

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLAND'S RIGHT: FROM RELIANCE ON  
HISTORICAL RIVALRIES TO STABLE PARTY PLATFORMS

Ashley Karen Timidaiski

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Approved by:

Dr. Milada Anna Vachudova

Dr. Graeme Robertson

Dr. Chad Bryant

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## **ABSTRACT**

ASHLEY KAREN TIMIDAIKI: The Development of Poland's Right: from Reliance on Historical Rivalries to Stable Party Platforms  
(Under the direction of Dr. Milada Anna Vachudova)

Many predicted that Poland's developing political party system would favor a strong right wing due to several preexisting qualities: Poland's less oppressive communist regime, the strong presence of the Catholic Church in Polish society, and the power of Solidarity – Poland's exceptionally large anti-communist opposition movement. However Poland's Right remained weak and fragmented for over a decade after the transition from communism. This thesis posits that the weakness of Poland's Right was due to their reliance on historical rivalries between the Solidarity-successor and Communist-successor parties as a campaign platform instead of creating a cohesive political ideology under unified leadership, as was exemplified by the failed right-wing coalition of the 1990s, Solidarity Electoral Action. In conclusion, it was not until the 2005 and 2007 elections, when the Right was forced to compete against each other, that the historical rivalry strategy was abandoned, resulting in two stable mass parties on the Right.

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AWS	Solidarity Electoral Action
ECE	East Central Europe
KLD	Liberal Democratic Congress
LPR	League of Polish Families
PC	Center Alliance
PD	Democratic Party
PiS	Law and Justice
PO	Civic Platform
PSL	Polish Peasants Party
PZPR	United Polish Workers Party (Communist Party of Poland)
RdR	Movement for the Republic
SdPI	Social Democracy of Poland
SLD	Democratic Left Alliance
SO (SRP)	Self-Defense (of the Republic of Poland)
UD	Democratic Union
UP	Union of Labor
UW	Freedom Union

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## Introduction

The recent political history for political parties in East Central Europe (ECE) has been, as one might expect, untidy: without previously established political parties, the first few years after the transition from communism featured a patchwork of small, ill-defined political parties. These parties were often forced to forge political alliances with one another in order to survive, and in such an unstable system alliances were formed less often on ideology than on political legacy. After the transition from communism, two political legacies were left: that of the Communist party and that of the anti-communist opposition movement. Once out of power, communist parties transformed (some with more ease than others) into left-wing<sup>1</sup> social democratic parties, and logically any opposition movement was to become the Right in the state's budding political spectrum. Based on this assumption, we could hypothesize that states with the strongest anti-communist opposition movements would naturally produce the strongest right-wing political parties.<sup>2</sup> In Hungary and Czech Republic a strong anti-communist opposition movement did, in fact, lead to a strong Right during the 1990s.

Poland, however, has proved a surprising exception to this prediction. Of all the East Central European countries, Poland initially showed the greatest signs of forming a

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper I will use the term "left-wing" and "right-wing" without any connotation that these are extremist far-left or far-right ideologies or parties. Any reference to extremist ideology or political parties will be explicit and specific. I will explain further in this chapter how I categorize political parties in Poland.

<sup>2</sup> See Vachudova, Milada Anna. (2008). "Centre-right parties and political outcomes in East Central Europe." *Party Politics*. 14(4). pp. 387-405 and Vachudova, Milada Anna. (2005). *Europe undivided: democracy, leverage, and integration after communism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

strong right wing: during the 1980s the “Solidarity” trade union became the largest democratic opposition movement in any communist state and later achieved an overwhelming victory in the first semi-free elections in 1989. In addition to the Solidarity movement, the conservative (and anti-communist) Catholic Church had long been prevalent in Poland’s politics – even during the communist regime. All of these factors should have resulted in a strong Right in the post-communist “Third Republic” of Poland, but it did not. Throughout the 1990s, Poland’s Right was plagued by infighting, fragmentation, and poor party management, while the communist-successor parties were able to maintain a strong, stable position on Poland’s Left into the 2000s. It was not until the 2005 and 2007 elections that Poland’s Right was able to succeed not only at the polls, but also in stabilizing their party structure and platform.

What can account for the disunity and chaos of the Polish Right for over a decade after 1989? There are several possible explanations: feuds between the Right’s elites, unfavorable circumstances occurring under a Right government (such as economic crisis, corruption, or scandal), or the inability of Right parties to connect with voters. All of these factors contributed to the weakness of Poland’s Right. However I hypothesize that the most injurious aspect of Poland’s Right was its reliance on the defunct Solidarity-successor versus communist-successor division as a defining cleavage – and the Right’s substitution of this historical rivalry for a comprehensive political ideology. As a result, parties that were ostensibly members of the Right had widely divergent ideologies and platforms, making a strong, “mass party” with a broad ideological consensus impossible.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Sitter, Nick. (2002). “Cleavages, party strategy and party system change in Europe, East and West.” *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*. 3(3). pp. 425-451.

I conclude that Poland's Right was unable to stabilize itself and succeed electorally until it overcame this "post-communist divide" in 2005<sup>4</sup>.

To provide evidence for this hypothesis, I will first examine the patterns of party competition in Poland after 1989, analyzing key cleavages between the Left and Right. I will demonstrate how the axis of competition prior to the 2005 election centered on vestigial issues of the post-communist divide, such as lustration, and social issues, such as the role of the Catholic Church in public life. Second, I will demonstrate how reliance on its historic rivalry with the post-communists instead of ideology to identify itself led to the fragmentation and weakness of Poland's Right during the 1990s, notably displayed by the failed right-wing party/coalition Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS). Finally, I will demonstrate that the 2005 and 2007 elections strengthened and stabilized the Right by eliminating the post-communist/post-Solidarity divide as a defining cleavage.

The plan of the paper is as follows: I will continue this first introductory chapter with a brief discussion of political ideology and party competition in ECE and Poland. This discussion will show how ideology is defined differently in ECE than in Western democracies, and how this difference leads to different patterns of party identification and competition. I will also clarify how parties will be categorized on the political spectrum in this paper.

In Chapter 2 I will detail the elements of Poland's communist past that ought to have favored the formation of a strong Right in the 1990s: the greater political freedom experienced by Poles during communism (in comparison to citizens of other communist

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<sup>4</sup> See Hanley, Sean, Aleks Szczerbiak, Tim Haughton and Brigid Fowler. (2008). "Sticking together: explaining comparative centre-right party success in post-communist Central and East Europe." *Party Politics*. 14(4). pp 407-434.

states in the region), the stalwart and active Catholic Church, and most especially the strong anti-communist movement Solidarity. In the second half of this chapter I will demonstrate how, in spite of these elements in favor of a strong Right, Poland's Right failed to develop a cohesive party in the early 1990s and how it remained weakened and fragmented in 1995 as a result.

Next, I will examine in Chapter 3 the failure of the first large-scale attempt to unite the Polish Right – Solidarity Electoral Action. I will demonstrate how the alliance was formed based on historical allegiances rather than ideology, and how this disunity led to infighting, fragmentation, and the coalition's ultimate dissolution by 2001.

In Chapter 4 I will demonstrate how the post-communist/post-Solidarity division began to wane with the 2005 elections and practically disappeared by the 2007 election. I will argue that the weakness of the Left during this time forced Poland's Right to compete against each other, resulting in competition based on ideology and not history, and ultimately the stabilization of the political platforms of right-wing parties.

Finally, I will conclude in Chapter 5 that Poland's Right owes its recent electoral success and party stabilization to their changed electoral strategy away from campaigns based on historical rivalry and towards campaigns based on economic and social cleavages.

### *Party Competition in the West and East*

Some background on party competition and political ideology is necessary before I begin to discuss specifics of Poland's party system. It should be noted that political parties in ECE and Poland follow a different pattern of competition than political parties

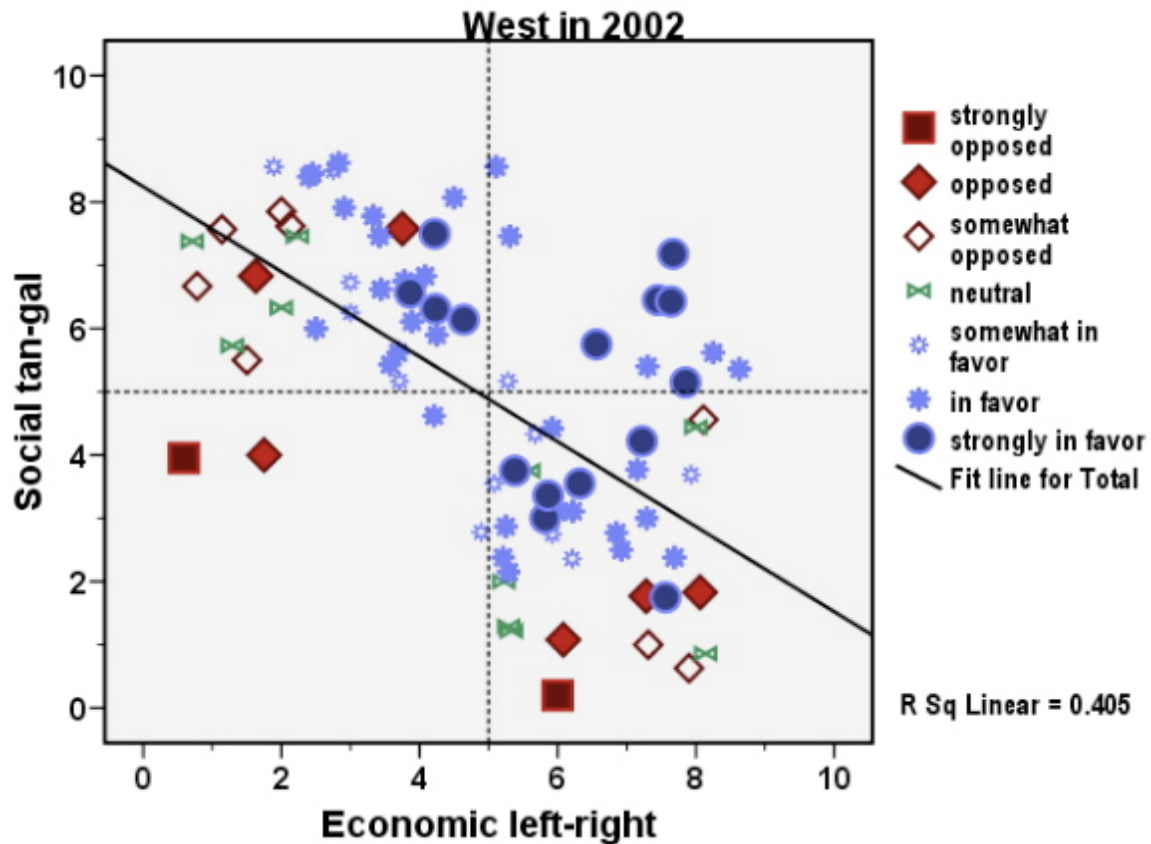
in the West. Since the Second World War, the axis of party competition in Western states has centered on economic issues, such as wealth redistribution, taxation, welfare, and the government's role in regulating the economy. While there are various positions in between, I will use the Left and Right to demonstrate how political agendas are generally aligned. Usually, the Left campaigns for economic equality through increased government regulation, more progressive taxation, and increased government spending on social welfare programs. Meanwhile, the Right usually campaigns for individual economic freedom through less progressive taxation (and sometimes alternate approaches to taxation, such as a flat tax), limited government interference in the economy, and less state-funded welfare programs. It is important to note that the economic Right is often described as being economically "liberal", which refers to economic liberalism's position opposite socialism, and thus should not be confused with the conventional "liberal" versus "conservative" division.

A second axis of competition has emerged in Western states since the 1970s – the socio-cultural or "new-politics" axis. This social axis encompasses environmental issues, the question of religion and secularism, and of immigration and national identity. The social Left is characterized by support for environmentalism, secularism, tolerance for alternative lifestyles (including support for same-sex marriage), and liberal immigration policies. The social Right is characterized by traditionalism, support for religious values (including stances against abortion and same-sex marriage), and restricted immigration policies (often including nationalism). Gary Marks, Liesbet Hooghe, Milada Vachudova and others have used the terms "GAL" (green, alternative, and libertarian) to describe the

social Left and “TAN” (traditionalism, authority, and nationalism) to describe the social Right.<sup>5</sup>

In Western democracies, economically Left and socially Left/GAL stances are commonly linked in the political platforms of left-wing parties, just as economically Right positions are linked with socially Right/TAN stances in right-wing parties.

Figure 1: *Ideology of West European Political Parties in 2002*



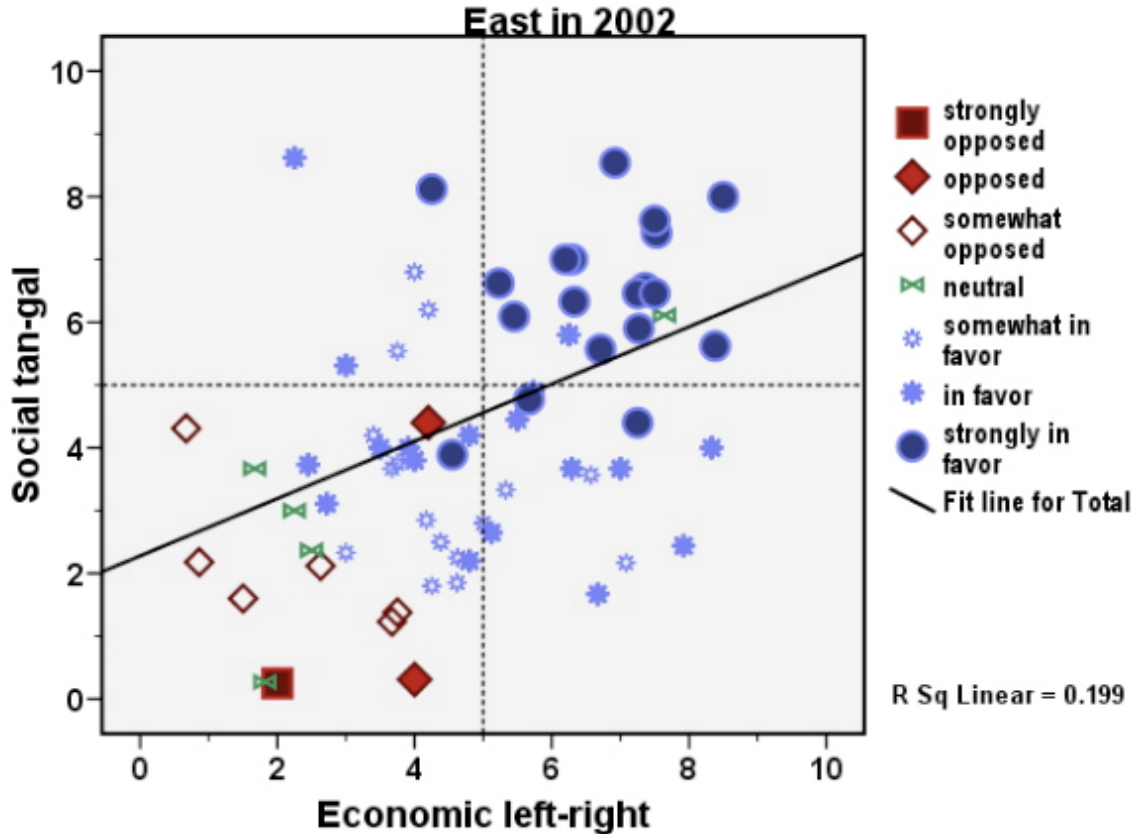
Source: Vachudova and Hooghe (2008). In addition to each party’s position on a social and economic axis, this figure represents each party’s position towards increased European integration.

In the post-communist world this pattern was not present. Decades of communist rule, which linked Left economics with TAN social policy, left behind a muddled field of

<sup>5</sup> See Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, Moira Nelson and Erica Edwards. (2006). “Party competition and European integration in the East and West: different structure, same causality.” *Comparative Political Studies*. 39(2). and Vachudova, Milada Anna and Liesbet Hooghe. (2008). “Postcommunist politics in a magnetic field: how transition and EU accession structure party competition on European integration.” *Comparative European Politics*, forthcoming.

political competition in ECE countries in which traditional axes of competition were no predictor of a party's position on either the Left or the Right.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 2: *Ideology of Central and East European Political Parties in 2002*



Source: Vachudova and Hooghe (2008). In addition to each party's position on a social and economic axis, this figure represents each party's position towards joining the European Union.

In general, political parties of the West have used economic policy as the most important criteria for distinguishing themselves from other parties, with social issues playing a less important role.<sup>7</sup> However in post-communist ECE, where the population had become accustomed to socialism, economically Right parties were rare and unpopular. As a result, economically Left platforms could be present in parties on both the Left and Right.

<sup>6</sup> Vachudova and Hooghe (2008) p 6.

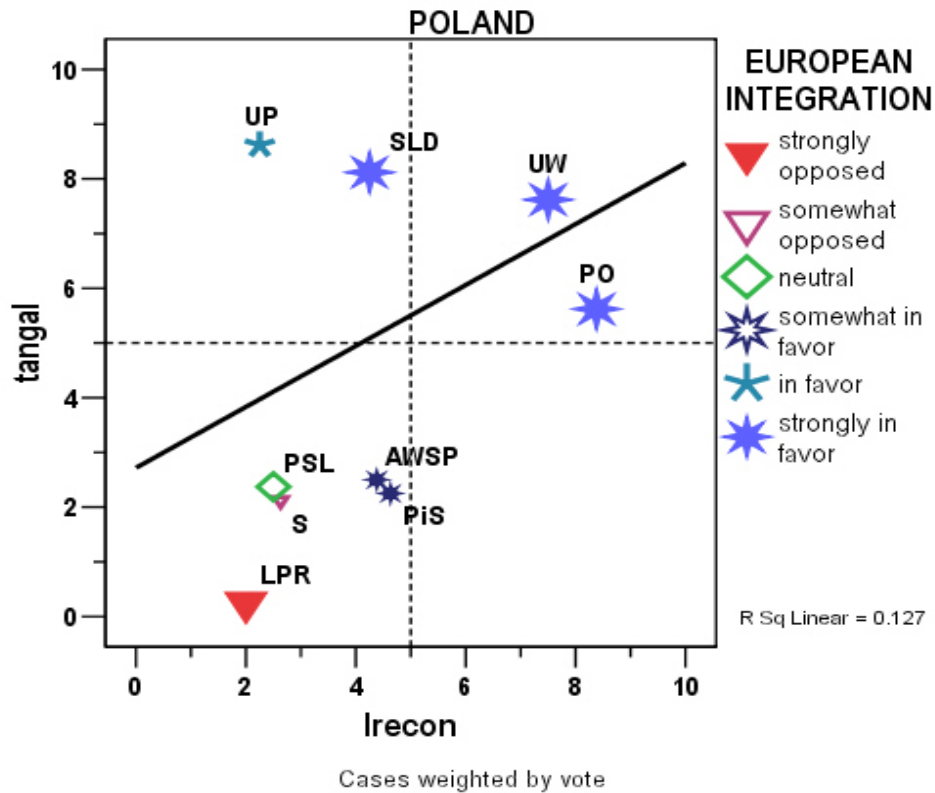
<sup>7</sup> There are variations on this pattern in the West. For example, right-wing parties of Western Europe, particularly Christian Democratic parties, hold economic positions that are more left-wing than right-wing parties in the United States. In addition, extreme right wing parties, such as Le Pen in France, typically tie nationalism to populism/socialism, which is typically an economically Left position.



Hence, social cleavages became a more accurate axis of competition.<sup>8</sup> At least in Poland, an even better predictor of a party's place on the political spectrum was its origin in either the communist party or the Solidarity opposition.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the Left and Right in Poland can be described as follows.

Figure 3: *Ideology of Poland's Political Parties in 2002*



Source: Vachudova and Hooghe (2008). As with previous figures, this figure also shows each party's position towards European Union Accession.

Poland's mainstream moderate Left was dominated by the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)<sup>10</sup>, which was almost entirely comprised of Poland's reformed communist party.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Vachudova (2008).

<sup>9</sup> For example, see Hanley, Sean. (2006). "Getting the Right right: redefining the centre-right in post-communist Europe." *Centre-Right parties in post-communist East-Central Europe*. Aleks Szczerbiak and Sean Hanley, eds. New York: Routledge. pp. 9-27.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A for a list of major parties in Poland and their ideological categorization.

As a result, the Left generally holds a more positive attitude towards the communist past, most notably displayed in their opposition to strengthened lustration laws. Like its Western social democratic counterparts, Poland's Left supports economic distribution through progressive taxation and state-funded welfare and healthcare programs. The Left opposes increased privatization of Poland's economy (though when the SLD came to power in the early 1990s it did continue the economic liberalization set in motion by the "shock therapy" of the previous Solidarity administration), and in general has purported to defend the "losers" of the economic transition. In addition the Left supports secularization and opposes the strong role that the Catholic Church played (and still does play) in Poland's public life. Both the social and economic stances of Poland's Left correspond with normal patterns of ideological affiliation found in the West, with only a few small parties (such as the pro-market Freedom Union (UW) or the radical socially conservative Self-Defense (SO) parties) diverging from the norm.

Poland's Right is not as easy to define. Economic positions vary widely from the pro-market Civic Platform (PO) to the populist/socialist League of Polish Families (LPR), and social positions range from moderate conservatism (like the positions held by PO) to more extreme religious and nationalist positions (like those held by the Law and Justice party (PiS) and LPR). For much of the 1990s, the Right defined itself primarily by its roots in Solidarity and opposition to communism (including support for lustration and decommunization) as well as religious social conservatism.

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<sup>11</sup> Early in the 1990s, nearly all left-wing parties had roots in the reformed communist party, but a few historical parties such as the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) also placed themselves on the Left. In the mid-1990s and 2000s, several liberal contingents splintered from the Solidarity-successor parties to form parties on the Left, such as the Freedom Union (UW).

In conclusion, for many parties in Poland, political ideology mattered less than history. For the Poland's Left, the transition from communist party to a Western style social democratic party was logical. As the official successor to the (now reformed) communist party, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) was able to dominate the left wing of Poland's political spectrum with little competition and the party enjoyed stability and strong support until the 2000s.<sup>12</sup> Solidarity, the massive opposition movement to the communist government, was comprised of a plethora of differing ideologies – from liberal secularists to conservative Catholics – with only one goal in common: the defeat of communism. As such, Solidarity's legacy did not have such an obvious path as the reformed communist party. Poland's Right thus identified itself based on its attitude towards communism, and not on any coherent political ideology. In the chapters to come I will demonstrate how this strategy failed not only to win elections, but also to create stable, broadly-based mass parties.

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<sup>12</sup> For more on the development of Poland's Left in the Third Republic, see Grzymala-Busse, Anna Maria. (2002). *Redeeming the communist past: the regeneration of communist parties in East Central Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## **Solidarity's Successors**

Poland is an unusual case in the context of political party development after communism. Among its peers in East Central and Eastern Europe, factors like a less-oppressive communist regime, the large presence of a non-state institution (such as the Catholic Church), and a large, enduring opposition movement like Solidarity would have led to a strong political Right after the transition from communism. In Poland, these factors did nothing to protect Poland's Right from a crisis of leadership, a lack of a strong cohesive platform, and the inevitable fragmentation that prevented Poland's Right from gaining votes or governing effectively. In this chapter I will begin first by describing the political history that preceded the right-wing parties of Poland's Third Republic. I will emphasize the factors that favored the formation of a strong Right, such as the less repressive communist regime, the prevalence of the Catholic Church, and the strength of the anti-communist opposition movement, Solidarity. In the second half of this chapter I will demonstrate how, despite these favorable elements, Poland's Right in the early 1990s was unable to consolidate under a unified leadership or ideology, and how it ultimately disappeared from Poland's party politics by 1995.

### *Solidarity's Origins*

Such a large-scale opposition movement as Solidarity was made possible by the precedent set by earlier anti-communist opposition. Though Poland's communist regime

was generally less oppressive than other communist regimes in East Central and Eastern Europe, the first few years of communist rule in Poland after the Second World War were extremely repressive politically, made especially so because of Poland's strong resistance to communism and general anti-Russian sentiment.<sup>13</sup> Stalin's hard-fisted influence extended over the Soviet bloc, stamping out political opposition completely when possible or co-opting the more resilient opposition into the state.<sup>14</sup> Unlike in Czechoslovakia or Hungary, Poland did not experience any democratic interlude between the war's end and the beginning of the Communists' rule.<sup>15</sup> Tomas Kostelecky writes of these early years: "Although the Communists did permit some features of the democratic system to exist (for example, parliament and local councils), the elections to these representative bodies were anything but normal or fair."<sup>16</sup> Opposition parties, where they existed, were usually weak and lacked cohesion.<sup>17</sup>

However after Stalin's death in 1953 political censorship decreased dramatically in Poland. Poland was able to create its own "national" socialism, which equated to decreased repression of universities and the Catholic Church. Activities in neighboring Hungary, as in the suppression of the 1956 revolt led by Imre Nagy, and in Czechoslovakia, as in the ill-fated 1968 "Prague Spring" led by Alexander Dubczek, had a great influence on Poland's own political opposition, at once inspiring it to carry on but

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<sup>13</sup> Mazower, Mark. (2000). *Dark continent: Europe's twentieth century*. New York: Vintage Books. p 258.

<sup>14</sup> Kostelecky, Tomas. (2002). *Political parties after communism: developments in East-Central Europe*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. p 29.

<sup>15</sup> Rothschild, Joseph and Nancy M. Wingfield. (2000). *Return to diversity: a political history of East Central Europe since World War II*. Third edition. New York: Oxford University Press. p 133.

<sup>16</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 29.

<sup>17</sup> Mazower (2000) p 260.

also serving it a grim reminder of the consequences of pushing the communist government – and its backers in Moscow – too far.<sup>18</sup>

Tolerance for political opposition increased with time in Poland. In the 1970s Poland's economic decline sparked many strikes and demonstrations. While these protesters were persecuted vigorously, the government vocalized empty promises for positive change.<sup>19</sup> These protests were the beginning of real political opposition in Poland, and sparked groups like the Committee for the Defense of Workers and the Confederation of Independent Poland.<sup>20</sup> In addition, Poland's substantial Catholic population (at one point nearly all Poles who claimed any religion at all claimed Catholicism) was energized by the election of the first Polish pope, John Paul II (formerly Cardinal Karol Jozef Wojtyla), in 1978. John Paul II was vocal in his denunciation of the communist governments of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, though he was careful to distance the church from outright political activity, being "in the world but not of it."<sup>21</sup> The church's influence continued to be a strong influence on Poland's anti-communist opposition – especially on Solidarity.<sup>22</sup>

### *Solidarity's Strength as an Opposition Movement*

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<sup>18</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 152-153.

<sup>19</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 32.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p 32-33.

<sup>21</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 199.

<sup>22</sup> For more on the Catholic Church's role in opposition to communism, see Michnik, Adam. (1993). *The Church and the Left*. Translated by David Ost, ed. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

In 1980, the famous Gdansk shipyard strikes marked the birth of Solidarity,<sup>23</sup> a free trade union led by future Polish president Lech Walesa that soon became a catchall opposition force to the communist government.<sup>24</sup> With almost ten million members,<sup>25</sup> it encompassed liberals and conservatives alike, Catholics and atheists, intellectuals and laborers, and even one-third of the members of Poland's Communist Party!<sup>26</sup> After much struggle, Solidarity was actually recognized as a legal trade union by the communist government in 1980 – an unprecedented occurrence in the Eastern bloc.<sup>27</sup>

The enjoyment of this success was short-lived. The Soviet Union became aware of Solidarity's growing power and allegedly threatened to intervene militarily.<sup>28</sup> In order to prevent the invasion of Soviet troops, Polish Communist leader Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law in Poland in 1981.<sup>29</sup> The result was a crack-down on Solidarity's activities and the arrest of their leaders – including Lech Walesa.<sup>30</sup>

Thankfully for the Solidarity movement, the period of martial law was relatively brief. The political thaw initiated by Russia's last communist leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, increased exponentially under Gen. Jaruzelski. Jaruzelski was one of the biggest

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<sup>23</sup> See Ash, Timothy Garton. (2002). *The Polish revolution: Solidarity*. Third edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>24</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 33.

<sup>25</sup> Tworzecki, Hubert. (1996). *Parties and politics in post-1989 Poland*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. p 49.

<sup>26</sup> Szerbiak, Aleks (2006a). "The Polish centre-right's (last?) best hope: the rise and fall of solidarity electoral action." *Centre-Right parties in post-communist East-Central Europe*. Aleks Szczerbiak and Sean Hanley, eds. New York: Routledge. p 57.

<sup>27</sup> Tworzecki (1996) p 48.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p 49-50.

<sup>29</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 34.

<sup>30</sup> Tworzecki (2002) p 49-50.

supporters in the Eastern bloc of Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* policies, which led to more political freedom for Poland's communist opposition, including the release of most political prisoners – notably Solidarity's leadership.<sup>31</sup> By February of 1989, Solidarity had been invited to negotiate with Poland's communist government in what was called the Roundtable negotiations.<sup>32</sup> Astonishingly, Solidarity's demands were all met, including the legalization of Solidarity as a trade union, permission to publish independent newspapers, and most notably the creation of an Upper House in Poland's parliament (the Senate, members of which were to be elected by free and open elections) and the free election of 35% of the 460 seats in the lower house of Poland's parliament (the *Sejm*).<sup>33</sup>

What followed in June of 1989 were the first semi-free parliamentary elections in the history of communist Poland. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of Solidarity: the communists had a default majority in the Sejm, and thus elected Wojciech Jaruzelski president, yet all but one of the contested seats went to Solidarity-dominated Citizen's Committee (and the one outlying seat went to an independent candidate). In districts where communists ran unopposed, no one was elected at all and the seats were declared vacant due to low voter turnout.<sup>34</sup> Solidarity, under Walesa, formed an alliance with the former satellite parties of the Communist Party – the United Peasants Party and

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<sup>31</sup> Szczerbiak (2004) p 57.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the Roundtable see Adam Michnik (2000). "Independence reborn and the demons of the Velvet Revolution." *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath*. Central European University Press. pp. 81-99.

<sup>33</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 34.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p 66.



Democratic Party.<sup>35</sup> This new coalition then formed a non-communist majority in parliament under Catholic former dissident Tadeusz Mazowiecki,<sup>36</sup> and on January 1, 1990 Mazowiecki's finance minister Leszek Balcerowicz introduced the Balcerowicz Plan, a privatization program more commonly known as "shock therapy."<sup>37</sup>

### *Solidarity's Weaknesses as a Political Party*

Though Solidarity had emerged strong in the 1989 elections, certain elements of the Solidarity opposition movement were ill-suited to Solidarity as a political party. The first element was its reliance on opposition to the Communist Party to identity itself. From the loss of the elections, its satellite parties, and its hold on power in general, the Polish Communist Party crumbled during the time between the 1989 election and the 1990 presidential elections, leaving Solidarity without a clear political purpose. According to Joseph Rothschild and Nancy Wingfield, "Without a serious Communist antagonist, Solidarity now lost its solidarity."<sup>38</sup> Solidarity had long survived on the basis of just one goal – the defeat of the Communist Party. Now that this goal had been achieved, its extremely variegated membership did not a cohesive ideological platform upon which to base itself.

The second element of Solidarity's weakness as a political party was the fact that Solidarity did not wish to identify itself as a political party at all! According to Aleks

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<sup>35</sup> These parties are not the same as the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) and the Democratic Union (UD).

<sup>36</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 67.

<sup>37</sup> For more on the Balcerowicz Plan and Poland's privatization, see Balcerowicz, Leszek. (1995). *Socialism, capitalism, transformation*. New York: Central European University Press.

<sup>38</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 232.

Szczerbiak, political parties have had a bad connotation for many Poles ever since the inter-war period, when party system chaos was blamed for the Second Republic's inability to integrate and unify the Polish nation.<sup>39</sup> This dissatisfaction with political parties was exacerbated ten times over by communist rule. Not just in Poland, but also in all communist regimes, the word "party" came to refer only to the ruling Communist party and thus became stigmatized.<sup>40</sup> According to Szczerbiak, "Forty years of one-party rule discredited not just the ruling communist party, but also the whole notion of party politics."<sup>41</sup> Hence, just as the Solidarity opposition movement claimed to be "the anti-politics,"<sup>42</sup> so did its successor parties shun traditional party platforms in favor of broad appeals to their non-party opposition past. New political parties even avoided using the word "party" in their name, opting for variations like "forum" or "union".<sup>43</sup> Lech Walesa, in particular, often claimed during his subsequent political campaigns that he "rose above" party politics, a sentiment that served only to further undermine party development on Poland's Right.<sup>44</sup>

The final element of Solidarity's weakness was the absence of a strong leadership. The trouble was most acute at the top of Solidarity's leadership, where Prime Minister Mazowiecki and Walesa clashed constantly over everything from Mazowiecki's cabinet picks to economic reform. In the end, Walesa left Solidarity to form his own party,

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<sup>39</sup> Szczerbiak, Aleks. (2006b). "Power without love: patterns of party politics in post-1989 Poland." *Post-Communist EU member states*. Susanne Jungerstam-Mulders, ed. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited. p 92.

<sup>40</sup> Mazower (2000) p 383.

<sup>41</sup> Szczerbiak (2006b) p 92.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* p 92.

<sup>43</sup> Mazower (2000) p 383.

<sup>44</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 61.

Center Alliance (PC), and pursue his accelerated reform agenda.<sup>45</sup> As I will demonstrate in the rest of this chapter, this splintering was only the first of many ruptures to come in Solidarity's future.

### *The 1990 Presidential Election*

President Jaruzelski, sensing that his ousting was imminent, decided to resign from the office of president in 1990, prompting a new election to replace him, which for the first time in Poland would be decided by popular vote instead of by parliament.<sup>46</sup> The 1990 presidential elections proved the ultimate battleground for the two former Solidarity allies, Walesa and Mazowiecki, who were now facing off against each other for the presidential seat. This election was less about party formation than about rivaling cults of personality. Solidarity was now split into the more liberal (though still relatively centrist) faction, made up of supporters for Mazowiecki, and the more conservative faction, who favored Walesa.<sup>47</sup> In the tradition of Solidarity's trade union history, Walesa promoted himself as a traditionalist supporter of the blue-collar worker and the peasant, while Mazowiecki, whose supporters numbered mainly among Poland's intellectuals (*inteligencja*), promoted himself as a modernist.<sup>48</sup> The campaign was a messy one, with Walesa's camp using anti-Semitic undertones in its attacks on Mazowiecki, and Mazowiecki's camp disparaging Walesa for his uneducated speech.<sup>49</sup> Election issues

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<sup>45</sup> Tworzecki (1996) p 52.

<sup>46</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 233.

<sup>47</sup> Szczerbiak (2004) p 58.

<sup>48</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 233.

<sup>49</sup> Tworzecki (1996) p 54.

included church-state relationship, individual vs. collective rights, and the definition of citizenship,<sup>50</sup> but according to Rothschild and Wingfield, “Only a small role in the rift between the Walesa and Mazowiecki camps was played by ideological or policy differences; it was primarily a matter of social animosities and personal alienations.”<sup>51</sup> Outside of this rivalry was the surprise “dark horse” candidate Stanislaw Tyminski, an American-born Polish businessman running as an independent. Tyminski was seen as representing the Poland outside of the elite urban centers, and surprised everyone by coming in second place after Walesa.<sup>52</sup> Below are the election results for the top four candidates:

Table 1: *1990 Presidential Election Results, Top Four Candidates*

Candidate	Percent of Votes	
	First Round	Second Round
Lech Walesa (PC)	40.0%	74.3%
Stan Tyminski (Independent)	23.1%	25.6%
Tadeusz Mazowiecki (Solidarity)	18.1%	-
Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (Left)	9.2%	-

Source: Millard (1994); Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 234

After Walesa’s victory, Mazowiecki resigned from the post of prime minister and formed a new moderate left-wing party, the Democratic Union (UD),<sup>53</sup> which attracted many of Solidarity’s more liberal leaders, including Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik. The loss of such iconic Solidarity leaders as Kuron and Michnik diminished the claims of right-wing parties claiming to be the heirs of Solidarity, since now Solidarity’s heirs were spread across several political parties and ideological positions.

<sup>50</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 68.

<sup>51</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 233.

<sup>52</sup> Tworzecki (1996) p 55.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p 55.

### *The 1991 Parliamentary Election*

More than any other election, the 1991 parliamentary election put on display the wild disarray of Poland's political party system. A combination of an overabundance of ill-defined or immature parties (one party was named "The Beer Lover's Party"!) with a very low electoral threshold to enter parliament resulted in an extremely fragmented Sejm. According to Tomas Kostelecky, "New parties mushroomed, others split, and many electoral alliances and coalitions were established and dissolved. [...] The highly proportional electoral system helped twenty-nine political parties gain representation in the Sejm..."<sup>54</sup>

Table 2: *1991 Parliamentary Election Results for the Sejm*

<b>Party or Coalition</b>	<b>% of Vote</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>% of Seats</b>
Democratic Union (UD)	12.3%	62	13.5%
Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)	12.0%	60	13.0%
Catholic Electoral Action	8.7%	49	10.7%
Polish Peasants Party (PSL)	8.7%	48	10.4%
Confederation for an Independent Poland	7.5%	46	10.0%
Center Alliance (PC)	8.7%	44	9.6%
Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD)	7.5%	37	8.0%
Peasants Alliance	5.5%	28	6.1%
Solidarity	5.1%	27	5.9%
Beer Lovers Party	3.3%	16	3.5%
Other parties	20.8%	43	9.4%

Source: Wade, Larry L. et al. "Estimating participation and party voting in Poland: the 1991 parliamentary elections." *East European Politics and Societies*. 1994(8).<sup>55</sup>

Though the results were so close that it is difficult to tell which party "won,"

Mazowiecki's centrist UD party managed to achieve the highest percentage of votes –

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<sup>54</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 68.

<sup>55</sup> Reprinted in Kostelecky (2002) p 69.

though at a mere 12.3% it was only half of what most surveys had predicted.<sup>56</sup> Even if the results did not show a large victory for any one political philosophy, this election signaled a shift in Poland's political spectrum from the right to the center and the left. UD's platform was a more moderate version of the now-reformed Communist party, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), whose agenda was mainly for state intervention in the economy, social welfare, and opposition to the interference of the Catholic Church in government – particularly the proposed ban on abortion. The SLD gained just under 12% of the vote, earning second place in the election behind UD.

Due the prominent place Catholicism held in Polish society, it was no surprise that in third place at 8.73% came the Catholic Electoral Action (WAK) alliance, made up of the Christian-National Union (ZChN) party and other smaller parties. While the ZChN portrayed itself as right-wing party due to its roots in Solidarity and its opposition to the Left, several of the positions taken by the party would be considered inconsistent with either Right or Left ideology. In keeping with its right-wing status, the ZChN's outlook “combined isolationist nationalism with a vision of a traditional, hierarchical society in which the church's social teachings would be enforced by means of civil and criminal law.”<sup>57</sup> However, its support of increased welfare programs and its antipathy towards “shock therapy” would have been more compatible with a left-wing political agenda. The minority government was formed from Christian National Union, Walesa's Center Alliance (PC), and Peasants Alliance and was led by PC representative Jan Olszewski, a former member of the intellectual opposition. This government fell after only six months

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<sup>56</sup> Tworzecki (1996) p 58.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p 59.

in office due to lustration scandals, namely “the attempt of the interior minister to reveal certain files containing the names of persons who had allegedly cooperated with the Communist secret police.”<sup>58</sup>

Solidarity’s disintegration continued as several more parties splintered from it. The Union of Labor (UP) party formed at this time from Solidarity’s left wing and labeled itself as a social democratic party,<sup>59</sup> and Jan Olszewski formed his own splinter party, the far-right Movement for the Republic (RdR).<sup>60</sup>

### *The 1993 Parliamentary Election*

In response to the results of the previous election’s proportionality law, a new electoral law with a 5% electoral threshold (8% for coalitions) was put in place, and ensured that only 6 parties entered parliament after the 1993 parliamentary elections. As Poles became increasingly frustrated with the economy, they looked to the Left for relief. The 1993 parliamentary elections were a big win for the Polish Left, led by SLD and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL).

Table 3: *1993 Parliamentary Early Elections Results for the Sejm*

<b>Party</b>	<b>% of Vote</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>% of Seats</b>
Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	20.4%	171	37.2%
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	15.4%	132	28.7%
Democratic Union (UD)	10.6%	74	16.1%
Union of Labor	7.3%	41	8.9%
Catholic Electoral Committee “Fatherland”	6.4%	-	-
Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN)	5.8%	22	4.8%

<sup>58</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 69.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* p 70.

<sup>60</sup> Szczerbiak (2002) p 59.

Non-Party Bloc for the Support of Reforms (BBWR)	5.4%	16	3.5%
German minority	0.6%	4	0.9%
Other parties	28.2%	-	-

Source: "Monitor Polski," No. 50, October 4, 1993.<sup>61</sup>

The SLD-PSL coalition government took office under Prime Minister and PSL member Waldemar Pawlak. Despite their social-democratic platforms, the SLD-PSL coalition proceeded, albeit with caution, with the economic reforms instated in the previous government.<sup>62</sup>

The new, higher proportionality threshold and the failing economy were major blows to the highly splintered right wing of Poland's political spectrum, with the end result being that "virtually all the parties of the right and centre-right, representing around one-third of the electorate, were excluded from parliament."<sup>63</sup> Poland's Right, now for all intents and purposes absent from parliament, approached the next presidential election with very little electoral support.

### *The 1995 Presidential Election*

This election represented a battle of the past, as it pitted Solidarity's Lech Walesa (and incumbent president) against the post-communist SLD party's Aleksander Kwasniewski. According to Aleks Szczerbiak, this election represented the "re-emergence of this 'historic' division, which had lain dormant but was never quite

<sup>61</sup> Reprinted in Tworzecki (1996) p 69.

<sup>62</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 269.

<sup>63</sup> Szczerbiak (2002) p 59.



forgotten.”<sup>64</sup> The Right was bitterly divided during the first round of elections, with five candidates vying to be the candidate for the Right, nearly all of whom had splintered from Solidarity in the recent past. The right-wing candidates – including incumbent president Lech Walesa, Jacek Kuron, Jan Olszewski, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz and Janusz Korwin-Mikke – apparently “extended as much energy on attacking each other as they did on Kwasniewski,” making Walesa’s ultimate status as the front-running right-wing candidate unsavory for many on the Right.<sup>65</sup>

Table 4: *1995 Presidential Election Results (Top Five Candidates)*

Candidate	Percentage of Vote	
	First Round	Second Round
Aleksander Kwasniewski (SLD)	35.11%	51.72%
Lech Walesa (PC)	33.11%	48.28%
Jacek Kuron (UW)	9.22%	-
Jan Olszewski (RdR)	6.86%	-
Waldemar Pawlawk (PSL)	4.31%	-

Source: Tworzecki, Hubert. (1996). *Parties and politics in post-1989 Poland*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. p 73

Kwasniewski won by a slim margin, but Walesa did not leave office quietly. Walesa’s outgoing interior minister accused SLD Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy of cooperating secretly with the KGB and spying for Moscow during the communist regime.<sup>66</sup> While Oleksy was later cleared of all espionage charges in 1996, the scandal created by his accusation forced his resignation.<sup>67</sup> This incident is a perfect example of the tendency of the Polish Right to use lustration as a political weapon against their opponents when

<sup>64</sup> Szczerbiak, Aleks (2006a). “The Polish centre-right’s (last?) best hope: the rise and fall of Solidarity Electoral Action.” *Centre-Right parties in post-communist East-Central Europe*. Aleks Szczerbiak and Sean Hanley, eds. New York: Routledge. p 62.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* p 61.

<sup>66</sup> Kostelecky (2002) p 72.

<sup>67</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 269.

normal modes of electoral competition failed. Ironically, many of Solidarity's key leadership during the 1980s, such as Adam Michnik, vehemently opposed the use of lustration as a political tool, supporting the rehabilitation of former communist agents into Poland's Third Republic rather than engaging in a witch-hunt against them.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, the strategy of lustration-as-weapon would continue to be employed by the Right throughout the 1990s.

### *Conclusion*

Solidarity enjoyed immense success as an opposition movement, but soon proved insufficient as a political party for several reasons. First, without a communist government to oppose it was left on a shaky foundation of vague ideology and disjointed leadership. Second, due the negative linkage between political parties and the Communist party, Solidarity had long prided itself on being "anti-politics" and was unwilling or unable to reverse its former anti-political position and become a political party. Third, Solidarity's leadership suffered a crisis of clashing personalities and political ideologies that left Poland's Right without strong leadership. Because of these factors, the first five years of the new political order proved devastating for Solidarity, as it dissolved into smaller niche parties that failed to win over voters. Despite the fact that the Solidarity political party (though it would never call itself that) emerged strong in the first few elections, it was soon destroyed by clashing personalities among its leadership, incongruous ideologies, poor party management, and a floundering economy. Solidarity

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<sup>68</sup> See Michnik, Adam. (2000). "Independence reborn and the demons of the Velvet Revolution." *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath*. Sorin Antohi and Vladimir Tismaneanu, eds. Central European University Press, pp. 81-99.

had envisioned a united opposition to the former communists, but it ended up splintered into multiple, small, and weak parties that could not reach the electoral threshold for entry to parliament. If the Polish Right had any hope of presenting a united opposition to the stable and successful Polish Left, they would have to develop a new strategy. In the next chapter I will describe the Right's next strategy – Solidarity Electoral Action.

## **Solidarity Electoral Action**

By 1995, Solidarity had proved that strength as an opposition movement did not equate to success as a political party. With the Communist Party now out of power, Solidarity lacked a common purpose that would have united them as a political party. In addition, Solidarity lacked good, strong leadership and even the desire to be viewed as a political party. Beyond Solidarity's weakness, the Left was able to maintain a strong, stable position in Poland's politics that was equally unexpected and devastating to the Right. In many ways the crushing defeat suffered by Lech Walesa in the 1995 presidential election proved a useful lesson to the Right. The Right learned that it needed to present a unified front in order to win elections, and the Right's solution to this was Solidarity Electoral Action – an electoral bloc turned political party that was designed for the single purpose of gaining votes in the next election. Like Solidarity, the bloc did not identify itself as a political party with a common ideological platform or one leader. Instead, the bloc was a loose association of parties who identified with each other as successors to Solidarity but maintained loyalty only to their individual parties and leaders. In this chapter I will describe how the bloc initially enjoyed success in the 1997 elections, but soon began to weaken due to a crisis of leadership. I will demonstrate how AWS employed decommunization and lustration as political tools against their rivals on the Left. Finally, I will detail how AWS and the rest of the Right ultimately proved unable to compete with the stronger and more consolidated Left, and how by 2001 not a single right-wing party was able to gain enough votes to secure a place in parliament.

### *The Formation of Solidarity Electoral Action*

The electoral bloc Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) formed in June 1996 as a conglomeration of almost forty<sup>69</sup> right-wing parties and groups for the express purpose – as stated in its own “Declaration of the AWS” – of forming a unified opposition to the Left and winning the 1997 parliamentary elections.<sup>70</sup> Member parties of AWS included Walesa’s centrist PC party, the Christian-nationalist ZChN, and the nationalist Confederation for Independent Poland (KPN) – however it was the Solidarity trade union, with Marian Krzaklewski as its leader, that was the clear leader of the bloc.<sup>71</sup> Notably, the bloc did not include Jan Olszewski’s far-right Movement for the Republic (RdR) party, nor did it include former president Lech Walesa in a significant way. According to Aleksander Smolar, it was no coincidence that the first large-scale unification of the Right took place only after Walesa’s failed re-election: “[Walesa] distrusted independent political forces and would attempt to weaken any party, no matter how close to him ideologically, that appeared to pose a threat to his personal position.”<sup>72</sup> The AWS bloc quickly found favor with Polish voters, and according to polls had already gained the support of 20% of the electorate by the summer of 1996.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 270.

<sup>70</sup> Pluta, Anna M. (2004). “Evangelizing accession: Solidarity Electoral Action and Poland’s EU membership.” *Slovo*. 16(2). p 154.

<sup>71</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 64.

<sup>72</sup> Smolar, Aleksandr. (1998). “Poland’s emerging party system.” *Journal of Democracy*. 9(2). p 126.

<sup>73</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield (2000) p 270.

## *The 1997 Parliamentary Campaign*

By now the Right had learned that their most effective strategy against the Left was to defer to historical rivalry of communist-successor parties versus Solidarity-successor parties. It seemed that the Left, too, employed this rivalry in its campaign as it sought to blame the other side for the hardships of the economic transition.<sup>74</sup> According to Smolar, both campaigns were centered on this rivalry:

The Left warned against expansionism by the Church, the threat of decommunization and lustration, and the radicalism of the Right. The Right complained of continuing communist influence, the "red" oligarchy in the economy, and the nihilistic and anti-Christian character of the Left.<sup>75</sup>

Surprisingly, the two sides spent less time on the discussion of the actual economy, but more time on “moral and historical” issues, such as decommunization and lustration.

Decommunization is a general term that applies to removing legacies of the former Communist regime still present in public life. This process varied in each post-communist state. In Poland, most Poles agreed that some form of decommunization was necessary, but it was the Right who showed the most support for it. The chart below shows the results of a 1999 poll given to supporters of the various parties elected to parliament in 1997.

Table 5: *Party Supporters' Attitudes Towards Decommunization, October 1999 (in %)*

<b>Party Name</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)	66	28	6
Freedom Union (UW)	59	34	8
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	31	57	12
Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	25	69	6
Average	42	46	15

Source: Osrodek Badiana Opinii Publicznej, *Polacy o Lustracji I Dekomunizacji*

<sup>74</sup> Blazyca, George and Marek Kolkiewicz. (1999). “Poland and the EU: internal disputes, domestic politics and accession.” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. 15(4). p 133.

<sup>75</sup> Smolar (1999) p 129.

(Warsaw, OBOP, October 1999)<sup>76</sup> The final row totals over 100%, likely due to rounding.

As you can see, over two-thirds of AWS were supportive of decommunization, while over two-thirds of SLD were opposed to it. The historical PSL party, which had roots in neither the Communist party nor Solidarity, appeared to be the most undecided.

One of the most controversial elements of decommunization is lustration.

Lustration is the practice of vetting public officials who have demonstrable links to the secret police during the Communist regime. Lustration was an extremely popular, if not extremely divisive, issue in Poland during the 1990s, with support for vetting communist officials never dipping below 50% in the period between June 1994 and September 1999. Support was highest in December of 1997, three months after the September parliamentary elections.

Table 6: *Polish Attitudes Towards Vetting Key Public Officials, 1994-1999 (in %)*

	<b>June 1994</b>	<b>December 1996</b>	<b>December 1997</b>	<b>September 1999</b>
Yes	57	57	76	56
No	36	24	12	31
Don't Know	7	19	12	13

Source: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej. *Ocena Procesu Lustracyjnego* (Warsaw, SBOS, October 1999).<sup>77</sup>

It is important to note that support for lustration in Poland extended beyond the right wing, and as a matter of fact it was the SLD President Kwasniewski who introduced a new lustration law in 1997. There were many disputes in parliament after the bill's introduction over amendments that would include intelligence officers in the vetting process, more broadly define "collaboration," apply the process to a much wider range of

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<sup>76</sup> Reprinted in Szczerbiak, Aleks. (2002). "Dealing with the communist past or the politics of the present? Lustration in post-communist Poland." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 54(4). p 561.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* p 559.

government officials, and over who would supervise this process.<sup>78</sup> It is also striking that many of the original leaders of Solidarity, whom AWS purported to emulate, were opposed to lustration. Adam Michnik, in particular, was vocal in his denunciation of the practice.<sup>79</sup> Whether or not AWS's campaign or the recent passage of the lustration bill deserves credit for the surge in popular support for lustration is unclear. However, it is clear that AWS profited by making lustration a central campaign issue – whether by successfully promoting the issue or merely by reflecting public opinion.

Another way that AWS exploited the (increasingly tenuous) connection between itself and the original Solidarity opposition movement was through symbols. For example, when AWS came up with their agenda they purposely named them the “21 programmatic tasks,” which were meant to represent the “21 demands” submitted by the first major shipyard strikers in August of 1980. They even publicized these program tasks on the very anniversary of the signing of the first 21 demands.<sup>80</sup>

### *The 1997 Parliamentary Election and Aftermath*

AWS did extremely well in the 1997 parliamentary elections, earning over one-fourth of the seats in the Sejm and over half of the seats in the Senate, beating the previous election's winner, the SLD, by about 40 seats in the Sejm and 20 seats in the Senate.

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<sup>78</sup> Szczerbiak (2002) p 566-567.

<sup>79</sup> See Stan, Lavinia. (2006). “The politics of memory in Poland: lustration, file access and court proceedings.” *Studies in post-communism*. Occasional paper no. 10. Centre for Post-Communist Studies at St. Francis Xavier University. Accessed at: <http://www.stfx.ca/pinstitutes/cpcs/studies-in-post-communism/stan2006.pdf>.

<sup>80</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 63.



Table 7: 1997 Parliamentary Election Results for the Sejm

<b>Party</b>	<b>% of Vote</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>% of Seats</b>
Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)	33.8%	201	43.7%
Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)	27.1%	164	35.7%
Union of Freedom (UW)	13.4%	60	13.0%
Polish Peasants Party (PSL)	7.3%	27	5.9%
Movement for Poland's Reconstruction (RdR)	5.6%	6	1.3%
Union of Labor (UP)	4.7%	-	-
German minority	0.6%	2	0.4%
Other parties	7.5%	-	-

Source: Polish Press Agency, 1997.<sup>81</sup>

Table 8: 1997 Parliamentary Election Results for the Senate

<b>Party</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>% of Seats</b>
Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)	51	56.7%
Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)	28	20.0%
Union of Freedom (UW)	8	8.9%
Independent candidates	5	5.6%
Movement for Poland's Reconstruction	5	5.6%
Polish Peasants Party (PSL)	3	3.3%

Source: Polish Press Agency, 1997.<sup>82</sup>

Due to the dominance of the two rival electoral blocs – AWS and SLD - there were significantly fewer votes for small parties this election, with only 7.5% of the vote going to parties too minor to obtain the 5% threshold to enter parliament, as opposed to 28.2% of the vote in the 1993 elections.<sup>83</sup> After the election, AWS formed a coalition government with the fellow Solidarity-successor UW party, though beyond a common past the two parties shared next to nothing ideologically. UW was economically Right (as its leader, Balcerowicz had been the architect of “shock therapy”) while AWS held much more redistributive economic views; AWS was strongly conservative on social matters while UW was much more secularist. Anna Pluta called the governing coalition

<sup>81</sup> Reprinted in Kostelecky (2002) p 73.

<sup>82</sup> Reprinted in Kostelecky (2002) p 73.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p 73.

“more a marriage of convenience than a working partnership,”<sup>84</sup> and it soon began to suffer under the strain of divisive issues like Poland’s accession to the European Union, leadership, and lustration controversies.

According to Clare McManus-Czubinska, EU accession – amazingly – was not an important election issue for either the candidates or the electorate at large during this time. Even as late as the 2001 campaign, when McManus-Czubinska and her colleagues conducted a survey on issues important to voters they found that EU accession was less important than other issues such as unemployment, crime, or taxation.<sup>85</sup> Even though it was not important during the campaign, EU accession quickly became a polarizing issue for the AWS-UW coalition government. The more liberal elements of AWS, such as PC, were strong proponents of a speedy EU accession, while the more conservative Christian and nationalist elements sought to delay accession by introducing more and more stringent conditions for entry. Objections to joining the EU were usually driven by concern for the hardships that would result from implementing all of the reforms required, as well as a fear of losing Poland’s national (and religious) identity to “Brussels.”<sup>86</sup>

Party leader Krzaklewski, seeking to appease both factions of the bloc, settled for supporting the more vague concept of “European integration” and promoted a “Europe of nations” in which Poland’s national and religious character could be preserved.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Pluta (2004) p 160.

<sup>85</sup> McManus-Czubinska, Clare, William L. Miller, Radoslaw Markowski and Jacek Wasilewski. (2003). “The new Polish ‘Right’?”. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. 19(2). p 15.

<sup>86</sup> Pluta (2004) p 155-157.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* p 157.

Unfortunately for the governing coalition, Krzaklewski's compromises were unable to mollify the various factions of the coalition. Promises that EU accession would not secularize Poland reassured many of AWS's parties, but not the more religious nationalist elements. The radical Catholic Radio Maryja became a vocal opponent of EU accession,<sup>88</sup> though the Catholic Church itself (notably the Polish-born Pope John Paul II) encouraged Poland to join the EU.<sup>89</sup> Nor did Krzaklewski's compromise do anything to appease AWS's centrist coalition partner, UW, who was a strong supporter of EU accession. In addition the sitting SLD President Kwasniewski, who could block any legislation he viewed as a radical deviation from the EU accession process, added another stumbling block in the way of a unified AWS-UW position on EU accession.<sup>90</sup>

Since the coalition was made up of numerous smaller parties, the issue of leadership became a sore subject among the governing coalition. After AWS-UW's victory in the 1997 parliamentary elections, little-known Jerzy Buzek was elected prime minister in lieu of AWS party leader Marian Krzaklewski, presumably because Krzaklewski wished to run for president in 2000. At first Buzek enjoyed popularity for his complacent and conciliatory style of governance, but his support began to waver after a series of labor protests in January 1999. According to Szczerbiak, "After that, the Buzek administration spent the next three years lurching from crisis to crisis and lacked any clear sense of direction."<sup>91</sup> AWS's popularity in the polls began to wane, and divisions emerged in the AWS-UW coalition over economic policy and leadership style.

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<sup>88</sup> Pluta (2004) p 163.

<sup>89</sup> Markowski (2006b) p 132.

<sup>90</sup> Blazyca and Kolkiewicz (1999) p 136.

<sup>91</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 65.

Power-sharing of various government ministerial positions between opposing factions of the coalition produced dispute after dispute on a wide variety of issues – with EU integration, the economy, and national defense topping the list of issues.<sup>92</sup> Due to the numerous conflicts, the UW eventually decided to leave the coalition government. The coalition broke apart in June of 2000, leaving Buzek’s AWS in the position of a minority government.<sup>93</sup>

Lustration controversies added a further twist to the internal drama of AWS leadership. AWS had devoted a large portion of its 1997 campaign to promises to break from the communist past and shore up the lustration law, which it did in 1998 after taking office. The June 1998 lustration amendments concentrated the authority for the lustration proceedings in the hands of the “Public Interest Spokesman” and appointing the Warsaw District Appeal Court as the designated venue. The amendments also allowed members of the Polish parliament “to initiate lustration procedures themselves through the introduction of the so-called ‘parliamentary denunciation’.”<sup>94</sup> It wasn’t long before the bloc began using lustration as a weapon against its political enemies, including SLD President Kwasniewski and even former Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, who were brought to trial prior to the 2000 presidential election with unfounded charges of espionage under the Communist regime.<sup>95</sup> The vicious infighting continued during the 2000 presidential election.

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<sup>92</sup> Pluta (2004 p 165.

<sup>93</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 65.

<sup>94</sup> Szczerbiak (2002) p 569.

<sup>95</sup> See Rohozinska, Joanna. (2000). “Struggling with the past: Poland’s controversial lustration trials.” *Central Europe Review*. 2(30). Accessed at: <http://www.ce-review.org/00/30/rohozinska30.html>.

### *The 2000 Presidential Election*

The September 2000 presidential election served yet another blow to the weakened AWS. Before Krzaklewski was chosen, there was a dispute among the different factions of AWS as to who would be the official AWS presidential nominee. As the party leader, Marian Krzaklewski was the logical choice, but disagreements within the bloc led to the formation of several splinter parties. A more liberal contingent within the bloc, centered on the Conservative People's Party, had presented an alternate candidate to Krzaklewski – Sejm Marshal Maciej Plazynski. Meanwhile AWS's former coalition partner UW decided not to back any candidate officially, but two-thirds of its electorate voted for independent center-right candidate Andrzej Olechowski.<sup>96</sup> In the end Krzaklewski was chosen to be AWS's candidate, but he had considerably less support from his former coalition.

According to Frances Millard, this campaign was “not issue-based, but candidate-based.”<sup>97</sup> In the face of the fragmentation of his party, voter disapproval of the lustration trials of Kwasniewski and Walesa, and the bad economy, AWS candidate Krzaklewski entered the campaign with a distinct disadvantage. Voter turnout was unusually high at 61%,<sup>98</sup> which signaled that Polish voters were eager for a change in government. Incumbent SLD President Kwasniewski impressively garnered more than 50% of the vote, while Krzaklewski was lucky to come in third at 15.57 % of the vote (which was

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<sup>96</sup> Millard, Frances. (2002). “The presidential election in Poland, October 2000.” *Electoral Studies*. 21(2). p 361.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p 359.

<sup>98</sup> Millard (2002) p 360.

more than three times less votes than Kwasniewski), trailing behind Olechowski, who earned 17.3% of the vote.<sup>99</sup>

Table 9: 2000 Presidential Election Results

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Percent of Vote</b>
Aleksander Kwasniewski (SLD)	53.9%
Andrzej Olechowski (Independent)	17.3%
Marian Krzaklewski (AWS)	15.6%
Jaroslaw Kalinowski (PSL)	6.0%
Andrzej Lepper (SO)	3.1%
Lech Walesa (Christian Democrat) <sup>100</sup>	1.0%

Source: *Panstwowa Komisja Wyborczu* (State Election Commission)<sup>101</sup>

After the election, Olechowski would later team up in January 2001 with Conservative People’s Party leader Plazynski and UW leader Donald Tusk to form a new center-right political party called the Civic Platform (PO). Also around the time of the formation of PO, another conservative party was forming under AWS justice minister Lech Kaczynski and his twin brother Jaroslaw. This party, called the Law and Justice party (PiS), was based on Lech and Jaroslaw’s hard-lined platform against corruption and crime.<sup>102</sup> The rest of AWS disintegrated into other, smaller parties, notably the radical Christian nationalist party called the League of Polish Families (LPR). This party had strong ties with the extremist Catholic radio network, Radio Maryja.<sup>103</sup> The remaining members of AWS formed the Solidarity Electoral Action of the Right (AWSP), with Olszewski’s Movement for the Republic (RdR) party (a former outlier of AWS) as the dominating

<sup>99</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 66.

<sup>100</sup> Note: Walesa was not ranked immediately after Andrzej Lepper, but I wanted to include him in this table of major candidates since he was a major figure in Polish politics at the time.

<sup>101</sup> Reprinted in Millard (2002) p 361.

<sup>102</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 66.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* p 68.

party and the Solidarity trade union, now officially retired from politics, only nominally voicing its support for it.<sup>104</sup> AWSP, wounded and weary, desperately needed to gain votes in the 2001 elections to stay in parliament.

### *The 2001 Parliamentary Election*

Polish party politics experienced a great upset in the 2001 elections, with four out of six of the new parties elected being new to parliament. Paul Lewis points out that much of the shift in power was due to a wave of Euroskepticism in Poland, which found its voice through the extreme Christian-nationalist League of Polish Families (LPR), one of the parties that had recently left the AWS bloc, and the radical populist Self-Defense party (SO).<sup>105</sup> Euroskepticism and support for the preservation of Polish national identity served SO particularly well, as it gained ten times the votes it did in the previous election (10% versus 1%).<sup>106</sup> SLD, the party with the most consistent and committed membership of all of Poland’s political parties at the time,<sup>107</sup> easily won the election, earning over three times the amount of votes as its closet competitor, the new center-right PO party.

Table 10: *2001 Parliamentary Election Results for the Sejm*

<b>Party</b>	<b>% of Votes</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>% of Seats</b>
Democratic Left Alliance / Labor Union (SLD/UP)	41.04%	216	47.16%
Civic Platform (PO)	12.68%	65	14.19%
Self-Defense (SO)	10.20%	53	11.57%
Law and Justice (PiS)	9.50%	44	9.61%
Polish Peasants Party (PSL)	8.98%	42	9.17%

<sup>104</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 67.

<sup>105</sup> Lewis, Paul. (2005). “EU enlargement and party systems in Central Europe.” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. 21(2). p 187.

<sup>106</sup> McManus-Czubinska et al (2003) p 2.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* p 5.

League of Polish Families (LPR)	7.87%	38	8.29%
Solidarity Election Action of the Right (AWSP)	5.60%	-	-
Freedom Union (UW)	3.10%	-	-

Source: *Rzeczpospolita*, 19 October 2001, and Polish State Electoral Commission.<sup>108</sup>

The final nail in the coffin of AWS was its decision to register the new AWSP as an electoral coalition for the 2001 parliamentary elections. Registering as a coalition required it to reach a higher percentage of the vote than a single party in order to meet the threshold for entry into parliament. Polls revealed that none of the individual parties making up AWS could survive an election in their own,<sup>109</sup> but neither could they survive together. As a result, the meager 5.6% of the vote they earned in the 2001 parliamentary elections was not enough to meet the 8% required (though ironically, it would have been just enough for the requirements for a single party).<sup>110</sup> Thus the largest-scale Right coalition in Polish party politics went from earning the highest percentage in one election to earning too few votes to enter parliament in the next election – all in one five year parliamentary cycle.

### *Conclusions*

In many ways, Solidarity Electoral Action was able to accomplish what previous attempts at a Right coalition were unable to do – to unite the highly fragmented Right long enough to get elected – however its strategy of using historical roots in Solidarity as the entire basis of the bloc proved inadequate for maintaining unity. In order to get elected, AWS emphasized their own Solidarity history through names and symbols,

<sup>108</sup> Reprinted in Szczerbiak (2006a) p 68.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* p 71.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* p 68.



antagonized their political rivals as communists or collaborators (notably through illustration), and stressed their common goal of a Christian, national Poland. AWS's coalition partner, UW, was seemingly only chosen because of its common Solidarity heritage, even though UW was more of a center-left party in terms of social ideology than right-wing. While it's evident that AWS's strategy was successful in earning them votes in the 1997 election, it did little in the way of maintaining party unity or effective leadership. Soon major issues like EU accession divided the bloc between the social liberals, who supported quick EU accession, and the conservatives, who sought to defend Poland's national Christian identity from the EU. In addition, in a coalition of over forty smaller groups, each with its own leader, conflicts over leadership soon emerged. The selection process of a common candidate for president in the 2000 election resulted in fragmentation within the bloc, which was already suffering in the polls.

By 2001 the coalition was in a very weakened position as it entered the parliamentary campaign. By this campaign the two consistent features of the AWS platform, namely decommunization and the support for Poland's national religious identity, had gradually "diminished as the basis for political divisions," remaining relevant only for "the far left and right flanks."<sup>111</sup> Increased Euroskepticism in the country led to support for extremist nationalist parties like Self-Defense (SO) and League of Polish Families (LPR). These two parties, along with AWS splinter parties Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice party (PiS), would become prominent fixtures in the next elections in 2005 and 2007. For all of their weakness, AWS might have survived another term in parliament if they had decided to register as a single party instead of a

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<sup>111</sup> Szczerbiak (2006a) p 69.

coalition. As it was, the bloc was completely eliminated from parliament in 2001, as it had been in 1993.

The Right took this time out of power to rethink its electoral strategy. The main flaw with AWS's electoral strategy was its reliance on the historical divide between the Communist-successors and the Solidarity-successors to attract voters. Often AWS campaign issues, such as lustration, equated to an ultimatum to voters: you are either with Solidarity, or you are with the communists. AWS failed to create a unified ideology or leadership that would sustain the party beyond their election into office. In the next chapter I will demonstrate how AWS splinter parties learned from AWS's mistakes and began to depart from the post-communist divide as an electoral strategy.

## **The Return of the Right**

After the 2001 parliamentary elections, Poland's Right found itself once again on the outside of Poland's politics. By the time the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections came around, Poland's Right had a distinct advantage over the Left, who was weakened by internal conflicts, a rise in domestic social conservatism, and voter fatigue with the ruling government. Yet Poland's right-wing parties did more than just get their candidates elected to parliament. The withdrawal of the major left-wing candidate for president forced the two largest parties on the right, Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS) to compete with one another instead of their usual rivals on the Left. This competition not only overcame the post-communist/post-Solidarity division that had characterized every election since 1989, but it also forced the parties of the Right to create distinct identities and platforms – a factor that increased their stability and durability until the next election. By the 2007 election the divide of historical identities was almost completely transcended, and the two right-wing parties were more secure in their identity and more likely to secure a permanent place in Poland's political party spectrum than ever before.

### *The Left's Deterioration and the Return of the Right*

The period between the 2001 and the 2005 elections proved to be a mixture of triumph and tragedy for Poland's left. While President Kwasniewski's administration

oversaw Poland's successful accession to the European Union, his party was significantly weakened during this period. Like the structural weaknesses suffered by the AWS coalition in the late 1990s, SLD now faced a crisis of leadership and fragmentation – though not at the devastating scale as the AWS did. Conflicts over the party's leadership, ideology, and management created rifts in the usually stable party.<sup>112</sup> When over thirty deputies broke away from the SLD/UP coalition in March 2004 to form the new Social Democracy of Poland (SdPI) party, they left the SLD government in minority status in parliament.<sup>113</sup> SLD Prime Minister Leszek Miller oversaw Poland's EU accession on May 1, 2004 and resigned from office the next day because of the scandals and internal problems facing his party, and – in his own words – because of the public perception of the “cancer of dishonesty” plaguing politics in Poland.<sup>114</sup>

Former Finance Minister Marek Belka became the new prime minister in June 2004 after failing a previous vote of confidence. According to Millard, “Marek Belka was a semi-detached member of the SLD from its most pro-capitalist liberal wing.”<sup>115</sup> His disassociation with the party would be his downfall. Belka's Finance Minister, Jerzy Hausner, was engaged in the creation of a new center-left party, Democratic Party (PD), and Belka's refusal to dismiss him resulted in the SLD withdrawing their support for both men, who consequently resigned and joined the new party. The SLD next tapped the well-respected Wojciech Olejniczak to replace Belka. Prime Minister Olejniczak and the

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<sup>112</sup> Millard, Frances. (2006). “Poland's politics and the travails of transition after 2001: the 2005 elections.” *Europe-Asia Studies*. 58(7). November. p 1009.

<sup>113</sup> Markowski, Radoslaw. (2006). “The Polish elections of 2005: pure chaos or a restructuring of the party system?” *West European Politics*. 29: 4. September. p 819.

<sup>114</sup> Millard (2006) p 1009.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* p 1010.

SLD immediately began a purge of their electoral list of members who did not uphold the SLD party line.<sup>116</sup>

The SLD's turbulent reign provided an opportunity for the Polish Right to regroup. Several factors in their favor were already present: growing dissatisfaction with the SLD government and a recent surge in domestic religiosity and social conservatism. According to Millard, the death of John Paul II – the former Polish cardinal who vocally opposed Poland's communist rule and supported Solidarity – was “a profound experience of shared mourning and reaffirmation of national religiosity”<sup>117</sup> that prompted a surge in social conservatism. Some social issues, such as abortion and religious education had fallen largely out of the public debate, but new issues such as gay rights were pushed to the forefront in the 2005 elections. The two major right-wing parties, Tusk's PO and Kaczynski's PiS, had announced early in the campaign that they would seek to form a coalition once elected to parliament, and together they embarked on a joint campaign mission to “improve the decency and transparency of public life, fight corruption, [and] unveil clientelistic links between the economics and political domain.”<sup>118</sup> This would set the tone for the entire election, which would focus more on corruption and economic issues (such as taxation) than on social issues.

### **The 2005 Election**

President Kwasniewski moved up the date of the parliamentary election, making it almost concurrent with the 2005 presidential election. Since there was little time in

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<sup>116</sup> Millard (2006) p 1010.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* p 1010.

<sup>118</sup> Markowski (2006) p 819.

between the two elections, presidential and parliamentary campaigns began to merge as political parties tried to equalize their candidates for Sejm and the Senate with their presidential candidates in order to gain votes. Therefore, it is not useful to separate the two campaigns for analysis. I will examine the campaign strategy and ideology of the political parties by their ideological position: left, center, or right.

### *The Left*

The story of the Left in the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections is a short one. Over the course of Polish elections after 1989, the balance of power predictably shifted from Left to Right every election, and as the incumbent government, it was to be expected that SLD would not win the 2005 election. However, its extremely poor performance in the parliamentary race – winning a mere 5% of the Senate vote (and no seats) and just over 11% of the Sejm vote – came as a shock to many. The first factor in its decline was waning support. In addition to the party shake-ups mentioned before, voter dissatisfaction with the SLD government’s response to the faltering Polish economy and growing social inequality led to its support dropping from over 40% in 2001 to 11% in 2005.<sup>119</sup>

An additional factor contributing to SLD’s poor parliamentary election performance was the disaster of its presidential campaign. According to Radoslaw Markowski, PO and PiS’s announcement that they would form a coalition if elected to parliament might have been to the advantage of a Left presidential candidate: “the expectation was that Poles might reject the idea of having both crucial positions, prime

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<sup>119</sup> Rae, Gavin. (2008). “Two rights make a wrong? The remaking of Polish politics after the 2007 parliamentary elections.” *Debatte*. 16(1). April. p 74.

minister and president, filled by the same political camp.”<sup>120</sup> Even though the opportunity was there, SLD failed to mobilize an opposition campaign to the Right. Due to internal dissent, the only suitable candidate for president that the SLD could agree on was Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz. According to Millard, “only Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz was sufficiently popular, experienced, and untainted with the heavy brush of corruption,” yet Cimoszewicz admitted that he found himself “increasingly detached” from the SLD party.<sup>121</sup> After a lackluster campaign and complaints of media attacks against his family, Cimoszewicz withdrew from the campaign, leaving no major left-wing candidate in the running. Without a presidential candidate to rally around, the SLD had little electoral support for the parliamentary elections.

A final factor to the SLD’s disadvantage was the similarity of their electoral program to other parties. Like the smaller SdPi party, which was unable to gain any seats in either the Sejm or the Senate, SLD “restated a renewed commitment to left-wing principles, to democracy, and to Europe,”<sup>122</sup> yet its populist-socialist economic platform was echoed by several other parties, including their right-wing rival Law and Justice (PiS). Pro-socialist voters could have their pick of several parties, and not many chose to remain loyal to the debilitated SLD.

The only left-wing party to see an increase in support was the enigmatic Self Defense (SO) party. SO declared itself to be the “new Left” and emphasized religious conservatism and populist economic policy. Even though SO chose to self-identify with the Left, its populist economic policy and extreme social conservatism make it more akin

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<sup>120</sup> Markowski (2006) p 819.

<sup>121</sup> Millard (2006) p 1017.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* p 1016.

to right-wing LPR or even PiS. Unlike PiS and LPR, however, SO did not claim to be a successor of Solidarity, nor did it pursue decommunization or lustration as a campaign issue.<sup>123</sup> SO's presidential candidate, Andrzej Lepper, did remarkably well in the presidential election, coming in at third place in the first round with 15.11% of the vote. SO also fared well in the parliamentary election, beating SLD by one seat in the Sejm and earning three seats in the Senate.

In conclusion, the strongest figure of the Left, the SLD, was substantially weakened by a lack of both real and symbolic leadership (namely, a presidential candidate), and for the first time its electorates realized the SLD was not the only party offering the socialist or secularist platform that they desired. After Cimoszewicz's withdrawal from the presidential campaign, a significant number of former SLD voters voted for centrist or right-wing candidates instead.

### *The Center*

While the Center of Poland's political spectrum varied in its social policy, it had in common a "liberal" economic policy similar to the Right in Western democracies that supported less progressive taxation (and sometimes a flat tax) and the increased liberalization of Poland's markets. Only two Polish parties espoused economic liberalism in their party platforms – center-left Democratic Party (PD) and center-right Civic Platform (PO). PD was basically a revamped Freedom Union (UW) with the addition of a small contingent of former SLD members, notably former PM Belka and Hausner.<sup>124</sup> PD did not manage to win seats in either the Sejm or the Senate and the independent

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<sup>123</sup> Millard (2006) p 1016.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* p 1015.



presidential candidate it chose to support, Henryka Bochniarz, earned only 1% of the vote.

Donald Tusk's Civic Platform party (PO) has often been grouped with the right-wing of Poland's politics due to its Solidarity roots and strongly conservative social policies, however its staunch support for the free-market, its proposed flat-tax, and its constituency of transition "winners" differ so much from the socialist platforms of either the right or the left as to make its categorization difficult.<sup>125</sup> PO is derived from the economically "liberal" contingent of the Solidarity opposition under communist rule. This faction "criticized the leadership of the [Solidarity] movement for concentrating on issues such as democracy and equality and for maintaining economic policies that had a 'socialist character.'"<sup>126</sup> According to Gavin Rae, "Tusk developed a dogmatic support for the free market, to the extent that he even claimed at the end of the 1980s that he would prefer a free-market economy without democracy to socialism with free elections."<sup>127</sup> Unlike most of Poland's Right, PO may be economically liberal, but like the Right it supports solidly conservative social policies, including an opposition to abortion, euthanasia, and same-sex marriages or civil unions.<sup>128</sup> Because PO is a center-right party, I will continue my discussion of PO's campaign in the next section.

### *The Right*

The two most right-wing parties in the 2005 election were League of Polish

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<sup>125</sup> Of course PO's economically Right and socially Right ideology would be completely normal in a Western democracy, but it is considered unusual in Poland's political party spectrum.

<sup>126</sup> Rae (2008) p 74.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* p 74.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* p 75.

Families (LPR) and PiS. A major theme of both of their campaigns was the dawn of the “Fourth Republic” (the so-called “Third Republic” began in 1991 with the first free elections in Poland). According to Millard:

The Fourth Republic would experience moral cleansing through deep lustration, anti-corruption measures, and reaffirmation of Catholic values, its new Constitution would repair the state; it would heal society with a social contract including fundamental changes in social and economic policy.<sup>129</sup>

PiS’s intended coalition partner PO also supported moderate religious conservatism and lustration, but as I’ve mentioned before their economic policies differed greatly. These differences were accentuated when PiS and PO were forced to compete with one another later in the race.

The withdrawal of SLD presidential candidate Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz left the two intended coalition partners in a very awkward position: as the only two major contenders for the presidency still in place, they were forced to alter their campaign strategies – and even their ideological stances – in order to compete with one another.<sup>130</sup>

PiS took the initiative and drew a new line of competition between itself and PO – that of “Solidarists” like PiS and “liberals” like PO.<sup>131</sup> This competition at once signaled that the usual campaign strategy of harping on historical divisions had passed and also forced the two right-wing parties to solidify their own agendas and distinguish themselves from their rival.

PiS expended the most effort in reshaping its identity, moving considerably towards the Left on economic issues and significantly towards the Right on social issues.

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<sup>129</sup> Millard (2006) p 1016.

<sup>130</sup> Markowski (2006) p 820.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* p 820.

The central issue of contention between the two parties was economic policy, specifically PO's proposed flat tax and PiS's progressive tax plan. According to Millard, "...PiS offered a stark choice between PO's 'liberal Poland', serving the rich, and its own 'social' or 'solidarity' Poland."<sup>132</sup> In an effort to distance itself from PO, PiS's economic policies became more and more populist-socialist. PiS purported to stick up for the transition's "losers" and launched attacks at Leszek Balcerowicz, former leader of UW (Donald Tusk's old party) and author of the infamous "Balcerowicz Plan."<sup>133</sup> Their offensive did not stop there, but extended to leaders of all parties since the transition: "The PiS party leadership [...] launched a campaign as if they had been absent from the Polish politics of the past decade and a half. They blamed everyone for the alleged failure."<sup>134</sup> His party's increasing socialist policies inspired PiS presidential candidate Lech Kaczynski to woo disenfranchised voters of the Left. Kaczynski even admitted (truthfully or not) to admiring some elements of communism, "including its contribution to culture and to women's rights"<sup>135</sup> – a move that would have been politically unthinkable under the old campaign strategy of Solidarity-successors versus Communist-successors. The result of this aggressive campaigning was that PiS managed to win over some of Cimoszewicz's supporters from the Left after his withdrawal from the race, "mainly the retired and marginalized."<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Millard (2006) p 1023.

<sup>133</sup> Markowski (2006) p 821.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* p 821.

<sup>135</sup> Millard (2006) p 1023.

<sup>136</sup> Markowski (2006) p 821.

PiS also radicalized its social platform. According to Markowski, “PiS underwent a spectacular change from a fairly typical conservative party with noticeable though weak nationalist and populist leanings, into a radical nationalist, and visibly populist-socialist one.”<sup>137</sup> In order to expand its base, PiS looked to the radical Right for support and earned backing from LPR and religious fundamentalists under the guidance of radical Catholic Radio Maryja.<sup>138</sup> PiS supporters had become by 2005 more Euroskeptic, more in favor of strengthening lustration laws, more amenable to the influence of the Catholic Church in public life, and more opposed to privatization.<sup>139</sup>

Though PO tried to fight back against PiS’s attacks, PiS’s more sophisticated campaign had managed to successfully label PO “the party of the flat tax” and of rich, greedy elites.<sup>140</sup> In addition, even though polls had predicted that PO would win the parliamentary race, PiS’s Lech Kaczynski was significantly more popular with the electorate than Donald Tusk in the presidential race. Kaczynski and independent candidate Zbigniew Religa were considered campaign frontrunners until Religa withdrew after a disorganized and weak campaign.<sup>141</sup> Tusk managed to make headway in the polls by gaining some of the departed candidate’s disappointed supporters, who were urged by

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<sup>137</sup> Markowski (2006) p 820.

<sup>138</sup> Millard (2006) p 1023.

<sup>139</sup> Markowski (2006) p 827.

<sup>140</sup> Millard (2006) p 1023.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* p 1022.

Religa himself to support Tusk.<sup>142</sup> Thus both Tusk and Kaczynski had managed to pick up votes from other parties.

### *The 2005 Election Results*

Turnout at the parliamentary election was the lowest it had ever been in post-communist Poland – a mere 40.5% of eligible voters turned out. Contrary to earlier projections, PiS easily carried the Sejm and Senate, earning over twenty more seats than PO in the Sejm and fifteen more seats in the Senate. Jaroslaw Kaczynski stepped back from an offer to become prime minister in order to boost his brother Lech’s chances at winning the presidency.<sup>143</sup>

Table 11: *2005 Parliamentary Election Results for the Sejm*

<b>Party</b>	<b>% of Vote</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>% of Seats</b>
Law and Justice (PiS)	26.99%	155	33.7%
Civic Platform (PO)	24.14%	133	28.9%
Self-Defense (SO)	11.41%	56	12.2%
Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)	11.31%	55	12.0%
League of Polish Families (LPR)	7.97%	34	7.4%
Polish Peasants Party	6.96%	25	5.4%
German minority	0.29%	2	0.4%
Polish Social Democracy (SdPI)	3.89%	-	-
Democratic Party (PD)	2.45%	-	-

Source: *Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza*.<sup>144</sup>

Table 12: *2005 Parliamentary Election Results for the Senate*

<b>Party</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>
Law and Justice (PiS)	49
Civic Platform (PO)	34
League of Polish Families (LPR)	7
Self-Defense (SO)	3
Polish Peasants Party (PSL)	2

<sup>142</sup> Markowski (2006) p 820. Ironically, despite Religa’s endorsement of PO and Tusk, after the election Religa accepted a position from his rival party, PiS, in the Ministry of Health.

<sup>143</sup> Millard (2006) p 1025.

<sup>144</sup> Reprinted in Millard (2006) p 1024.

New Senate 2005	1
Committee for Kazimierz Julian Kutz	1
Committee for Professor Marian Milek	1
Committee for Maciej Plazynski	1
Committee for Bogdan Borusewicz	1

Source: *Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza*.<sup>145</sup>

Voter turnout for the presidential was also low, but at 49.7% it was higher than the parliamentary elections. In the first round Tusk was in first, having gained a 3% lead over Kaczynski. However in the run-off race many of the supporters of the defeated SO and PSL parties chose to support Kaczynski over Tusk, resulting in Kaczynski winning over Tusk a margin of 10%.

Table 13: *2005 Presidential Election Results*

Candidate	Percentage of Votes	
	First Round	Second Round
Donald Tusk (PO)	36.33%	45.96%
Lech Kaczynski (PiS)	33.10%	54.04%
Andrzej Lepper (SO)	15.11%	-
Marek Borowski (SdPl)	10.33%	-
Jaroslaw Kalinowski (PSL)	1.80%	-
Janusz Korwin-Mikke (Independent)	1.43%	-
Henryka Bochniarz (supported by PD)	1.26%	-

Source: *Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza*.<sup>146</sup>

After the victory of PiS and Kaczynski, it came as little surprise that the proposed PO-PiS coalition was no longer on the table. PO had originally agreed to the coalition under the assumption that it would be the senior partner, and now that the situation was the reverse, “essentially [Civic Platform] did not want the junior role now offered by PiS...”<sup>147</sup> Millard explains that “bitterness, shock, and personal animosities also played a role, with a lack of mutual trust and the feeling that the Kaczynskis would not hesitate to

<sup>145</sup> Reprinted in Millard (2006) p 1025.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* p 1025.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* p 1027.

use PO as a whipping boy for economic failure.”<sup>148</sup> After the election, PiS appeared to be delivering on campaign promises, but it still lacked the majority in Parliament necessary to advance their agenda. Hence, PiS, like the AWS before it, created an oddly-matched coalition with LPR and SO, two parties that were significantly more extremist than PiS.

### *Analysis of the 2005 Election*

While the 2001 election effectively disintegrated the unified Right, the 2005 election resulted in the division and weakening of the Left. The competition between the two main factions of the Right – PiS and PO – at once divided the Right between the moderates and the extremists and in addition forced the two parties to solidify their ideology and platforms. The parties of the Right have begun to carve out their own niche in the electorate instead of constantly competing over the same voters,<sup>149</sup> thus stabilizing their support.

The biggest significance of the 2005 elections was that the old communist-successor versus Solidarity-successor divide had begun to wane. Besides the SLD, all of the major political parties had their roots in Solidarity or (like the PSL) were not connected with either Solidarity or the old Communist party. In addition the campaigns focused less on historical issues like lustration, and more on economic plans like taxation. This trend away from historical divisions continued into the next elections in 2007.

## **The 2007 Election**

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<sup>148</sup> Millard (2006) p 1027-1028.

<sup>149</sup> Markowski (2006) p 828.

The 2007 elections were held two years earlier than previously scheduled due to disputes between coalition partners and within the PiS party itself, followed by a dramatic overhauling of the reigning government. PiS's internal problems began with their choice for prime minister. After President Lech Kaczynski's twin brother Jaroslaw declined the post of prime minister in 2005, PiS member Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz was appointed. Marcinkiewicz came from the more liberal side of PiS and therefore clashed with the more conservative coalition partners, LPR and SO. Jaroslaw Kaczynski and Marcinkiewicz had an uneasy relationship from the start – while Marcinkiewicz was nominally in charge, it was Kaczynski who “remained the unquestioned leader” of the party.<sup>150</sup> According to Szczerbiak, Marcinkiewicz's independent thinking was both a benefit and a detriment: “Marcinkiewicz quickly carved out a niche and became Poland's most popular politician by portraying himself as a hard-working and independent-minded prime-minister above the political fray,” the result of which was Marcinkiewicz's dismissal in July 2006 and Jaroslaw Kaczynski deciding to replace Marcinkiewicz as prime minister himself.<sup>151</sup>

As with the failed AWS bloc, PiS experienced problems with their coalition partners. First, the influence of LPR on the PiS government resulted in a social policy that became more and more extremist. As a result of their position in power, Poland passed one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe – making abortion illegal in most cases except where the health of the mother is threatened or the pregnancy is a result of sexual violence. LPR leaders attempted to pass an even more restrictive

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<sup>150</sup> Szczerbiak, Aleks. (2008). “The birth of a bipolar party system of a referendum on a polarizing government? The October 2007 Polish parliamentary election.” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. 24(3). p 417.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.* p 417-418.



measure that would outlaw abortions for rape victims as well, but President Kaczynski eventually put his foot down and blocked the proposed law.<sup>152</sup> In addition there was a surge in anti-homosexual rhetoric on the part of LPR, with delegate Ewa Sowinska criticizing the so-called promotion of homosexuality in Poland's schools<sup>153</sup> and calling for the ban of the children's television show *The Teletubbies* for its depiction of an allegedly homosexual character, which echoed a similar criticism of the show by the late U.S. televangelist Jerry Falwell.<sup>154</sup> In addition there were several scandals in the SO party, notably sexual harassment and bribery allegations against the party leaders, including Andrzej Lepper.<sup>155</sup> Next LPR and SO attempted to create their own coalition and formally withdrew from their original coalition agreement with PiS. After the withdrawal of LPR and SO, Kaczynski declared the original coalition agreement to be voided and fired all the ministers appointed from the two smaller parties. As a result of this the Sejm voted to dissolve the current parliamentary term and hold early elections for the next term.<sup>156</sup> The three dominant players were PiS, the weakened Left, and PO. According to Anna Gwiazda, the 2007 election was marked by its concentration on "hard issues" such as the economy and health care that had previously given way to social

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<sup>152</sup> See Murphy, Kim. (2007). "The pair polarizing the Poles - The Kaczynski twins, president and premier, take on gays, graft and German hegemony." *The Los Angeles Times*. October 18.

<sup>153</sup> Connolly, Kate. (2007). "Poland to ban schools from discussing homosexuality." *The Guardian*. Tuesday March 20. Accessed at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/mar/20/schools.gayrights>.

<sup>154</sup> See "Poland to probe if Teletubbies are gay." (2007). *Reuters*. Monday May 28. Accessed at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/entertainmentNews/idUSL2832037420070528>.

<sup>155</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 418, 420.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* p 420.

issues like abortion and religion.<sup>157</sup> This shift in campaign issues indicated a positive step away from the bitter rivalries of the past based on historical legacy alone.

### *The Law and Justice Party*

Soon after PiS's government came to power, they became unpopular with the media and the urban elite due to scandals, the growing Catholic radical faction in their coalition partnership, and an inability to fulfill campaign promises, notably the highly progressive tax policy with which they had campaigned.<sup>158</sup> For all of their problems, Aleks Szczerbiak expressed surprise that they lasted in power as long as they did:

“The Law and Justice party's ability, unlikely governing parties in the two previous parliaments, both to remain organizationally intact and to retain a firm hold on a significant portion of the electorate, was remarkable given the government's frequent political crises.”<sup>159</sup>

The party focused on fighting corruption per its campaign promises, yet failed to instate any major social or economic reforms that would have an immediate effect on their electoral support.<sup>160</sup> Many on the Left who had supported PiS only because of its populist economic policy were sorely disappointed, and the Kaczynski government was the object of a number of protests by teachers and health care workers.<sup>161</sup>

Going into the 2007 elections, the public perception of PiS was not positive. An August 2007 survey revealed that over 60% of respondents considered the political

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<sup>157</sup> Gwiazda, Anna. (2008). “The parliamentary election in Poland, October 2007.” *Electoral Studies*. 27(4). p 762.

<sup>158</sup> Rae (2008) p 77.

<sup>159</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 418.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.* p 418.

<sup>161</sup> Rae (2008) p 77.

situation in Poland “bad”.<sup>162</sup> The worsening economy combined with the alienating radical social policies that had come to be associated with PiS (because of its ties to LPR and SO) left that party in a weakened place politically. PiS’s disadvantaged position in the election caused it to use its anti-corruption platform as a weapon against its opponents, implicating members of their rival’s party in bribery and corruption, notably the PO deputy Beata Sawicka.<sup>163</sup>

### *Left and Center*

After its embarrassing defeat in the 2005 election, SLD remained in a weakened state in 2007. In a desperate attempt to return to parliament in 2007, the SLD forged an electoral bloc with SdPI and PD called Left and Center (LiD). The bloc was based on “issues of civil rights, the neutrality of the state, equality between the sexes and European integration.”<sup>164</sup> The Left’s candidate for prime minister was former president Aleksander Kwasniewski. Kwasniewski had once been the most popular politician on the Left, but now proved to be something of an embarrassment, allegedly appearing inebriated in a televised speech on more than one occasion during the campaign.<sup>165</sup>

### *Civic Platform*

Voter dissatisfaction with PiS and overall weakness on the Left gave an advantage to PO in the 2007 elections. According to Gavin Rae, “The weakness of the left [...]

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<sup>162</sup> Gwiazda (2008) p 762.

<sup>163</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 423.

<sup>164</sup> Rae (2008) p 84.

<sup>165</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 424.

meant that PO could attract the support of the liberal electorate who were concerned with the creeping authoritarianism of the PiS government.”<sup>166</sup> In addition, PO managed to overcome the 2005 label of their party as “anti-Solidarity” in the 2007 election by arguing that they could be two things at once by having a “liberal economic policy and a Solidaristic social policy.”<sup>167</sup> By building a stronger campaign platform and using popular disapproval of the reigning PiS government to its advantage, PO was able to gain a higher percentage of the vote in the 2007 parliamentary elections than any party had been able to after 1989.

#### *The 2007 Election Results*

According to Rae, “The 2007 parliamentary elections became a plebiscite on whether the country wanted to continue along the course set out by PiS, and the answer given was a definitive no.”<sup>168</sup> PO won over PiS by ten percentage points in the Sejm and earned over 20 more seats in the Senate.

Table 14: *2007 Parliamentary Election Results for the Sejm*

<b>Party</b>	<b>% of Vote</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>% of Seats</b>
Civic Platform (PO)	41.5%	209	45.4%
Law and Justice (PiS)	32.1%	166	36.1%
Left and Democrats (LiD)	13.2%	53 <sup>169</sup>	11.5%
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	8.9%	31	6.7%
German Minority	0.2%	1	0.2%
Self-Defense (SO)	1.5%	-	-
League of Polish Families (LPR)	1.3%	-	-

Source: *Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza*<sup>170</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Rae (2008) p 77.

<sup>167</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 423.

<sup>168</sup> Rae (2008) p 77.

<sup>169</sup> Distribution of seats for LiD: SLD: 40; SdPI: 10; PD: 3.

<sup>170</sup> Reprinted in Gwiazda (2008) p 762.

Table 15: 2007 Parliamentary Election Results for the Senate

Party	Total Seats
Civic Platform (PO)	60
Law and Justice (PiS)	39
Committee for Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz	1

Source: *Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza*<sup>171</sup>

Only four parties entered parliament in 2007, compared to seven parties in 2005. Even though PiS lost many votes in 2007, it gained much of the votes from LPR and SO, who both failed to achieve the 5% threshold for parliament entry.<sup>172</sup>

Despite their best efforts, LiD only managed to gain 13% of the vote in 2007, which was amazingly 5% less than the combined percentages of the vote that all left-liberal parties earned in the 2005 parliamentary elections. The Left has been dealt two considerable blows by the last two elections. Some, like Aleks Szczerbiak believe that the Left has exhausted the usefulness of its staple social issue of reducing the role of the Church in Poland:

...given that many of the concerns about excessive Church influence on Poland around which the secular left mobilized in the early 1990s had receded, the social base for a liberal-cultural left was felt to be too narrow to sustain a major party in a socially and culturally conservative country such as Poland.<sup>173</sup>

In addition, its usual economic campaign of more progressive taxation and welfare programs is now championed by several parties, including to some extent PiS. The Left today in Poland remains weaker than ever, and drastic changes to their strategic program are necessary before they can regain their constituency.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Reprinted in Gwiazda (2008) p 763.

<sup>172</sup> Rae (2008) p 78.

<sup>173</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 430.

<sup>174</sup> Rae (2008) p 84.

The fate of the Right after this election remains uncertain as well. PiS, LPR, and SO, who are generally considered to be icons of the Polish Right, suffered significant losses in support in the 2007 election. Rae points out that one reason for PO's advantage was that PiS's traditional demographic – rural voters – turned out in smaller numbers (40% turnout in 2007) than PO's usual constituency of urban voters.<sup>175</sup> Szczerbiak theorizes that PiS's base was unmotivated to vote in an election where their issues, religious or conservative social issues, were overshadowed by economic issues.

In addition, lustration – usually a core issue of the Polish Right – was less prevalent in this election. During the 2007 campaign the Institute of National Memory (IPN) decided not to publicize a new list of public figures who were suspected of being collaborators with and those whom were under the surveillance of the former communist secret police. Even though “the first group of names of those spied upon included the president, the prime minister and speakers of both houses of parliament,” the IPN decided to suppress the publication of the list “because they wanted to avoid appearing like they were trying to influence the election's outcome.”<sup>176</sup> The decreasing importance of lustration in Polish politics is a positive sign, as the process had been transformed by its proponents (usually on the Right) from a useful tool of decommunization to a political weapon that could be used selectively against their opponents.

#### *Aftermath of the 2007 elections*

After winning over 40% of the vote, PO formed a coalition government with the Polish Peasants' Party (PSL), which was in the process of recasting itself as a Christian

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<sup>175</sup> Rae (2008) p 77.

<sup>176</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 428.

Democratic party under the leadership of Waldemar Pawlak.<sup>177</sup> The new government has faced multiple challenges, many of which are lingering problems from the last ruling coalition in parliament. After the 2007 election, “the PO government, during the first two months of its existence, has faced a wave of protests and strikes by workers including miners, teachers, nurses and customs officers.”<sup>178</sup> The major headache of the PO government has been the decaying health care system that has lately fallen into debt and “the government’s response to this has been to propose a set of measures that amounts to a marketization and partial privatization of the health service.”<sup>179</sup> I will remind you that much of PO’s support came from those anxious to vote *against* PiS rather than *for* PO, and as such there is a significant proportion of PO’s constituency with anti-liberal economic positions. As such, any hints that PO planned to privatize health care have been met with fierce resistance by the population, as Rae explains:

The principle of free health care and education was written into the new Polish constitution in 1997, with over 85 percent of the country’s population believing that the state should provide free and comprehensive social services...<sup>180</sup>

Tusk has made tremendous strides in altering his party’s policy to appeal to his newfound electorate. In an effort to pacify some of his right-wing constituents (who may reject some of Tusk’s more liberal economic policies), Tusk has made an effort to become more conservative socially. While PO had previously criticized PiS’s close association with religious radicals, such as those behind the radical Radio Maryja radio station, now Tusk is allowing its Catholic base to have more influence over his policies. For example,

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<sup>177</sup> Rae (2008) p 78.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* p 79.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* p 79.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* p 78.

“...Donald Tusk has, under pressure from the Catholic Church, refused to sign the European declaration of human rights and backed down from supporting state funding for in vitro fertilization treatment.”<sup>181</sup> According to Szczerbiak, PO’s attempts to woo social conservatives are the only reason an economically liberal party made it this far in Polish politics in the first place.<sup>182</sup>

PO has had difficulty in advancing its agenda not only because of popular resistance, but also because of difficulty from within the government itself. Even though PO’s Tusk is now prime minister and the PO/PSL coalition dominates parliament, the presence of PiS president Lech Kaczynski still presents an obstacle for PO’s agenda. Kaczynski remains openly hostile towards Tusk and PO, and is quoted as saying:

Today in power, under different guises, is an integrated formation of hard liberals from the old KLD. They talk of their alleged [Solidarity] past. Some of course participated in the underground movement but in truth they were not from [Solidarity].<sup>183</sup>

Rae concludes, “It is therefore possible that there could be a political stalemate, with the President blocking the government’s legislative program.”<sup>184</sup> Kaczynski’s antagonism may be to PO’s benefit if Kaczynski’s popularity continues to fall. If PO can manage to maintain its current level of support with the added obstacle of a hostile president in office there is a good chance that the party will do well in the next election.

### *Conclusions*

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<sup>181</sup> Rae (2008) p 83.

<sup>182</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 417.

<sup>183</sup> Rae (2008) p 83.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* p 83.



The most important result of the 2007 election was the defeat of the post-communist/post-Solidarity divide as a defining cleavage in Poland's party politics. Now both sides of Poland's political spectrum feature parties with roots in Solidarity. In Szczerbiak's words:

Not only did the two main parties, as in 2005, emerge from the Solidarity tradition, but even the Democratic Left Alliance finally managed to transcend the 'historic divide' by joining forces with the Democrats, a party that contained many well-known figures from the Solidarity movement.<sup>185</sup>

The result of this was that the axis of competition between Left and Right shifted away from historical rivalries, and for the first time shifted towards "hard issues" like economic reform and healthcare. In addition, the weakness of the Left has forced the Polish Right to compete against other right-wing parties, which has resulted in right-wing parties defining themselves better ideologically and stabilizing their party platforms. In addition the two main parties of the Right – PO and PiS – have been forced to moderate their platforms in an attempt to gain and retain voters. Euroskepticism and lustration were nearly absent from the 2007 campaign, and the radical LPR and SO parties received barely over 1% each of the vote, barring them from entry into parliament. Both Kaczynski and Tusk have moderated their platforms in an attempt to appeal to a broader electorate. While the absence of any strong left-wing voice in parliament or the government is a cause for concern, the absence of radical parties in parliament is a positive step forward for Polish democracy.

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<sup>185</sup> Szczerbiak (2008) p 428.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper I have presented the unusual case of the Polish Right, which failed to create strong, stable parties despite favorable pre-conditions such as a strong anti-communist opposition movement and the predominance of the Catholic Church. Though Solidarity excelled at motivating citizens as oppositionist, its weaknesses as a political party failed to motivate citizens as voters. Solidarity was made up of many diverse viewpoints and incompatible personalities, prompting Solidarity-successor parties of the Right to avoid traditional party platforms constructed on ideological positions and instead to promote broad campaigns constructed from appeals to the historical rivalry between the Communist party and Solidarity. With nothing more than common lineage to unite them, broad electoral blocs like Solidarity Electoral Action suffered from a lack of cohesive ideology, clashing leaders, and eventually fragmentation. It was only when parties of the Right were able to change their strategy of alluding to historic divisions to one of creating an identity based on ideological positions that right-wing parties were able to stabilize themselves and succeed electorally. The 2005 election proved just such an opportunity, as the exclusion of any Left candidate forced the two right-wing parties PiS and PO to compete with one another and cement their political identities. By the 2007 election, Polish party politics was further removed from the post-communist/post-Solidarity divide because parties on either side of the political spectrum had roots in Solidarity. In addition, campaign issues had moved from historically charged ones such as lustration and the role of the Catholic Church to “hard issues” such as the economy or

health care. All parties have been forced to moderate their platforms in an attempt to gain new voters. While the spectrum seems weighted on the Right side due to the large presence of PiS and PO, the radical fringe such as LPR and SO has been eliminated. While the Left is in a weakened position now, I predict that it will return in the next election with a reinvigorated base and that its return will force Poland's Right to choose between PiS and PO as its representative. Unless economic liberalism, a mainstay of PO's platform, gains in popularity in Poland, I predict that a more socially moderate PiS could make a come-back under new leadership. However, the unpopularity of the Kaczynski twins' legacy could ensure that the PiS party is voted out of Polish politics for good. Without more data it is impossible for me to speculate, but I can say with some confidence that both parties cannot last for long while the other is still strong.

Poland's political party system has made enormous progress in the past two decades, from an erratic spectrum of dozens of parties competing on the basis of historical rivalries to a stable system of a handful of parties that create platforms based on economic and social issues. While the political parties of the early 1990s were niche, today's parties seek to broaden their platform and attract a larger section of the electorate. Poland's Right, in particular, has evolved from the surprisingly weak and fragmented successors of Solidarity to two relatively stable mass parties. I am confident that the present state of Polish political party competition is by no means static, and that Poland's Right will undergo a number of changes before it reaches stability. However I hypothesize that the abandonment of historic rivalry as a campaign strategy will allow Poland's party system to form more naturally along ideological lines and allow Poland

itself to confront its communist past in a non-political way more conducive to the fortification of Poland's democracy.

**Appendix A: Table of Major Party Name Abbreviations and Party Affiliation**

<b>Party Name</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Solidarity Electoral Action	AWS	Right
Liberal Democratic Congress	KLD	Center-Left / Center-Right
League of Polish Families	LPR	Far Right
Center Alliance	PC	Right
Democratic Party	PD	Center-Left
Law and Justice	PiS	Far Right
Civic Platform	PO	Center-Right
Polish Peasants Party	PSL	Left
United Polish Workers Party (Communist Party of Poland)	PZPR	Far Left
Movement for the Republic	RdR	Far Right
Social Democracy of Poland	SdPI	Left
Democratic Left Alliance	SLD	Left
Self-Defense (of the Republic of Poland)	SO (SRP)	Far Left / Far Right
Democratic Union	UD	Center-Left
Union of Labor	UP	Left
Freedom Union	UW	Left
Solidarity	none	Right

## Appendix B: Glossary of Important Names

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>About</b>
Balcerowicz	Leszek	Center-Left	UW	Architect of the “Balcerowicz Plan” that introduced shock therapy to Poland in 1990. Was Leader of the Freedom Union party.
Belka	Marek	Center-Left	SLD, PD	Prime minister from 2004-2005 under President Kwasniewski. He later joined the Democratic Party.
Borowski	Marek	Left	SLD, SdPI	Former leader of the SLD and founder of the Social Democracy of Poland party. He was a presidential candidate in the 2005 election.
Buzek	Jerzy	Center-Right	AWS, PO	Prime minister from 1997-2001 under President Kwasniewski. He is currently a representative of the Civic Platform party in the EU Parliament.
Cimoszewicz	Włodzimierz	Left	SLD	Prime minister from 1996-1997 under President Kwasniewski. He was a presidential candidate in the 1990 and 2005 elections.
Giertych	Maciej	Far Right	LPR	Father of Roman Giertych and current member of the EU Parliament representing the League of Polish Families Party. He was a presidential candidate in the 2005 election.
Giertych	Roman	Far Right	LPR	Son of Maciej Giertych and current leader of the League of Polish Families Party.
Jaruzelski	Wojciech	Left / Far Left	PZPR	Former First Secretary of the communist Polish Worker's Party and Polish president from 1989-1990.

Kaczynski	Jaroslaw	Right	AWS, PiS	Co-founder of the Law and Justice party along with his twin brother (and current president) Lech Kaczynski. Jaroslaw served as prime minister from 2006-2007 under President Lech Kaczynski.
Kaczynski	Lech	Right	AWS, PiS	Current president of Poland, he assumed office in 2005. He and his brother Jaroslaw are co-founders of the Law and Justice party.
Krzaklewski	Marian	Right	AWS	Leader of the Solidarity trade union and the Solidarity Electoral Action coalition in the mid-1990s. He was a candidate for president in 2001.
Kwasniewski	Aleksander	Left	SLD	Co-founder of the Democratic Left Alliance and Polish president from 1995-2005.
Lepper	Andrzej	Far Left / Far Right	SO	Founder and current leader of the radical populist Self-Defense Party. He served as Deputy Prime Minister in 2006 after his party entered a coalition with the ruling PiS party.
Marcinkiewicz	Kazimierz	Right	PiS	Prime minister from 2005-2006 under President Kaczynski.
Mazowiecki	Tadeusz	Center-Right / Center-Left	Solidarity, UW, PD	Prime minister from 1989-1991 under Presidents Jaruzelski and Walesa. He later joined the Freedom Union then the Democratic Party.
Miller	Leszek	Left	SLD	Prime minister from 2001-2004 under President Kwasniewski.
Olechowski	Andrzej	Center-Right	PO	Co-founder of the Civic Platform party and independent presidential candidate in the 2000

				election.
Oleksy	Jozef	Left	SLD	Prime minister from 1995-1996, he resigned due to scandal.
Olszewski	Jan	Right / Far Right	PC, LPR	Prime minister from 1991-1992 under President Walesa. He was a presidential candidate in the 1995 election.
Pawlak	Waldemar	Center-Left	PSL	Was prime minister briefly in 1992 under President Walesa and again from 1993-1995. He is currently serving as Deputy Prime Minister under PM Tusk.
Tusk	Donald	Center-Right	KLD, UW, PO	Founder of the economically liberal Civic Platform party, he is currently serving as Prime Minister under President Kaczynski.
Walesa	Lech	Right	Solidarity, PC, AWS	Former leader of the Solidarity opposition movement, Walesa was a founding member of the Center Agreement and the Solidarity Electoral Action parties. He served as president from 1990-1995.



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