Political culture, participation and civil society in the Baltic States
Part I

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Objectives of the lecture

• To introduce the new concepts: political culture and interest groups
• To provide a basic overview about the main features of the political culture in the Baltic countries
• To provide an overview about the main trends of political participation and trust in the Baltic countries and to compare the Baltic States with the Western Europe
• To demonstrate how the interest groups are exerting pressure on politics and which are the more or less influential interest groups in the Baltic politics
Outcomes of the lecture

• The basic knowledge what is a political culture and what are the interest groups
• The basic knowledge about the main features of the political culture in the Baltic States
• The basic knowledge about the trends and forms of political participation in the Baltic countries
Political culture

- A very wide phenomenon – ethical conduct of the politicians is only one dimension of it.

- **Political culture:**
  - beliefs (for example “democracy is the best governmental system”),
  - attitudes (trust in institutions, regime, politicians),
  - values (equality vs. elitist values, individualism vs. collectivism, etc),
  - norms (ethics),
  - symbols and rituals (how independence day is celebrated, national symbols), etc

- Provides the **general background** for political process.
Political culture in Baltic States

- Low trust in institution, but high support for democracy (less than 5 % would like to see former system restored).
- Low inter-personal trust – social capital
- Low political participation
- Politics is leader-centered, leaders matters more than ideologies for voters (has changed in the 2000’s).
- Rather “the winner takes all” style of policy making – not consensual style
- Paternalistic elitist attitudes – we know what is best for the people (EU referendums)
- Materialist values, post-materialist values not wide-spread (more in Estonia, among more educated people)
- Not very “developed” protest culture
- Etatism – more in Lithuania, Latvia-Estonia rather anti- etatist
Trust in institution I

1. Support for the political community – basic attachment to the nation and political elite who is ruling over the country.
   – Measured by national pride or willingness to defend the country.
   – Baltic nations – very strong, Russian minority - weaker.

2. Support for the core regime principles – support for democracy as a political regime.
   – Baltic states – strong, comparable with Western Europe.
   – Highest in Estonia, lowest in Lithuania.
Trust in institution II

3. Evaluation of regime performance – how democracy is working, are people satisfied with functioning of democracy.
   - Baltic States – quite low.
   - Present system compared to former system – Estonians and Latvians more positive towards the present system

4. Support for institutions – parliament, government, president, etc.
   - Baltic States - lower than in Western E.
   - Higher support in Estonia, lower in Lithuania. Presidents enjoy high support

5. Support for political actors – certain politicians and personalities, ministries, parties, etc. Baltic States – specific, no general trends
Support on democracy (2005)

Western Europe
- DNK: 92%
- NOR: 91%
- SWI: 89%
- ESP: 88%
- FRA: 84%
- FIN: 83%
- USA: 81%
- UK: 78%
- GER: 76%

CEE countries
- CZR: 77%
- EST: 77%
- CRO: 76%
- RMA: 72%
- GEO: 70%
- LIT: 70%
- LTV: 69%
- UKR: 63%
- POL: 62%
- BGR: 61%
- RUSG: 57%
Your country is ruled according to the will of people? “Yes” answers (2005)

Western Europe
- SWI: 64%
- DNK: 60%
- ESP: 57%
- USA: 52%
- NOR: 50%
- FIN: 46%
- UK: 36%
- FRA: 28%
- GER: 25%

CEE countries
- CZR: 41%
- RMA: 41%
- GEO: 35%
- LIT: 31%
- EST: 29%
- CRO: 24%
- LTV: 21%
- RUSG: 17%
- POL: 16%
- POL: 13%
- BGR: 5%
Politicians behave unethically (accepting this statement %)

**WESTERN EUROPE**
- Germany: 58%
- USA: 52%
- Spain: 49%
- UK: 49%
- Norway: 31%
- Sweden: 26%
- Denmark: 25%
- France: 24%
- Finland: 23%
- Italy: 17%
- Netherlands: 14%

**CEE COUNTRIES**
- Poland: 84%
- Latvia: 66%
- Czech Rep.: 56%
- Romania: 55%
- Estonia: 45%
- Ukraine: 45%
- Bulgaria: 40%
- Lithuania: 24%
- Russia: 21%
Politicians are dishonest (accepting this statement %)

- Germany: 76%
- Ukraina: 48%
- Norway: 47%
- USA: 47%
- Spain: 41%
- Sweden: 40%
- Italy: 39%
- France: 36%
- Denmark: 29%
- Finland: 23%
- Netherlands: 12%
- CEE countries:
  - Poland: 90%
  - Romania: 69%
  - Ukraine: 68%
  - Bulgaria: 67%
  - Czech Rep.: 64%
  - Lithuania: 63%
  - Latvia: 49%
  - Estonia: 36%
  - Russia: 36%
Politicians are not capable and competent (accepting this statement %)

WESTERN EUROPE
- Germany: 40%
- Denmark: 37%
- UK: 37%
- Norway: 29%
- USA: 27%
- Italy: 26%
- Sweden: 23%
- Finland: 15%
- France: 14%
- Netherlands: 12%
- Spain: 4%

CEE COUNTRIES
- Poland: 80%
- Czech Rep.: 51%
- Romania: 47%
- Bulgaria: 46%
- Latvia: 44%
- Ukraine: 31%
- Estonia: 20%
- Lithuania: 16%
- Russia: 12%
Trust in institutions – Baltic States

• **General** – support for regime and institutions highest in Estonia, lowest in Lithuania.

• Why support for institutions is so low?
  – **Social problems and governments’ inability.** Incompetence and corruption among political elite (especially Latvia).
  – **Cultural and historical peculiarities** – the center of the power has always situated somewhere else. Institutions of central power – they are not ours (Latvia, Estonia)
  – **Low social capital** – if people don’t trust each-other, they don’t trust political institutions as well
  – Too high expectations and disappointment now

• **Who trust institutions**: winners of transition trust more (higher income, higher education, etc.);