

6 – Party System

Polish Politics in a European Context

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Party cleavages

According to a study of Rokkan and Lipset the left/right division of Western party system developed along following dividing lines:

- Secular/religious
- Urban/rural
- Labour/capital
- Centre/periphery

For Central Eastern Europe Kitschelt proposed further cleavages which can explain the fragmentation of the party system

Clea-
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Evolu-
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Party cleavages in CEE

Identity based

- ethnicity: ethnic majority vs. ethnic minority
- party history: post-dissidents vs. post-communist

Ideology based

- citizenship: universalist vs. particularist
- character of state: secular vs. religious
- economy and social issues: economic populism vs. market liberalism
- foreign policy: pro-European vs. anti-European

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Types of Parties (Kitschelt)

➤ Programmatic Parties:

basing their work on specific party programmes voters chose them for specific normative and ideological reasons parties have a stable relation with electorate, neither people nor parties chose their orientation quickly

➤ Charismatic Parties

Defined by leadership of the party short-lived relation between voter and party

➤ Clientelistic Parties

Parties defined by patron-client relations Parties give jobs or subsidies in exchange for support

In real-life parties are hybrids of these three ideal types

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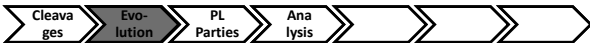
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Evolution of Party system

Four periods of evolution of party system

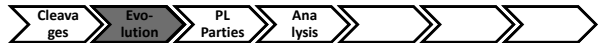
1. Partition period (late 19th century)
Parliamentarism in Galicia and Prussia – first Polish parties
2. Interwar period
Four major political parties: Socialists, Peasant parties, Christian Democrats and National Democrats
Evolution interrupted through the Sanacja regime (1926-39)
3. Decline of Communism
Communist Party vs. Solidarność
4. Transition period



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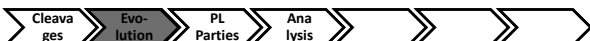
Stages of Polish Party Consolidation

1990-93 Fragmentation of Solidarność

- Implosion of Solidarność after loss of common enemy
- Formation of small parties („sofa party”) to increase power leverage (ability to negotiate government participation – ability to get positions in state firms, agencies, ...)

1993 Communist come-back

- public disappointment with economic reforms leads to low turnout and return of old Nomenklatura
- Many small post-dissident parties fail to enter the parliament
- Post-Communists keep to the “rules of the game”



Stages of Polish Party Consolidation

1997 Post-Solidarność Alliance formation

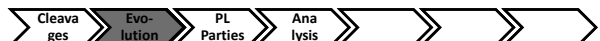
- Instable Centre-right party alliance – infighting within alliance
- Formation of new right-wing parties

2001 Consolidation of mainstream parties – rise of populist parties

- Radical populist parties enter parliament
- Decline in public participation and economic crisis

2005 and 2007 Consolidation, new polarisation and decline of populists

- Formation of two major right parties and two minor parties



Polish Parties

SLD – Alliance of the Democratic Left

(Post-Communist Party with Social Democratic profile)
Entered elections 2007 with other centre-left groups under the name Left and Democrats (LiD)
co-operation has ended in 2008

Mainly programmatic party, with clientelistic features e.g. membership of trade unions, business networks

PSL – Polish Peasant Party (or Polish People's Party)

(in majority former block party ZSL, but also rural Solidarność)

Mainly clientelistic party, functioning as a party and as interest group for farmers and food co-operatives
Pro-farmer and pro-country side programme



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Analysis

Polish Parties

PO – Civic Platform

(post-Solidarność party –formed by economic liberal and conservative groups)

Party with mainly programmatic orientation, but openly supported by some larger business interests



PiS – Law and Justice

(post-Solidarność party –formed by social conservative and catholic national groups)

Party is mainly programmatic, with charismatic features (centred around Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński)
with some clientelistic features - national catholic Radio Maryja and trade union NZZZ Solidarność



Cleavages

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Polish Cleavages

In Poland four major cleavages in the party system can be identified

- **Historic** background of the party and the willingness to co-operate with post-Communists
- **Identity** consisting of different elements: state-church relations, normative questions, such as abortion, gay rights, women rights, ... national identity, individualism vs. collectivism
- **Economics** tax policy, social policy, protectionism
- **European Integration** – position on European integration (there is a pro-American consensus among all parties)

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Analysis of Polish Party System

