

Political Faces of Slovenia  
Edited by  
Niko Toš | Karl H. Müller



# **Political Faces of Slovenia**

Political Orientations and Values at the  
End of the Century – Outlines Based  
on Slovenian Public Opinion Surveys

Preface by  
Janez Potočnik  
European Commissioner for Science and Research

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**Political Orientations and Values at the End of the Century**

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# Preface

by

Janez Potočnik | European Commissioner for Science and Research

## Political Faces of Slovenia – Some Reflections

The authors of the book you are about to read have embarked upon a demanding and complex intellectual project. Their aim is to present to the European reader the main characteristics of Slovenia's political developments in the past couple of decades, its specificities and the underlying reasons for the path towards independence and European integration. The celebration of the first anniversary of Slovenia's membership of the Union is a good occasion to effectively reflect on this and to draw some conclusions.

In many aspects, Slovenia occupied a special position in Europe within the last couple of decades. It was formally part of the socialist Yugoslavia who undertook a radical departure from the Soviet block in 1948. In addition to this, it was the most open, Western Europe-looking part of Yugoslavia and thus played in many ways the role of a forerunner of the former Eastern Europe, both economically and culturally. Its relatively high standard of living and openness were a tangible proof of this.

Politically but to some extent also in economic terms, Slovenia lacked a homogenous development path like the one to be found in the countries of Western Europe, owing this foremost to the fact that it was not an independent state. But its transition from a socialist-market society and economy and subsequent integration with the Union were made thereby even less difficult. The rapid process of nation-building from 1991 onwards as well as quick and successful integration into the European Union, were made possible through flexibility of institutional regulations and mechanisms of genuine democratic process. In this sense, Slovenia could be seen as a unique example in the European context and therefore a valuable case for the political theory and policy-making studies.

I welcome this book as a particular proof of vitality of Slovenia's political and economic arrangements which enable the country to successfully take part in the development of the European Union. The comprehensive assessment of the past development of Slovenia, the comparative nature of the study and the wide variety of the subjects analysed (social, gender, environmental, religious etc.) which goes beyond pure analysis of the political system, give a

fascinating overview of the Slovenian institutional “laboratory” as the authors call it. In this sense, I am convinced that the book will find the interest of both policy makers and political scientists not just in Slovenia but also across Europe. There is always something new to learn and there is plenty of it in this book.

## Acknowledgements

Working together across national boundaries and across different languages requires a coordinated effort by a large number of persons. In our case, the volume has been the first in a hopefully long series of books under the common heading of complexity, design, society. Moreover, it was the first book in which we tested our new layout as well as our new publishing and graphic programs. Thus, thanks go to

- Gertrud Hafner in Vienna who was confronted with the difficult tasks of transforming a very heterogeneous manuscript into a homogeneous format and into the new publishing program of the book series
- Ivana Kecman in Ljubljana who compiled the manuscripts and all other pieces of information necessary to produce this volume
- Andrea and Egon Leitgeb who were very helpful in building a new electronic publishing environment at WISDOM
- Michael Eigner who was mainly responsible for the redesign of the diagrams, figures and graphs in the book
- Werner Korn who acted as an unmoved prime mover behind this book project and behind the entire series on "Complexity, Design, Society" which takes its hopefully successful and sustainable take-off with the present volume
- a good spirit of cooperation and friendship between the two editors which has overcome many obstacles and barriers and which will continue to last well-beyond the publication of this book.

It should be emphasized that the next books in this series will place a stronger emphasis on the aspect of complexity or on new research designs, new methodologies or, as an essential element, on new information designs. However, this book has its main focus on the societal aspect and has as its special aim to provide a large amount of empirical information on the profiles and on the dynamics of the Slovenian transformation processes. After all, the completely unexpected revolutionary chain in 1989 has been one of the prime motifs to start the entire book series.



# Abstracts

## Part I – Political Faces

### **The Slovenian Way to Democracy and Sovereignty**

Vlado Miheljak | Niko Toš

The paper provides an account of the process of democratic transition and nation-state building in Slovenia. It begins with a portrayal of the country's specific situation before the political turning-point, both within Yugoslavia and the wider region. In this context, the authors point out three major structural characteristics that defined the Slovenian situation. Firstly, high level of ethnic and religious homogeneity, which prevented the outburst of tensions similar to those in other parts of former Yugoslavia. The second specific advantage was a relatively high level of economic development, which granted Slovenian industry a large share of Yugoslav market and encouraged its presence on Western European markets. Open borders were the third important factor, enabling Slovenian population unrestricted travel to two neighbouring Western countries (Austria and Italy) and a relatively free flow of ideas. In addition, the clash between anti-reformist federal politics, epitomized by Serbian president Milosevic, and the reformist line of Slovenian League of Communists, resulted in a high level of national solidarity and fostered a formation of a symbolic pact between reformist forces among Slovenian Communists and the civil society. As a consequence, the major conflict was not running along the opposition – ruling party axis, but rather along the Belgrade – Ljubljana axis. However, within the reformist block itself, two competing positions were engaged in a struggle for dominance – one which primarily saw democratization as a necessary step towards independence, and the other, which primarily saw independence as a necessary step towards democratization.

## **Beliefs in State or in the Usefulness of State? Attitudes Regarding the Role of State in Eleven Post-Socialist Societies**

Ivan Bernik | Brina Malnar

Drawing on a cross-country survey of attitudes towards post-socialist order, the article focuses on attitudes towards the role of state. The analysis is lead by a hypothesis that belief in strong state role is motivated more by interests than values, i.e. that attitudes favouring an active role of the state are widespread especially among those social strata which expect benefits from state redistributive actions. This hypothesis implies a claim that statist attitudes cannot be treated just as a relic of socialist regime and that they cannot be seen as dysfunctional in all respects in the new circumstances.

The survey data generally confirm these hypotheses but they also show that there exist considerable differences across the surveyed countries. Not only that in economically less developed post-socialist the pro-state attitudes are more widespread than in the more developed ones, there are differences among the countries on the similar level of economic development (e.g. Czech Republic and Slovenia).

## **Slovenian Identity: Intersecting Landscapes of Values and Culture**

Vlado Miheljak

The paper tackles the question of Slovenian identity, more precisely, to what extent it pertains to the value and cultural space of the so-called Central Europe. The analysis is based on the World Values Survey 1995 data set which included Slovenia and other Central European nations. The comparisons are organized around a set of different topics: attitudes towards the national community, political involvement and political identity, confidence in the institutions of polity, attitudes towards other citizens (trust and tolerance), commitment to legalism and attitudes towards democracy and autocracy. Cluster analysis has shown that similarities, value bonds and consistency of values actually exist, allowing the author a conclusion that overall distinctiveness of the Central European group, with respect to both post-communist countries, as well as established Western democracies, is greater than the differences within the group.

## **Satisfaction with Democracy in Slovenia. Ten Years On**

Janez Štebe

Transition winners and losers, whether in the political and ideological sense or in the economic and social security sense, have different opinions on how well democracy functions in practice. The expectations of different groups at the time of the regime change are important as well. Because of its gradual transition, expectations in Slovenia were relativised in many respects and it is interesting to examine, from the Democratisation Survey data, the respective impacts of economic and political factors on satisfaction with democracy. The findings suggest that present capacity to compete on the market is particularly important. The dimension of political leanings in the sense of support for the current government and coalition parties also makes a contribution to satisfaction. Finally positive subjective experience with the workings of the political system could contribute to the further consolidation of democracy.

## **Barriers of Democratic Consolidation**

Brina Malnar | Ivan Bernik

Many analysts of post-socialist societies have argued that consolidation of new political and economic structures, which have been established in a relatively short period of time, depends primarily on emergence of corresponding cultural structures. New value orientations and norms can provide a “software” on the basis of which individual and collective actors accept new political and economic order as legitimate and act accordingly. The main focus of this paper is to identify potential obstacles for consolidation of democracy in Slovenia at the level of collective perceptions. The authors argue that in Slovenia there has not been any broad lag between political and economical transformation and cultural change. The wide majority of population has accepted the democratic ideals and – with some reservation – the principles of market economy. There is also a broad consensus that the present and especially the expected performance of the existing political and economic system can be evaluated positively. Public opinion sees democracy primarily as basis of human and political rights, whereas market economy is seen mostly as a possible source of high social inequalities and risks. Therefore,

the acceptance of market economy in Slovenia obviously does not depend only on its successful performance, but also to the feeling that its outcomes are not in conflict with the standards of social justice as understood by the majority of population.

## **Slovenian Electorate – Formation or Renewal**

Vlado Miheljčak | Slavko Kurdiča

The paper explores the characteristics of Slovenian electorate in the nineties, the period of transition, when new political circumstances began to strongly affect public perceptions of politics, political parties and their representatives. Slovenian electorate was faced with a variety of new politics profiles founded on different value backgrounds, often based on historical divisions among Slovenians. The authors emphasize that intergenerational transmission of values and attitudes towards the past constituted one of the most pronounced cleavages in Slovenian society since the change of régime. In addition to this, the authors set out to determine other main factors which have influenced party preferences in the period of transition. The analysis starts with a pre-transition political preferences chart, followed by the topic of intergenerational reproduction of values, i.e. the transmission of political preferences through family, continues with the exploration of attitudes towards public issues as an indicator of party preferences, and wraps up with the topic of trust in association with party preferences. The authors conclude that the cleavage structure from the 1920s is becoming a reality in Slovenia again. The re-emergence of the between-wars pattern is rather surprising. It seems that with the revival of multi-party life the latent and long-repressed “Kulturkampf” has been reawakened and is now redrawing the lines of division along the urban/rural, religious/non-religious, and traditional/modern axes.

## **Nationalism, National Identity and European Identity: The Case of Slovenia from a Comparative Perspective**

Mitja Hafner-Fink

In the process of European integration, the following two cultural identities are clashing: 1) a national identity (being a citizen of a national state) and 2)

a European supra-national identity (European citizen). As a starting point of the paper Slovenia is understood as an idiosyncratic example of a re-integration of former communist countries to the European society – the following facts are important: after (a) democratisation and (b) gaining its independence from former Yugoslavia, Slovenia is (c) integrating with the EU. On the basis of survey data (mostly from the ISSP survey “National Identity 1995”, and from Slovene public opinion surveys after 1991) the following two hypotheses are tested: 1) It is the conflict between the national and the European identity that affects the structure of nationalist value system. 2) The achieved level of countries’ integration with the EU (East European states, “old” EU member states) determines the structure of nationalist value system in respected countries. Slovenia is compared to the following two groups of countries: a) selected West European states and b) selected Central and East European (candidate) states. The analysis confirms that the conflict (a negative correlation) between individual feelings of national identity and a European identity is supported (among others) by “negative” nationalism. A difference between “East” and “West” can also be seen: a proportion of “negative” nationalism was higher in Eastern European countries, and Slovenia clearly fit into this group.

## **Impact of Economic and Democratic Performance on Support for the Government**

Tomaž Volf | Matej Kovačič | NikoToš

In the paper, authors test a hypothesis that the level of support for the incumbent government and for democracy in general depends on their perceived economic and democratic performance. Therefore, a government’s economic and democratic performance is expected to positively influence the level of support for the government and democracy in general. Further, support for democracy as a form of government is expected to depend on the public’s perception of its political performance. Authors conclude that the economic effectiveness of the government has key impacts on the level of support for it. However, good economic performance does not guarantee the government a high level of support either. As far as the impact of democratic performance on the level of support for the government the findings are inconclusive. Some of the countries exhibit a negative causal relationship between the two variables, while in the remaining countries

democratic performance has a positive influence. Thirdly, there is no significant structural relation between support for the government and attitudes toward democracy as a form of government. This suggests that in these countries there is a clear distinction between democracy per se and the current political establishment. Finally, the analysis shows that there is a negative relationship between democratic performance and support for democracy. This suggests a pragmatic attitude towards the informal structures of democracy.

## **Value Divisions in the Light of Political Choices**

Slavko Kurdija

One of the principal theoretical postulates of modern sociological discourse is, that newly formed social segments (new identities) are being shaped and reproduced primarily through the socio-cultural sphere, and less so through the economic and material sphere. The article tackles this question on the level of political identities among Slovenians. The main focus was the search for criteria determining the formation of political identity. The text also explores the claim that class structures no longer are in line with interests with regard to political action. In addition the author points out that political affiliations are tied to the broader non-economic sphere. As with many other social topics, values play a key role in listing the criteria that determine the political positioning.

The question of the criteria that crucially determine the position of individuals or social groups, constantly re-emerges. A complex web of identities is spread over different social planes: social, economic, value, lifestyle, etc. Politics is only one such plane. This, together with certain general considerations of the dilemmas in the sociological analysis of identity, is the central issue dealt with in the article.

## **Part II – Contexts**

### **EU Enlargement – The Case of Slovenia**

Ivan Bernik | Samo Uhan

The article focuses on mass and elite attitudes towards the European Union in the pre-accession phase in Slovenia. It is argued, on the basis of survey data, that the mass attitudes were characterised by broad acceptance of the EU as a promising political and economic project on the one hand and a rather critical assessment of benefits of the Slovenia's (future) EU-membership on the other hand. On the elite level there existed not only broad consensus on the principles on which the EU is based, but also a strong conviction that the EU-membership will be generally beneficial for Slovenia. This is why almost all factions of political elite campaigned strongly for the Slovenia's EU-membership and that there was no attempts to exploit politically the doubts about the benefits of EU-membership in some parts of Slovenian population. In the concluding part of the article it is argued that in Slovenia the post-accession period will be characterised by the growth of critical attitudes towards the consequences of EU-membership both on mass and elite level.

### **Comparing Groups by Work Flexibility Across Eight Countries**

Pavle Sicherl

The paper uses the results from the special surveys undertaken in the project Households, Work and Flexibility (HWF) of the 5. FP of the EU, incorporating Sweden, Netherlands, UK, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. It attempts to form groups of flexibility that provisionally distinguish between desirable and undesirable forms of flexibility. We first grouped respondents into eight categories, combining them later into three major groups; the major criterion was employment status of the respondent, combined with some other 'objective' characteristics of flexibility. These provisional three groups are: flexibility group A (flexible workers for who the flexibility seems to be a preferred pattern of work), flexibility group B

(shift and irregular work patterns, temporary jobs and others), and standard employment group C (non flexible full time employment, regular working schedule, one activity). This produces in the case of Slovenia statistically significant differences with respect to work characteristics: e.g. people in flexibility group A undertake more work activities, more hours of work per week, have a more flexible schedule, as well as a more varied type of contract and place of work. This group is more likely to have higher incomes and more household goods, including Internet and PCs. They also have more satisfaction with earnings but less with working hours. On the other hand, flexibility group B is more often disadvantaged. The three flexibility categories show significant differences in ('objective') characteristics related to work and very few significant differences in ('subjective') opinions about possible work/family conflicts or agreement on various household issues. The empirical issue will be examined comparing the eight countries in the HWF project with an interesting range of development levels and past experiences.

## **The Stubbornness of Sexism in the Second Part of the Twentieth Century in Slovenia**

Maca Jogan

Till the beginning of the World War II, the androcentric social order prevailed either within the Slovenian state in the frame of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or later in the Yugoslav monarchy. Since the 1890s, several women's associations struggled for equal rights in all fields of public and private life, and for the shaping of the equal opportunities. Their demands were unsuccessful till the middle of the World War II. During the antifascist liberation war the Liberation Front declared gender equality of all rights (in May, 1942). After the war the equalization process gradually strengthened particularly during the socialist self-managing system (in the frame of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). In the 1990s, in the independent state of Slovenia, the transition to the modern (capitalist) social order has been connected with the revitalization of sexism - expressed by the tendencies of the redomestication of women and of the recatholization. Actually, the negative effects of transition touched more strongly women than men. Among the majority of women, the revitalized sexism has been confronted with the opposition and obvious resistance. By the common actions of various women's groups the acquired rights have been preserved. According to the results of the last empirical investigation of the Slovenian Public Opinion in 2003 it could be

assumed, that the beginning processes of the decomposition of sexism in the Slovenian society will not stop, though they will be seriously hindered from the (brutal) practices of the market economy.

## **Micro-foundations of Risk Societies in Slovenia and Europe I: Basic Concepts and New Inequality Scales**

Karl H. Müller | Günther Nemeth | Niko Toš

The paper will present new empirical perspectives which strongly contradict the conventional wisdom on the weak inter-relationships between living conditions, socio-economic risks, social inequalities and the state of health within and across contemporary societies. Here, a new evolutionary approach on socio-economic risks and on socio-economic risk groups will be introduced which embeds risks into objective as well as subjective dimensions of living conditions. Additionally, the new operationalization of socio-economic risks will be accompanied by the introduction of a complementary notion, namely by the concept of socio-economic life chances. Consequently, socio-economic risks and life chances will be used for the construction of a new vertical scale for societal inequalities and disparities. Moreover, the article will generate surprisingly strong and powerful linkages between the position on the new inequality scale and overall life satisfaction, on the one hand, and the state of health on the other hand.

## **The Micro-Foundations of Risk Societies in Slovenia and Europe II: Towards High Theory**

Karl H. Müller | Niko Toš | Dieter Ringler

The present article will cover new theoretical grounds by linking the new micro-foundations for risk societies with three theoretical domains. First, the scaling for inequality will be connected to principles and postulates which have been proposed within the cognitive sciences. Second, a new tie will be established between risk and inequality research and the medical literature on stress and stress factors. Third, another connection will be made between the new type of risk-research and evolutionary theory. In doing so, the new perspective on the micro-foundations of risk societies will be embedded in diversified and dense theoretical areas.

## **Some Notes on the Sociological Issues of the Environment and Environmental Values**

Pavel Gantar

The paper refers to the recent empirical sociological investigations of environmental value orientations and attitudes and addresses three sets of issues with regard to the transformations of environmental value orientations. First regards the establishment of environmental sociology and various conceptualisations of men/nature relationships. This is important for it influences the explanatory framework for empirical analysis of value orientations. The second issue concerns the differences between “deep” and “shallow” ecology and various forms of environmental activism derived from these basic men/nature attitudes. In the final section the issues of “altruism” and “selfishness” as they are perceived in empirical investigations. The author claims that great deal of reasons for environmental non-activism can be explained by “collective action” problems with regard to the common goods as for example the environment.

## **Comparative Analysis of Religiosity – in Slovenia and Central and Eastern European Countries**

Niko Toš

An original classification of religiosity is attempted employing data collected in seven Central and Eastern European countries (Aufbruch der Kirchen, 1997). The first step was to establish the applicability of three dimensions of religiosity: orthodoxy, belief in god and belief in life after death (profound religiosity), by multivariate and cluster analysis of national data (Poland, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovenia) for a large number of statements and questions (from the universe of Christian faith). In the second step fifteen variables from the scope of the three foregoing dimensions were analyzed to draw up a classificatory scheme for a new tripartite complex dimension (non-religious, independently religious, devoutly religious) which was labeled ‘inner religiosity’ and confirmed by testing against other dimensions of religiosity and selected socio-demographic variables. The seven countries were then ranked according to degree of religiosity using this classification, with Poland and Croatia coming at the top and Czech, Hungary and Slovenia at the bottom. For Slovenia it was found that roughly one fifth of the sample (19%) are devoutly religious, one fifth (21%) independently religious, and three-fifths (60%) are non-religious.

# Part I – Political Faces

Niko Toš | Karl H. Müller

For several reasons it has become a highly complex endeavor to present an outline of the political faces in Slovenia, past and present. Slovenia has played a very special role over the last sixty years, being a hybrid configuration within former Yugoslavia which itself has emphasized its independence from the Soviet-led communist regime. Moreover, Slovenia, like the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, is confronted with the multi-dimensional tasks of rapid nation-building following the chain of revolutions in 1989. To sharpen the contrasts of the political faces in Slovenia, the present volume tries to be as comparative as possible and to place Slovenia into at least two comparative contexts, namely into the context of other transition states as well as in the perspective of the evolution of Western European political systems and civil societies. Moreover, all the images of the political faces in Slovenia are supported and based on national as well as on international surveys so that the Slovenian portraits in Part I are strongly empirical in nature.

The various outlines of political faces in Slovenia cover a broad range of topics. Since short abstracts for all the articles can be found at the beginning of the book already, an attempt will be made to identify major thematic clusters. Essentially, five larger themes can be found.

The first topic is concentrated on a small explanation sketch for the very special Slovenian way of nation building (Chapter 1).

Several chapters deal in greater detail with the Slovenian electorate, namely with its attitudes towards the role of the state (Chapter 2), its satisfaction with democracy (Chapter 4) and with the part-preferences and the main reasons for the changing party preferences during the nineties (Chapter 6).

Three articles (Chapters 3, 7, and 9) address the issue of Slovenian or European identity. It is interesting to note that all three approaches, while using different methods and data, reach a similar set of conclusions.

A special article (Chapter 5) deals with the issue of barriers to democratic consolidation and arrives at the conclusion that Slovenia has been characterized by a simultaneity of transformations in the political, economic and the cultural arena which, by and large, were able to self-enforce each other.

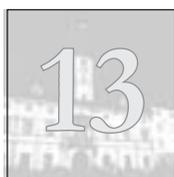
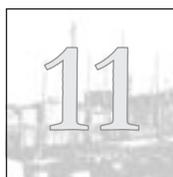
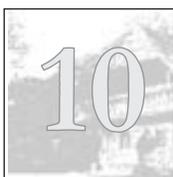
Finally, a fifth topic focuses on single hypothesis according to which the level of support for the incumbent government and for democracy in general depends on their perceived economic and democratic performance.



# 1

## The Slovenian Way to Democracy and Sovereignty

Vlado Miheljak | Niko Toš





## 1.1 Slovenia's Position Among the Former Yugoslav Republics and the Other Transitional Countries Today

Slovenia was twice as different as it is now in communist times<sup>1</sup>. Firstly, it was different to the other Yugoslav republics in that it was the most developed, the most pro-Western, and liberal. Secondly, it was quite different from the other Eastern and Central European countries. Sociological surveys of the value orientations of the general population and generational studies of youth (cf. Ule 1986, Hafner 1995) in the 1980s showed that notwithstanding the wide economic and cultural differences between the former Yugoslav republics individually, the differences between Slovenia and all the other republics were greater than those amongst the latter. These differences were manifested as a split between traditional and secular-rational orientations regarding authority, political authorities, religion, gender roles, national identification, etc. Actually, the first explicit conflicts between Slovenia and the federal establishment, which was taking more and more regressive and authoritarian stances after Slobodan Milosevic took power in Serbia, did not concern political but value issues: the position on the death penalty, homosexuality, conscientious objection (the right to civil instead of military service) and so forth.

What made Slovenia so distinctive? Above all, it was the atypical homogeneous ethnic composition and religious denomination of its population. Practically all ethnic Slovenes declaring a religious affiliation declare themselves as Catholics<sup>2</sup>. Its ethnic composition was also atypical for the former Yugoslavia. It alone fitted Brunner's definition (Brunner 1993) of a homogeneous nation state, in which the titular nation makes up 90% or more of the population. Other post-transition states that fall into this category are Poland, Hungary, Albania and Armenia. Most of the former Yugoslav republics were 'multi-ethnic' in the sense that besides a titular nation with an unquestionable majority there were one or more culturally, economically or numerically strong ethnic groups. Bosnia and Herzegovina was in the category of a 'multi-nation state' because there was not a single titular nation, which marked it as a country with a split ethnic awareness. Ethnic composition was a very important factor

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1 For a detailed analysis of Slovenia's distinctive position in former Yugoslavia and in the ex-communist camp and the features of the transition to democracy see: Toš and Miheljak 2002.

2 In the World Value Survey 95, 71% of respondents declared themselves Catholic, 1.8% Protestant, 1.8% Orthodox, 1% Muslim, 21 % of respondents who did not declare a religion came from a Catholic background.