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DEMOCRATS, AUTHORITARIANS AND NOSTALGICS: SLOVENIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD DEMOCRACY

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Abstract:

In this article, the authors deal with one of the elements of democratic political culture, i.e. attitudes toward democracy in Slovenia as one of the new EU members from East-Central Europe that only less than two decades ago established both its independent state and a democratic political system. They focus on four such aspects: the general understanding of democracy, attitudes toward democracy, support for democracy, and the level of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Slovenia. On the basis of the analysis of data from public-opinion polls, they detect some inconsistencies in Slovenian's attitudes toward democracy and even the presence of sentiments that are not compatible with democratic norms and principles.

Keywords: democracy, political culture, attitudes, Slovenia

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Introduction

With the collapse of communist form of rule, Slovenia as well as other countries from East-Central Europe stepped onto the path of comprehensive change, directed towards the establishment of political system as in existence in developed Western countries. This process was comprehensively analysed from different perspectives. (see, for example, Adam et al., 2005) We are talking about the installation of democracy as a form of political rule that is one of the core characteristics of modern societies. However, democracy is a complex phenomenon that could be defined in different ways. There is substantive diversity in perceptions, attitudes and understandings of democracy both from the hand of theorists and political actors (elites as

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well as ordinary citizens) (Blokker, 2008). Notions of democracy range from a minimalist approaches a sense of Schumpeterian perception, stressing its competitive dimension as a system in which citizens can choose between different political actors/elites (Schumpeter 1996) to the approaches of participative democracy stressing institutionalisation of participative opportunities of the people (Wolfe, 1985; Pateman, 2000) and other more qualitative notions, taking into account conditions necessary for its healthy functioning such as the rule of law, free media, mechanisms for empowerment of the citizenry, spontaneous cooperation among agents etc. (see, for example, Tomšič and Vehovar, 2006; Tomšič and Prijon, 2009; Adam and Rončević, 2003). For the purpose of our analysis, we define democracy as an 'extended polyarchy' in terms of supplementation of original (Dahlean) concept¹ that is related primarily to the electoral dimension of accountability (i.e. processes of political selection based on freedom of political action and political equality) with mechanisms of permanent control over power-holders through institutional balance of power between different branches of government as well as through mutual checking of civil and state actors on a different level of polity.

Democraticness as a trait of particular society can be thus defined as a level of matching of the existing political institutions and processes with the standards of (extended polyarchic democracy). Democracy is, as stated by Almond (1992: 6), 'a continuous state of becoming', meaning there are different types as well as levels of development of democratic order and, in this way, different democracies can be assessed according to the criteria of higher and lower 'quality' (O'Donnell, 2007). There are three dimensions of political system related to the level of democracy. We are speaking about 1. institutional, 2. actional² and 3. cultural dimension. The first refers to the formal political setting as manifests in country's constitution, legislation and other normative acts that regulate political life of the community. The second relate to actual political dynamics, i.e. the nature of political process as well as self-organisational potential of society. The latter consists of different cultural elements, related to political life – values, sentiments and attitudes, relating to different aspects of the relationships between citizens and political institutions and actors, usually labelled with a term 'political culture'.

¹ Dahl's concept of polyarchy as 'real-existing democracy' contains the following institutional factors, necessary for the persistence of democracy: elected officials, free, fair and relatively often elections, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, autonomy of associations and inclusive citizenship (Dahl 1971; 1989; 1998).

² It refers to societal processes, i.e. activities of different agents in society.

Political culture is thus, according to vast body of scholarly literature, an important factor of democratic development (Almond and Verba, 1963; Di Palma, 1990; Diamond, 1999). The present article deals with one the elements of democratic political culture, i.e. attitudes toward different aspects of democratic political setting, in the context of Slovenia as an example of newly democratised country. In our analysis, we focused on four such aspects: the general understanding of democracy, attitudes toward democracy, support for democracy, and the level of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Slovenia. We suppose that on the basis of analysis of attitudes toward democracy, instead of a simple distinction between democratic and authoritarian attitudes, several components can be determined. The relation between these components and particular political orientation will be explored.

Support for democracy as an element of democratic political culture

Prevailing cultural patterns (i.e. relationships between different types of these patterns) strongly determine the nature of particular institutional form (Lockhart, 1999). There are certain values that are more compatible with democratic principles than others. This brings us to the concept of political culture. If we deal with different aspects of political culture, we must be aware of the complexity of this concept.¹ Namely, as stated by Lucian Pye (1968: 218) political culture is »the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system«, or, stated by Almond and Verba (1963:13), »the particular distribution of patterns of orientations toward political objects among members of the nation«. It includes both political ideals and political norms. Political culture is a phenomenon that involves psychological and subjective dimensions of politics; it is a product of collective history of a political system and is thus enrooted in public events as well as in private experiences.

What is in our interest here is a democratic political culture, i.e. values and behaviour patterns, compatible with democratic principles and supportive of democratic development. What is meant by democratic political culture highly matches the concept of civic culture as established by Almond and Verba (1963) in their famous comparative

¹ Particular elements of political culture could be in different ways related to different aspects of political system or there could even be a tension between them. For conceptualisation of political culture in a modern, highly differentiated society, see, for example, Berg-Schlosser and Rytlewski 1993.

study on political culture in five countries.¹ This type of political culture is an important factor of democratic performance or, as stated by Lipset (1994), one of the requisites of democracy. Cultural climate with strong self-expression values where tolerance, trust and participative orientation prevail induces, as some theorists claim, more responsive and responsible behaviour of the political elites, thus enhancing effectiveness of democracy (Welzel, 2002; Welzel et al., 2003; Inglehart and Welzel, 2003).

(Political) culture is a multilayered phenomenon, composed of different elements that exert different impact on the behaviour of individuals and groups. Generally speaking, one can discern between 'thick' and 'thin' culture (Walzer, 1994; Pye, 2003). While thick culture is essential, coherent, deeply rooted in socialisation process, geographically homogeneous, durable and exogenous from ordinary politics; thin culture is empirical, less binding, endogenous (constructed), heterogeneous, more changeable and more rooted in recent experience (Pye 2003: 7-8; Mishler and Pollack 2003: 239-243). The both of them should not be perceived in a mutually exclusive way. While the core attributes are relatively thick (stable), they are getting thinned as one moves from the core to the periphery. According to Mishler and Pollack (2003: 245), more basic orientations, such as ideologies, and orientations toward more fundamental social objects such as nation religion, and ethnicity, would be located closer to the conceptual core where culture is thicker; less fundamental orientations, such as attitudes, would be located further away from the core, where the culture is relatively thinner; while social and political values (individualism vs. collectivism, materialism vs. postmaterialism, order vs. freedom etc.) would be located somewhere in between.

As mentioned in the introduction, our analysis is focused on the attitudes toward democracy, i.e. one of the aspects of thinner culture. However, it may be assumed that in a truly stable democratic system the general preference for democracy when compared to its authoritarian alternatives not only at the thin level of attitudes but also on the thicker level of the fundamental values. There is connection between attitudes and other cultural elements like values and identities. While some attitudes that reflect people's perception of political institutions and actors, their performance and behaviour are rather changeable, others are related to more fundamental issues like understanding of the nature

¹ Almond and Verba differed between three types of political culture: parochial, subject and participant culture. In this context, they clearly stated that only participant culture, based on autonomous and active individual, is compatible with democratic political setting.

of democracy and other types of political rule. They are integral part of citizen or civil competence that consists of those attitudes and skills that are necessary for successful governance (Soltan 1999: 17). It means the ability of the citizenry to play an active role *vis a vis* political authorities in terms of participation in political process and monitoring over conduct of power-holders.

Political culture and consolidation of new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe

To understand situation in post-communist transition regarding its democratic perspective, one has to look upon the cultural context in which historical development of these societies took place. In historical terms, most Eastern and Central European societies were part of the European (semi) periphery (Janos, 1989; 2000; Berend, 2001; Adam et al., 2005a) meaning they were so-called 'late-comers' not only in the sense of economic modernisation, but also in the cultural sense. They were characterised by a wide cultural gap between the educated elite and ignorant masses, and slow and partial secularisation with the strong role of the church (the Catholic one in Central Europe, the Orthodox one in Eastern and South-east Europe). (The only exception was the Czech lands, where the process of secularisation occurred earlier and was more thorough.)

Such circumstances provided weak grounds for the formation of a democratic political culture based on cherishing freedom, autonomy and the liberty of the individual, on the appreciation of pluralism and on the participative orientation of the population. Behaviour of the majority was characterised by submissiveness and passivity, deriving from perception of power and authority as something eternal and unchangeable, thus they can (or even may) exert control over them. On the other hand, the dominant elite was characterised by its sense of superiority, manifested in their lofty and paternalistic attitudes toward the 'common people', denying them ability of participation in public matters. Even the intelligentsia that represented society's educated minority was characterised to a significant extent by the sense of collective mission of enlightening and moral steering of the nation and thus nurtured a sense of superiority toward ordinary people – a trait that was not particularly compatible with democratic political culture (Szablowski, 1993; Bozoki, 1999). Characteristics of political culture like submissiveness toward the state, messianic perception of social change and ignorance toward established social norms (for example, avoidance of legal duties) represented considerable obstacle to political modernisation (Elster et al., 1998: 38). One can say that 'real socialism' was not totally alien in

the Central and Eastern European tradition but in many ways was a continuation of the authoritarian tradition. What was new was a messianic totalitarianism deriving from the utopian project of creating a 'new' society according to the postulates of Marxist-Leninist ideology. However, despite the common 'core' traits communist regimes differed among each other in some aspects. Different political purposes and operational principles influenced different norms and symbolic expressions resulting in the variations in the character of political culture of communist societies (Janos, 1996).

The collapse of communist regime and change of institutional setting did not automatically lead to the consensual installation of the value system, typical for established democracies with developed democratic political culture. Enthusiasm for democratic change sharply decreased soon after system transition, manifested in low level of confidence in political institutions, especially political parties what resulted in thesis of 'promulgation of anti-party sentiments' (see Fink-Hafner, 1995: 184; compare with Plasser and Ulram, 1996). On the other hand, certain nostalgia for communism appeared, manifested in an increase of a number of those who started to positively assess former regime.

Given the prevailing authoritarian tradition of Central and Eastern European societies that has communist as well as pre-communist origins, many observers (especially in the first half of the 1990s during the initial period of post-communist transformation) saw political culture as a problematic factor that could cause destabilisation or even the return of authoritarianism (see, for example, Pribersky, 1996; Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1999). This usually refers to the 'cultural lag', i.e. authoritarian tradition, especially widespread paternalism as the main element of political culture in this part of Europe, as integral part of both pre-communist and communist heritage). What was often cited was a lack of 'diffuse support' characteristic of established democracies, meaning that an evaluation of the government and legitimacy of the regime were tightly connected (Pridham and Lewis, 1996: 1). The support of government was supposed to strongly depend on its performance in the economic field, which meant problems because, in the event of a serious deterioration of the economic situation, egalitarian paternalism and authoritarianism (which were present latently) could arise again and threaten democratic stabilisation.

In general, one can state that in post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, we witness heterogeneous political culture, composed of communist and pre-communist, religious and secular, authoritarian and libertarian elements. We witness, on one hand, values

of competitiveness and self-confidence (civil orientation), and values of dependence on the state and need to we led on the other (traditional subject orientation) (Plasser and Ulram, 1996). In such perplexing of value orientations, different inconsistencies in people's attitudes toward different aspects of democracy appear. Although these inconsistencies are, to certain extent, a consequence of complexity of modern political culture, they mostly derive from turbulent post-communist situation.

In the following section, we deal with empirical analysis of different elements of political culture in the case of one transition country – Slovenia. The focus is on those aspects that represent the basis of democratic political culture and are thus of utmost importance for stabilisation of democracy. In this way, we test the robustness of democratic orientations.

Slovenian perception of democracy

Our empirical analysis focuses on the following aspects of the understanding and attitudes towards democracy within the Slovenian public opinion:

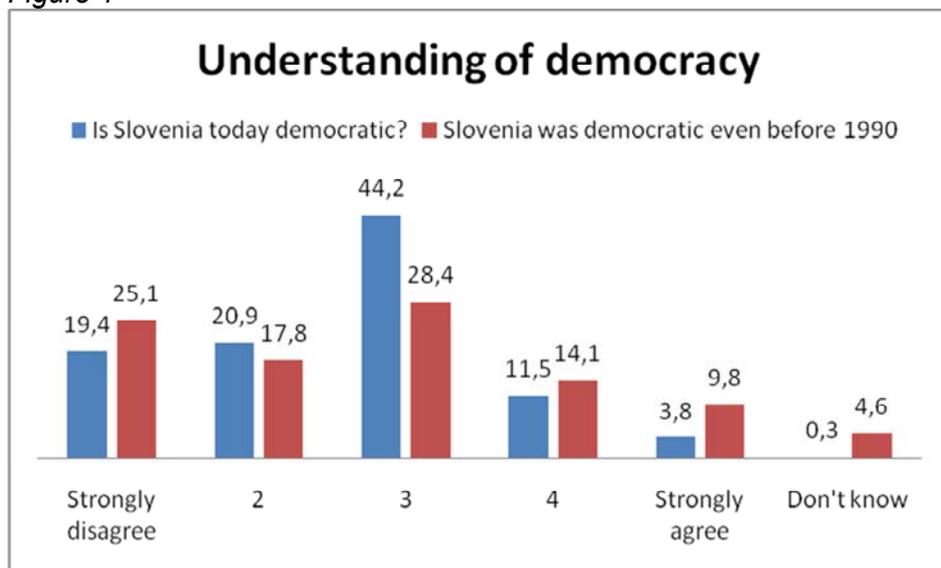
- The general understanding of democracy. One does not expect the general population to formulate a precise definition of democracy but it is important to know what institutional arrangements and practices are considered by the population as democratic. This aspect can be measured by the levels of agreement with the claims that Slovenia is democratic and that Slovenia was already democratic before 1990.
- Attitudes towards democracy. There is no doubt that democracy as such is a positively valued concept by the vast majority of the population. Consequently, it has little sense to ask people whether they are for democracy or against it. The attitudes towards democracy may be measured more adequately when democracy is confronted by some alternatives and/or challenges that might be attractive as well, such as the rule of experts, the rule of a strong leader, the variety of other types of government, security, material welfare, economic development and the former socialist system.
- The level of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Slovenia. This aspect may be tested by the level of the agreement with the statement that democracy functions well in Slovenia. To some extent it can also be measured by the agreement with the claim that Slovenia is democratic, which we also consider as an indicator of the general understanding of democracy.

The results of Slovenian Pulse survey¹ (Makarovic et al., 2010) from March 2010 concerning the understanding of democracy seem to be rather paradoxical. 23.9 per cent of respondents agreed (answers 4 and 5 at the 1-5 scale) that the system in Slovenia had been democratic even before 1990, while only 15.3 agreed that it was democratic today. The average level of agreement with the statement that Slovenia is democratic today was 2.59 and the average level of agreement with the statement that it had been democratic before 1990 was 2.64 (see Figure 1).

Clearly, it would be oversimplified and methodologically incorrect to interpret these results as a sign of the prevailing belief that Slovenia was more democratic during the communist times than it is today. Both systems were not directly compared in our survey and the issue about the democracy today is formulated as a question while the claim about the democracy before 1990 is formulated as a statement. Moreover, there is also a slight correlation between the two answers implying that those who believe that Slovenia is democratic today are also somewhat more likely to believe that it was democratic even before 1990s (Spearman's correlation coefficient equals 0.104) – in other words, they are less critical toward both systems.

¹ Slovenian Pulse ('Slovenski utrip') is a series of surveys performed by the School of Advanced Social Studies in Slovenia, based on questionnaires applied by fully structured computer aided telephone interviews to a stratified random national sample of at least 900 adult respondents. The sample is also poststratified based on the gender, age group, level of education and the size of the settlement.

Figure 1



Source: Makarovič et al., 2010.

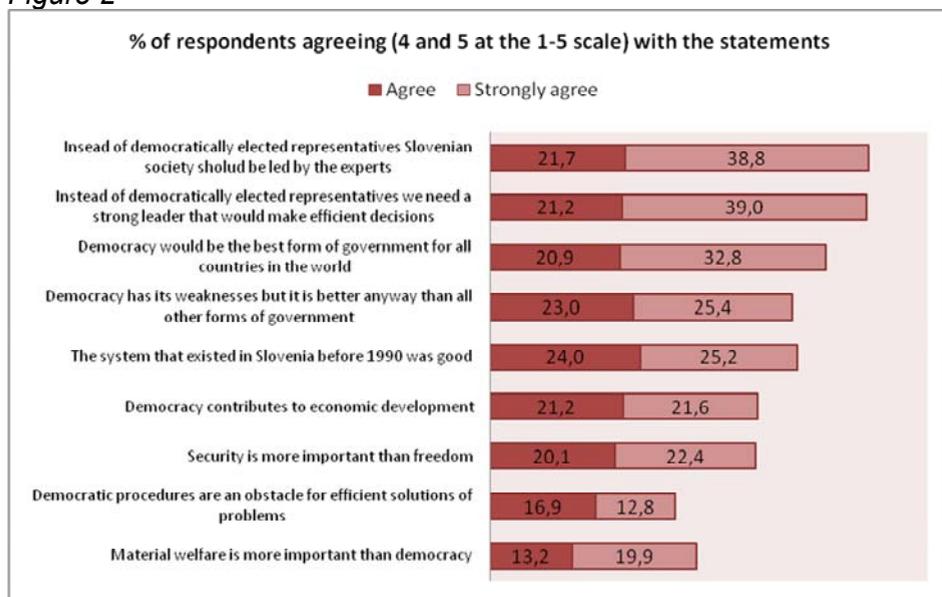
What the answers really tell us about the prevailing understanding of democracy is that it is not understood simply in a formal institutional sense: it is not just a multiparty representative system with the constitutionally and legally granted human rights and freedoms. The lack of belief that Slovenia is democratic today implies the prevailing understanding of democracy as a high normative ideal that is not easily achieved. Moreover, it also implies the lack of satisfaction with the functioning of Slovenian democracy that will be dealt with later in this text.

On the other hand, the belief that Slovenia was democratic even before 1990 reveals a rather vague understanding of democracy. Again it seems that it is not understood in a strictly formal sense, since the previous system clearly lacked formal democratic mechanisms, but maybe rather as something that is generally good and provides good results. It should also be noted that most of the respondents (49.2 per cent) agreed with the claim that the system before 1990 had been good. Both claims correlate with each other (Spearman correlation coefficient equals 0.371) implying that those who believe that the former system was good are also more likely to believe that it was democratic. The conclusion that people support democracy when it provides good results (especially in the sense of material security) may be reversed in our case into the interpretation that people believe that something is a true democracy when it produces good results. In other words: for a significant part of the Slovenian population the former communist system

was democratic *because* it was good (and not vice versa!). Although the argumentation is reversed the conclusion here may be quite similar to the thesis of the ‘instrumentalist understanding of democracy’ (Bernik et al., 1996; Bernik and Malnar, 2003), claiming that people in Slovenia (and also in other post-communist countries) relate democracy with social prosperity and material well-being. In either case, democracy is not understood by a significant portion of the population as a value in itself.

The prevailing failure to perceive democracy as a value in itself is further demonstrated by the attitudes towards democracy. According to the Slovenian Pulse survey of 2010 more than 60 per cent of the Slovenian respondents prefer the rule of experts or the rule of strong leader instead of democratically elected representatives. Almost half of the respondents consider the system before 1990 as good and almost 43 per cent claim that security is more important than freedom. On the other hand, about half of the respondents support the statements that democracy would be the best form of government for all countries in the world and that democracy is, despite its weaknesses, better than all other forms of government (see Figure 2).

Figure 2



Source: Makarovič et al., 2010; own calculations.

These results clearly cannot be interpreted as a firm support for democracy. The high level of acceptability of ‘technocratic’ solutions as an alternative to democracy has also been demonstrated by the

European Values Study. 'Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country' was 'very' or 'fairly good' for slightly more than 81 per cent of respondents in both 1999 and 2008 EVS surveys, which seems to be quite close to the results of the 2010 Slovenian Pulse. According to these criteria, Slovenians' support for democratic government when compared to the rule of experts ranked 35th among 39 countries included in EVS in 2008 (followed only by Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Serbia). This considerable belief in experts may be related again to some extent to the strong wish for greater performance related to the expert knowledge – which may be related to the instrumental understanding of democracy mentioned above.

Moreover, some Slovenian Pulse results even demonstrate a significant decline of support for democracy as such when compared to some previous studies. The European Values Study from 1995, 1999 and 2008 indicated quite a stable level of support for democracy when compared to 'having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections': they ranged from only 23.9 per cent support for the strong leader in 1999 to the maximum of 26.1 per cent in 2008. Although the questions and scales from EVS and Slovenian Pulse are not directly comparable, it can be argued that the firmness of support for democracy when compared to the strong leader concept has clearly decreased in Slovenia from 2008 to 2010.

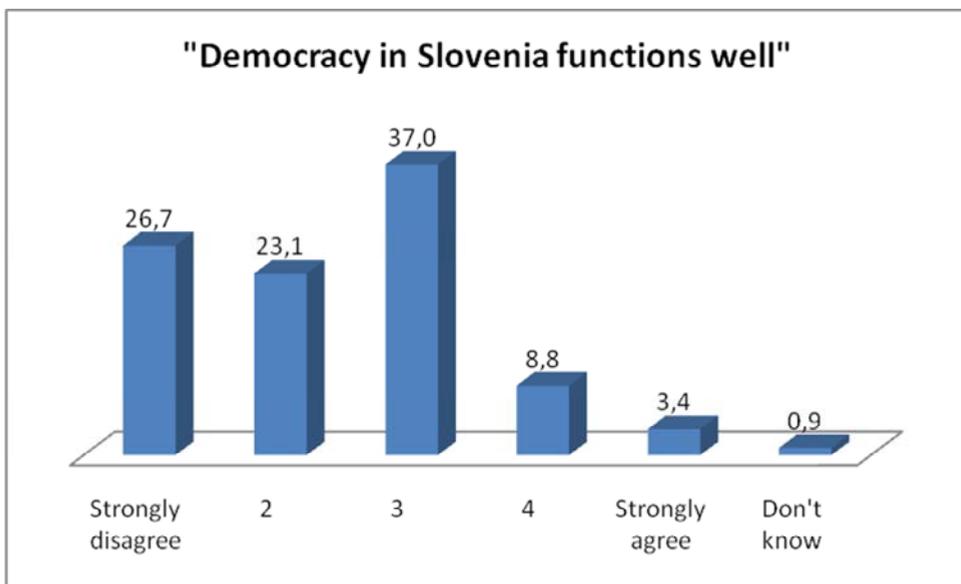
It may be argued that the results of the Slovenian Pulse survey were affected by the current situation in Slovenia, such as a number of scandals revealed just before the survey's fieldwork that compromised several top political figures in Slovenia or perhaps by the general perception of the weaknesses and inefficiency of the current government especially when confronted by the economic crisis.¹ However, even if the results were affected by a specific situation the reasons to worry about the Slovenian support for democracy remain. The results imply a clear reluctance of the major part of the Slovenian population to insist on the basic democratic principles even when the society is in economic, political and/or moral crisis. Support for democracy in Slovenia thus seems to belong more to the thin than to the thick aspects of the Slovenian political culture.

¹ The same Slovenian Pulse survey revealed that only 35 per cent of the respondents supported the current government.

Certain disappointment with democracy can be related to some extent with the poor performance of the system in practice. According to the European Social Survey from 2008 (ESS 2008), the Slovenian respondents graded their satisfaction with the way democracy works in their country by 4.75 in average at the scale from 0 to 10. This placed Slovenia in the 16th place among the 28 countries included in the survey. The results of the Slovenian Pulse cannot be directly compared to the ESS results because of the different formulations of the survey questions and different measuring scale. However, it can still be argued that the level of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Slovenia has declined from 2008 till 2010. According to the 2010 Slovenian Pulse, only 12.2 per cent of respondents believe that democracy functions well in Slovenia (see Figure 3). The negative trends in this respect can also be inferred from the Politbarometer Survey (CJM 2010) though it uses a vaguer question about the satisfaction with democracy in Slovenia (without clearly distinguishing between the supports for the democratic system as such and the opinion about how it functions in the Slovenian practice).

According to Politbarometer, the months after the 2004 parliamentary elections were the only time during the last 16 years period when the percentage of those satisfied with democracy in Slovenia was higher than the percentage of the dissatisfied. From that time the dissatisfaction has been decreasing again and reached its peak by the last Politbarometer survey in January 2010 (CJM 2010, 10) with 67 per cent claiming dissatisfaction with democracy in Slovenia – again the record high during the last 16 years.

Figure 3



Source: Makarovič et al., 2010.

During the next step our intention is to find the latent patterns of attitudes towards democracy in Slovenia according to the 2010 Slovenian Pulse survey data. Consequently, we applied the principal components method to explain the most of the variance of our variables.

When we include all of the variables concerning the understanding of and attitudes towards democracy and the levels of satisfaction with its functioning in Slovenia, three principal components are extracted explaining 51 per cent of the variance and rotated using the varimax orthogonal rotation that generated the results presented in Table 1. The three principle components are clearly identifiable.

The first component is mostly based on the belief that democracy is the best form of government for all countries in the world and despite its weaknesses; and that it contributes to economic development. It is also related to the belief that democracy functions well in Slovenia, rejection of the pre-1990 system in Slovenia, rejection of the authoritarian alternatives to democracy. We may call it the *democratic* component.

The second component is related to the support for the strong leader or experts instead of democratically elected representatives, and to giving material welfare and security priority over democracy and freedom. To some extent it is also related to the belief in the inefficiency of the democratic system, to the belief that Slovenia is not democratic today, to

certain support for the system before 1990. Generally, this component can be called *authoritarian*.

Finally, the third component is mostly based on the belief that Slovenia was democratic even before 1990, that the system at that time was good, and that Slovenia is democratic today. It is also related to the claim that democracy functions well in Slovenia and that democracy may be an obstacle to efficiency. Because of the positive attitudes to the previous system this component may be called *nostalgic*.

Table 1: Principal components of the perception of democracy in Slovenia

Rotated Component Matrix(a)

	Component		
	1	2	3
Is Slovenia today democratic?	,303	-,268	,600
Material welfare is more important than democracy	,165	,522	-,001
Security is more important than freedom	,241	,508	,063
Democracy has its weaknesses but it is better anyway than all others forms of government	,780	-,082	,060
Democracy would be the best form of government for all countries in the world	,765	,136	-,018
Democracy contributes to economic development	,722	,054	,172
The system that existed in Slovenia before 1990 was good	-,358	,453	,457
Democracy in Slovenia functions well	,360	-,083	,680
Slovenia was democratic even before 1990	-,178	,177	,704
Democratic procedures are an obstacle for efficient solutions of problems	,093	,403	,333
Instead of democratically elected representatives we need a strong leader that would make efficient decisions	-,207	,775	-,054
Instead of democratically elected representatives Slovenian society should be led by the experts	-,159	,742	-,059

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Source: Makarovič et al., 2010; own calculations.

Democratic component tells less about the attitudes towards the Slovenian political system today but more about the general attitudes toward democracy as such. High scores on the democratic component imply support for democracy as such.

Authoritarian component is characterised by the belief in a strong leader and the rule of experts. The authoritarians tend to be critical to the present situation in Slovenia. It seems that the authoritarian orientation is at least to some extent related to the belief that Slovenia is not really democratic and that democracy does not function well in Slovenia. Consequently, one can establish a link between the disbelief both in the system and democracy on the one hand and authoritarian tendencies on the other. Authoritarianism seems to be related to the dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy.

The nostalgic component does not imply the rejection the present system in favour of the past one. On the contrary, the attitudes towards the present system are more affirmative than in the case of both democratic and authoritarian components. To some extent this may be related to the sympathies with the 'centre-left' parties currently in power. Despite some common points between authoritarian and nostalgic component (they share the view about certain inefficiency of democracy and the belief that the system before 1990 was good) they can be clearly distinguished from each other. The central point in the authoritarian component is the support for the authoritarian leadership and it may be assumed that they consider the former communist system as good because it was close to this concept of leadership. Nostalgic component, on the other hand, includes no explicit rejection of democracy. It seems that the nostalgic perspective does not mean the support for the former communist system *because* it was authoritarian but *because* of belief that it was both *good and even democratic*. In other words, the nostalgics do support an authoritarian system but not because of its authoritarianism.

How are these components distributed among the population? Women seem to score higher at the authoritarian scale and lower at the nostalgic scale than men according to the t-test results ($t = - 2.382$ and $t = 2.823$ respectively). Age is slightly positively correlated to the authoritarian component ($r = 0.199$) and slightly negatively (!) to the nostalgic component ($r = - 0.117$). Democratic components are significantly higher among those with the monthly income higher than 500 EUR than among those with monthly income lower than 500 EUR. The reverse is true for the authoritarian component, whose scores tend to be higher among people with lower income levels. The nostalgic component is most

typical for those without their own monthly income. The authoritarian component is more typical for the retired than for the other categories. The democratic component has significantly higher scores among those with the completed tertiary education, while the authoritarian component scores are decreasing with the increasing education level.

It may be argued that democratic perspectives are more associated with the educated middle class, while authoritarian perspectives seem to be closer to the economically less well off and more marginalized parts of the population. At least to some extent they may be interpreted as a reaction to the system in which they clearly lack opportunities for themselves. The distribution of the nostalgic perspectives is less clear and seems to depend more on some other factors than on the socio-economic position in the society.

What seems even more relevant, however, is the relation between the components and the political orientations as manifested by the preferences for a particular political party. This may be even more important in Slovenia, whose young democracy has often been characterised by mutual accusations between the political parties, political leaders and intellectuals of the authoritarian tendencies and/or the connections with the authoritarian/totalitarian system of the past. On the one hand, there was a belief especially during the 1990s that only the so called 'Slovenian Spring' parties are truly democratic while most of the rest represent certain continuity with the communist authoritarian traditions (see e.g. Janša, 1994). On the other hand, there have been many opposite claims that the most dangerous authoritarian, anti-democratic or even fascist tendencies characterise Janez Janša and the Slovenian Democratic Party (see e.g. Miheljak, 1995; Kuzmanič, 2006).

To test the effects of attitudes towards democracy we have applied binary logistic regression to measure the influence of particular principal components to the probability that a particular respondent supports each of the two major political parties: Social Democrats (SD) and Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS). Clearly we do not assume that most of the variance in the party preferences can be explained by the attitudes towards democracy. Consequently, our regression models have not been generated with the ambition to predict the party preferences from attitudes towards democracy but simply to test the relative impact of particular principal components at the multivariate level.

In fact, the four principal components explain 15.4 % of variance (Nagelkerke R square) for supporting SD and only 4.6 % of variance for supporting SDS. In the case of SD, conditional forward method in SPSS

software package identifies only one component significant for the probability to vote for SD, namely the nostalgic one ($B = 0.930$). Both of them have positive impact on voting SD. In the case of SDS, the same method reveals the significance of two components, namely nostalgic ($B = - 0.426$) and democratic ($B = 0.320$), where the first has negative impact on supporting SDS, while the last contributes positively to the support for SDS.

Low scores on both the democratic and nostalgic component are typical for those who claim that they would vote for no political party. The nostalgic component may be particularly relevant to understand the long term differences between the Slovenian political parties. Nostalgic attitudes clearly contribute to the differences between the political parties, since they significantly contribute to the probability to vote for SD and negatively contribute to the probability to vote for SDS. The democratic component contributes to the probability to support SDS while it has no impact – neither positive nor negative – on the support for SD.

Finally, the authoritarian component is not related in either positive or negative way to the preferences for any of the two major political parties. The claims that either of the two parties attracts authoritarian (or anti-authoritarian) voters can thus be clearly rejected. Moreover, support for SDS is clearly related to some positive attitudes towards democracy (i.e. the beliefs that material welfare is *not* more important than democracy; that democracy contributes to economic development; that the system before 1990 was *not* good). It is true, on the other hand that the SD voters tend to hold nostalgic attitudes in favour of the former communist system but even they do not seem to support the former system because of its authoritarian nature but because of other reasons – since they are – just like SDS voters – not determined by the authoritarian component.

Conclusion

Although we cannot qualify Slovenian political culture as undemocratic, it is nevertheless characterised by certain inconsistencies and deficiencies. There is a clear lack of deeply rooted support for democracy and understanding it as a value in itself that should always be defended. On the other hand, one can also hardly speak about the high prevalence of clearly authoritarian and anti-democratic values. Moreover, instead of a simple democratic-authoritarian continuum, we are dealing with a complex multidimensional picture.

There persist attitudes, values and stereotypes that derive from former authoritarian regime and are, as such, incompatible with democratic

mentality, like rejection of political competition, personification of politics, support for strong leadership and sense of irreplaceability of certain politicians. What is also evident is a lack of understanding of the nature of democratic processes, manifesting, for example, in rather widespread perception of former communist regime as democratic. One can say that Slovenian political body is rather diversified in cultural terms, with the coexistence of more democratic and more authoritarian orientations, and certain level of nostalgia for former regime as well; what is typical for situation in new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe.

Although democracy is mostly supported in an instrumental manner, not as value in itself, and though some authoritarian (or technocratic) alternatives even seem to be acceptable for significant parts of the population during the times of crisis and weak performance of the political institutions, no relevant political parties in Slovenia can be identified as an authoritarian alternative. Despite the deficiencies in the Slovenian political culture, it would be clearly premature to predict a triumph of authoritarianism during the future years, since the institutional basis of democracy in Slovenia still seems to be firm enough.

Quite manifest dissatisfaction with the performance of the democratic institutions in the Slovenian society does not necessarily mean the withdrawal of democratic support, and may instead provide impetus for necessary political reforms (Dalton, 2002; 2004; Tarrow ,2002). However, in the context of the new democracies, the lack of clear support for democracy as a value in itself may also represent a significant barrier for the further consolidation and stabilisation of the democratic system.

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