

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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**THE PATTERNS OF POLITICAL COMPETITION IN POLAND:
THE IMPACT OF WEST EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE AND THE PAST
(the final Report)**

Wrocław 1998

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Chapter I

POLITICAL COMPETITION: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Political competition is both the symptom of conflict and the premise of democratic order. It reflects never-ending struggle between the parties and politicians having been striven to be in power and, from the other side, the conflict of values, beliefs, ideologies and so on. These struggle and conflict are the essence of political pluralism what is at the heart of contemporar

democracy. From the other hand, institutionalized political competition means that there are the **rules** of this game which are well known to the participants of political systems and to whom they are obeyed. That is why political competition in democracies is the basic factor of political order within the state.

From the time of publishing the famous work of J. Schumpeter's "Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy", there is the consensus among the scholars that democracy is tantamount to the fact that the regular, competitive elections are held (see Schumpeter, 1995, Dahl, 1995, Huntington, 1995, O'Donnell, 1996). Thus, the competitive party system has been the main indicator of the democratic nature of given political system. By "competitive" I have understood such a system in which political actions are checked by the awareness that the new rival may enter the political market and to attract the large group of the voters (Sartori, 1976, p. 221).

Since competitive elections are the core of democracy, the phenomenon of political competition is one of most important questions investigated by political scientists. Democracy means the competition *among individuals and organized groups (esp. political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force* (Diamond, Linz, Lipset, 1990, p. 6). The notion of competition refers basically to the process of political cooperation of political parties inside the rules of democratic game. This is an essence of the party system understood as *political mechanism* (Sartori, 1976). What has to be stressed is that the main inter-party relations vary from the open struggle to peaceful collaboration. They may be less or more stable and durable. They may differ in particular countries and in particular time. Then, the patterns of political competition may be defined as the established standards of co-operative behaviour of political parties, on national or cross-national perspective. They are visible in their electoral campaigns and during the process of

the forming and maintaining the cabinets, in the long run perspective.

This means that the political competition may be researched on three separate levels. The first of them is electoral one. Parties compete for the votes, presenting themselves as the most desirable and attractive offer. The central question is how the parties formulate their appeals; to what kinds of values are they referred and to whom are they addressed. In other words the subject of the analysis is **the way of political identification of the electorate and of the parties** themselves (Klingemann, Hofferbert, Budge, 1994). With respect to the interpretation of political identification two complementary approaches have emerged. The most popular explanation is that the people and the parties place themselves in political space - as being on the left, in the centre or on the right of it. This is the central assumption of spatial theory of voting (Downs, 1957, Budge, Farlie, 1983, Enelow, Hinich, 1984). This identification leads the voters to supporting given parties as the representants of their interests. As S. Bartolini and P. Mair, following the analysis of J. Enelow and M. Hinich, have argued *"the voter will cast his vote for the candidate (or party) "closest" to him in a space which describes all the factors which are of concern to the voter"* (Bartolini, Mair, 1991, p. 3). The second approach is based on social-group membership of voters. It assumes that the voting is the product of the collective, mainly class, awareness. For example, the well known class-voting model of G. Alford is based on this assumption. The socio-economic cleavage, considered as the most important, has been treated as the main factor affecting the shape of the party system and party strategies, since the Second World War. The result of its existence has been the competition between the Left and the Right - present in all West European countries, considered as the universal political pattern. Then, one of the goals of the research of phenomenon of political competition is to measure the size (electoral support) and the structure of the Left and of the Right

The third approach is, to some extent, the variant of the second. It has been developed mainly in United States and it has pointed out the weight of the party identification (Campbell et al. 1960). The party identification paradigm assumes that the preferences of the voters are shaped mainly by the established attitudes to the parties competing in elections for a long time. In effect, the political competition has been not between the Left and the Right, in European sense of this word.

From many reasons, all three mentioned approaches seem to be useless in the study of political competition in post-communist countries. First, after the fall of the communism, the voters determined their preference under the influence of affects rather than of rational choices. Initially, the main interest of the majority of voters was concerning with the overthrowing of *ancien regime*. This demand was expressed by the newly formed movements or parties, recognizing themselves as anti-system (e.g. communism) ones. Mass support for these organization in Poland ("Solidarity"), Czechoslovakia (Citizen Forum), Lithuania ("Sajudis") and in former GDR (The New Forum) showed the reluctance of the voters to the communism but did not revealed their preferences regarding such the questions as the privatization of economy, parliamentarism, integration with Western Europe or the like. The fall of "Forum politics", as the first stage of transition is often called (see Ascherson, 1992, pp. 223-233), and disintegration of anti-communist camp opened the way to the process of the party system's structuration and then, to the shaping of voters' preferences. The multiplicity of the poles and the dimensions of the competition (see below) was one of the main factors contributing to the confusion of the voters. Thus, the "rational" choice, if possible at all, was unlikely to be the base of electoral behaviour.

The social group identification as the determinant of the way of voting seems also to be doubtful. The collapse of the communism and, above all, of its the economic strongholds,

such as the large industrial companies and state farms, has brought about the recomposition of the structure of the society. Some political scientists have argued that the classical notion of the social class is no longer useful and should be replaced by the multidimensional and multifaceted concept of "*social milieu*" (Meyer, 1997). Instead of the conflict between capital and labour, reflected in party systems of advanced democracies, other conflicts on economic and political issues have emerged. The feeling of belonging to a given class was not the cue for how to vote. Suffice it to say that in the first competitive parliamentary election in Poland, no party was able to gain more than 13 per cent of the votes of the manual workers (Gebethner, 1993, p. 251).

The instability of the political scene in post-communist countries reflected in the disintegration of "Forum"-type movements and the frequent splits and mergers of the parties makes also party identification difficult for the voters. One has to add that in many countries, including Poland, pre-war parties which would be able to attract at least the older voters did not re-emerge. Thus, the pre-war party identities could not be restored. The newly formed parties are not entrenched in society and they have to form the linkages with the voters. It was not an easy task. As Polish sociologists have argued "*between 1990 and 1993 neither small parties, nor the larger // crystallized their ideologies or clearly formulated long-term programmes*"...and ..."*several parties also avoided taking any definite stand-point on particular controversial issues*" (Wesołowski, 1996, p. 237). It may not wonder that the party identities of the voters could not be established in a short time.

I have assumed that the political competition in the first stage of democratic transition cannot reflect the established linkages between the parties and the electorate. The main political actors are the elites, that is to say politicians, rather than well-organized parties. The stake of the first elections is for them the control over the process of democratization. The

parties are viewed rather as the tools of implementation of this task than the representations of the interests of given segment of the society. Thus, the processes of the forming the patterns of the political competition are simultaneous to the processes of the forming of party systems.

Another subject of analysis of political competition on the electoral level are party strategies. I have already pointed out that they are the core of party system. As was also mentioned above, they are differ with respect to the level of hostility. In this type of explanation the emphasis is put on the **centrifugal** or **centripetal** character of electora competition. As A. Lijphart has noted, centrifugal competition is based on two factors: the fragmentation of societies and adversarial style of political behaviour among the elites, while centripetal competition derives from the uniformity of the society and from consensual style of elites' political behaviour (Lijphart, 1968). In multi-party countries centrifugal competiti leads to extremely polarised pluralism while centripetal one - to moderated pluralism (Sartori, 1976). It is worth to note, however, that the category of extremely polarised pluralism, based on Italian experience after Second World War, has currently rather historical meaning because of radical reconstruction of Italian party system in the nineties.

The question of the political competition may, and should be examined also on the parliamentary level. As the result of the deformations brought about by the electoral law, the distribution of the seats does not reflect the distribution of the votes. These disproportion may be smaller or larger, depending of the kind of the electoral system (see Lijphart, 1996). The size of the parliamentary representation of given political party has been not only the indicator of its relevance but also the factor determining party's parliamentary and governmenta strategies. Thus, we have take into account such the variables as the effective number o parliamentary parties (what is not the same as the effective number of parties measured on electoral level), the strength of the first and the second party, aggregation of parliamentary

party system and the size of the opposition. I have assumed that the growth of the strength of the first and the second largest party, and the decrease of the effective number of parties are the premises of the consolidation of democracy (see Bar, 1984, Morlino, 1995).

The third level of political competition is the process of forming and maintaining coalitional cabinets. Since the subject of my comparative analysis are basically multi-party democracies, the coalitional cabinets are the rule. The patterns of political competition on this level are the predictors not only of possible alliances but also of their durability. It is obvious that the main aim of the parties is to form or to enter the cabinet in order to translate their programmes into governmental policies. The actual political relevance of the parties is determined mainly by that what G. Sartori named coalition potential (Sartori, 1976, p. 122). I will try to examine this question, using Ieraci participation index (Ieraci, 1992; see also Antoszewski, Herbut, 1995, chapter V). Thus, the first question is to determine the relevance of particular parties. The second task will be to reconstruct the criteria of the forming the coalitions. My hypothesis is that in Western Europe the programmatic adjacency is the decisive precondition of the forming and maintaining the coalitions while in Poland genetic criterion plays more important role.

In sum, the patterns of political competition are affected by many variables: the contents of electoral appeals, the structure of electoral support, coalitional potential of main political parties, the character of party strategies and so on. The analysis of these factors lets us to determine the dynamics of party systems, particularly the change of "political space" (Sartori, 1976, Cotta, 1992). Thus, the basic elements of the analytic model used for the reconstruction of the patterns of political competition in this work are following:

- 1/ the characteristics of the main participants of democratic game
- 2/ the number of the poles of the competition

3/ the number of the dimensions of the competition (Kitschelt)

4/ the stake of election,

5/ the standards of forming the cabinet.

6/ the level of the competitiveness.

The characteristics of the main participants of electoral game contains two elements: organizational and political. In order to analyse the nature of the political competition it is necessary to describe the main parties representing the sides of the political conflicts. I refer to the suggestion to distinguish the "families" of the parties (Gallagher et al., 1992, pp. 59-88), although I am aware of the difficulties concerned with the classification of the parties in the post-communist countries according to West-European standards. Another point is the organization of competitors actors. The parties may act as the single actors or may to for more or less coherent political "blocs" Finally, the electoral strength of particular "blocs" or parties has to taken into consideration. I will try to examine the support gained by the first and the second party, the fractionalization and aggregation of the party system (see Rae, 1971, pp. 56-57, Mayer, 1980, pp. 338-339) effective number of parties (see Laakso, Taagepera, 1979), and the level of electoral volatility (see Pedersen, 1979).

The political competition within advanced democracies may be bipolar or multipolar (Herbut, 1996, pp. 159-166). Owing to the nature of democratic transition in post-communist countries it is usually bipolar in the first phase and multipolar in the next stages. Initially, two political camps struggle for the dominance in the process of the reconstruction. They are the supporters and opponents of the old regime (Hungary is an exception). These two blocs, but particularly the later, are ideologically incoherent and susceptible to the splits. Thus, in short time, anti-communist camp may be divided into several "families" of the parties. It is often

assumed that multipolarity may result in growing instability of party system. I will try to test this assumption in the case of Poland in Chapter IV.

The number of the dimensions of political competition is the variable strongly related with the number of the poles. In his often cited conception of consensual democracy A. Lijphart has argued that in segmented societies there are more than one areas of inter-party conflicts. He indicates ethnicity, religion, place of residence, attitude to political regime and the kind of preferred values as the source of disagreement (Lijphart, 1984, pp. 127-140). According to H. Kitschelt, the number of these dimensions should be completed by the assessing how the cleavages are interrelated. He distinguishes three types of political competition in Western Europe: unidimensional Left-Right division, one-and-half dimensional, combining class and religious cleavage, and the two-dimensional competition what has appeared when the class and religious cleavage *"is supplemented by a cross-cutting ethno-linguistic division that generated its own parties"* (Kitschelt, 1997, p. 134). Poland is considered by the author as an example of the second type of political competition.

The stake of the election is the question neglected by the students of the political competition. It is different for particular parties, mainly because their size and coalition potential are uneven. For the large parties, the stake of the parliamentary election is either to form the cabinet or to play decisive role as the opposition. For the small parties the stake is, in general, to survive. During the democratic transition all the parties have tried to gain political relevance, disregard their size. All they want to participate in control of the transformation and to leave their stamp on this process. It is particularly important for the post-communist parties whether they have been recognized as the legitimate entrants in the process of economic and political reconstruction or not. From the other side, the new parties may confirm their governance ability or not. Thus, the stake of the election is to gain and, what is

may be more significant, to maintain the legitimacy to the dismantling of the old economic and political system.

Finally, the analysis of the patterns of political competition has to include the standards of forming the cabinets. What kinds of coalitions may we find in Western Europe, inter-war, and post-communist Poland will be the topics of my work. I will try to examine the ideological and organizational nature of the governmental coalitions. I hypothesize that the coalitions in post-communist countries are unavoidably syncretic and, hence, less able to effectively conduct the process of the reforms.

Considering the phenomenon of political competition on electoral and parliamentary level we must take into account the fact that contemporary democracies may differ as to the degree of competitiveness. How should we measure this difference? L. Morlino has suggested to use such indicators as effective number of parties, the level of net and interbloc volatility, the absence or presence of new parties and the difference between the strongest party and the next one (Morlino, 1995; see also Bartolini, d'Alimonte, 1996). It is also possible to determine the level of alternation in power what seems to be one of the best indicators of the degree of the competitiveness. I will try to develop this approach in further chapters.

In sum, the main aim of my work is to determine the influence of the past and Western European experience on the process of shaping the patterns of political competition in contemporary Poland. The basic assumption of my analysis is that the process of democratic transition is affected by both the legacy of the past and the pressures from the international environment. The democratic performance in inter-war Poland was rather poor and the consolidation of democracy failed. For the successful democratic transition, that is to say for the consolidation of liberal, matured democracy, it is important to draw the conclusions from the lesson of the history. The analysis of the rules of the competition in advanced

democracies, particularly in perspective of political integration with Western Europe may turn out to be helpful.

The additional assumption I have made is that, during the "third wave", political parties play crucial role in the process of democratic transition, although they unnecessarily have to be strongly institutionalized (Morlino, 1995, pp. 348-349, Toka, 1997, p. 5). From the other side, the stabilization of the party system, that is to say the stabilization of the patterns of inter-party cooperation, is the necessary, although insufficient, condition for the success in the consolidating new democracies (Pridham, 1990, p. 4).

Concluding, I will try to answer three questions. First is whether the patterns of political competition in Poland have been stabilized or not? Second, do they reflect the inter-war or rather contemporary, West European political experience. Finally, are they the base for predicting the consolidation of democracy in Poland or not. In order to formulate the conclusions I will examine the West-European patterns of competition (Chapter II), Polish democratic inter-war experiment (Chapter III) and the political process after 1989 in Poland (Chapter IV).

Chapter II

THE PATTERNS OF POLITICAL COMPETITION IN POST-WAR WESTERN EUROPE

(main trends)

1. Political competition on electoral and parliamentary level

In this part of the paper I will attempt to reconstruct the process of political competition in Western Europe, taking into consideration all already mentioned factors. Basing on empirical data from 16 countries during the period 1945-1995 I distinguish between four basic patterns:

1. **two-party competition.** It is characterised by the presence of two strong, well-disciplined parties, being able to assume together above 80 per cent of seats. Each of those parties represents firm ideological orientation which is either leftist or rightist. Hence, the structure of electoral conflict is clear for the voters. There are two poles of competition; each of them occupied by the one party. The stake of competition is the opportunity of forming one-party, majority cabinet and then, the possibility of making the policies desirable for the party which will win the elections. United Kingdom, Austria between 1966 and 1983 and Greece (except of period 1989-1990) are the cases. The similar mechanism does work, to some extent at least, in Germany, where the bloc of the right contains two parties forming the durable coalition (in period 1969-1982 the social-democrats and the liberals had formed the bloc of the left). In the nineties France and Spain seem also to be the examples of this pattern of political competition. What has to be stressed is that in all mentioned countries political competition has centripetal character.

2/ **the competition between the strong Left and fragmented and incoherent "bloc" of the Right.** The competition is also bipolar and centripetal. The conflict between the blocs is mainly socio-economic one. The basic feature of this pattern is the fact that on the left side of

the electoral arena the strong, well-disciplined party does exist, while there is no such a party on the right side. The left party (practically social-democratic one) has been able to gain the level of electoral support between 30 and 50 per cent. The competitors from the right are the smaller parties reluctant, in general, to collaborate each other. Then the stakes of competitions are different for the left which is able to form the one-party cabinet (although unnecessarily majority one), and for the right, which may to form the syncretic and rather undurable coalitions. Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Spain in the eighties are the cases.

3/ the competition between strong right-wing party and fragmented and incoherent "bloc" of the Left. The fragmentation of the Left and particularly, the presence of the relevant communist party does mean that the competition is multipolar, and the ideological conflict embraces also the problem of the vision (legitimacy) of political system. Sometimes, albeit rarely, the strength of the right party enables it to form one-party majority cabinet (Portugal since 1987 to 1997). Another example is France to 1981 where the majority right coalitions were formed, governing long time. In order to govern, the left party should gain above 50 per cent of votes. It seems to be rather unrealistic, although we must keep in mind the case of electoral success of socialists in France in 1981 and 1988.

4/ positive cooperation between both fragmented the Left and the Right. This kind of competition is characterised by the complex, multidimensional structure of electoral conflict. The class conflict is overlapping by the another cleavages such as the ethnic, national or religious ones. The effect of fragmented structure of society is the lack of political dominance: no party is able to prevail on the electoral arena in long run perspective. The diffusion of electoral support has imposed the collaboration of the parties in the frame of so-called grand coalitions what is characteristic for consensual model of democracy (Lijphart, 1984). The coalitional potential of the main parties is therefore high. The stake of political competition is

opportunity to enter the cabinet and, eventually, to take the post of the prime minister, playing the role of administrator or even symbol rather than political leader (Rose, 1991, p. 119). Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands (except of the seventies) and Finland to the end of the eighties are the examples.

There are two cases which do not fit to the patterns of political competition described above. The first is Ireland where conflict between the Right and the Left has minimal significance because of the weakness of the latter (at least to the beginning of nineties). The main competitors are the parties of the Right - Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and the small Labour Party is at most the coalitional partner of one of them. But we have to note that electoral support for the Labour has increased for last five years, so it is possible that the significance of the conflict between the Left and the Right will grow too, although not necessary in the nearest future.

The second untypical case is Italy. Political competition in this country was multipolar and centrifugal, at least to the end of seventies. The party system was characterized by the existence of anti-system parties, bilateral opposition and the centre occupied by one part (Morlino, 1996). Although two strong parties existed on political scene (Christian democrats and communists) political competition between them meant practical exclusion of communists from the governing. From the other side the strongest party - Christian Democracy - was not able to govern alone, at least after 1958. The result of this was political immobilism what has meant that DC had been in power for forty years, albeit partisan configuration of the cabinets was different. One may point out, however, that the patterns of political competition in Italy have deeply changed since 1992 and, at the moment, we have dealt with the bipolar party system, the competition between the Right (Forza Italia) and the Left (Olive Tree) and with the situation when *"the centre no longer holds"* (Woods, 1992,

Morlino, 1996).

If the degree of competitiveness may be measured by comparison of the electoral strength of the Left and of the Right we must note that there are four basic party "families" in Western Europe: socialists, conservatives, christian democrats and liberals. The size of their electoral supports has been relatively stable for fifty years. As data in Table 1 show, there are only slightly changes in eighties and nineties (Christian Democrats are the exception). Moreover, as many authors have suggested, interbloc electoral volatility is still low (Gallagher, Laver, Mair, 1992, Calise, 1993). One may to insist that the patterns of electoral competition are stable and durable what, of course, does not mean that the political preferences of voters remain the same. From the other side, however, we cannot forget that the new political parties have emerged since seventies and some of them prove to be significant political forces, changing the structure and the mechanism of party systems. The best example is Italian party system and the role of Lega Nord (almost 9 per cent of electoral support in 1992 and 1994) and above all of Forza Italia (21 per cent in 1994). In France, in 1993 National Front has gained 12,4 per cent votes albeit, because of majority electoral law, no seat. Some of those new parties, as for example The Greens, are durable elements of parliamentary arena in their countries; some, as New Democracy in Sweden (close to 7 per cent in 1991) are ephemeral, "flash parties" but their presence has imposed the change of electoral strategies of "old" parties.

Table 1. Electoral support for four party families in sixteen countries of Western Europe (1945-1995)

Party famil	Average support 1945-95	Support 1980-1995	The difference
Socialists	31,4	30,2	-1,2
Christian Democrats	24,3	20,0	-4,3
Conservatives	33,2	33,6	+0,4
Liberals	12,5	12,6	+0,1

Source: Antoszewski, Herbut, 1997, pp. 101-120.

Let me now consider the next question, namely the effective number of parties. It is worth to note that effective number of parties has been rather stable for fifty years in all Wes European countries. Comparing period 1945-79 with period 1980-1994 it has grown from 3,4 to 3,8 (the average level for 16 countries). An analysis in national perspective has discovered, however, some differences. The highest growth has been observed in Belgium (3,2 in first period and 7,5 in second one), Switzerland (5,0 and 6,4 resp.), Denmark (4,2 and 5,1) and Italy (3,5 and 4,5). In some countries, such as in France, The Netherlands or Spain, the effective number of parties has decreased. What is more important, is that the more effective number of parties, the less competitive party system. Switzerland, Belgium, The Netherlands are the countries with highest effective number of parties and in the same time they are consensual democracies with cooperation of the Left and the Right. From the other side, Great

Britain, Greece, Spain, Portugal and France, where cooperation between the Left and the Right has been excluded are the cases of countries with lowest effective number of parties. There are the exceptions, however. The low effective number of parties in Austria (2,4) is not correlated with high level of competitiveness because of consensual strategies of main two parties. From the other side, we have dealt with more competitive party system in Denmark, despite of high effective number of parties. It may be explained in terms of party strategies and of political tradition and culture. The fractionalization of West European party systems is demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2: The effective number of parties and the fractionalization of the party systems in Western Europe in 1945-1995

Country	ENP*	IF**	IA***
AUSTRIA	2,4	0,61	12,9
BELGIUM	5,4	0,73	4,4
DENMARK	4,7	0,77	4,7
FINLAND	5,0	0,80	3,2
FRANCE	3,3	0,66	8,0
GREECE	2,2	0,52	14,0
GERMANY	2,7	0,62	11,6
IRELAND	2,9	0,65	10,6
ITALY	4,0	0,73	3,5
NETHERLANDS	4,5	0,77	4,1
NORWAY	3,5	0,70	7,5

PORTUGAL	3,0	0,66	12,0
SPAIN	2,8	0,64	5,7
SWEDEN	3,3	0,71	8,5
SWITZERLAND	5,7	0,82	2,9
UNITED KINGDOM	2,0	0,53	14,3

Source, Herbut, 1996, pp. 174, 177, 179 and the calculation of the author,

* ENP - effective number of parliamentary parties (calculated by the dividing 1 by the sum of squared seats controlled by particular parties),

** IF - fractionalization index (calculated by the summing squared seats controlled by particular parties and subtracting this sum from 1)

*** IA - aggregation index (calculated by the dividing the percentage of the seat controlled by the strongest party by the number of parties represented in the parliament).

The difference between the strongest and the second strongest parties is the next factor to be analysed. It is obvious, that the more this difference, the less competitive party system. For example the predominant party system is practically uncompetitive (Sartori, 1976, p. 200). I have distinguished three kinds of party system **highly competitive**, where the difference between first and second parties is between 0 and 10, **moderately competitive** (10 and 20) and **slightly competitive** (above 20). Comparing data from the elections held in sixteen West European countries in the nineties, one may to conclude that Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Greece, Norway, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Finland and Belgium are the cases of highly competitive party systems, Denmark and Ireland are moderately competitive and France, Italy, Portugal and Sweden are slightly competitive. One has to have in mind, however, that electoral distance differs in particular elections. For example, the difference

between the first and the second party in France amounted 20,5 in 1993 and only 0,5 in 1988.

Hence, it is necessary to measure the electoral distance in long time perspective.

The degree of competitiveness may be analysed also by investigation of the frequency of the cases of alternation in power, resulted from the elections. We may assume that the more frequent alternation in power, the more competitive party system. I have constructed index of alternativeness, dividing the number of "critical" elections by the total number of elections. The minimum value of index is 0 (lack of alternation in power). The maximum one amounts 1 (when all the elections have brought about such an effect). Among West European countries we may find the highest value of that index in Ireland (0,80), Denmark and Fifth French Republic (0,40), Greece and Portugal (0,38). The lowest number of the cases of alternation in power affected by the elections was found in Italy (0,14), Austria (0,14) and Germany (0,15). Those three countries may be recognised as less competitive on the electoral level.

Summing up, the patterns of electoral competition in Western Europe has turned out to be rather stable and durable than drastically changing and show us rather political stability than political disorder, although the observation of Rokkan and Lipset about the "frozen" party systems does not seem to be adequate in the end of the century. It is striking, however, that the new parties, with a few exceptions, play rather marginal role on the electoral arena. From the other side, electoral change what is visible in Western Europe, does not impact on coalitional strategies of the main parties and, therefore, does not influence on the mechanism of party system to a large extent. The only radical change of patterns of electoral competition took place in Italy in the nineties. It does not mean, however, that patterns of political competition are stable at all, but their change is better seen on governmental arena. Let me consider this question in detail.

2. Political competition on governmental level.

As it was mentioned above, the process of forming of coalitional cabinets is one of the most important patterns of political competition. The standards of this process enable us to show the differences between the national political systems. Taking into attention two variables: political composition of the cabinets (one-party vs coalitional) and their strength (majority vs minority) we may distinguish between four patterns of coalitions: 1/ one-party majority cabinets, 2/ one-party, minority cabinets, 3/ majority coalitions, 4/ minority coalitions (respectively I, II, III and IV in Table 4).

Table 4: The types of cabinets in Western Europe in 1945-1995

Country	NC*	I	II	III	IV
AUSTRIA	19	4	1	14	0
BELGIUM	34	3	1	27	3
DENMARK	28	0	14	3	11
FINLAND**	41	0	4	23	7
FRANCE	24	5	4	1	14
GERMANY	17	0	0	17	0
GREECE	9	7	0	2	0
IRELAND	20	7	4	6	3
ITALY	53	0	15	29	0
NETHERLANDS	21	0	0	18	3
NORWAY	24	6	13	4	3
PORTUGAL**	19	2	2	10	1
SPAIN	7	3	4	0	0

SWEDEN	24	4	13	6	1
SWITZERLAND	50	0	0	50	0
UNITED KINGDOM	19	18	1	0	0
WESTERN EUROPE	396	59	76	210	51

Source; Strom 1990, Herbut, 1996

* NC - Number of cabinets

** - including no-partisan cabinet

Among 396 partisan cabinets functioning between 1945 and 1996 in 16 countries of Western Europe (these data do not include French Fourth Republic, Iceland, Luxembourg and Malta) slightly above one third (135) are one-party ones. Two thirds (251) were the coalitions. Among the one-party cabinets - 59 were majority ones. This kind of cabinet is the rule in the United Kingdom (19 times for the general number of 20 cabinets) and in Greece (7 and 9 respectively). 76 cabinets were one-party minority ones. This form was exercised most frequently in Italy (15), Denmark (14), Sweden (13) and Norway (13). But the most popular form of cabinet were the majority coalitions. There were 210 cases in West Europe (above the half of all analysed cabinets). We may find them above all in Italy (29), Belgium (27), Finland (23), the Netherlands 18) and Germany (17). The less frequently applied type of cabinet was the minority coalition (only 51 examples, mainly in Denmark and Finland). What is worth to point out is that minority coalitions are not formed in the democratising countries (Portugal is an exception with one cabinet).

The striking feature of political competition governmental arena is the exceptionality of the situations in which the forming of one-party majority cabinet is possible. Except of United Kingdom, where the electoral system of plurality does work in this direction, we have found since 1980 the one-party majority cabinets only in Greece (4), Spain (3) and Portugal (2). I

stems from the difficulty with gaining the majority of votes by one party. That was possible until the end of the seventies in Austria, Germany, Sweden, Ireland and Greece, but in the nineties only Portuguese Social Democratic Party has been able to gain such a result since 1987 (two times consecutively). For some of the authors there are many symptoms of dealignment which consists in the decline of the support for both the strongest party and the two strongest parties taken together. The empirical data confirm this suggestion (see table 5). It has been partial explanation of the dominance of coalitional cabinets in the last time.

Table 5. The support for two strongest parties in sixties and nineties

Country	Support in sixties	Support in nineties
AUSTRIA	88	62,9 (1994)*
BELGIUM	60	33,3 (1991)
DENMARK	60	53,4 (1990)
FINLAND	45	46,9 (1990)
FRANCE	65	58,9 (1993)
GERMANY	86	77,9 (1994)
IRELAND	80	63,6 (1992)
ITALY	65	41,4 (1994)
NETHERLANDS	50	46,2 (1994)
NORWAY	62	53,9 (1993)
SWEDEN	62	59,5 (1991)
SWITZERLAND	48	39,5 (1991)
UNITED KINGDOM	85	76,3 (1992)

* There are data of elections in the brackets

Source: von Beyme 1985 and calculations of the author

If, as a result of growing fragmentation of party system, some parties are imposed to form the coalitions it does mean that all political alliances are really possible. For example, strong socialist parties rarely, if any, cooperate with conservatives, liberals and with strong communists. The coalitions embracing the christian democrats and liberals or the socialists

have been more frequent. There are exceptions, of course. In Italy, after 1996 election, the cabinet was formed by former christian democrats and communists which both have been main sides of political conflict for fifty years. The broad "rainbow coalition" was created in Finland, after 1995 election. Five parties: post-communists, social democrats, Greens, conservatives and Swedish liberals were included in cabinet. In Ireland, the conservatives (Fianna Fail) formed the cabinet with Labour Party in 1993. Hence, there are the signs of the change of patterns of political competition in some countries, but it is difficult to say whether it is the political trend or not.

It has to be remembered too that the patterns of governmental competition are changeable because of the movement of the parties within political space. The best example may be found in the case of The Netherlands, where after Second World War all main parties formed the cabinets (so called grand coalitions). This consociational politics was replaced in the end of the sixties by confrontational one (polarization strategy). In this period new parties emerged and entered the governmental arena, what brought about the growth of polarization between social- and christian democrats. Despite the attempts to reform governmental system, the strategy of polarization failed. Since 1989 the new consensual model was introduced and the coalition of two strongest parties (CDA and PvdA) seems to have no real alternative (Tromp, 1989). Austria is another example of this political cycle. Only between 1966-1986 two main parties did not cooperate each other. It shows that the change of governmental competition is likely to be more frequent than of electoral one. But it is possible only if ideological and political distance between main parties of the Left and of the Right has decreased. It was the case in The Netherlands and Austria.

It is worth to note some different patterns of political competition in so-called "fragile" democracies of Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal and Greece). The political stability has been

secured through the "negative cooperation" of electorally strong parties of the Left and of the Right. They have been able to form one-party majority cabinets. But while in Spain the Left has prevailed since 1982, in Portugal the right - wing Social Democratic Party was predominant party between 1987 and 1995, and in Greece we have dealt with the cyclic alternation of power between the Left and the Right. At any rate, however, those three party systems have been less fragmented than the others West European ones. From the other side, the electoral markets in those countries are still open and the level of competitiveness has remained high, what may be the potential threat for democratic stability (Mair, 1991, p. 135).

The another question is the relevance of particular families of West European parties. To the data demonstrated in Table 6 I would like to add two comments. First, these data have shown us that, on electoral level, the highest is the relevance of the conservatives. One has to remember, however that the parties from this family have emerged only in 10 West-European countries, while the social democrats compete for the for the power throughout Europe. Second, the coalitional potential of particular families is not correlated with the size of electoral support. The share of social and christian democrats in the cabinets is higher than of conservatives and liberals. Moreover, if we take into account the coalitional potential (omitting the political performance in Greece, Spain and United Kingdom) we can see that the social and christian democrats have participated in majority, while conservatives in only slightly above one third of two- or multi-party cabinets.

Table 6: The relevance of the party families 1945-1995:

Party famil	Electoral Suppor	Participation index*
Social Democracy	31,4	0,57

Conservative	33,2	0,43
Christian Democracy	24,3	0,55
Liberal	12,5	0,42

Source, Antoszewski, Herbut, 1997, pp. 106-107, 112-113,115,117, 119-120

Concluding, in the end of the century we can find Western Europe as the area on which the patterns of political competition have been relatively stable and, in principle, have still represented old "classical" conflict between the Left and the Right and hence have reflected traditional socio-economic cleavage. So far, the only alternation in power is that between those two blocs or single parties. In no country radical Left or ultra-Right has entered the cabinets (France is an exception). They have remained isolated parties, despite the increasing of their electoral support. The only symptom of change of patterns of political competition on governmental level seems to be the growth of the relevance of those small parties which may be accepted by old ones, no matter the later have occupied left or right side of political spectrum.

From the other side one may insist that there is no universal "West-European" pattern of political competition. It stems from the differentiation of national party systems (Gallagher et al., 1992, pp. 84-86). What is worth to note is that these differentiated patterns of inter-part cooperation have led to democratic stability (Italy is an exception). One of the most puzzling questions is that whether the collapse of communism will bring the reception of the West European patterns of political competition in Eastern Europe, and if so, which ones will be prevailed. This problem, based on Polish political experience after 1989, will be considered in Chapter IV.

Chapter III

POLITICAL COMPETITION IN INTER-WAR POLAND

1. The first phase: parliamentary democracy

In 1918, after 123 years of captivity, Poland regained the independence. At the same time the process of transition toward democracy and of the forming of the party system was initiated. In this chapter I will attempt to reconstruct the patterns of political competition in inter-war Poland, taking into account electoral, parliamentary and governmental levels (see Chapter I).

The inter-war period embraces two phases of political development. The first of them is the stage of the transition towards parliamentary democracy. Between 1919 and 1926, the parliamentary regime, inspired by the experience of French Third Republic, was installed. The constitution introducing parliamentarism was passed in 1921. Simultaneously, the multi-party system, reflecting the complex structure of socio-economic and political cleavages, was formed. From the outset, three political camps became the main competitors. This tripolar pattern of competition was typical for inter-war Europe and embraced the Left, the Centre and the Right. All three camps were internally divided into particular, stronger or weaker, political parties and, what is worth to note, none of them was able to dominate on political scene in this period.

Initially, the strongest was the camp of the Right. Its main political force was the party named National Democracy. It was founded in 1897, during the period of partitions and found the supporters in all parts of the country. All the time it was led by well-known Polish politician Roman Dmowski who represented strong anti-German and, at least until the end of the war, moderate pro-Russian orientation. Although ND was active in all annexations

(Russian, Austrian and German) it gained the strongest support in former German one. As Polish political scientist writes, National Democracy *"was strongly nationalistic party with ideological roots in traditional Roman Catholicism and with social backing from the upper class"* (Grzybowski, 1994, p. 36). In the first election in 1919, ND formed the coalition of right-wing factions under the name of National Electoral Committee of Democratic Parties. It gained 45,48 per cent of votes in the former Russian annexation and became the largest fraction in the first Sejm of independent Poland, although soon after the election it was splitted.

The structure of the Centre camp was more diversified. According to the predominance of agricultural sector, the strongest party within it was Polish Peasant Party "Piast", founded in 1913 as the splitter from Polish Peasant Party under the leadership of Wincenty Witos. The supporters of this party concentrated mainly in former Austrian annexation. It represented the interests of all the strata of peasants and emphasized the role of the catholic tradition in Polish society and the necessity of the social reforms, particularly the land reform. The similar programme presented Christian Democratic Union, although it was located on the *"right wing flank of the centre"* (Grzybowski, 1994, p. 37). It represented the interests of petite-bourgeoisie and of the workers. The third party of the centre was National Union of Workers founded in 1905.

The main forces of the Left were socialdemocratic Polish Socialist Party (PPS - founded in 1892 in Paris), radical Polish Peasant Party - Liberation (founded in 1915 as a splitter from Polish Peasant Party), represented the interests of smallholders, and revolutionary Communist Party of Poland, founded in 1918 as the result of the merger of the communists and the left-wing socialists). This camp was particularly disintegrated and unable to cooperate.

In the period 1919-1926 two parliamentary elections took the place. The result of the first

of them was almost perfect equilibrium between all three political camps. The Right (represented by ND) gained 34,2 per cent of seats, the Centre - respectively - 30,8 and the Left - 30,3. The representation of national minorities was very poor and counted 3,5 per cent. It may be said that the political configuration in the Sejm directly after the election was the source of the immobility and instability, as the result of three factors: the lack of the dominant force, the mutual hostility of the competing blocs and the intrabloc divisions (particularly within the Left). Moreover, the Centre was not able to play the role of the pivot of party system because *"it was not consolidated and did not provide the clear political category"* (Próchnik, 1957, p. 56). It should not be surprising that the process of recomposition of parliamentary scene was soon started. The main tendency was the increasing of the strength of the Centre and the decline of the Right and of the Left. In 1922, due to the splits and mergers of the parliamentary factions the political structure of the Sejm was quite another. The Right possessed **24,8 per cent of seats, the Left - respectively - 16,5 and the Centre - 53,9** (Gwizdz, 1997, p.157). The more detailed data are shown in the Table 1:

Table 1. The recomposition of the Sejm in the period 1919-1922 (percentage of the seats)

	1919 (Feb.)	1919 (June)	1920 (Jan.)	1922 (July)
The Right	34,2	35,8	18,1	24,8
The Centre	30,8	33,2	59,1	53,9
The Left	30,3	26,8	17,7	16,5
the others*	4,7	4,2	5,1	4,8

* - including the national minorities

Source: Ajnenkiel, 1978, p. 68

In the second election in 1922 the structure of political competition was more complex. Above all, the fourth political force appeared on the electoral scene. The Bloc of National Minorities, representing all but Ukrainian nationalities (the Ukrainians boycotted the election, questioning inclusion of their country to Poland) entered the competition and was successful. It gained 16,0 per cent of votes and 20 per cent of the seats. The Right, represented by the Bloc of Christian - National Unity (the national and clerical parties allied with National Democracy) got 28% of seats, the Centre (PPP-Piast, Christian Democracy and National Workers' Party)- respectively -29,1 and 29,9 per cent and the Left (socialists, PPS-Liberation and communists) - 22,8 and 22,1 per cent (Próchnik, 1957, p. 133, Topolski, 1975, p. 673, Roszkowski, 1997, p. 37, Gwiżdż, 1997, p. 169). The comparison of electoral results of 1919 and 1922 elections (see Table 2) shows us the progressive fragmentation of the parliamentary scene (one has to stress that 19 electoral lists were presented to the voters and the candidates from 14 entered the Parliament). Instead of the three blocs equilibrium, four camps appeared in the Sejm. This change of the structure of political competition resulted in increasing difficulties in the forming and the maintaining the cabinets. From the other side, however, this pattern of political competition turned to be more stable: the political composition of the Sejm did not change until 1928 election.

Table 2: The Strength of the Political Blocs 1919-1922 (measured in the per cent of the seats):

The Bloc	1st election (1919)	2nd election (1922)

The Right	34,2	28,0
The Centre	30,8	29,9
The Left	30,3	22,1
The Minorities	3,5	20,0
The Others	1,2	-

Source: Gwiżdż, 1997, p. 169

Analysis of the electoral results in the first phase of inter-war period persuades to formulate several conclusions. First, no of the traditional orientations was able to predominate in the parliament and then, to form stable and durable cabinet. The fragmentation of party system was high. For example, index of fractionalization counted 0,84 in 1922 and effective number of parties in the same time was 6,4 on electoral level and 4,9 on parliamentary one. Moreover, the Left as well as the Right and the Centre, considered as the political camps, were also disintegrated and incoherent. This evaluation may be referred also to the parliamentary factions. They were "coalitions of factions" rather than the representations of particular parties. The number of parliamentary factions is worth to note too. Initially, there were 10 factions in the Sejm elected in 1919. Their number increased to 18 in July of (Próchnik, 1957, p. 61). After 1922 election 16 factions appeared in the parliament. The strongest of them, for example National People Union in 1919, included the representatives of different parties. In the Sejm elected in 1922 the number of factions was, initially, 18. In 1926 it counted 22. This was the reason of difficulties with the formulating governmental policies. Referring to the findings of the chapter II, we may conclude that the pattern of political competition in Poland between 1919 and 1926 does not resemble the configuration which we may find in contemporary Western Europe. Although the Right in Poland seems to be more

integrated than the Left, it was unable to govern alone, without the help of the fragmented Centre, dominated by traditional agrarian party.

Second, the structure of the political competition was unstable and changed rapidly in 1922 along with the entering of national minorities into the parliamentary game. The election of 1922 has revealed the high level of electoral volatility what is the indicator of the political destabilization (Morlino, 1995, p. 317, Lane, Ersson, 1988, p. 287). The level of inter-bloc volatility is particularly worth to note. It counted 16,5 and was brought about exclusively by the growth of the support for parties representing the national minorities. It means that the traditional orientations were the losers of this election.

Third, the instability of the patterns of the political competition reflects the changing structure of political cleavages. Referring to the findings of H. Kitschelt we may find two predominant types of cleavages in 1919 and three ones in 1922. The first election has revealed the socio-economic and religious conflicts; the second reflected additionally national-ethnic one (see Kitschelt, 1977, p. 133-34). What has to be stressed is that the religious cleavage was covered the socio-economic one. The only relevant, secular parties might be found on the left side of political spectrum. The right-wing and the centrist parties were with no exception confessional and struggled for catholic Poland. This axis of competition were next supplemented by the national-ethnic cleavage, rendering the structure of the competition more complex. The reaction against the growth of the support for national minorities was the alliance between the Right and the Centre, resulting in the reaching of the political pact (so called Lanckorona Pact) in 1923, oriented against the minorities as well as the left-wing, secular parties.

Finally, the analysis of the political competition in the first stage of inter-war period, has shown the high level of competitiveness of Polish party system. Not only no political camp

was able to predominate in the parliament, but the differences in the size of the support for particular "blocs" were very small (see Table 2). As it is often pointed out, the elections in 1919 and 1922 were "no winner ones" (Gwiżdż, 1997, p. 169). But it is the true only for the national level of analysis. On the regional level the degree of the competitiveness was considerably lower. No matter of this, the Polish party system in 1919-1996 may be recognized as highly competitive.

The obvious weaknesses of Polish parliamentary democracy and increasing instability of political system (strengthening by the deterioration of the international environment and of the national economy) were the sources of the critics of the parliamentarism at all. Outstanding Polish lawyer, S. Car wrote in 1929 that the crisis of the parliamentarism was the symptom of the general evolution of this type of political regime and it was the stage of its development, in the face of the new political reality (Car, 1997, p. 51). The support for the presidential regime was systematically increased. The main critic of the parliamentarism was marshal J. Piłsudski recognized as the creator of the independent Polish State and as the victor in Polish - bolshevik war in 1920. He emphasized the ungovernance of Poland due to the fragmentation of the Sejm and its inability to form durable cabinets. He blamed Polish parties for political instability of the country. In May 1926, during the deep parliamentary crisis, he led the military coup what resulted in the end of parliamentary democracy in inter-war Poland. Its effect was the radical change of the patterns of political competition.

2. The second phase: limited competition

The second phase of political development in inter-war Poland started directly after the May coup and lasted until 1939. No matter whether Polish political system in this time may be defined as "limited democracy" (Roszkowski, 1997, p. 73) or "authoritarianism", the

competitive elections were not abolished. There were four elections (1928, 1930, 1935, 1938), although one may doubt whether they were "free and fair" or not (as to the notion of "free and fair" election, see Elklit, Svensson, 1997), because they were plagued by frauds and low turnout. During analyzed period, deep constitutional changes took place. The power of the parliament was drastically reduced and the position of the president vis-a-vis the parliament and cabinet was strengthened. The number of the members of the Sejm was decreased. But, from interesting me point of view, the main change was the presence of new competitor on the political scene, what resulted in more complex structure of political competition.

Directly after the coup J. Piłsudski was elected the President by the **National Assembly (the Sejm and the Senate)**. **Surprisingly, he refused, insisting that the current constitution (passed in 1921) limited the power of the Head of the State too much, but he recognized the decision of the National Assembly as the approval of the coup. In the second ballot, I. Mościcki, former professor of Lvov Technical University was elected for this post. J. Piłsudski became the Minister of Defence and the Commander in Chief of Polish Army. But his political role was more relevant than the role of the member of the cabinet or even the Prime Minister. It was partially brought about by the forming of the new political movement what backed him and competed against all traditional, mentioned above, political camps.**

In January of 1928, No-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (BBWR) was founded by the nearest associates of marshal Piłsudski. BBWR declared the will of the "moral renewal" (in polish - sanacja) and of the improving of imperfect parliamentary regime. The leaders of BBWR announced in its programmatic document the rules of the strong arm and the limitation of the role of the

Sejm and of the political parties (Ajnenkiel, 1980, p. 88-89). Although BBWR was the right-wing, authoritarian and catholic movement, it was not nationalist one. This circumstance lets to contrast it with traditional, national-catholic Right, represented by National Democracy, renamed in 1928 for the Camp of the Great Poland (OWP). In other words, BBWR intended to become the political force locating itself "above political divisions".

In the 1928 election BBWR gained 25 per cent of votes and 29 per cent of seats, mainly due to the popularity of marshal Piłsudski. The second largest political force was Polish Socialist Party (12 per cent of votes and 14,2 per cent of seats). The losers of this election were above all the National Democracy (8,4 per cent of seats towards 22 per cent of seats in 1922) and the parties of the Centre (PPS-Piast and Christian Democracy). Comparing the results of the elections of 1922 and 1928, PPS-Piast dropped from 15,8 to 4,8 per cent of seats and Christian Democracy, respectively, from 10,0 to 3,6. The distribution of the seats in Sejm elected in 1928 is shown in table 3:

Table 3: Distribution of the seats in Sejm elected in 1928

	seats (percentage)
BBWR	27,6
the Right	8,4
the Centre	12,1
the Left	30,9
National minorities	19,3

Source: *Gwiżdż*, 1997, p. 181

Although BBWR was the strongest parliamentary faction, it was not able to gain majority. From the other side, anti-BBWR opposition was extremely fragmented. There were 20 parliamentary factions in the Sejm. Some of the parties, for example socialists and Christian Democracy, formed even two factions (Ajnenkiel, 1980, p. 98). No of traditional three camps was able to counteract the governmental policy effectively. The election of 1928 has shown that the new pattern of multipolar competition, reflecting new political cleavage, emerged. This new cleavage was close to that what A. Lijphart called "regime, support dimension". According to him, it appears as an effect of the presence of the relevant parties what oppose the democratic regime, demanding its "major overhaul", and results in the decline of the role of classical ideology (Lijphart, 1984, p. 137). This tendency found expression in systematic decrease of the support for all parties of the Right, of the Centre and of the Left and in the growth of support for no-ideological, progovernmental movement. It was connected with the division of Polish electorate into the supporters and the opposers of marshal Piłsudski, which turned to be the base of new political cleavage (Zaremba, 1981, vol. II, p. 151).

The efforts of traditional parties to increase their political relevance were made but turned to be ineffective. As it was already mentioned, after the May coup, the Right tried to consolidate and formed new political structure - The Camp of the Great Poland, but its electoral performance in 1928 was a complete failure. In 1933, the leaders of OWP were arrested and the organization was banned. Similarly, the attempts of the uniting the forces of the Centre and of the Left (forming of the camp of the Centre-Left in 1929, including, among the allies, the socialists, both Peasant Parties and Christian Democracy) did not succeed. Before the 1930 election, the leaders of CL were imprisoned and sentenced in so called Brest trial (from this reason the 1930 election was called Brest election). In March of 1931, three

agrarian parties merged and formed Peasant Party, but due to majority of progovernmental camp it did not matter.

What is a model of political competition in the second phase of the political development in inter-war Poland, on electoral and parliamentary level? The next factors have to be mentioned: the predominance of progovernmental bloc on both, electoral and parliamentary arenas, the fragmentation of the opposition divided into three, gradually weakening, ideological camps and the presence of the relatively strong representation of national minorities (until 1935). This multi-polar competition resulted in the restricting of the role of the opposition and in the decline of the resistance against authoritarianism. It was the reason of the low degree of the competitiveness of the party system. From the other side, the role of ideological cleavages, as the base of political competition, was firmly limited. Thus, we may find in Poland, in the period 1926-1939, the predominant, pragmatic party system.

One must be added to what was already mentioned. After 1935, the competitiveness on electoral and parliamentary arenas actually did not exist. In 1935 election, only the representants of BBWR gained the seats. This election was boycotted by almost all political parties, aware of the ineffectiveness of their efforts to oppose the progovernmental camp. The turnout was extremely low (46,5 per cent). From this reason the Sejm elected in 1935 was called "the parliament of the appointees". In effect, the opposition was exclusively extra-parliamentary one.

From the other side, we may discern the symptoms of the growth of the party system' stability. If we compare the results of 1922, 1928 and 1930 elections, we will find the growth of the support for the strongest party and the decrease of effective number of parties (on both electoral and parliamentary levels) as well as of the fractionalization of the party system, after 1928. These indicators are demonstrated in Table 4:

Table 4: The indicators of the stabilization of Polish party system

	1922	1928	1930
The support for the strongest party	29,1	22,1	46,8
Index of fractionalization	0,84	0,88	0,72
Effective number of parties (elect.)	6,4	8,9	3,6
Effective number of parties (parl.)	4,9	7,8	2,9

Source: Calculations of the author.

The another criterion of the division of inter-war period into two phases is the nature of cabinets. Until 1926 they were either no-partisan (6) or centre-right ones (4). The exceptions were the grand coalitions (the Witos' "war cabinet" and Skrzyński' cabinet). We cannot find neither left nor centre-left governments. Moreover, two political forces were all the time excluded from the process of the forming of the cabinets. They were communists and national minorities, conflicted with the Right, the Centre and the socialists. What is worth to pointing out is the extremely low durability of the cabinets, what is the evidence of political instability (Lane, Ersson, 1988, p. 285-292). Average durability is 7,5 months, but if we take into account only coalitional, partisan cabinets, it decreases to 5,5. The data are presented in table 5.

Table 5. The cabinets in Poland 1919-1926

The Prime Minister	Durability (in months)	Political composition
J.I. Paderewski	12	no-partisan
L. Skulski	6	centre-right
W. Grabski	1	centre-right
W. Witos	14	left-centre-right*
A. Ponikowski	9	no-partisan
A. Śliwiński	0,5	no-partisan
J. Nowak	5	no-partisan
W. Sikorski	5	no-partisan
W. Witos II	7	centre-right
W. Grabski II	23	no-partisan
A. Skrzyński	4,5	grand coalition**
W. Witos III	0,5	centre-right
Average durability	7,3	

* so called National Defence Cabinet, appointed in the face of the military confrontation with bolshevik Russia.

** embraced: National Democracy, Christian Democracy, PPP-Piast, National Worker's Party, PPS (socialists).

The change of the patterns of political competition on electoral and parliamentary level after the May coup was accompanied by the weakening the position of the Sejm vis-a-vis the cabinet. The parliamentary right of no-confidence vote was limited in constitutional amendment in 1926 what was confirmed in new constitution in 1935. Instead of confidence of parliamentary majority, the support from the president was decisive factor for the lasting of the cabinet. In practice, the president often disregarded the results of voting in the parliament.

The weakness of the opposition was the reason of establishing of *regime extra-constitutionnel* (Gwizdź, 1997, p. 179). Then, the cabinets were not the product of inter-party bargains but derived their authority, until 1935, directly from the will of marshal Piłsudski (one has to stress that, until his death in 1935, he was the minister of defence in 11 cabinets). There were 7 so called "colonels' cabinets" in the period 1930-1935. All the cabinets after 1926 were anti-parliamentary, conservative and authoritarian and provide the representation of pro-Piłsudski movement. The strategy of the prime - ministers consisted in the building ad hoc coalitions around given issues. Then, the position of the prime minister was close to what R. Rose called bargainer position (Rose, 1991, p. 19). The allies of governmental camp were the peasants parties, socialists as well as national minorities, depending on the nature of the issues. In turn, the communist deputies were intimidated and persecuted.

What is important is that the durability of the cabinets did lengthen slightly in comparison with the previous period (see Table 5). Only three cabinets (Piłsudski I, Prystor and Sławoj-Składkowski) were able to last more than one year. The average durability was increased from 8,1 towards 10,9 (mainly due of the last cabinet). The durability of the cabinets in the second phase of inter-war period are shown in table 6:

Table 6. The durability of the cabinets 1926-1939

Prime Minister	Time of duration (in months)
K. Bartel	4,5
J. Piłsudski	21
K. Bartel II	9,5
K. Świtalski	8
K. Bartel III	3,5
W. Sławek	4
J. Piłsudski	3
W. Sławek II	6
A. Prystor	24
J. Jędrzejewicz	0,5
L. Kozłowski	10
M. Kościałkowski - Zyndram	7
F. Sławoj-Składkowski	40,5
Average	10,9

Source: Topolski, 1976, p. 760.

Summing up, political development in inter-war Poland has shown us two patterns of political competition. In the first phase, the three-polar competition, typical for the then Europe took place. No of the political forces was able to dominate in the parliament and to formulate the policies. The fragmentation of the parliament was extremely high and was one

of the main reasons of political instability. In turn, the political instability became the source of the critics of the parliamentarism as a such and of the political parties. In the second stage, the cleavage pro- and anti political regime **(covered by the division into the supporters and the opponents of marshal Piłsudski)** was dominated over **socio-economic and cultural ones. The role of political parties decreased in favour of no-partisan movement which was able, partly due to the new electoral law, to monopolise the Sejm and the Senate. It resulted in decreasing of the level o the competitiveness on electoral and parliamentary arenas.**

The adversarial style of political elites' behaviour, the hostility to the minorities, the splits and mergers of political parties, the gradual decline of their political relevance and the undurable cabinets are altogether the main features of political competition in inter-war Poland. This is the legacy of the Past. The next question may be posed: is this political heritage reflected in contemporary time, during the restoration of the democracy after the collapse of anti-democratic, communist regime? I will examine this problem in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

POLITICAL COMPETITION IN POLAND AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

1. Introductory remarks.

The collapse of Polish communist regime in 1989 has triggered the process of the redemocratization. The Round Table Agreement announced semi-free, "contractual" elections in 1989 and free and fair one in 1993. This decision opened the way to the institutionalization of political competition, instead of informal rules governing this process during communist period. That is to say that autonomous political actors gained the opportunity to work out the patterns of cooperation in the struggle for political relevance. This question lies at a core of democratic transition.

In this chapter I will try to examine the nature of four parliamentary elections and of eight coalitional cabinets, taking into account the forming and the evolution of the patterns of political competition. I will attempt to analyse the structure of Polish political scene and its change. Next, I will show the ways of organising of the main political forces to electoral confrontation. Finally, I will examine the impact of the patterns of political competition on the stability (instability) of Polish party system, using different indicators, mentioned already in Chapter I.

Let me start with a trivial remark concerning political competition in post-Communist Europe. From many reasons it has been different from that we may find in advanced democracies and has presented certain common traits. Political competition has been centrifugal and multi-polar in all post-communist countries. It is brought about by the presence of reformed and renamed former communist parties which attempt to monopolise the left side of political space. Some of them have succeeded (for example in Bulgaria and to some extent Hungary), some have failed. In Poland, former communists were the strongest parliamentary

party from 1993 to 1997, but they occupied the left side of political spectrum together with post-Solidarity Union of Labour. In Czech Republic, which is closest to West European standards of competition, two relatively strong parties of the Left have existed: Social Democracy with its long pre-war tradition and the former communists, recognized as one of more orthodox in communist "family" (Pehe, 1995). Also in Hungary, post-communists have shared the label of party of the Left with two oppositional groupings - Association of Free Democrats and the Forum of Young Democrats (Körösenyi, 1993).

The second trait of political competition in post-communist Europe is the initial fragmentation of party systems. In all countries of this region a plenty of parties have emerged after the collapse of old regime. Many of them took a part in first competitive elections. But the majority of them turned out to be typical "flash parties". Moreover, we have witnessed the multitude of splits and mergers what has brought about the confusion of the electorate. In this respect Poland is the case (particularly in the first phase of transition) and that is why M. Grzybowski has called Polish party system "*overdeveloped pluralism*" (Grzybowski, 1994). Thus, the both: the effective number of parties (except of Bulgaria and Hungary) and the level of electoral volatility have been relatively high, so we may recognize the party systems of post-communist countries as highly competitive. The additional argument is relatively frequent alternation in power in some of them (Poland, Lithuania, Hungary).

What seems to be worth of special emphasizing is that new party systems in post-communist countries do not reflect "classical" structure of socio-political cleavages. There are another cleavages which yield peculiar axes of competition. Such an example is the competition between post-communists and fragmented, as in 1993 and 1995, or united, as in 1997, anti-communist bloc in Poland, based on the attitude to the communist past. There are similar cleavages in Bulgaria and Romania. And, as we may learn from Bulgarian and

Romanian experience, as long as the anti-communist forces are dispersed, the post communists, no matter reformed or not, may remain in power. This conclusion has been drawn by "Solidarity" in Poland and the united bloc of anti-communist opposition contested successfully for votes in September election of 1997. The question of the structure of political cleavages in Poland will be discussed below.

Except of obvious similarities to another post-communist countries, there are also the distinctive features of political competition in Poland. Four of them seem to be important. First of them is that Poland has been only country in which competitive election was preceded by semi-competitive one. In July of 1989, Polish voters were not asked which political force shall govern. Their choice was limited to the question which candidates of two political camps - communists and "Solidarity" - shall enter the parliament. Although the election was not fully-competitive, it gave the opportunity to vote for or against the communist regime. I explains the fact that communist coalition lost the power, even though it had 65 per cent of seats in the Sejm guaranteed by the political pact with the opposition. From this point of view, one cannot say that the "contractual" 1989 election was absolutely incompetent (see Raciborski, 1997, esp. pp. 29-30), let alone the election for the Senate was completely free and fair.

Second, the first parliamentary competitive election in 1991 followed the presidential one. L. Wałęsa - the symbol of the anti-communist opposition - became the winner of the struggle for the post of the Head of State and it was decisive factor for the later victory of the political forces deriving from "Solidarity" in 1991 parliamentary election. One has to remember that in this moment, the political space was occupied by many political parties, either representing or opposing old regime. What is worth to note, the camp of "Solidarity" was disintegrated and divided into the

large number of the parties fighting each other, many a time.

Third, the political competition in the first phase of transition in Poland was accompanied by instability of electoral law. Every one of the parliamentary elections in the period 1989-1993 took place under different electoral system. There were majority system in 1989, PR with Hare-Niemeyer formula in 1991 and PR with d'Hondt formula and with the 5 per cent threshold in 1993. Only the last system was tested twice - in 1993 and 1997. The shape of electoral law was the object of numerous controversies and of fierce disputes in the parliament. This instability of electoral law was not conducive to establishing neither electora strategies of political parties, nor electoral behaviour of the voters. In effect the patterns of political competition, at least in the first phase of transition, were unstable.

Finally, the participants of political competition on all three arenas are not only the parties. The exceptional role played by the movement "Solidarity" in the overthrowing of the communism has resulted in, higher than everywhere, the activity of the trade unions. From 1989 "Solidarity" has taken a part in every parliamentary and presidential elections. It had its parliamentary representation in the Sejm elected in 1989 and 1991 (in 1993 it failed to enter the parliament). It has been a leading force in electoral coalition (AWS), formed in 1997 as the counterbalance for the post-communist Left. The representants of the trade union have been present in the Senate throughout the analyzed period. Moreover, "Solidarity" entered the cabinet of J. Olszewski (1991-1992) and was the initiator of no-confidence vote for the cabinet of H. Suchocka. Its support for the cabinet of J. Buzek, appointed in 1997, is the decisive factor for its durability. This "overpolitization" of the trade unions seems to be the distinctive feature of political competition in Poland, compared to other post-communist countries.

2. Political competition in Poland: the electoral level

Let me now turn to the analysis of the patterns of political competition on electoral arena. As it was already mentioned, the June 1989 election has shown bipolar character of the rivalry for the votes. It was mainly due to majority electoral system forcing both, the supporters of the old regime and the anti-communist opposition to the integration. In effect, two political integrated, although ideologically incoherent, electoral coalitions took a part in the first, transitional election . The governing camp was formed by communists, peasant party democratic party (representing the interests of the craftsmen) and three organizations of secular catholics. The opposition was concentrated in Citizen Committee of "Solidarity" headed by L. Wałęsa. These two blocs competed freely for the seats in the Senate and for the legitimacy in the Sejm. Both the number of seats in the Senate and the legitimacy in the Sejm were the stake of election. Even though the communists had to gain parliamentary majority due to the contract, they had not to have sufficient legitimacy to govern, as it is the rule in democratic election.

What were the main symptoms of political disaster of the governing camp? Due to the Round Table Agreement, they were not visible in the political composition of the Sejm. In order to show them, we have to take into account four circumstances. First, the national list, containing exclusively the names of the communist candidates, did not get required support (more than 50 per cent). Second, "Solidarity" gained 99 per cents of the seats in the Senate. Third, the candidates of the "Solidarity" were able to win in the first ballot in the majority of the constituencies, while the representatives of the governing camp gained their seats only in the second one. Finally, the turnout in the second ballot, when almost only the communist competed, was slightly above 20 per cent (Dudek, 1997, pp. 46-49). From these reasons the comments of electoral results were unanimous and interpreted them as overwhelming victory

of "Solidarity" and the defeat of the communists, in spite of the number of the seats gained by both in the Sejm (see table 1).

Table 1. The political composition of the Sejm elected in 1989.

Part	Seats	Percentage
PUWP	173	37,61
UPP	76	16,52
DP	27	5,87
Catholic organizations	23	6,0
"Solidarity"	161	35

Source: Alberski, Jednaka, 1994, p. 69

PUWP - Polish United Workers' Party - the communists (Polish abbr.-PZPR).

UPP - United Peasants Party (Polish abbr. - ZSL).

DP - Democratic Party (Polish abbr. - SD)

Catholic organizations (allied with PUWP) - Pax, Christian-Social Union (UChS), Polish Catholic-Social Union (PZKS).

Bipolar nature of electoral competition was in 1989 accompanied by its centrifuga character. The stake of election encouraged the supporters and opponents of communist regime to formulate radical electoral appeals and to emphasize the differences rather than the common political interest (democratization). The ideological roots of both competing camps were most important for the voters as well as for the politicians. Since the election was really the plebiscite for or against the communism, the programmatic differences were receded into the background. Not only the elites but also the voters were deeply divided and situated

themselves on one or second side of the barricade. This situation fits very well to A. Lijphart observation that fragmentation of the electorate and the adversarial style of political elites' behaviour has yielded so called centrifugal democracy (see Chapter I).

Although some scientists argued that the electoral majority system had preserved two-party system (Gebethner, 1989, p. 6) it turned out to be not the case in Poland. Soon after 1989 election, the process of disintegration and decomposition of both political camps began. In August of 1989 the coalition of PUWP and two smaller parties was dissolved and replaced by new one, formed by "Solidarity", ZSL and SD. In January of 1990 Polish United Worker's Party has formally finished its activity. At the same time it transformed itself into the new political party, named Social Democracy of Polish Republic (SdRP). Soon after this, it formed electoral coalition - Democratic Alliance of the Left (Polish abbr. - SLD) which has turned out to be able to occupy almost whole left side of political space. In turn, the "Solidarity" camp started to disintegrate. One has to remember that Citizen Committee was typical syncretic coalition, created just for electoral victory. Within it, the different political and ideological orientations were represented. It was obvious that these differences shall result in the division of the movement. The first autonomous parties were founded in 1990. Among them were The Centre Agreement (PC) - supporting L. Wałęsa in presidential election, The Citizen Movement - Democratic Action (ROAD), supporting T. Mazowiecki, Christian-National Union (ZChN) and Liberal-Democratic Congress (KLD). The agrarian United Polish Peasant Party was divided into a dozen groupings from which renewed Polish Peasant Party (PSL), perceived as post-communist, turned out to be the strongest. The further parties were formed every day, and the number of them exceeded two hundreds in 1993. This phase of political development in post-communist Poland may be called the period of fragmentation of both, the

elites and the electorate. It was particularly visible in 1991 parliamentary election. All in all, one hundred eleven electoral committees, representing, in general, political parties, took place in it. Forty two registered their electoral lists in more than one constituency, sixty nine did it in one. Twenty seven were able to register their national lists, that is to say to gain 5000 supporting signatures in at least 5 constituencies. Twenty four entered the Sejm, and nine from them gained more than 5 per cent of votes, what was the reflect of deconcentration o the electoral support. The consequences of this were respectively: high level of effective number of parties (on both, electoral and parliamentary level) and of party system's fractionalization. The electoral results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The results of 1991 Parliamentary Election.

Part	Percentage of Votes	Percentage of Seats
UD	12,32	13,48
SLD	11,99	13,04
PSL	9,22	10,87
ZChN	8,98	10,87
KPN	8,88	11,09
PC	8,71	9,57
KLD	7,49	8,04
PSL-PL	5,47	6,09
"Solidarity"	5,05	5,87
others	21,89	11,08

Source: Monitor Polski, 1991, No 41., Gebethner, 1993, p. 15

Abbreviations: UD - Democratic Union, SLD - Democratic Left Alliance, PSL - Polish Peasant Party, ZChN - Christian-National Union, KPN - Confederation of Independent Poland, PC - Centre Agreement, KLD - Liberal - Democratic, PSL-PL - Polish Peasant Party - People's Agreement

The most striking features of political competition in first democratic election are the lack of strong parties, slight difference between the results gained by the first and the second parties, the extremely high level of fractionalization of the party system as well as the effective number of parties. As we compare these indicators with the results of the first, transitional elections in other countries in Western and Eastern Europe, during the "third wave of democratization", Poland appears as the deviant case (see table 3). The effective number of parties is more than two times higher than in next in turn Slovakia (9,8 and 4,0, resp.). The support for the strongest party is almost three times lower than in Slovakia and Hungary, and more than four times lower than in Greece and in Czech Republic. In only three countries the difference between the first and the second parties is lower than ten per cent (Spain, Hungary and Poland) but only in Poland it is so small and does not exceed 1 per cent. This is the evidence of extremely high the level of competitiveness of Polish party system.

Table 3. Political consequences of transitional elections in selected European countries during the "third wave of democratization".

Country	IF	ENP	S1	S2	D
Greece	0,64	1,7	54,4	74,8	34,0
Portugal	0,73	2,9	40,7	69,0	22,4
Spain	0,77	2,9	34,8	65,1	4,5
Hungary	0,85	3,7	32,8	58,3	7,3

Czech Republic*	0,68	2,0	55,3	66,6	44,2
Slovakia*	0,82	4,0	32,5	51,5	12,5
Poland	0,92	9,8	12,3	24,3	0,3

Source: Morlino, 1995, p. 324, Wiszniowski, 1997, p. 97, Herbut, 1997, p. 151,152, Toka, 1997, p. 17.

* - the values of indicators for Czech Republic and Slovakia are calculated on the base of voting for the candidates to both, Czech and Slovak Chamber of People.

Abbreviations: **IF** - Rae's fractionalization index, **ENP** - effective number of parties (Laakso-Taagepera index) - on parliamentary level, **S1** - support for the strongest party, **S2** - support for two strongest parties altogether, **D** - difference between the first and the second parties

Two additional circumstances should be added to what was already mentioned. First is that the majority of the competitors located themselves either on the centre or on the right side of political spectrum. Only SLD and the small "Solidarity of the Labour" might be perceived as the representants of the Left. Both the parties gained together 14,05 per cent of votes. But it does not mean that the rest of the electorate declared and expressed either the centrist or of the rightist orientations. Many of the parties originating from "Solidarity" emphasized the support for traditional ideas of the Left: the significance of the state sector, protection of those economically deprived, welfare policy, the political relevance of the trade unions, and so one. Moreover, the number of parties being in opposition to the communists as well as "Solidarity" have appeared on political scene. They tried to attract the losers of the transformation. One has to remember that S. Tymiński, perceived as the "third way candidate", gained almost 25 per cent of votes as the candidate for the post of the President, one year ago. Thus, 1991 parliamentary election

has revealed us the main axis of political competition which is expressed in the conflict between the supporters and opponents of new economic and social policies, or, in other words, between the winners and the losers of the transition.

Second, the centre and the right side of the political scene were more fragmented than the left one. The common denominator for those parties which located themselves in this part of political space was the opposition to the communism (PSL is an exception). From the other side, they differ, regarding to all further dimensions of political competition. Some of them pointed out their support for the marketization of the economy, particularly for the monetarist policy and for laissez fair ideology. The others emphasized their confessional character. The agrarian parties, regardless of their origins, presented anti-monetarist and pro-clerical stance. Certain parties presented themselves as the defenders of Polish national interest (ZChN and KPN). Thus, it is difficult to estimate precisely political preferences of Polish voters in 1991. We may find many evidences that the "anti-leftist camp" was only the political symbol, at least on electoral arena. In such a situation, the majority of the voters were confused and, in effects, did not take a part in the election (the turnout was 43,2 per cent).

Two years later, after the dissolution of the Sejm by President L. Wałęsa, **the voters gained the opportunity to judge the** government performance. This was difficult moment for the power incumbents because of the deterioration of the standards of life, of the growth of unemployment and inflation. It may be an explanation of the victory of those forces which promised to slow down the pace of the reforms. For J. Raciborski, the dissatisfaction of the voters from economic and social policies of T. Mazowiecki's and J. Bielecki's cabinets was decisive factor for the defeat of "post-August" forces. It was manifested in relatively strong support for the parties contesting these policies, no matter their origins (Raciborski, 1997, p. 43). The parties recognized as the supporters of austerity

programme, introduced by the Minister of Finances in the first non-communist cabinet L. Balcerowicz, gained only 20 per cent of votes. In opinion of Polish sociologist, the defeat of the governing camp, particularly the liberal forces, indicated the growth of significance of socio-economic cleavage (Morawski, 1998, p. 214; see also Antoszewski, 1993, p. 10). Interpreting the electoral results, many observers of Polish political scene, have emphasized the shift into left which took place in 1993 and started one year ago (Dudek, 1997, p. 272-275). The parties perceived as the left-wing ones gained 27,3 per cent of votes that is to say almost two times more than in 1991 (see Table 4). From the other side, the "post-August" camp suffered from its fragmentation (one has to remind that 5 per cent threshold was introduced in 1993) rather than from the considerable decline of electoral support.

Table 4: The support for the main parties in 1991 and 1993 (percentage of votes)

Party	1991	1993	Difference
UD	12,32	10,59	-1,73
SLD	11,99	20,41	+8,42
UP*	2,06	7,28	+5,22
PSL	9,22	15,40	+6,18
ZChN	8,98	6,37	-2,61
PC	8,71	4,42	-3,29
KLD	7,49	3,99	-3,50
KPN	8,88	5,77	-3,11
"Solidarity"	5,05	4,90	-0,15

Source; Gebethner, 1995, p. 10

Abbreviations - see Table 2.

*UP - Union of Labour (in 1991 "Solidarity of Labour").

Taking into account that new electoral law was restrictive, and then discriminating, for the small parties, the main effect of 1993 parliamentary election was the simplification of electoral arena. Suffice is to say that only five political parties and one electoral coalition entered the Sejm, from among 36 competitors (24 of them were able to register their electoral lists in more than one constituency). 35 per cent of the voters cast their votes for the parties which did not enter the Sejm. This is the reason of the size of the deviation of electoral result and the source of the overrepresentation of the strongest parties. The winner of the election - post communist SLD gained 20,41 per cent votes and 37,1 percent of seats (difference is =16,7); the second largest party (PSL), respectively, 15,4 and 28,7 (difference is =13,3). The size of the overrepresentation of third and fourth largest parliamentary parties (UD and UP) was lower and counted respectively 5,5 and 1,6. Only two parties - KPN and the newcomer, Non Party Bloc for the Support of Reforms (BBWR) were underrepresented (resp. -0,9 and -1,9). This means that the significant reduction of the effective number of parties took place in 1993 (see Antoszewski, Herbut, 1998, pp 88-93).

In comparison to 1991, parliamentary election in 1993 revealed certain changes on electoral arena. First of them is the growth of the concentration of electoral support. The strongest party gained 20,4 per cent of votes (12,32 in 1991). Two strongest parties were supported by 35,8 per cent of the electorate (24,31 in 1991). From the other side, the fragmentation of the support was still considerable. Seven parties (including two electoral coalitions) gained more than 5 per cent of votes (nine in 1993). Thus, index of fractionalization of party system remained almost unchanged, in comparison with the level

gained in 1991 (0,90 and 0,92 respectively).

The second change has to do the structure of political competition that is to say the number and the nature of main inter-party conflicts. According to Polish sociologist W. Wesółowski, six major dimensions cut across the Polish party system. They are: 1/ nationalism vs universalism, 2/confessionalism vs secularism, 3/authoritarianism vs democracy (presidentialism vs parliamentarism), 4/ laissez-faireism vs interventionism, 5/elitism vs populism and 6/communism-purging vs communism-forgiving (Wesółowski, 1996, p. 239-241). According to this scheme we may classify the parties which entered to the Sejm as follows:

SLD-universal, secular, democratic, interventionist, elitist and communist-forgiving,

PSL-nationalist, confessional, democratic, interventionist, populist and communist forgiving,

UD-universal, secular, democratic, laissez-faire, elitist and neutral in sixth dimension,

UP-universal, secular, democratic, interventionist, elitist and neutral in sixth dimension,

BBWR-nationalist, authoritarian, confessional, laissez-faire, populist, communist-purging,

KPN-nationalist, authoritarian, secular, interventionist, populist and communist-purging.

If this description is correct (even approximately) it is very difficult to determine the significance of the particular dimensions of the competition. It may be tentatively said that the voters preferred in 1993 interventionism to laissez-faireism, parliamentary to presidential democracy and communism-forgiving to communism-purging. Does it mean that party system is able to reflect the structure of political conflicts? Are they temporary or long-lasting? I will return to this question in final part of this chapter.

What was the new in political competition in 1993 was that the newcomers appeared on electoral arena. They were above all pro-presidential BBWR, populist, agrarian "Self-Defence" and Coalition for Polish Republic (KdR), created by former Prime Minister J. Olszewski, dismissed by the Sejm in 1992. From among them only BBWR turned out to gain political relevance. It opposed the government as well as the opposition and was thought as political alternative for both. Even in the name (see chapter III) it resembled the no party bloc taking a part in inter-war elections after 1928. BBWR, created in June of 1993 by the President L. Wałęsa, was populist as well as anti-communist. Originally, it was to be political representation of four "pillars": employers, employees, farmers and local activists (Dudek, 1997, p. 279). Although L. Wałęsa announced that his supporters would gain even 400 seats, his efforts to attract the smaller post-"Solidarity" parties, and to build no-party, pro-presidential political structure, failed. Eventually, BBWR gained only 5,41 per cent of votes and 16 seats, what was much more below the expectations (it is worth to note that support for BBWR before the election was considerably higher and exceeded 15 per cent) (Dudek, 1997, p. 280). The attempt to form no-party bloc was, however, the symptom of anti-party government bias of the President. Such a situation took place in inter-war Poland, **but** the creation of BBWR by the supporters of marshal Piłsudski succeeded.

The results of 1993 parliamentary election was shocking for many observers of Polish political scene and for many politicians from "Solidarity" camp. The victory of the forces deriving from communist-regime may be interpreted as the electoral vote of no-confidence to austerity policies, personalized by the governing parties (mainly UD and KLD) as well as to radical anti-communist appeals, presented by the majority of right-wing parties. It is worth to point out, that the four strongest parties (SLD, PSL, UD, UP) did not use anti-communist

rhetoric during electoral campaign. From among the parties which entered the Sejm only KPN and BBWR did so. Eventually, almost all anti-communist, right-wing parties found themselves out of the parliament.

What was the main political consequence of 1993 parliamentary election for Polish political scene? The most important seems to be the size and the nature of the opposition. It was very small and disintegrated on parliamentary level, what gave the governing parties the opportunity to formulate and make their policies on their own, with no respect to the opinions and/or the proposals of the opponents. In effect, the level of competitiveness of **parliamentary party system considerably decreased. This tendency was strengthened in 1995 with the victory of the leader of SLD, Aleksander Kwaśniewski**, in presidential election. From the other side, the relevance of **extra-parliamentary opposition was increased** as the result of their size: it represented 35 per cent of active voters and might questioned the governmental policies as insufficiently legitimated. It was particularly visible during the constitutional process in 1996-1997.

The victory of post communists in both parliamentary and presidential elections has intensified the efforts of anti-communist Right to unite. Such the attempts were unsuccessful until 1997. In June of 1997 the declaration about the forming of Electoral Action-"Solidarity" was signed by the leaders of "Solidarity" and of several small parties, including, among the allies, BBWR, KPN, ZChN and PC. The main aim of AWS was, from the outset, to form the electoral coalition, able to win the next parliamentary election and take over the power from the post-communists (Gebethner, 1997, p. 61). AWS presented itself as the successor of "Solidarity" in its struggle with the communism. Except of the efforts to attract all the anti-communist parties, some of them have remained out of AWS. From among them, the

strongest party has been The Movement for Restoration of Poland (ROP), headed by J. Olszewski.

In 1997 parliamentary election AWS gained 33,83 per cent of votes and 43,69 per cent of seats. Although the support for post-communists has increased from 20,41 per cent of votes in 1993 to 27,13 per cent in 1997, they were not able to win the election. The main losers of the election were PSL, which dropped from 15,4 per cent of votes to 7,31) and UP (7,28 and 4,74 respectively). The newcomers, but only in formal sense, were Union of Freedom (UW) - formed in 1994 as the merger of UD and KLD - and ROP, the successor of KdR. From among ten parties which registered the national lists, five did not enter the parliament. They were Union of Labour, two Pensioner's Parties, nationalist Bloc for Poland and conservative Union of Polish Right. The comparison of electoral results of 1993 and 1997 is presented in Table 5: This may be the point of departure to the analysis of the question of the stabilization of the patterns of political competition, and then, of Polish party system.

Table 5. The 1993 and 1997 Electoral Results

Part	votes 1993	seats 1993	votes 1997	seats 1997
AWS	-	-	33,83	43,69
SLD	20,41	37,17	27,13	35,65
UW	14,58*	16,07	13,37	13,0
PSL	15,40	28,69	7,31	5,87
ROP	-	-	5,56	1,30
UP	7,28	8,91	4,74	-
KPN**	5,77	4,78	-	-
BBWR**	5,41	3,48	-	-

Others	31,15	0,87***	8,06	0,43***
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Source: Gebethner, 1995, p. 10, Monitor Polski, 1997, No 64

* This number includes votes gained by UD and KLD which started in 1993 separately and merged in 1994, forming Union of Freedom (UW).

** Now in AWS

*** the seats gained by national minorities

3. The stabilization of Polish party system

The comparison of the results of three parliamentary elections in the period 1991-1997 lets us to answer the question whether the political competition in Poland has led to stable party system or not. In the body of literature we may find rather negative answer. This is, at least to 1997, popular and common reasoning among the scientists, politicians and voters. How did they argue their standpoint? Five kinds of arguments have been in use: 1/ the number of parties is high (it is stressed that in new democracies it is low), 2/ the support for parties is fragmented, 3/ the main parties are unable to gain significant support and the "victor" of election is relatively weak, 4/ the level of volatility is still high, and 5/ there are frequent mergers and splits what has brought about deep change of parliament's political composition (no Sejm was able to save its political structure until the end of the term of office). In the light of 1997 election, all these arguments, except of this one mentioned ad 3) do not seem to be plausible, from logical as well as empirical point of view. Conversely, taking into account the indicators of the stability of party system (see Chapter I) one has to discern the symptoms of the stabilization of Polish party system. It is expressed above all in the concentration of the electoral support and to in decreasing of fragmentation of the parliament (see Table 6).

Table 6: The strength of political parties on electoral and parliamentary arenas

The percentage of votes cast for:	1991	1993	1997
the parties which entered the parliamen	93,74	64,9%	87,2
the strongest party	12,32	20,41	33,83
two strongest parties	23,81	35,45	60,96
The percentage of seats:			
gained by the strongest party	13,84	37,17	43,69
controlled by two strongest parties	26,88	65,86	79,34
The turnout	43,20	52,08	47,98

Sources: Calculations of the author

Regarding the effective number of parties one has to point out that it has systematically decreased on both electoral and parliamentary levels. The reduction on the later has been considerable since 1993 and on the former only since 1997. The partial explanation of this discrepancy may be the voters' unawareness of the political consequences of the introduction of the 5 per cent threshold. In 1993 the did not take into account that their votes might be cas in vain, while in 1997 the electoral behaviour were more sophisticated and "strategic". But what is more important, the effective number of parties which was extremely high in 1991, is at the moment similar to those we may find in advanced democracies and even less than average value of index for Western Europe which counts 3,6 on parliamentary level and 4,3 on electoral one (cf. Table 2 from Chapter II and Table 7). For example, the higher effective number of parties characterises the party systems of Switzerland (av. 5,7, highest - 7,5), Belgium (5,4 and 8,0 resp.), Denmark (5,1 and 6,9) Finland (5,0 and 5,6), The Netherlands (4,5 and 6,4) and in Italy (4,0 and 5,5) (Herbut, 1996, p. 128).

The decrease of the fractionalization of Polish party system has been, to some extent,

slower than of the effective number of parties. It counts 0,78 and, comparing to Western Europe, it is higher than average value of the index (0,68). The higher degree of the fractionalization we may find only in Switzerland (0,82) and Finland (0,81); the similar is in the Netherlands and Denmark (0,77). In turn, in remained countries of Western Europe the value of index ranges from 0,52 (Greece) to 0,73 (Belgium) (Antoszewski, Herbut, 1996, p. 174). The evolution of the fractionalization index and of effective number of parties is shown in Table 7:

Table 7: The indicators of the stabilization of Polish party system

Date of election	1991	1993	1997
Effective number of parties (electoral level)	13,9	10,3	4,2
Effective number of parties (parliamentary level)	9,8	3,9	2,9
Fractionalization index	0,92	0,90	0,78

Source: Herbut, 1996, Antoszewski, Herbut 1997

The third indicator of party system stability is aggregation index. In 1991 its value was extremely low and counted 0, 58. It is worth to note that in no West European country after the Second World War it was lower than 2,0, and its average value is 7,47 (Antoszewski, Herbut, 1997, p. 179). The level of aggregation in Poland increased to 6,19 in 1993 and to 8,74 in 1997. One has to point out that the aggregation of parliamentary party system depends on the number of the parties represented in the parliament. This number still decreases: from 24 in 1991 via 6 in 1993 to 5 in 1997. This is the indicator of the simplification of the structure of political competition (see Table 8)

Table 8: The number of political competitors and their strengt

The number of the parties	1991	1993	1997
competing in the election	111	25	22
able to register the national lis	27	11	10
entering the parliamen	24	6	5
aggregation index	0,58	6,19	8,74

Source: Calculations of the author

The fourth factor considered by the researchers of post-communist party systems is the level of electoral volatility. As G. Toka points out, apparent instability of party support and party identities may be the greatest obstacle in establishing of party system because of it promotes the unwillingness of the elites to compromise (Toka, 1997, p. 9). Thus, the lowering of the electoral volatility reflecting the forming o "*strong party attachments*" has been the symptom of the structuration of party system. From many reasons the level of electoral volatility in the first phase of democratic transition is rather high. It is difficult, however, to precisely measure the level of volatility because of the frequent splits and mergers which take place on electoral and parliamentary scenes (see Gebethner, 1993, p. 19, p. Gebethner, 1997, pp. 37-39). For example, there were four changes in the structure of main political parties in the period 1993-1997. In 1994 UD and KLD, which have started in 1993 election separately, have merged and formed the liberal Union of Freedom (UW). The Movement for the Restoration of Poland (ROP), formed in 1996 is the splinter from PC. In 1996 Confederati for Independent Poland (KPN) was splitted into two groupings. One of them entered Electora Action "Solidarity" (AWS). In turn, AWS has been the result of the merger of about 40 small

parties. In such a situation the level of electoral volatility may be measured only approximately.

As J. Raciborski has written, the level of electoral volatility is higher than in Western Europe, but "*there are not dramatic differences*" (Raciborski, 1997, pp. 135-136). The same may be said if we compare the results of the first parliamentary elections in democratising countries. The data from Italy (after the Second World War), Spain, Greece, Portugal and Poland show us that there is no universal pattern in electoral volatility during the transition (see Table 9). The peak of volatility may be achieved in second (Italy) and third elections (Spain) or even later (Portugal). It is usually highest if the election is critical one as it was in Italy in 1948 and in Spain in 1982 (Morlino, 1995, pp. 318-319). It is uncertain whether 1997 parliamentary election in Poland may be interpreted in terms of realignment or not.

Table 9: Electoral volatility in the first phase of democratic transition in selected countries

Country	Between 1st and 2nd	Between 2nd and 3rd
Italy	22,9	12,1
Spain	6,1	42,2
Greece	22,2	26,1
Portugal	11,8	9,8
Poland	23,0	19,0

Source: Morlino, 1995, pp. 318, Raciborski, 1997, pp. 135-136

All the data shown in the tables from 6 to 9 show us that Polish party system may be perceived as rather stable and, moreover, there is the **tendency** to strengthen its stability. It is

visible in 1997 parliamentary election also on the level of electoral behaviour. We have to point out that:

1. the electorate of AWS is more or less the same as (in 1993) the electorate of the parties forming AWS today. It is close to the number of votes cast in vain in previous election,
2. UW has kept the electorate from previous election (I have in mind the voters of UD and KLD)
3. SLD has slightly increased the size of electorate, mainly due to decline of the support for UP.

1997 parliamentary election has shown us the further simplification of political competition took place. Although it was still multipolar, only two main political forces competed for the victory and for the position of the *formateur* in the process of the forming the cabinet. They were right-wing and anti-communist AWS and, from the other side, left-wing, "*communism-forgiving*" SLD. The attitudes to the socio-economic reforms and to the past were the main dimensions of competition (Morawski, 1998, p. 214). Despite of economic success of the post-communist coalition it was not able to defeat the integrated post-"Solidarity" camp. This is evidence that, for Polish voters, not only the materialist questions have had the significance. It may indicate that the competition for the policies is accompanied, or even is replaced, by the *valency competition* (Markowski, 1998). If this appraisal is correct, the further polarization of the party system will be unavoidable, and the consolidation of democracy will be uncertain.

From the other side we should emphasize that the main political forces represented in the parliament are not the classical parties. AWS as well as SLD have been the **coalitions of factions**, more or less **syncretic**. The only parties in the Sejm elected in 1997 are UW (13,37 per cent of votes), PSL (7,31 resp.) and ROP (5,56 resp.). Thus, the stability of the patterns of

political competition depends on the ability of AWS and SLD to save their unity. Up today, SLD seems to be more integrated and coherent structure than AWS, but we have to wait for the answer concerning the future of AWS at least to the next presidential election.

4. The dimensions of electoral competition in 1997

From many reasons, the scholars studying the problems of electoral competition in post-communist countries have the difficulties with the indicating of its main dimensions. The theory of cleavages, in Rokkanian version, does not seem to fit to East-Central European political reality. It may no wonder that the different, and rather intuitive criteria have been used in exploring of this question. For example, J. Wiatr, has recognized three *principal conflict areas* in post-communist Europe: the transformation of the economy, ethnicity and conflict of values (secularism vs confessionism) (Wiatr, 1993, pp. 8-9). K. Jasiewicz has indicated five dimensions of electoral competition: the state protectionism vs free market orientation, secularism vs religious fundamentalism, xenophobia vs occidentalism, authoritarianism vs democracy, decommunization vs reconciliation (Jasiewicz, 1995, pp. 51-52). As it was already mentioned, W. Wesołowski (1996) distinguished **six axes of political competition in Poland** (see above, pt 2). In 1997, the **attitude to newly passed constitution was important for both the politicians and the voters**, thus we should complete this list. According to this completed model, the characteristics of the parties elected to the Sejm in 1997 is as follows:

AWS - nationalist, confessionism, authoritarian, laissez-faire, populist and communist-purging, anti-constitutional,

SLD - universal, secular, democratic, interventionist, elitist and communist-forgiving, pro-constitutional

UW - universal, secular, democratic, laissez-faire, elitist and neutral in sixth dimension, pro-constitutional

PSL - nationalist, confessionism, democratic, interventionist, populist and communist

forgiving, pro-constitutional,

ROP - nationalist, confessional, authoritarian, interventionist, populist and communist-purging, anti-constitutional.

The weakness of such the approaches is that they unable us to identify the significance of individual dimensions for the voters. In my analysis I propose another model. I assume that the main ideological cleavage in contemporary Poland is that between liberalism and communitarianism. I distinguish between four kinds of political attitudes and, respectively, between four "families" of the parties. This model is based on the conflict between individualistic and collective vision of social life in two dimensions: socio - economic and value ones

Individualism in socio-economic sense means the approval for such policies as privatization and reprivatization, the freedom of economic activity, the lessening of public sector in economy, low taxes and so one.

Collectivism in socio-economic sense means the approval for such policies as: the maintaining of state-property sector as long as possible, active role of the state in economy, blocking the property relations reform, redistribution of the wealth, welfare policy and so one

Individualism in value dimension means the approval for the freedom of choice as to the way of the life. This freedom is limited exclusively by the interests of the other individuals. It contains among the allies the right to abortion, to divorce, the tolerance for another opinions, protection of the minorities, the approval for political and professional activity of the women and so one

Collectivism in value dimension means that the individual has to comply with community which he/she is the member of. His/her freedom of choice is thus limited. Such the collectivism has led to the rigorous moral and ethic norms such as the total ban of the

abortion, the power of the parents of their children, the stressing of the role of the women in the family and so on.

Crossing two mentioned above dimensions of electoral competition with individualism and collectivism we may find four kinds of political orientations, and then of competing parties. I have labelled them:

1. **libera** - individualism in both dimensions
2. **conservative** (secular or confessional) - individualism in socio-economic dimension and collectivism in value one
3. **socialist** - collectivism in socio-economic dimension and individualism in values one and
4. **communist** - collectivism in both dimensions (see figure 1)

Figure 1: The Support for the Main Political Orientations in 1991-1997

<p>LIBERA</p> <p>1991 - UD, KLD (19,8 per cent)</p> <p>1993 - UD, KLD (14,6 per cent)</p> <p>1997 - UW (13,4 per cent)</p>	<p>SOCIALIST</p> <p>1991 - SLD, SP* (14,6 per cent)</p> <p>1993 - SLD, UP (27,3 per cent)</p> <p>1997 - SLD, UP (31,8 per cent)</p>
<p>CONSERVATIVE (secular or confessional)</p> <p>1991 - ZChN, PC, KPN, PSL, PSL-PL, "S" (51,9 per cent)</p> <p>1993 - ZChN, PC, PSL, RdR, PSL, PSL - PL, KPN, BBWR, "S" (50,5 c per cent)</p> <p>1997 - AWS, ROP, UPRz, BdP, Pensioners, PSL (51,3 per cent)</p>	<p>COMMUNIST</p>

If we compare the support for the parties to be ascribed to one of these orientations, it will be visible that electoral behaviour of the Polish voters may be recognized as rather stable.

They have trusted above all the parties which are the exponents of the individualism in socio-economic sense and of the collectivism in value dimension. Further, more detailed conclusions may be drawn from this analysis. They are following:

1. the support for what I have called "communist orientation" does not exist on the political scene, and no relevant party occupies this part of political space.

2. the support for "conservatism" is high and very stable and the dominance of this orientation depends on the organizational ability of the Right to unify. It may be difficult because of the number of parties locating themselves in this political area.

3. the support for "liberalism" is relatively small and still decreases (it is probably result of the realization of Balcerowicz's austerity programme, launched in 1990). No party labelled liberal (in mentioned above sense of this word) has a chance to be the *formateur* of the government, and thus to introduce its policies autonomously.

4. the support for "socialism" is medium but it still increases (particularly between 1991 and 1993). It is probably connected with the costs of transformation and the role of the catholic church, perceived by the voters as too active.

The next question I want to answer is that how does political competition reflect the structure of the political interests of Polish people? I have identified those interests in six dimensions which were the subject of fierce political controversies during the electoral campaign. They may be the base for the locating the particular parties along the Left-Right continuum. In any dimension this location will be different. The dimensions are following:

1. the effectiveness of economics and the growth of standards of life (this economic dimension means conflict monetarism vs anti-monetarism).
2. the social policy (conflict welfarism vs anti-welfarism).
3. the religious dimension (secularism vs clericalism)

4. the relationship to the past (anti-communism vs post-communism)

5. the effectiveness of the political system (support vs opposition as to the new constitution)

6. the religious dimension (clericalism vs secularism)

The support for the Left and the Right in particular dimensions and its reflecting in political composition of Polish Sejm elected in 1997 is demonstrated in tables from 10 to 14 (I took into attention the size of electoral support and the percentage of the seats controlled by the parties recognized as "left-wing", "right-wing" or, in some cases, centre ones).

Table 10: The support for Left, Centre and Right (in socio-economic dimension)

Left-wing parties: SLD, UP, KPEiR, KPEiR RP

Centre Parties - AWS, ROP, PSL

Right-wing Parties - UD, UPRz

Parties of the	Electoral support	Percentage of seats
Left	36,2	35,6
Centre	48,1	50,0
Right	15,0	15,4

Table 11: The Support for the Left and Right in social policy dimension

The Left-wing Parties - AWS, SLD, PSL, ROP, UP, KPEiR, KPEiR RP, BdP

The Right-wing parties - UW, UPRz.

	The support	The percentage of the seats
The Left Parties	84,6%	86,5%
The Right Parties	15,3%	13,0%

Table 12: The Support for the Left and the Right in religious dimension

The Left-wing Parties - SLD, UP, UD, KPEiR,

The Right-wing Parties - AWS, ROP, PSL, UPRz, KPEiR RP, BdP

	Electoral Suppor	Percentage of Seats
Left Parties	47,3	48,7
Right Parties	51,7	50,9

Table 13: The support for constitution and for pro- and anti-constitutional parties

Pro-constitutional parties: - SLD, PSL, UW, UP

Anti-constitutional parties - AWS, ROP, UPRz, BdP, KPEiR RP

Referendum	Support for:		Percentage of seats
yes - 52,7%	pro-constitutional parties	52,5%	47,8%
no - 45,6%	anti-constitutional parties	45,7%	40,7%

Table 14: Support for "post", "anti"- communist and "neutral" parties and its reflecting in the composition of parliament

Post-communist parties - SLD, PSL

Neutral - UD, UP, KPEiR,

Anti-communist parties - AWS, ROP, KPEiR RP, UPRz., BdP

	Electoral Suppor	Percentage of Seats
Post-communist parties	34,4	41,5
Neutral	20,1	13,0

Anti-communist parties	44,4	45,0
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The analysis of the data demonstrated above may lead to the conclusion that the electoral competition in post-communist Poland has been far from the classical pattern prevailing in the advanced democracies, that is to say, from competition between the Left and the Right. The partial explanation of this is that the voters as well the elites located themselves within political space, use the criteria which have a little common with traditional meaning of the Left or the Right. As Polish sociologist has written, the terms of "leftness" or "rightness" indicate the attitudes to the communist past and former organizational affiliations rather than the support for given socio-economic policy (Pankowski, 1997, p. 72-77). Similarly, the elites have emphasized the condemnation of the communism as the main indicator of the "rightness" and, in turn, communism-forgiving idea as the symptom of the leftness. Moreover, paradoxically, the "right-wing" parties appeal for fast and deep changes, while their left-wing rivals try to slow down the pace of the transformation. Thus, it is very difficult to interpret political behaviour of Polish publics and elites in terms of rational choice theory. It is worth to note, however, that majority of Polish voters have perceived themselves in the centre of political spectrum (Markowski, 1995, p. 9). It does not mean more than that the parties recognized as radical lose to those which are perceived as moderate. Thus, we may pose the question whether is there the character of political competition in Poland the premise of westernization, and then, consolidation of democracy, or not

Following M. Cotta (1996), I have assumed that there is political cycle during the successful transition towards democracy. It involves the formation of anti-old regime coalition, disintegration of it, redefinition of party identities on the Left-Right scale and

consolidation of Left-Right competition. As Italian political scientist has written, the Polish case fits to this model only in the first phase of transition. The stages of political development in Poland are the creation of anti-communist front, its disintegration, party fragmentation, multiplication of the dimensions of political competition and resurgence of post-communism (Cotta, 1996, p. 95). One has to add that, after the return of the post-communists to power, the syncretic, anti-Communist-coalition revived. The presidential election in 1995 and parliamentary one in 1997 showed that this axis of political competition is most important, both for voters and politicians. Then, the "classical", Left-Right conflict is not likely to prevail on political scene, in the nearest future.

5. The level of competitiveness

In this part of the chapter I will try to examine the problem of the competitiveness of Polish party system, both on national and local level. In Chapter I have made the distinction between the highly, moderately and slightly competitive systems. The question is to what model does the Polish party system fit? Considering this question we must take into account global results of the parliamentary elections as well as the results in constituencies. It is particularly interesting whether the distances between the first and second strongest parties are stable (unstable) on both levels or not.

The analysis of the competitiveness of party system on national level should involve all parliamentary elections between 1989 and 1997. Unfortunately, the basic changes of electoral law took place in this period. One has to remind that 1989 election was held under plurality electoral system, while from 1991 different P.R. systems have been in use. Disregard of it, the electoral competition in 1989 was basically bipolar and resembled that within two-party systems. The dominance of anti-communist orientation was expressed in the results of the

election to the Senate. 67,7 per cent of voters supported the candidates of "Solidarity and 32,3 voted for the representatives of governing, communist camp. The distance between these two forces was, hence, very high and counted above 34 per cent what let us to recognize then the party system as slightly **competitive. This tendency was sustained in the presidential election in 1990. The dominance of L. Wałęsa over the next candidate was 10 in the first ballot and near 50 in the run-off.**

From 1991, however, the deconcentration of electoral support has brought about the rapid growth of the competitiveness of Polish party system. The distance between the winner of election and the second strongest party decreased to below 1 per cent. It was the result of the disintegration of the "Solidarity" camp. The post-communists benefited from it because they turned out to be the second strongest political force and, hence, legitimized participant of the democratic game. The conflicts within anti-communist bloc led to the victory of SLD and PSL in 1993 what was called by M. Cotta as "resurgence of post-communism" (see above). The distance between the first and second strongest party slightly increased in 1993 (to 5 per cent) but the competitiveness of the party system remained high. The same was visible in the results of **presidential election in 1995. In the first ballot, the difference between the support for A. Kwaśniewski and L. Wałęsa was 2 per cent, and in the run-off it counted slightly above 3 per cent. This tendency has been sustained in 1997, when the difference between AWS and SLD was 6,7 per cent.** It means that Polish party system may be still recognized as highly competitive.

The distance between first and second strongest party, has reflected the level of competitiveness only on the electoral arena. If we want to measure this level on parliamentary one, the additional indicators should be taken into consideration. I have in mind the size (the percentage of the seats controlled by the parties which do not support the cabinet) and the

coherence of parliamentary opposition. Taking these variables into account, we have to note that the situations vary from election to election. In 1991, due to the fragmentation of the Sejm, the number of the seats controlled by the opposition was quite large, but it was not able to form alternative coalition. One has to remember, however, that it could overthrow two cabinets (in 1992 and 1993). After 1993 parliamentary election, the size of the opposition underwent the shrinkage. The victorious coalition controlled 303 seats (65,68 per cent). Even though the governing parties, SLD and PSL, were not able to outvote the presidential vetoes, they had leeway, that is to say they might make the laws, practically autonomously. From 1997 the situation has changed. The opposition as a whole has controlled 43,3 per cent of the seats. Its main political force, SLD possesses 164 seats (35,65 per cent). This means that the margin of governmental autonomy has been narrowed. The size of the parliamentary majority may lessen in the future, due to possible splits from AWS. The symptoms of the incoherence of the governing camp were discernible in 1998, during the decision-making process concerning the decentralization of the state.

The level of competitiveness measured in the constituencies has been more differentiated. This is, above all, the question of electoral geography (Raciborski, 1997, pp. 145-165). For purposes of my analysis, the most important is the distance between the first and the second political force, and its changes. Following S. Bartolini and R. d'Alimonte I have distinguished between three kinds of electoral districts: marginal, safe and fortress ones (see Bartolini, d'Alimonte 1996, pp. 119-121), although I have assumed another quantitative criteria. In marginal districts the distance between the winner and the runner up is less or equal 10 per cent of the votes; in safe ones it is between 10 and 20 per cent. The fortress districts are the in which this distance exceeds 30 per cent. There were only 3 fortress districts, 18 safe, and 31 marginal ones in 1993 parliamentary election. Four years later the number of fortress

districts increased to 11 and the number of marginal ones decreased to 13. In 1993 in two districts (Sosnowiec, P³ock) the dominating force was SLD, and in one (Zamoœæ) - PSL. From among 11 fortress districts in 1997, AWS prevailed in 10, and SLD in one district (Sosnowiec). In six fortress districts dominated in 1997 by AWS, the victor of previous election was agrarian PSL, in three - SLD and in 1 - liberal UD. It has shown the flow of the electorate from PSL to AWS, particularly in the southern part of country, where the dominance of the latter was highest. What is worth to note, however, is that competitiveness of party system, measured on the level of the constituencies decreased between 1993 and 1997. Is there this tendency durable, is the matter of the future.

6. The competition on governmental arena

The analysis of the patterns of political competition on governmental arena should let us to determine the coalitional potential of main political parties and their political relevance. Considering this question I have assumed that the main aim of political parties is to participate in formulating and implementing of governmental policies. The only way to gain it is to form or enter the equilibrium cabinet, that is to say, the cabine , *once it is formed stays formed because no political actor with the ability to act in such a way as to bring down the cabinet and replace it with some alternative has the incentive to do so*" (Laver, Shepsle, 1996, p. 61). Thus, I have treated the parties as policy-seeking rather than office-seeking (for more details, see de Swaan, 1973, Laver, Schofield, 1991).

The fragmentation of Polish party system, although decreasing, has resulted in the necessity to form coalitional cabinets, what has been the rule in the majority of multi-party democracies. One may not wonder that no one-party cabinet was has been formed after 1991 in Poland. The short-lasting experience with minority cabinets (J. Olszewski, H. Suchocka)

has shown that such a cabinet has the little chance to survive. Moreover, after dismissing H. Suchocka's cabinet, the President dissolved the Sejm, what resulted in the alternation in power. Henceforth, the only majoritarian cabinets have been formed. The strength and the composition of the Polish cabinets is demonstrated in Table 15:

Table 15: Polish cabinets 1991-1997

Prime Minister	Durability (in months)	Number of parties
J. Olszewski	6	4 (PC, ZChN, PChD, PL)
H. Suchocka	10,5	7 (UD, ZChN, KLD, PL, PChD, SLCh, PPG)
W. Pawlak	16,5	2 (SLD, PSL)
J. Oleksy	10,5	2 (SLD, PSL)
W. Cimoszewicz	20	2 (SLD)
J. Buzek	N.A.	2 (AWS, UW)

Source: Antoszewski, Herbut, 1997a, pp. 511-517

Abbr. **PChD** - Christian Democratic Party **PL** - Peasant Party (post "Solidarity"), **SLCh** - People-Christian Party **PPG** - Polish Economic Programme.

What are the patterns of political competition on Polish governmental arena. The most striking feature is protracting inability of the parties deriving from anti-communist opposition to cooperate with post-communist socialdemocracy. Obviously, in 1989 and 1991 the communists were commonly perceived as the exponents of the old regime and the

supporters of the its restoration. They themselves were reluctant to participate in formulating the policies which were at odds with their old ideas. Their return to power in 1993 resulted, however, in the proposal to form the "overarching government", put forward by SLD to Democratic Union (UD) and to Union of Labour (UP). This suggestion was definitely rejected by the leaders of both "post-"Solidarity" parties. Similarly, in 1997, Union of Freedom (UW) refused the offer of SLD to form the coalition able to counteract AWS. In both cases the programmatic considerations played the minor role, and the political origin of these parties turned out to be the decisive factor. One has to point out, however that Poland is not an exception among post-communist countries (only Hungary does not fit to this pattern). Thus, the governmental coalitions after 1991 have been formed by the parties deriving either from *ancien regime* or from "Solidarity". Thus, the coalitional potential of SLD and, to less extent PSL, has remained still low. It means that both parties may be recognized as isolated ones.

One may add that also KPN demonstrated low coalitional potential, until its split in 1997. This is only relevant party which has had no roots in "Solidarity". Because of its radicalism, and certain anachronism, it was not taken into account as the governmental partner by post "Solidarity" parties. In effect, KPN splitted in 1997 into two parties. One of them entered AWS.

The second trait of Polish governmental coalitions is that they are more or less syncretic. Some scholars recognized this phenomenon as typical for democratic transition (di Palma, 1980). From many reasons it may led, however, to certain incoherence of governmental policies. This was particularly visible after 1992. The cabinet of H. Suchocka included pro-European and liberal UD and KLD, and, from the other side, anti-European, strongly catholic and populist ZChN, PChD and SLCh. Between 1993 and 1997 the cabinet was formed by secular and pro-European SLD and catholic, anti-European PSL. The most syncretic is,

however, the coalition of AWS and UW, formed in 1997 as, practically, no-alternative. There are many areas in which sharp controversies have appeared. They are among the allies, the European integration, monetarist policy, educational policy, health policy and decommunization issue. Moreover, there is no agreement within AWS as to the shape of governmental policy. This political incoherence of the governing camp has been, of course, the source of the hopes of the opposition to regain the power, even if the surveys do not indicate the growth of support for SLD, let alone PSL. The conflicts regarding the new administrative division of the country have shown that these hopes are not groundless ones.

The analysis of political composition of Polish cabinets has demonstrated the highest relevance of nationalist, pro-clerical and populist parties as well as the parties perceived as post-communist. ZChN, PChD and PL were represented in 3 cabinets (including the cabinet formed by AWS). Thus, the value of the index of their participation is relatively high and counts 0,5. SLD and PSL have demonstrated the same level of the participation (3 cabinets in 1993-1997) but the time they exercised power is longer. The parties represented liberal orientation remained in the government rarely and shortly. UD and KLD participated in 2 cabinets (index of participation is 0,33). One may add that, after 1997, the marketization and pro-European policies promoted particularly by UW are called into question, not only by the post-communist opposition but also by certain governmental parties.

The level of the competitiveness of the party system on the governmental arena may be measured by the number of the cases of the alternation in power (see Chapter II). It is obvious that, because of the shortness of analysed period, the conclusions to be drawn may be only tentative. What is, however, worth to note is that in Poland this alternation is frequent, similarly to the other countries of the region (Czech Republic and Slovakia are the exceptions). Up today every parliamentary election has led to the change of the power

incumbents, including post-communists. This may be interpreted as the indicator of high level of competitiveness of Polish party system. From the other side, one may not to preclude that the last election was critical one and the realignment has been its result. It is possible provided that AWS will turn out to be durable electoral coalition. If so, there is the chance for the Right to predominate on the political scene for a long time. I do not believe, however, that traditional pattern of the political competition between the strong, united Left and strong, although more fragmented Right, will be reflected in Poland in the nearest future. There is no political tradition to form such a pattern (see Chapter III) and there are no strong incentives to "westernize" Polish politics because of the strength of nationalist political stream which opposes "the imitation of foreign models".

The main precondition of the "westernization" of Polish political competition is the implementation of two important political tasks. One of them is the successful transformation of economy from central-planned into free market one. This requires certain protection of the losers of this reform, that is to say, some elements of the state interventionism. One may say that the parties accepting some kind of welfare policy have the greater chance to attract the majority of voters than those who are the exponents of "hard monetarism" and of rapid marketization. The second task is successful deal with the remnants of the communism. Until the reconciliation concerning this question is not achieved, the main axis of the political competition will be the attitude to the past and its legacy. This means that the main competitors will be still communism-purging and communism-forgiving parties rather than the right-wing and left-wing ones. Nine years after the demise of communist regime the evolution of the character of the political competition in Poland seems to be, to some extent at least, unpredictable.

CONCLUSIONS:

In Chapter I formulated three questions. The first of them was whether the patterns of political competition in post-communist Poland have been stabilized or not? The analysis of such the variables as electoral behaviour and political composition of has led me to the positive answer. Even though we may observe the numerous changes in the structure of the political scene, the support for the main political forces has remained relatively stable. The voters, albeit confused in the first phase of transition, have gradually crystallized their preferences. The size of the support for what I called "conservative" orientation has not changed from 1991. The level of volatility has decreased for four years and is, at the moment lower than in some West European democracies of the third wave. Three poles: conservative, liberal and social-democratic seem to confine political space and there are not the symptoms of radical electoral shift in the nearest future. The number of the dimensions of competition has remained the same. What may be the reason of concern is the low turnout that has oscillated between 43,2 (1991) and 52,08 (1993).

The stabilization of the patterns of political competition is visible also on the parliamentary level. The analysis of political composition of the Sejm has revealed the evolution from the extremely fragmentation to bipolar structure within which the post-communists and post-"Solidarity" united camp are the main competitors. Parliamentary strength of the both camps has radically grown for the last years. Thus, the competition on parliamentary level makes alike that in the countries with the two and half party systems. The size of the opposition has prevented the decline of the competitiveness what is still high, at least on the national level. It has resulted on governmental arena. The two-party coalitions, basing on the solid parliamentary majority have been the rule from 1993. One has to remember, however, that two strongest parliamentary forces have been not the classical

parties.

Do the patterns of political competition in post-communist Poland reflect the inter-war or rather contemporary, West European political experience? From many reasons, but particularly owing to the nature of transitional process in post-communist countries, the competition in this region of Europe has its peculiar properties. The main difference between Polish and West European political performance is that in the former case the competition between the Left and the Right is accompanied by the other dimensions going beyond the traditional Left-Right scale. The most controversial issue is the solution of the question of communist past. This is not only problem of the punishment the communist crimes. The more important is the legitimacy of the post-communists to participate in the governing democratic country. The protracting "state of impossibility" to resolve this problem is likely to be the main obstacle in the national reconciliation and results in the isolation of post-communists by the parties deriving from the anti-communist opposition.

From the other side, the political competition in post-communist Poland does not resemble that what took place in inter-war period. Above all, no from pre-war political parties was able to revive after 50 years as the relevant political force. Thus, the parties competing in elections are, with the exception of SLD and PSL, newly formed and not anchored in the past. Although, in general, new parties are weak, they have demonstrated the willingness to cooperate, at least within two separate blocs. After 1919-1926 the weakness of the parties was overcome by the forming no-party political formation what resulted in drastic decrease of the level of the political competitiveness. The voters accepted such a solution. The attempt to create similar "Bloc" in 1993 failed. In turn, AWS has been not "no-party" formation but the typical electoral as well governmental coalition. The efforts to reshape it into the classical party, although so far unsuccessful, have been made. Thus, one may say that the distrust for

political parties what was decisive factor for the collapse of the parliamentary democracy in inter-war Poland has not re-emerged since 1989.

Is the nature of political competition in post-communist Poland the premise for predicting the consolidation of democracy? One has to point out that the democracy has not seriously challenged and threatened since 1989. Conversely, the return of the post-communists to the power, even though shocking, was the positive test for the "immature and fragile" political system. The response for the governs of the post-communist parties was the integration of "post-"Solidarity" camp. Although it is typical syncretic coalition, it provides political, and moreover, partisan alternative for the post-communist competitors. That may be the reason for optimism.

The second positive factor is the fact that the parties play the crucial role in the process of political competition. No political actor what is not responsible to the voters, as the army, police or the Church, has striven for power. From the other side, the role performed by the trade union seems to be overpolitized. With this respect, political competition in contemporary Poland is different from both pre-war and West-European experience.

Although for many observers Polish democracy may be perceived as unconsolidated, the symptoms of consolidation have been discernible. This appraisal has to do with the party system, albeit not with the parties themselves. One has to keep in mind, however, that Poland has still been in the phase of democratic transition and the result of this process has remained, to some extent at least, uncertain.