

THE TRANSFORMATION OF BULGARIAN POLITICAL CULTURE IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY (A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE DOMINANT POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE YOUTH POLITICAL SUBCULTURE)

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Abstract

During the last 25 years of democratic transition Bulgaria succeeded in partially overcoming some of the major transitional issues concerning the institutional and market transformation but many basic problems mostly related with the way institutions function still persist. All the governments since 1989 have come to power promising prosperity but nearly all of them end their mandate with social trust, close to zero. This paper argues that one of the factors which prevent the establishment of functioning democratic socio-political institutions is political culture. Attitudes of the youth towards politics define the priorities of state and will determine whether the country will continue to develop democratically. This study examines some basic political attitudes and tries to find if there are differences between the dominant political culture in Bulgaria and the political culture of youth.

Keywords: democracy, transition, political culture, youth subculture

Introduction

It is a matter of discussion whether the Bulgarian transition to democracy is an ongoing process or is over. What is certain is that the democratic institutions are established and in 2002 the European commission concluded that Bulgaria was a state with functioning market economy (Regular report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession 2002: 46). According to Ralf Dahrendorf the post-communist states need one more element in order to stabilize what has been achieved and this element is the "social foundations" – the establishment of civil society (Dahrendorf 1990: 99–100). The transformation of political culture into a "civic" one (as interpreted by Almond and Verba in "The Civic Culture") may take more than 60 years but it is a process and it is important to know what the socio-political attitudes are 25 years after the beginning of the democratic transition; what is the perception among the

society of their living after the fall of totalitarian regime? Of particular importance is the question about the views on political and social issues of the youth. Eventually, they will be responsible for what is coming next – whether the development of democratic principles, standards and values continues or stops.

In Bulgaria, as well as in most of the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, transition has necessarily entailed struggle between proponents of the old system and the emerging democratic order. There are various positions about how to interpret “what was before” and “what is now”. These views are often expressed simply within one of two narratives: “before it was better” and “the totalitarian regime is a criminal”. These are debates of particular resonance among those who lived through the communist era and immediate transition. Twenty five years after the fall, there are new generations who are familiar only with democracy and their views on communism are formed exclusively under the influence of family, school (teachers in particular), friends, movies and other media. The sources of information are generally very subjective depending on the personal experience of those expressing an opinion. But after all, youth’s position on democracy is generally formed by their own experience – the opportunities they have and the difficulties they face. The interpretations heard about the past can only serve as a confirmation of youth’s current belief.

Therefore *the object* of current work is to investigate Bulgarian political culture and the political culture of youth people in Bulgaria. The specific *focus* of the study is basic sociopolitical attitudes in the dominant political culture and youth political subculture.

The *main objective* of the report is to gauge youth involvement in the political process and to measure their attitudes toward democracy and its principles; and to compare their attitudes to the dominant political culture in Bulgaria.

For achieving the stated objective researcher has the following *tasks*: 1/ to make some theoretical remarks on political culture and political subcultures; 2/ to make an overview of the historical basis and current characteristics of Bulgarian political culture; 3/ processing of collected empirical data; 4/ analysis of the results of the processed data; 5/ make and estimate of possible trends.

The theories of political culture and political subcultures, formed under the works of Almond and Verba, Walter Rosenbaum, Daniel Elazar, Ronald Inglehart and etc. provide a wide range of *methodology* some of which is relevant to the study of the issues mentioned above. In the current work the political culture of Bulgarians and in particular of the youth subculture is studied and the comparative analysis is made on six basic indicators: 1) attitudes toward state; 2) attitudes toward politics and politicians; 3) attitudes toward political parties; 4) attitudes toward foreign partner/institution (Big Brother); 5) attitudes toward democratic political system and its functioning in Bulgaria; 6) attitudes toward the personal activity in the political process (see Пастармаджиева 2013: 74–75). For the purposes of this paper “dominant political culture” and “youth political subculture” are defined as follows: “*dominant*

political culture” – attitudes of Bulgarians aged 18 and older by the end of 2013; “*youth political subculture*” – attitudes of Bulgarians aged 18 to 30 years old by the end of 2013 (born from 1983 to 2005).

The data used for the purposes of the comparative analysis comes from the four waves the European Social Survey¹ conducted in Bulgaria in the period 2006–2013. The data covers the main chosen indicators and the most important period of the democratic transition when new generations, unfamiliar with the totalitarian regime, reach a maturity and begun their involvement in the political process. The “oldest” representatives of this youth political subculture turned eighteen in 2001 meaning that five years later (in 2006, when the first ESS wave was conducted in Bulgaria) there were enough representatives of this subculture to study. Also the four ESS waves meet the purposes of the work because they are conducted in key moments of the period: 1) December 2006; 2) March, April, May 2009; 3) December 2010, January, February and March 2011; 4) February, March, April 2013. The data was processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. This process as well as variables used is explained as endnotes for every figure.

The *structure* of the study includes some theoretical remarks on political culture and political subcultures; overview of the historical basis and current characteristics of Bulgarian political culture; the results of the conducted comparative analysis and a conclusion with key inferences and possible future tendencies.

Political culture and political subcultures

The impact of cultural models on politics is an idea dating back to Plato and Aristotle (Танев 2012: 19). The theory of *political culture* found its place in contemporary political science in mid-20th century. The implication of political culture as explanatory model of socio-political processes starts with Almond and Verba’s “The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations” (1963). They define political culture as “specific political orientations, attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes towards the role of individuals

¹ The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted every two years across Europe since 2001. The survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations. The main aims of the ESS are: 1) to chart stability and change in social structure, conditions and attitudes in Europe and to interpret how Europe’s social, political and moral fabric is changing; 2) to achieve and spread higher standards of rigour in cross-national research in the social sciences, including for example, questionnaire design and pre-testing, sampling, data collection, reduction of bias and the reliability of questions; 3) to introduce soundly-based indicators of national progress, based on citizens’ perceptions and judgements of key aspects of their societies; 4) to undertake and facilitate the training of European social researchers in comparative quantitative measurement and analysis; 5) to improve the visibility and outreach of data on social change among academics, policy makers and the wider public (<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>)

in the system” (Almond and Verba 1963: 13). The authors identify three groups of orientations – cognitive, affective and evaluational. There are four basic elements toward which are directed these orientations: 1) the political system as general object; 2) the input objects of the system; 3) the output objects of the system; 4) self as object of the system (Almond and Verba 1989: 15). Almond and Verba distinguish three main types of political culture according to the frequency of orientations to these specialized political objects: *parochial*, *subject* and *participant* and three mixed types – *parochial-subject*, *subject-participant*, *parochial-participant*.

Almond and Verba’s study was seminal provoking critics and igniting discussions in the scientific community and opening questions of political culture to debate. Their work also served as an inspiration to scholars to test their approach. Since “The Civic Culture” many authors have added their own ideas and methodology for studying individual national political culture. This has enriched political culture theory and has contributed to giving it its contemporary form.

An example of one such study is “American Federalism: A View from the States” (1972). Its author, Daniel J. Elazar explores American political culture by following its historical roots in the migration flows and settlement from Europe. His work defines political culture as the “particular pattern of orientations to political action in which each political system is imbedded” (Elazar 1972: 85) and uses the term in the sense of attitudes, beliefs and expectations of the role of government. Elazar states that the roots of political culture are “in the cumulative historical experiences of particular groups of people. Indeed, the origins of particular patterns of political culture are often lost in the mists of time” (Elazar 1972: 89).

The author identifies three types of political culture in the United States: *individualistic political culture* – government is instituted for strictly utilitarian reasons, to handle those functions demanded by the people it is created to serve, thus government need not to have any direct concern with questions of the good society; *moralistic political culture* – which emphasizes the commonwealth conception as the basis for democratic government; and *traditionalistic political culture* – which is rooted in an ambivalent attitude toward the marketplace coupled with a paternalistic and elitist conception of the commonwealth (Elazar 1984: 115–118). According to the author each American state can be identified with one of these types or with a combination of them. The attitudes typical for the representatives of each type affect their political preferences. In each state a different kind of policies may find support depending on the type of political culture.

Daniel Elazar’s construction cannot be implemented directly for every national political culture because it is created specifically for the United States. The basic idea, however, can be adapted because it links the historical roots of a state with the present attitudes of its citizens. This is a very important element; one missing in Almond and Verba’s work.

“Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics” (1977), Ronald Inglehart investigates the transformation of views from mate-

rialistic to post-materialistic; something he calls a “silent revolution”. According to the author post-materialists are ready to give up some of their material comfort in order to achieve realization in the area of spirit. The attitudes of these two groups are reflected in their political preferences. The respondents are asked to choose two among four national priorities: 1) Maintaining order in the nation; 2) Giving people more say in important political decisions; 3) Fighting rising prices; 4) Protecting freedom of speech. The so-called “materialists” are likely to choose answers (1) and (3) and the Inglehart’s “post-materialists” would prefer (2) and (4) (Inglehart 1977: 74). The recognition of Ronald Inglehart’s contribution to the theory of political culture saw him (along with his collaborator Pippa Norris) awarded the 2011 Johan Skytte Prize for contributing innovative ideas about the relevance and roots of political culture in a global context.²

The various works of Aaron Wildavsky on sociocultural processes reflect his view on social relations, structured by the political culture as fundamental to the specific political affiliations, which play a major role in shaping the political behavior. According to him culture is not a question of nationality and is fully rational thinking. Political cultures are built within a continuous process of social interaction based on the types of lifestyles. Thus he distinguishes four basic types of lifestyle: collectivism, egalitarianism, individualism, fatalism (Wildavsky 1987: 6).

The theories listed above demonstrate the variety of options when choosing an approach for political culture study. The selected approach depends on the objectives of the study and the national context. In the case of Bulgarian political culture Elazar’s concept requires a whole study devoted to adaptation of the model which is not the goal of the current work. Inglehart’s ideas are applicable only if the purpose of the study is to identify any transformation from materialism to post-materialism in Bulgarian society and this doesn’t match this paper’s purpose. Wildavsky’s concept of lifestyles doesn’t cover the idea of the current work. Almond and Verba emphasize on the relationship between the political culture and democratic stability. This is close to what the author of the paper tries to ascertain. This is why in the current paper is made an attempt their methodology to be adapted for the purposes of the study of Bulgarian political culture and youth political subculture.

It is indisputable that national socio-political processes can’t be realized and analyzed without understanding of the cultural foundations of political attitudes in the society. These views in specific national context are not homogenous and examples of fragmentation types can be numerous. This variety of political attitudes can be systematized and analyzed through the prism of *political subcultures*.

² The 2011 Johan Skytte Prize is awarded Ronald Inglehart, University of Michigan, and Pippa Norris, Harvard University for contributing innovative ideas about the relevance and roots of political culture in a global context. The Johan Skytte Prize is among the most prestigious prizes relating to the field of political science. (<http://skytteprize.statsvet.uu.se/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=OWPq5BNjfpw%3D&tabid=5558&language=sv-SE>)

In the Elsevier's Encyclopedia of The Social and Behavioral Sciences subcultures are explained as a result of the meeting of wider cultures and particular social situations. Therefore, subcultures could be considered as the way in which actors interpret whole cultural settings in the light of the situations and contexts in which they find themselves. A social group and a subculture may coincide but generally, they are not equal. (Encyclopedia of The Social and Behavioral Sciences 2001: 15245). Political scientists are interested in subculture as long as their members have certain political behavior.

The concept of political subcultures is studied as part of political culture theory but isn't fully developed. In Almond and Verba's work the issues of subculture are not deeply examined, but according to them using this concept "we can locate special attitudes and propensities for political behavior among parts of the population, or in particular roles, structures, or subsystems of the political system" (Almond and Verba 1989: 32). Daniel Elazar calls the identified three types of political culture in the USA political subcultures (though without defining the term).

The notion of political subcultures finds application in the early work of Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba "Political Culture and Political Development" (1965) and in "The Politics of the Developing Areas" (1960) by Gabriel Almond and James Coleman. These studies examine some national political cultures on subcultural level but none of them provide theoretical background of political subcultures concept.

There are various contemporary studies on political subcultures³ which identify and analyze such subcultures in different national contexts but none of them provides definition of the term. Most of the authors act as if there is an agreement on its meaning and generally the context of its usages gives an idea what the scientist mean by "political subculture". There is a high degree of similarity in the interpretation of the concept and it can be summarized as: regulatory systems of groups smaller than society whose distinctive outstanding characteristics can be language, values, religion, lifestyle, ethnicity, region and other factors.

Currently there isn't a unified definition of "political subcultures". Based on the works on political subcultures mentioned above, in the current paper "political subculture" is defined as: *a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, assessments of the politics and participation in it, which determine certain behavior and is characteristic of a particular social group defined by certain criteria such as region, age, education, religion, social status, political affiliations and party identification.* (Пастармаджиева 2013: 42)

³ Such as: Vergani, M. (Online First) 'Local political subcultures and party activism in Italy: the case study of the Democratic Party'. Party Politics. 2012; Манаков А. Г., Т. М. Иванова, „Политические субкультуры Псковской области”, Социологические исследования, 8, 2000, с. 48–53; Enyedi, Z., Organizing a subcultural party in Eastern Europe: The Case of the Hungarian Christian Democrats, Party Politics, 1996; Riedel, R., The Phenomenon of Religious-political Subculture in Poland, 2009; Diakoumakos, G., Greek politics and culture: The main Greek (political) subcultures (PhD thesis), 2010 and etc.

Basic elements of the Bulgarian political culture

Although some authors (Георгиев 2000: 86) trace the development of political culture to the establishment of the Bulgarian state in 681, most researchers begin their studies with the understanding that the basics of modern Bulgarian political culture should be sought during the Bulgarian National Revival (XVIII-XIX century). The central features during this period were the struggle for the preservation of a national identity and protection from imperial assimilation. These concerns determined the formation of a national political culture of a parochial (traditional) type. The transformations of Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat and the related processes in the Bulgarian society (such as commercial and craft activities, manufacturing, creation of community centers) created favorable conditions for the modification of political culture into more participant type. The most distinct manifestations of participatory attitudes were national liberation struggles and uprisings. The main political actors were not only fighting against the Ottoman Empire but also discussing what the form of the new Bulgarian state should be.

The period from liberation in 1878 to the beginning of totalitarian regime in 1944 was characterized by sharp struggles between authoritarian and democratic attitudes and at different moments each one of them seemingly prevailed (Благоева 2002: 66). Another dividing line running through Bulgarian politics and society during this period was the direction of the country's foreign policy – towards Russia or towards Western Europe. This question largely determined the political positions of most political parties of that period and led to sharp partisan struggles. Political parties “draw their ideological content more on outside than on inside” (Георгиев 2000: 224) which means that their identity was built on what their foreign orientations are. Another obvious characteristic from this period was politicians' focus on taking and holding of national authorities (Митев 1996: 13). These struggles built in the consciousness of Bulgarians a negative attitude towards politics and politicians and deepened the alienation between public and political life hampering the creation of an authentic functioning civil society and lead directly to the inability to create a stable democratic system in Bulgaria. Using the terminology of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, Blagoeva defines Bulgarian political culture after the liberation as “parochial-subjective type with participatory elements” (Благоева 2002: 68).

The period of totalitarianism put a lasting imprint on the Bulgarian political culture changing not only the structure and institutions of power but also through the process of social engineering which aimed to cultivate awareness of communist ideology. During this period, a new political culture was created. The establishment of a totalitarian political culture was done through the factors of political socialization. This system sought to break democratic political traditions and create favorable conditions for the establishment of authoritarian tendencies and close relations with the USSR. Political culture during the totalitarian regime was rather subjective as its characteristics are the widespread in society paternalistic and egalitarian orientations and attitudes (Благоева 2002: 82). The essential characteristic of political

culture during socialist period was a generalized inferiority complex and the articulated need for a “Big Brother”, mostly due to Bulgaria’s dependence on the USSR. Internal paternalism was also widespread backed by the patriarchal subordination of society “comfortably settled on paternalistic attitudes which evolved mass expectation that the state should take care of everything” (Милина 2004: 125). Nevertheless, in the 80’s there were beginnings of civic participation. Although the civil organizations at that time were close to the government, their activity supported the adoption of participatory practices (Тодоров 2011: 18).

Authoritarian tendencies fully re-emerged during totalitarian period leading an even greater detachment from politics. In 1989 Bulgaria began the transition to a new political system – democracy. The beginning of the Bulgarian transition to democracy was marked by a high degree of destructiveness and fission morally and economically (Янков 2010: 39). The new democratic political systems established after 1989 in Bulgaria and throughout Eastern Europe have been characterized by democratic political institutions and (interestingly) a corresponding deficit of political culture, which is why building democratic institutions in the first phase of transition (1990–1991) did not match with the formation of a democratic culture (Митев 1996: 11). Law and civil society, as essential components of democracy, have been formally enshrined and institutionalized, but still lag far from the forms and mechanisms that are intended to allow them to function adequately in the post-totalitarian space (Милина 2004: 123).

Comparative analysis between the dominant political culture and youth political subculture

Twenty five years of living after the fall has led to the transformation of cultural models but these years have also reinforced the beliefs created during the totalitarian period. The results of the processed empirical data show what the prevailing social attitudes are and their relation to the views of the youth.

The *attitudes of Bulgarians toward the state* are studied through the views on national institution such as country’s parliament, legal system and police (Fig. 1); satisfaction with the national government (Fig. 2) and the expectations toward the government (Fig. 3).

The institution which has the lowest share of respondents who trust in it is the national parliament. In 2013 less than 5% of those surveyed trust in the institution of parliament. The results of Figure 1 show that the trust was higher in the first half of the parliamentary terms and declines in the end of their terms⁴.

⁴ The term of the 40th national Bulgarian parliament is 2005-2009; the term of the 41st national Bulgarian parliament is 2009–2013.

Trust in police was initially higher in comparison to other institutions but in 2009 we observe a significant decrease in this trust. It should be taken into account that the interviews were taken in March, April and May of 2009, after wide antigovernment demonstrations in January and February with wide youth participation. These were crushed by the police. Clearly the police's violence affected the trust in the institution. Regarding the attitudes toward the state there aren't any significant differences between the dominant political culture and the youth subculture.

The level of satisfaction with the national government in the dominant political culture has been generally stable during the studied period except for 2011 when it increased (Fig. 2). The decrease in government satisfaction in 2009 among the young people can again be related to the protests in January 2009 against the government and the police violence. The hopes pinned to the government of political party GERB, especially by the youth, are reflected in the highest level of trust, recorded in the studied period. In 2011 about 12,5% of youth subculture representatives were rather satisfied with the national government. In February 2013 after protests which again ended with police violence the government resigned. The results on Figure 2 for 2013 represent the attitudes toward both the outgoing government and the caretaker government, assigned by the president of Bulgaria on 13 March 2013 because the interviews are taken in February, March and April 2013.

The results about the expectations toward the national government confirm the etatist and paternalistic expectations in the Bulgarian political culture indicated by many Bulgarian scientists. The percentages of Figure 3 give reason to believe that these expectations were not formed solely under the influence of the totalitarian worldview. The positions of youth, those not socialized during the totalitarian rule are rather close to the dominant ones. In 2013 almost 85% of youth agreed with the statement that "government should reduce differences in income levels"- the result for the dominant political culture in the same year is very close – 88%. Again in 2013 the position that it is "important that government is strong and ensure safety" is shared by 82,9% of youth and by 84,6% of the dominant political culture. These numbers indicate that Bulgarians believe in and prefer a strong national state.

The *attitudes of Bulgarians toward politics and politicians* are represented through their trust in politicians (Fig. 1), declared interest in politics (Fig. 4) and following of political news (Fig. 5).

About 50% of Bulgarians declare that they are interested in politics (Fig. 4). This interest is not that distinct among the young people but a tendency of growing interest among them is seen. Two thirds of the young people watch political news on TV less than one hour per day (Fig. 5) but there is an increasing trend in the share of those who watch such news between 1 and 3 hours per day.

Traditionally in Bulgaria trust in politicians is very low, and the attitudes of young people don't differ from this pattern (Fig. 1). Occasionally politicians have tried to explain the decline in their trust by saying that society didn't understand their policy. In recent years such excuses haven't added anything to their result and

the reasons should be sought in their own behavior. The low level of trust is also cultivated by some circles in Bulgarian political life through the media, pundits and social scientists. The “conclusion” that all the politicians are *maskari* (crooks, rascals, scoundrels) is repeated constantly by many of the latter.

The *attitudes toward political parties* in Bulgaria are characterized by the very low levels of trust in them (Fig. 1). Nevertheless Bulgarians have their political preferences (Fig. 6). Most of them define themselves as centrists. On one hand this is an indicator of balance, but on other it is due to the disappointment from the political parties who have already governed the country and define themselves as right or left. Among young people there is growing trend among those who define themselves as center-right, whose share is more than 25% in 2013. Traditionally in Bulgaria the identification with a certain political party comes before the self-placement on the left-right political scale. For example, if a person sympathizes with a certain political party and this party defines itself as “Center-Right”, it is very likely the person to identify him/herself as “center-right” because of political party’s self-definition and this identification has almost nothing to do with individual’s conceptualized values and ideology.

About 35% percent of youth feel close to a certain political party (Fig. 7). It is lower than in the dominant political culture where over 50% have their political party preferences. Further, among youth, political preferences don’t translate to membership in a political party. Although only 3,2% of the youth in 2011 are members of a political party there is a growing trend – in 2009 they are only 0,4%. This is vice versa to the dominant political culture where a decline is observed.

As regards *the attitudes toward foreign partner/institution* in Bulgaria social researchers note that unlike the lack of trust in national politics and institutions, Bulgarians have real trust in foreign institutions or partners (Fig. 8). The figure shows that the youth have more trust in European Parliament or the United Nations in comparison to the average trust in them in Bulgaria. Of course this may be related to cosmopolitanism widespread western orientation of young people but it may be and indicator of national inferiority complex and the need of reliable “Big Brother”

The *attitudes toward democratic political system and its functioning in Bulgaria* are measured through the satisfaction with the way democracy works in Bulgaria (Fig. 9), opinion on political parties that wish to overthrow democracy (Fig. 10) and opinion on democracy in general and in Bulgaria (Fig. 11).

About 6% of all Bulgarians are satisfied with the democracy in Bulgaria (Fig. 9). In 1989 and the years following a lot of people felt like losing a stable and comfortable life and it stands to reason dislike democracy. During the last 25 years a lot of those who were excited about the democratic transition faced recurring economic and social problems and have also become disappointed. This result is explainable. Among young people there is greater satisfaction but it still is very low. They also have good reasons – because of the difficulties mentioned above they are unable to start their life as they wish to and many of them are forced to leave the country. This

result should be interpreted as showing not dissatisfaction with the democracy in general, but rather with the inability of the Bulgarian governments to make it function as it should.

Such statement is confirmed by the results shown in Fig. 10. In the studied period more than 60% of youth agree that political parties that wish to overthrow democracy should be banned (Fig. 10), which means that they value democracy and believe that it should be protected. The result for the dominant political culture is a little bit lower but still high (almost 59% in 2013).

The results from 2013 are very optimistic: 88% of young people declared that it was important for them to live in a democratically governed country (Fig. 11). This corresponds to the prevailing attitude. However, it is worth noting that in the same year 20% of youth surveyed think that Bulgaria is only “rather democratic” overall. 15% of all Bulgarian share this opinion.

The last indicator is *attitudes toward personal activity in the political process*. Less than 10% of Bulgarians declare participation in some kind of activity in the last 12 months before the interviews (Fig. 12). Most often performed activity is signing a petition. But among the young people grows the share of those who have taken part in a lawful demonstration and the interviews in 2013 are made in February, March, April 2013 after anti-government demonstrations with the participation of many young people.

Conclusion

The results of the quantitative analysis showed that between the youth subculture and the dominant political culture there are no significant differences as concerns the studied indicators. There are some variations, concerning interest in politics; closeness and membership of political party and evaluation of democratic political system in general and in Bulgaria. These results don't mean that Bulgarian political culture is a homogenous one. They only give a ground to argue that the age is not the factor which determines the diversity.

They also indicate that during the process of transition to democracy Bulgarian political culture reflects some durable and historically set features as well as the impact of the totalitarian past – negative attitudes toward politicians and national institution, political alienation, higher trust in foreign partners and/or institutions, paternalistic expectations, low civic participation (but the latter is growing in the last few years).

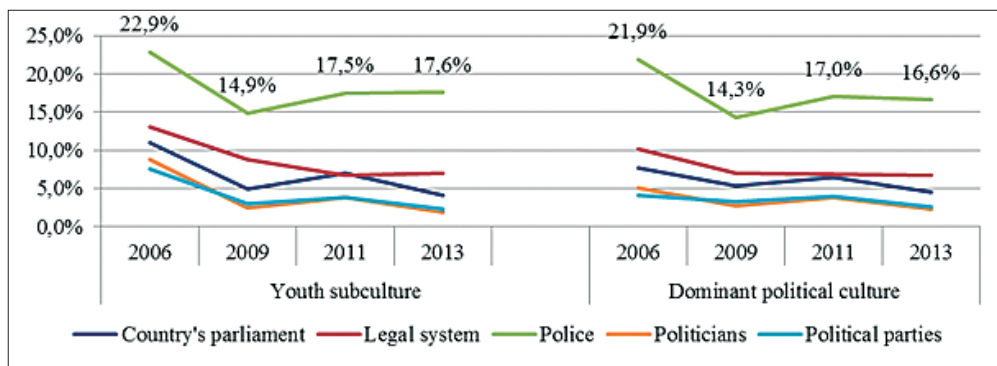
The results indicate that youth value the democracy; have political preferences, but are not very willing to engage with a political party; they are moderately interested in politics but ready to take political action. These give ground to argue that despite the lack of civic education, which is meant to teach youth of democratic values, the young people intuitively follow them.

This result can be referred to as one of the positive characteristics of the democratic process but is not enough to say that Bulgarian political culture reached a point where it can be called “civic”. As the figures indicate the dominant political culture haven’t change significantly during the studied period. Living after the fall has changed many things in Bulgarians lives but haven’t led to general transformation of political culture.

Although it is not a civic one, Bulgarian political culture is more participatory. The anti-governmental protests which started in June 2013 and finished in July 2014 with the resignation of the government demonstrate the palpable desire of Bulgarians to participate in and protect the principles of democracy. The same applies to the youth subculture. In these protests the young people were very active.

Young Bulgarians are ready to protect democracy and its values. Further, Bulgarian society is characterized by solidarity, tolerance and paternalistic attitudes which is valid for young people as well. These circumstances may create conditions for populist propaganda to infatuate youth to follow destructive ideas such as “far left” or “far right.” In such insecure world a possible way to protect youth from extremist movements is to cultivate the values of democracy since childhood and to emphasize the results of all radical and totalitarian regimes and the lasting consequences on whole nations.

Figure 1. Trust in⁵:



⁵ The respondents are asked to evaluate their trust in the given institutions on a scale from “0” to “10” where “0” is “No trust at all” and “10” is “Complete trust”. The percentage on Fig.1 represents the sum of answers “7,8,9,10” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather trust”.

Figure 2. Satisfaction with the national government⁶

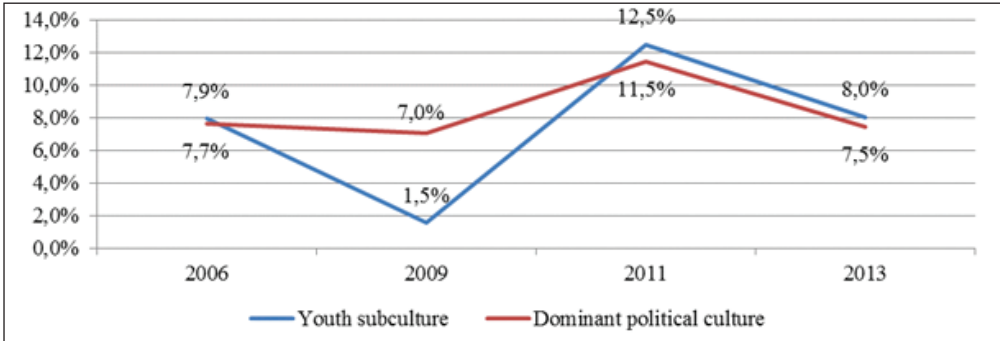
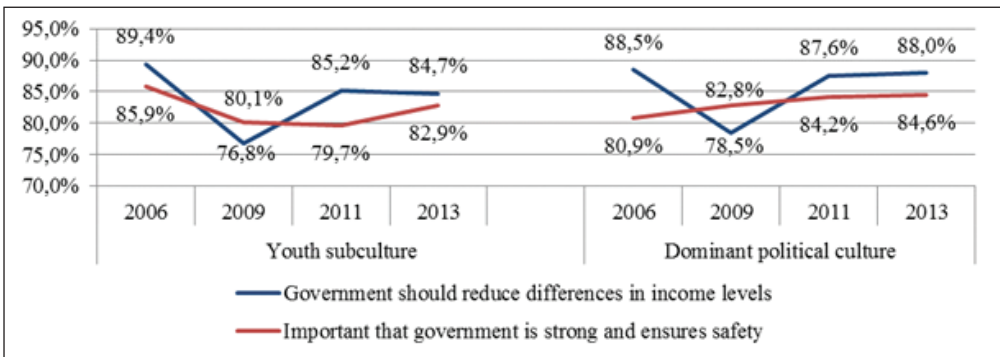


Figure 3. Expectations toward the national government⁷



⁶ The respondents are asked to evaluate their satisfaction with the national government on a scale from “0” to “10” where “0” is “Extremely dissatisfied” and “10” is “Extremely satisfied”. The percentage on Fig.2 represents the sum of answers “7,8,9,10” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather satisfied”

⁷ The respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement on the two statements as possible answers are: Agree strongly; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Disagree strongly. The percentage on Fig.3 represents the sum of answers “Agree strongly” and “Agree” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather agree”.

Figure 4. Interest in politics⁸

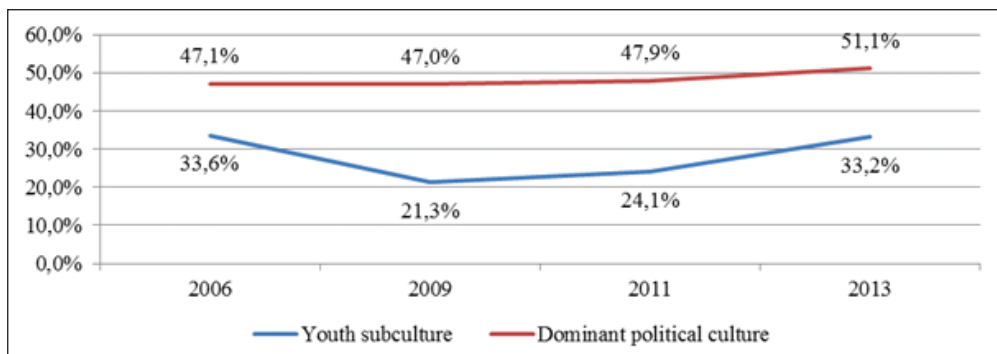
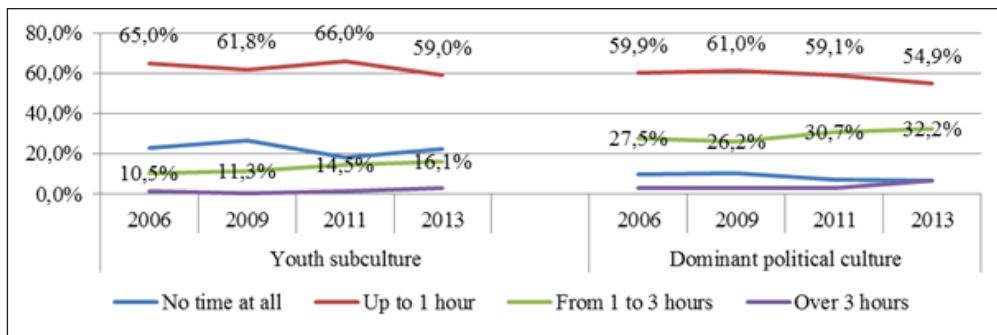


Figure 5. TV watching, news/politics/current affairs (on average weekday)⁹



⁸ The respondents are asked to indicate their level of interest in politics as possible answers are: Very interested; Quite interested; Hardly interested; Not at all interested. The percentage on Fig.4 represents the sum of answers “Very interested” and “Quite interested” which are grouped in the answer “Rather interested”.

⁹ The respondents are asked to indicate the time they spend on average weekday for TV watching, news/politics/current affairs as possible answers are: No time at all; Less than 0,5 hour; 0,5 hour to 1 hour; More than 1 hour, up to 1,5 hours; More than 1,5 hours, up to 2 hours; More than 2 hours, up to 2,5 hours; More than 2,5 hours, up to 3 hours; More than 3 hours. For the purposes of current paper the answers are grouped as follows: No time at all; Up to 1 hour; From 1 to 3 hours; Over 3 hours.

Figure 6. Placement on the left-right political scale¹⁰

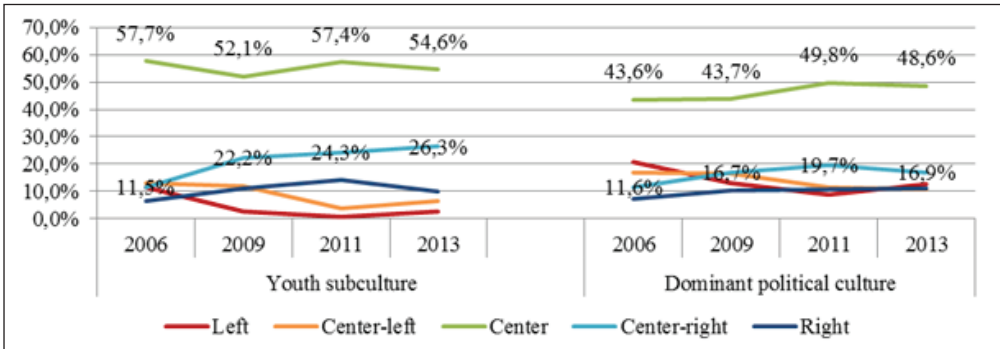
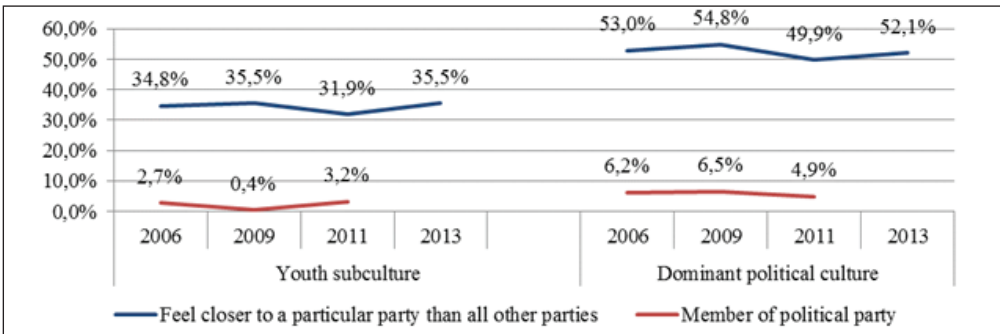


Figure 7. Closeness to and membership in political party¹¹



¹⁰ The respondents are asked to place themselves as regards their political views on left-right scale as “0” is “Left” and “10” is “Right”. For the purposes of current paper the answers are grouped as follows: “0” and “1” – “Left”; “2” and “3” – “Center-Left”; “4”, “5” and “6” – “Center”; “7” and “8” – “Center-Right”; “9” and “10” – “Right”.

¹¹ The respondents are asked if they feel close to a certain political party and if they are member of such. The possible answers of both questions are “Yes” and “No”.

Figure 8. Trust in European Parliament and United Nations¹²

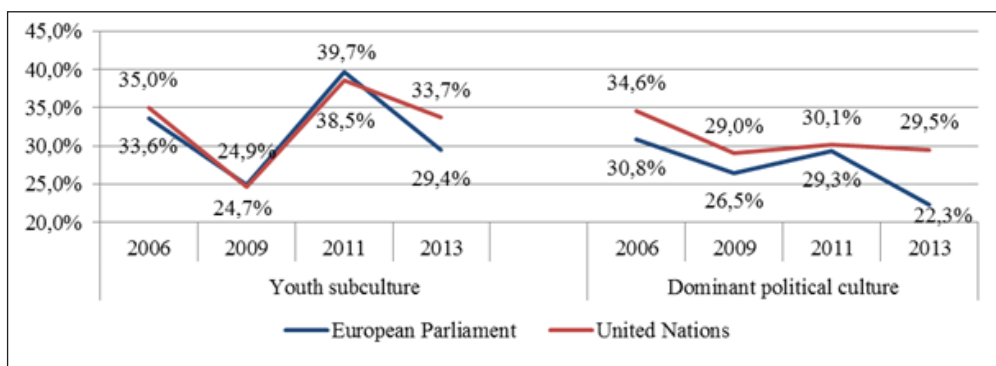
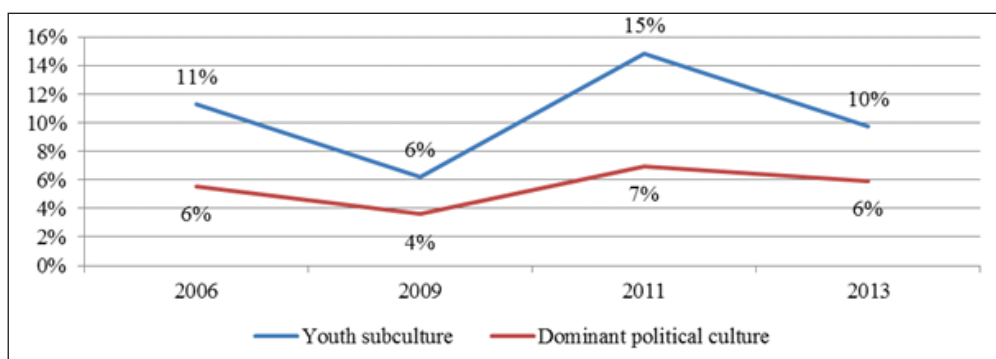


Figure 9. Satisfaction with the way democracy works in Bulgaria¹³



¹² The respondents are asked to evaluate their trust in the given institutions on a scale from “0” to “10” where “0” is “No trust at all” and “10” is “Complete trust”. The percentage on Fig.8 represents the sum of answers “7,8,9,10” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather trust”.

¹³ The respondents are asked to evaluate their satisfaction the way democracy works in Bulgaria on a scale from “0” to “10” where “0” is “Extremely dissatisfied” and “10” is “Extremely satisfied”. The percentage on Fig.9 represents the sum of answers “7,8,9,10” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather satisfied”

Figure 10. Ban political parties that wish to overthrow democracy¹⁴

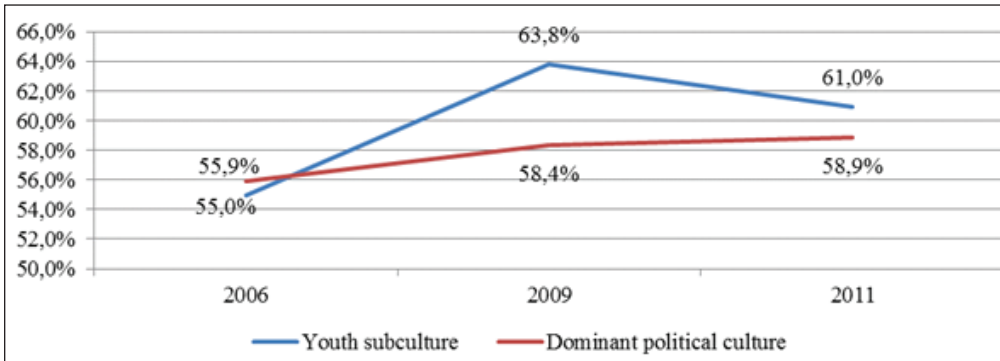
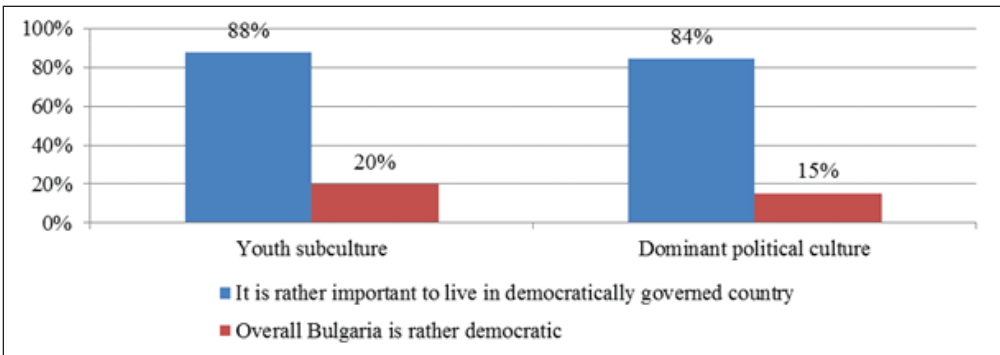


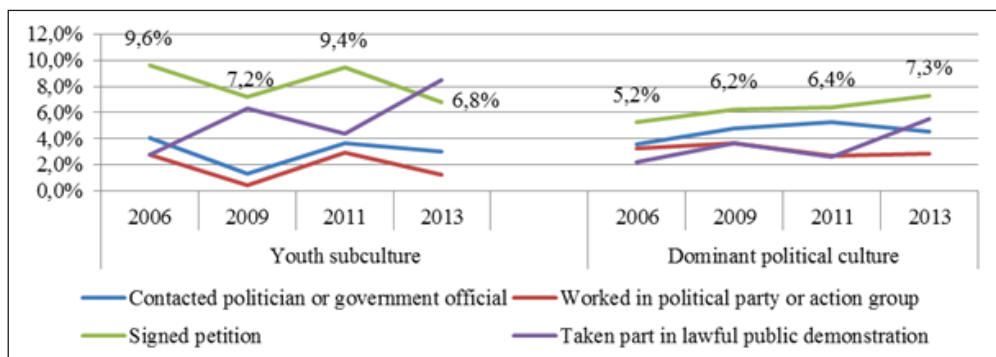
Figure 11. Opinion on democracy in general and in Bulgaria¹⁵



¹⁴ The respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement on the statement “Ban political parties that wish to overthrow democracy” as possible answers are: Agree strongly; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Disagree strongly. The percentage on Fig.10 represents the sum of answers “Agree strongly” and “Agree” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather agree”

¹⁵ The respondents are asked to evaluate how important for them is to live in democratically governed country on a scale from “0” to “10” where “0” is “Not at all important” and “10” is “Extremely important”. The percentage on Fig.11 represents the sum of answers “7,8,9,10” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather important”. As concerns the democracy in Bulgaria, the respondents are asked to evaluate how democratic Bulgaria is overall on a scale from “0” to “10” where “0” is “Not at all democratic” and “10” is “Completely democratic”. The percentage on Fig.11 represents the sum of answers “7,8,9,10” which for the purposes of the current paper are grouped in the answer “Rather democratic”.

Figure 12. Political activity last 12 months¹⁶



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¹⁶ The respondents are asked if they practiced the mentioned activities in the last 12 months. The possible answers are “Yes” and “No”.

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