CHAPTER -IV

POLITICAL CULTURE

Political culture\textsuperscript{119} is intertwined with the overall socialisation of people. It is a link between the individual and institutional values. Thus it is reflected in the group orientations or attitudes of individuals in response to their public behaviour. Thus, politics and culture are always interdisciplinary. It is multi-dimensional factor which maintains a connective link between the past and the present. It mainly describes how citizens actually view themselves as political subjects and their subjective behaviour which affects policy process. It also describes how people think about politics and the language in which they express their political attitude and why they accept these few 'ideas' and 'practices' as legitimate. Political culture, especially, focuses on the 'public behaviour' of individuals and their impact on policy-making. It includes elite and non-elite behaviour, their associational inclinations and participatory norms.

So, the scope of political culture includes, socio-psychological understanding of the 'individual' and their 'way of articulation' in public matters; and the 'capacity of elite' to 'aggregate various demands' in society from time to time. It depicts the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. Political culture may be divided into two parts—subjective orientations and objective orientations. Objective orientations can be measured by citizen involvement in politics and voters participation (voters turn outs in elections, the debate and discussion among peer groups etc.). However the notion about the subjective orientation is not possible to measure but only can be assessed by comparative analysis.

\textsuperscript{119} Political culture has been used as a 'conceptual umbrella' covering perceptions, beliefs, and values concerning everything political (Brown, 1984, p. 5; Pammett and Whittington, 1976, p. 1); as the 'amiable peculiarities' that distinguish nations (Beer and Ulam, 1958, p. 12); as political values (Njaka, 1974; Paden 1973; Vander Meer 1985); as 'ideology' (Bluhm, 1974); as political psychology (Hirsch, 1971; Putnam 1973); as 'national character' (Austin, 1975; Finer, 1956; Fitzgibbon & Fernando, 1981); as 'morality plays' (Greer with Long, 1963); as 'civil religion'(Liebman and Don-Yeshiya, 1983); as nationalism (Baker, 1983; Kofele-Kale, 1981; Ranum, 1975); as 'democratic values' (Rochon and Mitchell, 1989); as political indoctrination (Fagen, 1969; Solomon, 1971); and as resistance to indoctrination (Almond, 1983; White, 1984, Lane, 1992: 362).
Thus, this chapter will focus on the political culture that has evolved in Hungary in the post-socialist period. The systemic change basically intended to replace the old system with one that was open, transparent and accountable. Apart from putting institutional value order, this has also tried to change the attitude towards politics. This chapter, by focusing on the elite political behaviour and civil society activism, indicate if and how far this has materialised during the period 1990–2006.

The first part of the chapter discusses the conceptual framework of ‘political culture’; the second part discusses the elite behaviour and an analysis of political attitude of Hungarian citizens. In the third part it discusses the elevation of new political trends; role of the civil society and the media in nurturing participatory democracy since the 1990s.

IV Conceptual Framework and Interpretations

Political culture is the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which gives order and meaning to a political process and which provides the underlying assumptions and rules that determine the political system as a whole. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity. Political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of that system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experiences. *(International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, 1969: 218)* There are two different interpretations of political culture—Marxist and non-Marxist or Third World perspective.

IV.1 Marxist Interpretation

In Marxist analysis the political culture is straightly related to the superstructure. Both Lenin and Marx understood culture as class structure, created in the image of bourgeoisie or ruling class. In capitalism, the bourgeoisie uses culture to increase its wealth and to intensify the exploitation of those who work. Marx conceived of beliefs and symbols of culture in the capitalist society as a part of superstructures, representing
the interest of the bourgeoisie, assimilating the ideology inherent in the dominant mode of production and social class relations. Culture, therefore, becomes static. This is also because it protects the interests of the ruling bourgeoisie. Only through historical changes in the material base and transformation in the mode of production, has class relations changed in relation to mode of production. Thus, culture is inter-related with the material practice of society and behavioural aspect of groups of people who control the mode of production.

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci has given critical assessment of Marxist economic interpretations. He recognised the historical regularities but he rejected the idea of automatic or inevitable development of revolution. Thus, he stated that the mass had to become conscious of their situation and the nature of the system they live in. Subsequently, the masses needed to develop a revolutionary ideology, but they could not do that on their own. Gramsci operated with a rather elitist conception in which ideas were generated by intellectuals and then extended to the masses. The masses could not generate such ideas. But they were experienced by the elite, only as the only faith. The masses could not become self-conscious on their own; they needed the help of the social elites.

However, once the masses had been influenced by ideas, they would take the action that lead to social revolution. The role of social elites is otherwise described by Gramsci as hegemony and as cultural leadership by the ruling class. He contrasts hegemony to coercion that is ‘exercised by legislative or executive powers, or expressed through police intervention’. While economic Marxists tended to emphasise the economy and the coercive aspects of state domination. Gramsci had emphasised on hegemony and cultural leadership.

However, in both Marxist thinkings, political culture should be indoctrinated by the Communist party to build the Socialist Ideal State. The ideological political culture in every communist country hypothesises an ideal communist man. He carries forward the new society and a produce of its new institutions and practices. The most detailed elaboration of the qualities of this ideal communist man is to be found in the programme
of Communist party of the Soviet Union adopted by the 22nd Congress in 1961, in a section entitled ‘the Moral Code of the Builder of Communism’. Some versions of this moral code (or something very similar in the values and qualities stressed) is to be found in a central place in the most important ideological formulations, training manuals, school books, and the likes of all the communist countries. The qualities stressed include;

‘...dedication to Communist cause; love for the socialist motherland and other socialist countries; conscientious labour for the good society; a high consciousness of social duty; collectivism and comradely mutual assistance and respect; moral integrity in public and private life; intolerance of injustice, dishonesty or careerism; friendship and brotherhood with the other peoples of USSR, and solidarity with the workers and peoples of other countries; and firm opposition to the enemies of communism, peace and freedom’ (Almond, 1983: 132).

Thus, the operational political culture defined by the Marxist numenkaltura wanted to build socialist society of an ideal kind.

IV.2 Non-Marxist Interpretation: Third World Perspective

In the 1950s and 1960s, the newly independent nations of Africa and Asia formulated plans to promote their economic and cultural development. These development plans were conceived as national projects in the various nations. They sought to return the nation to an autonomous path of economic and cultural development, given that their development had been distorted by the colonial legacy and they are exploited as the marketing space for the First World countries. So, parallel quest for economic and cultural development emerged in Latin America during this time (as discussed in chapter I of this thesis).

There were common elements in the Third World national development plans and goals emerging in Africa, Asia and Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s. They affirmed the principle of self-determination, proclaiming the rights of all the people to be subjects in their own economic and cultural development. They affirmed the principle of autonomous economic development, maintaining that decisions concerning the use of natural and human resources should be based on the needs of the people and the nation and not on the needs of the West. Many sought to advance economic production by appropriating the rational economic structures imposed by the West but placing them
under the moral guidance of the traditional cultural values of the people. Thus, it creates a type of culture which was different from the prevailing Western one. Many hoped to diversify commercial and diplomatic relations, a strategy they called Non-Alignment Movement (NAM). They developed their own industrial capacity to supply the needs for their people by aligning both the blocs (USA and USSR).

During this period, political scientists like Lucian W. Pye, Almond and Powell, Laswell, A. Rustow, Joseph La Palombara, Riggs, Lipset and a host of other social theorists tried to study the patterns of changes that were taking place in these states. These outstanding scholars had shown a deep insight of the understanding of the socio-economic forces and the political culture determining the nature of political system of a country. While understanding the socio-economic forces that affect the political culture, they categorized their culture into parochial to participant, or traditional to modern.

The manuscript *Civic Culture* (Almond and Verba, 1963) is devoted to concluding operational definitions, carried out in survey research across five nations. Indeed, the division of the world into three or four categories (parochial, subject, participant, and ‘civic’) was not the permanent solution to categorise any political system. They defined political culture in terms of *political orientations and attitudes* held by individuals in relation to their political system. The types are postulated as the parochial, implying that individuals have low expectations and awareness of the government and generally are not involved citizens. In this case individuals are aware of the outcomes of the government but do not participate in the processes that result in policy decisions. In the case of participant, individuals are active and involved in the system as a whole—i.e., in both the input and output processes. The *civic culture* referred to a classic mixture of participant, subject and parochial orientations. In a *civic state*, a citizen must stay loyal towards the authority and respect it; he should also show allegiance to the political community, the state and various institutions of the state. According to several Hungarian thinkers, Hungary has similar trends in its political culture (Korosenyi, 1999: 25). Though Hungary has low level of participation level in election in comparison to other western European states but the citizens are active and loyal to various institutions. The
prolonged reliance in democratic values; the complete trust in political intelligentsia have created an era of political stability since 1990 (we will discuss all these issues in course of our chapter).

Nevertheless the students of political culture have failed to specify the ranges and varieties of internal essence of Verba’s *Civic Culture*. Later they have been clarified by the seminal work of Pye and Verba—*Political Culture and Political Development* in 1965. This work has explained that political culture of a country encompasses both political ideals and the *operating norms of a polity*. Thus, the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics in a country are manifested through its political culture. So, the discussion on political culture can be assessed here through the understanding of operational values related to politics and political behaviour. These are reflected time to time through elections and the cult of demonstrations and associational variations. Political culture is defined by the motivations that inspire both leaders and followers. This motivational aspect of political culture governs the spirit in which interests are articulated and aggregated and the intensity with which loyalties and commitments are evoked. It determines the degree to which the leaders are capable of working together and the depth to which the public is ready to be a constructive citizenry (Pye, 1966: 89).

Sidney Verba concurred that political culture ‘consists of the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which defines the situation in which political action take place’ (Verba 1965: 513). Political culture is a system of control, related to the beliefs identified with politics, especially with the nation-state; with one’s fellow citizens; with governmental output and operation; and with the process of making decisions, the political input (Chilcote, 1994: 225).

On the other hand, Max Weber viewed culture as being composed of the beliefs and symbols of ideal types of authority: traditional, charismatic and rational. Those ideal types of authority are legitimised by the actions of individuals who shape the collective society. Individual actions are conditioned by custom and tend to become increasingly rational. Consequently, individual actions are oriented to beliefs that support and maintain the collective society at large. A rationalisation of authority accompanies a
secularization of this society: rules of procedure become routine, and administrative activities are specified.

Therefore, political culture is a set of attitude, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and that provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in political system. It encompasses both political ideals and the operating norms of polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in the aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experience. In brief, political culture is to the political system what culture is to the social system.

Stable political systems tend to have relatively homogeneous political cultures within which there is general agreement about the proper limits and functions of politics. In such systems each generation is socialised out of common experience and against a common memory and past traditions. The various agents of political socialisation, ranging from the family, the school and the church, to mass media and the articulations of politicians themselves, tend to reinforce each other or at least appear to belong to some dialogue about what should be the meaning, the means and the ends of political action (Pye, 1966: 105). While analysing the Hungarian political culture we must discuss its common historical experience of the Communist rule. In addition to it, we will examine their effective measures to throw the ex-regime, the interest of architectural team to the establishment of liberal, democratic parliamentary state. Its scope rightly includes the raising pattern of elections, changing nature parties and their political manifestations to establish stable political system.

In reference to this theoretical background the chapter can strive to understand the changing culture of Central Eastern European Countries (CEECs). It will attempt to trace out the various historic forces behind the change and democratic drives leading towards gradual change. The discussion will not segregate the political culture into strictly two parts—elite-culture and mass-culture. But it would make an effort to combine both in a very effective manner and discuss public experience and their common
historical events. It is definite understand that Hungarian political culture is definitely different from the other east European countries because of the type of peaceful transition and the post transitional stability.

IV.3 Role of Political Elite in Shaping Political Culture

The term elite refer to those people who have some distinct qualities by which they are differentiated from the general masses. The elite owe its particular position of privileges to recognition and esteem accorded to it by the people in the society. The concept of elite is used to describe certain fundamental features of organised social life. All societies need authorities within, and spokesmen and agents who are also the symbols of common life and embodiments of values that maintain it. This arrangement is supported by inequalities in performances and rewards. At the heart of the elitist theory there is a clear presumption of inadequacies of average citizen. As a consequence, democratic systems must rely on the wisdom, loyalty and skill of their political leaders, and not on population at large.

The political system is divided into two groups: the elite (political entrepreneurs), possessing ideological commitments and manipulative skills; and the masses (citizens at large). The masses are the apolitical clay of system—a class of passive followers who have little knowledge of public affairs and have less interest in politics. In the light of the elitist theory, the factor that distinguishes between the democratic and authoritarian structure is the provision for limited peaceful competition among the members of the elite for the formal position of leadership within the system.

The origin of the concept of ‘elite’ laid in the anti-Marxist writings of the Italian theorist Pareto and Mosca. They constructed an alternative vocabulary to emphasise on ‘class’ and class-conflict. During the 1950s and 1960s, especially after C.W. Mill’s book *The Power Elite* (1956) the concept of elite began a new theoretical and methodological debate. It connected both political and economic power of society to one stratum of people.
Even scholars like Lijphart (1968) and Rustow (1970) commented on the importance of political leaders. The inauguration of democratic government depends crucially on the democratic commitment and the skill of elite actors. For both Rustow and Lijphart, political elites are important indeed. The behaviour of these actors determines, to a great extent, whether or not the positive route can be followed. Rustow asserted that political elites are specialists in power; they naturally are the key players in the game of transformation (Rustow, 1970: 356). Lijphart has more to say. If popular conflicts in divided societies are to be resolved, people from different segments must be held apart. Interaction at the grassroots can lead to an outbreak of severe clashes between groups. And such clashes, in turn, can yield a spiral of negative effects. Responsible leadership is safeguard against escalating conflict. It is also the vehicle for the establishment of accords between segments (Elgstrom et al, 2002: 73).

3.1 Nature of Elite in Central and East European Countries (CEECs)

If we analyse the process of transformation from elitist approach (discussed earlier) then, this type of agreement between old regime and the new, a cooling-down of conflict took place during the 1990s simple manner in CEECs. The objective was to reach an agreement suitable for both (ruling elite and non-ruling elite), a compromise of highest order. Here intense interaction among a small circle of individual brought forward the decision of regime change and its means to achieve. Through the Round Table talks RTTs the group of elite and non-elite initiated a process of change to society. In other words, unity among citizens—which Rustow and other consider to be prerequisite for democracy—can be nurtured by elite-dominated process of democratization (ibid: 74).

The group of these elite includes legal experts who drafted the constitution. The group includes the weak Communist leaders, leaders of democratic movements and the team of dissident leaders. Change among Hungarian elites was thus deep but also gradual, evolutionary and to a significant extent internal. O’Neil (1996) and Szoboszlai (1991) charts the difference from the old Communist elite of the early 1960s to the ‘new’ reformist-technocratic elite of the 1970s and 1980s to the ‘new-new’ post-communist
elite. The reformist movement developed within the Communist party itself. The 1989 regime change did not involve as much mass initiation as it happened in Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

In Central Europe, intellectuals particularly those working in humanities, have a long tradition of political engagement. Authors, poets, journalists, historians, and polyhistors maintained and invigorated their national culture and language, and set out the basic principles of nation-state in the nineteenth century. These erudite reformers tried to incorporate more and more Western elements into their main goal—as a 'knowledge elite' possessing a broad outlook and high erudition—was to further national progress by drafting reforms proposals and promoting the establishment of a Western-type bourgeoisie. In the nineteenth century, these reformers tended to be followers of liberal-nationalist, then of radical ideologies of social equality. They believed that their knowledge and learning entitled them to pose as the 'living conscience' of their nation, to maintain national identity in the face of foreign oppression, and uphold democratic values in undemocratic times. The more backward a country was, the wider the gap between the educated knowledge elite and uneducated masses. In these circumstances, typical of Eastern Europe as a whole, intellectuals came to exhibit more and more the characteristics of closed group, almost a social class in their own right. Russia was particularly an extreme case (Bozoki et al, c1999:1).

The strong engagements of the intellectuals in politics and especially in the reform have been interpreted different manners. In accordance with this the pre-communist account suggests that Hungarians (common, non-elite political individuals) historically have shown little interest in voting because for centuries politics was considered a 'gentleman's game' and that ordinary citizens were not accepted to understand it and they were not allowed to participate (Simon 1994: 176). In contrast, Szoboszlai (1992: 73) claims that apathy was responsible for low voter turnout in 1990, but that the roots of this apathy lies in the political culture of the old communist regime rather than in the Hungarians pre-communist national character. That is evident after 40 years of compulsory voting under socialism, non-voters stay away from the polling booths because they were eager to exercise their newly found freedom not to vote.
Finally, Korosenyi (1990: 339) claims that the political indifference observed in 1990 was generated by the unique characteristics of post-communist political culture. In his view, the Hungarians did not vote because they were dissatisfied with the slow pace of the democratic electoral process, and they had little faith in the ability of post-communist elites to bring about meaningful social change (Szelenyi and Szelenyi, 1996: 468).

3.2 Elite Transformation during the 1990s

The Hungarian elections of 1990 had put an end to the four decades of communist rule. Several commentators suggested that the class rule of intellectual’s predicted by George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi (1979) in their study The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power had finally been realised. Three quarters of the new Member of Parliaments (MPs), teachers, academic researchers and university professors; historians, philosophers, social scientists, and economists; and lawyers, doctors, and other professionals (Bozoki, 1999: 169; Kiss, 1992, 591–602). The change throughout the Central Eastern European can be exemplified as the ‘elite circulation’ process prompted by sociologist like Pareto, Mosca and Mill.120

Their importance was to be relatively short-lived, however. The defeat of the one-party-state transformed the very nature of politics and the relations between politicians and society. The numenkaltura was being replaced by that of private capital and representative democracy. But the Communist numenkaltura had not completely gone astray from the political landscape. The political and societal landscape had rearranged the-then numenkaltura into a new class. It was the right reason how the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) proved to be clear majority and formed the government of 1994. However, both eras are witness to the rising influence of the intelligentsia, the educated class, who undermined the importance of common people (who are not competent and unorganized). As a final point, there was no mass mobilisation in the Hungarian transition even after the end of consolidation phase. After 2002 the inclusion of masses in politics rose through clear cut voter turnout, demonstrations and rallies on streets.

120 The highly publicised (re-) burial of Imre Nagy, and public execution of Nicolae Ceausescu, and the political backlash against Erich Honecker collectively send a clear massage across the world about the defeat of old bureaucratic order and victory of new political elite.
Besides, Hungarian dissident intellectuals of the late 1980s were examples of free thinking individuals, educated and from elite family backgrounds that had patronising attitudes towards women and the poor. They remained cut off from the working class and were isolated from the wider society. Many of them came from the intelligentsia families, or even from families whose members had held high positions in the old Stalinist regime, or even earlier ones. But they played a significant role in the ‘negotiated revolution’ of 1989. Far from being a people’s revolution as some political commentators suggested, the ‘achievement is made through elite agreement’. The changes were initiated and completed by intellectual elites, and the position of the intelligentsia as a class was not endangered but strengthened as a result.

When they sought to address the problems of ordinary people, the dissidents did so in the manner of social works, recalling the Fabian ‘missionaries’ in the End of Victorian Age. Money was raised from amongst the intelligentsia along the lines of traditional charities—by charity concerts, poetry readings and art auctions—and used to repair houses and make other improvements in particularly poor parts of the countryside. In the charitable missions to help the poor, the social attitudes of many Hungarian intellectuals had much in common with those of the middle classes of the Victorian Age England, with whom they shared common assessments of their own superiority and the inferiority of masses.

In a study of popular attitudes based on opinion poll surveys carried out in 1989 two sociologist, George Csepeli and Antall Orkeny, argued that political and ideological beliefs are structurally conditioned and socially determined, often even ‘coded at birth’; that the lower classes are ‘confused masses...inconsistent attitudes and logically inadmissible attitude constructs’. They viewed common people as inadequately socialized and lacking in the cultural capital needed to participate in democratic society. Only intellectuals, they argued, were capable of acquiring consistent and admissible belief systems (Csepeli and Orkeny 1992 cited in Bozoki et al, c1999: 175).

In almost identical terms to those used by John Stuart Mill over a century before, these two Hungarian sociologists expressed the view that ordinary people lack the
intelligence and culture needed to bring about the necessary improvements in their own lives. Their view of the ‘confused masses’ with an arrested political consciousness and inconsistent and in admissible attitudes is one with Webb’s notion of the ‘average, sensual man’ whose mind has to be ‘bludgeoned’ for his own good. While such intellectuals may not view themselves as privileged social group, they certainly look down on the less-educated and less-fortunate sections of the society as constituting an inferior caste (ibid:176)

With such a belief in superiority of their own abilities and in the incompetence and limited intelligence of masses, it is not surprising that Hungarian intellectuals, particularly since 1989, have come to see themselves as natural leaders and organisers of ‘civil sphere’ of society. For them ‘civil society’ does not mean popular initiatives or social self-organisation from below, but their own ‘intervention from above’ in directing the life of society. The new political parties formed since 1989 have also been the playground of intellectuals, and have developed neither substantial memberships nor social constituencies. They have remained content to float above the people, and have failed to put down roots in society. The same is true of the new or independent trade unions that were expected to take over from the old official trade unions of the one-party state. The new unions were invariably formed by professional intellectuals and academics, and were not joined by significant number of skilled or manual workers, who saw little difference between the new unions and the old, and preferred to remain with ‘the devil they knew’ (ibid: 179).

In all these instances the intervention of intellectuals has served only the interests of the intellectuals themselves. It has not encouraged participation by people or any movements of social self-organisation from below. The intellectuals have monopolised the organisation of civil associations, thereby colonising the civil sphere of society and, in the process, excluding and disenfranchising the vast majority of society’s members. They have legitimized all this in the name of civil society, and have come remarkably

121 Rudolf Tokes, Andras Korosenyi, Janos Kis and Andras Bozoki all agreed on the consensual nature of the Hungarian revolution of 1989. The role of intellectual has brought the legal revolution through enormous ease, which means revolutionary counter-elite were not present during this period.
close to realising the aim of their Victorian forebears—Mill and the Webb’s—of establishing an ‘aristocracy of intellect’, the rule of the educated classes, the class rule of intelligentsia.

The existing intellectual’s involvement in the politics of Hungary and the domination of the educated people over the ‘less educated’ masses has resulted in an inequalitarian society and elite-driven political culture in recent days. Families, not the individuals are the operative units of social class, through which social advantages are passed on from one generation to the next (ibid: 179). The existing liberal democratic tradition in large and privatisation in particular has started spreading the distinction between manual and efficient worker. This essentially divided the society\textsuperscript{122} in to rich-efficient group with financial power and middle class in the lower strata, representing the very source of ‘nation’.

The newly dominant educated classes naturally sought to monopolise their privileges and to restrict any further upward social mobility from the lower classes. The children of professional and white-collar employees start off with advantages which they then pass on to their children. At the same time, working-class parents are slightly unable to ensure higher education for their children, and are more likely to send them to apprentice schools or technical colleges where they can learn a trade and proceeded to early employment. As a result, movement into the white collar and professional intelligentsia from the manual working strata has been progressively slowing down since the late 1960s (ibid: 178).

Since 1989, the number of employed Hungarians has fallen by one third, and almost one-quarter of the population have no prospect of improving their situation solely by their own efforts. By 1995 real wages had fallen by around 30 per cent, and about one-third of the population was living below the minimum official subsistence. As a result, one of Hungary’s leading educational sociologist concludes, only the top 10 per cent of families can afford to put their children through higher education: half the children of the

\textsuperscript{122} One of the trends in world wide globalisation process is that it creates incredible distinction between efficient-skilled labour and manual-unskilled labour.
elite families go to university, some 40 per cent of the children of professional intellectuals, and 25 per cent of children from families of lower professions. At least one-fifth of the population earns scarcely enough money to survive, and their children have absolutely no prospect of entering higher education (Bozoki, 2002: 179; Gazso, 1995: 19).

In this manner the democratic, liberal value had proven contradictory to the ideals of much early socialist-equality. The expansion of education, social safety net and the rise of the intellectuals have not resulted in an equal and just society. Nevertheless it has given quite definite space for inequality to prevail. The freedom of association, organisation and access to information has been manipulated by the elite class in favour of their growth and prosperity. Through this transformation some amount of social mobilisation has taken place but the majority of masses are still alienated in the process.

The change from the communist, authoritarian regime to plural democracy has brought significant change in structure of the elite. The change has not taken place according to the classical elite governing or non-governing elite. In case of Hungary the ruling numenklatura elite preserved their position in politics by changing their stance on ideology or other political issues. To few political thinkers, the collapse of the communist system in 1989 brought little significant change in composition of the political (and social) elite: the members of the numenklatura elite were able to retain their positions or to transfer to new positions within the elite. According to the ‘grand coalition’ picture, a group or class alliance emerges between the strata of enterprise managers and new entrepreneurs and those within the state and the party bureaucracy (Hankiss, 1989: 310; Krórosényi, 1999: 75).

IV.4 Nature of Hungarian Political Culture

Political culture can be understood from different angles. While examining the various views of the political scientists in the first part of the chapter it is apparent that political culture signifies the collective cultural and behavioural models of a political community, combined with the modes of collective problem solving and conflict resolution that the
community tried to share during a certain period. Second, the political way of thinking ‘is never a direct function’ nor of direct experience of single individual. It is rather a product of ‘shared interpretations that accumulate and develop into traditions across generations’. The ways of thinking and attitudes to be found during this process are highly resistant to change, and it is customary to call the combination of knowledge, value, feeling and symbols connected with this ‘political culture’ (Gombar, 1989: 62; Krorosenyi, 1999: 11).

If we analyse the above notion—one characteristics of those using modern survey methodology-political culture involves the attitudes, dispositions, value systems, preferences, information and abilities of individual concerning politics, the political community. Here, a political community is always characterized by how the various political values, norms and attitudes are distributed among its members. Our discussion about political culture can be traced from historical legacy of communist rule in Hungary and the process of transition to democratic regime change during 1990.

4.1 Political Culture and Democracy

After the breakdown of the Communist system in Central Eastern Europe, all countries in the regime embarked on the road of democracy building. This transformation was classified by Huntington as ‘third wave’ of democratisation. In the course of time, few countries like Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia adapted the Western-European\(^{123}\) notion of democratic values—like codified constitution, adopted parliamentary/presidential form of governments and allowed pluralism way of expression and association. Almost all the countries have adopted market economy which allowed competition and pluralism of choice to prevail.

In countries such as Belarus and Ukraine, democratic reforms were more a matter of rhetoric than practice. All of a sudden the institutions here were created to suit the elite’s partisan aims. This had given very undersized room for the genuine public participation and fair political competition. In counties such as Russia and Romania, violence has been used as means of democracy building. For instance during 1993 the use

\(^{123}\) Whether democratic values have their origin in the West or Europe is a rather confusing question.
of tanks at the site of the parliament by President Yelsin led to massive failure of governance in Russia. During this period other countries of the region especially the Balkans, also confronted on the basis of ethnicity. The third 'reverse wave' of democracy hit the relatively high mature, developed countries like, Italy, Germany, Spain and Portugal.

Unlike countries like Russia and Romania, the democratic transition that took place in Hungary was non-violent and gradual. The political culture underneath the historical events of Hungary had created an atmosphere of accommodation (plural demands). The co-operation between ruling-reform communist, various social movements brought forward a proposal in favour of democratic, constitutional and parliamentary form of government. The success of the Hungarian transformation lay in their slow and gradual nature. A different form of pluralism and semi-market economy was present under the regime of Kadar-Communism proceeded to the negotiated political change. The strong, democratic, accommodative attitude, high level of support for the elite-driven reform had depicted Hungarian culture as distinct in kind.

4.2 Legacy of Communism

The Communist regulations have brought with it the totalitarian dictatorship which not only monopolise political power, but it also destroyed almost every institutions of social associations, interest groups and religious organisation. Furthermore, it nationalised the church, education system, the institution of private economy and activities of civic organization. It has monopolised all the socialising agents of the society except family. The strict political and ideological supervision of party-state, neither has not given choice to the people to express their views differently nor correctly. For example the voters turn out was very high during Communist rule due to the compulsory voting right.

The opportunities for the pursuit of an individual life strategy—for a politics-free career, for professional prestige—began to gradually widen after Kadar adopted 'soft approach' during the 1960s. With the economic reform of 1968, the control over the economy and politics was relaxed to some extent. This has created a sphere of second
The second economy was tied to the state institutional system only informally, and within it a space opened up in which individual or family ambitions of consumption and accumulation could better satisfied.

This cautious economic liberalisation occurred not through the open revision of the official tenants of Marxism, official party resolutions, five year plans or the prevailing legal rules, but rather often through tacit evasion. Because of this, and because of the strengthening of economic sphere not controlled by the state and the growth in the number of groups participating within it, a dual morality and dual society came into being (Hankiss, 1989:134; Korosenyi, 1999:13). Besides atomisation, political passivity and state paternalism, the most important product of communist decades was the dual value system, which gives an incentive not for adherence to the official rules of law and the state but rather for their violation and evasion. The dual value involves not only the breach of norms (including legal norms) and corruption that leaks into public office, but also political cynicism and alienation from the political community. The legacy of which, remained a part of political culture in the democratic system of 1990s (Korosenyi, 1999: 14).

The case of Hungarian, political culture comes under the category of participant political culture that was mentioned by Almond and Verba (Korosenyi, 1999: 25). However, Hungarian notion about politics is essentially limited politics as of ‘dirty game of few people’. Consequently, the Hungarian political culture perhaps shows a high level of alienation against politics. The economic melt down in Hungary, high sounding populism, in recent politics making politics unpopular these days. Thus, ‘political cynicism is a general phenomenon in Hungarian politics’.

124 During the 1970s various semi-market measures were initiated under the policy of New Economic Mechanism (NEM). The deal began in the countryside where private business and plot for agriculture was endured. This was better known as ‘second economy’ which had given ‘a unique opportunity for upward social mobility’ among people. In the long run the second economy created a dual and fragmented society with a new class. Under the Kadar regime in Hungary, only a few felt that they could protect their own interest and their number grew only temporarily following the democratic transitions.
4.3 Political Agreement during 1989—Round Table Talks (RTTs)

The Hungarian political transition and the role of elite in politics can be better understood as a phase of 'willingness to compromise on the part of both the new and the old elite' (Bozoki, 2002: xix). The collective elite gesture rising in Hungary during the 1980s is what Casba Gomber called 'logocracy', denoting an intellectual of a new type. Thinkers, policy consultants and those who worked behind the scenes were the gatekeepers to public discussion on reform proposals. They are the new entrant in the sheltered domains of 'protocracy', 'bureaucracy' and 'technocracy'. They are the key player in the game of transformation and policy-making aftermath of centralised leadership. The so-called 'refolution' or 'negotiated revolution' can be rightly redefined as a negotiation happen at the elite level where, masses are either less interested in politics or taken liberal democratic option as the only alternative.

The Hungarian Political alienation and lack of interest in politics can be traced even the twilight period of 1989—the end of Communism and the beginning of liberal democracy. The Agreement of Commencement of RTTs, on June 10th, 1989 has rightly defined the long awaited purpose of change, the actor involved in the agreement and the vision behind it. The document (text) stated that:

...[T]he need to recover from the economic and political crisis faced by the Hungarian nation to transform power structures democratically calls for a dialogue between all political players who feel responsible for the future of this society. The crisis can overcome, and political pluralism can be created, only by democratic consensus based on mutual recognition of interests and goals of all those concerned, by determination to reach an agreement and by building an atmosphere of trust and self-restraint. The future of Hungarian nation can be changed for the better by respecting the Constitution and by firmly rejecting use of force. It is in our common interest to resolve and by firmly rejecting nay use of force. It is our common interest to resolve any social conflicts in accordance with universally accepted European political norms based on general consensus. The transition from a single-party state to representative democracy and the introduction of the rule of law is conditional on the holding of free elections. Only the existence of set of smoothly functioning representative bodies trusted by the people, and a stable and consistent form of government, can prevent a further deepening of crisis. Peaceful political transition must go hand in hand with a relaxation of economic and political tensions which have been accumulated over the years, and the two must take place interactively. Many examples from our history should warn us that difficulties shared by all can be resolved strictly by way of consensus. All civil organisations and movements must allow participating in the difficult and contradictory transformation process of equal partners 125(Agreement on the Commencement of National Roundtable Talks, June 10th, 1989) (Bozoki, 2002: 287).

125 It seems the agreement was between few 'political players' who considered themselves responsible for 'society' wanted to bring back European political norms.
In view of above facts and circumstances, numbers of Opposition Roundtable, the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party and the joint delegation of other participating organizations, such as the Alliance of Political Left Alternative, the Patriotic People’s Front, the alliance of Hungarian Democratic Youth, the Hungarian Resistance and Anti Fascist Alliance, the National Alliance of Hungarian Women, the Munich French Society and National Council of Trade Unions, have expressed their willingness to start effective political talks (Bozoki et al, 2002: 288–89).

In this manner, the Hungarian society has legitimised self proclaimed representative to change the very nature of state during 1989. It shows the long existing tradition of elite-mass co-ordination and mass acceptance of elite-driven negotiation. The term ‘elite driven’ is most appropriate here because the foundation of Hungarian new state after 1989 is given by these RTTs which was neither a elected body nor a body came after a national referendum. It reflects the ‘a great force of cohesion’ but cohesion build and brought directly from upper strata of people who are known as intellectuals in political science parlance.

The very nature of Hungarian negotiated revolution is described by Tokes as ‘chaos and civil disorder’. To him Hungary’s political transformation from a post-communist state to a parliamentary democracy was facilitated by people and their ideas for change. By ‘people’ he meant professional politicians, academics, and literary elites and unattached intellectuals. After meeting at the National Roundtable in June, 1989, they crafted a historic compromise for a peaceful transition from a politically bankrupt regime to legitimate one of popular sovereignty, parliamentary democracy, and national independence (Tokes, 1996:167).

4.4 Change in elite-structure after 1990

The historical backgrounds of the political career of the East Central Europe intelligentsia consists largely in the difficulties in experienced over the half-a-century it took to attain, first—national independence and second, democratic transformation. In the
era of national and political oppression, the intellectuals often represented the ‘nation’ or ‘society’ in opposition to the authorities, from which arose the ‘prophetic’ role of writers and poets which continued throughout the period of communist rule. In the communist systems of Central Europe, the intellectuals also formed the opinion-forming stratum serving the system, then both the ‘internal opposition’ and the ‘dissident’ opposition which stood against it.

In Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, thanks to its honoured role and status, the intelligentsia turned into one of the main bearers of the regime change, and it seemed that it would form the political elite of new, democratic regime. It was able to retain this role, however, only during the time of transition, until the first (or second) democratic elections. The intellectuals played a key role in transition movement, in the organisations which emerged to oppose the communist system (Solidarity, Civic Forum, Public against Violence, Hungarian Democratic Forum, Alliance of Free Democrats, and so forth) in which they occupied the leading positions (Krosenyi in Bozoki, c1999: 232)

The political elite that organised the new parties and controlled the process of democratic transition was highly fragmented. The new parties were formed on the basis of the traditions and political groups of three successive political regimes. The ‘historical parties’ (FKGP, KNDP) had their roots in 1945–48 period, Socialist Party (MSZP) was the successor party to the communist one-party system, while the completely new parties (MDF, SZDSZ, FIDESZ) were derived from the dissident intellectual groups of the 1980s. These three groups may each be considered, beginning with that rooted in communism. The polarization of politics according to above mention criteria stayed till the first elections. Then politics has taken different course by bringing left parties to power in 1994 or parties ‘claiming pragmatic political behavior’.

With these changes a radical transformation occurred in the personnel of parliament between the last two one-party parliament and first democratically elected parliament. As results of the first free parliamentary elections, 95 per cent of parliamentary deputies are replaced (Korosenyi, 1999: 80; Loewenberg, 1993: 440; Toth, 1992: 81). This change occurred not simply at individual level but created a dynamic turn
in pattern of governing. It carried forward with it elite change, ‘elite circulation’—that is, the arrival of new elite with different qualifications, different occupations and different socio-cultural background and change in political character of the parliament.

The level of education and the professional composition of parliamentary elite also changed. The deputies in the democratically elected parliament were more highly qualified than their predecessors; the proportion with higher education qualifications rose from 59.3 per cent in old parliament to 88.9 per cent in the new (Toth, 1992: 82). This trend hereby increasing further the over-representation of most educated part of the population in the legislature. Meanwhile, the nature of their degrees also changed considerably. Among those possessing degrees the proportion having agricultural or technical degrees fell from 53 per cent to 18 per cent, while the proportion with degrees in law or humanities leapt from 23 per cent to 51 per cent (Krorosenyi, 1999: 80; Toth, 1992: 82).

Table IV.1

The occupational distribution of parliamentary deputies, 1985 and 1990 (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial and agricultural managers</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party secretaries, party and council functionaries</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade-union and interest-group functionaries</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servants and soldiers, policemen</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers, doctors, veterinary surgeons</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligentsia</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No occupation or no data</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Loewenberg, 1993: 442; Korosenyi, 1999: 81
This has been rightly expressed in the views of scholars while they analyze election of 1994. The Parliament, even more than the previous one, consists of the highly educated professional, technocratic strata of society. Only 20 of them (5.18 per cent) do not have university higher educational degrees, a higher ratio than previously (63 or 16.32 per cent in 1990). The predominant specialisation areas include lawyers, economists and academics and there are only a few actual workers/technicians basically in the group of 20 without higher degrees. Women are present in somewhat increased numbers but they are still severely under represented: 44 (11.39 per cent) compared with the former 28 (7.2 per cent). The age composition also changed somewhat: there are 150 deputies below 45 years of age (38.86 per cent) while previously the average age was 45 (Racz and Kurkorelli, 1995: 270).

There were some signs of increasing professionalization and political expertise in the first year, of the Second Parliament (1994 national election) (ibid: 270). The contrast between the First and Second Parliament shows that MPs with a background in human sciences in the former had been exchanged for those with a background in economic, legal, and technical sciences in the latter. This increasing expertise in concrete social processes has yielded ‘better’ productive laws, so there had been fewer problems with implementation of the laws passed by the Second Parliament. The failure of implementation was the characteristic feature of the First Parliament (Agh, 1997:429–30). Anyway the level of education and incoming professionalism in the behaviour of political elite had changed the process of policy-making in Hungary. Hungary in recent years nurtured more competence in policy-making through it’s technocratically, competent committee systems.

4.5 Party Polarisation: A New Trend

The term polarisation has entered the vocabulary of Hungarian politics during the recent years. From the late 1990s, there has been a steady division of the political spectrum into two camps which continuously produce themselves as a political unit through the
construction of the other camp as their counterpart. These are named ‘left’ and the ‘right’,
denoting the Socialists and Liberals against the Right-wing ‘civic’ camp and (neo)
conservatives. Since both are constructed around imaginatively empty and merely
relational concepts of ‘nationhood’ and ‘the people’, the situation could be termed as one
of competing populisms.

This situation of polarisation could not be grounded on the mere legacy of
communism with its bipolar world view. Neither could be attributed to the already
existing and substantive cleavages. To Zsolt Enyedi, cleavages are often products of
political agency, and can be culturally formed. The isolation between the groups comes
into existence because of the socio-structural categories (denominations, classes, etc.),
collective identities, political attitudes and political leadership, strengthening each other;
draw a wall between the groups. Hungarian political parties are not following cleavage
lines; rather they are creating their own. This article described the polarisation in
Hungary as a self-imposed and takes new turn time to time which hardly lay down any
trend (Kitschelt, 1999).

In fact, polarisation is a political tool—articulated to demarcate frontiers between
‘us’ and ‘them’ and to stake out communities, perceived as moral orders. Polarisation is a
situation in which two groups create each other through demarcation of the frontier
between them. The dominant political frontier creates a point of identification and
confrontation in the political system, where consensus is only found within the political
camps themselves. Polarisation is reproduced in all political and social contexts with an
intensity that distinguishes it from mere two-party politics. It is a totalising system, as it
aims to dominate the existing systems of differences and identities. Similar logic can be
found in other polarised contexts, such as those in the US or Italy. The situation
constitutes a problem for democracy in so far as democracy is seen as the articulation,
combination and promotion of political values, demands and preferences that direct
policies and seek to find a ground beyond the political elites, not mere regular elections.

In Hungarian politics fragmentation or extreme differentiation after the
‘negotiated revolution’ of 1989–90 contributed to create a positive, motivating and
encouraging feeling of unanimity in politics. But the heightened sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’, the denial of the legitimacy of the ‘other’ and then necessity of strong ties between the members of the us to form a single community (as opposed to a pluralist network of different interlinked communities) is part of the legacy of the previous totalitarian era’s black and white positioning.

This was combined with a complex electoral system designed in the RTTs with the democratic opposition and the power holders, and—when used towards this aim—it enables large parties to claim prominence through a list system, high regional threshold and regional constituencies: majoritarian elements to dominate proportional ones. The elections take two rounds, first in single-member constituencies, where, if no one gains 50 per cent of the vote, there will be a second round, and in multi-member regional ones on a list vote. A system of top-up seats ensures that the votes cast in single member constituencies would not be wasted: votes were not cast to the winner of the constituency get recycled. There is a threshold of 5 per cent, but the real threshold is often higher. The electoral system became an asset to large units and persuades party to indulge in coalitions.

In polarisation Left and Right have strongly announced significations: ‘Left’ refers to the Socialist Party (MSZP), which fosters liberal economic policies (as social democrats in most European countries), and to the value (e.g. human rights) and economically liberal Free Democrats (SZDSZ). ‘Right’ refers to the moderate and radical nationalist and ‘conservative’ parties—conservative in terms of traditional values of religion, morality and ethno-nationalism (the Hungarian Democratic Forum-MDF; FIDESZ; and the radical nationalist MIEP and Jobbik).

In the 2006 electoral campaign the main centre-Right party, FIDESZ, had most etatist economic policies, whereas MDF and the liberals supported neo-liberalism. Instead of conventional notions, the Left and Right are ‘based primarily on attitudes towards the Hungarian nation’ in a rather pre-communist fashion. The Hungarian 'right' argued to be defending the nation and national values, the extreme right being anti-
Western and isolationist, and the ‘left’ is seen as socialist, internationalist, cosmopolitan, anti-nation, at best civic in its outlook regarding the nation. The discursive divide provided at least an illusion of ideological substance and a claim to differentiation, as each accused the other side of being too national or too cosmopolitan.

4.6 Raising Populism after 1998

After more than 40 years of one-party dictatorship, Hungary held a multi-party general election in 1990; in line with the Constitution, this has been followed by fresh elections every four years science: 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006. All the elections may be considered a success, primarily because each produced a result that allowed the stable government; there has been no need to call mid-term elections. Each election till 2006, opposition was guaranteed to rule, where, Gyurcsany’s government is an exception. Throughout this period ‘populism’, rhetoric politics or politics of ambitious aim became one of the trends of Hungarian politics.

To understand the meaning of populism, ‘it is some kind of deviation in politics which create artificial illusion than concentration on real political issues’. Populism demands a redefinition of the role of state by emphasizing its dispensational paternalistic character. Its traits include a kind of economic nationalism; a moralistic rhetoric constantly redefining national ambition; a steady process of searching out and stigmatising the ‘enemies of nation’; polarisation of politics to single dimension. During these years (1998–2006) the political competition was not centered on different programmes and rationally debated issues. However the politics of Hungary symbolically indulged in—us vs. them politics—based on cultural identity of past or future.

For instance in a political debate Gyurcsany during the 2006 election campagain emphasised on a ‘strong’, ‘proud Hungary’, where, the opposition leader talked about ‘Magyar Solidarity’. The opposition leader Orban said that voter would have to choose between Hungarian Solidarity and ‘ruthless laissez faire capitalism’ or ‘Hungarian model economy’ at the forthcoming parliamentary elections. To him Solidarity is ‘a tenet of Christianity, adopted by people of other faiths, and a factor on which rights and lefts
wing voters could agree'. Gyurscany, on the other hand concentrated on reforms when he addressed the nation. The next government’s first ‘task will be to reform the nation from justice to health care. In last four years it has achieved few goals, but we don’t want to be tired republic but a strong Hungary and we need a common denominator to make Hungary a western country in terms of quality of life’.127

4.7 Politics of National Re-unification after the 1990s

The importances of nationalism have increased in Hungary after 1990s because of many reasons. The reinterpretations of the Hungarian Revolutions, reburial of Imre Nagy in the hero square and first President Antall’s address to the 15 million Hungarian are nothing but resurgence of the nationalism of highest order.

The Article 6 of the Hungarian Constitution, for example, says that ‘The Republic of Hungary bears a sense of responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living outside its borders and shall promote and foster their relations with Hungary.’ This constitutional commitment to ethnic Hungarians living abroad reflects the fact that almost one-third of people of Hungarian ethnicity lives outside the territory of Hungarian state and constitute ethnic minorities in neighbouring states (Median sky, 1995: 108; Priban, 2004: 423). At this juncture, the Hungarian state brings a sense of responsibility towards the Hungarian people residing in neighbouring countries. But, the Hungarian minority residing in Bulgaria, the Slovak Republic and Romania is the citizen of respective state. Subsequently, the Article 6 of Hungarian constitution has made a rule which affects the internal affairs of other states.

By means of this ethnic logic, in 1993, the post-communist parliament also adopted a new citizenship law legislating the principle of jus sanguinis,128 which meant that Hungarian descent became the main criterion for citizenship. This law was accompanied by the Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, which guaranteed political and other rights of minorities living in Hungary. This article became

127 The Budapest Sun, 23 December—12 January, 2005
128 It is a social policy where citizenship is determined not by place of birth but by relation of blood, ancestral connection citizenship. It contrasts jus soli or citizenship based on birth place.
the cornerstone of Hungarian nationalist politics when the first post-communist Prime Minister (PM), the late Jozsef Antall, stated that he regarded himself as the prime minister of 15 million Hungarians. After the victory of the post-communist Left-wing opposition in subsequent parliamentary elections, the new Prime Minister, Guuyla Horn, distanced himself from this Right-wing nationalism spelled under Antall era. He described him as the PM of the 10 million Hungarian citizens. The ethnic and nationalist struggles in Hungarian political life symbolised by the Article 6 were further exacerbated by the right-wing government of 1998–2002. The then-Prime Minister Viktor Orban started granting various social welfare policies to the ethnic Hungarian living outside the territory. This legislation caused an international tension between all neighbouring states and European Union.

However, the nationalist conservative governments of prime ministers Antall (1990–94) and Orban (1998–2002) promoted the principle of ethnic identity, while post-communist socialist governments of prime ministers Horn (1994–98) and Medgyessy (since 2002) do not give ethnic policies such priority. The politics of national reunification on the name of ethnic identity has formed an important part of Hungarian politics.

IV.5 Corruption: A Persisting Problem

Corruption continues to be a serious problem in most Central Eastern European Countries. On a year long study by Open Society Institution (OSI) the study found, ‘the problem is likely to persist even after 10 candidate countries joining European Union

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129 This was including the ethnic Hungarian minorities living abroad.
130 Apart from other rights and entitlements, this legislation provides ethnic Hungarians from abroad with permission to work in Hungary for three months of each year. They also receive the Hungarian state’s welfare benefits for that period. This legislation also provides financial assistance for ethnic Hungarian students in higher-education institutions while they are in Hungary and extends this assistance to ethnic Hungarians in their home countries (Priban, 2004:423)
131 OSI was founded by Hungarian-born US financier, philanthropist and billionaire George Soros, who founded Open Society Archives (OSA) which gives glimpses of dissident activities of the early 1980s and till the regime change in 1989.
EU). According to the study, in Hungary, 'corruption is most rampant in the areas of public procurement and political party campaign financing. In addition, bribes are frequently paid on to smooth procedures with traffic police, customs authorities and physician.' The study acknowledged the introduction of anti-corruption legislation in the candidate countries, mostly regarding the legal frameworks for the penalisation of embezzlement and the introduction of compulsory assets statements for leading public figures had brought about significant changes. Due to the lack of clearly established supervising and enforcing mechanisms, parties hardly declare their financial sources.

Hungary has a reputation of being one of the least corrupt post-Communist countries. In 2005, Transparency International ranked Hungary 40th out of 159 monitored countries worldwide. Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index shows a slight improvement in the country's score from last year’s 4.8 to 5 out of 10, where 10 indicates the lowest level of corruption. According to GfK\textsuperscript{132} Polling Institute’s study, however, Hungarians bribe public service employees more frequently than the Central and Eastern European average. A number of doctors use state equipment for their private profit. The practice of 'gratitude money' for public health care employees, when the state-employed doctor receives money from the patient for provisions to which he or she is not entitled, is widespread (Freedom House Report: 2006).

Although, anti-corruption legislation has come into force in Hungary over the last few years, the study claimed the former FIDESZ-led government did little to establish transparency of its procedures. Liz Barrett, author of the report on Hungary, said the actions of former government were not unlawful, but that it nevertheless 'created a climate facilitating corruption'.\textsuperscript{133}

However, government of Gruscan has taken many majors to combat corruption after 2003–04. For example, the State Audit Office of Hungary now examines the business between all public and private sectors. Previously, such contracts had been considered as confidential business matters. In other sphere also Hungarian government

\textsuperscript{132} Growth for Knowledge', is German’s largest market research company spread through out world.
\textsuperscript{133} The Budapest Sun, 21–27 November, 2002, 1.
took other majors to combat corruption and laundering of proceedings. It includes—limiting the involvement of civil servants in private companies and requiring members of parliament to disclose their interest, income, and assets. Other laws also tried to seek out petty corruptions, such as placing curbs on collection fines on the spot and granting immunity for reporting requests for bribes. During this period, several minister, senior civil servants and business people were forced to region, and several were prosecuted (Compos and Pradhan, 2007: 410). Hence, the Freedom House rating for corruption has changed from 2.75 in 2005 to 3.00 in 2006.

IV.6 Political attitudes

In response to the democratic behaviour the chapter must analyse the political attitude of Hungarian citizens. Particularly we must examine their orientation towards the support of democracy. This must include the very basics like, participation rate in elections, public trust in democratic institutions, public support of political principles and political tolerance.

First, the voter turnout was very less during the first elections (see Table-IV.2). The turn out is very low in comparison to European standard. In 1990, the voters voted against The Socialist Party (MSZP) and favoured centre-Right government of Antall. In 1994 election reverse wave gone in favour of former Communist or MSZP. In legislative matters they behaved very mature manner. Again in 1998 elections the voters preferred right-wing FIDESZ and voted out the Socialist. In 2002, again the incumbent government of Orban voted in favour of Socialist and Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ). During the 2002 elections the voter turn out was highest in Hungarian democratic history after 1990. Here, voter negatively voted against FIDESZ conservative-rightist politics. The voter turn out was average to European standard in 2006. This is first time also the incumbent government was chosen second time to the office, consequitively.
Table-IV.2
Turnout in Hungarian Parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1st round, per cent</th>
<th>2nd round, per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006*</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note:*source of 2006 result is collected from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance website.

Second, the level of public support for the political principles and values in Hungary indicates that the Hungarian democrats reach far beyond a Schumpeterian concept of democracy. They embrace a class of political orientations which have an obvious and direct impact on the quality of the democratic process. With regard to democratic consolidation, the most important political principle is that of tolerance, followed by the acknowledgement of the illegitimacy of the use of violence in politics and solidarity with the poor (Hans-Dieter Klingemann et al, 2006: 149–170).
Table IV.3
Legitimacy of violence in Politics, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Never Justified (%)</th>
<th>Justified (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never Justified (%)</th>
<th>Justified (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never Justified (%)</th>
<th>Justified (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18–34 years</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–54 years</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–90 years</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never Justified (%)</th>
<th>Justified (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Town Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never Justified (%)</th>
<th>Justified (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100–9,999</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000–99,999</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000–2,000,000</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subjective Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never Justified (%)</th>
<th>Justified (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower class</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper class</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Haerpfer in Hans-Dieter Klingemann et al, 2006: 154

In third position, the political attitude of a community can better be assessed by their level of support for the ‘deviant behaviours’ or ‘non-conventional aspects’. These aspects include—homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce. Almost all these aspects are been discussed openly and debated rigorously by the Constitutional Court\(^\text{134}\) and other adjacent Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) after 1990. The culture of non-violence and tolerance is deeply rooted in Hungarian tradition (see Table IV.3). This tradition has promoted the acceptance of other deviant behaviours.\(^\text{135}\) In fourth place, the important indicator i.e. how people are politically oriented among their peer group. In the survey (Haerpfer’s index, here Table IV.4) majority of 56 per cent of Hungarian citizens’ discusses now and then, whereas 27 per cent never discuss politics with their friends (Klingemann et al., 2006:157). There is a gender difference in that men go ahead with

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\(^{134}\) As discussed in Chapter III of this thesis.

\(^{135}\) See Haerpfer’s index on ‘Homosexuality’ in, Klingemann et al. (2006), pp148–170.
discussing politics among their friends. There is a linear relationship between age and the frequency of political debate with friends. The elderly citizens discuss politics frequently than the young generations. There is also a clear relationship between the urban–rural dimension and the frequency of political discussion. The larger the size of the local community, the more often political discussion takes place between friends. In rural areas and small towns, only 14 per cent of the population discusses politics.

Table IV.4
Political Discussion with Friends, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequently (%)</th>
<th>Occasionally (%)</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–34 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–54 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–90 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100–9,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000–99,999</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000–2,000,000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper class</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Therefore, the cultural orientation en route for democracy includes tolerance and acceptance of deviant behaviour shows that it is deeply rooted in Hungarian society. The aspect of political development are congruently present in the behaviour of elite and mass
equally. The masses are well equipped with information about political issues, discuss it among peer groups.

**IV.7 Civil Society**: The Changing Trends

Civil Society is the intermediately bridge between family (private) and state (public). It also carries many forces of political culture and political understandings. It not only nurture democracy but provide it with legitimacy of the popular demand. There are many fundamental requirements for a sound civil society.\(^{137}\)

In the first place political, civil and economic rights providing legal guarantees for individual and group association are essential for strong civil organisations. Second, it is equally important that citizens must have unrestricted and uncensored access to the public sphere. Third, for the development of strong civil society it is indispensable that citizens should be able to and free to establish political parties, who articulate civil society's interest with the state. Without these basic conditions evolution of a strong civil society is possible.

\(^{136}\) The literature on relations between civil society and democratic political society have their roots in early liberal writings like those of Tocqueville. However they were developed in significant ways by 20th century theorists like Almond and Verba, who identified the role of political culture in a democratic order as vital. They argued that the political element of many voluntary organisations facilitates better awareness and a more informed citizenry, who make better voting choices, participate in politics, and hold government more accountable as a result. The statutes of these organisations have often been considered micro-constitutions because they accustom participants to the formalities of democratic decision making. More recently, Putnam has argued that even non-political organisations in civil society are vital for democracy. This is because they build social capital, trust and shared values, which are transferred into the political sphere and help to hold society together, facilitating an understanding of the interconnectedness of society and interests within it. Others, however, have questioned how democratic civil society actually is. Some have noted that the civil society actors have now obtained a remarkable amount of political power without anyone directly electing or appointing them. Finally, other scholars have argued that, since the concept of civil society is closely related to democracy and representation, it should in turn be linked with ideas of nationality and nationalism.

\(^{137}\) In the words of Neera Chandokhe—

'...without the protection of judicially granted and enforceable rights of free expression, freedom form associations, freedom to dissent, freedom to generate and disseminate public opinion, civil society is not possible. Armed with these weapons-rights, rule of law, freedom and citizenship-civil society becomes the site for the production of a critical rational discourse which possesses the potential to interrogate the state. Civil society has, therefore, been privileged by democratic theory as a vital precondition for the existence of democracy'.
The 1972 ‘socialist’ constitution declared that all power belongs to the ‘working people’. However, it significantly intimated that the leading force of society is the communist Party, i.e, the Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party (MSZMP). The Hungarian Communist regime in the 1970s and 1980s was not at all as brutal as in the 1950s; it was still a communist political and economic system. By the end of the 1980s the wind all over Europe was changing. Miszlivetzs a leading democratic dissident group leader rightly commented on—

The ‘unexpected’ richness in political and public life of the 1980s, culminated in 1989, was not surprising for those who knew about the deep undercurrents in east Central Europe. This richness was found in civil existence which was never totally eradicated from collective social consciousness and was preserved in enclaves. These learnt forms of civil society gradually became more visible during the turbulent decade of the 1980s (Miszlivetz, 1999:51)

After the collapse of the political system of communism in 1990 the first Parliament ratified a very heavily amended version of the 1949 constitution, and not the newly enacted one, which restored the political, economic and civil rights of individuals. Suffrage became universal and politically unrestricted. Citizens were become free to establish associations of political and other kinds, including organisations for interest representation in the economic sphere by employers or employees. Besides providing political and civil rights, by guaranteeing public and private ownership, the amended version of the 1949 constitution re-established the basic legal opportunities for development of individual and group autonomy. Civil society was present outside direct state control, through which the citizenry organising to pursue their own interests.138

The activity of these organisations and their involvement in politics increased during 1980s through various measures: East-West dialogue, new initiatives taken by Human right activists, environmental groups, Solidarity Movement, and Hungarian Democratic opposition. The Helsinki citizens’ Assembly, established in 1990 in Prague, was the only international institution of civil society which is an offspring of the efforts

138 Here it is relevant to agree with Chandhoke’s assertion that, civil society is essentially a concept which belongs to the tradition of political modernity founded on individualism and defense of human rights (1995:26). It is an area of public sphere where people can get together and freely discuss and influence political decision making.
to create civil networks across borders in the 1980s. That shows a significant amount of continuity in protecting human rights and supporting local grassroots initiatives for democratisation. By the end of 1989 Hungary had legitimised the role of civil society in same line in which it had legalised, political parties, labour union, and given permission for strikes or rallies.

The organisation of civil natures differed from state to state according to historical traditions, nature of the dictatorship, political structure and social structure. A wide variety of civil initiatives movements and association emerged at the beginning of the 1980s in Hungary in the absence of a large and strong independent authority like the Polish Catholic Church which functioned as an umbrella. At an early stage, there was a strong tendency for cooperation and solidarity among these civil groups called 'alternative social movements' or 'civil initiatives'. There was a unifying and consciously shared concept of civil society that had its origin in the political thought of Istavan Bibo, a prominent and independent political writer and historian. Bibo introduced the metaphor 'small circles of freedom', which was subsequently used and developed further by the emerging student movements, environmental groups and human rights initiatives during the 1980s. There was a gradual increase of networking and alliance making during the second phase of the 1980s. Rivalary among these groups remained secondary to the unifying force of challenging the one party dominant authority. This was rightly commented by Miszlivetz and Jensen 'when they surfaced, all these actors employed the new vocabulary of a wholly new language'.

From the outbreak of the 1956 Revolution onwards there was tension between the non-acceptance of Soviet domination and the logic of the bipolar world system throughout the region. Original and effective ways were traced out to democratise and support building of a relationship with the outer world. Even after the failures of 1956 and 1968, the Solidarity proved effective and efficient in Poland. The new way of thinking and articulation was represented by public figures like Michnik, Kuron, Konard and Haval. They all greatly conceptualized the relation of civil society and the repressive authoritarian state. The change in thinking and acting in civil society was supported by Western media Radio Free Europe service, Helsinki Agreement, etc. Suddenly a new
spirit, a new thinking cropped up which radiated in the civil discourse of Central Eastern European states. The attitude of: 'I have the right to make my voice heard' gained momentum within these alternative movements. It was this common feeling that bound them together and cracked a common language and milieu for civil society.

Drawing on various discussions in the Hungarian press, Bozoki\textsuperscript{139} had summed up the feeling of many civil movement activities concerning the effects of the growth of party politics on civil society: A new pluralist political elite had developed after the 1990 elections. The civil movements had increasingly identified themselves as parties and became political organisations working like a factory in a hierarchical structure. The remaining representatives of 'civil society', an essential concept of opposition in the eighties, or those who were left outside the parties felt that civil society had been 'robbed', its values looted by the process of rapid party formation. It is right to conclude that civil society in Hungary has a weak root in society. It exists but highly influenced by the political sphere. This has been rightly described by Miszlivetzs:

...[R]apid party formation and the first free elections resulted in the establishment of new institutions of representative democracy that radically changed the dynamics of civil society. An overwhelming majority of former civil society activists became members of the new political elites and occupied the highest positions, their perception of civil society versus state relation changed dramatically. (Miszlivetzs, 1999: 167)

Regardless of different political and cultural contexts, there was a fundamental consensus among the participants of Central Eastern Europe that one could no longer remain silent on fundamental political, social and ecological issues. During this period only the concepts like empowerment, participation, deliberation, and human right and self-determination came to the lexicon of Communist state vocabulary. The European common home, new world order, European public sphere and global civil society were born in the mid 1980s. This 'second renaissance of civil society' in East Central Europe had created a world wide transformation in the understanding and importance of civil sphere.

According to the Hungarian Central Statistical office there were in total 19,950 non-profit association registered in August 1992. Most of them had been established after the 1989 law on the right of association allowed the existence of autonomous groups. Unfortunately the records do not reveal their membership and their existence during the Communist Era. More detail is provided on 6,066 associations in the emerging civil sphere in the Register of Associations published in October 1992. The register classified associations according to various category like—leisure groups and professional associations.

The trend of being civil and not influencing the ‘public sphere’ or policy processes became an undeniable feature of the Hungarian civil organizations. This had been rightly summed up the citing a report by the National Statistical Office(KSH), Miszlivetz and Jensen—‘the data...shows an unprecedented growth in the number of civil, non profit organizations in past five years’, and they specify that the number of groups more than tripled from 1989 to 1992 (1998: 84). They referred this as ‘the emerging paradox’ of a statistically strong ‘civil society’ but one that is primarily organised ‘from above’, with only limited participation by ordinary citizens.
Table IV.5

Civil Associations in Hungary: 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mass Communication</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist’ associations, society</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalist, Patriotic, folk art circle</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports, sport fans’ groups</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time, hubby groups</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship circles, fraternal society</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational societies</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Societies</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s organisations, family care groups</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Organisations</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations of disabled</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Associations</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Development and protection groups</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic interest representation groups</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional chambers and federations</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic legal aid groups</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations promoting international ties</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political organisations</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,066</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statistics shows the formal institutional increase in the civil sector during the transition period. An increased number of organisations in the civil sector, however, do not necessarily mean that the real participation in civil society. The impact of their views on the political decision making has increased in the same proportion or with the same speed. Skepticism is not only warranted because 42 per cent of associations operate in the field of sports and leisure activities. A large problem is presented by the pseudo existence of many of the registered NGOs (Miszlivetz, 1998:84).

7.1 Recent Developments in Civil Society

Hungary’s transition from Communist dictatorship to consolidated liberal democracy is one of the most successful among the former Communist-bloc countries. The new political elite evolved at the onset of reforms comprising former Communist-era bureaucrats and the democratic opposition of the 1980s. By the end of the 20th century, a bipolar political system had emerged with social democratic and market liberal values guiding the political Left and conservative Christian democratic values guiding the political Right, an independent business sector developing, and a colorful civil society succeeding as dynamic actors of day-to-day policy-making and implementation.

Events during recent days indicate that the country has successfully passed its transition period and the society is now actively engaged in policy formulation for further development. The embedding of civic participation in the political process by NGOs was the prime development of the year. Responding to popular support of NGOs in June, the Parliament elected the former president of the Constitutional Court to become the head of state for five years. Politics centered on the behaviour of the two main political blocs, one led by Socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany and the other by Center-Right former Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Political life, crammed with policy reforms and successes claimed on the incumbent’s side and accusations of failure, corruption, and crises from the opposition’s side, demonstrated continued dynamism. The legal framework governing NGOs is generally favourable, and politics does not hinder the formation of non-registered democratic citizen movements or petition campaigns.
An overwhelming number of civil society organisations take an active role in providing direct social services to citizens or fellow organisations. There are several key watchdog groups closely monitoring public institutions, and there are also a handful of groups and think tanks aligned across party lines. The year 2005 marked a milestone for Hungary’s civil society, reinforcing that citizens’ commitment to political goals may ultimately gain a breakthrough via nonviolent means. Outstandingly, Hungary’s new president was elected by the Parliament in June following a forceful nationwide campaign by NGOs supporting former president of the Constitutional Court Laszlo Solyom as head of state. The new Law on Volunteerism adopted in June—however altered from the original concept—is a result of years of NGO advocacy (Country Report 2006: 289).

A major development in the legal framework of NGOs is the adoption of the Law on Volunteerism in June. According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) statistics, in 2003 close to 400,000 individuals volunteered for public causes, contributing almost 35 million working hours, saving Hungarian Forint (HUF) 24 billion (US$120 million) that would otherwise have been paid in staff costs. Yet a 2005 study conducted by the Nonprofit Research Association in 2004 found that almost 3.5 million Hungarian citizens were giving some form of pro bono service to their communities. Since 2003, the Hungarian Volunteer Center had been conducting an erudite advocacy campaign involving a coalition of NGOs for the legal recognition of volunteer work. Hungarian NGOs, relying on the favourable attitude of media and the general public, drafted the original piece of legislation, organised a handful of public debates, and carried out consultations with the government. Despite certain criticisms they finally approved the bill that does not sanction free-of-charge activities offered to the smallest NGOs, the law enables NGOs to offer modest tax-free allowances, in-kind compensation and training opportunities to citizens working for them (ibid).

Hungarian civil society can be judged as one of the most vibrant sectors of society. The U.S. Agency for International Development’s NGO Sustainability Index puts Hungary’s civil society in third place alongside Latvia among 29 former Soviet-bloc
countries. According to KSH statistics, among the nearly 75,000 registered organisations, the majority are working to provide human services, sport and recreational opportunities to their communities. Over 50 per cent of them enjoy public benefit status, which has offered economic benefits to NGOs since 1997. Observers estimate that approximately half the registered groups are in fact operational. The garden variety organisations include strong Budapest-based resource centers with network institutes across the country offering training opportunities, legal counsel, technical assistance in their advocacy efforts, libraries, and Internet portals. There are also a host of politically engaged NGOs and think tanks supporting all sides of the party landscape (ibid: 301).

7.2 Raising Civil Society Advocacy

The year 2005 marked a milestone for Hungary’s civil society, reinforcing that citizens’ commitment to political goals can ultimately gain a breakthrough via strategic civic mobilisation. It is true that in his former post, President Solyom was known for his active role in developing constitutional case law and even introduced an original and internationally emulated legal concept to interpreting liberal democratic constitutions. And his concept of the ‘invisible Constitution’ meant that one needs to seek the spirit or moral objective of a constitutional clause. But initially, his nomination appeared as a bombshell to the entire political elite—not for Solyom’s tenacious reputation, but because the Hungarian Constitution does not recognize civil society’s role in the presidential election process per se. Nevertheless, from 2005 the role of NGOs in governmental matters became a fact.

In previous occasions every five years since 1990, political parties were conveniently preparing to consult among themselves and their favoured candidates. But after Solyom was pitched in the public discourse and received wide-ranging civic support, parties were forced to consider him as a potential candidate. Solyom’s active

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140 This has already been discussed in Chapter III under the heading ‘Role of President’.
role in a 2004 campaign against the installation of NATO radar\textsuperscript{141} in the country, which the opposition backed to garner further public support, also assisted in putting him forth as the opposition parties' official candidate and in his eventual winning of the post.

Trade unions and interest groups enjoy significant autonomy in Hungary. By far the most influential workers' groups within the Hungarian government are those in the public sector and state-owned public services, such as the various public transport companies. In addition, several organisations were established in the past years to represent farmers' interests and exhibit substantial bargaining power. In February and March 2005, farmers held a series of demonstrations and succeeded ultimately in demanding that the government release payments mandated through the country's pledge to the EU. While unions in the public service sector and particularly the predecessors of the former Communist unions are considered to be closely aligned with the political Left, agrarian interest groups and some larger trade worker alliances formed around the systemic changes are frequently identified with the Right. Therefore, because of low membership, observers consider the unions to be generally weak and in need of perking up their reputations.

7.3 Civil Society and the Hungarian Media

A free and responsible media works like a catalyst in establishing democratically responsible government. It not only acts as a watchdog of individual freedom and expression but also check the overpowering governmental agencies. In the Communist Era media was totally state controlled and worked as a mouthpiece of Communist party. The existence of samizdat or unauthorised publications has organised a powerful opposition against ruling communism in Hungary after the 1980s. From the mid-1980s the press gave an outlet for the regime reform intelligentsia and the dissident groups.

\textsuperscript{141}The issue installing of NATO radar station in southern Hungary was opposed by environmentalists and almost 945 of people voted against it. The construction of a radar station on Tubes Hill, near the city of Pecs and 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of Budapest, would endanger wildlife and hurt tourism, environmental groups said. They also expressed concerns about the possible effects of the radar's electromagnetic field.
During these times after the change of the regime the political intelligentsia had some amount of influence over the media through expressing their ‘message’ and ‘agenda’ on political parties.

Democratisation and advancement of a market economy have changed the profile of the Hungarian media. But the influence of political elite over media remained unchanged till 1997 when privatisation established two nationwide private television channels. This has balanced the influence of political elite and played their independent role. Now what Korosenyi states that the role of mere journalist has been changed into ‘media intelligentsia’. He rightly observed that:

‘...a significant member of journalists sees their role as similar to that of media intelligentsia who are afforded many columns—inked by newspapers. They select stories not on the basis of their ‘new value’, but rather according to their personal world view and political values system and orientation. The media elite is in large part a politically committed-through certainly not homogeneous—actor in Hungarian politics and through its influence it forms apart of political elite. The majority of the media elite are left-wing or liberal, while a small part is right-wing, nationally oriented and/or conservative’ (1999: 96).

According to Freedom House report, media was generally considered to be free in Hungary. But wide selection of media outlets prevents any control over freedom of the press and of access to information. Particularly in the print press, the media scene reflects Hungary’s polarized political climate. Although the quality of journalism in Hungary is generally adequate, the boundaries between factual information, analysis, and commentary are often opaque. Libel continues to be a criminal offense and the high number of libel and state secrecy lawsuits that have occurred lately have raised widespread concern. The lack of proper legal regulation and financing keeps public service broadcasts at the crossroads of political and professional debate. Disputes left Hungarian Radio without a president in 2005.

The continued high number of court cases against journalists raised concerns in the 2000s. The Libel and secrecy laws continued to be criminal offenses, which according to many restricts the press freedom. The high court annulled the last year’s 10-month suspended jail sentence for libel handed to Editor Andras Bencsik of the weekly *Demokrata* in a case brought against a Member of the Parliament (MP). The arbitrary prosecution under outdated secrecy laws of *Nepszava* journalist Rita Csik, charged in 2004 with ‘deliberate breach of a state secret’ after she wrote a story quoting an
unlawfully classified police memorandum citing criminal evidence collected on an MP, continued in 2005 with the acquittal of the journalist in the lower court (the case is to be continued in the appeals court). This was the first case since transition in which a journalist accused of breaching state secrets was brought to court.

In recent times, journalist Antonia Radai of the weekly HVG (*Heti Vilagagzadasag*) was also taken to court for publishing parts of a Mafia case that allegedly involved several civil servants. The indictment was classified, and one cannot know the details of what Radai is accused of under security law. According to Miklos Haraszti, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s representative for freedom of the media was allowed to attend the court trial. The provision regulating state secrets is unconstitutional on at least three or four points, all of which should be changed immediately.

While acting as a minister of youth and sports in 2003, Prime Minister Gyurcsany took Laszlo Torok, a journalist at the daily *Magyar Nemzet*, to court in 2005. Torok was put on probation for libel for quoting the deputy head of the oppositional FIDESZ. According to the judicial branch’s interpretation of the Hungarian criminal code, grounds for libel charges include not only statements damage one’s reputation, but publicity given to another person’s derogatory statements. While politicians are under immunity, journalists quoting them are not (*Freedom House Report, 2006*).

The quality of journalism in Hungary is generally adequate, but the boundaries between factual information, analysis, and commentary are often blurred. For the first time in Hungary, *Magyar Hirlap* introduced a news ombudsman to improve journalistic standards. The main task of the ombudsman is to monitor and report on the objectivity, accuracy, and balance in news coverage of the paper.

The media landscape is dominated by market forces in Hungary, and foreign media companies are very active in both national and local newspaper markets. Only a small number of daily papers are owned locally. Local papers are particularly important and manage to keep their monopolies in the counties where they publish their total
circulation which is almost the same as that of the national daily papers combined. However, in the race to attract readers by print media outlets, tabloids prove to be the winners (ibid).

There are over 200 local or regional public, commercial, nonprofit, and cable radio stations, most limiting their programming to entertainment without significant original news content. According to a recent report by the Open Society Institute, ‘Hungarian (television) channels scarcely ever broadcast investigative reports and can hardly be labeled as watchdogs of democracy’ (OSI Report, 2005).

By analysing the main characteristic of political culture we can conclude that, Hungary is parliamentary, republic, democracy with viable civil society. It has a stable multi-party system representing clear cut societal divisions (cleavages). The political parties now a day involve themselves in populist measures. The political elites here particularly divided masses on their societal lines. The masses are fragmented, politically indifferent to the political issues but do indulge in discuss. They discuss various political, contentious matters among peer groups. Being the citizen of 21st century they use internet and other web media into usual use. However, still they are alienated towards politics; very often blame politics as dirty game. Still, they hope government must initiate development process and help the middle class who constitute majority of Hungarian population. The consensual nature of Hungarian politics lies in their subjective character of tolerance and acceptance of deviant behaviours.

Having surveyed various elements like the rate of corruption, nature of civil society and the role of media in Hungarian politics, we, can conclude that Hungarians are very much aware about the events around them. But their subjective orientations towards elites make them remain inactive politically. They hardly want to express their discontent through demonstrations, rallies, etc. Subsequently, the low level of mass mobilisation, low level of protest has increased the stability of the political system. So, political stability in Hungary after the 1990s is the combined result of the constitutional procedures and widespread political apathy.