennedy, "Between Utopia and Dystopia: The Labilities of Nationalism in Eastern Europe" in Michael D. Kennedy (ed.) Envisioning Eastern Europe: Postcommunist Cultural Studies. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994. Niki should be credited with finding the term, lability, which consolidated and furthered our theoretical work on nationalism in Poland, Hungary, Ukraine and Romania in that essay.

³ Many of my colleagues have tried to impress on me the significance of everyday life for social analysis, but it was Margaret Foley, Rebecca Friedman and Naomi Galtz's October 1996 "Private Life in Russia" conference at the University of Michigan that finally made the mutual importance of everyday life and studies of intellectuals obvious to me. For one important theoretical perspective on everyday life, see Alf Ludtke. The History of Everyday Life. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁴ Geoff Eley, "Intellectuals and the Labor Movement" pp. 74-96 in by Leon Fink, Stephen T. Leonard and Donald M. Reid (eds.) Intellectuals and Public Life: Between Radicalism and Reform. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996.

⁵ I use the term businessmen to reflect the Polish term "biznesmeny", as well as to signify the process of masculinization in the elaboration of business and capitalism in post-communist Eastern Europe. See for example Peggy Watson, "The Rise of Masculinism in Eastern Europe", New Left Review 198(1993):71-82.

⁶ In some ways, this term resembles that classic term of American political science, "influentials". In Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961:557-58), V.O. Key used the term to describe opinion leaders and activists who disproportionately influence public opinion. I find the connotation of the "prominent" more appealing, however, because it puts the proper emphasis on the *appearance* of influence rather than its actual exercise, as Key's term suggests. Although I first encountered its use in Polish, Janet Hart tells me that "prominenci" has a proper Italian linguistic genealogy. I introduced this term in the context of another project collecting the oral histories of "prominenci" in Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. (See <http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/crees/fsugrant>).

⁷ For my previous engagements with intellectuals and intelligentsia as such, see "The Intelligentsia in the Constitution of Civil Societies and Post-Communist Regimes in Hungary and Poland" Theory and Society, vol 21 #1 (1992):29-76; "Eastern Europe's Lessons for Critical Intellectuals" pp. 94-112 in Charles Lemert (ed.) Intellectuals and Politics: Social Theory in a Changing World. (Boulder: Sage Press, 1991), and "The Constitution of Critical Intellectuals: Polish Physicians, Peace Activists and Democratic Civil Society" Studies in Comparative Communism vol. 23 #3/4 (1990):281-304.

⁸ Joanna Kurczewska, "The Polish Intelligentsia: Retiring from the Stage" pp. 239-54 in Christopher G.A. Bryant and Edmund Mokrzycki (eds.) Democracy, Civil Society and Pluralism. Warszawa: IFiS, 1995.

⁹ For recent reviews, see Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, "Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation" Becoming National: A Reader. Princeton University Press, 1996; John A. Hall, "Nationalisms, Classified and Explained" pp. 8-33 in Sukumar Periwal (ed.) Notions of Nationalism. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995; Michael D. Kennedy, "What is the Nation after Communism and Modernity?" Polish Sociological Review 1:105(1994):47-58

¹⁰ Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and its Fragments Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 4.

¹¹ Rogers Brubaker, Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). p. 61.

¹² For an important demonstration for why omitting liberalism from an explanation of nationalism is problematic, see Susan Woodward, Balkan Tragedy Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1995.

¹³ See for example Adam Michnik, "The Literary Impact of the American and French Revolutions", Partisan Review, 59, 4(1992):621-27. For commentary on this, see Michael D. Kennedy, "An Introduction to Ideology and Identity in Transformation" in Michael D. Kennedy (ed.) Envisioning Eastern Europe: Postcommunist Cultural Studies. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994

¹⁴ Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies" American Sociological Review. 51(1986)273-86.

¹⁵ Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation" in Bhabha, Nation and Narration (London: Routledge Press, 1990), pp. 302, 297.

¹⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, Legislators and Interpreters Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

¹⁷ Echoing here Slavoj Zizek's ideas about the mirror-like motive for the enthusiasm over communism's end. See Tarrying with the Negative (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993):200.

¹⁸ Liberalism after Communism. Budapest: Central European Press, 1995. I draw upon his work for this section.

¹⁹ Vaclav Klaus and Tomas Jezek, "False Liberalism and Recent Changes in Czechoslovakia" East European Politics and Societies, 5:1(1991):

²⁰ p. 38

²¹ Szacki, p. 31.

²² pp. 43-72.

²³ p. 173.

²⁴ M. Dzielski, "Szefczyk Dratewka ma pomysl' Duch nadchodzacego Czasu, p. 206. (Warsaw: Wektory, 1989) cited in Szacki, p. 131.

²⁵ pp. 137-38.

²⁶ pp. 143-44.

²⁷ pp. 158-59.

²⁸ p. 173.

²⁹ pp. 53-58.

³⁰ p. 177

³¹ Szacki finds three basic orientations toward the nation: 1) Christian liberalism, which tended to avoid the basic conflicts between value systems and to believe on that basis that a harmony of beliefs was possible; 2) conservative liberalism which found basic conflicts, but maintained that cultural matters could be left to religion, and economic and political matters left to liberalism; and 3) that tendency which believes a new civilization is necessary. As one of its main spokesmen, Janusz Lewandowski, asserted, "only part of the national heritage could enter the new capitalist synthesis. The more sudden the changes of structures, the faster the progress of the market, the more dynamic the adjustment processes have to be and the less room there is for conservatism" see "Czy i jaka centraprawica?" Przegląd Polityczny, 1992, no. 3(16). cited in Szacki, p. 185. This position does not necessarily mean an attack on the Church. Many, even those in the left liberal tradition, found their own personal reconciliation with the Church, but could nonetheless not resolve those ideological tensions between political

liberalism and its view of a many sided truth vs. a religious conception of absolute truth, and an economic liberalism that vaunted the market over moral questions of distributive justice. See pp. 192-93.

³² pp. 203-04.

³³ See William H. Sewell Jr.'s critique of rational choice theory in "Theory of Action, Dialectic and History" American Journal of Sociology 93(1987):166-71 for one reason why such a focus on subject formation is generally important.

³⁴ See William H. Sewell Jr., "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation" American Journal of Sociology 98:1(1992):1-29. p.20

³⁵ Jacek Kurczewski and Iwona Jakubowska-Branicka, (eds.) Biznes I Klasy Srednie. Warszawa: Zaklad Socjologii Obyczajow I Prawa, Institut Stosowanych Nauk Spolecznych, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1994.

³⁶ Iwona Krzesak, "Etnografia Business Centre Club" pp. 37-61 in Jacek Kurczewski, (ed.) Biznes I Klasy Srednie. Warszawa: Zaklad Socjologii obyczajow I Prawa, Institut Stosowanych Nauk Spolecznych, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1994 See also Pauline Gianoplus's Ph.D. dissertation in progress at the University of Michigan, Department of Sociology.

³⁷ p. 48.

³⁸ Elzbieta Skotnicka-Illasiewicz and Wlodzimierz Wesolowski, "The Significance of Preconceptions: Europe of Civil Societies and Europe of Nationalities" pp. 208-27 in Sukumar Perival (ed.) Notions of Nationalism. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995.

³⁹ p. 210.

⁴⁰ Vaclav Havel, "New Definition -- North Atlantic Treaty Unchanged" Polityka 22 June 1996, p. 13; in FBIS EEU 96 121 21 June 1996, p. 6.

⁴¹ Interview the Milan Kucan, president of Slovenia, and Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech Republic, by Adam Cerny and Martin Ehl, "A President is Primarily a Citizen" Prague Tyden , June 3, 1996, p. 35. FBIS EEU 96-125, June 27, 1996, p. 6.

⁴² For a translation of some of his program, see pp. 164-65 in Harsanyi and Kennedy, 1994.

⁴³ pp. 67-68 in "What is a Hungarian?" George Konrad, The Melancholy of Rebirth: Essays from Postcommunist Central Europe. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1995.

⁴⁴ p. 285 in Vladimir Tismaneanu, Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel. New York: Free Press, 1992.

⁴⁵ In "Fantasies of Salvation: Varieties of Nationalism in Postcommunist Eastern Europe pp. 102-24 in Michael D. Kennedy (ed.) Envisioning Eastern Europe: Postcommunist Cultural Studies. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

⁴⁶ p. 104.

⁴⁷ Elzbieta Skotnicka-Illasiewicz and Wlodzimierz Wesolowski op cit. indicate that liberal parliamentarians make this geopolitical point explicitly.

⁴⁸ pp. 137-38.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey Sachs, Poland's Jump to the Market Economy. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993, p. 5. Leszek Balcerowicz interviewed in "Gdyby nie Gorbaczow" pp. 5-29. in Teresa Toranska(ed.) My Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza MOST, 1994.

⁵⁰ Of course this national dependency is manifestly important for smaller nations. As one of the parliamentary elites interviewed by Skotnicka-Illasiewicz and Wesolowski emphasized, it is a matter of choosing which ally one wants, and which will preserve one's nation best.

⁵¹ I use his interview with Teresa Toranska, "W swiecie poswyzszonej schizofrenii" pp. 30-87 in My (We or better rendered in English "Us") Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza MOST, 1994 for one text to illustrate this point. This is a particularly useful text for such an illustration, as it follows Toranska's earlier publication, Oni (Them), in which she interviewed communists.

⁵² p. 39

⁵³ especially from the point of view of Moscow. p. 42.

⁵⁴ p. 33

⁵⁵ p. 56

⁵⁶ p. 81

⁵⁷ p. 77.

⁵⁸ Of course there is ample Polish precedent for such critical takes on Polishness, and thus need not go to liberalism for this disposition. Witold Gombrowicz, one of Poland's most celebrated writers, eloquently critiqued many expressions of Polish national identity.

⁵⁹ Michael Mann, "The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy", British Journal of Sociology, 1971. Phillip Converse, "????".

⁶⁰ Analysis of which was undertaken by Malgorzata Fuszara, "Styl Zycia, Pracy I Konsumpcji Biznesmenow Polskich: Analiza /Slovnika Businessmenow Polskich" pp. 21-35 in Jacek Kurczewski, (ed.) Biznes I Klasy Srednie. Warszawa: Zaklad Socjologii obyczajow I Prawa, Institut Stosowanych Nauk Spolecznych, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1994.

⁶¹ p. 34.

⁶² Indeed, Joanna Kurczewska argues that the intelligentsia as such are disappearing under postcommunism, to be replaced by more specialized kinds of intellectualities. See "The Polish Intelligentsia: Retiring from the Stage" and Edmund Mokrzycki, "A New Middle Class?" in Christopher G. A. Bryant and Edmund Mokrzycki (eds.) Democracy, Civil Society and Pluralism. Warsaw: IFiS, 1995.

⁶³ Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals" in The Prison Notebooks: London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971:5 actually identifies the capitalist entrepreneur as an intellectual, the 'organizer of society'. For a much greater elaboration of this class's alternative formations and business culture, see Pauline Gianoplus's University of Michigan doctoral dissertation in sociology in progress.

⁶⁴ Iwona Krzesak, "Etnografia Business Centre Club" pp. 37-61 in Jacek Kurczewski, (ed.) Biznes I Klasy Srednie. Warszawa: Zaklad Socjologii obyczajow I Prawa, Institut Stosowanych Nauk Spolecznych, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1994 See also Pauline Gianoplus, dissertation University of Michigan.

⁶⁵ Hence it is not surprising that many intellectuals now feel themselves irrelevant. Adam Michnik, for instance, has said that in comparison to the communist past, the major problem facing intellectuals is that here is a "cacophony" of voices out there, and nobody is especially heeded (personal communication: October 1996).

⁶⁶ In 1993 and 1994, Pauline Gianoplus, Margaret Foley and Magdalena Szaflarski conducted interviews for this project. Our research was supported by the University of Michigan Center for International Business Education. In 1995, Naomi Galtz joined Foley and Gianoplus to conduct these interviews. Our research in that year was supported by the William Davidson Institute.

⁶⁷ See Michael D. Kennedy and Pauline Gianoplus, "Entrepreneurs and Expertise: A Cultural Encounter in the Making of Post-Communist Capitalism in Poland" East European Politics and Societies 8:1(1994):27-54. One reason we interviewed these managers was to assess whether the same negative assessment of business culture existed among them.

⁶⁸ The numbers following quotes refer to a particular interview; the identity of each interviewee must, by prior agreement, remain confidential.

⁶⁹ Toranska's interviews with Balcerowicz and Bielecki for example.

⁷⁰ See Kennedy and Gianoplus, 1994.

⁷¹ See Piotr S. Wandycz, The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

⁷² For a marvelous account of different kinds of normalizations, see Daina Stukuls, "Viewing the Nation." East European Politics and Societies 1997.